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Fresh Decorative Patterns on the EBA Pottery of Yanik Tepe (Iran) from the Reorganized Assemblages at the National Museum of Iran

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Abstract

Following its inauguration, the National Museum of Iran used to be entrusted with the storing of all objects obtained from archaeological investigations over several decades. Yet access to stored objects began getting increasingly difficult over time. For that reason, a lion share of the stored objects remained unpublished. Whilst select works on display at museum halls have their own importance, a full insight into cultural, economic, political and technological developments will inevitably call for a study of a given cultural complex as a whole, which consists of stone tools and blades, pottery, faunal remains, and all other vestiges of the pertinent society. Hence, a reorganization work planned for the Museum's storerooms, as part of which the author embarked on a study of the pottery assemblages from the Early Bronze Age levels of Yanik Tepe deriving from C. Burney's 1960s excavations. The main question was: To what extent did the newcomer potters communicate their homeland artistic traditions on this pottery? Data from museum and library enquiries provided the basis for a comparative study. The dataset was analyzed qualitatively, and the study adopted a culture-historical approach. Statistical analysis revealed the predominating decorative scheme to be one consisting of a combination of geometric patterns, like simple bands, with animal or bird motifs, an observation reflecting the import of these species to the local subsistence economy that essentially relied on raising livestock and hunting. Comparison to the material from other spheres across the geographic extent of the culture showed that while the homeland legacy is mirrored in a few cases, there are also examples reflecting experimentations of local artisans.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Yanik Tepe, Early Bronze, Pottery, National Museum of Iran.

Article Type: Research Article

Introduction

The late 4th and early 3rd millennium BCE witnessed cultural transformations and interactions in southwest Asia and the spread of the Kura-Araxes Culture in east and south Turkey and west Iran. Fundamental changes thus took place as newcomers from northern Araxes inhabited the southern basin of the river, with some groups even proceeding further to reach northwest Iran. Hence, the social structure of societies would undergo changes, in particular through increased populations, and this in turn resulted in inter-regional contacts and prompted an exchange of ideas incarnated, among others, in artistic works. Pottery being no exception, a novel tradition emerged. Termed as the Kura-Araxes pottery, it is a handmade black pottery with a decorative technique diverging from the earlier painted tradition. Burton-Brown was first to recover the evidence of this shift in his 1948 excavations at Geoy Tepe (Burton-Brown 1951). Further evidence, at a much larger scale, would come out during Charles Burney's excavations between 1959–1962 of Yanik Tepe near Tabriz from at least 12 occupational levels (Burney 1961, 1962,

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1964). Given the similarities attested in pottery techniques and decorations as well as other aspects of the material culture over the vast geographic extent of the Kura-Araxes horizon, which extends from South Caucasia through northwest and west Iran to eastern Anatolia and the Levant (Burney 1962; Sagona 2000; Motarjem 2011), the present paper, adopting a culture-historical approach, seeks to ascertain the possible links between the repertoire of patterns ornamenting the pottery from Yanik Tepe and the motherland of the culture. To this end, a sample is presented and discussed here for the first time. It was identified, registered and single out for analysis following the reorganization of the storerooms of the National Museum of Iran in 2004. During this work, the bags with the sherdage from C. Burney's excavations were subjected for the first time to a treatment of whatever sort since they had moved there for storage.

Research Question and Method

The question central to this study is: Was the Kura-Araxes pottery tradition at Yanik Tepe informed by the legacy from the culture's region of origin, or it reflects locally developed traits?

As stated, the pottery collections from Yanik Tepe had remained intact since their initial movement to the Museum after the close of excavations. Preparatory work was thus required before deciding on or attempting any sort of inquiry. Accordingly, the whole collection was recorded and washed before the decorated sherds were singled out and sorted into such groups as geometric motifs, animal motifs, plain, and miscellaneous. This was followed by the documentation that involved photographing, drawing and registering the entire formal and technical attributes of individual pieces. Patterns identical to those already published by Burney were excluded. Also, to meet the diversity criterion, the assemblages were considered from as varied excavated exposures as Trenches (or Areas) H, HX, K, L, M, P, and different Levels, viz. YT.HH1, YT.HH10, YT.H5, YT.HH1A, YT.HX1, YT.HX3, YT.HX3c14, YTHX4, YT.161HX, YT.161HX29A, YT.C5, YT.39C, YTK3, YT.LIA, YT.L3PRMII, YT.P2, YT.P3,P5, and YT.RH13.

Regional Landscape and Geographic Location of Yanik Tepe

Northwest Iran has a diversified topography. This mountainous region runs from the northwest flank of the Zagros southeastwards for about 480 km. Hemmed in by the Caucasus Mountains and the Taurus mountain complex of Anatolia, fractures have formed in this tableland thru the pressures from both sides, hence the formation of the Ararat, Sahand and Sabalan mountains. The principle natural phenomenon in the whole region is the Urmia Lake with an estimated age of ca. 35,000 to 40,000 years. Covering a total area of around 463,600 hectares, it is a quasi-rectangular basin orienting north-south. The lake is fed by 21 permanent and seven seasonal rivers, about 40 floodways, springs within the lake itself, and direct precipitation (Schachner 2001). This originally freshwater lake is thought to have been saturated by salt sometime about 8,000 years ago (Shahrabi 1994: 47). The mean altitude of the lake basin is 1100 m. Given this medium elevation and the presence of the Sahand and Sabalan as well as the northern Zagros, it would historically furnish the required natural resources for transhumant tribes. Surveys and excavations in the Lake Urmia region have identified settlements dating to the prehistoric, proto-historic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and later phases of the historic period. Yanik Tepe represents one of the about 50 sites dating to this timeframe, and is situated close to the city of Tabriz in East Azerbaijan Province of northwest Iran. The province shares international borders with Turkey and the Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia (Figures 1-2).

History of Research

The initial work on the Kura-Araxes culture in Iran was mainly restricted, up until the past decade, to the southern and western Lake Urmia Basin. In 1935–6, Sir Aurel Stein embarked on a series of archaeological explorations starting from the Persian Gulf littoral northward along the Zagros ranges up to the Solduz valley, where he carried out test excavations at Dinkha and Hasanlu. Among the notable works that would follow were the excavations of Geoy Tepe (Burton-Brown 1951), Hasanlu (Hakemi and Rad 1950; Dyson 1961), and Haftavan (Burney 1970, 1972, 1973, 1975). C. Burney identified Yanik Tepe in the course of his

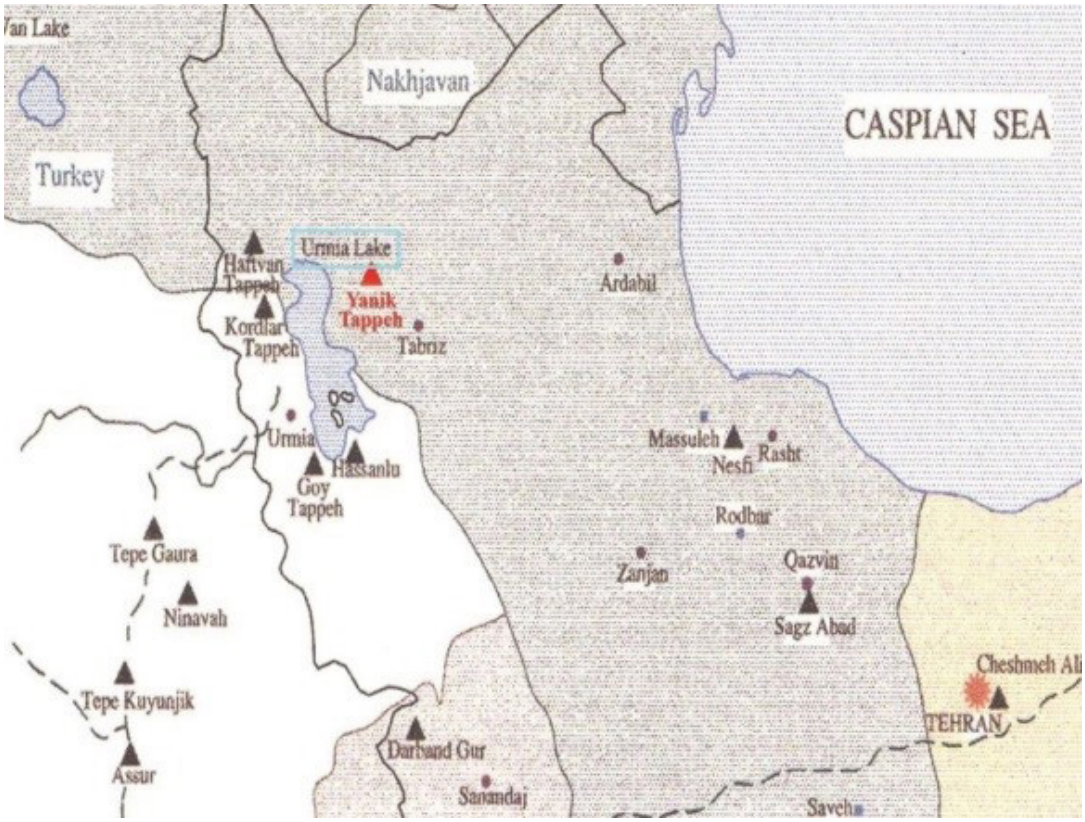


Figure. 1: *Map of northwest Iran showing the location of Tabriz and Yanik Tepe(After: Alizadeh 2001)*



Figure. 2: *The Aras (Araxes) river on the Jolfa-Nakhichevan borderline*

regional surveys of 1958–9 (1961, 1964). In his reconnaissance surveys of the southeast quadrant of Azerbaijan in 1971. S. Swiny recorded 16 Early Bronze Age sites, among which were Yanik Tepe and Geoy Tepe (Swiny 1975). Further work was completed by G. Summers, who as part of his dissertation analyzed the pottery from Yanik Tepe to pinpoint variations in wares, forms and decorations between the ETC II and ETC III, or the Kura-Araxes II and III. Towards the 3rd millennium BCE, the related material is attested over an immense area bounded by the Kangavar valley in the central Zagros (Young 1969), the Qazvin plain (Fazeli Nashli and Abbasnezhad 2005), the northern Lake Urmia Basin (Omrani 2004), and Hamadan (Mohammadifar *et al*. 2009).

On the other hand, in the recent years numerous authors have addressed the chronology, expansion, and origins of the culture in Iran, Caucasia, and Turkey (e.g. Sagona 1984, 2004; Rothman 2005; Batiuk and Rothman 2007; Kohl 2005; Piller 2012; Wilkinson 2014; Rothman 2015; Palumbi and Chataigner 2014; Rothman 2015).

Several Kura-Araxian sites have been identified in northwest, west and central plateau of Iran, and invaluable data are now available on site distributions and the attributes characterizing the material culture of individual regions. Notable are the rescue excavations in the basin of the Khoda Afarin Dam at the two sites of Kohne Pasgah and Kohna Tapasi (Maziar 2010; Zallaghi and Aghalari 2007). A systematic excavations especially focused on the earliest Kura-Araxes phases was directed by A. Abedi at Kul Tepe of Jolfa, where he obtained significant results on the Kura-Araxes I and II, corresponding to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic (Abedi *et al*. 2014). Related material has been explored at Nader Tapasi, a site presumably containing a complete sequence of the horizon. In 2003, R. Mohammadi surveyed the site, which would later undergo stratigraphic excavations K. Alizadeh in 2006. The latter excavated the contemporaneous single-period site of Kohna Shahar in Chaldoran of West Azerbaijan (Alizadeh and Azarnoush 2003; Alizadeh 2012; Fazeli Nashli and Ajorloo 2005; Omrani 2004). The Kura-Araxes culture was laso documented at Tepe Pisa of Hamdan and Tepe Gurab of Malayer (Khaksar et. 2014; Mohamadifar and Motarjem 2015).

Yanik Tepe

A key site in the archaeology of the eastern Urmia Lake Basin, Yanik Tepe is 30 km southwest of Tabriz and 6 km from Khosrowshahr, within the village of Tazeh Kand on the Talkheh Rud. Burney excavated the site in 1960, 1961 and 1962, shortly after its identification in 1958–9. Yanik Tepe consists of a high mound and a low mound, rising 16.5 m and 1.50 m from the surrounding lands, respectively. With an original total area of about 6 hectares, it represents a type-site of the Kura-Araxes culture in Azerbaijan (Burney 1963: 138). Typical of the culture flourishing at Yanik Tepe in the Early Bronze Age were round houses and a distinct pottery tradition. Most intriguing are those forms and types that resemble the material from the vast cultural horizon of eastern Anatolia and the early Trans-Caucasia of the mid-3rd millennium BCE.

The earliest deposits exposed at Yanik Tepe date to the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, with the related assemblages paralleled in Hasanlu X (Hajji Firuz period). Then follows, presumably after a hiatus, the Kura-Araxes period, spanning the Early Bronze to the early Middle Bronze. The Early Bronze material was exposed in the 1960 and 1962 seasons in Trenches D, F, G, H and P. In the second season (1961), the Middle Bronze deposits appeared as four building levels. The long sequence recovered in the three seasons span the Neolithic, no later than about 6000 BCE, to the Iron Age of ca. 600 BCE (Voigt and Dyson 1992: 177, 188).

Drawing on the results of his excavations at Yanik Tepe, Burney divided the whole Kura-Araxes (or the ETC) sequence to the three discrete periods of ETC I, ETC II and ETC III, where the earliest marks the birth of the culture in its motherland, the second is associated with round structures and incised pottery, and the latest sees the predominance of rectilinear architecture and virtual disappearance of incised decorations (Summers 2004: 619–620). For a more recent and detailed discussions on the chronology and dates as well as the stratigraphy of Yanik Tepe, the reader is referred to Summers 2013; 2014: 157–159.

An idiosyncrasy of the Early Bronze Age at Yanik Tepe is the handmade, black or gray burnished pottery with incised patterns. The technique is reminiscent of woodcarving and was presumably inspired by the densely forested landscape of the

homeland of the culture's bearers, who came to the rather sparsely wooded regions of northwest and west Iran. The technique was widely applied along with the excision, and the resultant motifs were then filled with white and occasionally ocher pastes.

Patterns like birds and highly stylized rams or ibexes with curled horns, and bands of geometric motifs were incised on bowls, jars and footed pedestal vessels and small cups, the pottery forms common to the period.

The Middle Bronze period marks a shift in architectural styles as related houses were built in a rectilinear plan using mud bricks, with thick walls that bespeak two-storied buildings. The use of decorations diminishes, and the so-called graphite burnishing (pattern burnishing) technique emerges, as is evidenced by a few cups. Vessels are relatively finer and burnishing is more frequent. Pottery forms show no considerable changes between the two periods (Burney 1962). However, the so-called Nakhichevan lugs, common to the latter period, now occur only as vestigial elements (Figures. 3- 7).

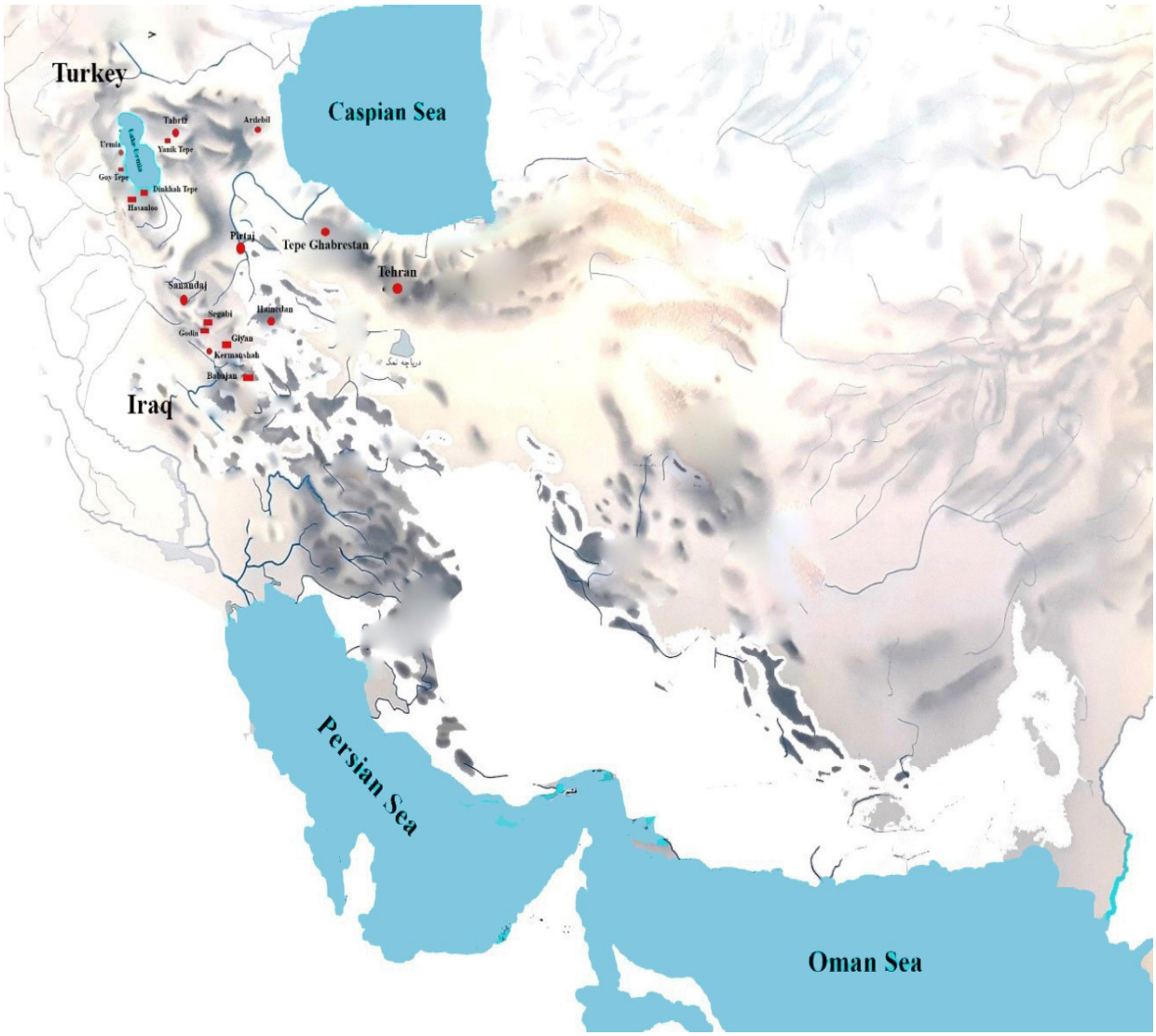


Figure. 3: *Location of Yanik Tepe near the Lake Urmia*



Figure. 4: *Aerial image of Yanik Tepe now hemmed in by the village of Tazeh Kand*



Figure. 5: *Yanik Tepe: top) general view and the exposed side of the mound; bottom left) Yanik Tepe: A gray ware vessel of Bronze Age; bottom right) remains of ash and oven exposed in the face of the mound*

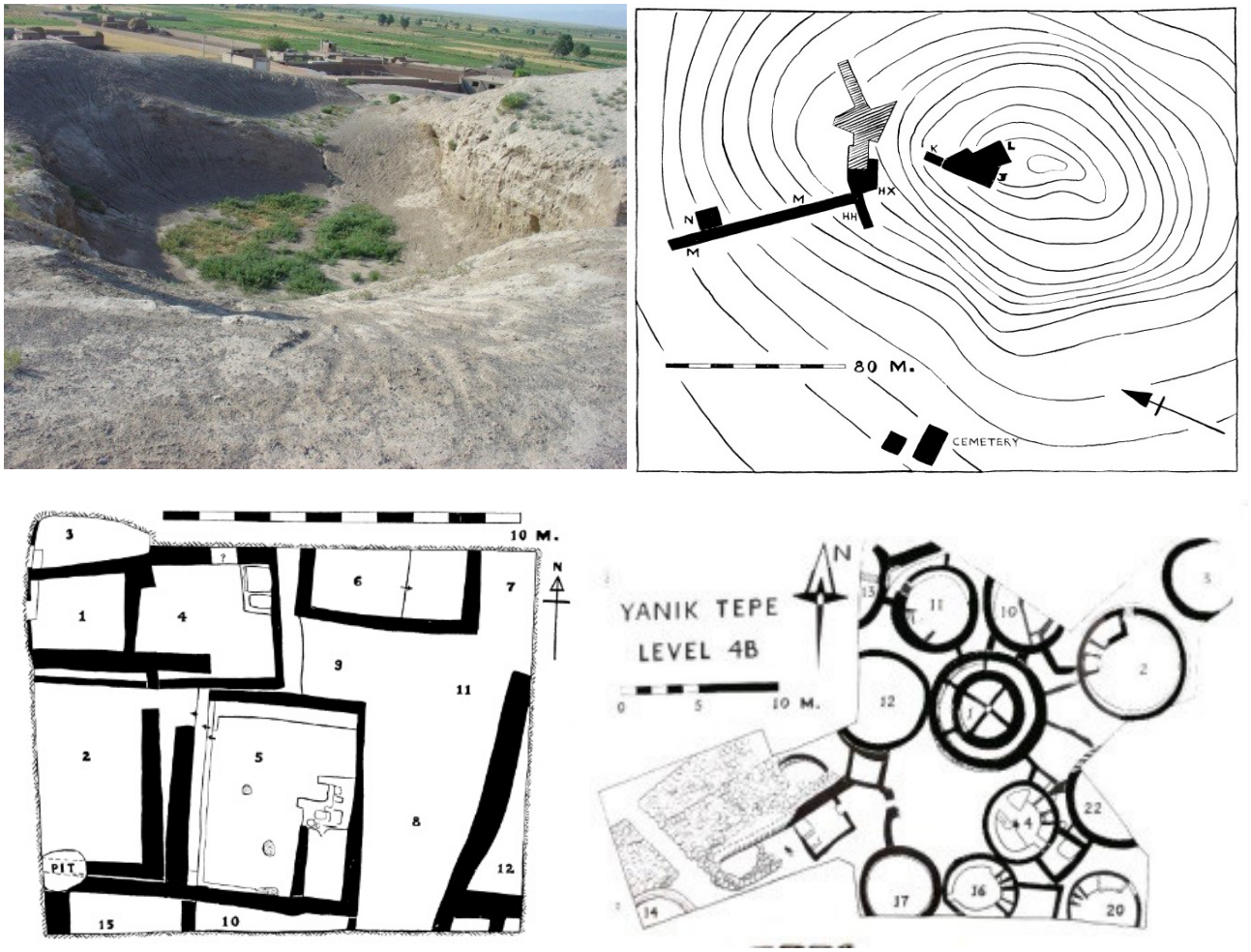


Figure. 6: *Yanik Tepe: Aerial image and plan of excavated areas with round and rectilinear structures (After:Burney 1960, 1961, 1962)*

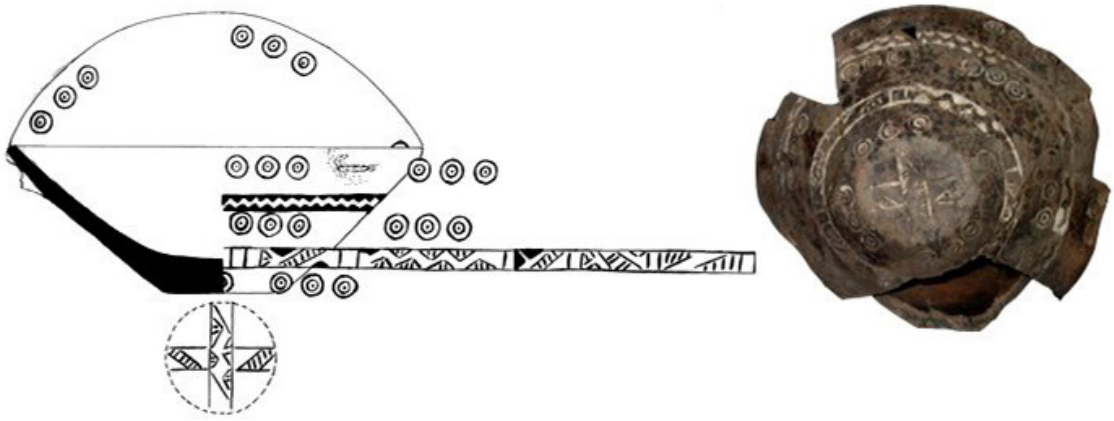


Figure. 7: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised and white-filled concentric circles, plain bands, and bands of geometric motifs, Level HX7*

Kura-Araxes Pottery of Yanik Tepe

What follows is a presentation of a yet-unpublished pottery sample from Yanik Tepe, with a special focus on decorations (Figures. 10–36). The pieces come from various trenches and levels to ensure a representative sample to the possible extent. Besides supplementing the existing history of pottery, these new pieces enhance our current understanding of the evolution of pottery styles through the long Kura-Araxian horizon at the site.

The Kura-Araxian pottery, coming in disparate wares and decorations, represents a new style introduced to northwest Iran by newcomer artisans. It is characterized by dark gray or lustrous black or light brown color; vessels are handmade, contain mineral tempers, and show a burnished surface bearing an assortment of motifs such as spirals, "ram horns," and concentric circles or "eyes" (Burney and Lang 1971).

In the Kura-Araxes Period I, rail rims thrived, the Nakhichevan lugs were yet unknown, and a few Chalcolithic forms and decorative techniques persisted (Glumac and Anthony 1992). Related material occurs at most sites in Caucasia, eastern Anatolia, and Geoy Tepe K1 (Sagona 2000: Figure.8-15).(Table. 1)



Figure. 8: *Sherds from Yanik Tepe in the course of the reorganization work, divided by period*

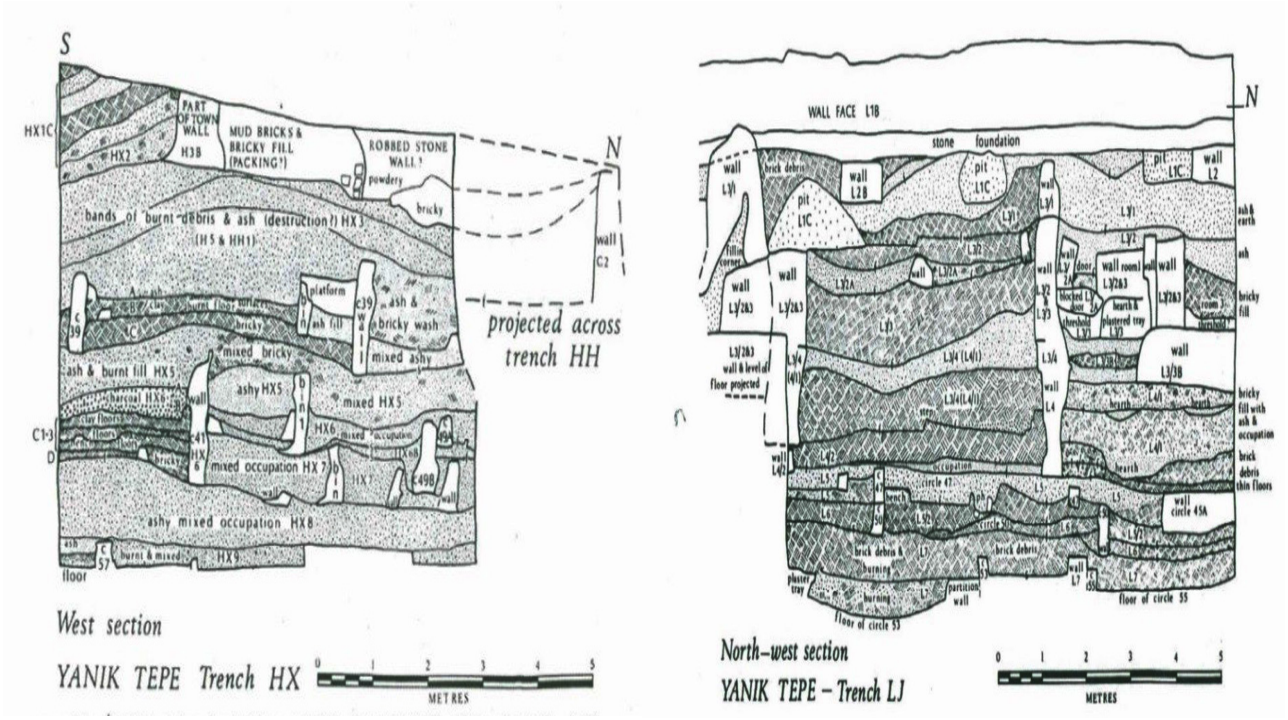


Figure. 9: *Yanik Tepe: West section of Trench HX and northeast section of Trench LJ and related strata (After: Summers 2004)*

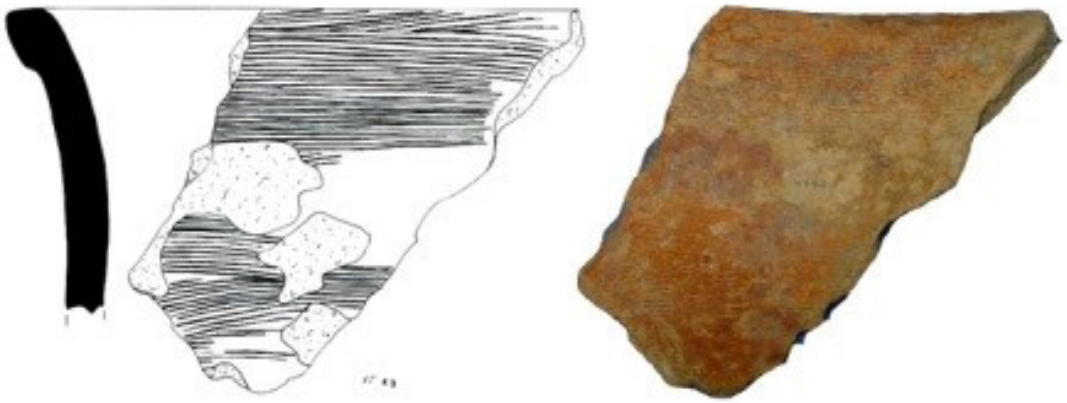


Figure. 10:*Yanik Tepe: Orange ware with scraped decorations inspired by the Chalcolithic traditions, Level YT.K3*

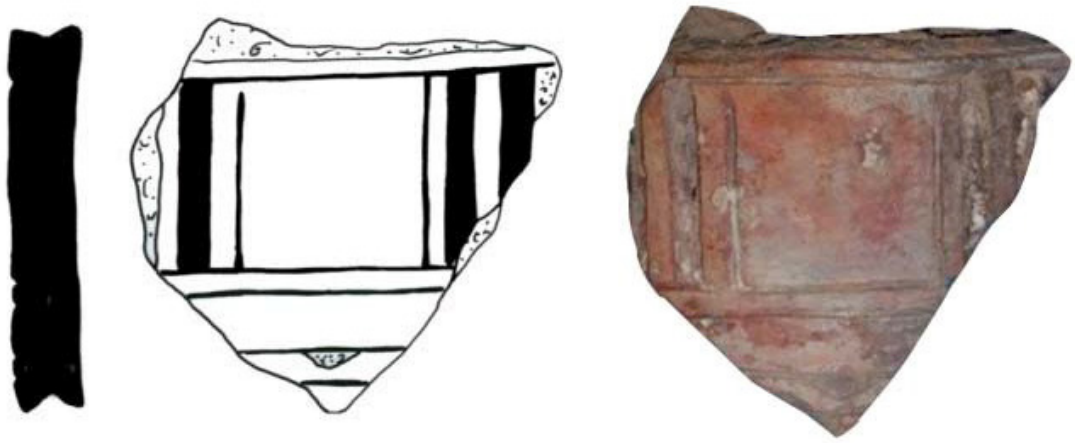


Figure. 11: *Yanik Tepe: orange-red ware with incised decorations inspired by the Chalcolithic traditions, Level YT.HX4*

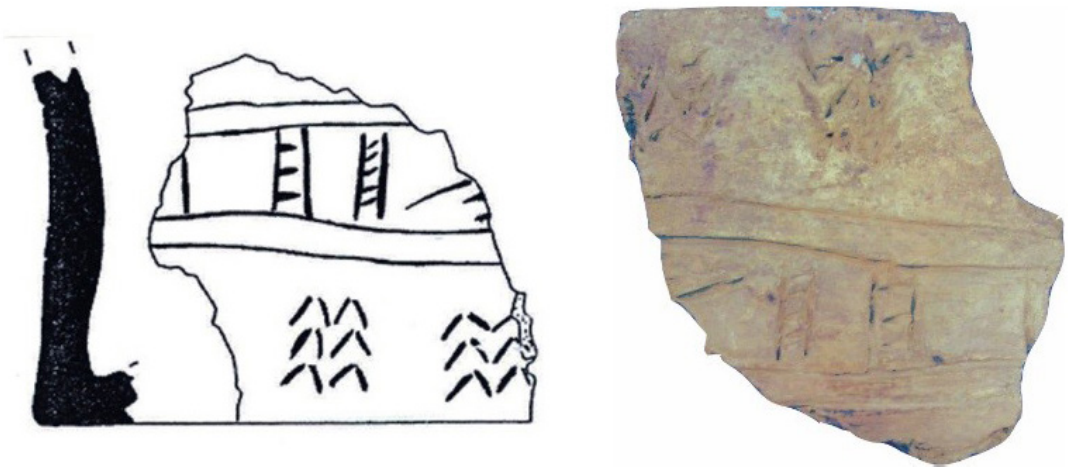


Figure. 12*: Yanik Tepe: Brown-red ware with incised chevrons and ladders inspired by the Chalcolithic traditions, Level YT.HH,39c*

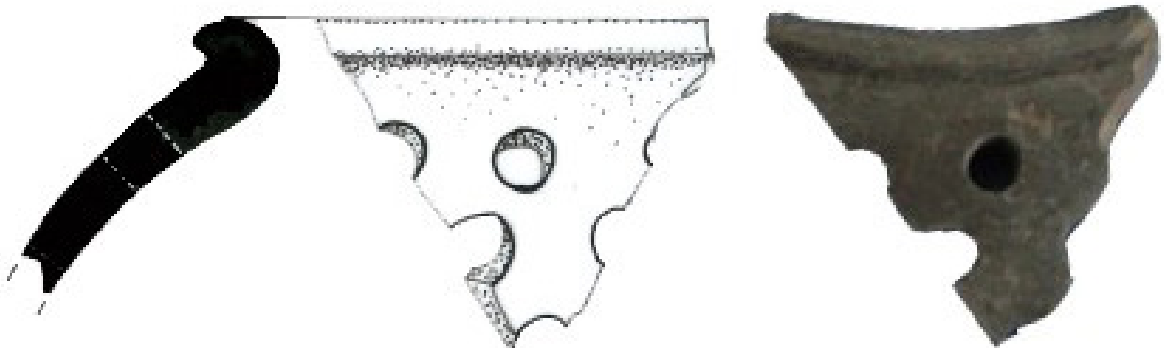


Figure. 13: *Yanik Tepe: Fragmentary gray-ware strainer, Level YT.HX1*



Figure. 14: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised concentric circles ("eyes"), double band, Level YT.K3*



Figure. 15: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised chevrons, partial animal motif, Level YT.HX1*

Table. 1: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 10-15*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 10	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	wet-smoothed	wet-smoothed	handmade	orange	orange	scraped decorations
Figure. 11	body	sand, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	orange-red	orange-red	burnished and incised geometric and square motifs
Figure. 12	body	sand, grits small lime	adequate or fine	wet-smoothed	wet-smoothed	handmade	brown-red	brown-red	incised chevrons, ladder
Figure. 13	body, rime, strainer	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray	gray	burnished and incised
Figure. 14	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	incised, concentric circles ("eyes"), double band
Figure. 15	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray	gray	burnished and incised chevrons, partial animal

The Period II is distinguished by the abundance of elbow handles, advent of semi-circular Nakhichevan lugs, and utter absence of the rail rims (Seyedov 2000). Notable in the assemblages are the ubiquitous concentric circles or "eyes" and incised triangles or chevrons. The pottery with its distinctive incised decorations shows influences from neighboring spheres. Various motifs are discernible. Animals, birds and fish abound. Birds appear as stylized representations on jars and bowls with decorations always reserved for the base or close to it. Also present are very simple geometric designs, bands raging from plain wavy-line incisions to a very intricate combination of nested designs, horizontal grooves or hatches, zigzags and doted patterns, rows of geometric motifs like lozenges with adjoining triangles filled with various sets of incised dots in diverse arrangements, swastikas, small lozenges and slanting motifs. Spirals and concentric circles occur in incision and excision, with the patterns filled with a white paste or lime. A frequent motif is the sharply angled triangles evoking the mountain, as is the incised patterns imitating cuneiform signs. The vessels are much finer than the ordinary handmade pieces. The Kura-Araxes II material from Yanik Tepe find parallels in Geoy K1, Yakhvali, Ravaz (Kohna Shahar), Baruj, Haftavan VII and Godin IV (Burney 1961, 1962; Kleiss and Kroll 1979; Asurov 2000).

In the Kura-Araxes III, incised decorations ceased in favor of pattern burnishing, and the Nakhichevan lugs likewise began to wane. Related pottery is known from Geoy K3, Godin IV, Shengavit IV, Kul Tepe of Nakhichevan, Kvatskhelebi in Georgia and sites in the Koban area of East Anatolia (Burney 1961, 1962; Burney and Lang 1971; Sagona 2000: Figure.16-34).(Tables. 2- 8)

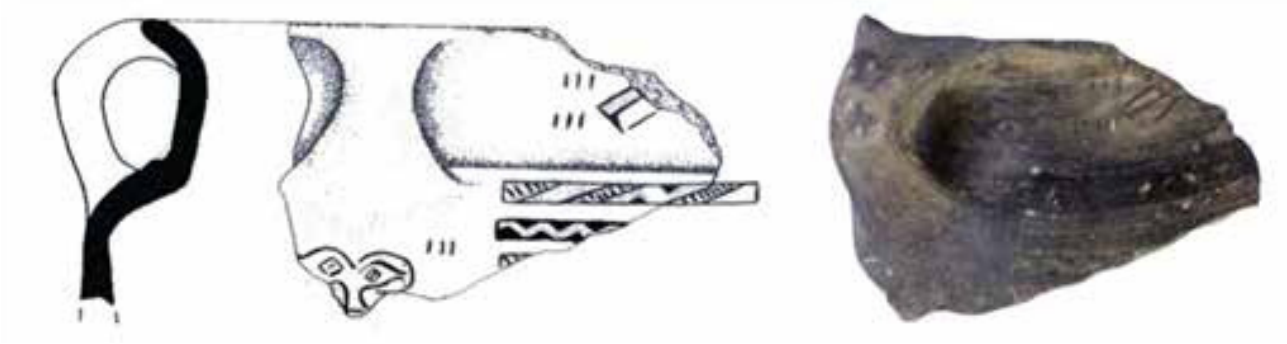


Figure. 16: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised plain bands, bands of geometric and animal designs, Nakhichevan lug, Level YT.HHX9*

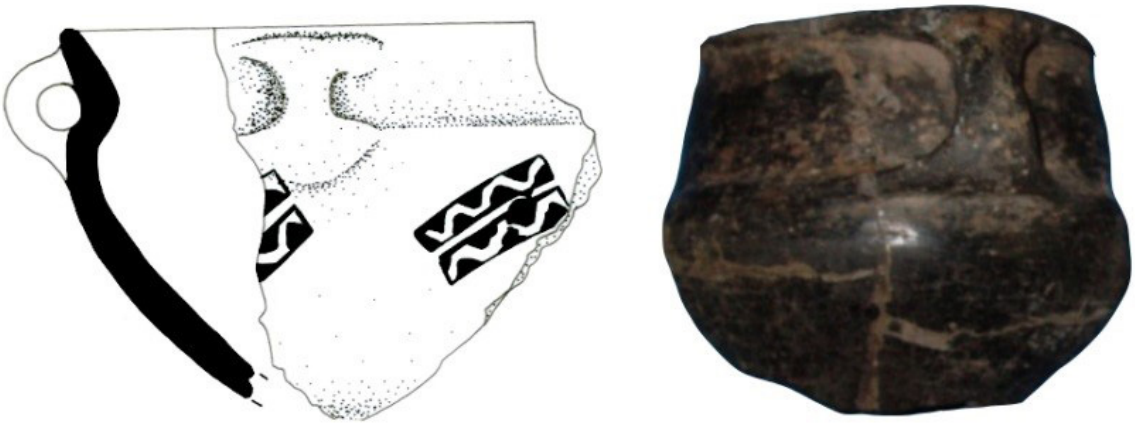


Figure. 17: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised geometric motifs, Nakhichevan lug, Level YT.HH1*

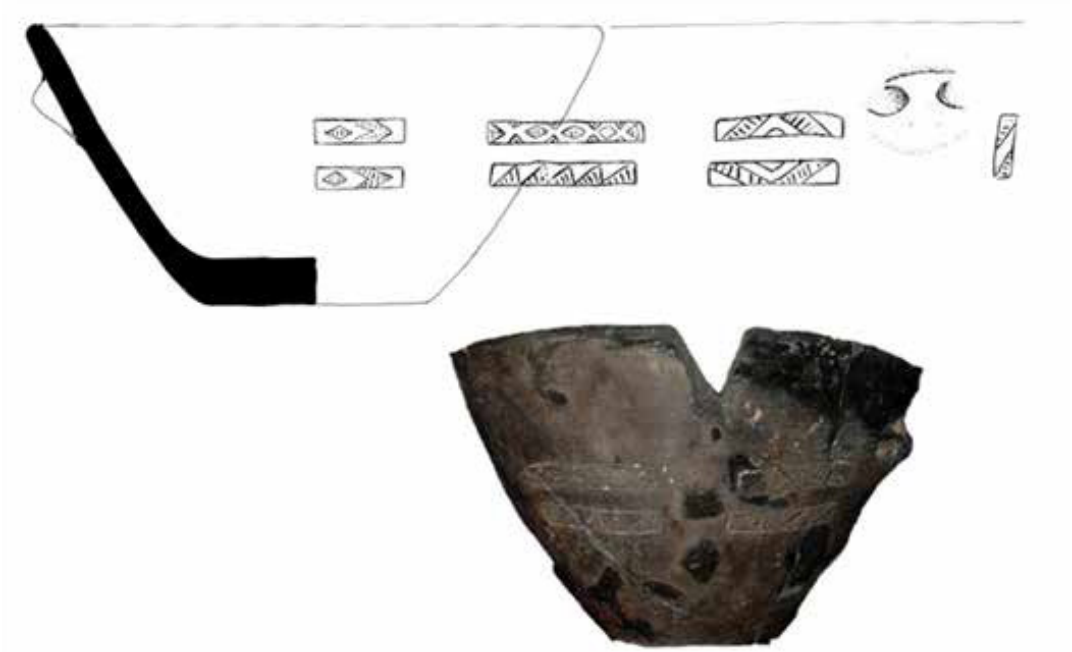


Figure. 18: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, band of incised white-filled geometric designs, Nakhichevan lug, Level YT.125*

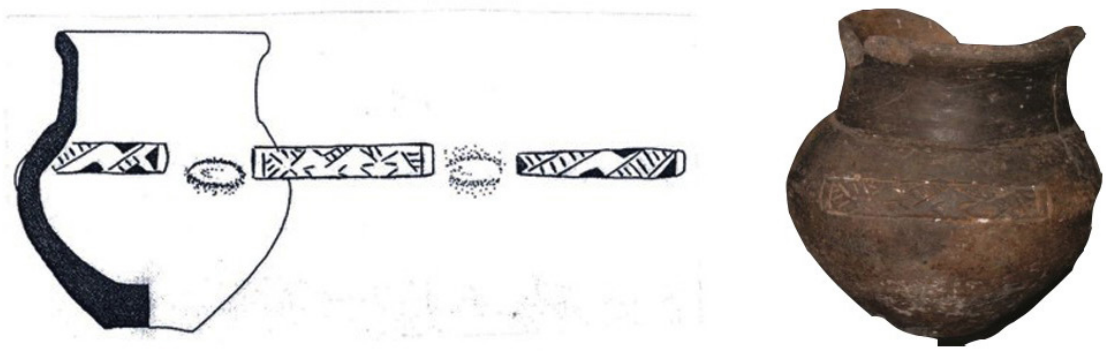


Figure. 19: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-dark brown ware, band of incised white-filled geometric designs, Nakhichevan lug, Level YT.P5*

Table. 2: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 16-19*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 16	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised plain bands, bands of geometric and animal designs, Nakhichevan lug
Figure. 17	rim, handle	sand, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, incised geometric motifs, Nakhichevan lug
Figure. 18	body, rim	sand, grits small lime	adequate	polished	polished wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	iburnished, band of incised white-filled geometric designs, Nakhichevan lug
Figure. 19	body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished wet-smoothed	handmade	gray- to dark brown	gray- to dark brown	burnished, band of incised white-filled geometric designs, Nakhichevan lug

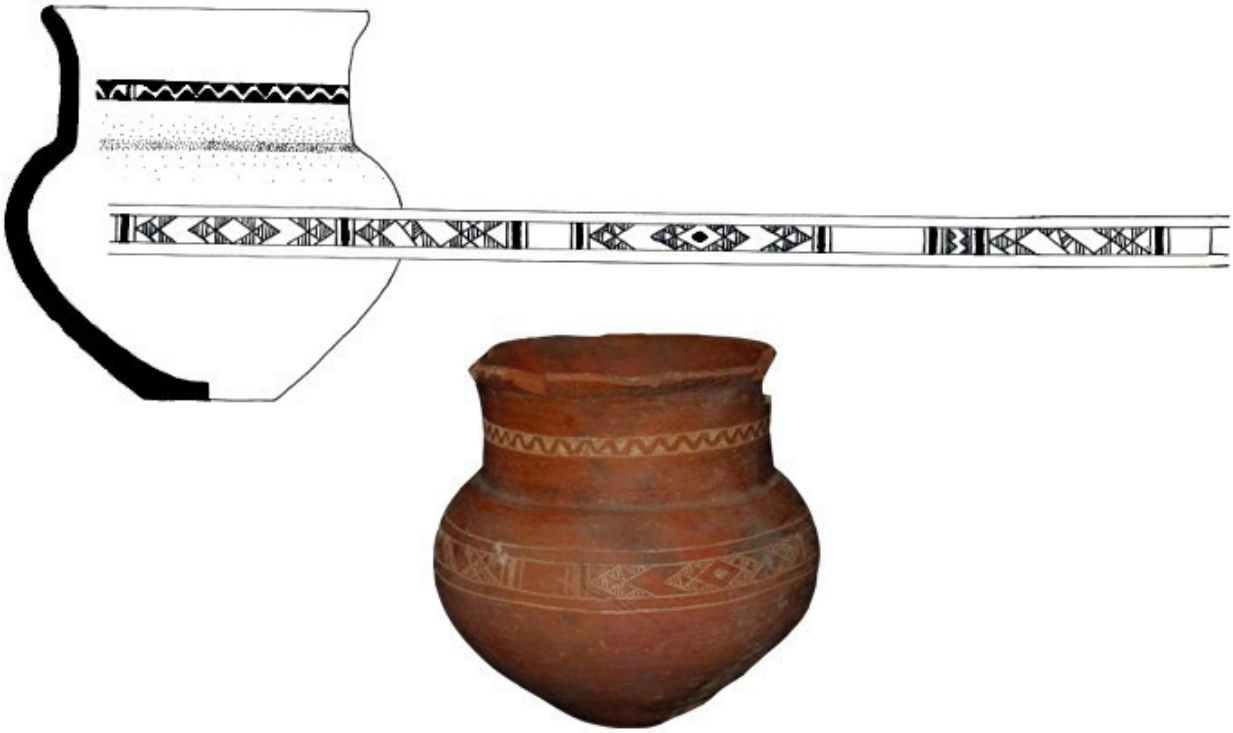


Figure. 20: *Yanik Tepe: Orange-red ware, band of incised white-filled geometric designs, Level YT.HX.3*



Figure. 21: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised white-filled bands of geometric designs as undulating lines, ladder-like motif, and triangles, Level YT.RH1*



Figure. 22: *Yanik Tepe: Light brown ware, ocher-filled incised bands of geometric designs, Level YT. 61HX3, Circle*

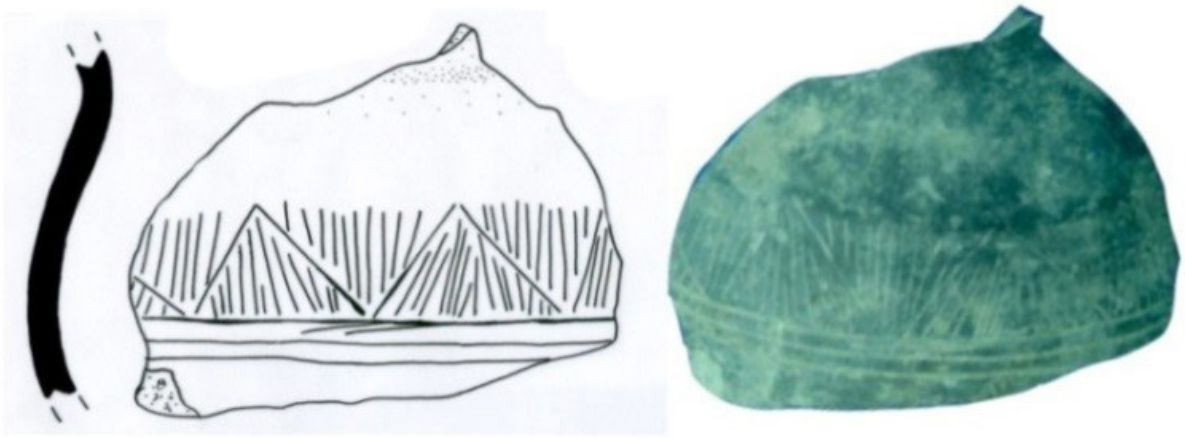


Figure. 23: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, plain horizontal bands, sharp-angled triangles, vertical grooves, Level undetermined*

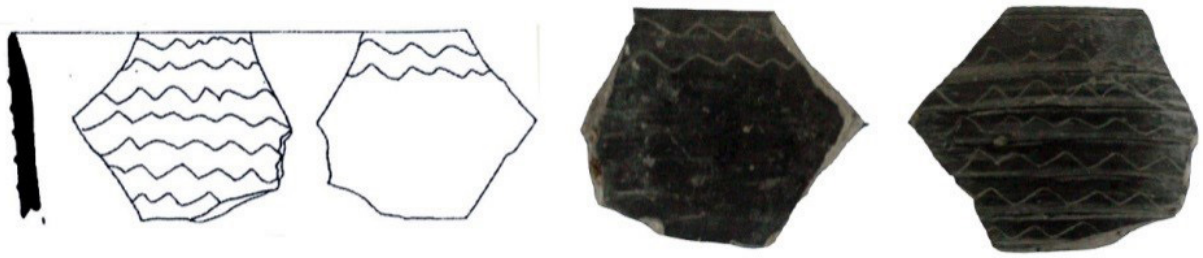


Figure. 24: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, plain horizontal bands, waves or spirals, Level YT.P2*

Table. 3: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 20-24*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 20	whole vessel	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	orange-red	orange-red	burnished band of incised white-filled geometric designs
Figure. 21	body	sand, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	incised white-filled bands of geometric designs as undulating lines, ladder-like motif, and triangles
Figure. 22	body	sand, grits small lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	light brown	light brown	incised ocher-filled bands of geometric designs, ladder-like motif, and triangles

Figure. 23	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	plain horizontal bands, sharp-angled triangles, vertical grooves
Figure. 24	rim	sand, fine lime	adequate	polished	polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, plain horizontal band, wave or spiral

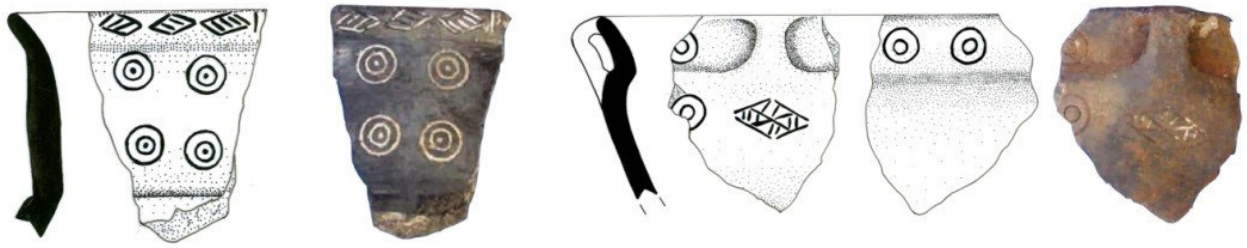


Figure. 25a–b: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware and light brown, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles ("eyes"), lozenges, Nakhichevan lug, Levels YT.HH IA and YT.61 HS 36*



Figure. 26a–b: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles, undulating band, Levels YT.161HX4 and YT.LJA*

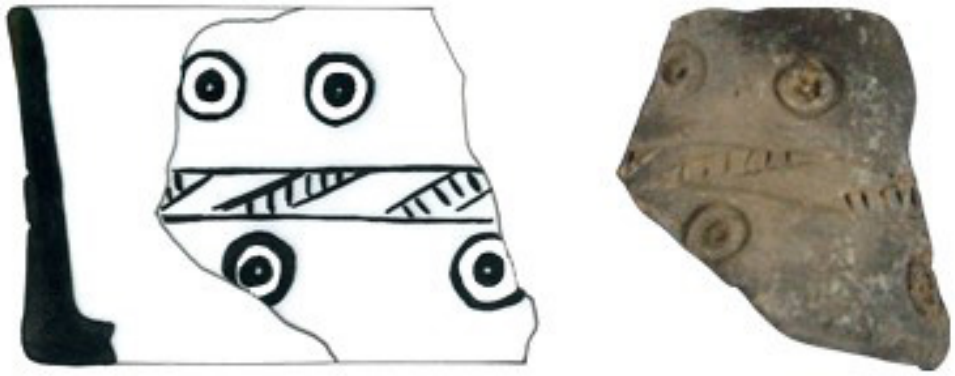


Figure. 27: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised band of ladder-like motif, concentric circles, Level YT.HX1*

Table. 4: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 25-27*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 25 a	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles (“eyes”), lozenges
Figure. 25 b	rim, handle	sand, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	light brown	light brown	burnished, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles (“eyes”), lozenges, Nakhichevan lug
Figure. 26 a	rim	sand, grits small lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles, (“eyes”), undulating band
Figure. 26 b	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled geometric designs, concentric circles (“eyes”)
Figure. 27	body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-dark brown	gray-to-dark brown	Incised band of ladder-like motif, concentric circles (“eyes”)



Figure.28:*Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised white-filled geometric designs and “cuneiform” signs, Level YT.RH1*

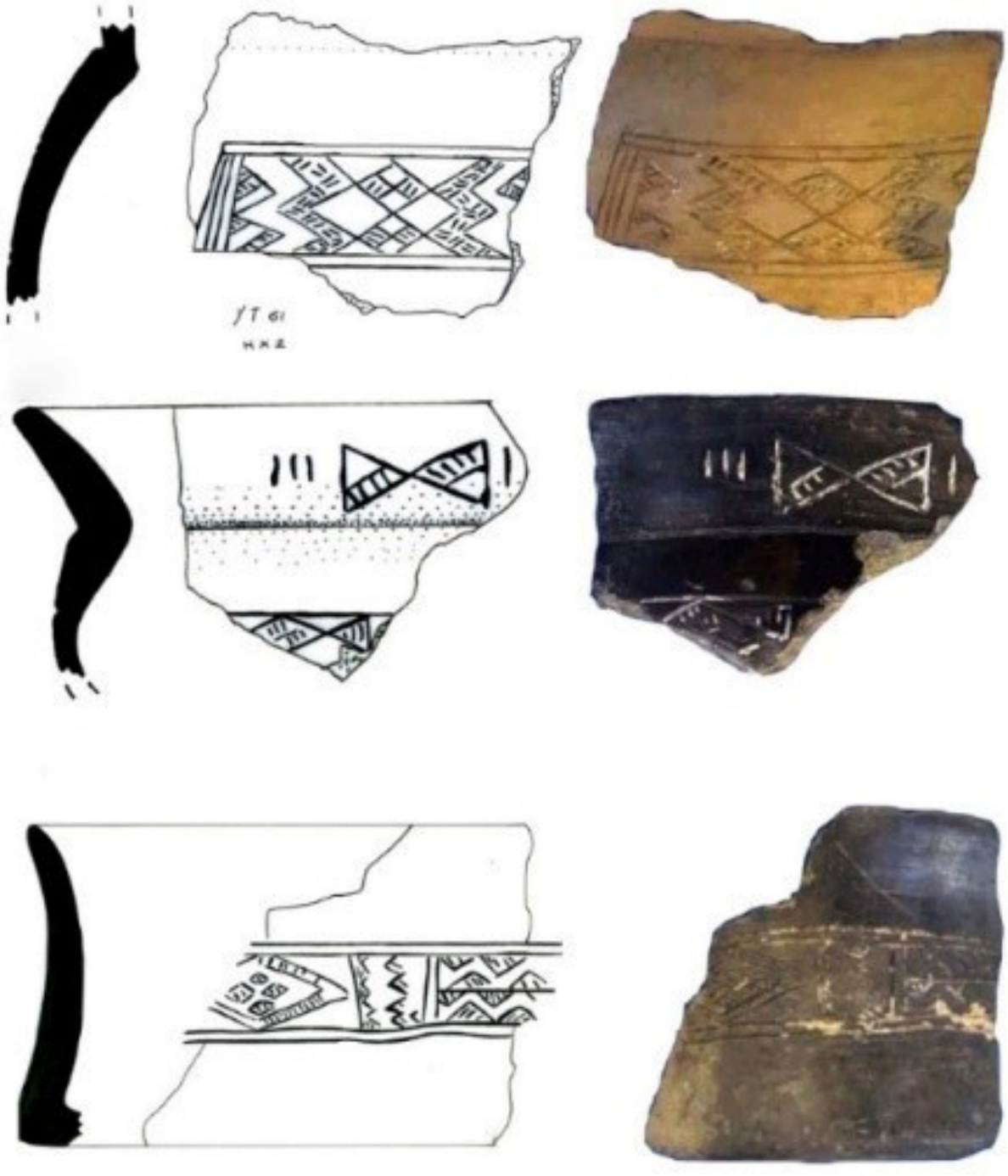


Figure. 29a–c: *Yanik Tepe: Light brown, black and gray wares, geometric designs, incised white-filled bands of lozenges and zigzags, Levels YT 61 HX2, YT. HX3 Circle 14 , YT. HX3*

Table. 5: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 28-29(a-c)*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 28	rim, body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, incised white-filled geometric designs and "cuneiform" signs
Figure. 29 a	body	sand, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	light brown	light brown	burnished, band of incised geometric designs
Figure. 29 b	rim	sand, grits small lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, band of incised white-filled geometric designs
Figure. 29 c	rim, body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, band of incised white-filled geometric designs

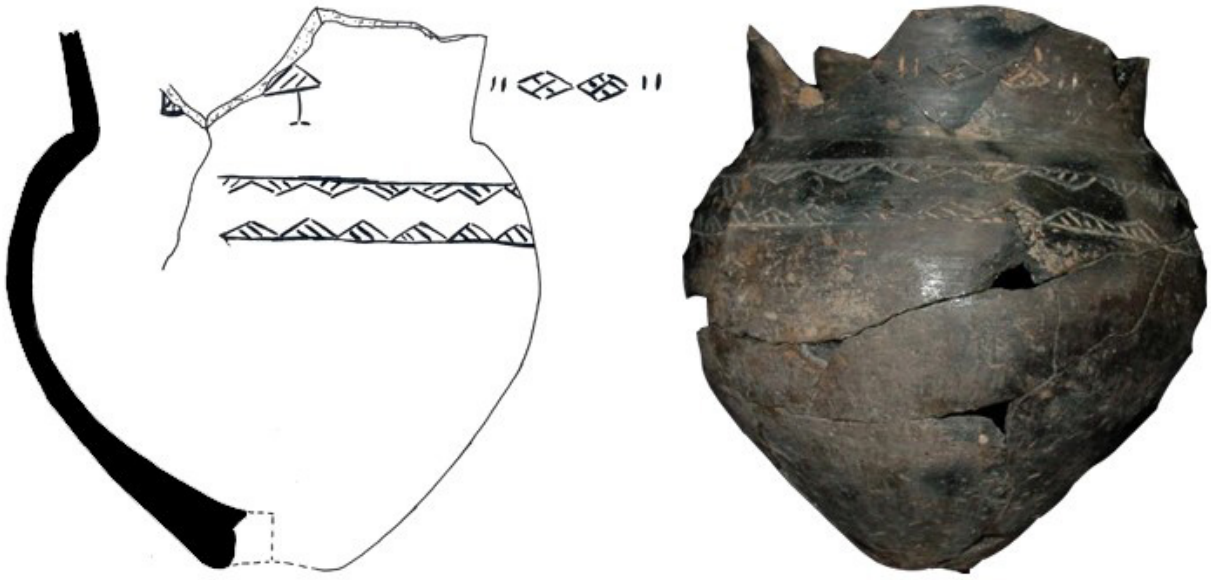


Figure.30: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised white-filled band outlined with hatched chevrons, animal motif, double lozenges flanked by short grooves, YT.161HHI 29 A*



Figure.31: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised white-filled concentric circles, lozenges, "fish," Phase YT61.HH1, 29A*

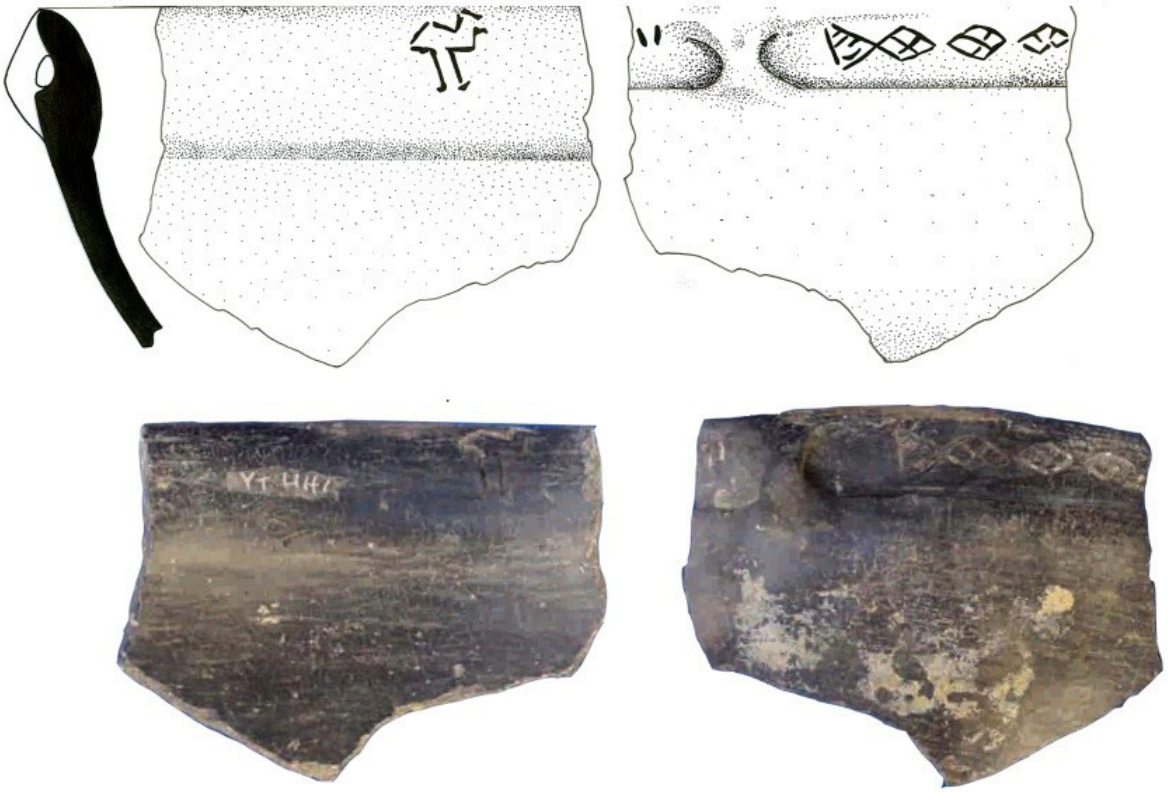


Figure. 32: *Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised white-filled geometric and animal (fish?) motifs, Nakhichevan lug, Phase YT.HH1*

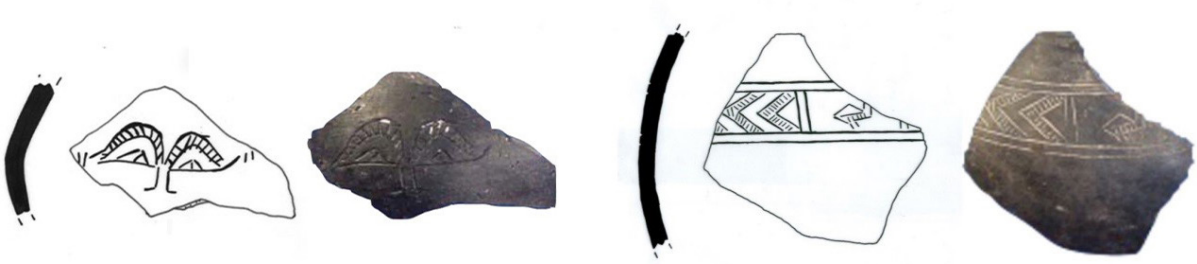


Figure. 33a–b*: Yanik Tepe: Gray-to-black ware, incised white-filled ram horns, band of geometric and animal motifs, Phase YT.HX3 , YT.HX 39C*



Figure. 34: *Yanik Tepe: Gray ware, incised white-filled stylized animals underneath the base, Sherd No. YT.LJ,l43*



Figure. 35 a–b: *Yanik Tepe: Gray and light brown wares, incised white-filled concentric circles, horns, bands of geometric designs, Phase YT 1961 HH1*

Table. 6: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 30-34*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 30	vessel	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	wet-smoothed polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, incised white-filled band outlined with hatched chevrons, animal motif, double lozenges flanked by short grooves
Figure. 31	rim	sand, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled concentric circles, lozenges, “fish”
Figure. 32	rim, handle	sand, grits small lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished , incised white-filled geometric and animal (fish?) motifs, Nakhichevan lug
Figure. 33 a	body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, incised white-filled stylized animals
Figure. 33 b	body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished wet-smoothed	handmade	gray	gray	burnished., incised white-filled band of and animal motifs,,
Figure. 34	underneath the base	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled stylized animals underneath the base

Table. 7: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 35(a,b)*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 35 a	body	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	gray	gray	burnished, incised white-filled concentric circles, horns, bands of geometric designs
Figure. 35 b	rim	sand, fine lime	adequate or fine	polished	polished	handmade	light brown	light brown	burnished, incised white-filled concentric circles, horns, bands of geometric designs

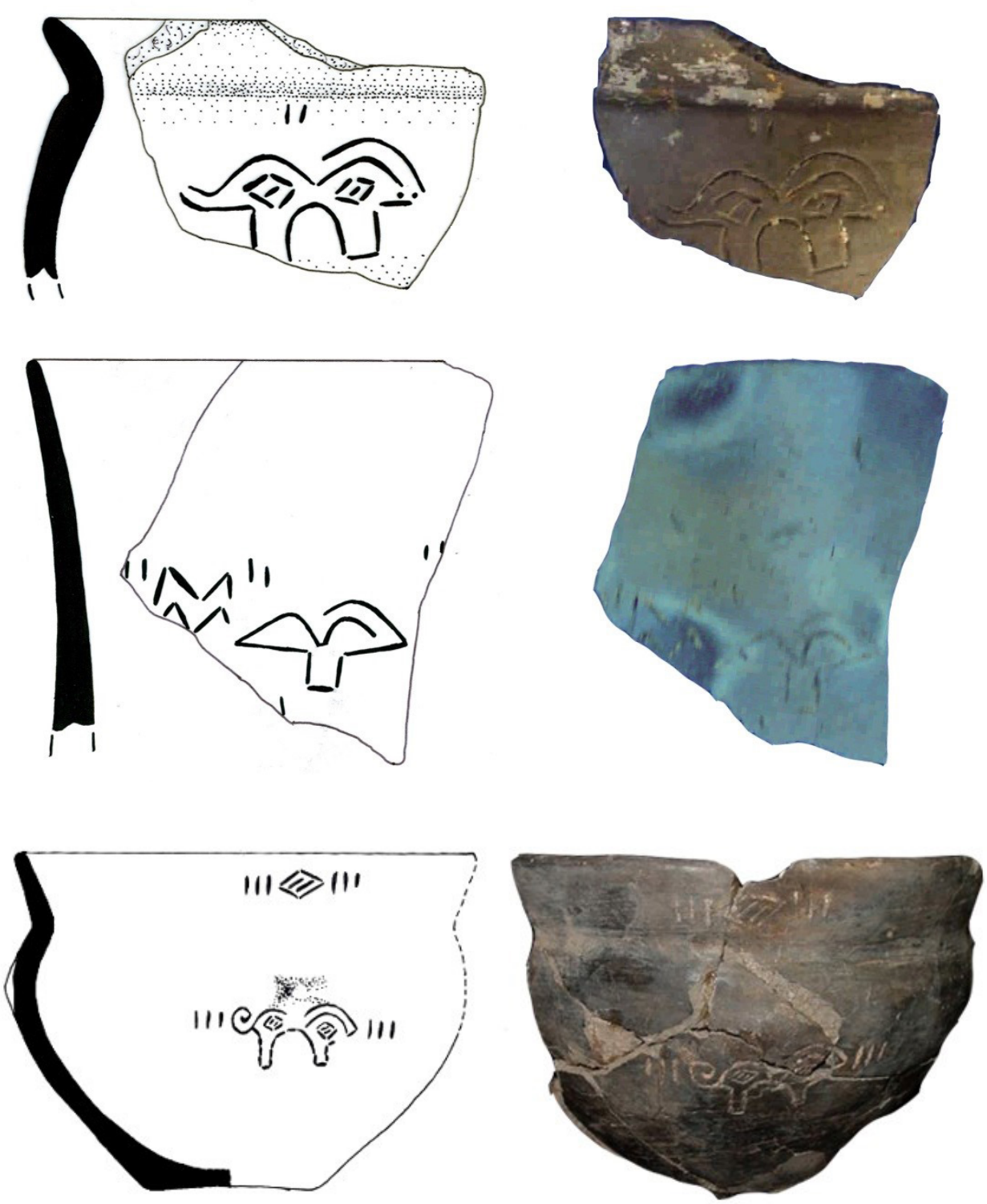


Figure. 36a–c:*Yanik Tepe: Gray to- brown and gray-to-black wares, incised white-filled animal and geometric motifs, Phases YT. HHX, YT.HH1, YT.HHX3,*

Table. 8: *Characteristic features of the selected pottery Shreds, figures 36(a-c)*

No.	Fragment	Temper	Firing	Ext. Surface	Int. Surface	Manufacture	Ext. surface color	Int. surface color	Decoration
Figure. 36 a	rim	sand, grit, fine lime	adequate	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-brown	gray-to-brown	incised white-filled stylized animal
Figure. 36 b	rim, handle	sand, fine lime	adequate	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-brown	gray-to-brown	burnished, incised white-filled stylized animals
Figure. 36 c	vessel	sand, grits small lime	adequate	polished	wet-smoothed	handmade	gray-to-black	gray-to-black	burnished, incised white-filled stylized animal and (fish?) motifs

Conclusions

Sweeping cultural changes and interactions in southwest Asia and the dispersion or extension of the Kura-Araxes culture to the western Iran and eastern and southern Turkey in the late 4th–early 3rd millennium BCE revolutionized the regional social structure. The ramifications that ensued, a most notable being the population growth, would culminate in the emergence of inter-regional contacts, which in turn made possible exchange of ideas that also included art styles. An obvious example as regards pottery is the advent of a type of handmade black pottery known as the Kura-Araxes tradition, which employed an innovative decoration technique. The present study introduced a yet unpublished sample of patterns on the sherdage from Yanik Tepe, which resided untouched in the storerooms of the National Museum of Iran for decades. The huge ceramic collection in the museum's storerooms, dating to the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze and Iron through the Sasanian period, suggests that the settlement at the site persisted for an extended span of time thanks to the favorable surrounding landscape.

Statistical analysis of the pottery showed the most frequent decorative schemes are a combination of geometric designs as plain or decorated bands with animal and bird motifs, a fact that reflects the important role animals played in the regional subsistence system hinging on animal husbandry and hunting. Comparison of these ornamental patterns with those attested across the vast geographic area of the Kura-Araxes horizon shows that while a few motifs show strong influences of the homeland of the culture, there are also instances of an essentially indigenous character, though with evident inspirations from neighboring regions.

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