CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EARLY IRON AGE PROBLEM IN THE CENTRAL BLACK SEA REGION IN LIGHT OF VEZİRKÖPRÜ / OYMAAĞAÇ HÖYÜK CERAMICS

VEZİRKÖPRÜ / OYMAAĞAÇ HÖYÜK SERAMİKLERİ IŞIĞINDA ORTA KARADENİZ BÖLGESİ ERKEN DEMİR ÇAĞ PROBLEMİNE KATKILAR

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Keywords: Oymaağaç, Early Iron Age, Dark Age, Ceramic, Central Black Sea Region.
Anahtar Sözcükler: Oymaağaç, Erken Demir Çağ, Karanlık Çağ, Seramik, Orta Karadeniz Bölgesi.

ABSTRACT

After the Bronze Age and ending with the collapse of the Hittite Empire, the changes in material culture seen in settlements signal the beginning of a new period. This new period, called the Iron Age, is separated into chronological subdivisions which have been established through absolute dating (radio-carbon and dendrochronological analysis), historical events, and artifactual finds (ceramics etc.).

After the Hittite Empire collapsed around 1190 BC, there was a period recorded in literature as the ''Dark Ages,'' with a general lack of written documents found in the archaeological record. Excavations carried out in recent years have revealed important findings enlightening these Dark Ages in centers such as Çorum/Boğazköy-Büyükkaya, Yozgat/ÇadırHöyük, Ankara/Yassıhöyük-Gordion, and Kırşehir/Kaman-Kalehöyük. Ceramics and C14 data, especially, have confirmed the existence of the EIA in these key settlements. While these settlements in Central Anatolia have shed light on the EIA, there still remains a problematic situation in the Central Black Sea Region.

Limited information is known related to Early Iron Age architecture in Oymaağaç Höyük and that information is inadequate as a context has not yet been revealed. It has been considered that single-room houses found in the mound belong to the Early Iron Age. As no evidence which enables dating has been obtained with this architecture, it is doubted whether they belong to the Early Iron Age. Iron Age ceramic finds in Oymaağaç Höyük are generally obtained in pits. In this study, Oymaağaç Höyük ceramic finds which will contribute to the pattern of Early Iron Age in the Central Black Sea Region will be evaluated comparatively, under the light of key sites with reliable stratigraphy. Obtained material will be examined in terms of form as well as paste, production technique and ornament style.

ÖZET

Hitit İmparatorluğu'nun yıkılmasıyla sona eren Tunç Çağlarının ardından yerleşimlerde görülen materyal kültürdeki değişimler yeni bir çağın başlangıcının da habercisi olur. Demir Çağ adı verilen bu yeni dönem kendi içinde kısmen kesin (Radyo-karbon ve dendrokronolojik analizler) kısmen tarihsel olayların ve kısmen de buluntuların (Seramik vb.) şekillendirdiği kronolojiye bağlı alt bölümlere ayrılır.

Hitit İmparatorluğunun yaklaşık MÖ 1190 yıllarında yıkılışından sonra yazılı ve arkeolojik belgelerin susmasıyla "Karanlık Çağ" olarak literatüre geçen bir dönemin yaşandığı varsayılmaktaydı. Çorum/Boğazköy-Büyükkaya, Yoz-

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gat/Çadır Höyük, Ankara/Yassıhöyük-Gordion, Kırşehir/Kaman-Kalehöyük gibi merkezlerde son yıllardaki yapılan kazılar Karanlık çağı aydınlatan önemli bulgular ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle bu anahtar yerleşimlerin C14 verileri ve ele geçen seramikler Erken Demir Çağ kurgusunun oluşturulmasında oldukça önemlidir. Erken Demir Çağ ile ilgili veriler Orta Anadolu'da daha güvenilirken Orta Karadeniz Bölgesinde tartışmalı bir durum söz konusudur.

Oymaağaç Höyük Erken Demir Çağ mimarisi ile ilgili bilinenler kısıtlı ve henüz bir kontekst açığa çıkarılamadığından dolayı yetersizdir. Höyükte belirlenen tek odalı evlerin Demir Çağına ait olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu mimariyle birlikte tarihlemeye yardımcı olacak buluntular gelmediğinden dolayı Erken Demir Çağına ait olup olmadıkları şüphelidir. Oymaağaç Höyük Demir Çağ seramik buluntuları genellikle çukurlardan gelmektedir. Bu makalede, Orta Karadeniz Bölgesi Erken Demir Çağı'nın kurgusuna katkı sağlayacak Oymaağaç Höyük seramik buluntuları, güvenilir stratigrafilere sahip anahtar yerleşimler ışığında, karşılaştırılarak değerlendirilecektir. Eldeki malzeme sadece form değil aynı zamanda hamur, üretim tekniği ve bezeme üslubu açısından ele alınacaktır.

CHRONOLOGY

After the Bronze Age and ending with the collapse of the Hittite Empire, the changes in material culture seen in settlements signal the beginning of a new period. This new period, called the Iron Age, is separated into chronological subdivisions which have been established through absolute dating (radio-carbon and dendrochronological analysis), historical events, and artifactual finds (ceramics etc.). At Boğazköy- Büyükkaya, the Early Iron Age (EIA), in light of radiocarbon dates and building levels, has been divided into three phases; the early phase dates to 1180-1125 BC, the middle phase to 1125-1065 BC, and the late phase to 1070-990 BC[1]. Radiocarbon dates from samples, taken *in situ* from an oven (1190-840 BC) and pit (1270-910 BC) found on the citadel and the southern slopes of Çadır Höyük, indicate a Late Bronze Age transition period to the Iron Age[2]. Ceramic parallels and stratigraphy in Gordion place the EIA's early phase between 1100-900 BC (YHHS 7B)[3]. The IId layer in Kaman Kalehöyük is characterized as an EIA layer according to its architectural character. Additionally, C^{14} results and ceramic studies suggest dates between 1190 and 810 BC for the IId layer[4]. The late phase (IId1-3), specifically, has been dated between 900-884 BC with C^{14} and dendrochronological data[5].

Although the EIA dates are well-studied and established through architectural, artifactual, and bioarchaeological evidence, there has been no exact dating for the end of the Middle Iron Age (MIA) and beginning of the Late Iron Age (LIA). The advent of the Middle Iron Age is dated roughly to the 9th century BC. However, it is arguably accepted that the transition from the Middle Iron Age to the Late Iron Age begins with a historical event such as the arrival of the Persians into Anatolia around 547 BC. The end of the Iron Age is delineated by another historical event, Alexander the Great's conquest of Anatolia in 330 BC[6].

DISCUSSIONS

After the Hittite Empire collapsed around 1190 BC, there was a period recorded in literature as the ''Dark Ages,'' with a general lack of written documents found in the archaeological record. Excavations carried out in recent years have revealed important findings enlightening these Dark Ages in centers such as Çorum/Boğazköy-Büyükkaya[7], Yozgat/ÇadırHöyük[8], Ankara/Yassıhöyük-Gordion[9], and Kırşehir/Kaman-Kalehöyük[10]. Ceramics and C^{14} data, especially, have confirmed the existence of the EIA in these key settlements. While these settlements in Central Anatolia have shed light on the EIA, there still remains a problematic situation in the Central Black Sea Region[11].

The Iron Age period in the Central Black Sea Region has been a preferred subject of research since the beginning of the 20th century by multidisciplinary teams of scientists[12]. But in recent years, discussions focused on the EIA issue have revealed new opinions based on new data. Having been supported by more reliably dated findings,

[1] Seeher 2000a: 373-374, Abb.21, Abb.22; Genz 2004: 15

[2] Gorny et al 2002: 119

[3] Voigt, M.M. 1994. 'Excavations at Gordion 1988–89: The Yassihöyük Stratigraphic Sequence' Anatolian Iron Ages 3,The proceedings of the Third Anatolian Iron Ages Colloquim held at Van, 6-12 August 1990, (Ed. A.Çilingiroğlu and D.H. French) 265–293

[4] Even though Omori dated this layer as 1410-990 BC (Omori/Nakamura 2006: 267), the new evaluation carried out with Matsumura has been dated between 1190 and 910 BC (Matsumura/Omori 2010: Table 2).

[5] Kealhofer/Grave 2011: 418

[6] Genz 2011: 335

[7] Seeher 2000b: 19,20; Genz 2000a: 35-54; Genz 2001a: 1; Genz 2003a: 179 vd.; Genz 2004: 24-28; Kealhofer et al 2009: 275 et al.

[8] Genz 2001b: 159

[9] Sams 1994: 194; Grave et al 2009: 2162 et al.

[10] Matsumura 2005: 503 et al. (Taf.50-106); Matsumura 2008: 41 et al.

[11] See Dönmez 2003a: 213-228; Dönmez 2003b: 1-17 for discussions.

[12] See Dönmez 2010: 139-141 for research history.

Fig. 4 - Early Iron Age Sites

discussions of the Central Anatolia EIA have continued on ceramics rather than single roomed houses in Boğazköy/Büyükkaya[13], Çadır Höyük[14], Kaman-Kalehöyük[15] and modest simple architecture in Gordion[16].

In his surveys of the Central Black Sea Region between 1997 and 2005, Ş. Dönmez noted that he did not encounter ceramics with EIA characteristics during this research period, nor on earlier surveys[17]. Nevertheless, M. Özsait and N. Özsait, who have researched survey data in the Central Black Sea since 1986, have suggested that some ceramic pieces found in Amasya and Samsun are similar to EIA ceramics obtained from Boğazköy-Büyükkaya[18]. Dönmez confirmed these results, stating that MIA and LIA ceramics from the Central Black Sea do not differ from Central Anatolian ceramics; with regard to technical structure, form and ornamentation, though parallels can be seen in Boğazköy, Alişar Höyük, Kaman-Kale Höyük, Kültepe, Maşat Höyük, and Konya-Karapınar ve İkiztepe[19]. Moreover, Dönmez states that M. Özsait's suggestion is not new, and ceramics from Çorum-Eskiyapar,[20] which have been dated to the EIA's late phase or to beginning of the Middle Iron Age, are well-known and accepted. In his recent publication, Dönmez evaluates Central Black Sea Iron Age cultures in light of the latest archaeological finds and suggests that ceramics collected by M. Özsait on survey can, in fact, be dated to the Early Iron Age[21].

NEW DATA

All these views have been suggested in light of recent survey data in the region. Scientists engaged in this research have maintained the opinion that archaeological excavations will provide a solution to the EIA problem. The first data from a scientific excavation to address the Central Black Sea Region EIA problem comes from Oymaağaç Höyük[22].

Oymaağaç Höyük, in the district of Vezirköprü of Samsun Province at the northern edge of the Vezirköprü Plain, is arguably recognized as the Hittite holy city, ''Nerik'' (Fig.4). Finds obtained by survey[23] between 2005 and 2007, and excavation work since 2007, have reinforced this hypothesis[24]. After the destruction of Hittite settlements in Anatolia, Nerik was also destroyed and turned

[13] Seeher 2000b: 19
[14] Ross 2010: 69
[15] Early phases of Iron Age in particular IId 4-6 Omura 1995: 195
[16] Voigt 1994: 267; Henrickson/Voigt 1998: 85-87
[17] Dönmez 2003a: 214; Dönmez 2003b: 4; Dönmez 2010: 141
[18] Özsait/Özsait 2002a: 79-95; Özsait 2003a: 200; Özsait/Özsait 2002b: 536; Özsait 2003b: 128,129
[19] See Dönmez 2003a: 216-219 for detailed information, Table; Dönmez 2003b: 4-7, Tablo-1
[20] Restart of Eskiyapar excavations will provide new information about the subject. Bayburtluoğlu 1979: 173-174
[21] Dönmez 2010: 146
[22] Czichon 2010: 21, Res.10
[23] Czichon 2008: 188,189; Czichon 2009: 25-30
[24] Czichon/Klinger 2010: 40; Czichon 2013a: 305

into a settlement similar in character to a village in the EIA. While destroyed Hittite walls were reclaimed and reused as structural foundations during the EIA, single-roomed houses, a fabric workshop, and pits characterize architectural data exclusive to the EIA period[25]. Currently, Iron Age ceramics from Oymaağaç Höyük have been evaluated in settlements with well-established, reliable stratigraphy, such as Boğazköy/Büyükkaya[26] and Çadır Höyük[27] in Kızılırmak bend. Ceramics, unearthed just above of Late Bronze Age layer, are close parallels[28] of EIA ceramics clearly seen in Boğazköy/Büyükkaya and Çadır Höyük.

OYMAAĞAÇ HÖYÜK EARLY IRON AGE CERAMICS

Currently, no pottery exists from an EIA context. EIA ceramics are usually found inside discrete Iron Age pits[29]. These ceramics[30], made from the same material as the pits in which they were found and located just above the Late Bronze Age (Great Kingdom Period) layer, are easily separated from both wheel-made, matt coloured Late Bronze Age ceramics and polished Middle and Late Iron Age ceramics. Oymaağaç Höyük EIA material can be examined in several sub-groups according to manufacturing technology, ware characteristics, form characteristics, and ornamentation[31]

The ceramics as described above can be separated into coarse handmade and middle handmade according to the size of the material within. Among these ceramics, oxidized, reduced, and subsequently oxidized wares are observed according to firing technology. Burnished and self-slipped wares, generally fired in a reduced or subsequently oxidized kiln, are common. Prominent forms are bowls and pots. These form types can also be further subdivided according to differences in base, body, and mouth structures.

The EIA's most common forms are flat bottomed, carinated, open-mouthed bowls (Fig.1/2-3). Many sub-types have been categorized by rim morphology: vertical, inverted, thickened triangle, and thickened-rounded outward. Even though few examples exist, there are also funnel-bodied and simple rimmed bowls (Fig.1/1; Fig.3/1). Open-mouthed pots, with rough paste and stone-tempered qualities durable for cooking, represent another group with sharp carinated rims (Fig.1/4; Fig. 3/3). Another common form of this period is the handmade, neckless pot. Pots can also be separated into several subtypes, according to the following rim characteristics: simple, straight-cut, simple-rounded, and angled outward thickened (Fig.1/5). In addition, there are knobs on some pots (Fig.1/6; Fig.3/2). Lastly, hatched rim pots, shoulder-handled pots, one-handled mugs, jugs, and sieves are associated with the EIA (Fig.2/1-4; Fig.3/4,5,6).

Painted, incised, and notched ornamentations on a relief strip are commonly seen on Oymaağaç Höyük EIA ceramics. Painted decorations were mostly red or reddish brown in colour. Chevrons between two stripes, intersecting lines, concentric circles, and dotted triangles (Fig.3/8) predominate as well as plant ornaments such as the stylized tree (Fig.2/5; Fig.3/7). Zig-zag designs, located between two horizontal incised lines on a mug, have also been observed on a cylindrical handle (Fig.2/6;Fig.3/9).

Parallels for Oymaağaç Höyük ceramics have been identified on surveys and at excavations in centers around Kızılırmak bend. Close similarities in the most common carinated bowls and pots are also seen in Boğazköy/Büyükkaya[32]. Moreover, it is possible to see close parallels of other EIA forms jugs[33] and sieves[34] in Boğazköy/Büyükkaya and Çadır Höyük.

Similar ceramics of those found in Oymaağaç Höyük with red or reddish brown paint on light coloured ground, attributed to the EIA culture, have been observed in Boğazköy/Büyükkaya[35], Boğazköy/Büyükkale[36], Çadır Höyük[37] and Eskiyapar[38]. Among the painted ceramics found on survey and in excavations, hand-made ceramics with EIA dotted triangle ornamentation have been recorded at Boğazköy/Büyükkaya[39], Çadır Höyük[40] and Eskiyapar[41], in addition to those ceramics found on survey carried out by M. Özsait[42].

[25] Czichon 2013a: 309

[26] Genz 2001a: 2

[27] Genz 2001b: 167, Fig.1/7-8

[28] There are similar samples in Çorum/Eskiyapar, Bayburtluoğlu 1979: 174, Res. 6b-7

[29] 155 pits from the Iron Age, unearthed between 2007 and 2011 in Oymaağaç Höyük, have been studied in detail by M.A. Silvio Reichmuth with their typological, functional and comparative datings. Reichmuth 2013

[30] Czichon 2013b: 198, Abb. 6

[31] Typological characteristics for Oymaağaç Höyük Iron Age ceramics will be given in detail throughout the PhD Dissertation which is currently in progress.

[32] Genz 2004: Tafel 8/19, Tafel 20/14, Tafel 21/2; Shoulder handled pot Genz 2004: Tafel 10/10; knobbed pot with a simple rim Genz 2004: Tafel 10/14; neckless pot with a vertical rim Genz 2004: Tafel 11/13; Pot with a lip slot in the mouth Genz 2004, Tafel 24/12

[33] Genz 2004: Tafel 15/7, Tafel 16/6, Tafel 24/13

[34] Genz 2001b: Fig.1/2; Genz 2004, Tafel 17/6-7-8-9

[35] Genz 2004: Tafel 19/7,9, Tafel 27/10, Tafel 34/9, Tafel 35/6

[36] Genz has dated some painted ones to the Early Iron Age which have been dated to the Hittite period by F. Fischer at first. Genz 2003b: 117, Abb. 2/1,4,5,7, Abb.3/3,4,6,

[37] Genz 2001b: 167, Fig. 1: 7-8

[38] Bayburtluoğlu 1979: 301, Res. 2

[39] Genz 2004: Tafel 27/2, Tafel 34/9

[40] Ross 2010: Fig. 5b.

[41] Bayburtluoğlu 1979: 174, Res. 6 b-7

[42] Özsait/Özsait 2002a: Fig.2/8; Pl.II/4; Pl. III/3,4,6;Özsait/Özsait

CONCLUSION

The name "Suppiluliuma" is mentioned in tablets obtained in Oymaağaç Höyük[43]. According to paleographic examination of the text and associated ceramic finds, this person has been identified as Supplilulіuma II, last king of the Hittite Great Kingdom period[44]. Archaeological data indicate that after the collapse of the Hittite Empire in the Central Black Sea Region, where traces of settlements were seen in the final years of the Great Kingdom, no organization dependent on central authority existed. Throughout the EIA, it was believed that people lived in characteristically isolated village settlements. However, similarities found in ceramics in nearly all settlements along the route that goes from the Central Black Sea Region to Southern Anatolia Region strongly suggest an indicator of small-scale interactions during the EIA[45].

Genz determines that there are three ceramic regions in Central Anatolia for the EIA. First of these is the western region which includes Gordion. The second region includes Boğazköy and Central Black Sea Region where red painted ceramics are prevalent. The last region encompasses the area from Kaman Kalehöyük towards the southeast via Porsuk to Cilicia. Nevertheless, Genz acknowledges that there might be another unknown ceramic group[46]. Oymaağaç EIA ceramics are categorized within the second group. In light of ceramic comparisons, Oymaağaç Höyük's EIA settlement can be dated to the middle and late phases (1125-990 BC) according to the chronology of Boğazköy/Büyükkaya.

Based on inscriptions, it appears that the political organization of the previous period continued in the south and southeast regions of Anatolia during the EIA[47]. Presently, it is difficult to comment about the socio-political condition and ethnic structure of both the Central Black Sea and Central Anatolia Region EIA village settlements. However, further excavations at Oymaağaç Höyük and Amasya/Oluz Höyük will provide new, illuminating archaeological contributions to the Central Black Sea research question.

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2002b: Resim1/6,7, Levha 1/1,2,3,4,7

[43] Czichon 2013b: 198

[44] Czichon 2010: 21

[45] See Wittke 2007: 340, Map 1 for the itinerary in Anatolia in the Early Iron Age.

[46] Genz 2003a: 185

[47] Matsumura 2008: 44-45

CATALOGUE

Fig. 1/1: (Fig.3/1) Carinated, bowl sherd with vertical rim (7383:076:005). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), reducing with an oxidized surface, burnished. Ext: Light reddish Brown (5 YR-6/4), Int: Reddish Brown (5YR-5/4), Core: Very dark gray (10 YR-3/1).

Fig. 1/2: Carinated, bowl sherd with inverted rim (7383:007:001:003). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized, burnished. Ext: Dark gray-brown (10 YR-4/2), Int: Brown (10 YR-4/3), Core: Yellow-brown (10 YR- 5/4).

Fig. 1/3: Funnel-shaped, bowl sherd with flat rim (7383:004:001:010). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), reduced, burnished. Ext: Brown (7.5 YR-4/2), Int: Brown (7.5 YR-4/2), Core: Dark gray-brown (10YR- 3/2).

Fig.1/4: (Fig.3/4) Carinated, pot with inverted rim (7383:004:001:011). Handmade, coarse grit-tempered (0.63-2mm), porous, reducing with an oxidized surface, fine slip. Ext: Brown (7.5 YR-5/2), Int: Grayish brown (10 YR-5/2), Core: Dark gray (2.5Y- 4/1).

Fig.1/5: Neckless, jar with vertical rim (7383:004:001:017). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), reduced, burnished. Ext: Dark gray (10 YR-4/1), Int: Dark gray (10 YR-4/1), Core: Dark gray-brown (10YR- 3/2).

Fig. 1/6: (Fig.3/2) Knobbed, neckless, jar with inverted rim (7383:007:001:005). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), reduced, burnished. Ext: Dark gray (10 YR-4/1), Int: Very dark gray (10 YR-3/1), Core: Very dark gray (10 YR-3/1).

Fig. 2/1: Shoulder-handled jar (7383:059:008). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), silt and lime temper, porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized, burnished. Ext: Light red (2.5 YR-6/8), Int: Light red (2.5 YR-6/8), Core: Light red (2.5 YR-6/8).

Fig. 2/2: (Fig.3/4) Vertical handled on shoulder jar with hatched rim (7383:020:001:002). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized, burnished. Ext: Yellowish red (5 YR-5/6), Int: Reddish yellow (5 YR-6/6), Core: Yellowish red (5 YR-5/8).

Fig. 2/3: (Fig.3/5) Jug (One handled) (7383:059:009). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized, burnished. Ext:

Light reddish brown (2.5 YR-7/4), Int: - Core: Light reddish brown (2.5 YR-7/4).

Fig. 2/4: Jug (Spout) (7483:041:001:002). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), nonporous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized, burnished, cream sliped. Ext: Pale yellow (2.5 Y-7/3), Int: Pale yellow (2.5 Y-7/3) Core: Pink (7.5 YR-7/4)

Fig. 2/5: (Fig.3/7) Red painted shoulder-neck sherd (7483:054:001:017). Handmade, fine grit-tempered (0.2 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), reduced. Ext: Pale brown (10 YR-7/2) Int: Pink (7.5 YR-7/4) Core: Brown (7.5 YR-5/4)

Fig. 2/6: (Fig.3/9) Mug with incised zigzag design (7383:059:019). Handmade, medium grit-tempered (0.2-0.63 mm), porous, medium fired (mohs 3-5), oxidized. Ext: Brown (7.5 YR-5/3) Int: Reddish Brown (5 YR-5/4) Core: Reddish Brown (5 YR-5/4)

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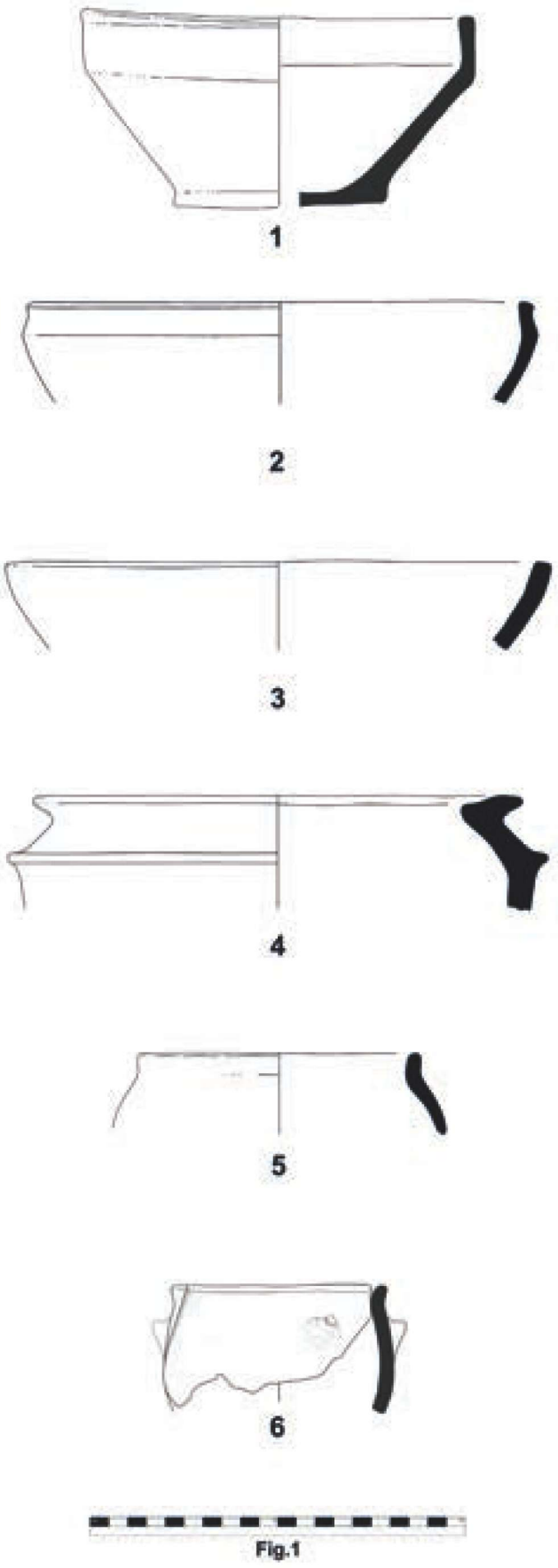

Fig. 1 - Early Iron Age Ceramics from Oymaağaç Höyük

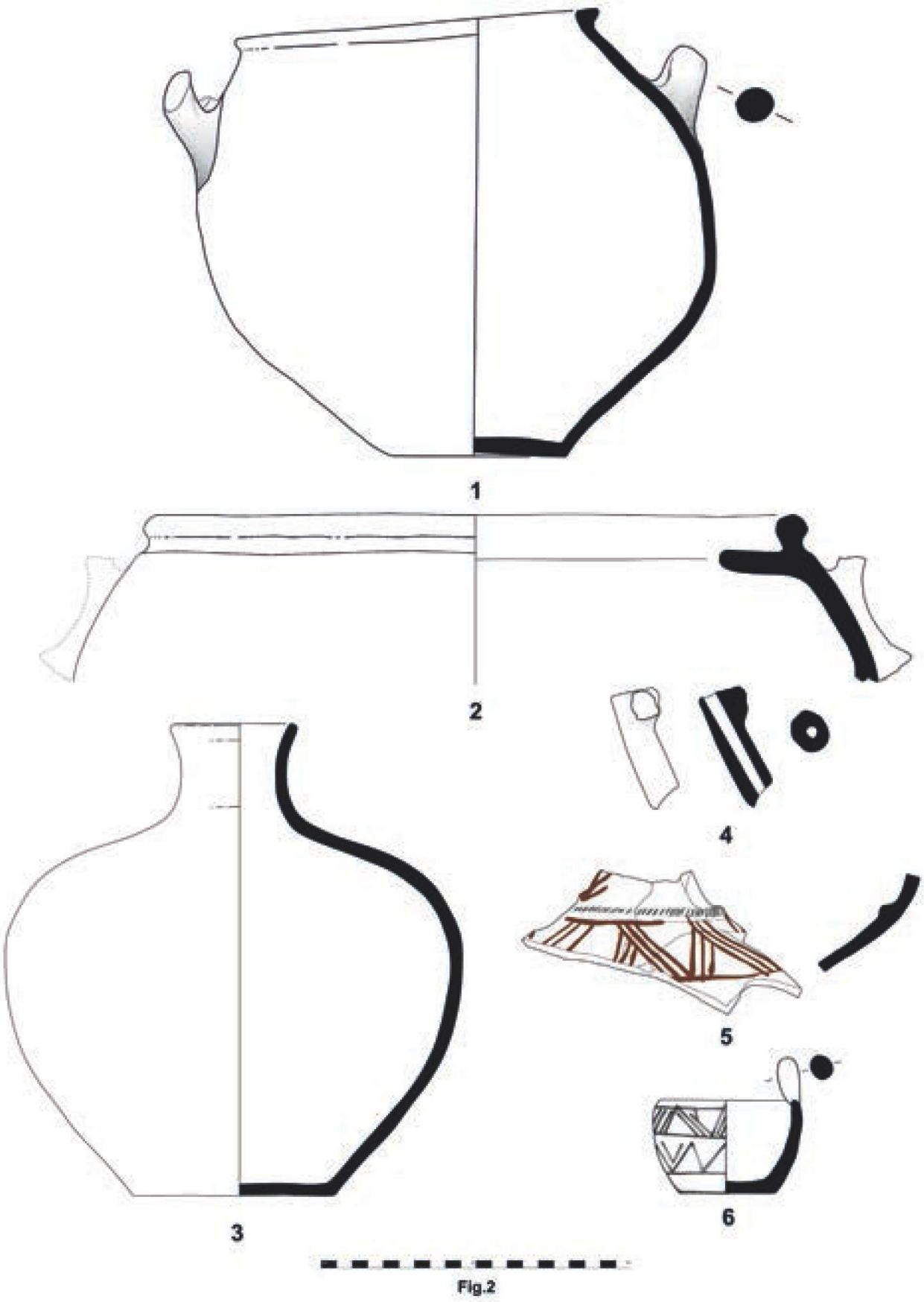

Fig. 2 - Early Iron Age Ceramics from Oymaağaç Höyük

Fig. 3 - Early Iron Age Ceramics from Oymaağaç Höyük (Photos: H. Marquardt)