

FROM URARTU TO “MEDIA”
A REASSESSMENT OF SO-CALLED “POST-URARTIAN” OR “MEDIAN”
POTTERY: 1. VASES WITH TWO HORNED HANDLES

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Abstract

Over the years, scholars have been intrigued by some unusually shaped pottery vases discovered on a number of Ancient Near Eastern sites. Of particular interest are three different vessel types, distinctive “tankards/jars” with horned handles, bowls with a single horizontal handle and spouted handled jugs. All are widespread in the Armenian Highlands and north-western Iranian Plateau. These pottery forms are generally considered to be representative of the “Median” area because of their occurrence on major sites, such as Nush-i Jan, Baba Jan, Godin Tepe, Tepe Ozbaki, Hamedan and Gunespan-e Patappeh. This kind of pottery is also found on some fortresses located in the territory of historical Armenia, mainly important Urartian sites e.g. Bastam, Çavuştepe, Arin-berd and Karmir-blur. This circumstance has led to the hypothesis that “Media” had a strong influence between the 7th and 6th century BCE on the territories that were previously part of the kingdom of Urartu. This article deals with one of these forms, tankards/jars, the first to which attention was given, and probably the most controversial.

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Introduction

Over the years, scholars have been intrigued by some unusually shaped pottery vases discovered on a number of Ancient Near Eastern sites. Of particular interest are three different vessel types, distinctive "tankards/jars" with horned handles (Fig. 1A), bowls with a single horizontal handle (Fig. 1B) and spouted handled jugs (Fig. 1C). All are widespread in the Armenian Highlands and north-western Iranian Plateau. These pottery forms are generally considered to be representative of the "Median"² area because of their occurrence on major sites, such as Nush-i Jan, Baba Jan, Godin Tepe, Tepe Ozbaki, Hamadan and Gunespan-e Patappeh. This kind of pottery is also found on some sites located in the territory of historical Armenia, mainly important Urartian sites, e.g. Bastam, Çavuştepe, Arin-berd and Karmir-blur. This circumstance has led to the hypothesis that "Media" had a strong influence between the 7th and 6th century BCE on the territories that were previously part of the kingdom of Urartu.³ These are a bowl with a horizontal handle discovered during conservation work conducted in 1989-1990 in Arin-berd, and a spouted jar discovered in an Urartian grave in Aghavnadzor (Gasparyan *et alii*, *forthcoming*), both in the Republic of Armenia. In addition, the recent discovery of an interesting unpublished hybrid – a double horned-handle jar with a spout found in a grave in Armavir – has led to some reflections.⁴ The unearthing not long ago of important finds in the necropolis of Keren, in the Kashatagh region of Nagorno-Karabakh, has allowed us to learn more about this pottery. The material from Keren represents an interesting connection on the road between the Armenian Highlands and the Iranian Plateau; the vessels discovered there show a unique syncretism. This article deals with one of

² Behind this label are hidden delicate and problematic historical and archaeological questions, which have long been debated. Stephan Kroll has rightly pointed out the difficulty of identifying the "Median" presence in Transcaucasia, because of uncertainty regarding the "Median empire" itself (Kroll 2003, 285). The idea that a Median imperial system ever existed has repeatedly been called into question by various scholars since the 1980s, see lastly Rossi 2010. Similarly, doubt has been cast on the actual existence of the Median cultural heritage that supposedly later merged into the Achaemenid state (Rossi 2010, 311-312). On these problems, see also Genito 1986b and Genito 2005a. With regard to general issues about Media, see Lanfranchi *et alii* 2003. In this paper, the term Media is always put in inverted commas.

³ On this, see Dan 2015, 7-9 with previous literature.

⁴ Personal communication from Simon Hmayakyan 2016 to R. Dan.

these forms, tankards/jars, the first to which attention was given, and probably the most controversial.

History of studies

The interest in this form started in the 1960s when some specimens were discovered in Arin-berd in Armenia. G. Tiratsyan argued that this was a type that originated in and was typical of Urartian culture (Tiratsyan 1964, 162, pl. 2; 1968, 30; 1969, 93-95; 2003a, 31; 2003b, 36-37), an idea that was later taken up by A. Martirosyan (1974, 147-148). In disagreement with this interpretation, S. Esayan dated the material to the post-Urartian period, 6th-5th century BCE (Esayan 1967, 73). A similar date, 5th-4th century BCE, was proposed a few years later by M. Israelyan; she emphasized that the vases had been discovered in the upper layers at the fortress of Arin-berd (Israelyan 1971, 149-150) and could thus be dated to the post-Urartian period. The scholar who raised the problem of the presence of so-called "Median" pottery in Urartian territories was S. Kroll. In an important book devoted to the study of the pottery collected during surveys and excavations conducted under the direction of W. Kleiss in Iranian Azerbaijan, he discusses two unusual forms: a "*schüssel mit einem horizontalhenkel*" (Kroll 1976, 112, Typ. 3) and a "*doppelhenkel-pokal*" (*Ibid.*, 115, Typ. 83a), both dating to "*urartäisch-medisch-achämenidisch*" periods. In 1979 he considered these forms (among others) to be typical of the "Median" area, in a first attempt to identify some of these characteristic pottery shapes in the "Hallenbau" discovered at the site of Bastam, in Iranian Azerbaijan.⁵ Later the author spoke of the existence of a "*Median pottery tradition in former Urartian territories*" during the second half of the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, using the label "*in a geographical sense, because the first and possibly earliest evidence of this pottery comes from the region of ancient Media*". He also wrote that, on the basis of the new dates from Godin Tepe II.2, "*in archaeological terms the Godin II - Nush-i Jan pottery tradition must have moved northwards in the second half of the 7th century. This could be an*

⁵ The earliest part of the complex, the so-called annexes (Rooms 1-7), according to Kroll was built in the 7th century BCE during the reign of Rusa II, while the large pillared hall was built later, but still in the Urartian period. In Room 6 of the annexes, typical Urartian storage vessels were found crushed and covered by a floor of dark humic clay. The so-called "Median" phase was identified above this floor and in pits nearby (Kroll 1979, 229; 2013a, 249).

indication of the existence and the spread of the «Median Empire»" (Kroll 2003, 283; 2013a, 249-250; 2014, 205; 2015, 110-111). Recently, Veli Sevin published for the first time a group of pottery discovered many years ago in the Urartian fortress of Çavuştepe, together with unpublished pottery discovered in Van Kalesi Höyüğü and Yeşilaliç 2, which belongs to the same category (Sevin 2012). M. Herles and C.K. Piller recently evaluated this matter, with a special focus on Armenia (Herles and Piller 2013) as H. Kalkan, with a focus on Van Lake Basin (Kalkan 2015).

Methodological approach

As mentioned above, from the pottery usually considered to be from the "Median" area (Fig. 1) we have selected three main forms that appear to be particularly distinctive. In this article, we have concentrated our attention on one group of unusual two-handled vases characterised by the presence of projections or "horns" on the handles. As said, this pottery is associated with complex historical problems. The purpose of this article is not to try to clarify contentious historical issues such as the existence of the "Median Empire", but to discuss and classify a specific type of pottery and try to establish its chronological and geographical range. Over the years, different names have been used to describe these vessels, which have been variously called goblets, amphorae-rythons, tankards, cups, jars, etc. This terminological confusion reflects the highly variable features and wide distribution of these forms, as well as the heterogeneity of previous studies. In this regard, we have chosen to adopt a terminology obtained by considering the morphology and size of the vessels, and then their possible functions. On the basis of their dimensions we have decided to call tankards all the specimens of small size (less than 18 centimetres high, with one exception, TS1), while the bigger specimens (more than 18 centimetres high) are defined as jars. As we will see, it is evident that the study of this kind of pottery presents many problems connected with the proposed dating and wide geographical area in which they occur. Certain procedures and precautions have been adopted. First, only well-dated specimens – i.e. obtained from systematic excavations – have been taken into account for an assessment of chronological development; specimens from the antiquities market⁶ are considered but not for dating purposes. In addition, mainly complete or almost

⁶ Of uncertain provenance are only the specimens probably from Khurvin, which are part of the so-called ex-Maleki collection (Vanden Berghe 1964).

complete exemplars, which show the presence of both the horned handles, have been taken into consideration. The selected vessels do not include fragmentary specimens, for example single horned handle fragments,⁷ since it is impossible to reconstruct the whole shape of the vessel.⁸ This is important, given the fact that complete tankard/jars with only one horned handle are attested, like for example the specimens from Nush-i Jan (Stronach 1978, fig. 7.13) and Hasanlu Tepe (Danti 2013, fig. 17.8.W). At the same time, we have decided to exclude the so-called twin-spouted vessels (Haerinck 1980), due to their different function and morphology. We created a database (Fig. 2) to collect and analyse the data obtained from the literature, which includes all the information given by the different scholars. Unfortunately, as mentioned, the quality of the archaeological recording is extremely variable and for many specimens it was impossible to find all the desired data. Indeed, it should be emphasized that it is difficult to verify the chronology proposed by the excavators for many contexts, due to a general lack of data regarding the vessels and exactly where they were found. For this reason, we have decided to base our hypothesis mainly on entire specimens from verifiable contexts.

Tankards and jars with two horned handles

The tankards and jars selected for study are characterized by the presence of two handles, each with a projection on top. It has been suggested that these ceramic shapes resemble metal vessels rather than usual ceramic forms (Dyson 1963, 35), because they are apparently similar in shape and concept to numerous provenanced and unprovenanced metal vases with zoomorphic handles dated to the Achaemenid period. Quite remarkably, the closest parallels for these vessels are the zoomorphic-handled vessels that the Armenian (Delegation III; Fig. 3A) and Lydian (Delegation VI; Fig. 3B) delegations carry on the Apadana reliefs at Persepolis.⁹ These metal vases have been

⁷ For example, the handle fragments discovered in Tsaghkahovit (Khatchadourian 2008, 512, 515, 520) and Oğlan Qala (Ristvet *et alii* 2012, 348, fig. 23.10), both dated by the excavators to the Achaemenid period.

⁸ An exception is the specimen discovered in Ziwiye, for which part of the cup shape, and lower neck typology are evident. Despite its fragmentary condition, there is no evidence to date that this form type included single handled specimens.

⁹ According to B. Filow, the depiction of similar vessels in the hands of the members of different delegations indicates that they were not regional vase types, but rather belonged to

discovered for example in Hamadan, Filippovka in the Urals (Fig. 4), and Kukuva Mogila near Duvanli in Plovdiv province, while many others are kept in private collections,¹⁰ and are generally dated on stylistic grounds to Achaemenid period. The tankards and jars that have been selected for this study were first divided into four main groups on the basis of shape and size:

1. *Slender Shape*
 - 1.1 Slender Body
 - 1.2 Slender Neck
2. *Proportioned Shape*
 - 2.1 Biconical Body
 - 2.2 Hemispherical Body
3. *Expanded Shape*
 - 3.1 Elongated Body
 - 3.2 Wide Body
 - 3.3 Holemouth
4. *Cup Shape*
 - 4.1 Higher Neck
 - 4.2 Lower Neck

It should be underlined that different kinds of protrusion are present on the vases according to differences in shape (Fig. 5):

1. Slender Shape

This category has a generally slender shape (Fig. 6); specimens could be divided into two subgroups¹¹ and defined as jars – the slender body type, and tankards – the slender neck type.

the type adopted by the Achaemenid court, and may have been manufactured in workshops situated on the coast of Asia Minor (Filow 1934, 201-202; von Gall 1999, 154; Treister 2010, 226-227). In any way must be underlined that the vase with two horned handles was not depicted as part of the gift brought by Medians (Delegation I; Fig. 3C).

¹⁰ On these, see Amandry 1959; Ghirshman 1962; Tiratsyan 1969, 87-105; Pfrommer 1990; Boardman 2000, 188-189, 246, n. 129; Treister 2010, 236-238, figs. 9-10; Sideris 2016.

¹¹ Interestingly, there is an unusual elongated bottle shape with two horned handles (Vanden Berghe 1964, 61, pl. XIX.166). This vase, discovered in Khurvin in a context usually dated to the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (Genito 2005b, 355), was not taken into account due to the fact that despite its elongate shape it cannot be inserted in the amphora-rhyton category.

1.1 Slender body

The first has a body which is longer than the neck, characterised by handles that run parallel to the neck (Fig. 6.1.1). The shape of the neck results in there being a wide mouth. The body shapes of the three vases considered are quite heterogeneous, with ovoid, biconical and high-shouldered shapes tapering towards the base. The bases are usually flat.¹² A specimen was discovered in a grave at Nor-Armavir (NA2) together with a spouted jar and dated to the 8th century BCE by the excavator (Martirosyan 1974, 51, pl. 18a).¹³ Another specimen discovered in the lower fortress of Çavuştepe (CA1), close to the temple area, is attributed to Layer II and dated to a generic post-Urartian layer (Sevin 2012, 358, fig. 5.10). A further vessel was discovered in Godin Tepe (GT1), in a storeroom – Tower 34 (Young and Levine 1974, fig. 45.20) and dated to the Godin II.2 period (8th-first half of 7th century BCE; Gopnik 2011, fig. 7.32, pl. 7.1); it has unusual knobs just under the base of the handle. The height of these vases ranges from 19 centimetres (NA2) to 28 centimetres (CA1, GT1), and the external surfaces are red burnished, with the exception of the Çavuştepe specimen on which there are no available data. Only the Godin Tepe vessel is dated with certainty to the 8th-first half of 7th century BCE, whereas the impossibility of precisely dating the Çavuştepe sample – attributed to a generic post-Urartian period – should be underlined. The same is true of the Nor-Armavir vase, considered to be part of an Urartian *pithos* grave (Martirosyan 1974, 51), but of uncertain date due to the impossibility of evaluating the associated material. With regard to geographical distribution, two of these vases come from the Armenian Highlands and one from the central-western Iranian Plateau (Fig. 8).

¹² Specimen GT1 was partially reconstructed from the drawings published by the scholars, but it seems that the base is completely missing. It is reconstructed here as a disc-shaped base.

¹³ A debate issue concerns the chronology of the *pithos* burial in Nor-Armavir. N. Tiratsyan dated the grave to the Urartian period (Tiratsyan 2010, 135), but S. Kroll and D. Stronach considered it post-Urartian (Kroll 2015, 111). In our opinion it is not possible to date exactly a burial on the basis of these two forms (horned vessels and horizontal handle bowl). For a correct date is better to consider all the grave goods or better a ¹⁴C date. Other similar burials could shed light upon this issue.

1.2 Slender Neck

The second group has a neck longer than the body, characterised by curvilinear handles more distant from the neck than in the previous case (Fig. 6.1.2). The body is usually almost biconical and the base is narrow and flat, rarely disc-shaped. The neck is everted and the mouth wide. We know of three vases belonging to this category discovered in northern Iran and dated between the 12th and 6th centuries BCE.¹⁴ One specimen was found in Baba Jan (BJ1) in an intermediate level between I¹⁵ and Va, i.e. a poorly preserved domestic area, that cannot be dated with certainty. C. Goff noted the close resemblance of this vase with the exemplars discovered in Sialk V (Goff Meade 1968, 119). Two specimens were discovered in Tepe Sialk (TS1, TS2) in a sounding near the southern wall of the "*Grande Construction*" in the south mound. There was discovered grey-black pottery considered to be similar to that from Cemetery A, dated to Sialk V – Iron Age I-II (Ghirshman 1939, 8, pl. IV.1-2; Henrickson 1992, 302; Berberian *et alii* 2012, 2848). The height of these vases ranges from 14 centimetres (BJ1) to 28 centimetres (TS1),¹⁶ and the surface is burnished and smoothed and light red to brown in colour. There is an interesting linear decoration on just the upper part of the shoulder on the Baba Jan specimen (BJ1) and one from Tepe Sialk (TS3). Unfortunately, both contexts of discovery of the vases must be considered uncertain. The distribution of this form appears to have been restricted to the central-western Iranian Plateau (Fig. 8).

2. Proportioned shape

This form is quite different from those previously described, especially regarding the proportion of the body to the neck, and its small

¹⁴ A fourth specimen was recently discovered in Ulug Depe, Turkmenistan, but is still unpublished. The vessel is similar to the Sialk specimens (personal communication from Stephan Kroll 2016 to R.Dan), so we can consider it as belonging to the Slender Shapes.

¹⁵ Layer I was originally dated to the 6th-5th century BCE by the excavator of the site (Goff 1985, 5), whose dating is mainly based on comparisons with Godin Tepe II finds. This date was later revised by H. Gopnik to the 7th or 6th century BCE (Gopnik 2000, 194; 2011, 344, tab. 7.1).

¹⁶ Of the three exemplars that belong to this category, two have dimension compatible with tankards (TS2, BJ1), while one (TS1) is bigger. We have considered these specimens in the same group for the evident similarity of shape, but and we currently have too few specimens for the creation of another sub-group.

size places it in the tankard category (Fig. 6). This group could be divided into two subgroups based on the shape of the body: biconical or hemispherical. Both have handles that are fairly distant from the body and the bases are always flat and quite narrow.

2.1 Biconical body

Eight vessels have biconical bodies (Fig. 6.2.1). The oldest specimen appear to have been discovered in Geoy Tepe (GE1), in the fill of Pit 6, attributed to the Geoy A period (that correspond to Hasanlu IVb – 1050–800 BCE; Burton-Brown 1951, fig. 41.339; Danti 2013, 332, pl. 17.1). One specimen comes from Hasanlu Tepe (HT2) level IVb (Dyson 1965b, fig. 4.6), and has a ridge in the middle of the neck, the body is carinated and the handles have central protrusions, while the “horns” are composed of two pierced triangles. In the settlement of Bastam a vase (BA1) of this type was discovered in room 6 (one of a group of rooms located east of the so-called Pillar Hall). This vase is considered to date to the so-called post-Urartian and “Median” levels (600-500 BCE) (Kroll 1979, 231, pl. 2.12; Kroll 2003, fig. 1.1; Kroll 2013a, 249, figs. 6, 7, 9). A *pithos* grave discovered in Nor-Armavir and dated to the 7th century BCE contained a tankard with a biconical body (NA1). According to the excavator this grave was Urartian, while for D. Stronach and S. Kroll, the presence in the same grave of a bowl with one horizontal handle indicates a post-Urartian date, although this was criticized by Tiratsyan (2010, 135, 137). Another tankard was discovered in another *pithos* burial (NA6) dated by Tiratsyan to the beginning of the 7th century BCE (Tiratsyan 2013-2014, 146). Another two tankards were discovered in Altintepe (AL1; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLVII.5) and in Davti-blur (AR2; Martirosyan 1974, 147, fig. 69; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLVI.3), but no precise information is available on them. Another vase from Davti-blur (AR1) with a red-slip burnished surface was discovered in the settlement (Martirosyan 1974, 147, fig. 69; Avetisyan 1992, XLVI.4). The height of these vases is between 12 centimetres (NA6) and 18 centimetres (AL1), although the two Davti-blur specimens – 7 centimetres (AR2) and 8 centimetres (AR1) – must be considered miniature vessels. The surface colour and treatment is the same for the five vases for which we have data (BA1, GE1, AR2, NA1 and NA6): red slip, burnished and polished. Given this information, we can hypothesize that this distinctive shape appeared in the area of the Orumiyeh basin during the Hasanlu IVb period (1050-800

BCE), and spread in the late/post-Urartian period only in the territory of the Armenian Highlands (Fig. 9).

2.2 Hemispherical body

The second group of nine tankards is characterised by a more hemispherical body (Fig. 6.2.2). Three specimens were discovered in three graves in Sarukhan – Pali Tak (SK1; Piliposyan *et alii* 2011, 44-45), Davti-blur (NA3; Martirosyan 1974, 147, fig. 69; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLVI.2) and Nor-Armavir (NA5; Tiratsyan 2013-2014, pl. XXI.1), and dated to the 8th-7th century BCE. Two vases discovered in graves in Çavuştepe, are considered to date to an imprecise post-Urartian epoch (CA2, CA3; Erzen 1986, 319, fig. 19; Sevin 2012, 360, fig. 5.11-13). A specimen from Arin-berd (for which we have been unable to recover information about the context of discovery) has been dated to the 8th century BCE (ER1; Chodžaš 1968, pl. XVIII.14; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLV.12). In Oshakan a vase of this type was discovered in grave 25, dated to the 7th-6th century BCE (OK2; Esayan and Kalantaryan 1988, pl. XLIX.2; Herles and Piller 2013, 203-204, fig. 4), while another was found in the Burial 140 in Van Kalesi Höyüğü, dated to the late Iron Age (VK1; Tarhan 1994, fig. 17.3; Sevin 1994, 226, fig. 21.3.2; Tarhan and Sevin 1994, figs. 11-12; Kroll 2003, 286, fig. 1.10; Sevin 2012, fig. 5.13; Kalkan 2015, 29, fig. 1). The specimens discovered in Sarukhan, Çavuştepe and Van Kalesi Höyüğü have unusual rounded horns on the handles. Their height ranges from 11.5 centimetres (NA5) to 15.5 centimetres (OK2), with the exception of the specimen from Davti-blur (NA3), which is 8 centimetres high and was part of a group of miniaturistic vessels found in this site. All the specimens for which information is available were discovered in graves, and all have red slip, burnished and polished. Given the distribution and chronology of these vessels, we can hypothesize for this peculiar shape a date between the 7th and 6th century BCE, in the late/post-Urartian period, with a distribution restricted to the Armenian Highlands, especially on the eastern shore of Lake Van and in the Ararat Valley (Fig. 9).

3. Expanded shape

Here the neck is lower than in other forms and most of the height of the vase is due to the body (Fig. 7). All exemplars have a flat base and handles start from the shoulder and go up to the rim or immediately under it. We have divided this form into two subgroups: elongated body vessels, that for

their smaller size could be defined as tankards, and wide body vessels that are twice the size and could be considered jars.

3.1 *Elongated body*

The first group has an elongated body with pronounced shoulders and tapers toward the base (Fig. 7.3.1). Handles are quite distant from the body and the neck is flared. We currently know of eight specimens of this type. Some were discovered in Oshakan (OK1, OK3, OK4; Avetisyan 1992, pls. XLV.6-7, XLVII.1), Karmir-blur (KB1; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLV.5) and Nor-Armavir (NA4, NA7; Tiratsyan 2013-2014, pls. XX.2, XXII.1). Unfortunately, very little information is available about their contexts of discovery save for the two specimens from Nor-Armavir (NA4, NA7) that were found inside the same *pithos* burial and dated to the beginning of the 7th century BCE. The presence of rolled tab handles (with a sort of bulge in the middle) characterizes one specimen from Harzhis (HA1) that is also decorated with three rows of incised triangles filled with dots.¹⁷ It was discovered in grave 3 of the cemetery and dates to the 7th-6th century BCE (Avetisyan 1992, 70, pl. XLV.11; Xnkikyan 2002, 82, pl. LXXV.17). A vase with these features was found in Agrab Tepe (AT1). It was inserted in the buff ware, and is characterized by rolled tab handles (Muscarella 1973, 57, fig. 15.16),¹⁸ similar to the Harzhis specimen. It was dated to the Hasanlu III period (Iron IV-Achaemenid period, so-called “Triangle Ware phase”) by R. Dyson (1965a, 213, fig. 13), while O. W. Muscarella later rightly underlined its closer resemblance to Hasanlu IVb period (1050-800 BCE) horned-handle specimens (Muscarella 1973, 59). The height of these vases is 12 (AT1) – 17 centimetres (KB1, OT1). Despite the scarce information available, this group seems to be exclusive to the Armenian Highlands, especially the Ararat Valley, starting from 11th-9th centuries BCE (Fig. 10).

3.2 *Wide body*

The second group has a wider body and a flat base; it consists of five specimens (Fig. 7.3.2).¹⁹ Two were discovered in Davti-blur, of which one

¹⁷ It is interesting that this vase seems to be associated with a lid with a conic handle (Xnkikyan 2002, LXXV.22).

¹⁸ A specimen from Çavuştepe, too fragmentary to be inserted in a specific group, has two rolled tabs (Sevin 2012, fig. 5.9).

¹⁹ A specimen of this group is actually exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Hamadan and dated to the Achaemenid period, but has not been considered for this article due

from the settlement (AR4) dates to the 8th-7th century BCE (Martirosyan 1974, 51, pl. 18; Avetisyan 1992, pls. XLV.2, XLVI.1). The second (AR3) is decorated on the neck and shoulder with two different bands filled with triangles obtained removing the applied slip.²⁰ These bands are delimited by grooved lines. This decoration is also found on another vessel discovered in Arin-berd (ER2; Aa.Vv. 1971, fig. 60; Avetisyan 1992, pl. XLV.3; Tiratsyan 2003a, 31, pl. 2.1), although – apart from its dimensions – no further information is available. Another comes from Nush-i Jan (NJ1) and was discovered in level 2 R12 in a mud-brick collapse; it is characterised by a reddish-brown burnished surface and dated to Level I (8th to mid-7th century BCE; Stronach 1969, 20, fig. 7.2). The last specimen was found in Zendan-e Soleyman (ZS6); it is covered by a finely polished red slip and dated to Period II, which corresponds to the 7th century BCE (Thomalsky 2006, 224). The height of these vases ranges from 21.5 centimetres (NJ1) to 32.5 centimetres (AR3). The vases were presumably contemporary, but the only precise date available is for that from Nush-i Jan. These vessels were present in the Malayer area, in the Lake Orumiyeh Basin and Ararat Valley in the 8th–7th century BCE.²¹ A distinctive triangular decoration may be seen on two

to lack of information. The vessel has a peculiar decoration with horizontal parallel linear grooves all over the wide neck, the body is hemispherical and slightly expanded, with a fluted decoration. It has a disc-shaped base and only one horned protuberance is preserved. Under both handles two knobs are present. The vessel seems to be an imitation of metallic prototype.

²⁰ This peculiar decoration is quite well attested both in Arin-berd, where other fragments decorated in this way have been discovered (Chodžaš 1968, 136), and in a group of Urartian sites, like Davti-blur (Martirosyan 1974, fig. 72) in Armenia, Girik Tepe (Özdem 2003, 136-138, 140; Dan and Vitolo 2016, 102, fig. 13f), Toprakkale (Piotrovskij 2011, 563, 567, 579, fragments nos. 250, 251, 285, 418, 419), Yukarı Anzaf in an 8th century BCE context (Belli 2007, 426, fig. 8) and Ayanis (Kozbe *et alii* 2001, 97, 126, 147, pl. XVI.18) in Turkey, and Agrab Tepe, in a context dating to the second half of the 7th century BCE (Muscarella 1973, 63, figs. 23.2, 24). The Ayanis specimen is particularly important because it was discovered smashed on the floor of the Temple Area (Area VI) between the two pillars numbered 1 and 3 (Kozbe *et alii* 2001, 97) and should be taken into account that the fortress was probably built in 673-672 BCE (Erdem and Batmaz 2008, 68). This kind of decoration appears to be typical of the Urartian period, especially on pottery presumably connected with cultic use.

²¹ Of two distinctive vessels with a narrow neck and globular-ovoid body, one was discovered in the Khurvin cemetery and dated to the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (Vanden Berghe 1964, 61, pl. 19.166) and the other in a grave in Tex, dating to the first

specimens, from Arin-berd (ER2) and Davti-blur (AR3), and may be attributed to the late Urartian period, e.g. 7th century BCE (Fig. 10).

3.3 Holemouth

The holemouth jars are characterised by an elongate, oval-shaped body, a wide mouth and a flat base. We know of six specimens with horned handles (Fig. 7.3.3). Two from Ghalekuti (*Qal'a-ye Kuti*) are characterized by a wide mouth, an elongated body and short handles with very low horns; they have no surface treatments and are of rough manufacture. One is from a Late Bronze/Early Iron Age settlement (GH1; Egami *et alii* 1965, pl. XXXV.1; Negahban 1995, 337; Fukai, Ikeda 1971, 3) and one presumably from a Parthian-Sasanian shaft burial (GH2; Tomb V; Sono and Fukai 1968, 59, pl. LXXX.3; Negahban 1995, 337).²² One vessel was discovered on the Hasanlu Tepe high mound and is of "monochrome burnished ware" of Hasanlu IVb period (1050-800 BCE) (HT6; Danti 2013, fig. 17.15.D). It is characterised by a carination with two horizontal ridges on the upper part of the neck and instead of horns, the handles have pierced triangular protuberances. Three specimens were discovered at Zendan-e Soleyman: the first (ZS1) has a groove and incised decoration on the upper part of the elongated body, while the handles are positioned on the middle; the second and the third specimens (ZS7, ZS8) have handles on the upper part of the body. One (ZS7) is wide-mouthed with a short neck, and the other has a simple profile (ZS8). All are dated to Period II, which corresponds to the 7th century BCE. Their height ranges from 15.5 centimetres (GH2) to 37 centimetres (GH1),²³ and with respect to it they may be divided into two main dimensional categories. This distinctive form appears to have been present from the 15th century BCE up to the Parthian-Sasanian period, only in the territory of modern-day Iran.

millennium BCE (Xnkikyan 2002, pl. XXXVIII.9). Both have horned handles but are quite different from the type just described.

²² This group of graves was considered to date to the Parthian (3rd-2nd centuries BCE) to Sasanian periods (Haerinck 1983, 153). However, the close resemblance should be noted between this specimen (GH2) and the vessel discovered in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age settlement site of Ghalekuti I (GH1), although it is smaller in size.

²³ The dimensions of the finds from Zendan-e Soleyman were not taken into account because they are fragmentary.

4. Cup shape

This group is characterised by a wide mouth and carination and can be divided in two sub-groups, the first one with a short neck and the second one with a higher neck.

4.1 Higher neck

This group has a higher neck and a general heterogeneity regarding handle protuberances. Seven vessels belong to this category (Fig. 7.4.1). Three were discovered in Hasanlu Tepe High Mound (HT5, HT7, HT9) and all date to period IVb (Young 1965, fig. 7.3; Dyson 1965b, 65, fig. 7.3; Danti 2013, fig. 17.13.M, T; Kroll 2013b, 186, fig. 11). Another three specimens were discovered in Tepe Ozbaki (TO1, TO2, TO3), on the top of the so-called "Median" Fortress (Madjidzadeh 2010, figs. 235.5, 10, 13) dated to the 7th-6th centuries BCE (Madjidzadeh 2001, 38-39; Stronach 2003, 237-240). The last specimen was discovered in Nush-i Jan (NJ2), inside Room 18 of the "North Storage" and dated to the Late "Median" period (Stronach 1978, fig. 7.14). As said, the protrusions on the handles are varied: rolled tabs (HT9), pierced triangular protrusions (HT7), indented horns (NJ2), everted horns (HT5), sometimes with rounded upper parts (TO1, TO2) and zoomorphics (TO3). One of the specimens from Hasanlu Tepe (HT5) has also a knob at the base of both handles. A plain ridge is present between the neck and the shoulder of five vessels (HT5, HT7, HT9, TO1, TO2), a grooved wave decoration is incised on the belly of two specimens from Tepe Ozbaki (TO1, TO2), and impressions run along the carination of a vase from Hasanlu Tepe (HT9). The height of these vases ranges from 8 (HT7) to 12 centimetres (HT5). On the basis of these vessels' places of discovery, we can hypothesize an origin in the Lake Orumiyeh Basin area, between the 11th and 9th centuries BCE and a spread in the so-called "Median" area between the 7th and 6th centuries BCE (Fig. 11).

4.2 Lower neck

The second group is similar to that described above, but there are elongated tabs on the handles, in most cases out-turned. All the handles start from the carination and end on the rim. Nine specimens belong to this category (Fig. 7.4.2). Four were discovered in Hasanlu Tepe, on the High Mound (HT1, HT4, HT8) and in a burial (HT3), all dated to Hasanlu IVb

period (1050-800 BCE) (Crawford 1961, 91, fig. 4; Dyson 1963, 36; Young 1965, figs. 3.17, 6.3; Danti 2013, fig. 17.13.K; Kroll 2013b, 186, fig. 11). Four were discovered at Zendan-e Soleyman (ZS2, ZS3, ZS4, ZS5), and closely resemble the examples from Hasanlu Tepe, all with red slip surface treatment and dating to the 8th-early 7th century BCE (Thomalsky 2006, 245, pl. 11.1-2, 6-7). The last specimen was discovered on the surface at the Ziwiye fortress (ZW1; Young 1965, fig. 3.17) and dates to the 8th-7th century BCE (Mo'tamedi 1997, 149).²⁴ They have different kinds of base, disc-shaped (HT1, HT8) and low footed (HT3). Most of them have horizontal grooved incisions on the shoulder (HT1, HT4, ZS3), while some have a band of fluted (HT8), small fluted (HT3) or triangular decorations just above the carination (ZS3). The tab handles sometimes have knobs at the base (ZS4) or incised triangles upon them (ZS3). Their heights range from 8 (HT4) up to 14 centimetres (ZS5). This form appears to be characteristic of the southern part of the Lake Orumiyeh Basin between the 11th and the 8th century BCE (Fig. 11).

Conclusions

Overall, we have taken into account fifty-eight specimens from twenty-one different sites, distributed over a wide area that includes parts of modern-day Armenia, Iran and Turkey.²⁵ Geographically speaking, fifteen of these sites are on the Armenian Highlands, while seven are on the Iranian Plateau (Figs. 12-13). The Armenian Highlands sites can be divided into six geographical areas: 1) Lake Orumiyeh Basin (Bastam, Geoy Tepe, Agrab Tepe, Hasanlu Tepe, Ziwiye, Zendan-e Soleyman); 2) Ararat Valley (Arin-berd, Karmir-blur, Oshakan, Davti-blur, Nor-Armavir); 3) Lake Van Basin (Van Kalesi Höyüğü, Çavuştepe); 4) Erzincan Plain (Altıntepe); 5) River Vorotan (Harzhis); 6) Lake Sevan Basin (Sarukhan). The sites on the Iranian Plateau can be divided in two geographical areas: 1) "Median" area (Nush-i Jan; Baba Jan; Godin Tepe and Tepe Sialk, Tepe Ozbaki in Central Iran); 2) Caspian Sea Region

²⁴ Despite its fragmentary condition, we have considered this fragment because we do not know of other similar shapes with only one handle.

²⁵ Vessels of these types are attested also in the territory of modern-day Georgia, especially from archaeological sites of Shida Kartli region and the surrounding of Tbilisi (Zviad Sherazadishvili, personal communication to R. Dan 2016). These specimens will be the object of a future paper.

(Ghalekuti). As said, we have divided the whole vessels into four main groups, on the basis of differences in vase morphology. The vessels with a slender profile were divided in two subgroups. The first group with a more slender body is in general of uncertain date, with the exception of a specimen discovered in Godin Tepe and dated to the 8th to first half of the 7th century BCE. The other specimens can be only dated to a generic late Urartian/Post-Urartian epoch. Their geographical distribution is on the Armenian Highland and Iranian Plateau. The second subgroup is characterized by a slender neck, but unfortunately once more the date of the specimens taken into account must be considered totally uncertain. Regarding their distribution, it must be underlined that this form is exclusive to the Iranian Plateau. In general for the slender shape group there is a major presence on the Iranian Plateau, with four specimens in comparison with the two discovered in the Armenian Highlands. Unfortunately the samples are few and with the exception of one (GT1) substantially undatable. Currently is not possible to hypothesize the zone of origin of this shape (although the Iranian Plateau seems to be more likely). This group is a fine tableware, 14-28 centimetres in height. This range suggest that they served more than one purpose: the smaller specimens could have been for pouring liquids, and the bigger ones fine tableware jugs. A group of vessels characterized by more proportioned shapes constitutes the second major group, which was also divided in two subgroups. The first is a group of vessels with a biconical body. All these forms were discovered in sites distributed on the Armenian Highlands. The possible center from which this shape spread may have been the southwestern shore of Lake Orumiyeh, where the older specimens were discovered (11th to 9th centuries BCE). This group is attested up to the Late/Post-Urartian period. The second subgroup consists of vessels with a hemispherical body, and specimens were discovered only on the territory of the Armenian Highlands. On the basis of the available data, we can hypothesize a chronological range between the 7th and 6th century BCE in the Late/Post-Urartian period. It must be underlined that this proportioned group appears exclusive to the Armenian Highlands, because none were discovered on the Iranian Plateau. On the available data, it seems that the variant with a biconical shape could be older than the hemispherical. The height ranges from 11.5 to 18 centimetres, a size that suggests that they were tankards, with potory function. The surface treatments – usually red

slip, burnished and polished – point to a fine-ware production. Just in Davti-blur there are two miniaturistic examples that may have served a different purpose. The third major group is composed of those vessels with a more expanded shape, and was divided into three subgroups. The first one consists of vessels with a more elongated body that appear to be exclusive of the Armenian Highlands, starting from the 11th-9th centuries BCE. A wider body characterizes the second subgroup, which appears to have been distributed in the Lake Orumiyeh Basin, the Malayer area in the Iranian Plateau and the Ararat Valley, with a chronological range between the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. The third group is the so-called holemouth jars. This subgroup is attested only in three archaeological sites, in the Lake Orumiyeh Basin and on the shore of the Caspian Sea, and seems to date to a long chronological period that extends from the 15th-13th centuries BCE, including the Middle Iron Age specimens found in Zendale Soleyman, presumably up to the Parthian-Sasanian period. All the subgroups are quite heterogeneous. The elongated-body group has heights of 12-17 centimetres and the specimen discovered in Harzhis associated with a lid, may suggest, despite its small dimensions, a function connected with storage. The wide-shape subgroup range between 21 and 32 centimetres in height and the fine triangle decoration on the two specimens from Davti-blur and Arin-berd point to a fine tableware jar. The holemouth group seems quite problematic: the specimens from Ghalekuti and Zendale Soleyman have significantly different sizes; the examples from Ghalekuti lack surface treatment and are of rough manufacture. The third specimen from Hasanlu Tepe is instead burnished and more finely made. It seems hard to propose a function that might have been shared by these vessels.²⁶ The fourth major group consists of the cup-shape vessels, divided in two subgroups. The first has a higher neck and is found in the Armenian Highlands and Iranian Plateau. It covers a chronological range from the 11th-9th centuries up to the 8th-6th centuries BCE. Based on the available data, we suggest that the birth of this shape occurred in the Lake Orumiyeh Basin and later spread in the so-called “Median” area. A lower neck is typical of the second subgroup; this shape appears to be characteristic of the southern part of the Lake Orumiyeh Basin between 11th and 8th

²⁶ Only the specimen GH1 from Ghalekuti could possibly have been used for storage functions.

centuries BCE. All members of this cup-shaped group appear to be concentrated in an area between the two geographical regions taken into account, and extended to the east. The small size of both vase subgroups, that range from 8 to 14 centimetres in height, point to a typological definition as tankards: fine tableware, use for potory purposes. They seem to be generally of fine manufacture, sometimes burnished, with a wide range of colors (buff, grey, brownish).

Considering the ensemble and the archaeological circumstances of discovery, there is no evidence of subgroups that belong to a specific context. In fact, they were found even in burials, as well as in settlements and fortresses, so – at the present state of knowledge – it is impossible to contextualize their use for ritualistic or other special purposes. At the end of this analysis the importance of subdividing these double-handled horned vessels into different typological groups must be underlined. Their different morphologies, chronological spans and geographical distributions may be reconstructed only if we take into account all the variability of these vessels. While waiting for new data that will improve our knowledge about all these types – we want to emphasize that in our opinion it is impossible to use for dating purposes fragmentary vessels of which the entire shape may not be clearly comprehended.

Furthermore, considering all the groups analyzed in this text together, it must be underlined that there are two main areas of distribution of these forms, i.e. the Lake Orumiyeh Basin and the Ararat Valley (Fig. 13) and a chronological range mostly from the 11th to 6th century BCE (Fig. 14). The oldest known examples of this kind of vessel come from Sialk (13th-10th century BCE) and from the southern shore of Lake Orumiyeh (11th-8th century BCE). At present it is impossible to establish their place of origin. However, given the later diffusion to the Ararat Valley (8th-6th century BCE) and so-called "Median" area (8th-6th century BCE), we can propose – due to its central position – that Lake Orumiyeh may have been the core area. From a historical point of view we can suppose that the spread of this pottery in the Ararat Valley was a consequence of the Urartian conquest – by Išpuini and Minua – of the Lake Orumiyeh Basin, at the end of the 9th century BCE (Salvini 1984, 13-21). This region, that is considered to be the original area of the Urartian *ethnos* (Salvini 1984, 30), was conquered before the Urartian expansion in the Ararat Valley, due to Minua and his son Argišti I (Salvini 2002, 37-60). In conclusion it

seems reasonable to suppose that the Urartians were responsible for the diffusion of these peculiar horned vessels in the Ararat region.

This conclusion has various implications. The pottery discussed here is directly related to the problem of the Iranian influence in the Armenian Highlands during the "Median" period, which is to be suspected for architectural reasons (Dan 2015, 7-9, 24-28), although less evident from an analysis of the material culture. In this context, the data presented above make it difficult to maintain the thesis that the diffusion of horned vessels in the Armenian Highlands was the result of a "Median" influence or conquest.

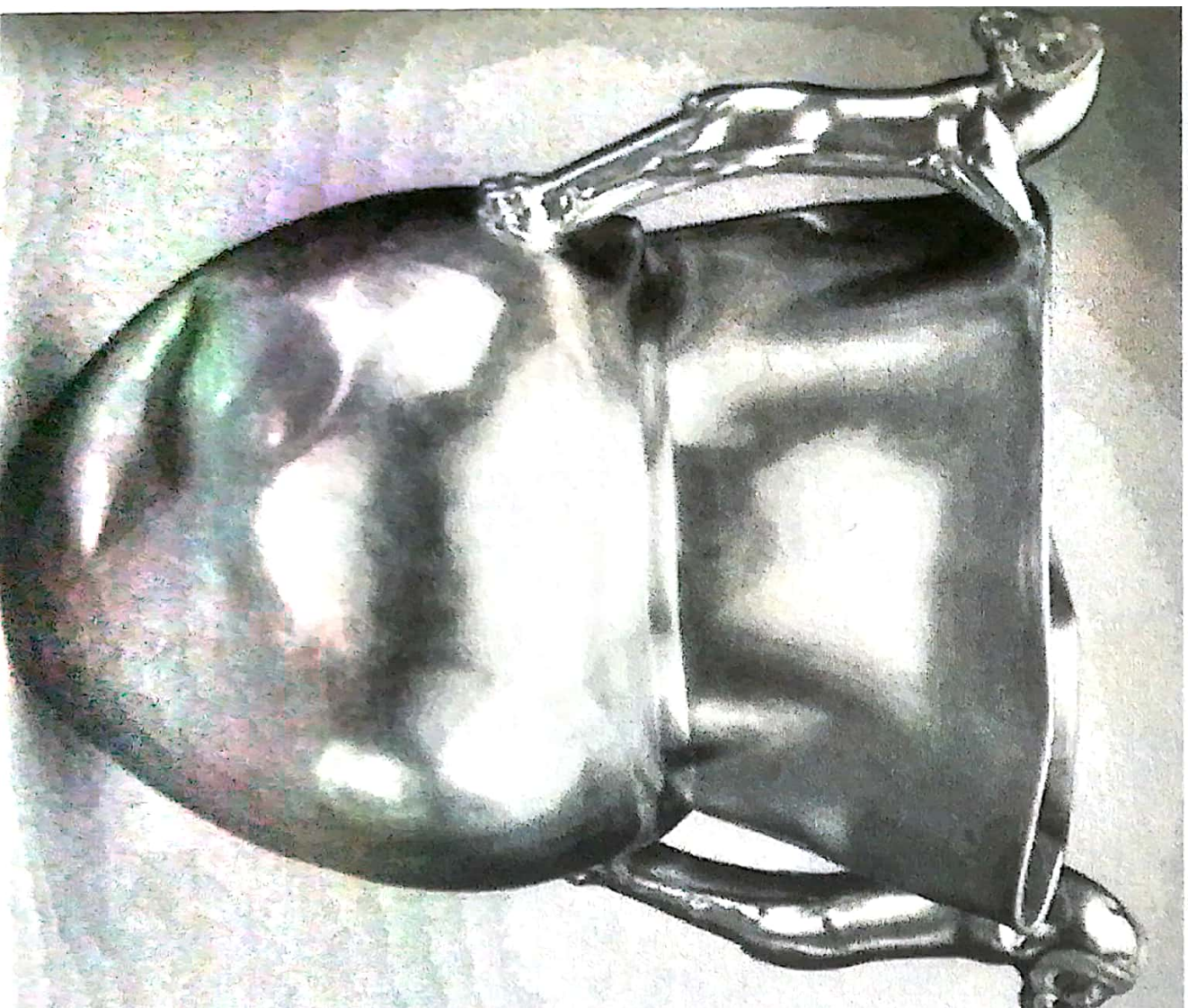
Presumably, the presence of this kind of pottery in the so-called "Median" area is connected to a local development starting from the older specimens discovered in Tepe Sialk. In attempting to define this pottery, it is no longer necessary to dwell on the problem of contacts between "Media" and the Armenian Highlands, given that the possible original core area was around Lake Orumiyeh.

The question of who was responsible for the spread of this form around the southern shore of Lake Orumiyeh awaits resolution. This problem appears to be directly connected with the cultural attribution of the site of Hasanlu Tepe, which seems to be a key site for understanding the development and spread of the horned vessels.

In any case, it will be necessary to increase the number of well-excavated and documented specimens to confirm these hypotheses and better understand the place of origin and spread of the different kinds of typology analyzed in this study.

To conclude, it is interesting to notice that the "Median" delegation depicted on the Apadana of Persepolis is not carrying a vessel resembling the types discussed in this text, but another kind of jar. B. Filow has suggested that these vases are similar, which was considered to be proof that they were adopted by the Achaemenid court, but manufactured in the periphery of the empire (Filow 1934, 201-202). On the contrary, we would like to underline the differences between the vases brought by the delegations: a big double horned jar by the Armenians, two small double horned tankards by the Lydians and a large handled jar without protrusions on the handles by the "Medes". It is possible that these shapes were appropriate representations of the different delegations, and that the tankards with two horned handles were typical of the Armenian Highlands rather than the "Median" area.

is. The south wing of the east side of the Apad
n (III); B) Lydian delegation (VI); C) ‘Medi:
y R. Dan 2015)



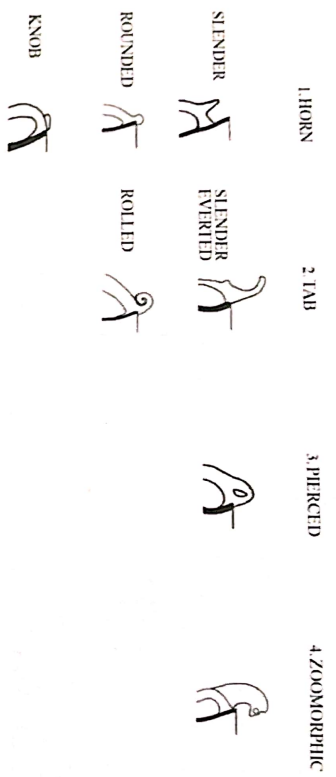


Fig. 5 - Different kinds of protrusion present on the vases

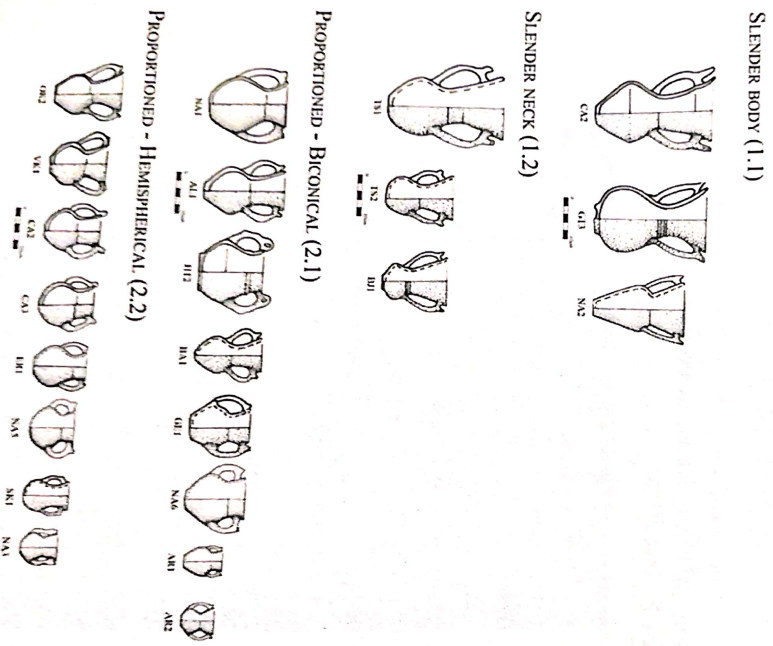
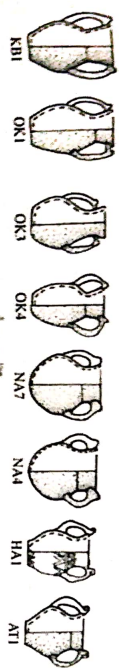
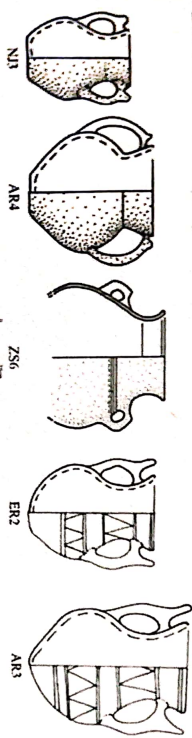


Fig. 6 - Two horned-handled vessels: Types 1 and 2 (drawing by R. Giura)

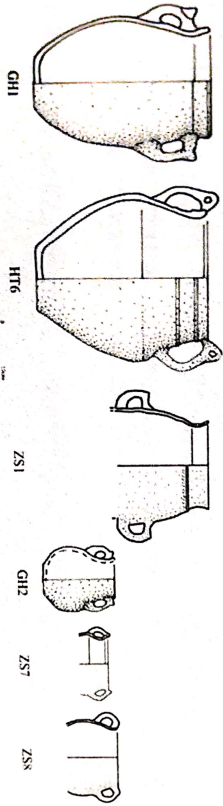
EXPANDED - ELONGATED (3.1)



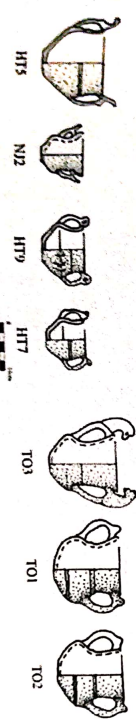
EXPANDED - WIDE (3.2)



EXPANDED - HOLE-MOUTH (3.3)



CUP SHAPE - HIGHER NECK (4.1)



CUP SHAPE - LOWER NECK (4.2)

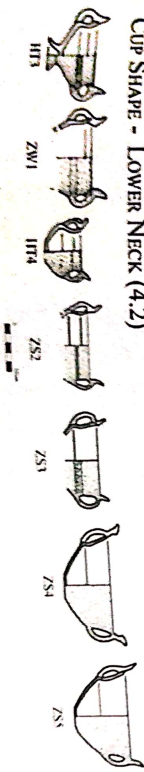


Fig. 7 - Two horned-handled vessels: Types 3 and 4 (drawing by R. Giura)

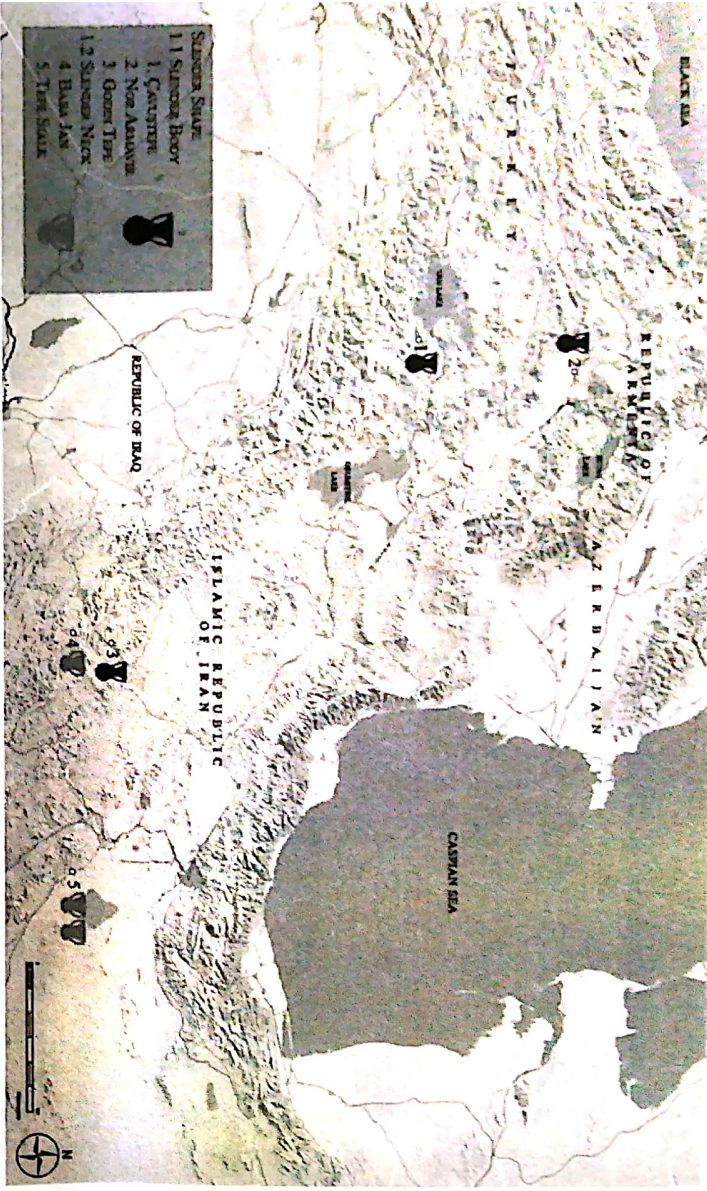
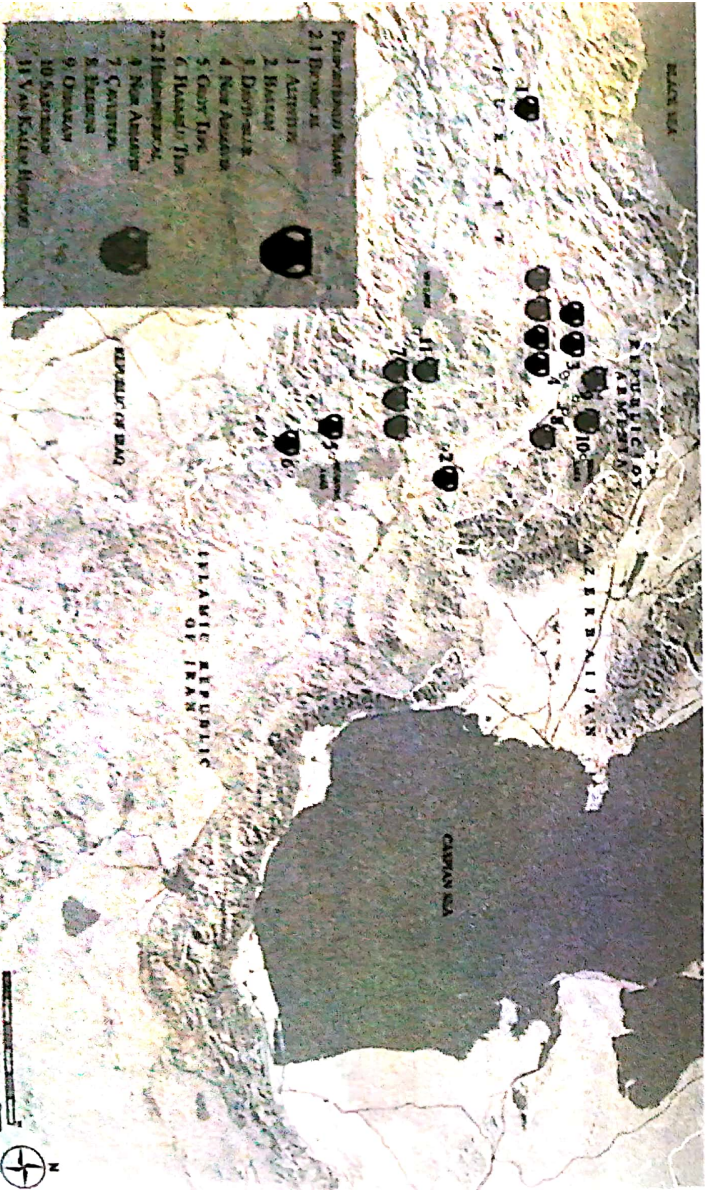


Fig. 8 - Two horned-handled vessels: Type 1 - Slender Shape geographical distribution (drawing by R. Dan)



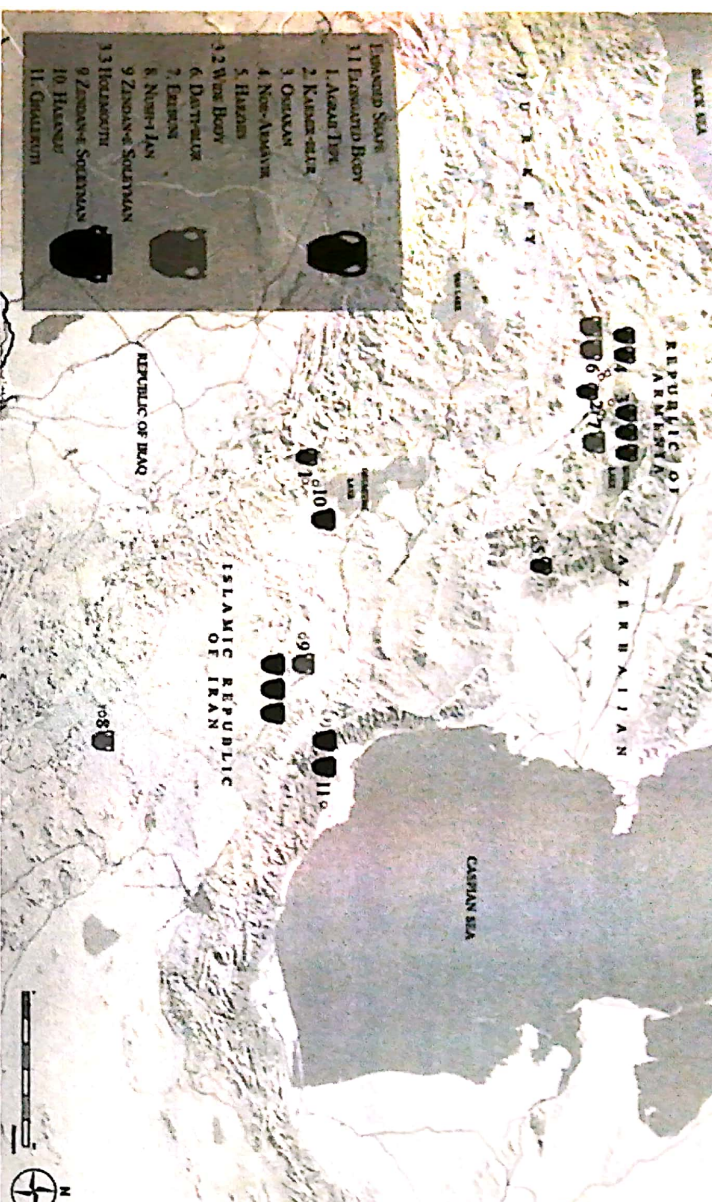


Fig. 10 - Two horned-handled vessels: Type 3 - Expanded Shape geographical distribution (drawing by R. Dan)



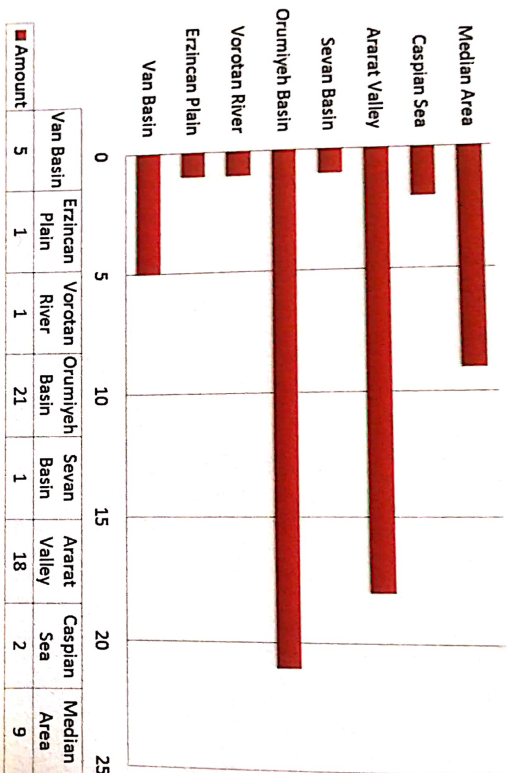


Fig. 12 -Geographical distribution of tankards/jars with two horned handles

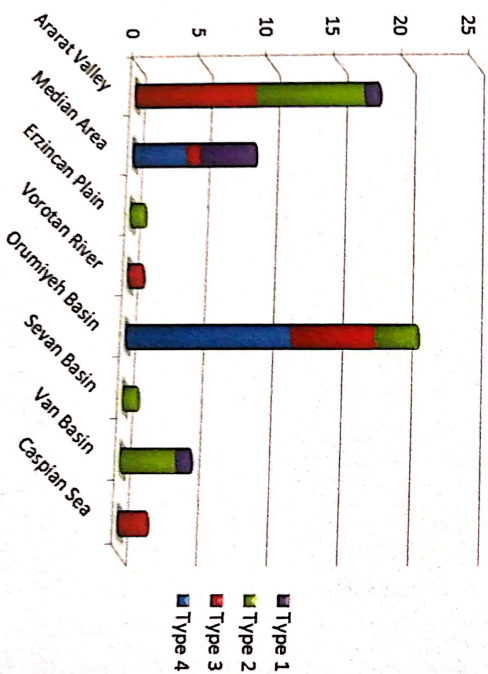


Fig. 13 -Geographical distribution of the different types of tankards/jars with two horned handles

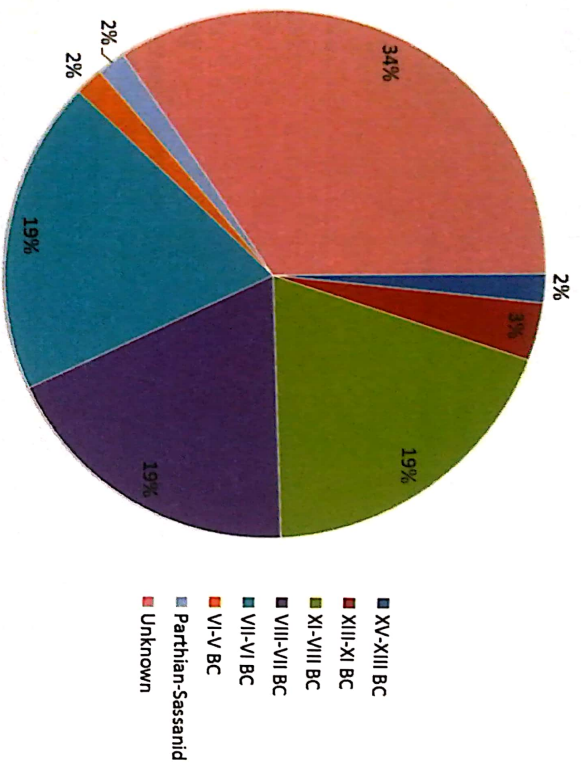


Fig. 14 - Chronological subdivision of tankards/jars with two horned handles