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## A Culinary Perspective on North-Central Anatolia: An Overview of Cooking Facilities across the Late Bronze and Iron Ages

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**Abstract.** This paper presents the evidence related to the spread of cooking methods in north-central Anatolia during the Late Bronze and Early and Middle Iron Ages (1650-700 BC), with particular emphasis on fire installations and cooking tools collected during the last century of archaeological activities. Ovens, hearths, andirons, cooking pots, and baking plates are a constant presence within the various settlements of the Anatolian plateau. This essay will reconstruct the history of cuisine and eating customs across the Late Bronze and Iron Ages through archaeological evidence and complementing it with ethnographic research. This approach, indeed, offers extra information on foodways not available in written sources, especially when the latter are lacking or reticent. Finally, the data and information on daily life's cooking and food preparation will be employed as a lens to identify broader social and economic phenomena prompted by the rise and fall of the Hittite Empire in the heart of the Anatolian Plateau.

**Keywords:** foodways, Anatolia, Bronze Age, Iron Age, fire installations, kitchenware.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Food is fundamental to human existence and 'the cooking act is a central, inescapable moment in people's lives, so it represents a fact of culture, a direct expression of what people do, know, and think – of what basically they are' (Montanari 1988: IX). Therefore, food is life, but also culture (Montanari 2007). Foodways – overtly or implicitly approved by a community – can be understood as the product of social, political, and economic choices that affect the history of regions and populations.

Consequently, in the past decades, food has been recognised as a fruitful area of study for a better understanding of modern and ancient societies (Dietler 2007; Dietler, Hayden 2001; Twiss 2007; Villing, Spataro 2015; Bonnetterre 2021: 1-3).

Relating to the Anatolian Plateau during the Late Bronze Age and Early and Middle Iron Ages, written sources on foodways are unfortunately lacking or reticent, making it complicated to piece together the whole picture of the widespread culinary practices in this area during such a long period. The Hittite cuneiform texts display a large variety of words to indicate cooking tools and food (Hoffner 1974; 2003), but without citing specific methods of processing it,<sup>1</sup> whereas written documents are completely absent for the following historical phases. The Hittite language employed three basic verbs to describe actions involving the heating and preparation of food: *inu-* (Hoffner 1967: 32, 76; Tischler 1983: 363; 2001: 62), *zanu-* (Hoffner 1967: 20, 32, 76; Tischler 2001: 205; 2016: 657-660), and *zeyā-* (Hoffner 1967: 32; Tischler 2001: 207; 2016: 686-690). These verbs describe the action of cooking in the broadest possible sense ('to cook') and, depending simply on the sentence's object, can be translated into modern languages in a variety of ways, such as 'boiling, stewing, roasting, toasting, etc.' (Casucci forthcoming a). Only the verb *ša(n)hu-* (Hoffner 1967: 20, 76; Tischler 1983; 2004: 828-829) has a more specific meaning: 'to roast' and 'to bake'. Therefore, the texts never provide many details on the cooking methods, ingredients, and tools employed during the preparation of the meals.

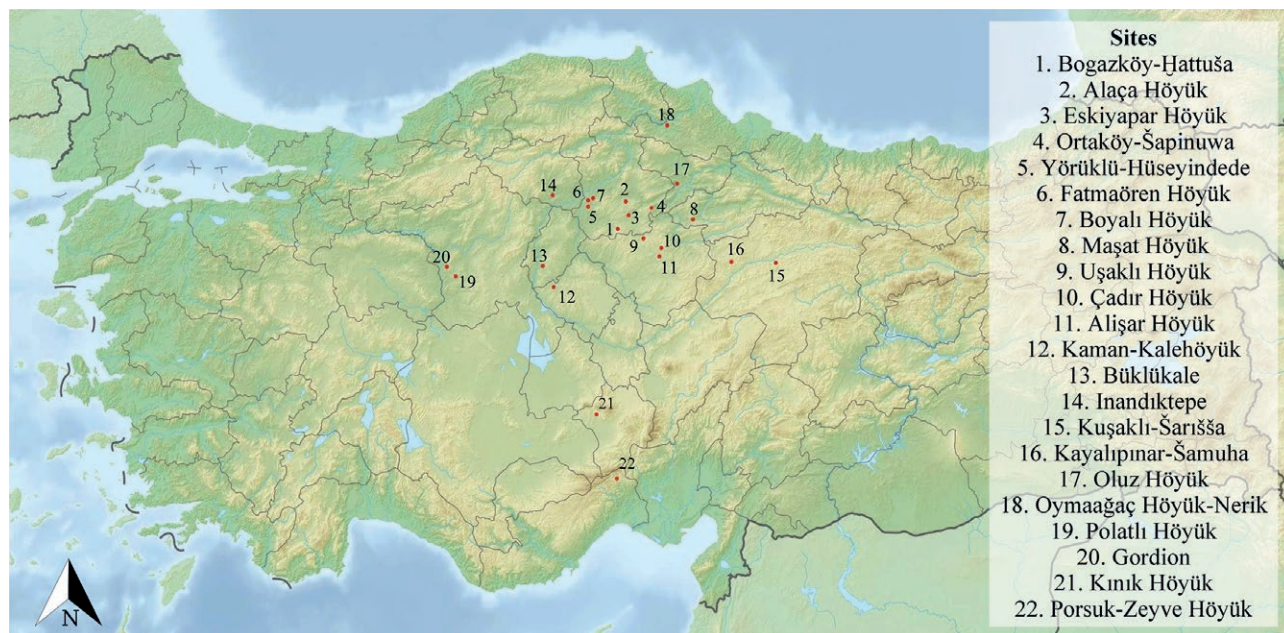
Despite this weakness,<sup>2</sup> a scholar has several available approaches to these types of studies. Information can be integrated through different analyses of archaeological artefacts, such as kitchenware and fire installations, as well as their carbon deposits, surface attritions (Skibo 1992), residue analysis, and zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical studies (Graff 2018). Food and all its associated elements constitute a language that is non-verbal and unwritten but highly communicative and full of significance.<sup>3</sup> Going beyond the physiological and functional needs, food and cooking practices have a strong social component and are evident manifestations of the culture, becoming an instrument of self-determination and cultural exchange governed by its grammar. Therefore, along with the archaeological manufactures that were generally thought to have more artistic and historical significance, everyday tools – like cooking pots, hearths, and ovens – can provide interesting details about some aspects of ancient everyday life. A scholar can comprehend better the cultural, social, economic, and political reality of the past through these items, which were typically classified as 'trivial' (Gelichi 2011). The presence or lack of a cooking tool might imply social hierarchies, preferences of food, different levels of wealth, and access to aliments. In the same way, it can be a proxy of cultural identity or cross-cultural interactions and population movements to new areas (Villing, Spataro 2015: 1; Graff 2015: 32-33; 2018; Metheny 2015: 221; Yasur-Landau 2010).

This paper aims to present a preliminary overview of the culinary practices widespread during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (1650-700 BC) in the core of the Anatolian Plateau, inside the bend of the Kızılırmak River (Hittite *Marassantiya* and classic *Halys*). This objective will be reached through the analysis of morphological and functional typologies of cooking vessels and fire installations recovered during the last century of archaeological excavations in north-central Anatolia (Fig. 1). Their interpretations will also make use of the ethnographic examples and limited information coming from the written and visual sources.

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of this reticence is offered by the Ritual for the God of the Storm of Kuliwišna, where in vs. II:5' we read that the deity is appeased in the same way as the wooden ladle calms the pot (Glocker 1997). This example shows that this simple picture could recall a well-known and established culinary practice without providing specific details.

<sup>2</sup> In recent years, scholars have shown a growing interest in feasts in the Hittite world. The conducted investigations provide some information about the Hittite cuisine through the reading of ancient texts. See Collins 1995; De Martino 2012; Mouton 2007; Cammarosano 2018; and Polvani 2012.

<sup>3</sup> In the wake of Lévi-Strauss (1958), several scholars have examined in deep the relationship between food, language, and communication. For a detailed analysis and bibliography see Barthes 1966; Douglas 1865; Di Renzo 2005: 198; and Montanari 2007: 153-154.



**Fig. 1.** Map of Anatolia showing the sites analysed and mentioned in the text.

## 2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE ANATOLIAN PLATEAU FROM THE HITTITE KINGDOM TO THE REGIONAL STATES (1650-700 BC)

Recent archaeological studies have challenged, improved, and redefined the traditional accounts of imperial power that relied on textual sources and have emphasised the role of the dominant cores and surrounding areas (Cline 2014; Sinopoli 2001; Brown 2013; Strobel 2011a).

The history of the Hittite kingdom, one of the great states of western Asia during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1650-1200 BC), offers the opportunity to examine how central areas and hinterland sites and regions can experience and interpret mechanisms of political and economic dominance by an imperial power, and what happens when this authority withdraws or vanishes.

The historical and archaeological investigation in the capital Hattuša-Boğazköy, located in the heart of the Anatolian Plateau (the ‘Land of Hatti’) and at other Hittite regional centres, attested that this was a kingdom with a complex state religion and sophisticated system of imperial administration that included both vassal states and Hittite-administered provinces (Bryce 2005; Glatz 2009; Schachner 2009; Seeher 2011; Mielke 2011). Moreover, written sources documented that Hittite kings were important participants in the military engagements and diplomatic negotiations that took place in the eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age.

Food played an essential role in the political, administrative, and religious spheres during this period. This is philologically documented by the Hittite festival texts (Barsacchi 2019; Cammarosano 2018) and archaeologically by several large granaries discovered in the Hittite centres (Seeher 2006; 2008; 2018: 57-69; Mielke 2001; Fairbairn, Omura 2005; Czichon 2015), which show as the storage and distribution of food requested a rigid political-administrative organisation (Westbrook, Woodard 1990; d’Alfonso, Matessi 2021).

However, this system experienced a crisis and collapse between the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. For a long time, the previous research – focused on the Hittite capital – has followed the idea that Hattuša was destroyed by a devastating fire brought on by an enemy strike, and then abandoned (Bittel, Naumann 1952: 27; Macqueen 1986: 50-52; Klengel 1999: 312). The various burned ruins were regarded as proof of such devastation and were thought to be related to the Egyptian narration of the Sea People raids, followed by a long ‘Dark Age’. Nevertheless, the subject of how the crisis was perceived in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BC in Hittite

written sources, as well as its internal and external causes, have already been addressed and reassessed in various ways, proposing new interpretations (among others Divon 2008; Singer 2013; Strobel 2011b; Seeher 2018; Kealhofer, Grave, Voigt 2019). In the last years, based on new data coming from the Hittite capital and other sites, the thesis of a sudden collapse was replaced by the one of a political and urban crisis, at least in the heart of the Empire. Scholars have suggested that only the Hittite elites abandoned the capital (Seeher 2001; 2010; 2018), and that the decades before the fall of the Empire – around 1180 BC or later – were rather a period marked by changes in the administrative workings of society and several internal and external problems (Schachner 2020). Some sites were abandoned, some rebuilt more modestly, and others were still continuously occupied without significant interruption (Mielke 2011; Ross *et al.* 2019). Therefore, it was suggested that the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200-900 BC)<sup>4</sup> in Anatolia experienced distinct regional cultural trajectories (Seeher 2001; 2010: 80; Genz 2003; 2004: 26-28; 2005: 76; 2011: 81; Summers 2009; 2013; 2017: 82; d’Alfonso 2020a; d’Alfonso, Matessi, Mora 2020: 33-34, 50-52), in which phenomena of transformation and adaptation – among to which the foodways could be also be included – would be the basis for the formation of the following regional states (the so-called neo-Hittite kingdoms)<sup>5</sup> during the Middle Iron Age (ca. 900-700 BC) (d’Alfonso 2020b; 2023).

### 3. COOKING TOOLS: AN INVESTIGATION IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

#### *Fire installations*

Two types of fire installation can be distinguished in north-central Anatolia during the Hittite period (ca. 1650-1200 BC): hearths and ovens (Tab. 1).<sup>6</sup>

Hearths (Fig. 2-3a-b) can be recognised by their simple ash patches, which are occasionally surrounded by stone or clay edge, and/or by the presence of a thin cooking surface made with hardened clay, that could be also located over a layer of gravel, lime, pottery sherds, or stone slabs to avoid heat dispersion. They are circular, semi-circular, and rectangular in shape, and they are typically discovered in the principal rooms or courtyards of domestic buildings. Other morphological variants are attested in only a few cases. They can occupy a central position or be located in front of a wall, or near a corner, indicating different domestic activities – such as lighting, family gatherings, heating, cooking, and eating. The discovery of kitchenware in the proximity of these fire installations suggests that they were probably employed to prepare a variety of foods: baking plates (and probably grills and wooden skewers) could be put directly on the embers and used to roast meats, cereals, and vegetables, which may be also boiled or stewed inside cooking pots.

Ovens of varying sizes were discovered inside and outside, in courtyards or open spaces, as well as in public and private structures. Two main categories of closed fire installations with a superstructure can be distinguished: dome ovens and cooking pot supports. The first ones are large installations (ca. 1-3 m in diameter) distinguished by a brick or stone dome combustion chamber and a curving opening at the base. The cooktop, made with stones, gravel, and clay, was the place where the fuel was burnt and where a variety of foods were cooked, as suggested by

<sup>4</sup> There is no firm consensus regarding central Anatolia’s Iron Age phasing. It is difficult to establish a precise correlation between archaeological and historical sequences, and there are problems with the range of absolute dates that are available for this period. Therefore, Iron Age phases are typically site-specific (D’Agostino, Mazzoni, Orsi 2021: 63-64; Summers 2008; Kealhofer, Grave 2011). In north-central Anatolia, however, the Early Iron Age is mainly equated with the period from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC; the Middle Iron Age with the 10<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC; and the Late Iron Age with the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (D’Agostino, Mazzoni, Orsi 2021: 63-63; Genz 2011; Seeher 2018; but see also Kealhofer, Grave 2011; and Kealhofer, Grave, Voigt 2019; 2022 for slightly different ranges).

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the Iron Age states of central Anatolia and the difficulties of framing the political situation of the area within the band of the Kızılırmak River see Weeden 2023.

<sup>6</sup> For a thorough examination of the many morphological and functional typologies of the fire installations found in Late Bronze Age central Anatolia see Casucci 2020.

Table 1.

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure platform	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
1	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop
2	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges
3	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay and gritty cooktop
4	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	
5	Cooking Pot Support	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,49 m	N/A	6 cm	24 cm	N/A	N/A	10 cm	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay body located over a pottery sherds layer
6	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Clay cooktop with a central incision
7	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Clay cooktop with a central incision
8	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Burnt patches above a platform
9	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
10	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	2,00 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside	Stone edges. The cooktop was located above a stone layer
11	Subcircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	2,00 x 1,00 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop located above a gritty layer
12	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 x 0,7 m	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Gritty and clay cooktop bordered by stones and located above a squared platform. The platform was located over a stone step
13	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,85 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges
14	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,65 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside	Clay cooktop with a central incision, bordered with medium size stones and located over a pebble layer. An opening could be on the northern side

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
15	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,60 x 0,80 m	N/A	N/A	5 cm	10 cm	1 x 0,8 m	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop located above a stone layer built with small stones and pebbles arranged inside a semicircle formed by with medium-sized and angular stones positioned vertically. The remains of clay dome have a linear and squared external surface and a curved internal one. A round opening was preserved just above the cooktop and could have been used to ventilate
16	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Burnt patches above a platform
17	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside	Burnt patches above a platform
18	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,90 m	N/A	N/A	3,5 cm	N/A	N/A	20 cm	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone and pottery sherd layer, located over platform bordered with clay. Renewed several times
19	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Mudbrick cooktop above a stone layer, located over a platform
20	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	1,00 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer and stone edges. Associated with fire installation 20
21	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,80 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer and stone edges. Associated with fire installation 20
22	Horseshoe-shaped Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,60 x 0,75 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0,7-2,0 m	40 cm	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Located over a platform. Associated with fire installation 23
23	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	1,00 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer, located over a platform. Associated with fire installation 22
24	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,70 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	0,2 cm	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Clay cooktop above a stone layer and stone edge
25	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mudbrick cooktop with a central incision
26	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mudbrick cooktop with a central incision

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
27	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,90 m	N/A	N/A	3,5 cm	N/A	20 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
28	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop bordered with stone edges. Associated with a working installation for the production of flour as suggested by grinders and millstones
29	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	1,10 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	20 cm	1,6 x 1,8	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop located above a gritty and clay layer arranged over another small stones and pottery sherd layer. The entire fire installation is built over a gritty platform. The remains of clay dome have a linear and squared external surface and a curved internal one. A round opening was preserved just above the cooktop and could have been used to ventilate
30	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	0,90 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
31	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
32	Cooking Pot Support	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,45 m	N/A	4 cm	N/A	20 cm	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	
33	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	Pottery sherd edges
34	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Pottery sherd cooktop
35	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Central position	Burnt patches
36	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Stone cooktop associated with a cooking pot
37	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Associated with a bath and a cooking pot. Probably used to heat the water and the room
38	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
39	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,75 m	N/A	3 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Associated with a Hittite baking plate

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure platform	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
40	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	1,20 x 0,60 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Pottery sherd cooktop
41	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
42	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	1,20 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Associated with a Hittite baking plate
43	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,60 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a pottery sherd layer
44	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,60 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer and associated with kitchenware
45	Subcircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,63 x 0,80 m	N/A	3 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
46	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	Stone edges
47	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
48	Dome Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
49	Semicircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
50	Semicircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
51	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
52	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
53	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
54	Semicircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
55	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Ash and burnt patches
56	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	2,00 m	6 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a pottery sherd layer and bordered with stone
57	Squared Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	1,00 x 1,00 m	4 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a pottery sherd layer and bordered with stone



N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Size hole	Height sub-structure	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
58	Cooking Pot Support	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	0,50 m	N/A	2 cm	N/A	20 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a pottery sherd layer. Clay body reinforced with pottery sherds
59	Semicircular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	1,50 m	55 cm	N/A	5 cm	N/A	50 cm	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a gritty and drebis layer
60	Rectangular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	1,35 x 1,10 m	5 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop renewed several times and bordered with a mudbrick and stone edge on one side
61	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
62	Oven	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone cooktop
63	Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Ash patches associated with kitchenware
64	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
65	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	2 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
66	Horseshoe-shaped Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	MB-LB	0,80 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay edges
67	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay edges
68	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
69	Circular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	
70	Squared Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	
71	Rectangular Hearth	Boğazköy-Hattuşa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Central position	
72	Rectangular Hearth	Alışar Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Mudbrick edge on one side
73	Horseshoe-shaped Hearth	Alışar Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Mudbrick structure
74	Cooking Pot Support	Alışar Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
75	Dome Oven	Alaç Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Central position	

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
76	Circular Hearth	Alaç Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	
77	Cooking Pot Support	Alaç Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay body reinforced with stones and pottery sherds
78	Circular Oven	Alaç Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Inside - Close to a wall	
79	Cooking Pit	Boyalı Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside	
80	Dome Oven	Boyalı Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
81	Dome Oven	Farmaören	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
82	Dome Oven	Hüseyinde Tepe	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
83	Dome Oven	Hüseyinde Tepe	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop above a stone layer
84	Hearth	Maşat Höyük	MB-LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Associated with fire installation <sup>77</sup>
85	Dome Oven	Maşat Höyük	MB-LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Associated with fire installation <sup>76</sup>
86	Cooking Pot Support	Maşat Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside	
87	Rectangular Hearth	Maşat Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges
88	Rectangular Hearth	Maşat Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges
89	Hearth	Maşat Höyük	IA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
90	Rectangular Hearth	Inandık Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges, Associated with fire installations 83 and 84
91	Oven	Inandık Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges, Associated with fire installations 82 and 84
92	Oven	Inandık Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Stone edges, Associated with fire installations 82 and 83
93	Circular Hearth	Inandık Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Central position	
94	Circular Hearth	Inandık Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Central position	
95	Tandır	Kayalıpınar Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Clay cooktop above a pottery sherd layer
96	Cooking Pot Support	Kuşaklı-Şarıssa	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay body with three bulges on the rim. Inserted in a plastered superstructure

N°	Type	Site	Date	Diameter / Size	Height	Thickness walls	Height cooktop hole	Height sub-structure	Diameter / size platform	Height platform	Type of context	Location	Note
97	Undetermined	Çadır Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	Outside - Close to a wall	
98	Hearth	Çadır Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inside	
99	Subcircular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Public Building	Inside	
100	Tandır	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	0,50 m	N/A	4 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
101	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
102	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	0,50 x 0,30 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Associated with a lot fragments of baking trays
103	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Associated with fire installation 104
104	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	Associated with fire installation 103
105	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Associated with a lot fragments of baking trays
106	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA	0,85 x 0,69 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Associated with a lot fragments of baking trays and bones
107	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA-LIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	
108	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	MIA-LIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside	
109	Circular Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	LB	0,40 x 0,30 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area	
110	Hearth	Uşaklı Höyük	LB	N/A	N/A	5 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Open Area - Close to a wall	
111	Cooking Pot Support	Uşaklı Höyük	MB-LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
112	Circular Hearth	Oluz Höyük	EIA	0,60 x 0,45 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Domestic Building	Inside - Close to a wall	Clay cooktop
113	Circular Hearth	Oluz Höyük	MIA	1,40 m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inside	Clay cooktop
114	Circular Hearth	Oluz Höyük	MIA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inside	Clay and gritty cooktop

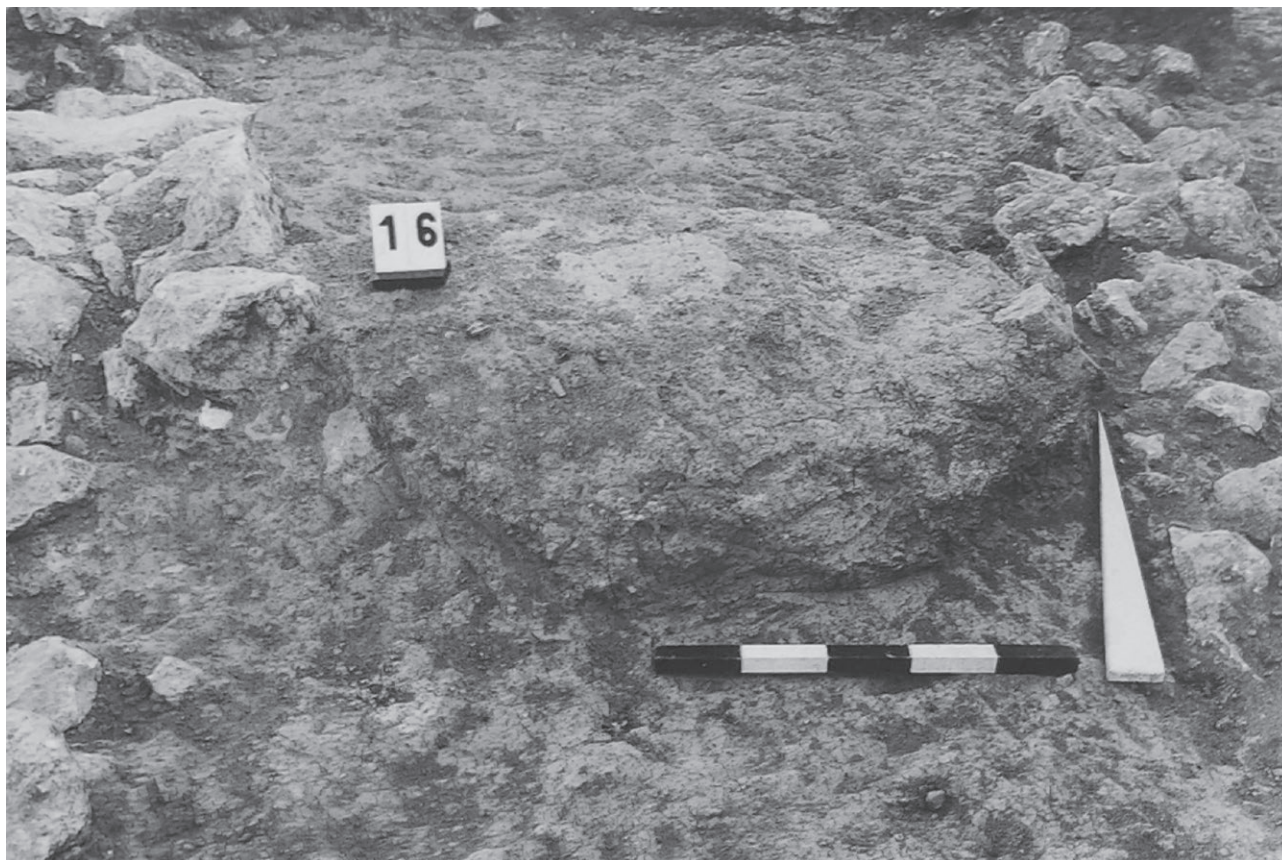
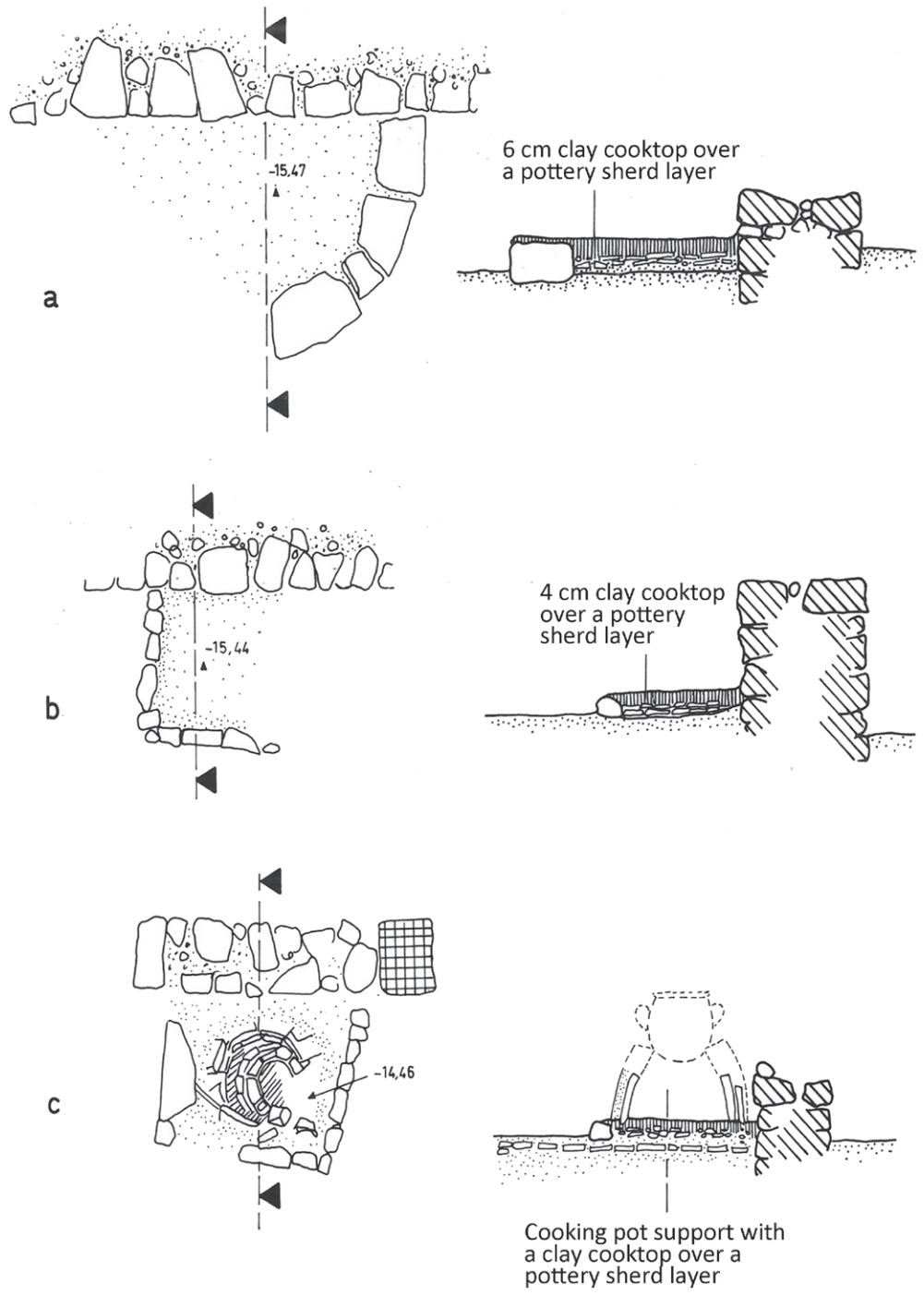


Fig. 2. Circular hearth from Hattuşa-Boğazköy (Neve 1999: Pl. 147b).

the comparison with the modern ovens in Turkey – e.g., leavened bread, *firin ekmeği* (Yakar 2000: 176; Ökse, Görmüş, Kaymak 2015: 44). There are just a few poorly preserved examples known from the Hittite period in north-central Anatolia. Their placement inside public buildings, as in the case of the so-called GAL MEŞEDI-*haus* (Schachner 2017) and open areas as a street of the Hüseyindede site (Yıldırım, Sipahi 2001), could indicate that different groups of people used these jointly, making the cooking activity also a time of gathering and socialising areas.

Finally, cooking pot supports are bell-shaped installations with clay walls that range in thickness from 4 to 10 cm and a base diameter between ca. 0.50 and 0.75 m. Their cooktop, located at the bottom, often consisted of a fire-hardened layer of clay that had been located on top of another one of gravel and pottery sherds. In the archaeological reports, these are described simply with the terms ‘oven’ and ‘fireplaces’, or generically ‘fire installation’. Although these fire installations are comparable to ancient and modern bread ovens *tandır*<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 4) for some physical features, they were more likely used as supports for cooking pots placed on their upper openings (Fig. 3c) or equipment for roasting different meals using hooks and skewers inserted into their body (Casucci 2020: 174-175, 188-189). This function is particularly evident from the three bulges on the upper opening of the bell-shaped clay

<sup>7</sup> *Tandır* is a clay oven of slightly conical form about 1.00-1.50 m in height and 0.40-0.50 m in length, used primarily to bake unleavened flatbreads attached around its well-smoothed inner surface – today *tandır ekmeği* (Yakar 2000: 176). Fire installations characterised by a bell-shaped clay body and described as similar to the modern *tandır/tannur* have been mentioned in reports since Late Pottery Neolithic sites of western Asia and frequently reported both in private and public buildings during historical periods (Balossi Restelli 2015: 45-50; Parker 2011, Rova 2014). For a detailed description of modern *tandır* see Smogorzewska 2012; Parker 2011; Parker, Uzel 2007; Rova 2014; Balossi Restelli 2015; Balossi Restelli, Mori 2014; and Dalman 1935.



**Building F/BK IVb**

Fire installations in Room 3 (a, b) and 5 (c)

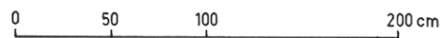


Fig. 3. a-b: hearths; c: cooking pot support (Neve 1982: Fig. 24).

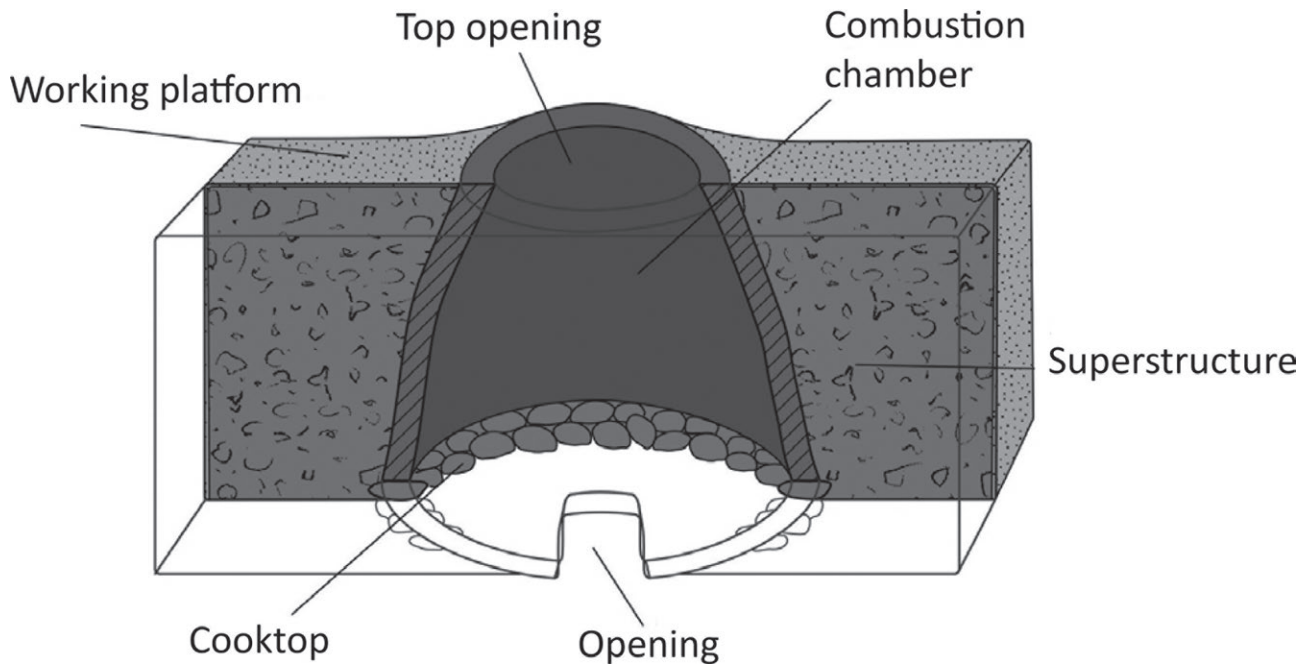


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of a modern *tandır* (drawn after Smogorzewska 2012).

body of the fire installation discovered inside the Kuşaklı-Şarişsa North-West Gate (Fig. 5) (Müller-Karpe 2017: Fig. 30; Mielke 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2006b). The three ledges were apparently useful to hold a cooking pot without entirely blocking the aperture that would cause the blowing out of the flame (Casucci 2020: 184).

Additionally, as rightly pointed out by Rova (2014: 127-128), people in the past had opted for various solutions concerning the building and location of the *tandır* based on individual needs; the previous cooking pot supports never seem to share all features with the modern *tandır*. The available examples of cooking pot supports do not appear to have a perfectly conical shape (the body appears stockier), and they were never placed in open spaces or near doors as *tandır*, but rather inside rooms in a central position or near walls. Moreover, based on the archaeological documentation, it is difficult to establish whether these fire installations had finished internal surfaces suitable for baking unleavened flatbread. Therefore, no sure examples of *tandır* have been identified in Late Bronze Age sites of north-central Anatolia. Only one slanted and circular grit and pottery sherd base can be interpreted as the lower part of a *tandır*, but it was discovered at Kayalıpınar (eastern part of the central Anatolian Plateau) without an associated context, and it has been dated to the final Hittite phase (Level II) (Müller-Karpe 2006: 215). There are two main explanations for this lack. First, the archaeological investigations of the last century have been focused on the digging of the Late Bronze Age public buildings. However, some domestic contexts have been excavated in the Hittite capital and other central Anatolian sites, and consequently, one very likely explanation for this absence is that we simply have not been lucky enough to find them. Otherwise, a second possibility is that there are significant differences in the foodways of this period that made *tandır* style cooking facilities unnecessary, unpopular, or redundant during the Late Bronze Age, compared to the previous phases.<sup>8</sup> Although it is challenging to argue based on a lack of evidence; the *tandır*'s absence may indicate that the Hittite baking plates – which will be presented later – took over from this fire installation in making unleavened flatbreads during the Late Bronze Age (Orsi, Volante, D'Agostino 2023: 98).

<sup>8</sup> *Tandır* are fire installations attested at many sites in Anatolia from the Late Chalcolithic to Middle Bronze (Ökse, Görmüş, Kaymak 2015).



Fig. 5. Kuşaklı-Şarişsa, Northwest Tower. Cooking pot support inside Room 7 (Müller-Karpe 2017: Fig. 30).

During the transition to the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200-900 BC) and the subsequent Middle Iron Age (ca. 900-700 BC), fire installations, on the one hand, seem to remain partially unchanged. The excavations on the Büyükkaya (Seeher 2018), at further parts of the ancient Hittite capital,<sup>9</sup> and other sites located in north-central Anatolia,<sup>10</sup> revealed the presence of not-structured and circular hearths and dome ovens, built with rather similar techniques and characteristics of the previous ones, attesting a continuity in the cooking installations across the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. On the other hand, other elements – such as horse-shaped hearths – appear to be more attested, highlighting more similarities with the previous local traditions of the Early and Middle Bronze Age<sup>11</sup> rather than the Late Bronze Age. This, in some way, seems to fit with the theory that the older traditions survived in areas outside Hittite control proposed by Genz (2003; 2004; 2005) to explain the spread of handmade

<sup>9</sup> Traces of domestic structures with associated fire installations were discovered in the Büyükkale II (Middle Iron Age) and the square J/18 of Lower Town (Middle-Late Iron Age) (Neve 1975; 1982).

<sup>10</sup> Remains of fire installations dating to the Iron Age were discovered at the site of Maşat Höyük, Alişar Höyük, Oluz Höyük and Kaman-Kalehöyük (Özgüç 1978; Bittel 1937; Dönmez 2010; Dönmez, Yurtsever-Beyazıt 2014; 2016; Matsumura 2005).

<sup>11</sup> During the Early and Middle Bronze Ages in central Anatolia a greater variability of fire installations is attested. For more details see Ökse, Görmüş, Kaymak 2015 and Aquilano 2017.



Fig. 6. The lower portion of the clay oven-*tandır* US 300 in Uşaklı Höyük Area D (©Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological project).

painted pottery during the Early Iron Age. Concerning this reappearance of older traditions, the discovery of a *tandır* located in proximity to a wall belonging to the Middle Iron Age domestic structures of the Uşaklı Höyük site (Fig. 6) (D'Agostino, Mazzoni and Orsi 2021: 59-61; Casucci forthcoming a) is interesting. If the previous interpretation of the absence of this type of bread oven in Hittite centres is correct, the example at Uşaklı Höyük could be evidence for the re-emergence of another bread tradition already attested in central Anatolia during the Middle Bronze Age – for example in the *karum*'s houses at Kültepe-Kaneş (Özgüç 1986). Although the *tandır*, in Turkish – or *tannur*, in Arabic – are not devices only intended for cooking unleavened bread,<sup>12</sup> it is possible to hypothesise that these fire installations were primarily used during the Iron Age for baking flatbreads, which during the previous Late Bronze Age were likely produced using alternative tools, such as the Hittite Baking Plate (Casucci 2023; forthcoming a; Orsi, Volante, D'Agostino 2023: 98).

To summarise the fire installations during the Late Bronze Age from the morphological point of view result quite homogeneous. They are principally represented by unstructured circular or squared hearths, cooking pot supports, and domed ovens. During the Iron Age, on the contrary, a greater typological variety is attested, and clear changes can be observed in comparison to the previous phase. If circular and squared hearths continue to be present, the diffusion of horseshoe-shaped hearths, the disappearance of the so-called cooking pot supports, and the reappearance of *tandır* after the gap during the Late Bronze Age are strong signals of discontinuity.

### *Kitchenware*

In Anatolian archaeology, an interest in the cooking devices – specifically Hittite cooking pots – was restricted to the publication of a paper by T. Mühlenbruch (2012), mainly devoted to the dimension analysis of the cook-

<sup>12</sup> The available ethnographic evidence has well shown how the *tandır* is a type of oven also used for cooking meat and vegetables using hooks or skewers positioned inside or pots placed on the top opening (Dalman 1935: 110-111; Mulder-Heymans 2002: 199; Ökse, Görmüş, Kaymak 2015: 44).



ing pots coming from three fundamental Hittite sites – Boğazköy, Kuşaklı, and Kayalıpınar – and who suggests the existence of different size groups of ‘mass-produced’ cooking pots under Hittite state control for different functional and social contexts. The publications of some pottery assemblages and preliminary reports of main archaeological sites can provide additional information.<sup>13</sup>

During the Late Bronze Age, two major morphological categories characterised the kitchenware assemblage attested in all north-central Anatolian sites: the so-called Hittite baking plates and cooking pots.

The so-called Hittite baking plates (Fig. 7-8), which are one of the most represented forms within each Late Bronze Age pottery assemblage,<sup>14</sup> belong to a distinct group based on their technical characteristics, as well as from a functional and morphological standpoint. They are large open plates with a diameter between 25-30 and 100 cm, and they are characterised by a typically coarse fabric, rich in mineral and vegetable inclusions, and by a generally thickened and everted rim that frequently bears rope impressions (Mielke 2006; 2017; 2022). According to Mielke (2006; 2017), this vessel might be the direct evolution of the baking trays spread in Anatolia in the previous phases, which are attested only in a few pieces during the Late Bronze Age, and characterised by a flat base, short and vertical or slightly tilted outward walls, and a simple and rounded rim. The regular presence (ca. 5-15%)<sup>15</sup> of the so-called Hittite baking plates in Hittite public and private contexts demonstrates their regular daily use. As pointed out by Schoop (2011: 247) and Orsi (2018: 189) the probable employment for food preparation (roasting, toasting, and *sautéing*) is further suggested by low dense and gritty fabric, suitable for resisting thermal shock (Rice 1987: 105-106, 229-231, 367-368), traces of secondary burning mainly on external or both surfaces,<sup>16</sup> and archaeological contexts.<sup>17</sup> However, many unanswered questions surround their forming<sup>18</sup> and use.

The Hittite cooking pots (Fig. 9) have matte reddish-brown surfaces and a medium-coarse fabric, including mineral inclusions of medium and large sizes of various quality and shapes. They are wheelmade and do not

<sup>13</sup> For a selection of relevant sources see Fischer 1963; Mielke 2006; 2017; 2022; Bossert 2000; Genz 2001; 2004; 2005; 2011; Mühlenbruch 2012; 2014; Schoop 2006; 2009; 2011; Mazzoni, D’Agostino, Orsi 2019; and Orsi 2018; 2020.

<sup>14</sup> This type of vessel seems to appear within archaeological contexts in conjunction with the formation of the Hittite kingdom and follow its development, to then disappear with its collapse and the transition to the Iron Age (Schoop 2003; 2006; 2009; 2011; Glatz 2009: 130).

<sup>15</sup> This data is based on the percentage distribution of Hittite baking plates within the published ceramic assemblages of Hattuša-Boğazköy (Parzinger, Sanz 1992), Kuşaklı-Şarişša (Mielke 2006a; Arnhold 2009; A. Müller-Karpe, V. Müller-Karpe, Stümpel 1996; Müller-Karpe 1998), and Kayalıpınar Höyük (Mühlenbruch 2014; A. Müller-Karpe, V. Müller-Karpe, Rieken 2017). The collation of these kitchenware artefacts into a unified database is a component of my PhD project (*Fires and cooking pots: foodways and culinary identities in Anatolia between the 2nd and 1st Millennium BCE*) at the University of Pavia.

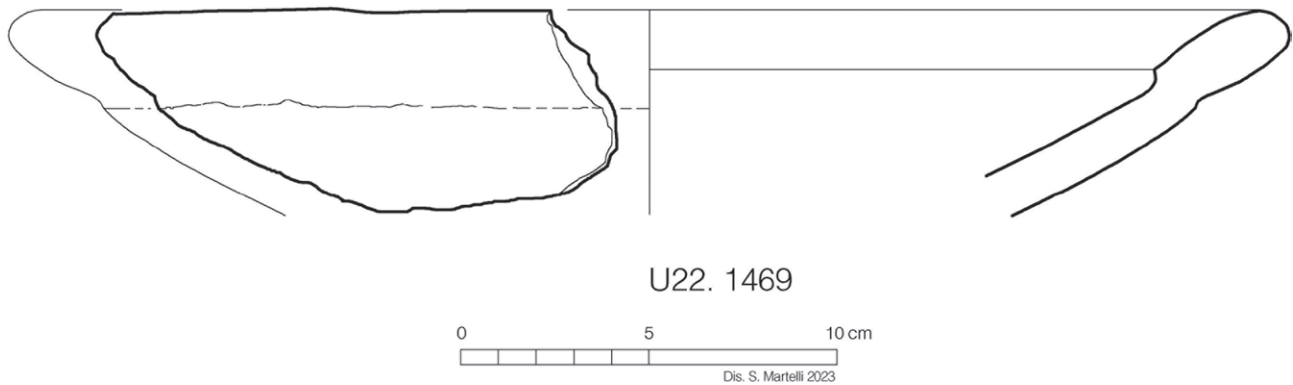
<sup>16</sup> The traces of carbon deposit on the surfaces of the plates suggest their possible use in association with fire (Mielke 2006a: 129; Schoop 2011: 247), but it is important to remember that their absence is not direct proof of the contrary: if blackening from secondary burning is generally frequent on pottery used suspended over the fire or placed next to it, carbon deposits on containers placed directly on the embers tend to disappear more easily (Orsi, Volante, D’Agostino 2023: 88). Traces of secondary burning on large plates are quite frequent, but not ubiquitous. However, a preliminary analysis of the correlation between the secondary burning distribution and the fabric typology suggests a distinction between medium-small sized plates, characterised by a finer fabric and not primarily intended for use in association with fire, and the larger size ones, almost exclusively in coarse fabric and more frequently used in connection the fire (Orsi, Volante, D’Agostino 2023: 88).

<sup>17</sup> Despite these plates being described in various ways in the previous literature, including as ‘bowls and plates’ or even ‘lids’, scholars have hypothesised that they were used in ordinary household activities, specifically for baking bread (Fischer 1963: 66; Özgüç 1982: 24; Müller-Karpe 1988: 127-128; Mielke 2006a; Schoop 2011: 246-247). Since the shape is perfect for cooking sticky food, it has been supposed that they were mainly employed for baking different types of thin unleavened bread (Schoop 2011: 246-247), which are still highly popular in contemporary Turkey under the name *pida* or *yufka ekmeği* (Yakar 2000: 176). However, if the association between this type of vessel and the term <sup>DUG</sup>DÍLIM.GAL. – attested in several cuneiform texts and proposed by Torri – we could imagine that this served multiple functions (D’Agostino, Orsi, Torri 2020: 124-125; Orsi, Volante, D’Agostino 2023: 87-88; Casucci 2023: 291, forthcoming a).

<sup>18</sup> Mielke (2006a: Fig. 132; 2017: 134-136), based on experimental experience, has proposed a hand-building process for these artefacts, limiting the use of the wheel only during the finishing stage. At the same time, according to an experimental archaeology programme carried out at the site of Uşaklı Höyük an employment a slowly rotating device was also used during the construction process (Orsi, Volante, D’Agostino 2023: 89-95).



**Fig. 7.** Hittite baking plate from Uşaklı Höyük (©Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological Project).



**Fig. 8.** Hittite baking plate from Uşaklı Höyük (©Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological Project).

have treated surfaces, proving a very fast and massified production, probably inside specialised workshops (Mielke 2022). From a morphological perspective, they are distinguished by a typical rounded shape, external thickening of the rim measuring ordinarily ca. 18-32 cm in diameter, the lack of a neck, rounded base, and the presence of two vertical handles with a circular, rounded, and more rarely, a rectangular section (Müller-Karpe 1988, Mielke 2006a; Mühlenbruch 2012; 2014). The coarse fabric and the shape characteristics provide the product with strong thermal shock resistance and a good yield on fire, facilitating a greater exposure, distribution, and conservation of heat over the vessel's whole surface and its contents, and reducing simultaneously the evaporation of liquids (Mielke 2006a: 78; Schoop 2011: 249; Casucci 2023: 290). At the same time, the difficulty of accessing food due to the deep and relatively closed shape could easily be overcome by using ladles. This latter hypothesis is supported by one of the depictions on the Inandiktepe relief vessel (Fig. 10) (Özgüç 1988: Fig. 64-65), in which two people are shown mixing and serving the contents of some pots with ladles, which are most likely made of wood (Mielke 2006a: 83). A similar scene was also described in the text *Grand Festival of Goddess Arinna* (KUB XX 76, I - CTH 634), where food was cooked and served using cooking pots. Finally, the rounded bases and most of the surface with a slope ranging from 60° to 90° suggest they were probably hung over them through a superstructure to boil and stew foods. This is confirmed by the discovery of fire installations classified as cooking pot support (Casucci 2020: 183-187). The previously described installation, discovered inside the North-West Gate of the Hittite city of Kuşaklı-Şarišša, is particularly exhaustive. Moreover, the Hittite cuneiform sources – where porridge (BA.BA.ZA), soups, and stews of vegetables and meats (TU<sub>7</sub>) are enough mentioned (Hoffner 2003: 99-102; Mouton

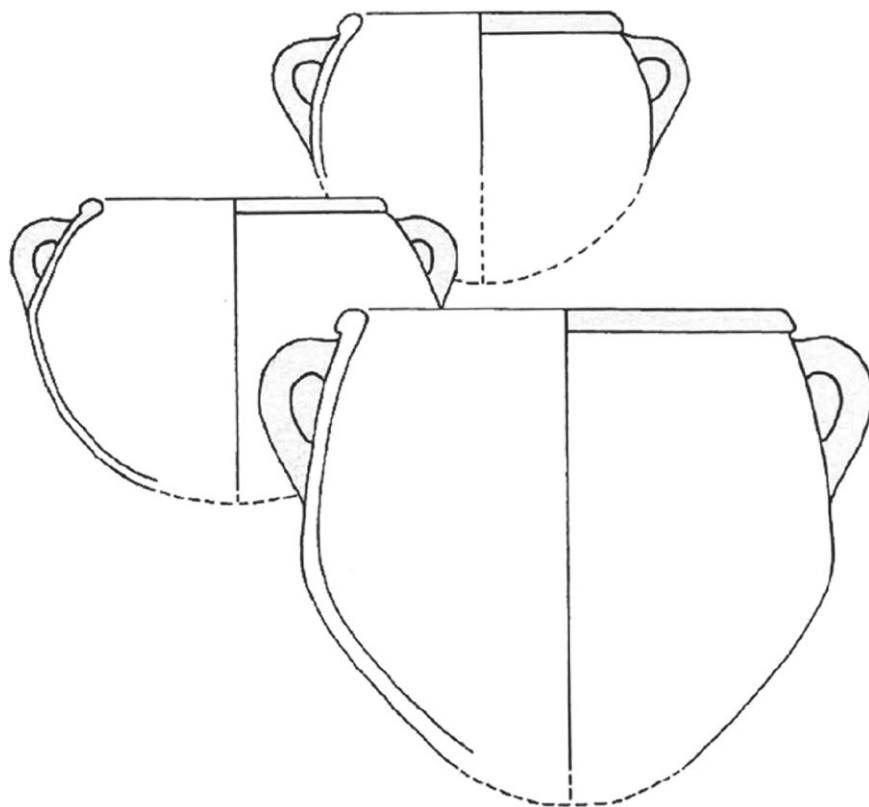


Fig. 9. Late Bronze Age cooking pots (Mielke 2006a: Fig. 57).

2007; 2017; Şahingöz, Akbulut, Örgün 2015) – and the archaeobotanical analysis done on the grain stock of the Kuşaklı-Şarişsa North-west Gate – where wheat had been boiled and ground to create *bulgur* (Pasternak 1999a; 1999b; Mielke 2004c: 30-31), a dish that is still popular in western Asia today – also support the picture of preparing boiled and stewed meals.

Based on the published pottery assemblages,<sup>19</sup> the cooking pots from the Early and Middle Iron Ages in north-central Anatolia can be compared since they have some similar features and uses, which differentiate them from those of the previous phase. They are characterised by a surface that is typically dark brown or grey in colour, and by a fabric that is typically gritty (Fig. 11-12). However, some differences are present between the Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age cooking pots. The first ones are likely a household production, as suggested by the handmade manufacture and technical and morphological choices (Orsi 2020; Genz 2001; 2004; 2005), and are characterised by surface treatments – e.g. coarse burnishing – which make these pots glossy and smoothed (Fig. 11); instead, the ones dating to the Middle Iron Age return to be mostly made on a wheel, indicating manufacturing on a different scale (Fig. 12). From a morphological perspective, a ‘standardisation’ process is seen during the Iron Age: the cooking pots group<sup>20</sup> passed from a variety of globular and neckless vessels with simple rim, small jars with simple or flared rim measuring generally ca. 15-20 cm in diameter, and different types of handles (small holder or band or vertical handle) during the Early Iron Age (Fig. 13) to a more uniform product in the Middle Iron Age, when the variant characterised by a globular body, flat base, medium-short neck and vertical or slightly everted rim, rounded

<sup>19</sup> The Iron Age kitchenware assemblage that is examined in this study comprises the published artefacts coming from Hattuşa-Boğazköy (Genz 2004; Bossert 2000), Uşaklı Höyük (Orsi 2020), Alaça Höyük (Kosay, Akok 1973), and Alişar Höyük (Schmidt 1932; Bittel 1937). This collection is included in a unified database which is a component of my PhD research, see note 15.

<sup>20</sup> For the reference sample, see note 19.



Fig. 10. Cooking pots on the relief vessel from Inandiktepe (Özgüç 1988: Fig. 64).

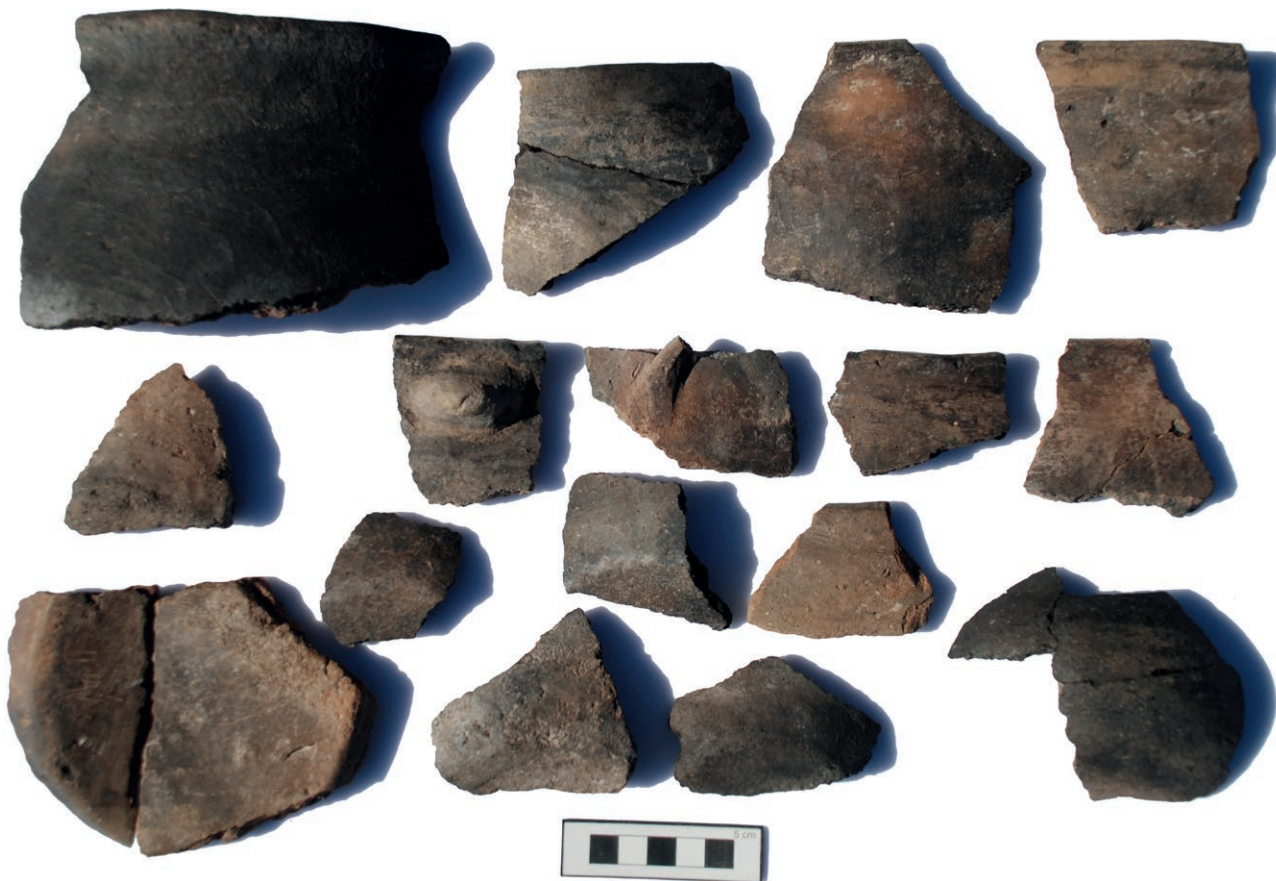


Fig. 11. Early Iron Age Handmade Kitchenware from Uşaklı Höyük (Orsi 2020: Fig. 8).

or triangular in shape measuring usually ca. 15-25 cm in diameter, becomes the most widespread (Fig. 14). Despite these variations, the rounded shape, and the narrow opening in relation to the body ensured even heat distribution over the surfaces, minimising also liquid spillage and evaporation. Moreover, the flat base could make it possible to

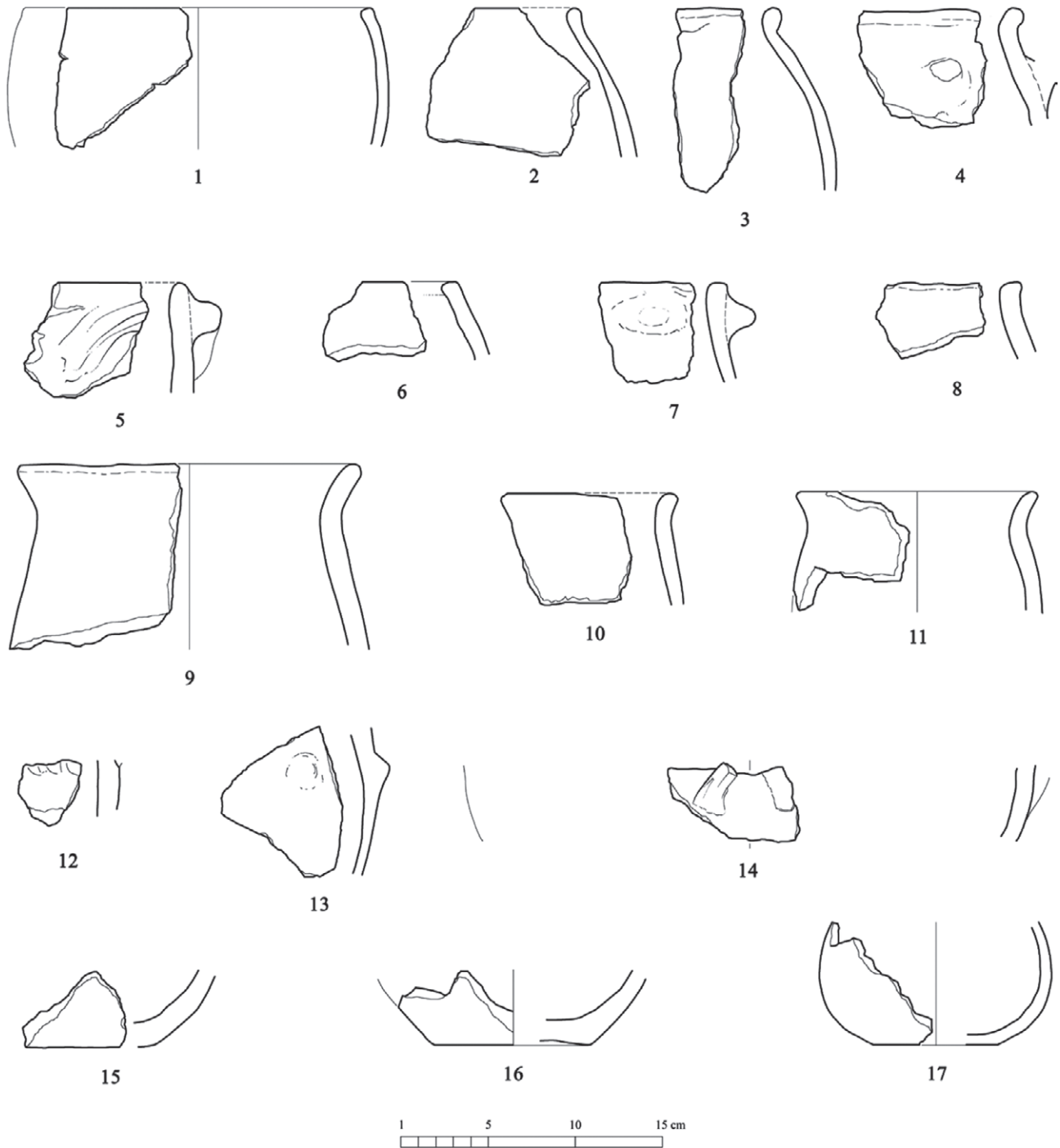


**Fig. 12.** Iron Age Wheelmade Kitchenware from Uşaklı Höyük (©Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological project).

stand solidly and suggests their placement close to or directly on the heat source, resting on a cooktop or stand, in order to make a slow fire cooking (Killebrew 1999: 107; Lis 2015: 105).

Summarising, the analysis of kitchenware across the Late Bronze Age and Iron Ages, like fire installations, shows some differences. The Late Bronze kitchenware set is characterised by wheelmade neckless cooking pots with thickened rims and large baking plates, one of the genuine Hittite shapes. The transition to the Iron Age is well marked by the disappearance of these Hittite baking plates. Additionally, the Iron Age cooking pots are smaller and morphologically different in comparison to the Hittite ones. The neckless cooking pots with externally thickened rims, typically of the Late Bronze Age, decreased intensely during the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium, replaced by the colored ones that became the most attested type. Especially, the typical Iron Age's flat base, opposite to the rounded one of the Hittite cooking pots, could be connected to the disappearance of the Late Bronze Age cooking pot supports. This suggests two different ways of positioning the vessel in relation to the flame, and consequently two different ways of cooking: one suspended and high flame during the Late Bronze Age and another one on low heat by placing the cooking pot near the heat source during the Iron Age.

Finally, to fully understand this change in material culture and likely change in culinary practices across the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age, it is necessary to look also at the regions surrounding north-central Anatolia and observe their responses to the political transformation that took place at the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. In fact,



**Fig. 13.** Selection of Early Iron Age Handmade Kitchenware from Uşaklı Höyük (Orsi 2020: Pl. 2).

these areas, which had been under Hittite political control and whose material culture was partly influenced by the north-central Anatolian tradition during the Late Bronze Age, seem to have experienced local outcomes throughout the Iron Age (d'Alfonso 2020a; 2023). The Gordion case, in central-west Anatolia, seems to be particularly exhaustive. The site, probably under the Hittite political and cultural influence during the Late Bronze Age, as shown by the pottery found in a deep sounding (Gunter 1991), displays a local route in the subsequent periods. At



**Fig. 14.** Middle Iron Age cooking pot from Uşaklı Höyük (D'Agostino and Orsi 2020: Fig. 5).

first, during the Early Iron Age (12<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> BC), it is characterised by the presence of local handmade cooking pots which seem to find more comparisons with those of western Anatolia (Voigt, Henrickson 2000; 2013) rather than with the area inside the bend of the Kızılırmak river. Subsequently and concurrently with the formation of the Phrygian kingdom, Gordion knows a local development of a group of wheelmade cooking pots, the so-called *one-handled utility pots* (Sams 1994; Casucci forthcoming b), and a set of three fire installations – the dome oven, circular, and U-shaped hearth – that appears to be standardised and without no direct comparison with other regions (Casucci forthcoming b). Turning south of the Kızılırmak River, instead, the picture is once again different. As evidenced by the excavations of Kaman-Kalehöyük (Matsumura 2005: 361-364), Porsuk-Zeyve Höyük (Dupré 1983) and Kınık Höyük (d'Alfonso, Gorrini, Mora 2014: 574; 2016: 601), the first phase of the Iron Age seems to maintain a continuity with the central Anatolian pottery production of the Late Bronze Age, including wheelmade and neckless cooking pots with external thickened rim.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Even though the 13<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC are still currently a hazy period in the historical reconstruction of north-central Anatolia, accentuating any potential signs of change, what becomes clear from the observations on archaeological data, including the kitchenware and fire installations, is that the Hittite capital and its region located inside the bend of Kızılırmak river was not suddenly destroyed and abandoned, falling into a long dark period, but rather experienced a phase of transformation. In this change, culinary practices must also be included.

During the Late Bronze Age, fire installations, mainly represented by multifunctional circular hearths, cooking pot supports, and dome ovens, tended to a sort of typological 'homogenisation', which in some ways seems to go hand-in-hand with that of pottery production (Schoop 2009; 2011; Mielke 2017), including kitchenware set.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Greater morphological variability is documented for the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. Horseshoe-shaped hearths, double chamber hearths, andirons, and cooking pots with support directly attached to the base have been discovered in several sites of the Anatolian Plateau (Ökse, Görmüş, Kaymak 2015; Aquilano 2017). Similar examples, such as the andirons and the two globular pots with a

The latter is composed of neckless pots with an externally thickened rim, suitable for cooking soups and stews, and the so-called Hittite baking plates, a multifunctional tool for frying and toasting various foods, most likely including unleavened bread (Orsi, Volante, D'Agostino 2023).

This trend of 'homogenisation' came to a standstill in the subsequent Early and Middle Iron Ages, when elements of new material and culinary culture seemed to emerge. Indeed, although there is no clear break in the faunal and botanical assemblages between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC<sup>22</sup> and people continued to eat stewed, boiled, and roasted vegetable-based meals (wheat, barley, emmer, and legumes), as well as roasted and blanched meat less frequently, the Iron Age cooking tools highlight some differences in comparison to the Late Bronze Age ones. The disappearance of the so-called Hittite baking plates after the fall of the Hittite empire, and the spread of different types of cooking instruments such as horseshoe-shaped hearths and collared cooking pots are the signal of change in the cooking practices between the Bronze and Iron Ages. Specifically, the discovery of a *tandır* in the Middle Iron Age levels at Uşaklı Höyük could be proof of another way of baking unleavened bread, replacing the Hittite baking plate in this function.

Looking at the neighbouring regions, which had experienced Hittite political and cultural influence during the Late Bronze Age, the cooking tools changed drastically from the previous period and do not display new typological ties with those of north-central Anatolia during the Iron Age, but a local development. In fact, the case of Gordion (central-western Anatolia) seems to show local development, marked by different cooking pots and a rather standardised cooking set of fire installations. On the other hand, the southern Anatolian plateau shows more continuity with the Late Bronze Age tradition.

At the current state of research, based on historical and archaeological data available for north-central Anatolia, it is difficult to establish whether ancient traditions and aspects of daily life have been preserved for centuries in some groups located on the margins of a state and a society aimed at 'integration' like the Hittite one. However, since cooking tools are traditional artefacts reluctant to change, the permanence of some of these instruments, the modification of others, and their production at least during the Early Iron Age at a household level<sup>23</sup> suggest that who moved and/or stayed to fill the void, left by the abandonment of Hittite public institutions, reorganised their foodways to the new socio-economic reality during the Iron Age.

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support directly attached to the base coming from Alaca Höyük (Kosay, Akok 1966: Pl. 16 and 106, 1973: Pl. XXXII, LXXIII and XXXVII), can also be assigned to the Late Bronze Age. However, they compose a very small group and come from dubious contexts or date to the transition phase between the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

<sup>22</sup> For a more thorough picture of the outcomes of the archaeobotanical analyses carried out at the main archaeological sites in the north-central Anatolian region (Boğazköy, Çadır Höyük, Kuşaklı-Sarissa), see Diffey, Neef, Bogaard 2017; Diffey *et al.* 2020; Ross *et al.* 2019; and Pasternak 1999a; 1999b.

<sup>23</sup> A similar situation can be observed in the northern frontier area of the Neo Assyrian kingdom, see D'Agostino 2016.



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