

## CONSIDERING THE REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE PARTHIAN FINE POTTERY

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### Introduction

It is possible to understand the characteristics of the Parthian ceramics in Iran, since they were regularly researched by E. Haerinck [Haerinck 1983]. The Parthian ceramics in Mesopotamia was also studied a little prior to the Parthian pottery in Iran [Debevoise 1934; Day 1940]. It can be considered that a relatively large amount of general information regarding the Parthian pottery is available. However, new information regarding the Parthian material culture has not been published in recent times and it is not certain whether the study on this subject matter is in process. Hence, it is essential to compare the widely distributed Parthian pottery (fine ceramics) with the indigenous Parthian coarse pottery.

The author has excavated the Parthian and Sasanian period site since the year 2001. This paper provides a provisional consideration before the authoritative report.

Although, it is well known that the Parthian material culture included the Hellenic group material culture, it is evident that it was influenced by the Iranian indigenous material culture. It also included the Mesopotamian group material culture. In order to understand the regional difference and the historical transformation of the Parthian culture, which was created by the harmonious union of the Greek, Iranian, and Mesopotamian culture, it is important to accurately classify the Parthian pottery, which is most commonly excavated.

Haerinck divided Iran during the Parthian period into nine archaeological areas, expounding on each regional difference. He particularly referred to the distribution of the Parthian fine cup-shaped pottery [Haerinck 1983:24]. The author also considered the distribution and the classification of the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery, which extended right from Iran to Syria in the 2nd and 1st millennium B.C. [Adachi 1997]. By comparing and reconsidering both Haerinck's and Adachi's studies, it is possible to study the transformation of the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery from 2nd millennium B.C. to 3rd century A.D in Iran.

This fine carinated cup-shaped pottery is believed to have a certain type of common ware shape which was in existence since the prehistoric period in West Asia. Therefore, studying the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery is extremely useful in understanding the regional relationships through the West Asian ceramic history. This shape of ware, commonly referred to as a Fiala cup not only in West Asia but also in Greece, existed in the shape of a wide sphere. It can be suggested that the fine carinated vessels are regarded as one of the suitable material cultures that examine the regional differences in the Hellenistic ceramic culture.

This paper shows the regional differences in the Parthian fine pottery group, while comparing new materials from Tappe Jalaliye, Gilan, Iran [Ohtsu et.al 2004a], and Adachi's chronology regarding the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery [Adachi 1997] with Haerinck's viewpoints [Haerinck 1983].

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### Classification of the Fine Carinated Cup-shaped Pottery in West Asia before the Parthian period

The fine pottery analyzed in this paper is the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery, which is a certain type of cup with a flared rim, neck, and a carination on the body. Although this shape of ware is commonly referred to as the fiala cup around Greece, it was distributed not only in Greece but also in West Asia. The relationship between the shape of the ware and the ancient Greek world is an interesting archaeological problem. However, this paper will not refer to the fiala cup in order to focus on the analysis of the Iranian ceramics.

In one case, the author divided the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery of the Iron Age in West Asia into three groups: the Iran-Iraq Group, the Palestine Group, and the Syria Group based on the analysis of the clay, the decorations, and the sizes. He suggested that the Iran-Iraq Group and the Palestine Group were technologically different from the Syria Group (Fig. 1) [Adachi 1997]. Besides, the Iran-Iraq Group had three distinct characteristics. They were as follows: (1) Their bodies were

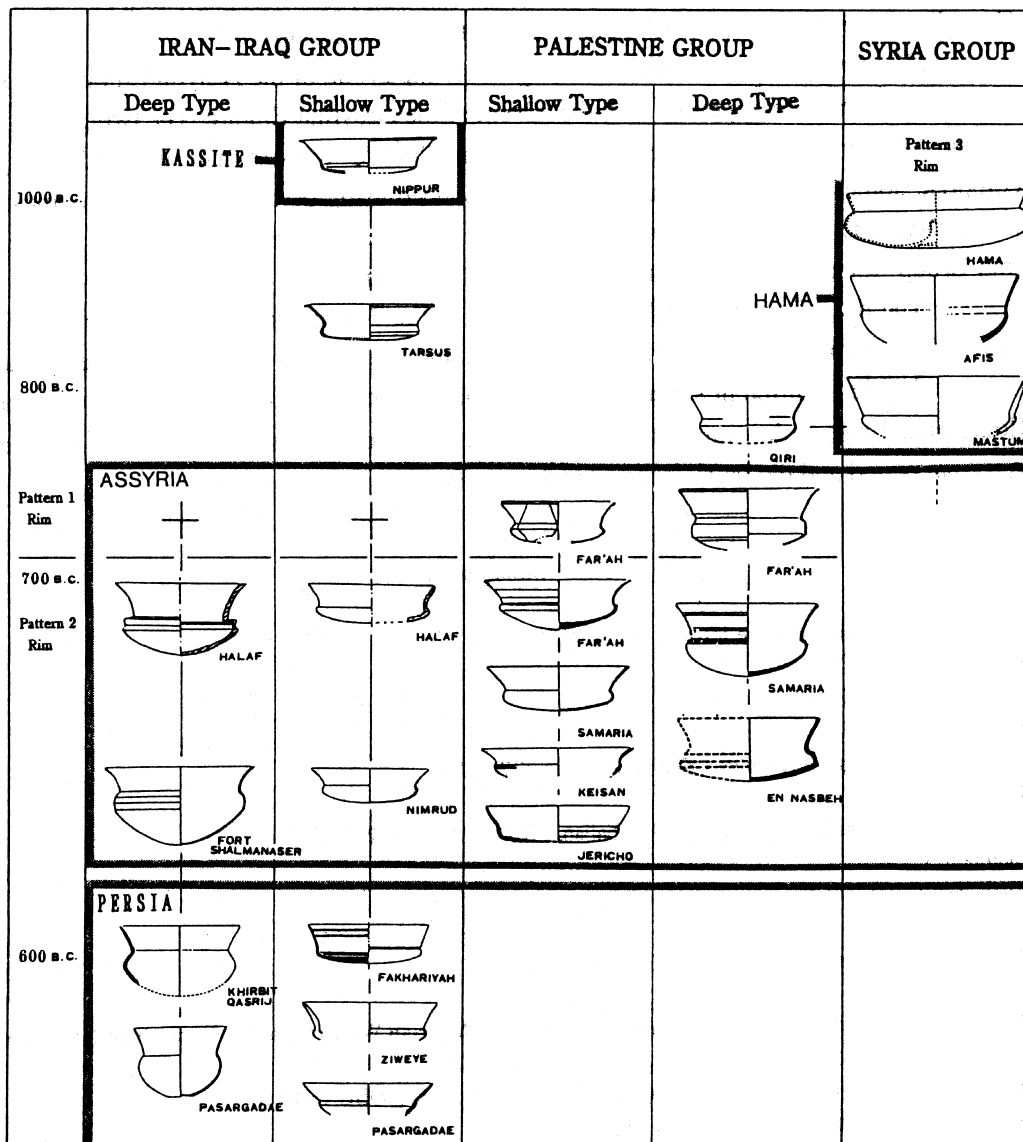


Fig. 1 The Chronology of the Fine Cup-shaped Pottery in West Asia [Adachi 1997: Fig. 8]

mostly made of buff, (2) the materials from Iran were usually painted and, (3) deeper cup-shaped pottery, the rate of diameter growth of which is less than 2.5, appeared from 8th century B.C. in Iran [Adachi 1997].

In this paper, the Parthian fine carinated cup-shaped pottery is analyzed according to the Haerinck classifications and its historical transformation as regards the shape is considered when comparing the pottery with new evidences from Tappe Jalaliye.

### The Haerinck classification of the Parthian fine ceramics

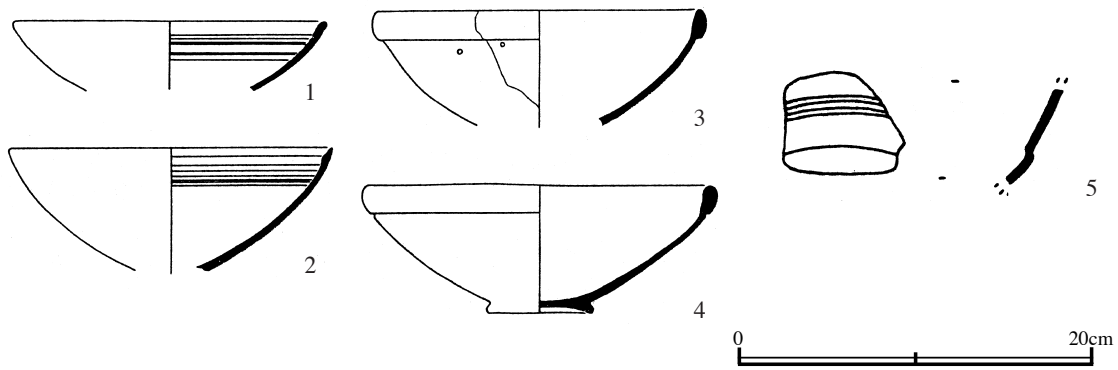
This section introduces the Haerinck classification [Haerinck 1983].

#### 1. Clinky Ware [Haerinck 1983: 100–106]

Clinky Ware refers to fine ceramics that have a hard body and that were distributed in south-eastern Iran (Fig. 2, 3). It was so named because of the clink sound that was generated when an impact was made on the ceramics. Clinky Ware appeared around 150 B.C. when painted pottery (Festoon Ware) ceased to exist. Clinky Ware is occasionally referred to as Cinnamon Ware. It consists of various ware items such as cups, plates, jars, and jugs. They are commonly used to identify Parthian ceramics in order to easily distinguish them from the ceramics belonging to other periods. T. C. Young initially named these various ware items as Clinky Ware [Young 1966]. This term is quite well-known since D. Stronach used it when he reported the excavations at Tepe Nush-i Jan [Stronach 1968, 69]. The inner body is gray and both inner and outer surfaces are orange in color. The section appears to have a sandwich-like shape. Occasionally, the outer surface appears to be decorated with some indentions.



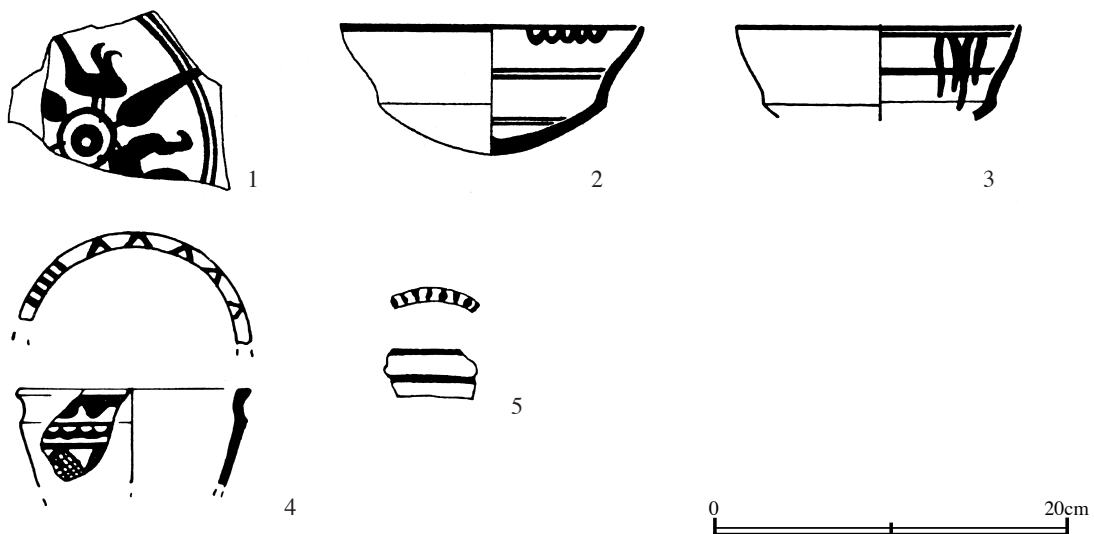
**Fig. 2** The Distribution of the Haerinck's Classification of the Parthian Fine Ceramics [referred to Haerinck 1983: 240–247]



**Fig. 3** Clinky Ware (1–4: Nush-i Jan [Stronach 1969: Fig. 6: 12–15]; 5: Jannatabad [Haerinck 1983: Fig. 15: 11])

## 2. Festoon Ware [Haerinck 1983: 98–100]

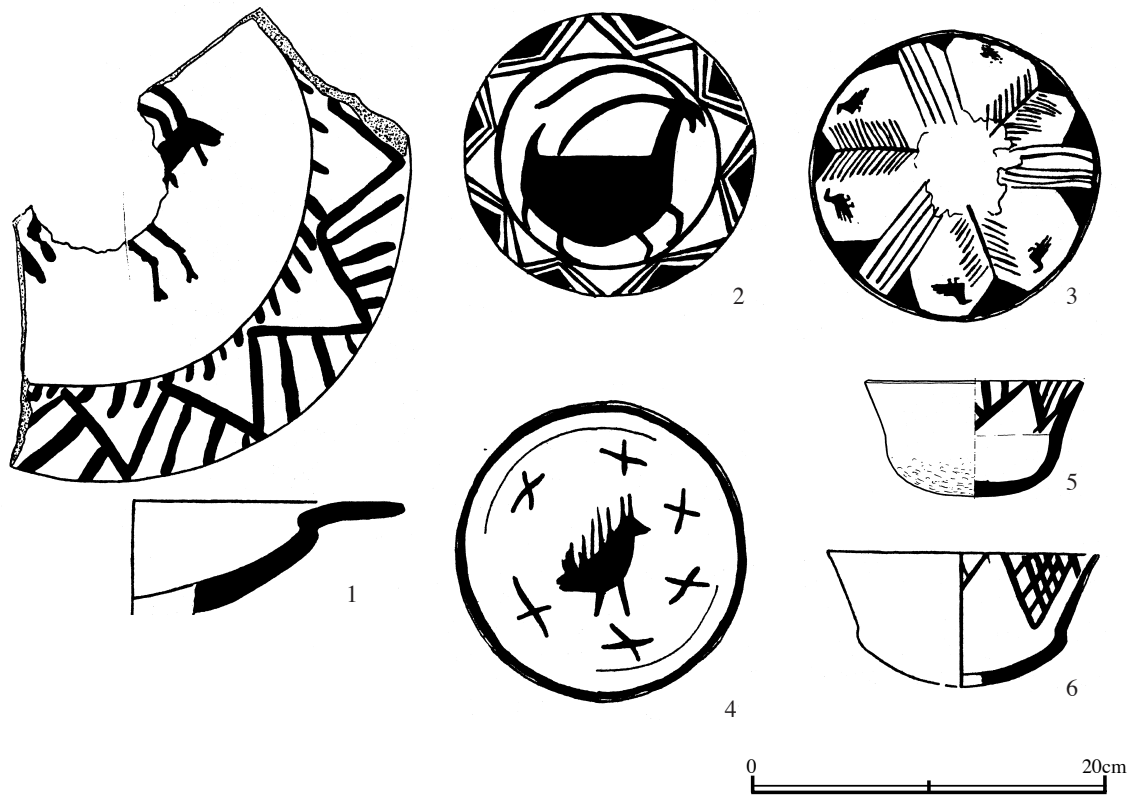
Festoon Ware, which appeared prior to Clinky Ware, was distributed in the southwestern region of Iran (Fig. 2). Its appearance dates back to the Achaemenid period. Their bodies of the pottery are buff-orange in color and they were painted with either brown or black designs (Fig. 4). Generally, the painted designs included festoons, triangles, horizontal and pendant designs, and occasionally, bird-shaped and flower-shaped designs. The ware items include jars, cups, and so on.



**Fig. 4** Festoon Ware (1–3: Nush-i Jan [Stronach 1974: Pl. LV: 7–9]; 4: Masjid-i Soleiman [Haerinck 1983: Fig. 2: 1]; 5: Bard-i Neshandeh [Haerinck 1983: Fig. 7])

## 3. Ardabil Style [Haerinck 1983: 127–131]

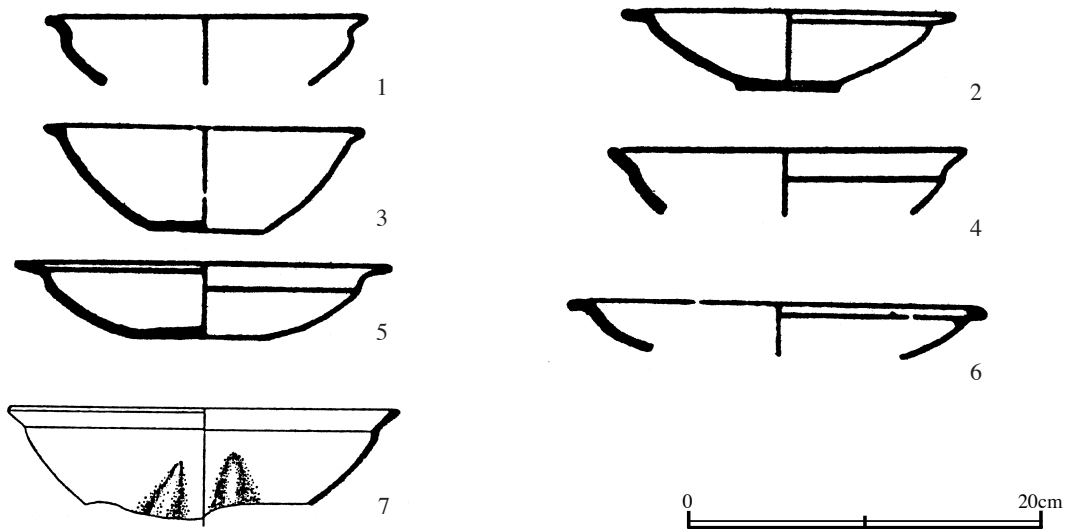
This refers to the style of ceramics that were distributed in the north-western region of Iran (Fig. 2) and which ceased to exist around 100 B.C. These were also observed during the Achaemenid period. The pottery was covered with either cream or beige slip and was painted with geometric, bird-shaped, or deer-shaped designs. A geometric design filling cross-hatched with triangles was the most common decoration, painted in either red or brown on the surface (Fig. 5: 1–4). The ware items included jars and rhytons with double handles, and so on.



**Fig. 5** Ardebir Style (1-4) and Triangle Ware (5, 6), (1, 5, 6: scale=1:4; 2-4: scale unknown)  
 (1, 6: Yanik Tepe [Burney 1962: Pl. XLV: 33, 36]; 2-5 [Haerinck 1978: Fig. 4: 1, 4, 6, Fig. 6])

**4. Triangle Ware** [Haerinck 1978: 84-85; Haerinck 1983: 130]

Triangle Ware is a carinated or slightly carinated profile, painted hanging cross-hatched or hatched triangles (Fig. 5: 5, 6). Haerinck suggested that Triangle Ware and Ardebir style were contemporary, belonging mainly to the 5th - 2nd century B.C., since a bowl of Triangle Ware was



**Fig. 6** Mottled Ware (1-6: Scale unknown; 7: Scale 1: 4)  
 [1-6: Deshayes 1976: Fig. 10: 3-8; 7: Hansman and Stronach 1970: Fig. 14:6]

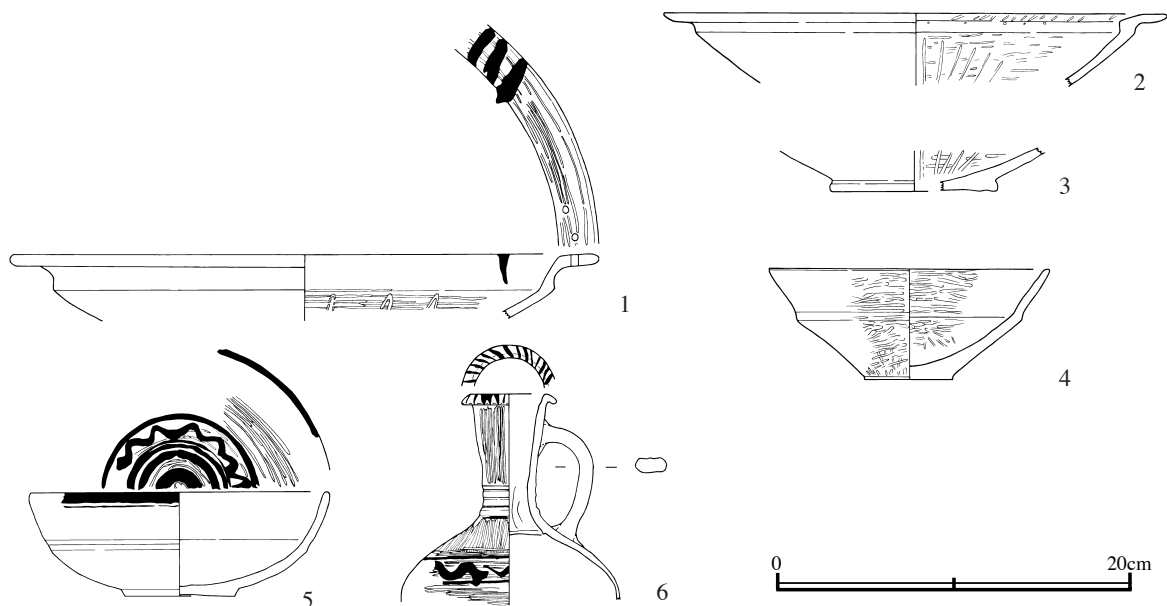
found in the same level as the Ardebir style bowl in Yanik Tepe (Burney 1962). Yanik Tepe is the southwestern limit of Ardebir Style and the northwestern border of Triangle Ware (Haerinck 1983: 85).

### 5. Mottled Ware [Haerinck 1983: 196–200]

Mottled Ware was distributed in the north eastern region of Iran (Fig. 2). Stronach coined the term, since the ware items were covered with mottled decorations. Meanwhile, Haerinck referred to them as “Ceramique sonore” because in case of an impact, the ceramics generated clink sounds similar to the Clinky Ware. The mottled decorations were usually observed on the inner surface of the ware vessels, the common color being gray (Fig. 6). However, occasionally they did not exist. The body color varies from orange to red. However, the section with a sandwich-like shape is not observed in Mottled Ware. The ware vessels include shallow bowls, cups, and so on. Although, both Mottled Ware and Clinky Ware have the clinking and hard body characteristics, it is easy to distinguish them from each other as they have different body colors and surface decorations. The Mottled Ware, which was excavated in the Seleucid layer in Turung Tappe, was also used since the early Parthian period.

### The Fine Carinated Cup-shaped Pottery Found at Tappe Jalaliye Layer I (Fig. 7).

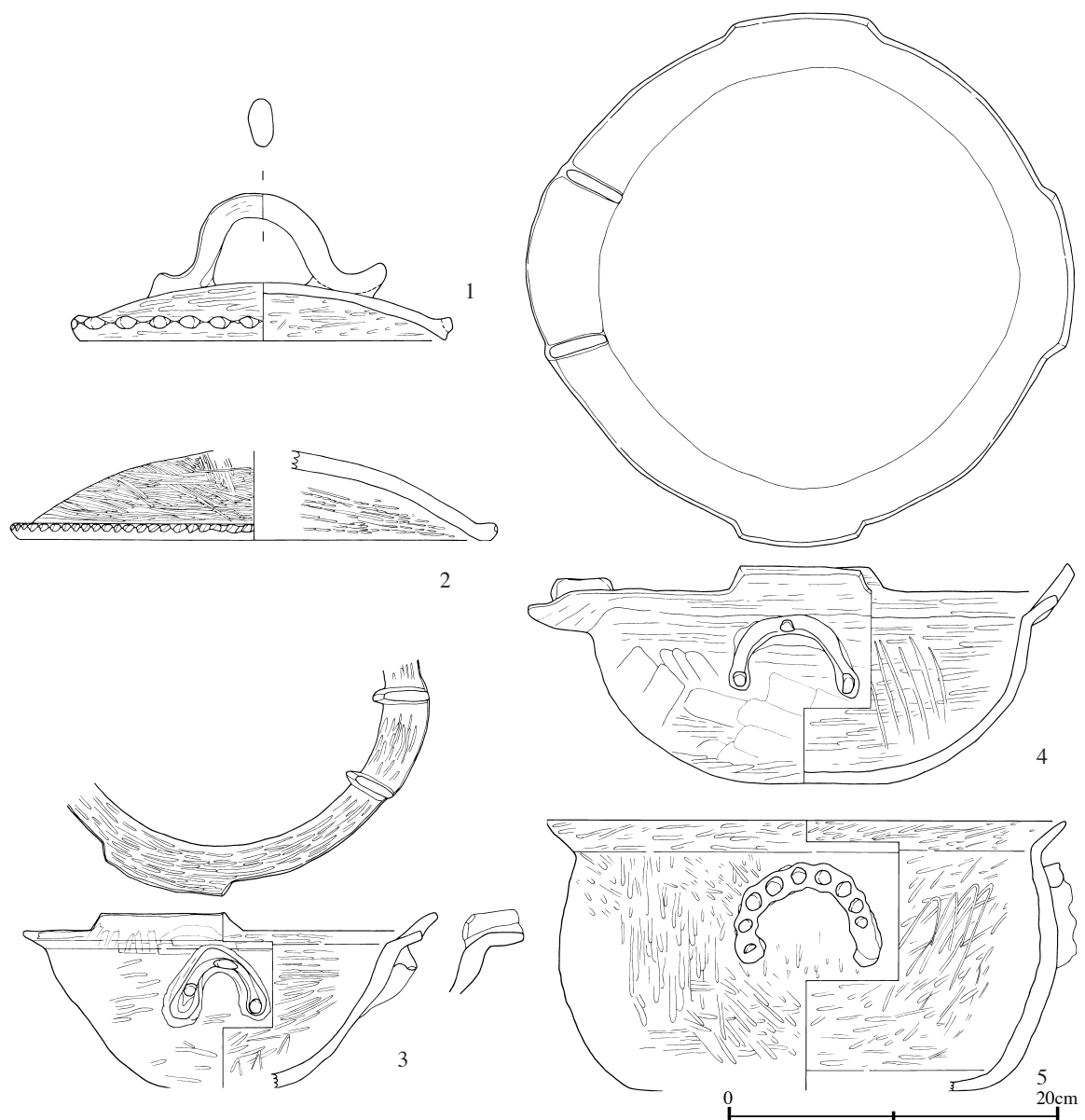
Tappe Jalaliye is located in the Gilan provenance, north of Iran. This site belongs to the Kaluraz site, which was excavated by Hakkemi in 1960's [Hakkemi 1968]. The Noruz-Mahaleh and the Hassani-Mahale sites belong to the Parthian sites in the Gilan provenance. These were excavated by the University of Tokyo in the 1950s and the 1960s. Thus far, it was believed that the four fine ceramic groups of the Haerinck classifications mentioned above (Clinky Ware, Festoon Ware, Ardabir style, Triangle Ware and Mottled Ware) were not distributed in the Gilan provenance. Tappe Jalaliye is extremely unique as it is an artificial mound and a settlement site. Such a site, has rarely been discovered in the Gilan provenance, having been expected to make a material chronology in the surrounding areas by means of the stratigraphy. A certain type of fine pottery was excavated in Layer



**Fig. 7** The Parthian Fine Pottery from Tappe Jalaliye I  
[1–6: Ohtsu *et al.* 2004a: Fig: 143: 11, Fig, 145:44,45, Fig. 143:10, 9]

I at Tappe Jalaliye (Fig. 7) and the body, finishing, and decorations of the fine pottery were different from those of coarse pottery excavated from Layer I at Tappe Jalaliye. The ware items of the fine pottery include small jars (jugs), cups, shallow bowls, and so on. Painted decorations are observed on the surface of three ware items. The painted decorations consist of festoon and pendant designs (Fig. 7: 5, 6), which are identical to the ones observed on Festoon Ware (Fig. 4). In addition, the characteristic painted decorations observed on the rim of the small jar excavated from Tappe Jalaliye Layer I (Fig. 7: 6), can also be observed on the materials belonging to Festoon Ware (Fig. 4: 4, 5).

The cup-shaped pottery items found at Tappe Jalaliye Layer I have a flat base and their bodies are accurately carinated. Burnishes in a radial pattern are frequently observed on the inner surface (Fig. 7: 1–3). Such cup-shaped pottery can be found in the Mottled Ware.



**Fig. 8** The Parthian Coarse Pottery (Cooking Pot with Lid) from Tappe Jalaliye I [1–5: Ohtsu *et al.* 2004a: Fig: 144: 30, 28, 32, 35, 33]

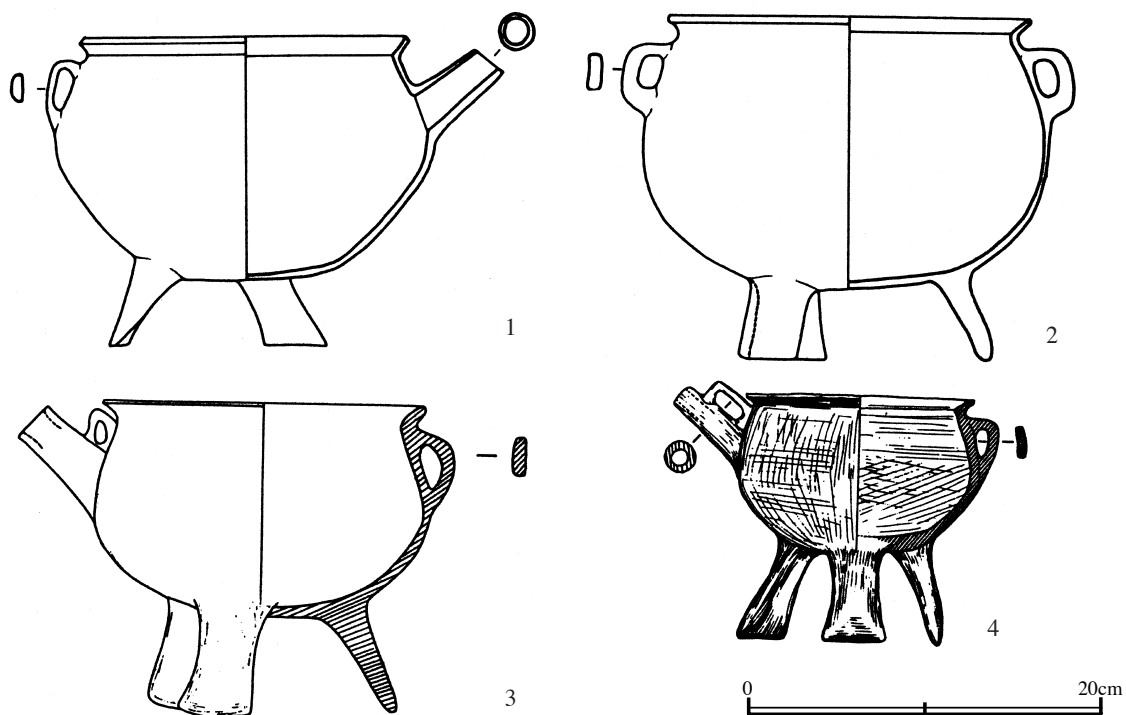


### Considering the date of Tappe Jalaliye Layer I

The University of Tokyo excavated some sites in the Gilan provenance where Tappe Jalaliye is located. Tappe Jalaliye is located in the Rostam-Abad basin through which the Sefid river flows in the eastern region of the Gilan provenance. Certain sites excavated by the University of Tokyo are located in the Dailaman basin east of the Sefid river. A comparison of the materials from Tappe Jalaliye with the ones from these sites in the Dailaman basin is extremely useful because the Rostam-Abad basin and the Dailaman basin are situated in close proximity to one another. However, it is extremely difficult to find any similarity between the Parthian materials from the Dailaman basin and the ones from Tappe Jalaliye Layer I.

The Noruz-mahale and the Hassani-mahale sites in the Dailaman basin were identified as sites belonging to the late Parthian period by the University of Tokyo. A characteristic of Parthian pottery excavated from these sites is the three legged bowl-shaped pottery, three legs of which are shaped in the form of a spatula (Fig. 9). Thus far, the existence of the three legged bowl-shaped pottery has not been observed in Tappe Jalaliye and in the areas surrounding Tappe Jalaliye where an archaeological survey was extensively carried out for three seasons. Considerable quantities of materials were picked from these sites [Ohtsu *et al.* 2003, 2004a, b]. Although it is possible that the three legged bowl-shaped pottery may be found in the areas surrounding Tappe Jalaliye in the future, it is necessary to highlight the fact that the Rostam-Abad basin has fewer late Parthian sites as compared to the Dailaman basin.

Tappe Jalaliye Layer I dates back to the Parthian period due to the existence of the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery that is analyzed in this paper. As mentioned in the preceding section, the painted designs of the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery at Tappe Jalaliye Layer I can be observed in Festoon



**Fig. 9** Three Legged Bowl-shaped Pottery from the Delaman Basin  
 (1, 2: Hassani mahale [Sono *et al.* 1968: Pl. LXII: 2; Pl. LXXVI: 2];  
 3, 4: Noruz mahale [Egami *et al.* 1966: Pl. XXXVII: 4; Pl. XXXIX:12])



	Period	South-west	West	North-west	North-east	North (Gilan)	Fine Pottery
B.C. 250	Early	Susa Apadana 5e Bard-i Neshandeh Masdjid-i Soleiman		Yanik Tepe		Tappe Jalaliye I	Painted Body Cluster Ardabir Style Triangle Ware Festoon Ware
B.C. 150			Nush-i Jan		Tureng Tappe VB Shahr-i Qumis		
0	(Middle)	Susa A VI Apadana 5d-c		Germi			Hard Body Cluster Mottled Ware Clinky Ware
250	Late (Late)	Susa A V Apadana 5b-a			Tureng Tappe VC	Noruz-mahale Hassani-mahale	

Fig. 10 Chronology of the Parthian sites and Fine Pottery in Iran

Ware and their ware shapes can be done in the Mottled Ware. It would be appropriate to date back the Tappe Jalaliye Layer I to the early Parthian period since Festoon Ware and Mottled Ware were dated back to the early Parthian period by Haerinck (Fig. 10).

The fine carinated cup-shaped pottery of Tappe Jalaliye was not excavated at the Dailaman sites. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that cooking-pot-shaped pottery with lid (Fig. 8), which was most commonly found at Tappe Jalaliye Layer I, was not excavated from the Dailaman sites. It is essential to recognize there exist apparent differences between the early Parthian materials from Tappe Jalaliye Layer I and the late Parthian materials from the Dailaman sites although Tappe Jalaliye, which is a settlement site, and the Dailaman sites, which are graveyards, cannot be considered from the same viewpoint.

### Discussion

There exist at least four Parthian fine pottery groups classified by Haerinck, and the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery existed among these groups. The cup-shaped pottery is believed to have been derived from either the Syrian or the Mesopotamian pottery group since it is not commonly found in the 2nd Millennium in Iran. The fine cup-shaped pottery was also used during the early 1st millennium in Iran. The cup-shaped pottery was used as a typical shape of ware even in the Achaemenid period [Stern 1982]. It was more commonly used during the Parthian period.

The Parthian fine pottery groups are divided into at least two main clusters: a hard body cluster (Clinky Ware, Mottled Ware) and a painted body cluster (Ardabir style, Triangle Ware, Festoon Ware). The two clusters of fine pottery in the Parthian period which consist of five groups have cup-shaped pottery each other (Fig. 10). Their distribution was studied by Haerinck (Haerinck 1983).

It is noteworthy that the fine pottery from Tappe Jalaliye Layer I suggests the presence of certain characteristics of both Festoon Ware and Mottled Ware. If the fine pottery from Tappe Jalaliye I belonged to the Festoon Ware group, the distribution map drawn by Haerinck would extend northward (Fig. 11). However, the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery excavated from this site has a flat base. An identical shape of the ware has not been observed in Festoon Ware. Since the Mottled Ware group, which was distributed in the northeastern region of Iran, has ware with a similar shape and a flat base, it is certain, that it was influenced from the Mottled Ware.

Although several materials of the Mottled Ware were excavated from the Parthian layers at Tureng Tappe, they were reported only in the initial stages [Deshayes 1976]. Therefore, it is difficult to compare the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery from Tureng Tappe with the one from Tappe Jalaliye



**Fig. 11** The Tentative Distribution Map of the Parthian Fine Ceramics

at present. If the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery from Tappe Jalaliye belonged to the Mottled Ware group, the distribution of Mottled Ware would extend westward (Fig. 11).

### Conclusion

After this paper reported that the Parthian fine pottery included the fine carinated cup-shaped pottery that was classified into two clusters and five groups, it highlighted that the new fine carinated cup-shaped pottery, which did not belong to these clusters and groups was found at Tappe Jalaliye Layer I. It would be appropriate to regard the new fine carinated cup-shaped pottery as a fusion group between Festoon Ware and Mottled Ware. Since both Festoon Ware and Mottled Ware are fine pottery groups, which existed before the Parthian foundation, it is important to study them in order to understand the formation of the Parthian fine pottery culture. The fusion group can be observed in Tappe Jalaliye, which is located at a central geological area situated between the sites where the Festoon Ware and the Mottled Ware are distributed. Therefore, it is believed, that a certain type of information exchange existed in the central area (Fig. 11).

Although, the Rostam-Abad basin in the Gilan provenance where Tappe Jalaliye is located was believed to have been a geological and cultural frontier of the Parthian empire, the existence of a pottery cultural contact can be observed even during the early Parthian period. It is important to continue excavating at Tappe Jalaliye in considering significance of the new fine carinated cup-shaped pottery group to reconstruct the Parthian ceramic history.

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