

ANOTHER EARLY VINČA SETTLEMENT FROM TRANSYLVANIA

Florina Maria NIȚU*

Abstract: By reanalyzing the ceramic material from Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor archaeological site, Sibiu county (archaeological research led by Iuliu Paul between 1959 and 1960) we've noticed, on one side, the lack of Turdaș elements and on the other side, the presence of a rich lot of ceramic material belonging to Vinča culture, phase A₃.

Keywords: neolithic, Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor, Vinča culture, pottery.

Rezumat: Reanalizând materialului ceramic din situl de la Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor, jud. Sibiu (cercetări arheologice conduse de Iuliu Paul în anii 1959-1960) am constatat lipsa elementelor Turdaș și prezența, în schimb, a unui lot consistent de material ceramic aparținând culturii Vinča, faza A₃.

Cuvinte cheie: neolitic, Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor, cultura Vinča, ceramică.

I. General context

The research from Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor (Sibiu County) took place in 1959 and 1960, under Iuliu Paul's direction. As a result of the six sections that were open up during the two years of activity, two research reports were published, presenting a few stratigraphic layers and profiles and little ceramic material. We must mention that the archaeological site has also been cited in the professional literature of the end of 19th century and a first attempt of a thorough archaeological research of the site is related to Nicolae Lupu. In 1954, Nicolae Lupu initiated a research campaign here, but it was abandoned due to unfavourable weather conditions (Paul 1962, p. 193).

In 1959 two sections were open up at Fața Vacilor (I and III) and only one in the point La Roghină (II) (Map 1). By investigating the research performed in 1959, we can say few things about Vinča culture. The sections from Fața Vacilor had the same dimension, 12 x 1 m, and the so-called Turdaș materials were detected only in S1, level 2 (the three levels depicted here were attributed to Petrești culture) (Paul 1962, p. 193-194).

Out of four sections made in 1960, S IV drives our attention. It is considered that in sections S V-VII the culture stratum entirely belongs to Petrești culture; it is only in S IV that a so-called Turdaș level was identified and within it, a pit (Fig. 2).

Taking into account the Turdaș ceramic material discovered, the other two levels were named Turdaș-Petrești and Petrești-Turdaș, respectively (Paul 1970).

The issue of Vinča-Turdaș culture will be solved after 1992, when archaeological research will begin at Turdaș-Luncă site (research carried out between 1992 and 1998 by professor Sabin Luca) (Luca 2001). Given the results obtained here, professor Sabin Luca will demonstrate the inutility of this term, Vinča-Turdaș, and the differences between Vinča and Turdaș culture in a number of studies, articles and books (Luca 1999a; Luca 1999b; Luca 2001, 98-114; Luca 2006; Luca 2006a, 17-21; Luca et al. 2000a; Luca et al. 2000b).

By reanalyzing the archaeological material coming from this site and which is stored at the National Brukenthal Museum, we couldn't identify not even a pot fragment belonging to Turdaș culture; instead, we have discovered a considerable number of ceramic fragments (considerable, if we take into consideration the fact that only representative material was stored in the museum) attributed to Vinča culture. This situation is also confirmed by Cosmin Suci, who in 2008 carried on surface research here. It was then that more ceramic fragments belonging to Vinča culture were found and no Turdaș fragment could be identified (Suci 2009, p. 138-142).

II. Description of the ceramic material

We have found and documented about 150 fragments that are typical of Vinča culture after analyzing the entire material received from Ocna Sibiului-Fața Vacilor. The present work describes

* Brukenthal National Museum,
nina_maria_nitu@yahoo.com

only a part of the analyzed material and a thorough study will be published in the future.

In general, the pottery fragments that were stored are fine or semi-fine, most of them being decorated. The most common decorations are the pleats and the incised dotted band, followed by oval and round impressions, alveolar ornaments and grooves, which are represented in a very small proportion of the total material (only two ceramic fragments).

III. Analogies

All the analogies we can find in Transylvania refer to Miercurea Sibiului-*Petriș* (Suciu 2009) and Romos- *Făgădău* (Luca 1995-1996) sites. This, because all the other excavations in the area haven't been published yet (Paul *et al.* 1999; Paul 2000, nr. 80; Paul 2001, nr. 107; Paul 2002, nr. 131 bis); or they give hardly enough information for a cultural and chronological attribution (Paul 2007).

For plates Pl. 1 and Pl. 4 we find analogies, for morphology and ornaments type, in level IIa1 in pit-house B18 (Suciu 2009, 103-104, Fig. 139-2; 140-4), level IIa2 in pit-house B15 (Suciu 2009, 119, Fig. 171-1) and pit G8 (Suciu 2009, 114, Fig. 159-1,2; 160-5) and in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 129, Fig. 186-2). At Romos we have similar shapes and ornaments too (Luca 1995-1996, 58, 60, Tef. V-7; Tef. III-5). For Pl. 2 we can find analogies in level IIa1, pit-house B12 (Suciu 2009, 97, Fig. 128-1, 2), B4 (Suciu 2009, 92, Fig. 122-10), in level IIa2, pit-house B5 (Suciu 2009, 119, Fig. 171-5) and in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 125, 129, Fig. 178-5; 188-6- represented here like a possible lid) and at Romos (Luca 1995-1996, 58, Tef. III-8). For Pl. 3 we have analogies in level IIa1, in pit-house B18 (Suciu 2009, 104, Fig. 141-1), in level IIa2, pit-house B15 (Suciu 2009, 119, Fig. 171-4) and in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 125, Fig. 179-4). Pl. 4 presents similarities with a few pottery shapes from Romos (Luca 1995-1996, 60- 61, Tef. V-7; VI-11).

Fragments 3-6 from Pl. 5 have analogies in level IIa1, pit-house B18 (Suciu 2009, 104, Fig. 140-6, 7) but also in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 129, Fig. 188-5). Also, we can find analogies at Romos (Luca 1995-1996, 61, Tef. VI-4, 5). In level IIb, house L13, we have analogies for the shape represented in Pl. 5, figure 2 (Suciu 2009, 133, Fig. 195-1, 2) and also in L11 (Suciu 2009, 125, 127, Fig. 178-1, 2; 182-1) and even earlier, in level IIa2, in pit-house B5 (Suciu 2009, 19, Fig. 150-1). For Pl. 6 we find analogies in level IIa2, pit G8 (Suciu 2009, 113, Fig. 157-2) and in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 129, Fig. 188-3). For Pl. 7 we have analogies, from a morphological point of

view, in level IIa1, pit-house B4 (Suciu 2009, 92, Fig. 122-4), pit-house B18 (Suciu 2009, 103, Fig. 138-1) but also in level IIb, house L11 (Suciu 2009, 127, Fig. 183-1)

IV. Final discussions

Although alveolar ornaments are not represented here, we have to take them into consideration. There are three ceramic fragments, all lip fragments, with alveolar ornament very near to the lip. All three of them represent the same type of ornament, E6 (Nițu 2008, Pl. 14).

On the basis of presented elements and similarities with above mentioned Vinča sites from the area and considering the lack of certain A₂ or B₁ elements, we can state that ceramic material from Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor* belongs to Vinča culture, phase A₃.

Ceramic material from this site presents similarities with other Vinča sites from Transylvania, some unpublished but described, others published to the utmost extent possible (Luca 1999a; Luca 1999b; Luca 2000a, Fig. 15-16; Luca 2000b, Abb. 15-16). We refer here to pottery brought to light once again, this time attributed to Vinča culture, from archaeological sites like Limba, Sântimbru-*La Țărmure*, Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii* or Vurpăr (Luca 2000a, 39-40, 45-47). In this context we would like to stress the importance of a reevaluation of pottery came from archaeological sites known as Turdaș. As I already said, it was demonstrated that there are two different cultures, Vinča and Turdaș. Although this was stated a decade ago, we have knowledge of only one so-called Turdaș site republished as Vinča, that from Sebeș-*Podul Pripocului* (Popa, Totoianu 2001). And this is not because there are no other Vinča sites, but maybe because no one is looking in museums' deposits for them.

We also analyzed ceramic material from other sites with Turdaș cultural levels, stored in Brukenthal National Museum deposits. We refer here to Daia Română-*Părăuț* (Alba county) (Paul 1992), Pianul de Jos-*Podeni* (Alba county) (Paul 1969), Răhău-*Dealul Șipotelor* (Alba county) (Horedt *et al.* 1967) and Cașolt-*Maticuta* (Alba county) (Paul 1961) – work in progress, not finished yet). In all these cases we couldn't find not even one Vinča fragment. All these sites, according to material preserved, belong to Turdaș culture (except Cașolt, only partly analyzed).

In conclusion we stress, once more, the importance of investigations carried out in museums' deposits, to clarify what archaeological site belongs to which culture, Vinča or Turdaș.

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ILUSTRATION LIST/ LISTA ILUSTRĂȚIILOR

Map 1. Location of the excavations opened up at Ocna Sibiului archaeological site.

Figure 1. Part of east profile of section SIV, representing the pit.

Plate 1-7. Pottery fragments from Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*.

Harta 1. Amplasarea secțiunilor în situl de la Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*.

Figura 1. Parte a profilului de est a secțiunii SIV, reprezentând bordeiul *Turdaș*.

Planșele 1-7. Ceramică din situl de la Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*.

DESCRIPTION OF FIGURES

Description of pottery: ware type; colour; temper; burning type; surface treatment.

Pl. 1 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča

1. Meter: 1. Depth: 0,35-0,55 m. Description: fine; greyish-black; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

2. Meter: 1. Depth: 0,55-0,75 m. Description: fine; whitish-grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

3. Meter: 7. Depth: 0,75-1,00 m. Description: fine; whitish-grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

4. Meter: 10. Depth: 0,75-1,00 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

5. Meter: 8. Depth: 0,15-0,35 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with incised-dotted band.

Pl. 2 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča

1. Meter: 13. Depth: 0,75-0,95 m. Description: fine; light brown; fine sand; good burning; polished.

2. Meter: 8. Depth: 0,15-0,35 m. Description: semi fine; coffee-colored (interior light brown); sand; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incisions and dots.

3. Meter: 8. Depth: 0,15-0,35. Description: semi fine; brown; sand with big granulation; good burning; smoothed; decorated with dots.

4. Meter: 2. Depth: 0,75-1,00 m. Description: semi fine; whitish-grey; good, reductive burning; fine sand with pounded pottery fragments; polished; decorated with pleats.

5. Meter: 2. Depth: 0,75-1,00 m. Description: semi fine, greyish-black; sand with pounded pottery fragments; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

6. Meter: 2. Depth: 0,35-0,55. Description: fine; greyish-black; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

Pl. 3 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča

1. Meter: 6. Depth: 0,75-1,00 m. Description: fine; greyish-black (grey interior); fine sand; good burning; polished; two fragments.

2. Meter: 28. Depth: 1,00-1,20 m. Description: fine; brown; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.

3. Meter: 11-12. Depth: 1,25-1,50 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
4. Meter: 17. Depth: 1,40-1,60 m. Description: fine; brown (grey interior); fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
5. Meter: 5. Depth: 1,20-1,40 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incised-dotted band.
6. Meter: 11-12. Depth: 1,25-1,50 m. Description: fine; greyish-black (grey interior); fine sand and ochre; good burning; polished; decorated with incised-dotted band.
7. Meter: 28-29. Depth: 1,85-2,00 m. Description: fine; greyish-black; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
8. Meter: 27. Depth: 1,40-1,80 m. Description: semi fine; light brown (whitish-grey interior); sand; good burning; smoothed.

Pl. 4 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča

1. Meter: 14. Depth: 1,20-1,40 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
2. Meter: 25. Depth: 1,80-1,95 m. Description: fine; brown (greyish-black interior); fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
3. Meter: 29. Depth: 1,85-2,00 m. Description: semi fine; whitish-grey; fine sand with pounded pottery fragments; good burning; smoothed; decorated with pleats.
4. Meter: 24. Depth: 1,80-2,00 m. Description: fine; greyish-black; fine sand; good burning; smoothed.

Pl. 5 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča.

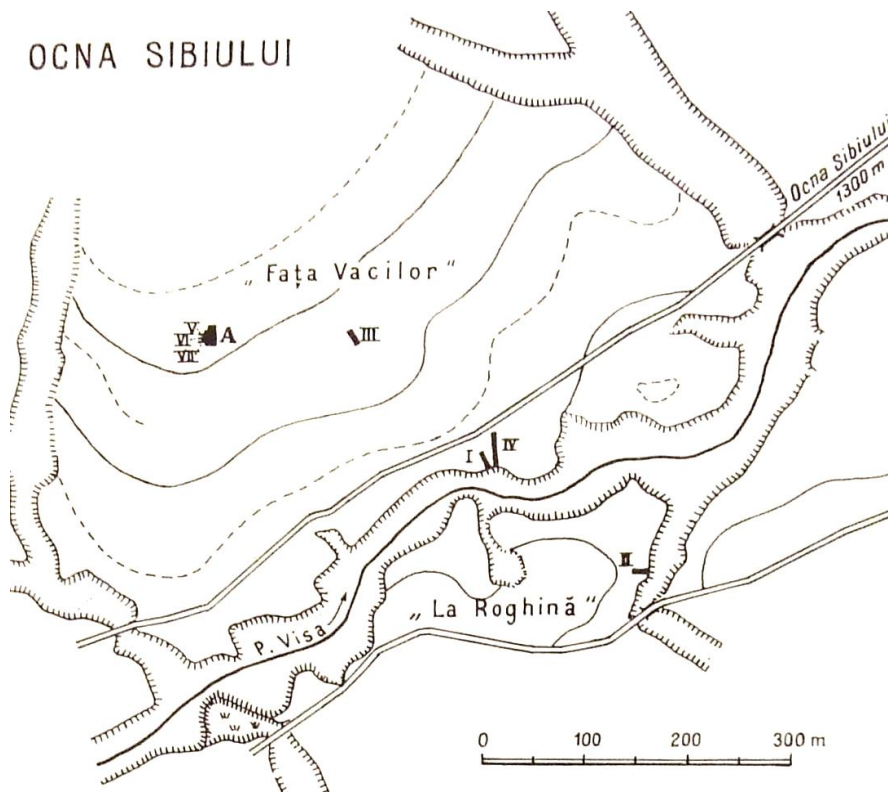
1. Meter: 16. Depth: 1,60-1,80 m. Description: fine; whitish-grey; fine sand; good burning; polished.
2. Meter: 24. Depth: 1,20-1,40 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; polished.
3. Meter: 25. Depth: 1,80-1,95 m. Description: fine; light brown; fine sand; good burning; polished.
4. Meter: 5-6. Depth: 0,10-1,20 m. Description: fine; brick-colored; fine sand; good burning; polished slip, partially preserved.
5. Meter: 15. Depth: 0,55-0,75 m. Description: fine; reddish slip; fine sand; good burning; polished slip, partially preserved.
6. Meter: 1. Depth: 1,00-1,20 m. Description: fine; reddish-brown slip (light brown interior); fine sand; good burning; polished slip, partially preserved.

Pl. 6 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča.

1. Meter: 2. Depth: 1,00-1,20 m. Description: fine; whitish-grey; fine sand; good burning; polished.
2. Meter: 29. Depth: 1,60-1,85 m. Description: fine; light brown (greyish-black interior); fine sand; good burning; polished; decorated with oval marks on rim.
3. Meter: 17. Depth: 1,40-1,60 m. Description: fine; light brown; fine sand and pounded pottery fragments; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incised-dotted band and dots.
4. Meter: 29. Depth: 1,85-2,00 m. Description: semi fine; whitish-grey (grey interior); fine sand and pounded pottery fragments; good burning; smoothed; with two perforations.
5. Meter: 29. Depth: 1,60-1,85 m. Description: coarse; grey (dark brown interior); sand with big granulation and ochre; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incisions and dots.

Pl. 7 Ocna Sibiului-*Fața Vacilor*. Section IV / 1960. Culture: Vinča.

1. Meter: 21. Depth: 1,60-1,80 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incised-dotted band.
2. Meter: 11-12. Depth: 1,50-1,72 m. Description: fine; greyish-black; fine sand; good burning; smoothed; decorated with incised-dotted band.
3. Meter: 29. Depth: 1,85-2,00 m. Description: semi fine; brown (grey interior); sand; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.
4. Meter: 25. Depth: 1,80-1,95 m. Description: fine; grey; fine sand and pounded pottery fragments; good burning; polished; decorated with pleats.



Map 1

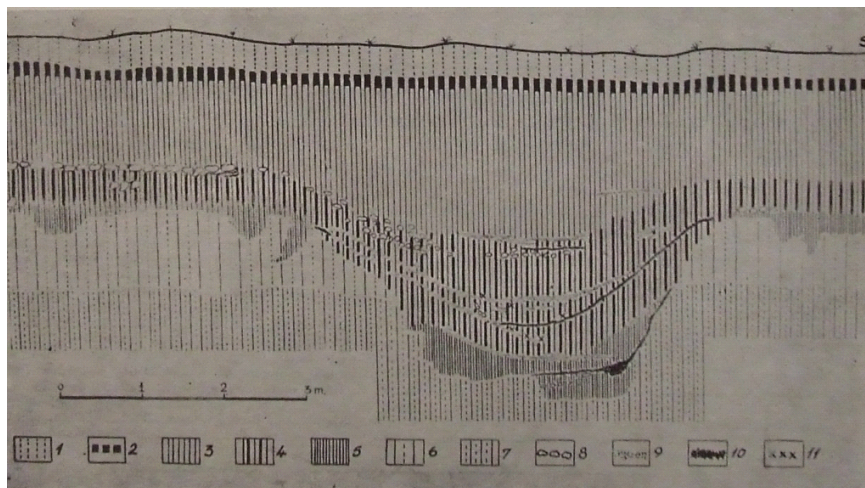


Figure 1

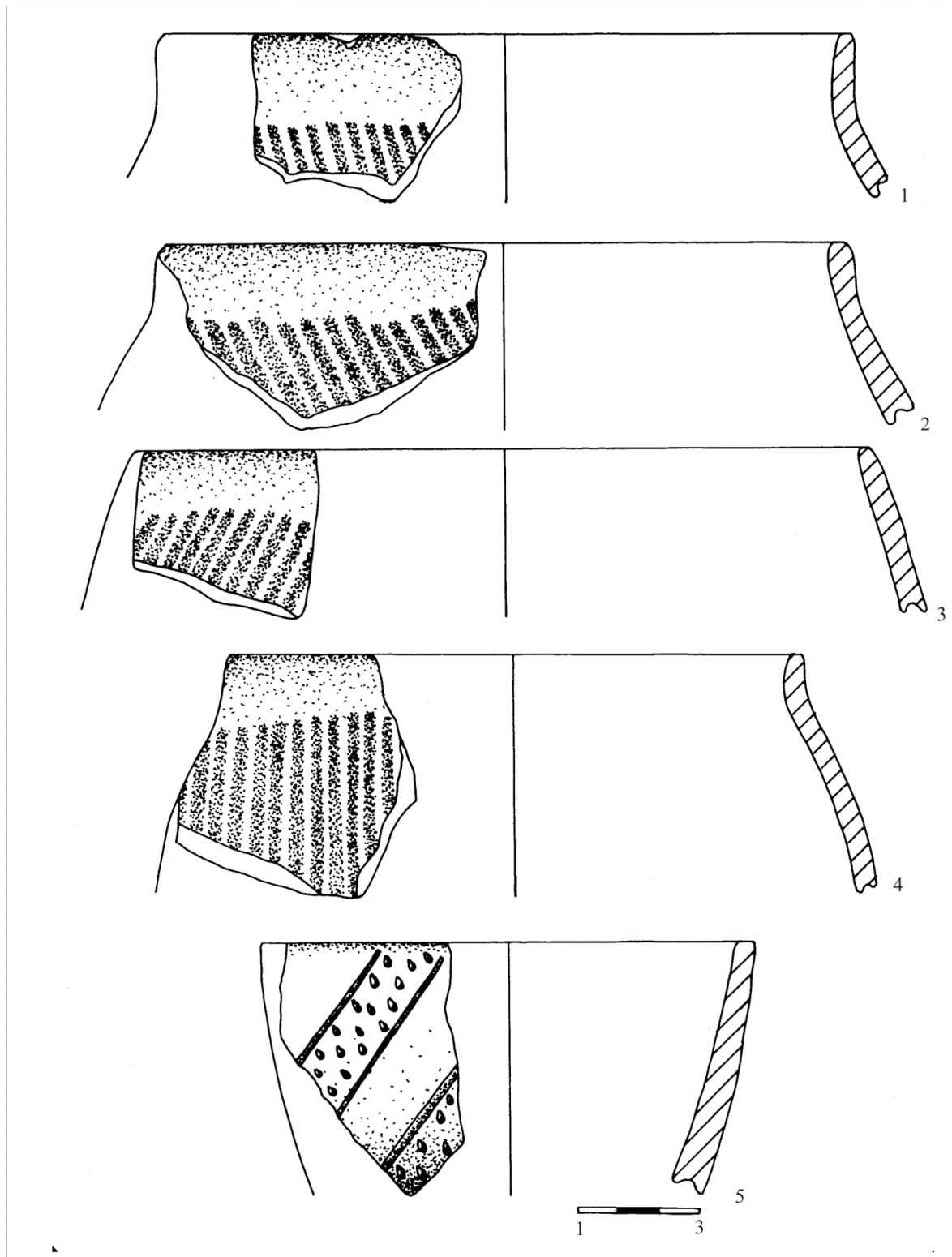


Plate 1

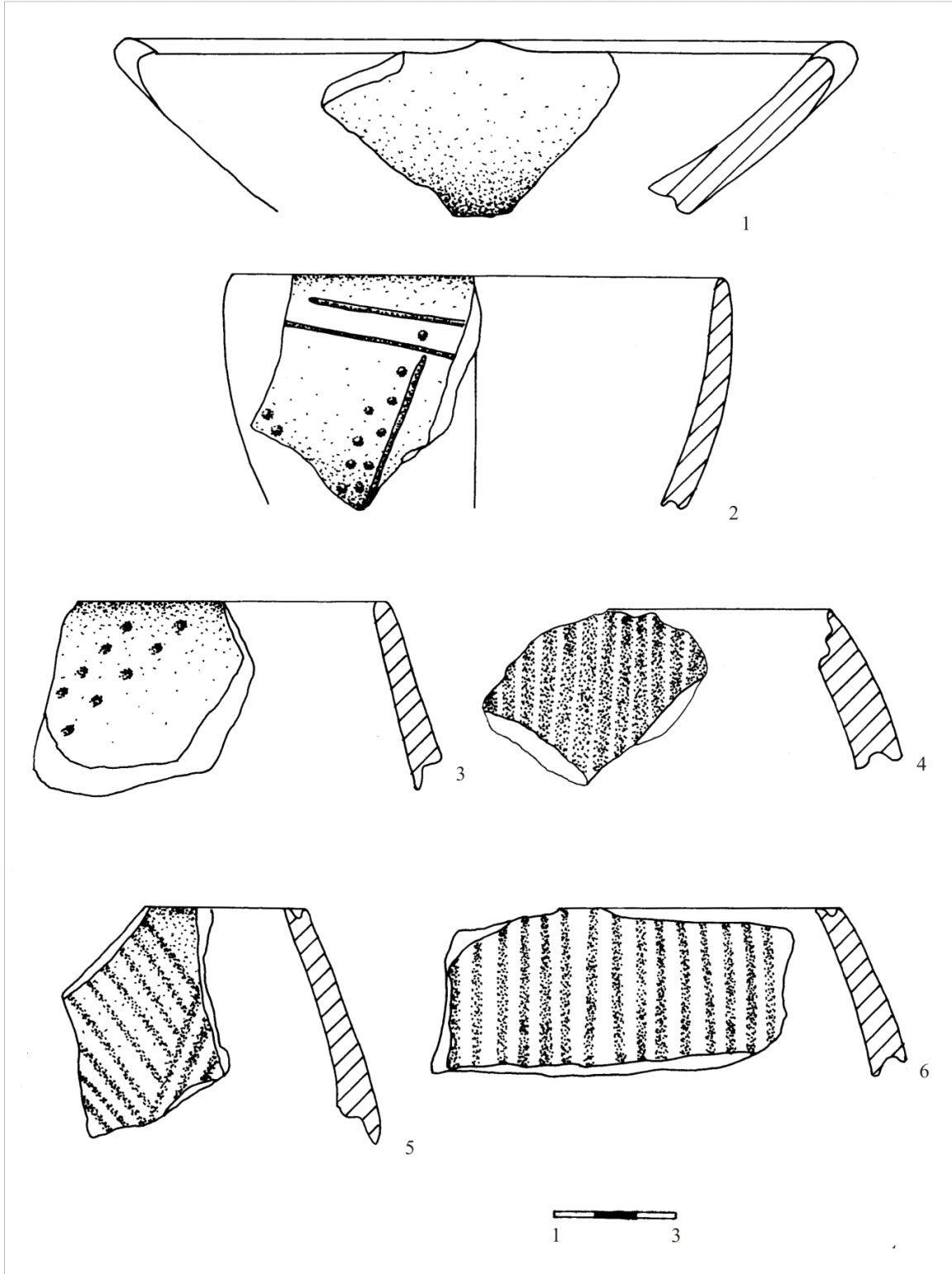


Plate 2

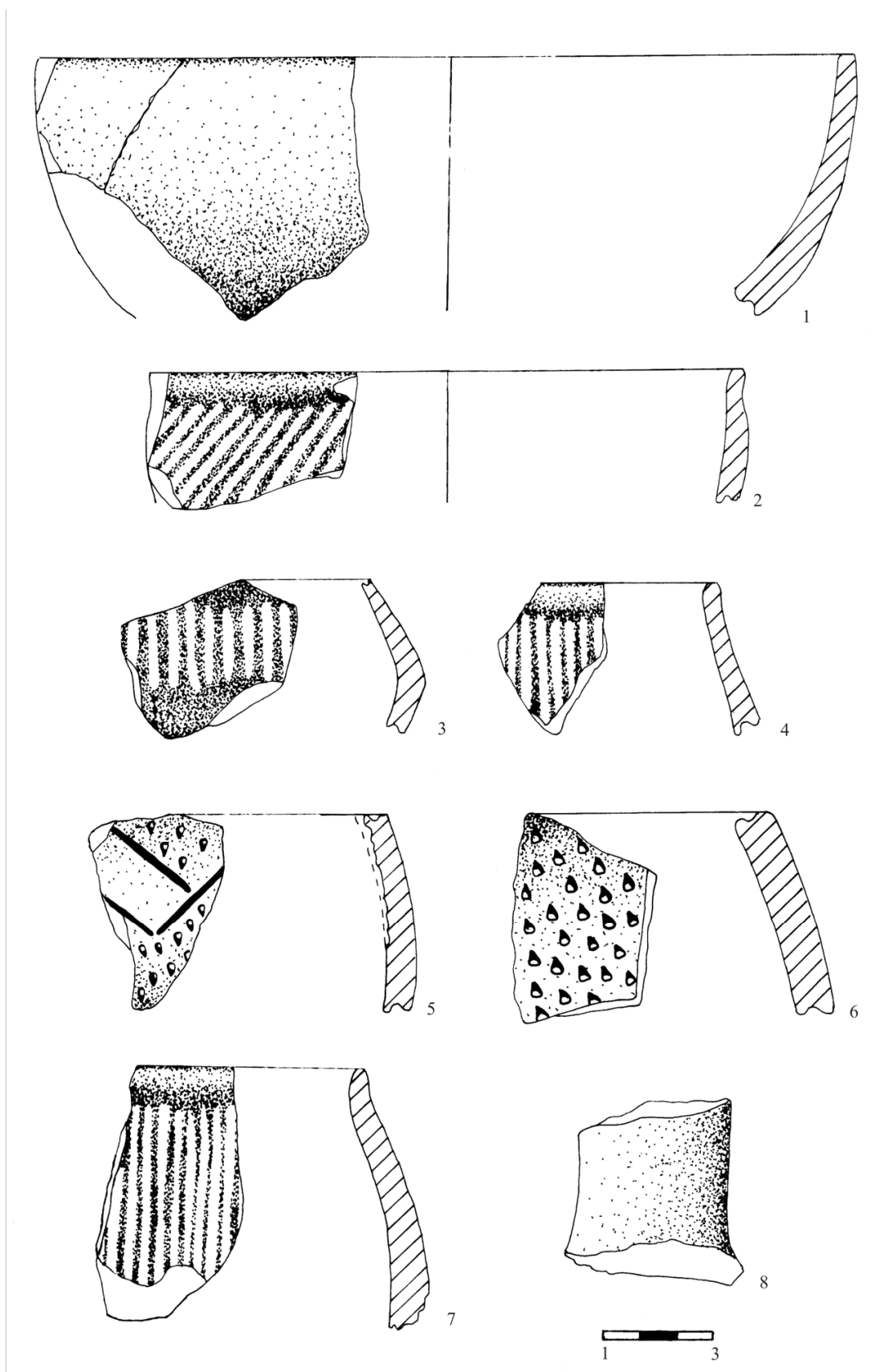


Plate 3

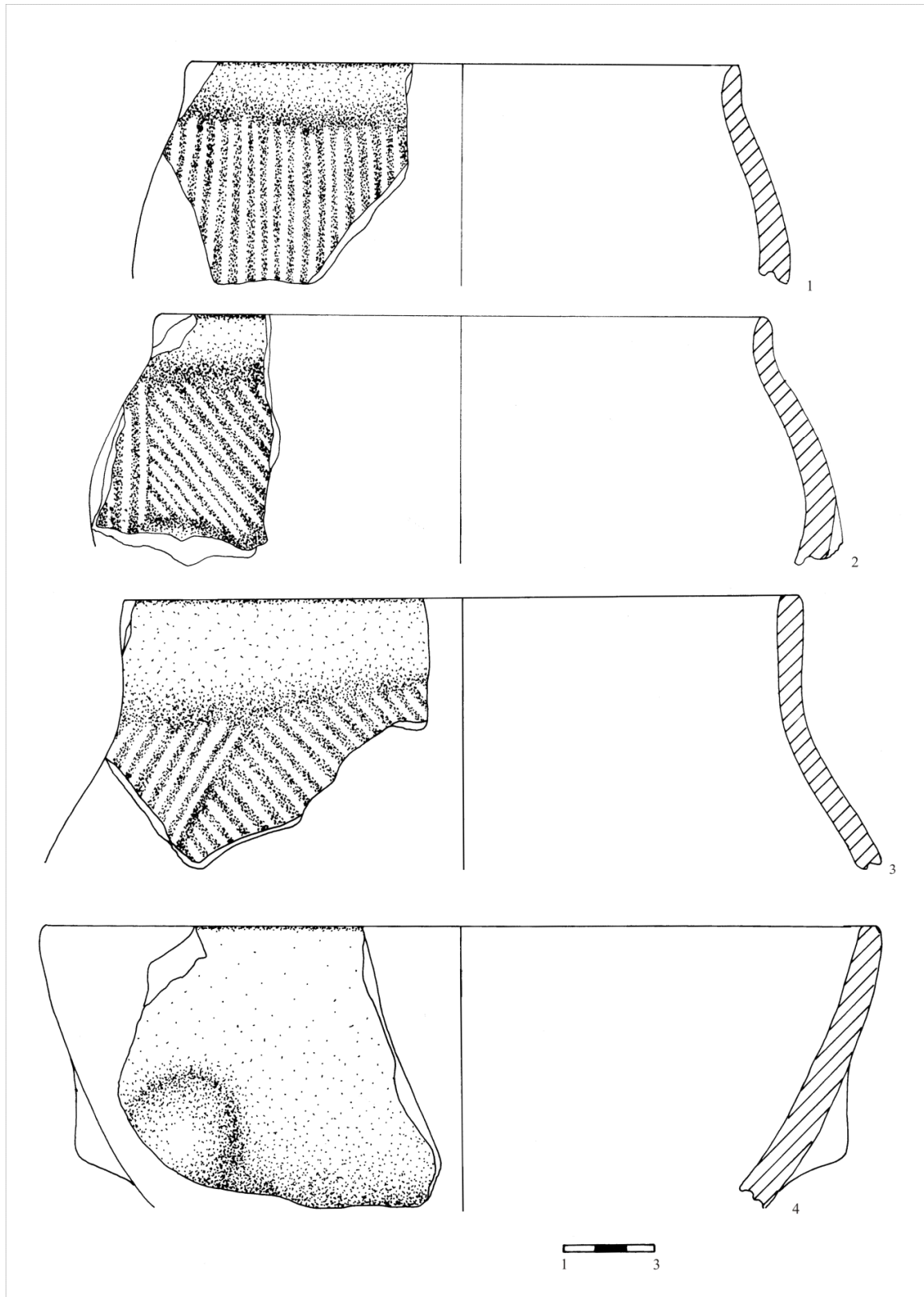


Plate 4
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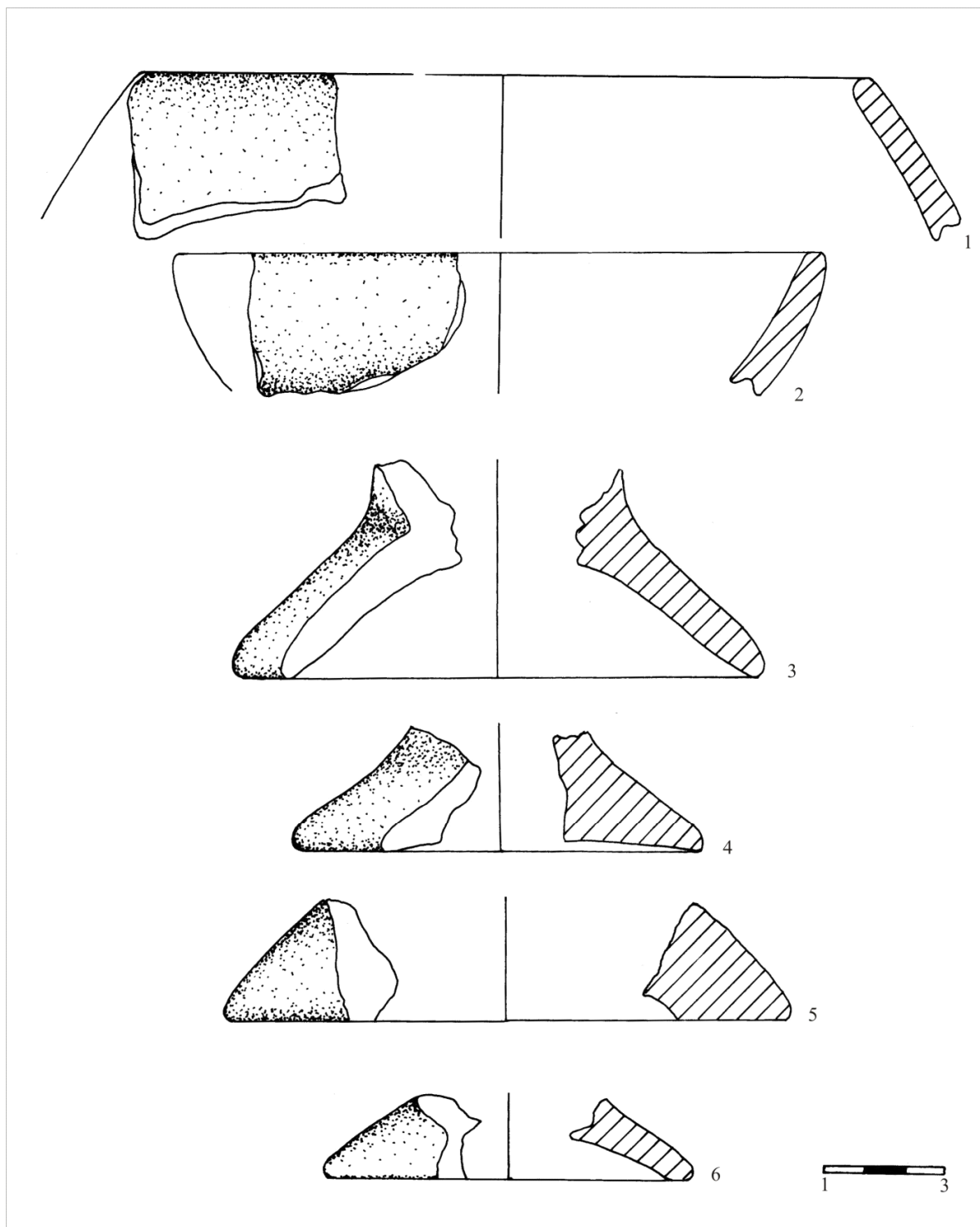


Plate 5

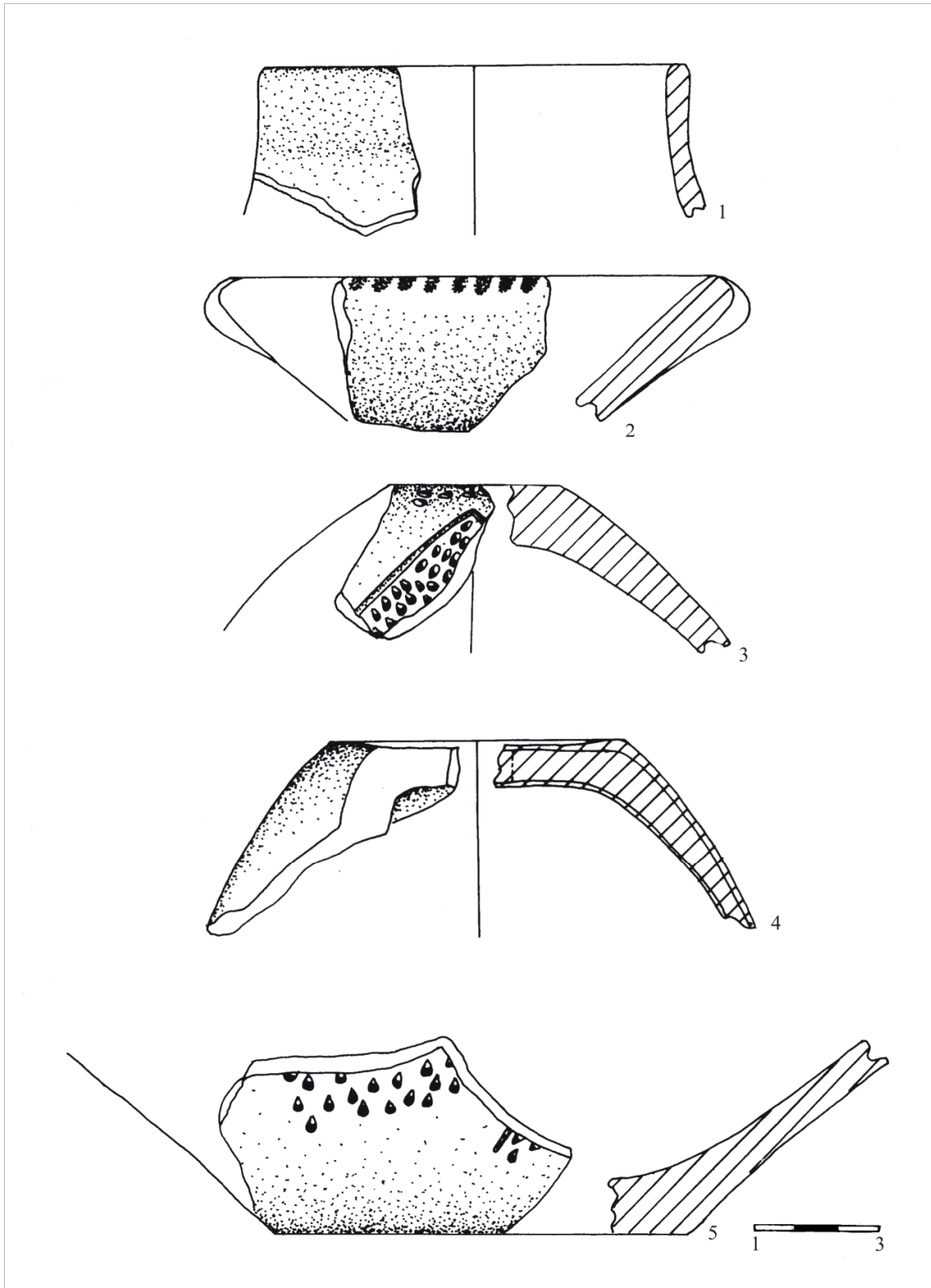


Plate 6

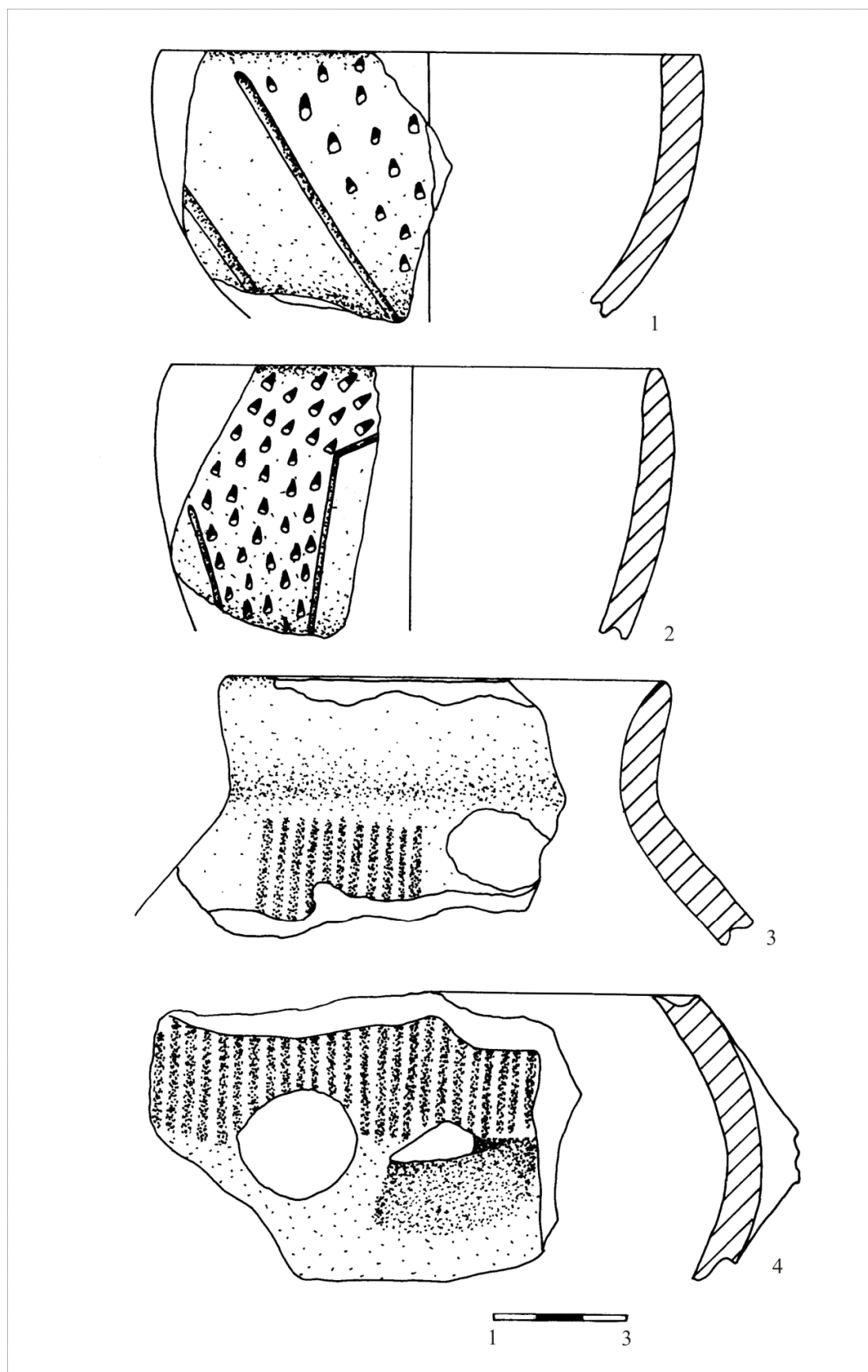


Plate 7