

THE POTTERY COMPLEX FROM THE ROMAN VICUS NEAR THE VILLAGE OF GORSKO ABLANOVO (2007–2008)¹

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The remains of a Roman unfortified settlement at the village of Gorsko Ablanovo, Opaka Municipality, Targovishte District (Fig. 1), became familiar to science at the early 20th century as result of the research work of K. Skorpil. According to him, the vicus is located to the northeast of the village².

The settlement structure consists of an inhabited zone, two mound necropolises and a sanctuary³. Its territory coverage is approximately 2000 decares. The discovered remains belong to spread residential complexes with yards. In terms of topography, the building occupies the first and the second floodless terraces. The main part of the settlement occupies terrains, located along the left riverbank of the Cherni Lom, but the archaeological materials, discovered along the right riverbank prove the habitation of this area as well. The huge area, the serious architectural remains and the significant quantity of accidental finds present us with the opportunity to search the place of the vicus within the qualification system, adopted by the contemporary researchers. Despite the lack so far of epigraphically resources and the name of the settlement that remains unknown as of this moment, the site can be defined as a village from the Roman period with quasi-municipal status, or as an “ordinary” vicus⁴.

Within the borders of settled territory or in immediate proximity to it there has been a functioning sanctuary. Its location is not clarified precisely, but several votive plates of the Thracian Horseman⁵ and a limestone altar to Apollo⁶, which originates from this area support the hypothesis for the building of a temple in the past⁷.

Important segments of the settlement structure are the two necropolises, which have mound character and are located correspondingly to the east and to the west periphery of the vicus⁸. The first (the east one) of them consists of six mounds, one of which has been robbed in the early 20th

¹ The article is delivered for publishing in Bulgarian, with detailed catalogue of the discovered informative ceramic fragments (Русев, Русев, Върбанов, под печат).

² Шкорпил 1914, 76.

³ Овчаров 1972, 49–54; Георгиев, Ангелов 2004, 10–16; Торбатов 2008, 56–57; Торбатов 2012, 251.

⁴ Торбатов 2008, 57–58.

⁵ Добруски 1901, 797; Кацаров 1934, 45–46; Kazarow 1938, 82, № 384–386; Дончева 1992, 239–242.

⁶ Овчаров 1972, 49–50.

⁷ Торбатов 2008, 56.

⁸ Торбатов 2012, 251.

century, and two others that were archaeologically studied in 2008–2009. The second (the west) necropolis includes four mounds, which have not been examined until now⁹.

In the 1960's, D. Ovcharov conducted field survey in the village land of Gorsko Ablanovo, succeeding to implement detailed observations, as well as to analyze numerous and various archaeological material¹⁰. His scientific conclusions enrich largely the knowledge that refers to the territorial range, the economical life and the ethnical composition of the population. He considers that the Roman vicus should be dated in the 2nd – first half of the 3rd century.

A new stage of the research works is the excavations, conducted by S. Torbatov in 2007–2009. During these three campaigns the work is focused in three sections, which cover different parts of the settlement territory (the studied area is 340 sq. m.) (Fig. 2) and two mounds in the east necropolis¹¹.

The first section is located in the Karaachlaka locality (trenches A and B), where two chained premises are registered, which belong to a building with inner yard (Fig. 3). The building has foundations of unprocessed crashed stones, superstructure probably of adobe, roof made of tiles (tegulae and imbrices) and ground fireplace of square bricks¹². Based on the discovered coins, small finds and ceramic fragments, the existence of the residential building is referred at the end of the 2nd – the first half of the 3rd century¹³.

The distance to the second sector in the Yaliyata locality (trenches B-И) is around 900 m. Initially, geophysical study of the terrain was conducted by N. Tonkov, through applying the geomagnetic method. During the archaeological excavations was documented a complex that consists of a large building and a kiln for construction pottery, connected to it (tiles of the type imbrices) (Fig. 4). The building had similar construction specifics like the one from the previous sector, and the revealed chain premises are organized around an inner yard, fenced by a wooden colonnade (portico)¹⁴.

The kiln stands 25 m away from the building and is part of a large yard, which appears as an addition to the complex from the east. The facility has two chambers and has irregular rectangular shape (Fig. 5). The lower chamber is entirely dug into the ground, while the upper one only partially¹⁵. The construction and the use of the kiln coincide with the construction of the residential complex, and its production is directly related to the specific needs in the time of construction. After discontinuing the use and its abandonment, the ground in front of the prefurnium is used as a depot. The discovered materials, which include thrown out fragments of everyday pottery, animal bones, bronze ring-key and coins, refer to the first half of the 3rd century¹⁶.

The third sector is located in the western part of the settlement, in the southwest periphery of the Tokatlaka locality (trenches Ё-K). The research activity here is not related to the registration of architectural remains, but the results appear as an essential contribution to the study of the settlement development. The archaeological finds refer to three different eras – the Hellenistic, the Roman and the period of the First Bulgarian kingdom¹⁷.

⁹ Торбатов 2012, 251.

¹⁰ Овчаров 1972, 46–50.

¹¹ Торбатов 2008, 59–65; Торбатов, Русев 2008, 462–463; Торбатов, Русев 2009а, 484–486; Торбатов, Русев 2009б, 486–489; Торбатов, Русев 2010, 347–348; Торбатов 2012, 252–279.

¹² Торбатов 2008, 60; Иванова 2012, 215–218.

¹³ Торбатов 2008, 60.

¹⁴ Торбатов 2008, 61.

¹⁵ Иванова 2009, 114.

¹⁶ Иванова 2009, 118.

¹⁷ Торбатов/ Русев 2009а, 486.

The numismatic material, discovered during the excavations, is a series of 36 silver and bronze coins, which refer to different periods and denominations. The earliest coin is imitation of Philip II of Macedon, struck in the 2nd–1st century BC. The second group includes six worn-out sestertii from the 1st–2nd century. The third category is represented by denarii, which belong to the coinage of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Elagabalus. The largest in number are the bronze provincial coins of Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Diadumenianus, Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, namely the first third of the 3rd century. The latest group consists of six coins, which register coinage from the time of Licinius I, Constantine I, Constans, Constantius II and Valentinian I, and only a single accidental find dates from the first half of the 13th century¹⁸.

According to the numismatic data, the first stage of settlement during the Roman period in the region started in the early 2nd century and ended up probably with the invasions of the Costoboci in 170–171 AD¹⁹. The life in the settlement, within the frames of the examined territory, is most intensive in the first third of the 3rd century (until the reign of Severus Alexander) and ended up with the invasion of the Goths. The vicus is restored in the early 4th century, but not in the same sizes, but rather in the old periphery zones, ultimately dying in relation to the military activities, caused by the so-called Second Gothic War²⁰.

The largest in number material, gathered during the archaeological excavations, is the pottery complex from the Roman period, which is 99% of all ceramic fragments (a total of 2770 pieces). The remaining parts of vessels refer to the Early Chalcolithic Age²¹, the Late Hellenism, the Late Roman and the Early Medieval periods. The group of the Roman everyday pottery, separated on the ground of the technological principle, consists of fine-ware (40,7%), amphorae (15,5%), coarse-ware (43,4%) and handmade (0,1%).

Red slip pottery

The discovered red slip pottery from the vicus at the village of Gorsko Ablanovo is a compact and numerous groups. It is of particular significance, since a variety of types and versions is registered in relatively narrow chronological frames. The processed pottery is mainly from trench Ж. The quality of the varnish is good with all of the vessels. It is very well placed using the East Roman method. In terms of color it is: red, grey, brown and their color tones. The presented are fragments and vessels of the following types: dishes, bowls, pitchers, strainers and amphorae. Only part of the pottery has poor decoration, which consists of slanting stripes and incised weaving lines, placed with sharp instrument.

Dishes

This is the most numerous vessels' category. Several types are registered, widely spread across the Roman provinces on the territory of the Balkans. Some of the versions reveal the undoubted local production. With all of the vessels the slip is well placed, the clay is baked well.

Dishes Kabakchieva 1983, type VIII (Plate I, 1).

These are shallow dishes with arc-shape folded to the outside walls and a rim, underlined through concave. The bottom is leveled, placed on a low chair. The clay is well purified with

¹⁸ Върбанов 2012, 233–242.

¹⁹ Торбатов/ Русев 2009а, 485.

²⁰ Торбатов 2012, 263; Върбанов 2012, 226–232.

²¹ Станев 2008, 52–54.

beige color. The vessels are covered with red slip. On the base of descriptions and analogies, the type is dated within the frames of the 2nd–3rd century²².

Shallow dishes with rounded and folded on the inside mouth rim (Plate I, 2–3).

The vessels bear the same technological features like the previous type with arc-shape folded to the outside walls (Kabakchieva 1983, type VIII), the bottom is shaped in an identical manner. The difference is in the profile of the mouth. It is rounded and folded on the inside. The walls are slightly folded to the outside. The turning point between the body and the bottom is also marked with relief line. The clay is well purified with beige color and light brownish tone at some of the vessels. Sand is added for mixing the clay paste. The slip is red or brown in color. The diameter of the mouth is between 20 and 28 cm.

Dishes Kabakchieva 1983, type VII (Plate I, 4–5).

These are dishes with complex shape. The rim, according to the description of G. Kabakchieva, is rounded. The body is separated from the bottom by a relief line. The bottom stands on a low chair. The clay is well purified with beige color and light red tone. The slip is well placed, with red color. The diameter of the rim is about 20–22 cm. This is the most widely spread type of red slip dishes in the period 2nd–3rd century²³.

Dishes Kabakchieva 1983, type XII (Plate I, 6).

These are shallow dishes with cone shape and slightly rounded and protuberated to the outside mouth. The bottom is wide, flat. The clay is fine, beige. The slip is brown, the diameter of the mouth – 22 cm. When defining the type, G. Kabakchieva gives dating within the frames of 1st–2nd century, presuming on the base of the sustainability of production, existence in the 3rd century as well²⁴, which is entirely acceptable and accurate.

Dishes Armira, type I (Plate II, 7–17).

These are dishes with generally spherical shape of the body. The mouth rim is rounded, upright, folded to the inside, slightly thickened or narrowly rounded, with three incised horizontal lines below it. The vessels cover almost all of the dish versions, registered in Armira²⁵. This is one of the most widely spread shapes from the vicus at Gorsko Ablanovo. The diameter of the mouth varies from 11 to 28 cm. The clay is fine or very well purified with beige, beige-brown, grey-brown or brown-beige color. Sand is used for mixture of the paste. The slip is well placed with red, brown or grey color. The dating of the dishes from Armira, type I is thoroughly examined by G. Kabakchieva (Кабакчиева 1986, 8–11). The vessels, presented here, reveal some examples mainly within the sizes and versions of the shaping of the mouth, difference in quality and color of the varnish, which supports the proved local production.

Dishes with walls widening upwards (Plate III, 18).

They are relatively large dishes with gradually widening walls upwards. The mouth is slightly rounded, folded to the inside. The bottom is shaped, similar to the dishes Kabakchieva 1983, type VIII. The vessels originate from prototypes with North-African origin, produced in the Roman provinces on the territory of present-day Bulgaria (Кленина 2006, 90).

Dishes Sultov, type VI (Plate III, 19–21).

Semispherical, medium deep dishes with relief lines at the mouth. The body is separated from the bottom through a relief line. The clay is well purified with brown tone. Sand is used for mixture of the clay paste. The slip is red or light-brown, well placed. There are similar vessels

²² Кабакчиева 1983, 6.

²³ Кабакчиева 1983, 5.

²⁴ Кабакчиева 1983, 7.

²⁵ Кабакчиева 1986, 8–10.

from Nicopolis ad Istrum and Novae, and in the 2nd–3rd century they are produced at Butovo (Кленина 2006, 90), where they are dated in the second half of the 2nd–3rd century.

Dishes with protuberated to the outside rim (Plate III, 22–24).

Protuberated to the outside and folded rim, thickened with relief rings at the base. The clay is fine or well purified with red-brown color. Sand is added for mixture in the paste, but only in rare cases. The slip is well placed with red color.

Dishes with strongly folded to the outside wall and rounded mouth rim (Plate IV, 25–31).

Some of the dishes resemble type 2 from Villa Armira (Кабакчиева 1986, 107, Plate IV, 67), and other have very strong variations. During the examination of the pottery from Castra Martis, G. Kabakchieva published similar examples and presents analogies (Кабакчиева 2005, 87, 114, Plate IV, 20), which appear to be a late version of the dishes with folded to the outside walls and rounded mouth rim. Fragments of such dishes are published during the analysis of the Antiquity pottery from Chitashka mogila, Bratya Daskalovi Municipality (Димитров, Русев 2013, 137, Plate III), which is very well dated in the end of the 2nd century.

Bowls with rounded mouth and spherical shape (Plate IV, 32–33; Plate V, 34–36).

Generally, the bowls have rounded narrow mouth, in some cases shaped horizontally. The vessels have spherical shape. The clay is well purified with beige color and its tones. The varnish is well placed with red, brown or beige color. The diameter of the mouth is within the range of 12 and 19 cm. The bowls of the type are widely spread across the Roman provinces. In Histria they are dated in the period second half of the 2nd–3rd century (Suceveanu 1985).

Bowls with S-shaped profile (Plate V, 37–39).

Large bowls with S-shaped profile in general. The mouth is rounded, underlined through concaving. The body is furrowed through relief lines and rings. The clay is well purified with orange-ochre or beige color. The slip is placed with red or brown color. The diameter of the mouth is about 18–25 cm.

Bowls with complex shape (Plate V, 40–41).

Large bowls that resemble the dishes Kabakchieva 1983, type VII, but with significantly larger sizes. The mouth is rounded, underlined through concaving, furrowed with relief rings. The body is separated through relief lines. The clay is well purified. Pure small sand is used for mixture in the paste. The slip is thick, with brown color. The diameter of the mouth is 28 cm. Vessels with similar shape are widely spread within the frames of the 2nd–3rd century (Suceveanu 1985).

Bowls (Plate VI, 42–45).

Medium deep and deep bowls with spherical and bispherical body. The mouth rim is protuberated on the outside, furrowed by several perpendicular relief rings. The clay is well purified with mixture of small sand. The diameter of the mouth is 13–14 cm. The type is not so spread in comparison to the others, examined above.

Vessels with three handles (Plate VI, 46).

Large vessels with biconic shape, narrowed mouth, furrowed along the rim. They have three handles with three perpendicular canelures. Decoration is placed on the vessel with sharp tool and consists of irregular lines along the body. The clay is well purified with red-brown color. The slip is well placed with orange color. The diameter of the mouth is 14,2 cm. The vessels with three handles are spread across some parts of the Empire, and their local production is not excluded, which follows Hellenistic traditions (Brukner 1981, 183).

Cups (Plate VI, 47–50).

Vessels with bispherical body. The mouth is small, furrowed with relief rings at the base. The upper half is clearly separated by the lower one with relief line. The clay is fine with beige color

and its tones. The slip is very well placed. The diameter of the mouth varies within the frames between 5,5–7 cm.

Cups (Plate VI, 51–52).

Cups with spherical body. They have relatively large dimensions. The diameter of the mouth is 8 cm. The clay is fine, the varnish is well placed. All cups have accurate analogies in the production centers of Nicopolis ad Istrum with dating at the end of the 2nd – the early 3rd century.

Pots Armira, type III (Plate VII, 53–55).

Large pots with spherical-coneshaped body. The mouth is widely open, rounded, its outer side is carved by several canelures. The clay is well purified. The quality of the varnish is good. The type is dated precisely within the frames of the second half of the 2nd – first half of the 3rd century (Кабакчиева 1986, 24).

Pots (Plate VII, 56–58).

Elongated pots, defined in some Late Antiquity complexes as saucepans (Кленина 2006, 103). The body is elongated, furrowed. The mouth is thickened, slightly folded to the outside.

Pots (Plate VII, 59).

Pots with spherical shape and decoration of weaving lines, stamped with sharp tool. The clay is well purified. Sand is added as mixture. The slip has good quality, brown color. Similar pots are found on the territory of Timammium in pit complexes from the first half of the 3rd century (Върбанов 2008, 104).

Krater-shaped vessels (Plate VIII, 60–64).

These are large vessels with diameter of the mouth of 18 cm and in rare cases of 22 cm. They are large pots with cone shape. The clay is well purified. One of the few examples, where along with the sand, the paste is also mixed with mica, is registered at the krater-shaped vessels. The shape, development and distribution of these vessels are already discussed in the literature (Кабакчиева 2005, 89).

Lids (Plate VIII, 65–66)

Two lids are determined. All of them are covered in brown color. The clay is not well purified with light-grey color. Quartz particles and mica are used for mixture of the paste. The diameter of the registered lids is 20 and 27 cm.

Strainers (Plate VIII, 67–68).

Only two fragments (mouths) are defined as strainers. The clay is relatively well purified with beige color and mixture of sand. The vessels are covered with red or brown color. The diameter of the mouth varies from 13–16 cm. The fragments of strainers refer to the type, defined by Sultov for domestic use, discovered together with coins of Caracalla (Sultov 1985, 81–82).

Amphorae

The presented amphorae have quality slip with red, red-orange, brown, light-beige or grey color (at some of the examples it is placed extremely precisely). The clay is well purified, gained light-beige or red-orange color after the baking. Fine sand and rarely mica is used for mixture in the clay paste. Among the fragmented materials are registered a number of twisted handles with thick brown slip, light-beige, well purified clay and various sizes of the type Skorpan XIII-G.

Amphorae with folded to the outside stripe-shaped profiled rim (Plate IX, 69–71)

All registered examples are of well purified clay, which gained light-beige color after baking. The slip is very well placed with red or brown color. The diameter of the mouth varies from 13 to 15 cm. The handles are flat with two stripes or canelures. The shape is known from the Agora

of Athens and the villa near Ivaylovgrad. They are dated from the 1st to the end of the 3rd century (Кабакчиева 1986, 21).

Amphorae with slightly protuberated to the outside and strongly folded inner mouth rim (Plate IX, 72–76).

The slip is well placed with red or brown color. The clay is beige. The diameter of the mouth is between 10–14 cm. Typically, Roman amphorae, dated in the period 2nd–3rd century.

Amphorae with thick mouth rim with slightly quadratic shape (Plate IX, 77–78).

Two examples with thick mouth rim with slightly quadratic shape are presented. The clay is well purified with beige color. The vessels have varnish cover with light-beige and red color. The diameter of the mouth is 8 and 11 cm.

Bottoms (Plate X, 79–88; Plate XI, 89–96).

The bottoms are examined separately, since not all of them can for certain be referred to some of the categories of vessels. For some of the examples it can be presumed what the vessel looked like, and others cannot be defined. Some of the fragments have accurate analogies in Stobi, dated generally in the Middle Roman period (Anderson-Stojanovich 1992, Pl. 140, 1203–1206).

Kitchen pottery

The discovered kitchen pottery is a relatively compact and numerous group. It is of particular significance, since it registers a diversity of types in narrow chronological range. The found vessels are in the nuances of brown, tile-red, beige, ochre and less of the grey. The clay paste is most often mixed with sand in different concentration, small stones and mica. The surface is smoothened less or more carefully, but never until polishing. The decoration is of horizontal incised stripes or canelures, and at the kernoi – incised quadrangles, stamped with rollers.

A restored shape of a vessel, worked on a fast potter's wheel, can be referred to the Hellenistic Age. It is a bowl with a rim folded to the inside and slanted (**Plate XIII, 113**) – dishes type 10c according to E. Moscalu (Moscalu 1983, 115–117). It is typical for the period 4th–3rd century BC, but it is also found in the period of Late Hellenism (Върбанов 2013, 234). Another fragment is of a vessel-storage, worked on fast potter's wheel (**Plate XIV, 135**) and it is also found during the Late Hellenistic Age (Върбанов 2013, 236–237). The latter originate from trench K and are synchronous to the Hellenistic coin, found during the excavations, as well as with other accidental finds in the village area (Пыцев 2013, 225–234). Another fragment of a pottery vessel or an item (**Plate XIV, 133**) from trench Ж, can be interpreted as a body of a ceramic candlestick. Such are known from the period of Late Hellenism (2nd–1st century BC) to the north of the Danube (Teodor, Nicu, Țau 2003, 113, fig. 80).

The vessels from the Roman period are presented by the following types: lids, dishes, kernoi, cups, pots, bowls (?) and pithoi. Since we have few entire forms of vessels preserved, the distribution by types remains conditional until a future archaeological study of the same site.

Vessels, worked by hand. Only several fragments of such vessels are found, and the most typical one is from a pot with a flat handle (**Plate XIV, 132**). There is a parallel of the vessel in the mound necropolis next to the village of Charda, Yambol region (Alexandrova 2013, 104, cat # 312). The upper chronological border of the mound necropolis is until the end of the first quarter of the 3rd century (Alexandrova 2013, 32).

Vessels, worked on fast potter's wheel.

Lids

They are a relatively small in number category of vessels – with conical shape and small cylindrical or conical handle at the top. Three types are registered, widely spread in the Roman provinces on the territory of the Balkans (Sultov 1985, 86; Popilian 1976, 127–128). They are local production. The discovered fragments are mainly in the nuances of the brown, less of the ochre, tile-red and grey. Their surface is usually not smoothed and they bear the traces of smoking. The diameters of their mouths are within the frames of 14–24 cm, of the handles 4–6 cm, and the only example with entire profile preserved has a height of 8.1 cm.

Lids, type I (Plate XII, 97–103).

These are lids with straight mouth rim. They correspond to type 1 after B. Sultov and to type 3 after G. Popilian (Sultov 1985, 86; Popilian 1976, 128). According to the revealed parallels, the type is dated mainly in the 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 127–128).

Lids, type II (Plate XII, 104).

These are lids with mouth rim strongly folded to the inside. They correspond to type 2 of B. Sultov and to type 5 of G. Popilian (Sultov 1985, 86; Popilian 1976, 128). According to the revealed parallels, the type is dated within the frames of the 3rd–4th century (Popilian 1976, 128). A similar shape is found inside a grave from the first half of the 3rd century in proximity to the Roman station of Sostra in Troyan region (Китов 2003, 95–99).

Lids, type III (Plate XII, 105–108).

These are lids with mouth rim slightly folded to the outside. They correspond to type 1 of B. Sultov and to type 1 of G. Popilian (Sultov 1985, 86; Popilian 1976, 128). The type is found as early as the second half of the 2nd century and is especially popular in the early 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 128).

Dishes

The main part of them are flat vessels with conical shape and slightly concave to the inside walls. They are local production, with colors in the nuances of light-brown, ochre, beige and yellow-white, with large quantity of sand inside the paste and traces of fire on the walls outside. The diameters of their mouths are within the frames of 20–33 cm (most often 23–25 cm), the diameters of the bottom: 12,5–17,5 cm (most often 14–16,5 cm), and their heights within the range of 4,5–5,6 cm, and in only one case – 7,2 cm. Four types are separated:

Dishes, type I (Plate XIII, 114–118).

Their mouth is opened to the outside, rounded and thickened to a different degree both inside and outside. The shape is local, widely spread in the Roman Danube provinces and is found not only throughout the entire 3rd century, but also during the following two centuries (Popilian 1976, 123–125).

Dishes, type II (Plate XIII, 119–122).

They have mouth rim, folded to the outside and thickened to the inside, forming an edge. Sometimes it is decorated with incised parallel concentric lines. It is close to dishes type 2 after G. Popilian, dated in the 2nd century (Popilian 1976, 126–127). These dishes are produced and widely spread in Lower Moesia as well (Sultov 1985, 84). Accurate parallel of the example from Gorsko Ablanovo (Plate XIII, 119) is found in trizna from the third quarter of the 2nd century (Pyceв 2012, 350; 378, Fig. 17, 1).

The following two types (III and IV) have prototypes in the polished Roman pottery from the 2nd century, but are also found in the following century (Popilian 1976, 123–125).

Dishes, type III (Plate XIII, 123).

They have straight mouth rim, slightly thickened to the outside. According to the typology of G. Popilian, they can be referred to type 2a, dated in the 2nd century (Popilian 1976, 124).

Dishes, type IV (Plate XIII, 124).

They originate from the type Dragendorf 35 and are widely spread across the Balkan provinces during the second half of the 2nd century (Popilian 1976, 125).

Kernoi (Plate XIV, 125–128).

They are similar in shape to dishes type II, but have decoration of circles and quadrangles, stamped with cogwheel on the bottom and the edge of the vessel. Along with them, on the edge there are one or two attached cups. Usually this type of vessels is related to burial practices. Such are discovered in the mound necropolis of the Roman vicus next to the village of Gorsko Ablanovo and inside the studied mound near the town of Opaka, and their dating is at the very end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century (Топбаров 2012, 261–262; Ручев 2012, 352–353).

Vessel with similar decoration on the bottom, but without cups and decoration along the mouth rim and with smaller dimensions is found inside a secondary grave in the mound necropolis next to the road station of Sostra (Китов 2003, 120, Fig. 84). Its dating is in the last quarter of the 3rd century (Китов 2003, 118–122).

On the preserved fragments of kernoi from trench Ж the cups are missing, but here is found a fragment of a cup and part of a vessel edge with decoration and ground for a cup. The diameters of the mouths of the discovered vessels are within the frames of 21–24 cm, the bottom diameters: 16–18 cm, and their heights in the frames of 4,7–5,0 cm (without the cups).

Cups

They are found rarely in the complex – only few small fragments can be referred to this category.

Cups, type I (Plate XIV, 129–130).

They have the shape of pots, but due to their small dimensions (diameter of the mouth within the frames of 6–7 cm) are referred to the cups. No certain parallels can be indicated, since it is unclear whether the vessels had handles. As analogue can be referred cups type 3 and 4 (after the classification of G Popilian), dated in the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 109–111).

Cups, type II (Plate XIV, 131).

According to one part of the researchers of Roman pottery in our country, vessels with similar spherical shape are bowls, and according to other – cups (*see for instance* Alexandrova 2013, 20–21; Sultov 1985, 68). Given the smaller dimensions of the examined fragment, the second interpretation is adopted here. Undisputedly, the type is imitation of “polished” prototype (Найденкова 1985, 30; Plate 10, 49). It is widely spread in the provinces of Lower Moesia and Thrace during the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century (Alexandrova 2013, 21).

Pots

The most frequently discovered type of vessels during the excavations on the Roman vicus at Gorsko Ablanovo is the pots.

Pots, type I (Plate XV, 136–147 and Plate XVI, 148–160).

The most widely spread type, characterized with slightly folded to the outside rim, thickened to the outside and curved in arc-shape to the inside. Its diameters vary from 10,5 to 22 cm

(the largest number within the frames 13–17 cm), and the most often registered color of the surface is in the nuances of the brown. It is possible that one part of them to have had one handle – these with the less thickened rim to the outside (Plate XV, 136–147). They find good parallels with vessels from Dacia (on the territory of present-day Oltenia), widely spread during the 2nd and the first decades of the 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 90). All the others are close to type II of G. Popilian and type I of B. Sultov. According to the first researcher, they are found frequently in the early 3rd century, and according to the second one their dating is from the 2nd to the middle of the 4th century (Popilian 1976, 67; Sultov 1985, 85). Similar ones are found inside a pit from the early 3rd century in Trimammium (Върбанов 2008, 104; 115, Plate 6.01–6.02).

Pots, type II (Plate XVII, 161–173).

At this type the mouth rim is smoothly folded to the outside, and its lower end is thickened. The neck of the vessels is short. Its diameters vary from 12,5 to 20 cm, and the most often registered color of the surface is in the nuances of brown. Close parallels are the vessels type X after G. Popilian, often found in the early 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 89).

Pots, type III (Plate XVIII, 174–185).

At this type the straight rim is folded to the outside at approximately 45°. In part of the cases the inner side is arc-shaped curved. The diameters of the vessels vary from 13 to 21 cm, and the most often found surface color is in the nuances of brown. Close parallel are the pots type XI according to G. Popilian and the pots type I and II according to G. Kabakchieva. While the first ones are dated in the end of the 2nd century, these of the Province of Thrace are dated generally in the 3rd–4th century (Popilian 1976, 89; Кабакчиева 1986, 28–29). Similar ones are found inside a pit from the early 3rd century in Trimammium (Върбанов 2008, 104; 115, Plate 6.03–6.06).

Pots, type IV (Plate XIX, 186–191).

Six of the examples, discovered during the excavations in Gorsko Ablanovo can be distinguished as a separate type, and for two of them is certain the presence of small, flat handles. Since there is no entire form restored, it is possible for some of them to belong to deep bowls. The diameters of the vessels vary from 20 to 28 cm, and the most often color of the surface has the nuances of brown and grey. The type is characterized with straight rim, strongly folded to the outside (up to 90°). The walls below are vertical or slightly open to the outside, and the vessel gains spherical to biconic shape. Typical is the decoration from horizontal canelures and mixture of sand, and smoking to the outside. As parallels can be identified pots with two handles, type 4 after G. Popilian, widely spread in the lands of present-day Oltenia in the first half of the 3rd century (Popilian 1976, 92). A similar vessel (fragment of rim with handle) is also discovered inside a pit from the 3rd century in the region of Sexaginta Prista (Върбанов, Драгоев 2012, 100, Plate XV.01.).

Pots, type V (Plate XIX, 192).

Only one fragment from a rim is found during the excavations on the vicus at Gorsko Ablanovo. It is characterized with thickening on the inner side of the mouth rim. It is possible for the type to be local one, since there are no accurate parallels among the published pottery from the territory of present-day Bulgaria and Romania.

Bottoms (Plate XIX, 193–200).

For almost all of the bottoms, presented here, is certain that they originate from pots. The exception is one fragment (Plate XIX, 196), which is probably from a pitcher/jug.

Pithos (Plate XIV, 134).

The discovered fragment of pithos rim has parallels in the ceramic complex from Villa Armira, where however they are dated generally in the period 2nd–4th century (Кабакчиева 1986, 30–31).

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THE POTTERY COMPLEX FROM THE ROMAN VICUS NEAR THE VILLAGE OF GORSKO ABLANOVO (2007–2008) (Abstract)

Most of the pottery vessels, examined here, which originate from the vicus near Gorsko Ablanovo, have accurate parallels among the complexes from excavated sites on the territory of Northeastern Bulgaria. In general, these materials, based on the coins discovered inside them and according to the opinion of the researchers, are dated in the second half of the 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century. Unfortunately, the largest part of the finds are not published yet. Of peculiar significance in the case is the fact that the described everyday pottery from the Roman unfortified settlement near Gorsko Ablanovo originates from closed residential complexes, which existed in the first decades of the 3rd century.

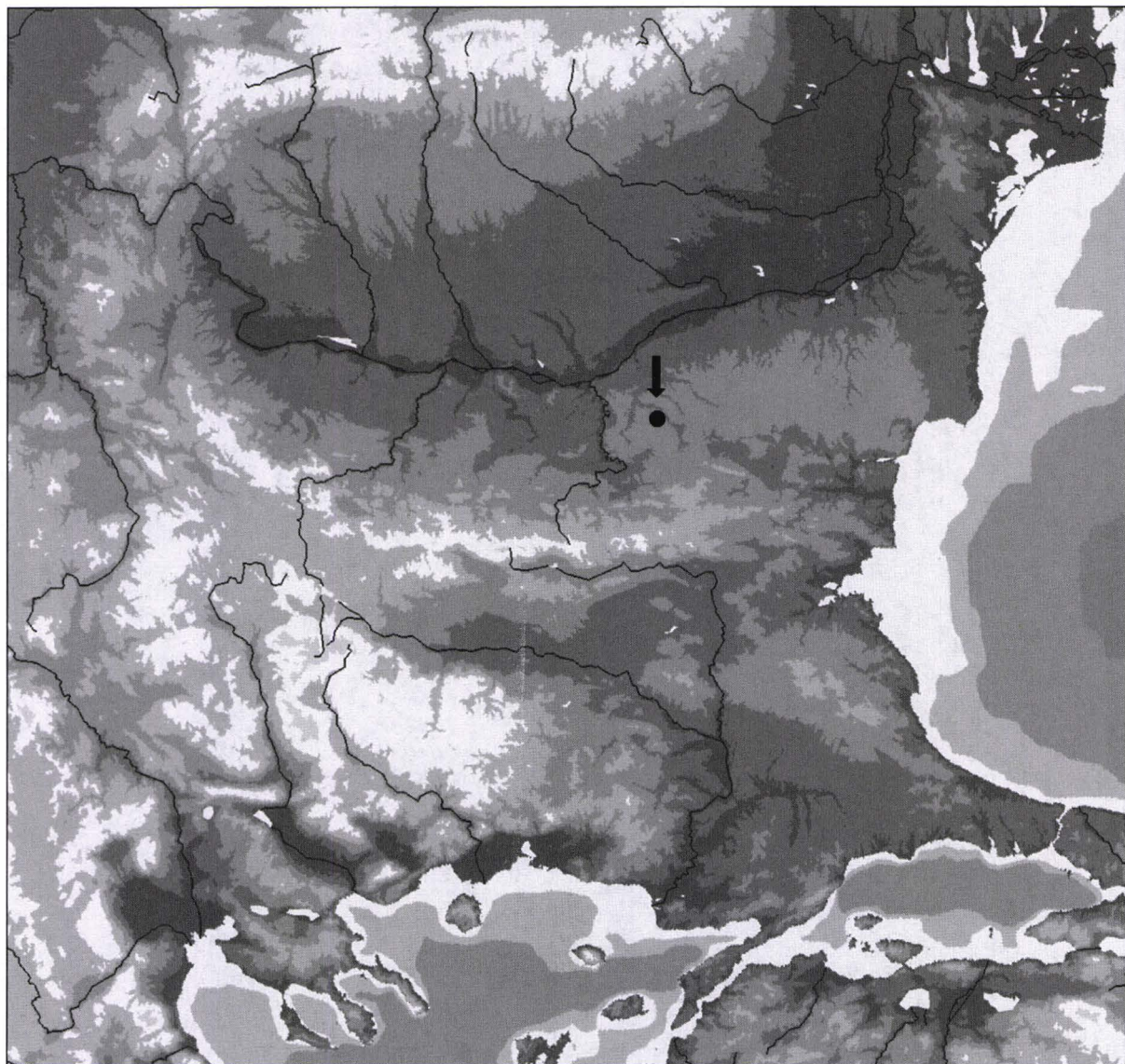


Fig. 1 – The remains of a Roman unfortified settlement at the village of Gorsko Ablanovo, Opaka Municipality, Targovishte District

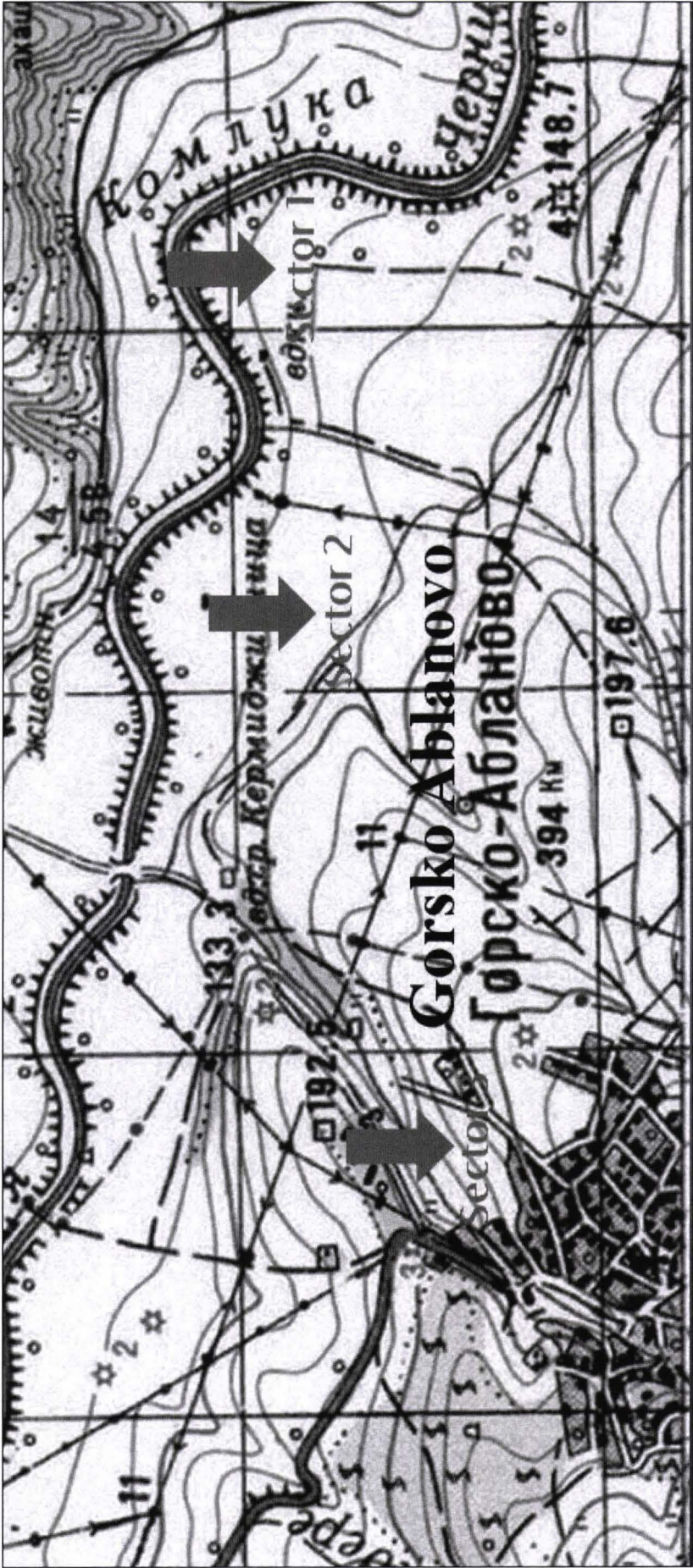


Fig. 2 – The 3 sectors researched in the campaign 2007 – 2009

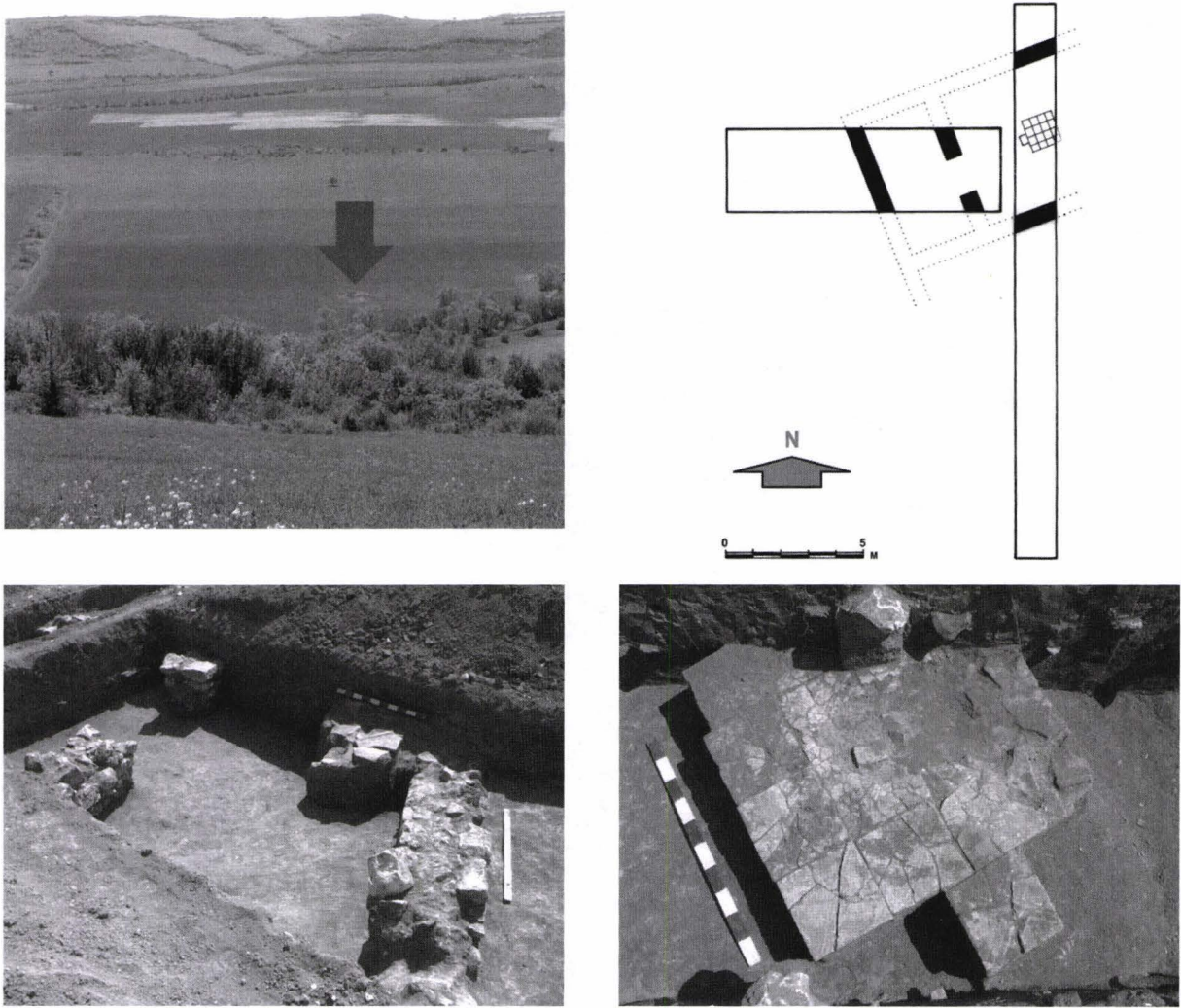


Fig. 3 – The first section is located in the Karaachlaka locality (trenches A and B)

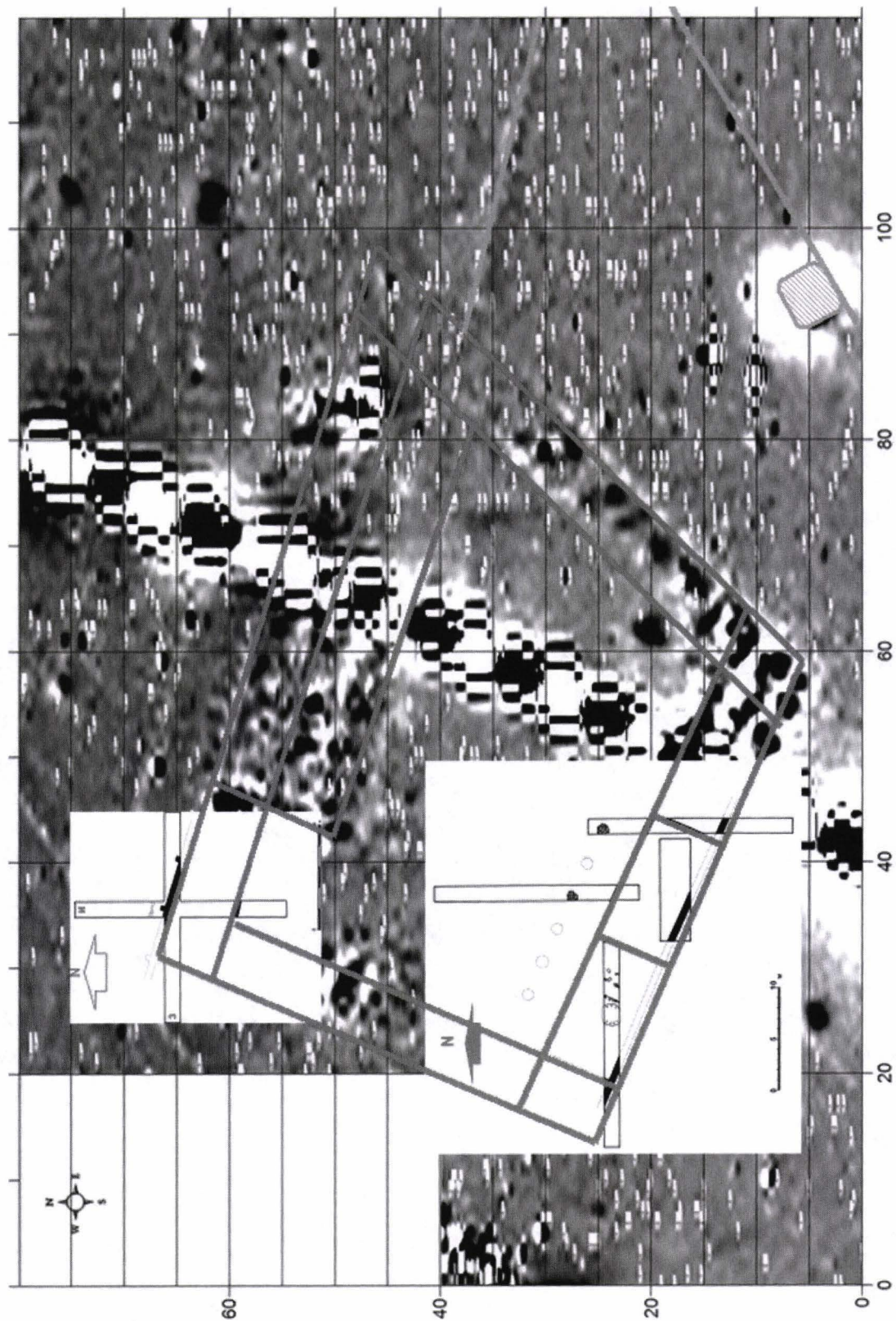


Fig. 4 – Second sector researched by geomagnetic method

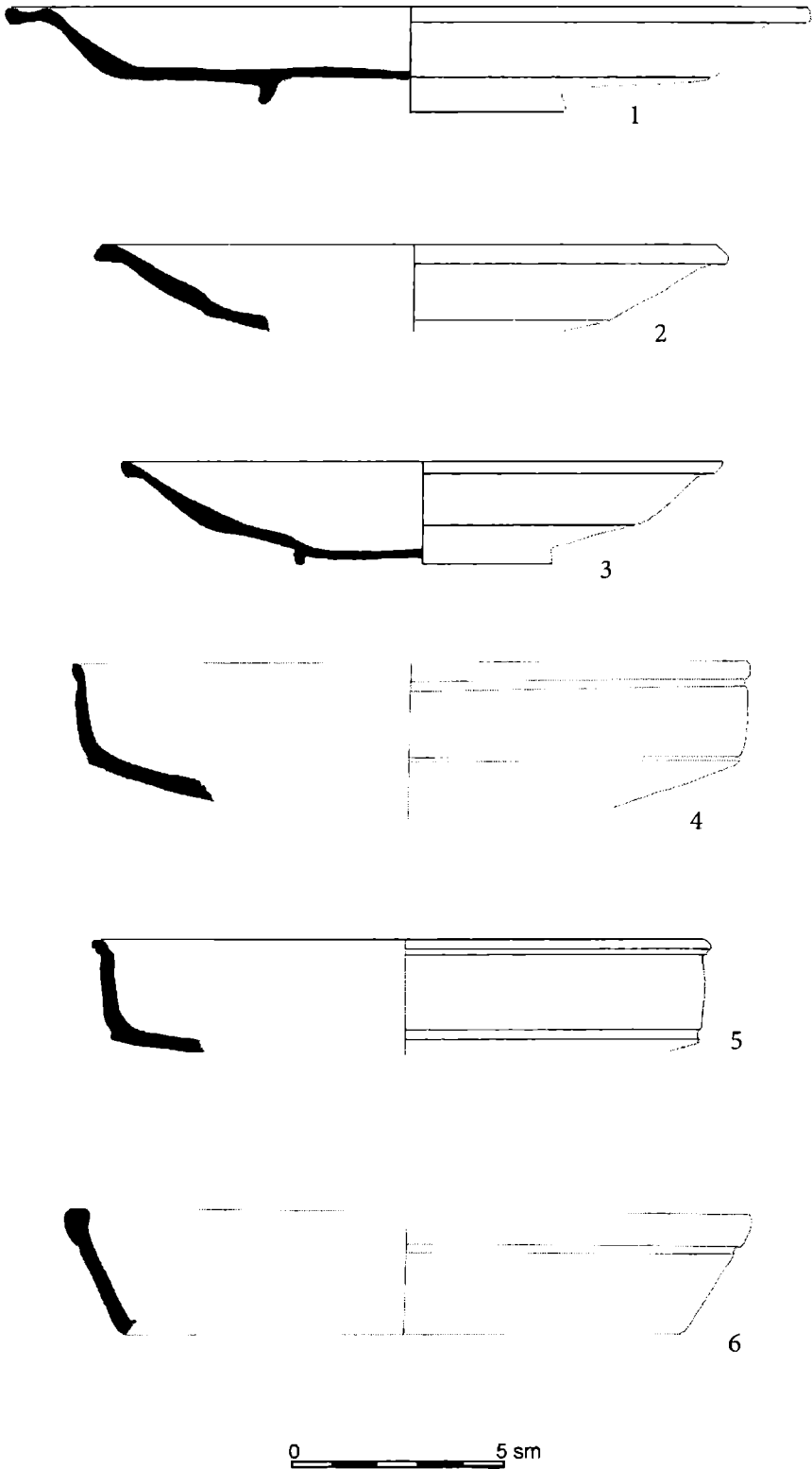


Plate I – 1–6 Dishes Kabakchieva 1983

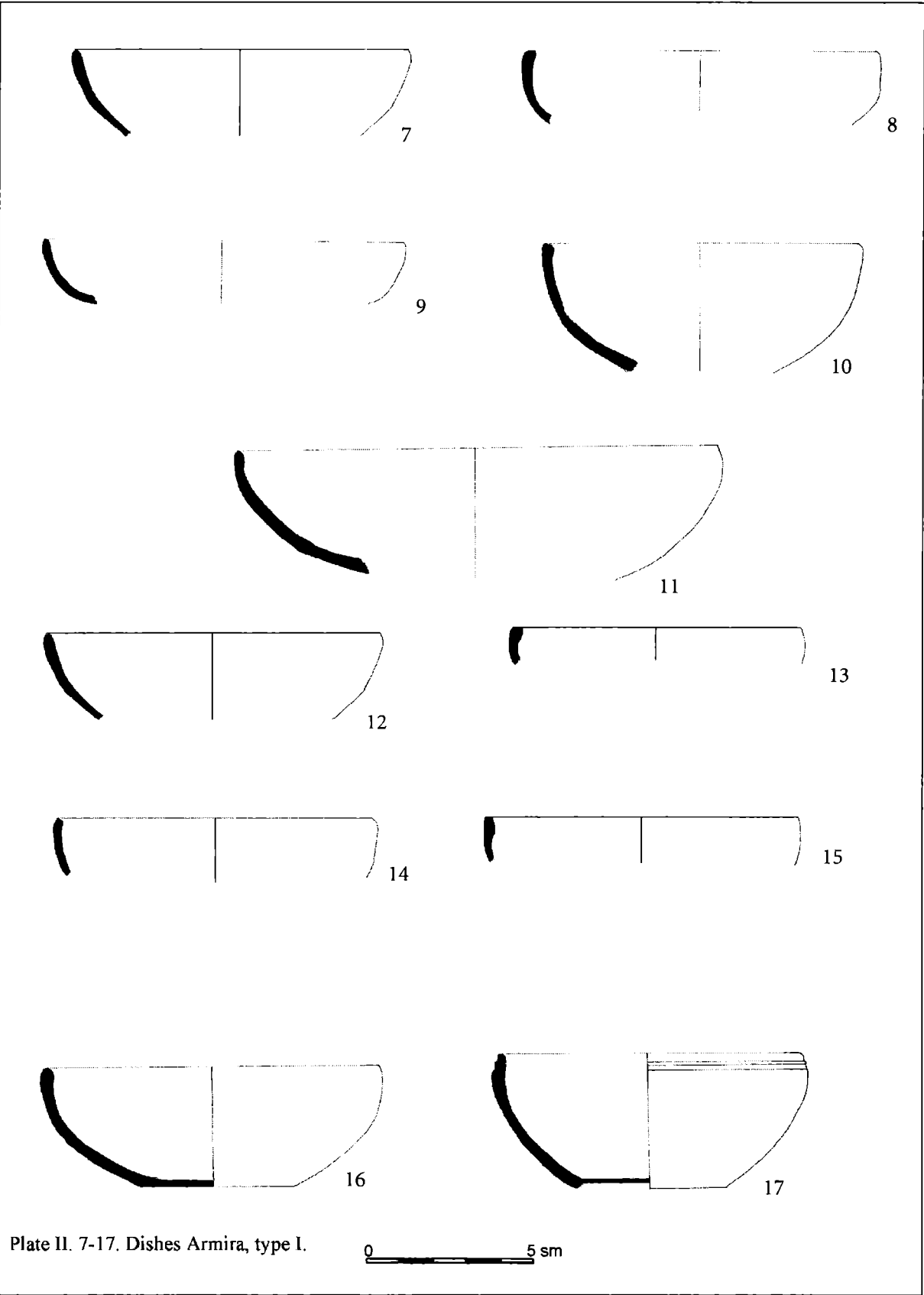


Plate II – 7–17 Dishes Armira, type I.

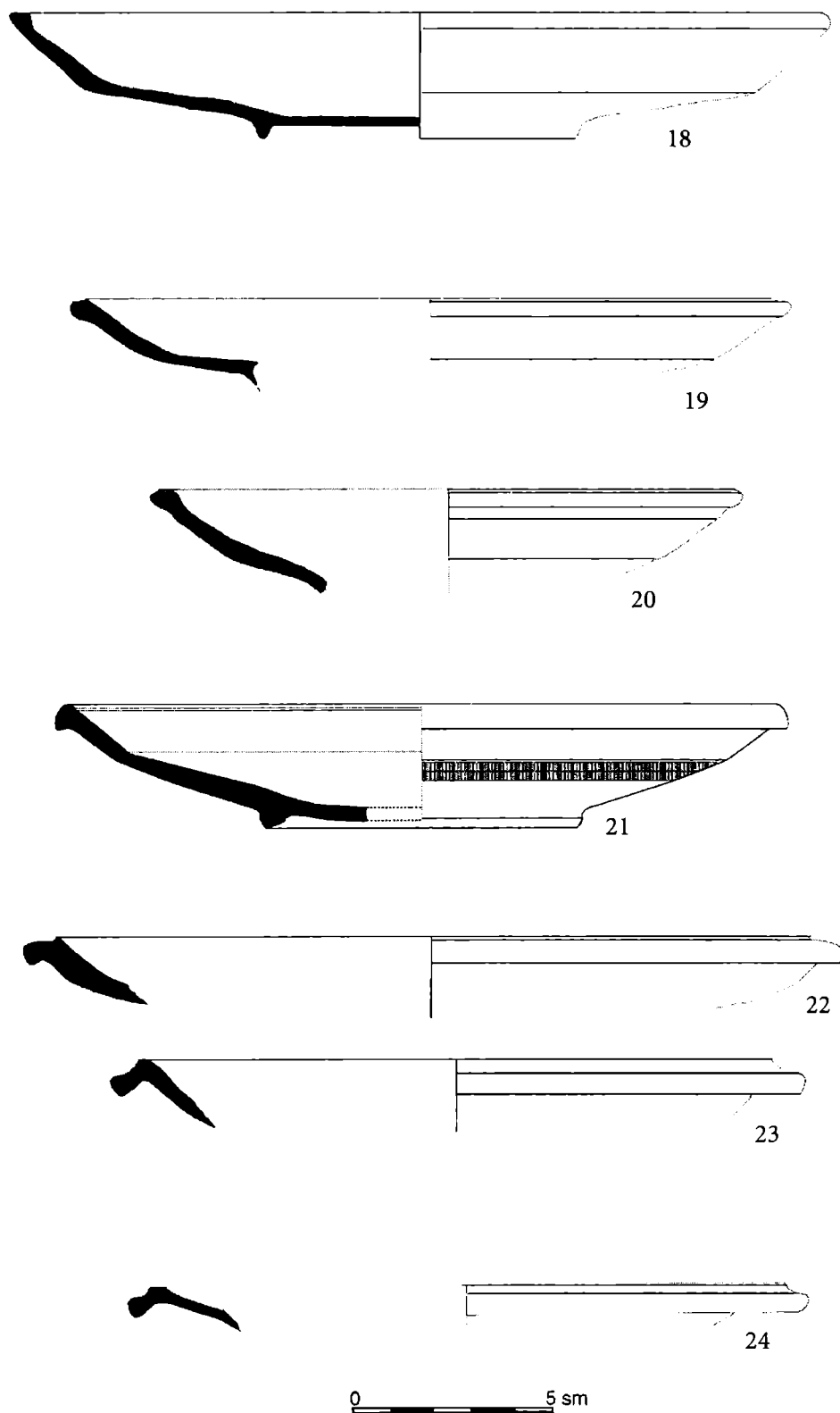


Plate III – 19–21 Dishes with walls widening upwards 18; Dishes Sultov, type IV; – 22 –24 Dishes with protuberated to the outside rim.

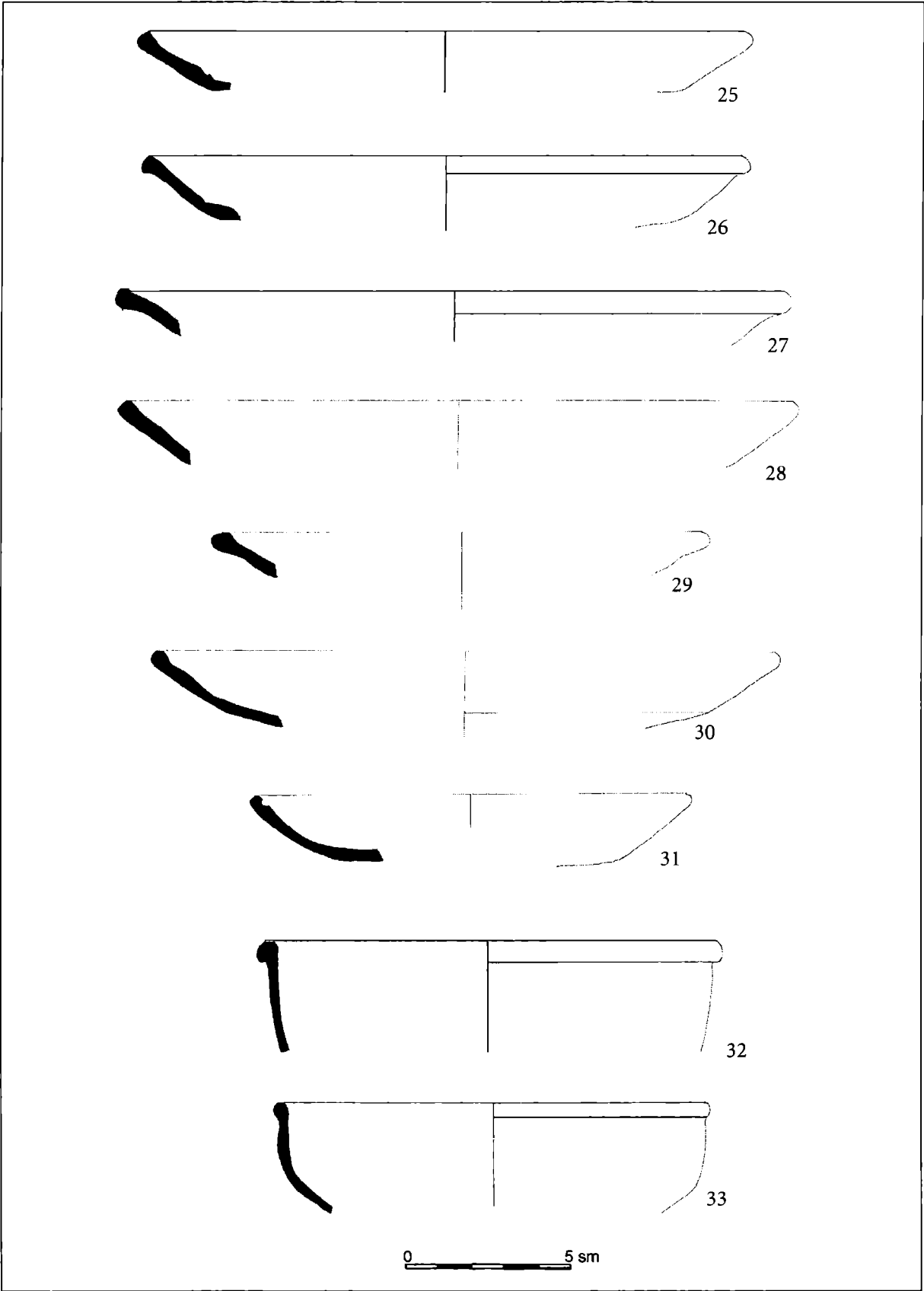


Plate IV – 25–31 Dishes with strongly folded to the outside wall and rounded mouth rim; 32–33 Bowls with rounded mouth and spherical shape.

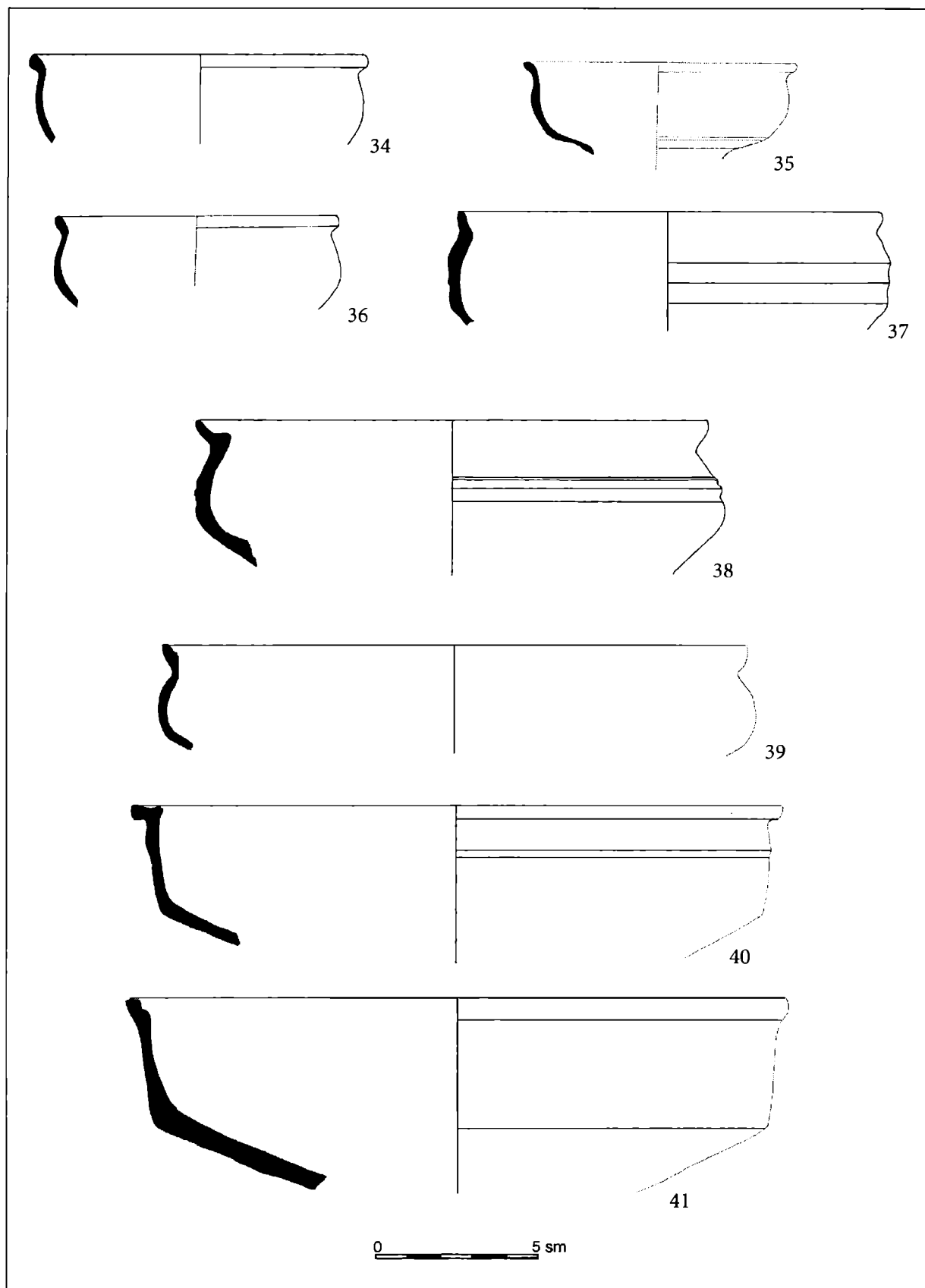


Plate V – 34–37 Bowls with rounded mouth and spherical shape; – 37–39 Bowls with S-shaped profile – 40–41 Bowls with complex shape

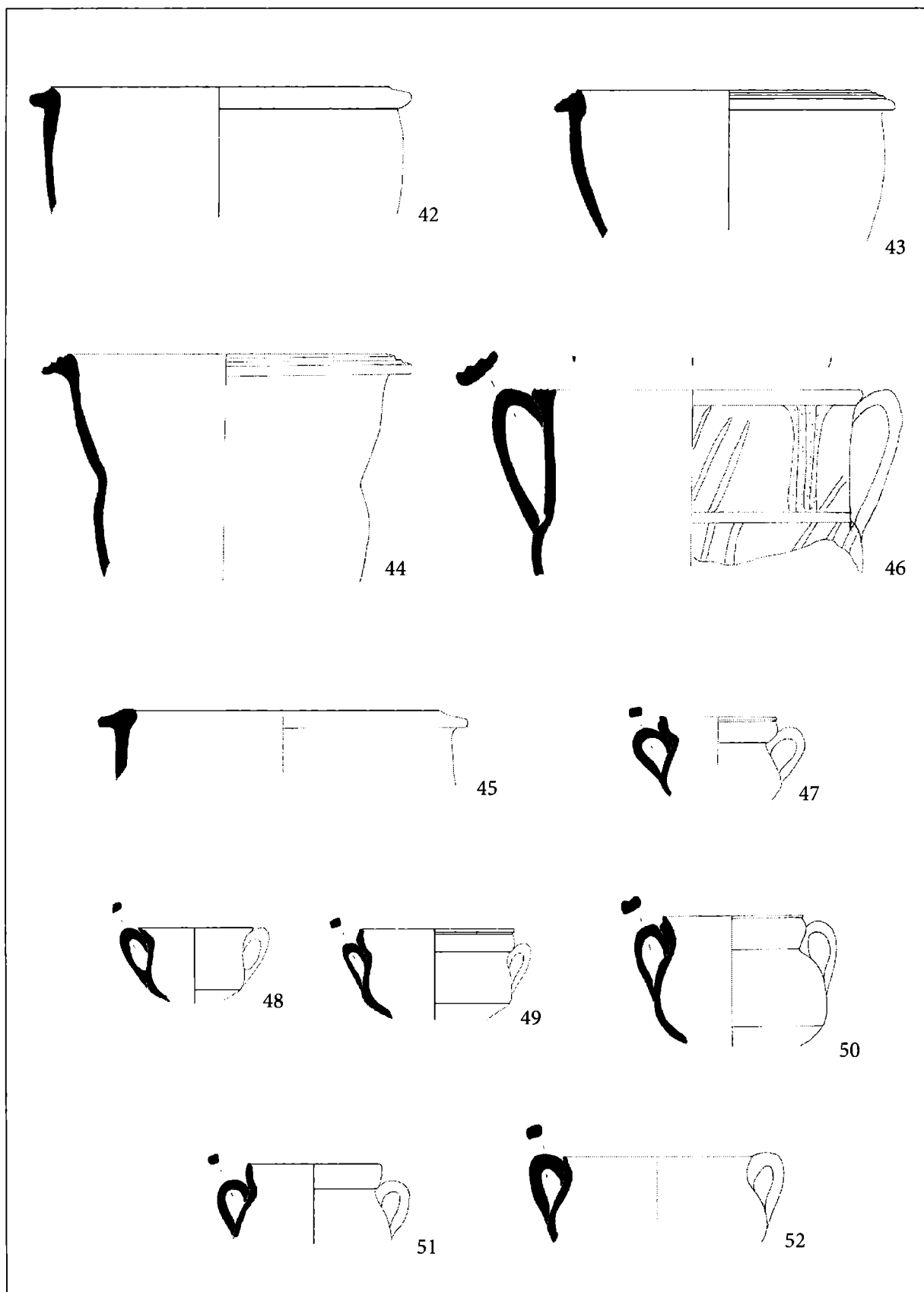


Plate VI – 42–45 Bowls – 46 Vessels with three handles – 47–52 – Cups

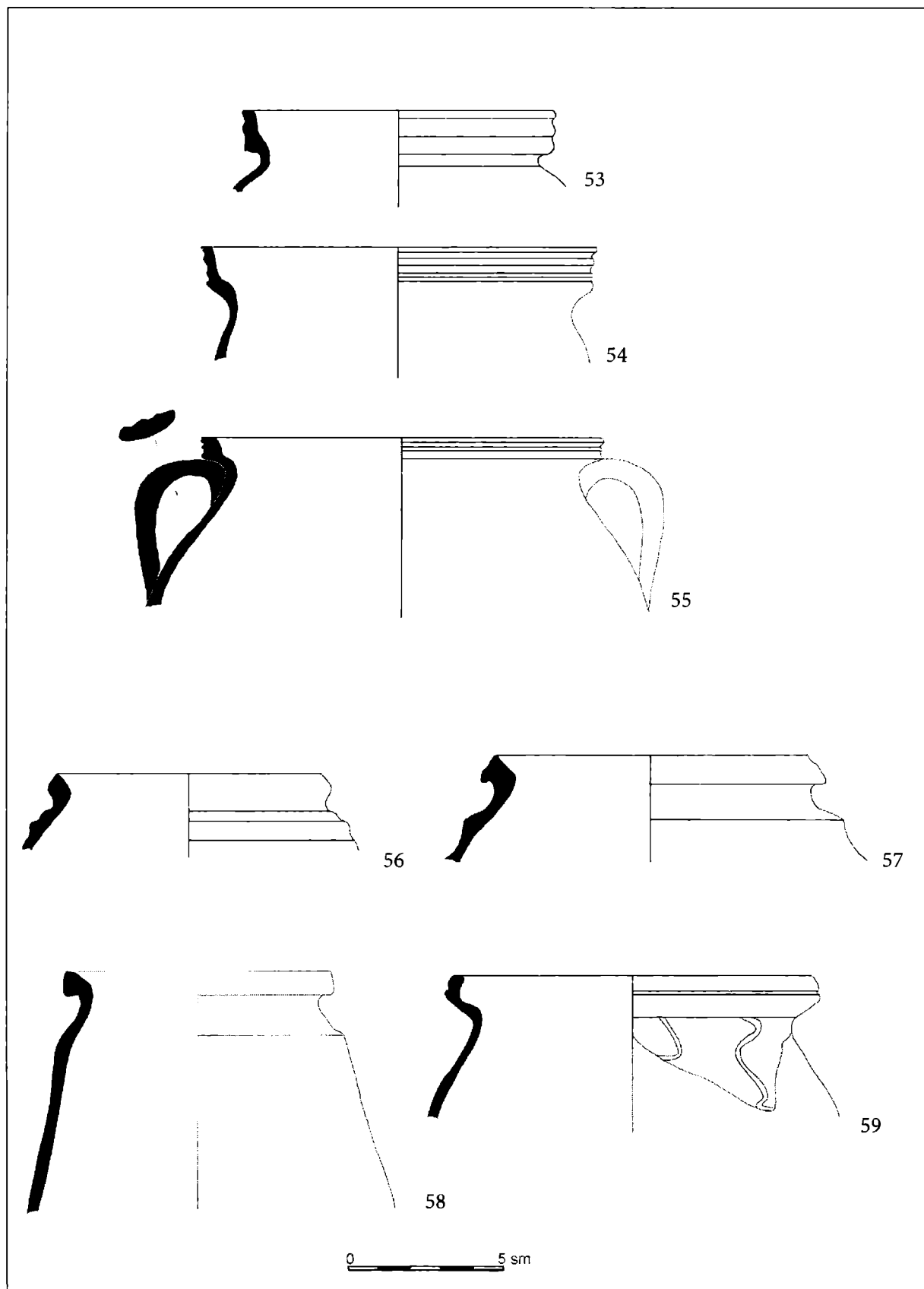


Plate VII – 53–55 Pots Amira, type III – 56–59 Pots

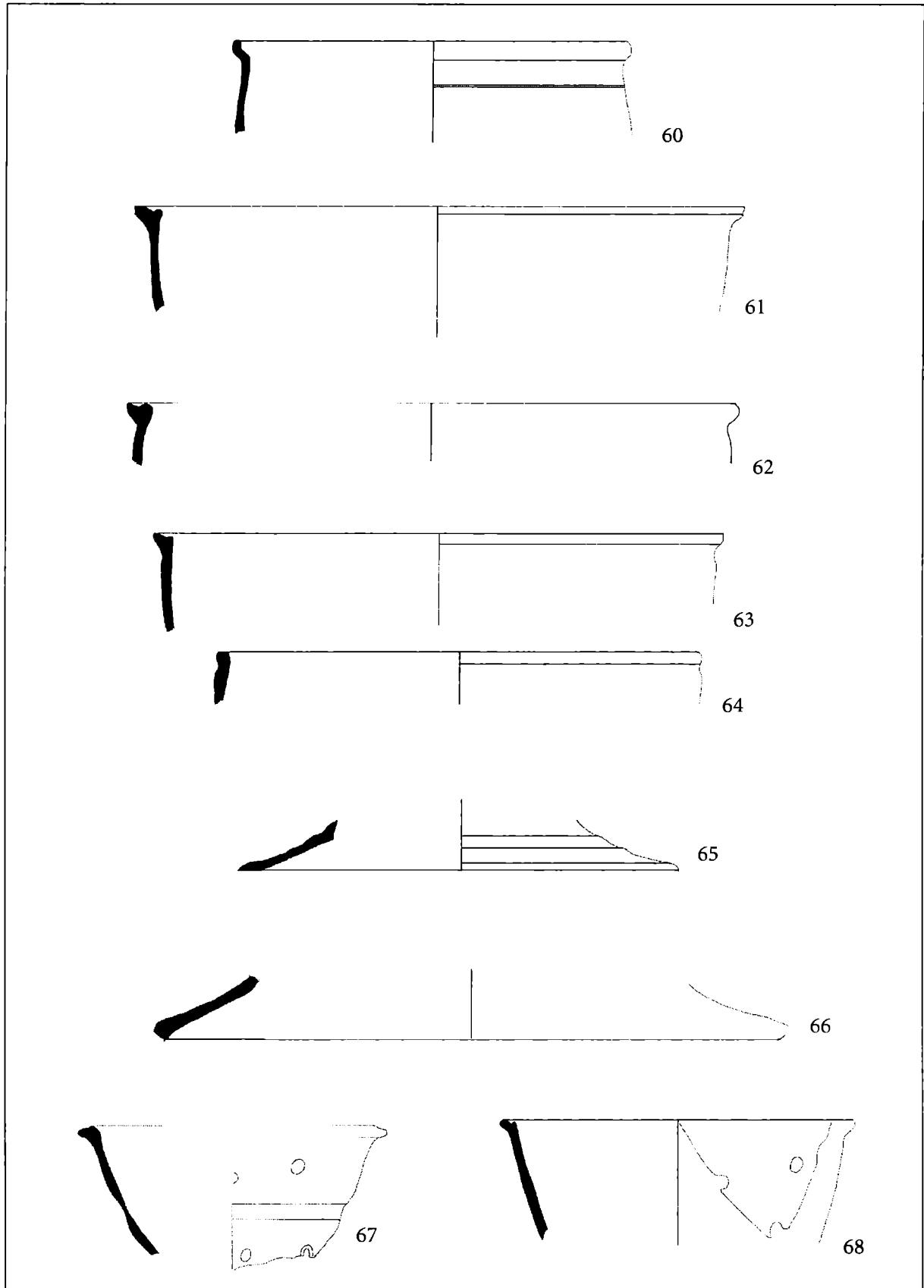


Plate VIII – 60–64 Krater-shaped vessels – 65–66 Lids – 67–68 Strainers

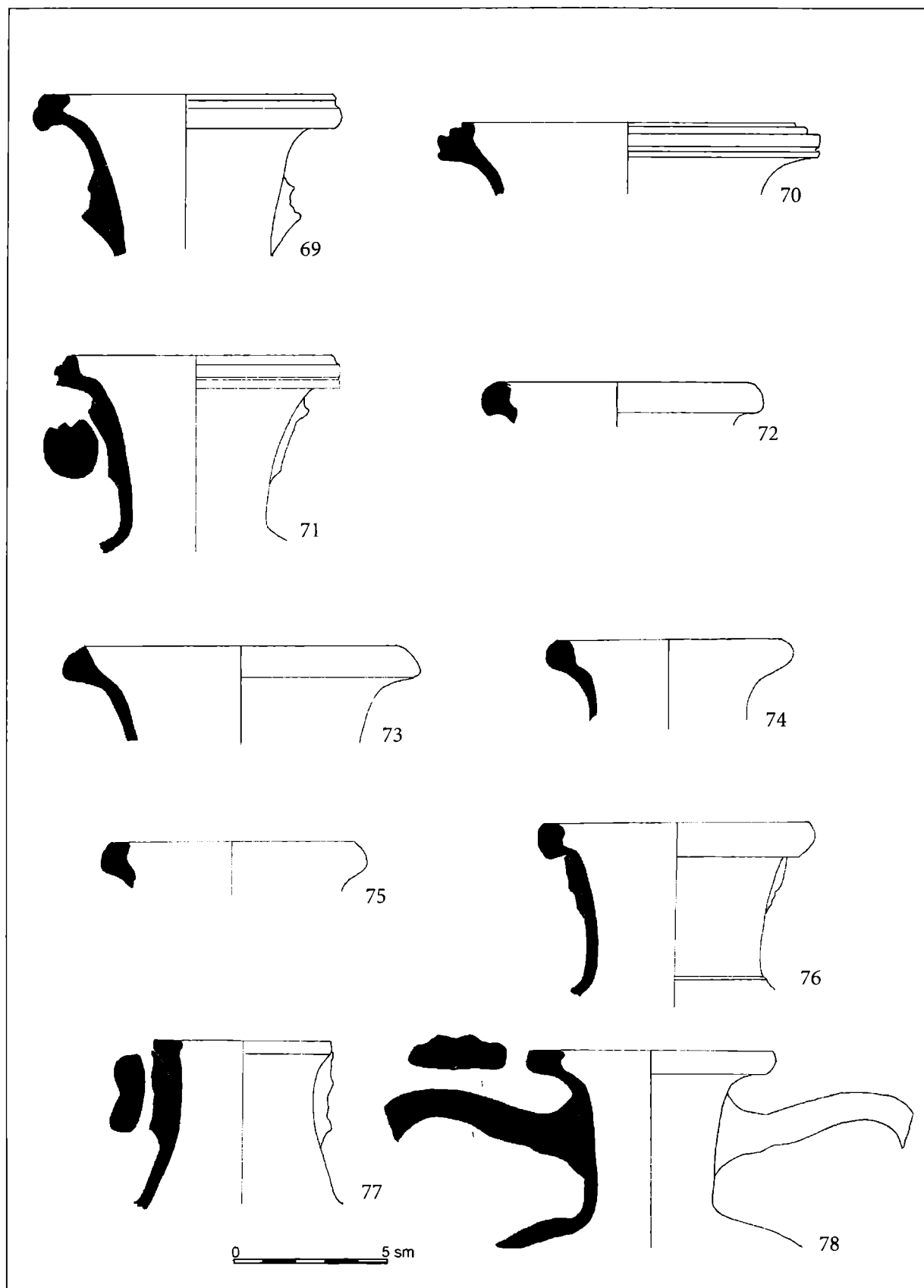


Plate IX – 69–71 Amphorae with folded to the outside stripe-shaped profiled rim. – 72–76 Amphorae with slightly protuberated to the outside and strongly folded inner mouth rim. – 77–78 Amphorae with thick mouth rim with slightly quadratic shape.

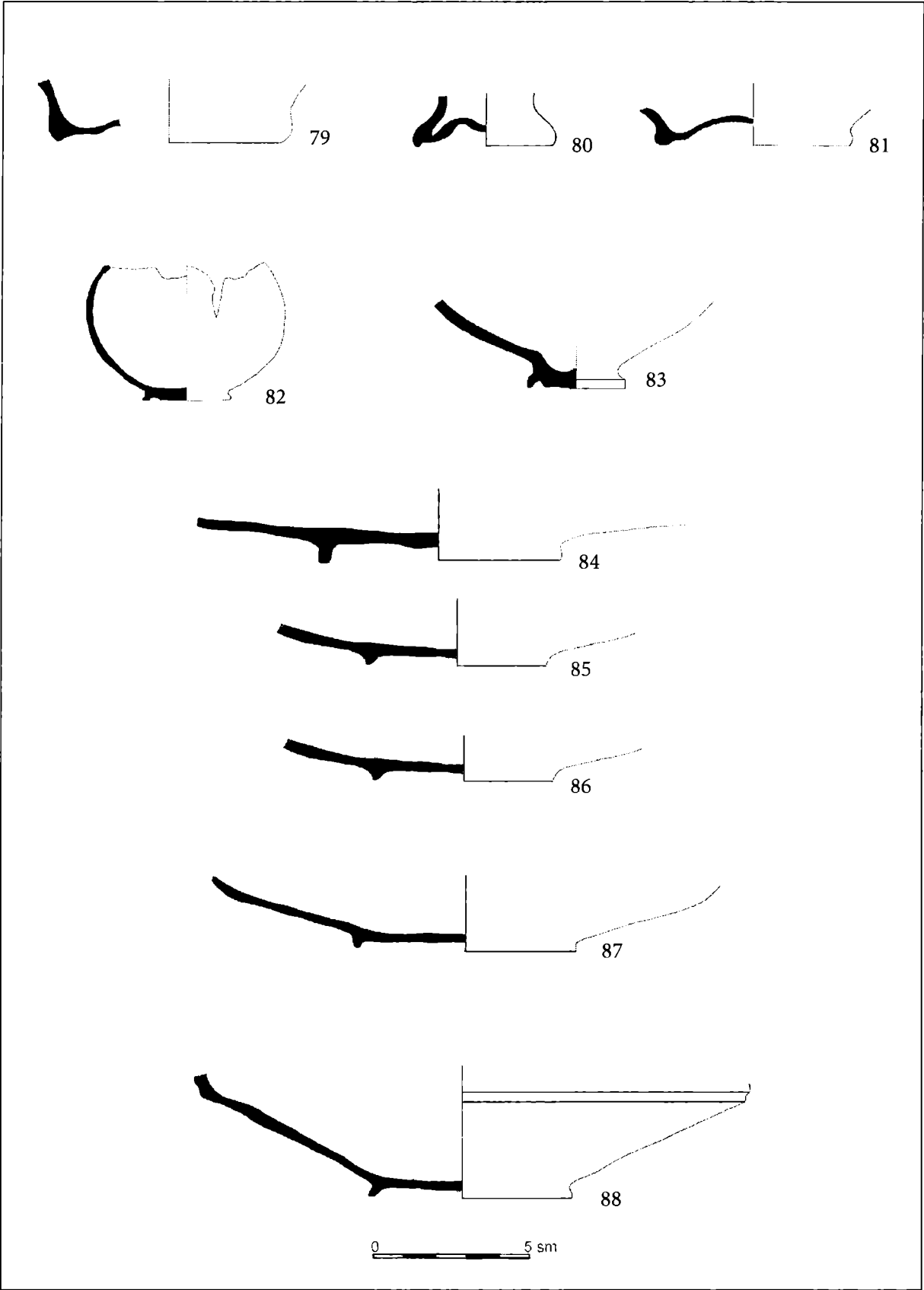


Plate X – 79–88 Bottoms

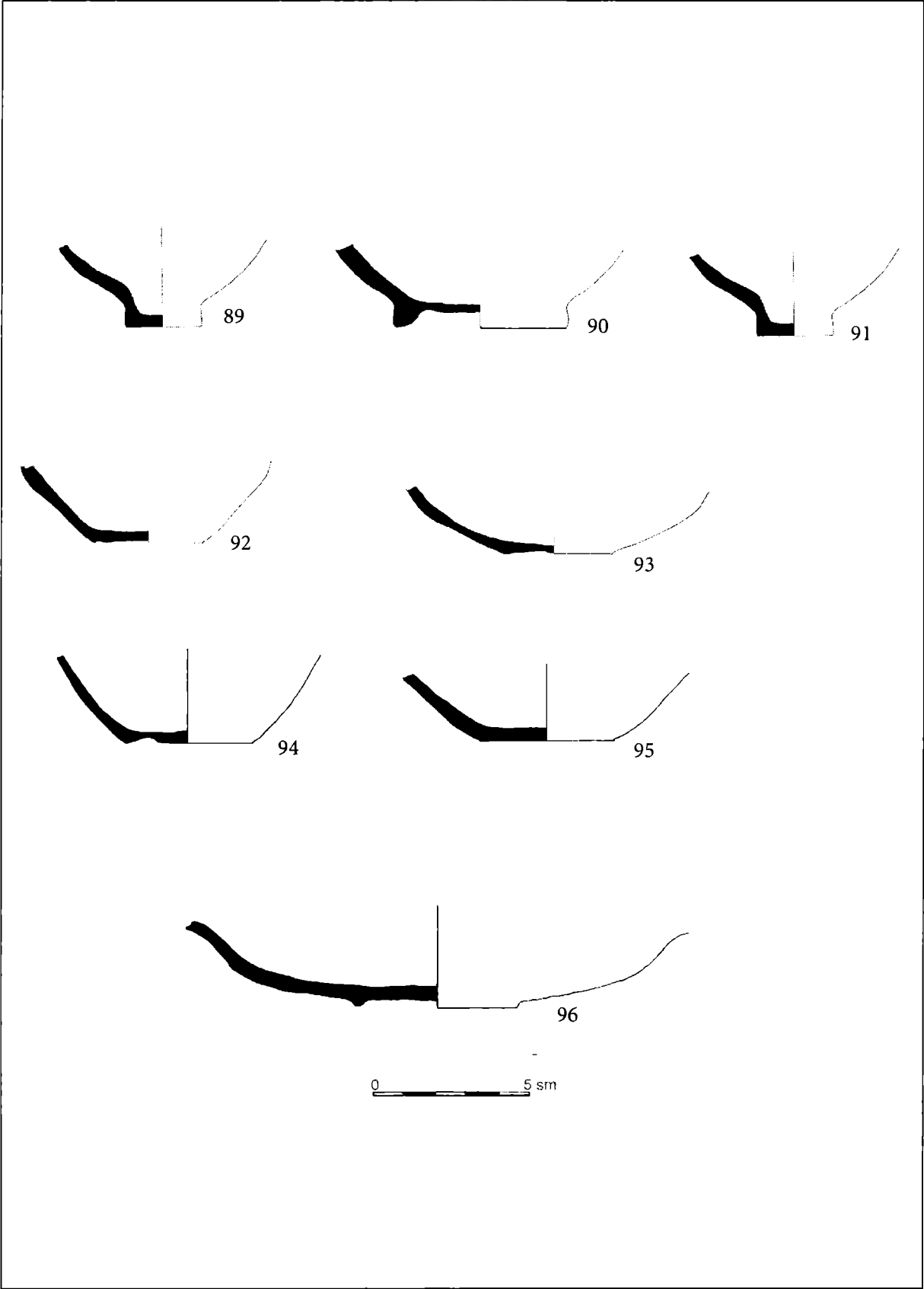


Plate XI – 89–96 Bottoms

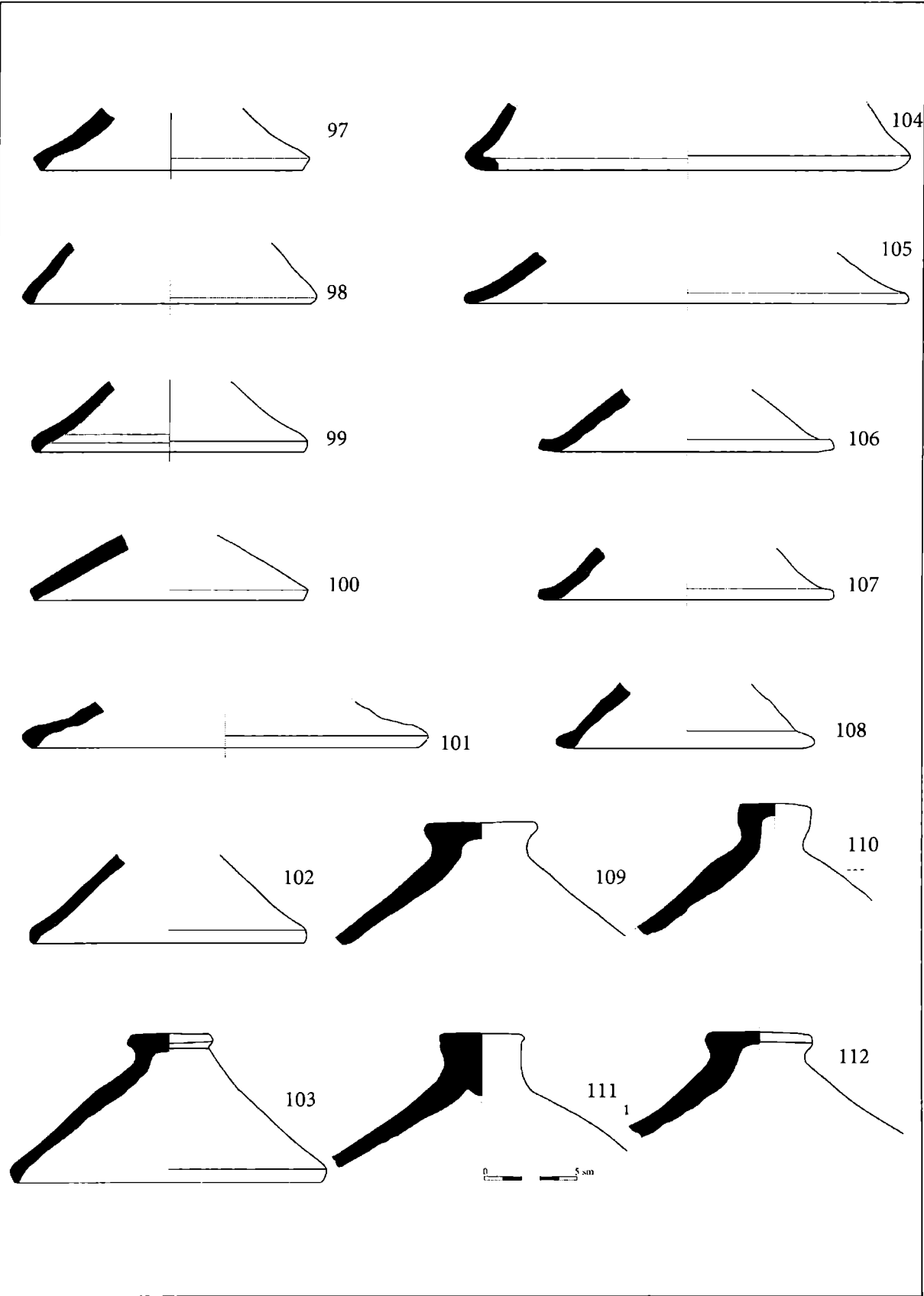


Plate XII – 97–112 Lids, type I – 97–103 Lids, type II – 104 Lids, type III – 105–108 Lids' handles

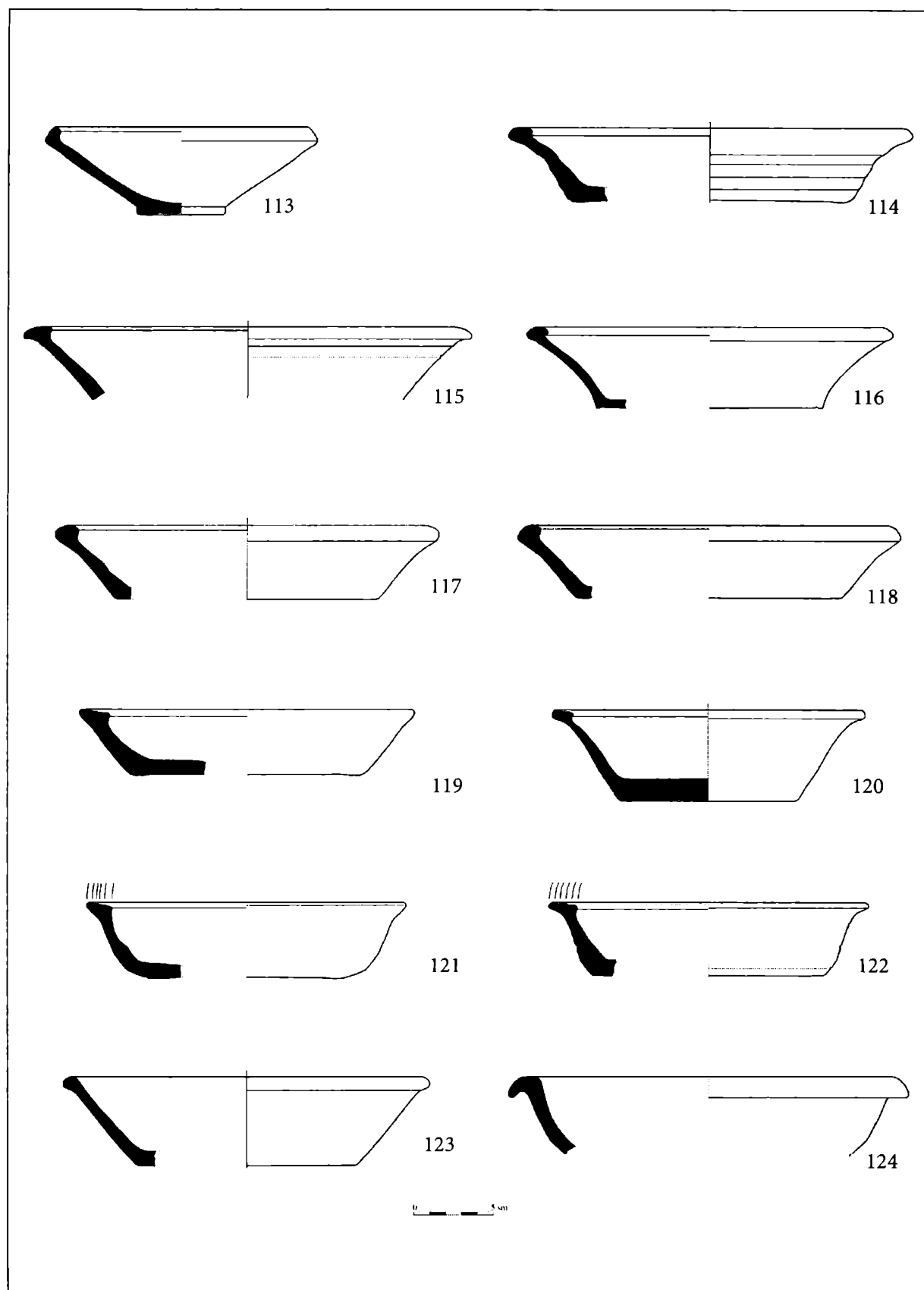


Plate XIII – 113 – Hellenistic bowl – 114–118 – Dishes, type I – 119–122
Dishes, type II – 123 Dishes, type III – 124 Dishes, type IV

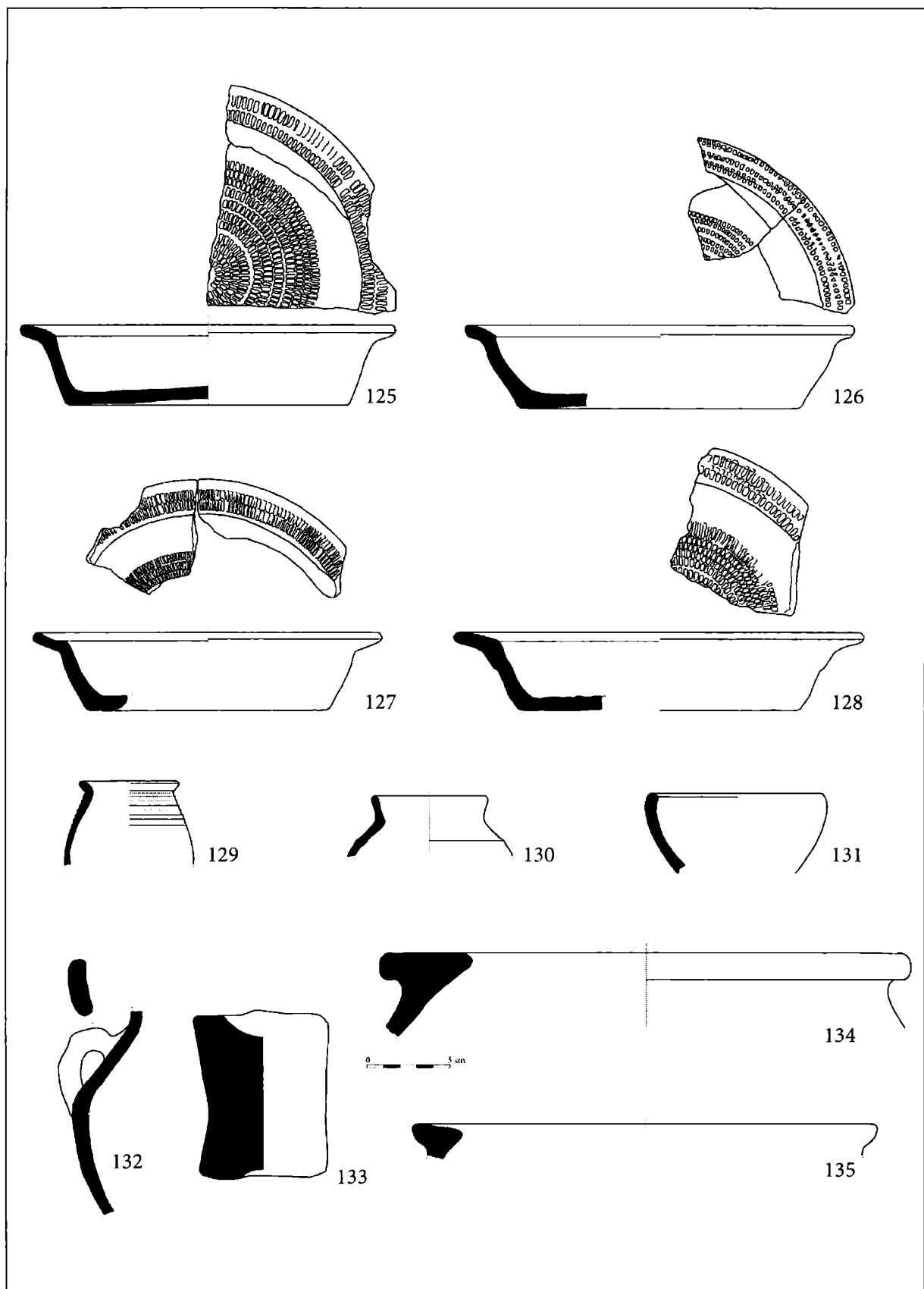


Plate XIV – 125–128 Kernoï – 129–130 Cups, type I – 131 – Cups, type II – 132
Pot worked by hand – 133 Candlestick – 134 Pithoi – 135 – Vessel –storage

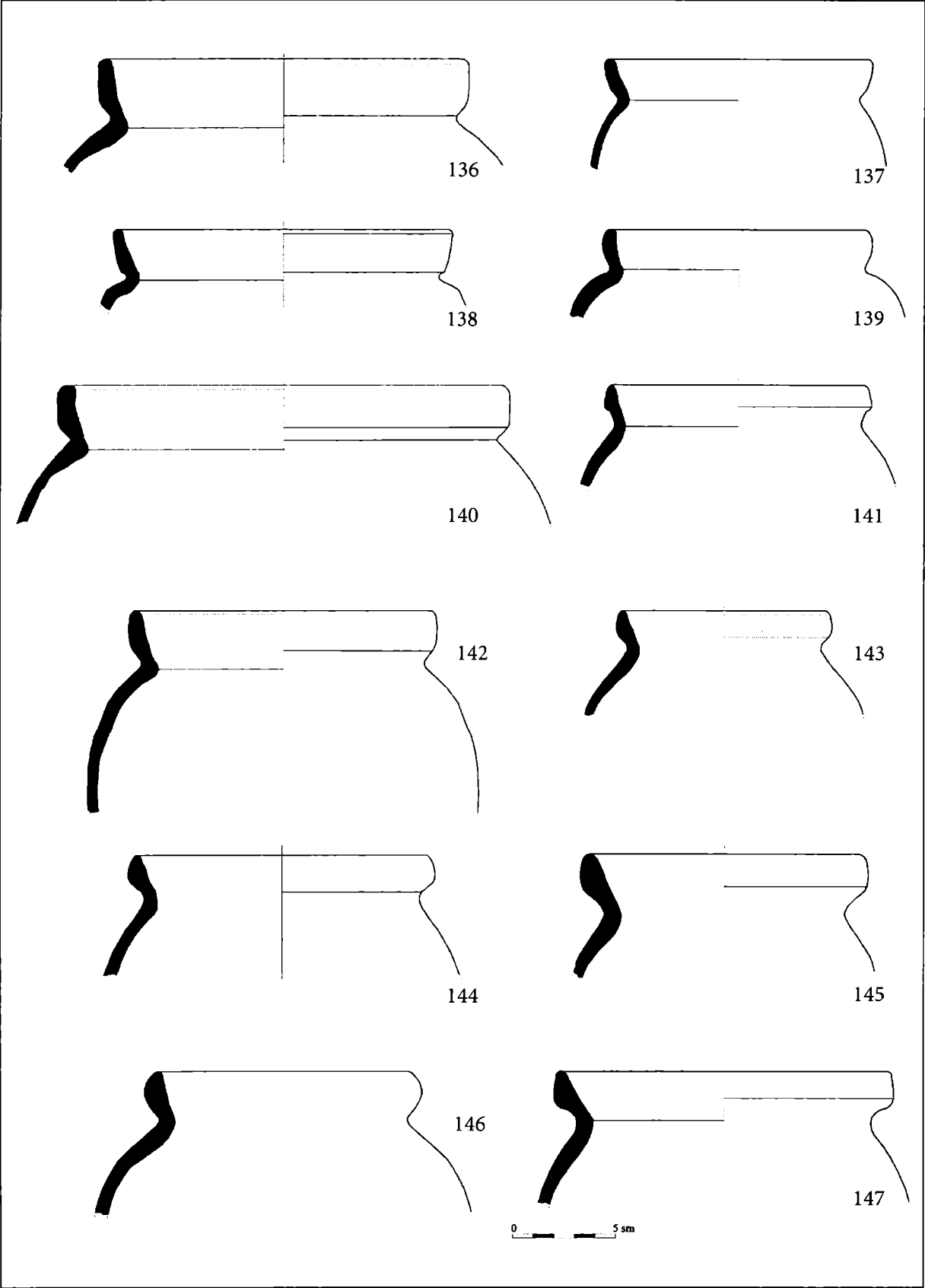


Plate XV – 136–147 Pots, type I

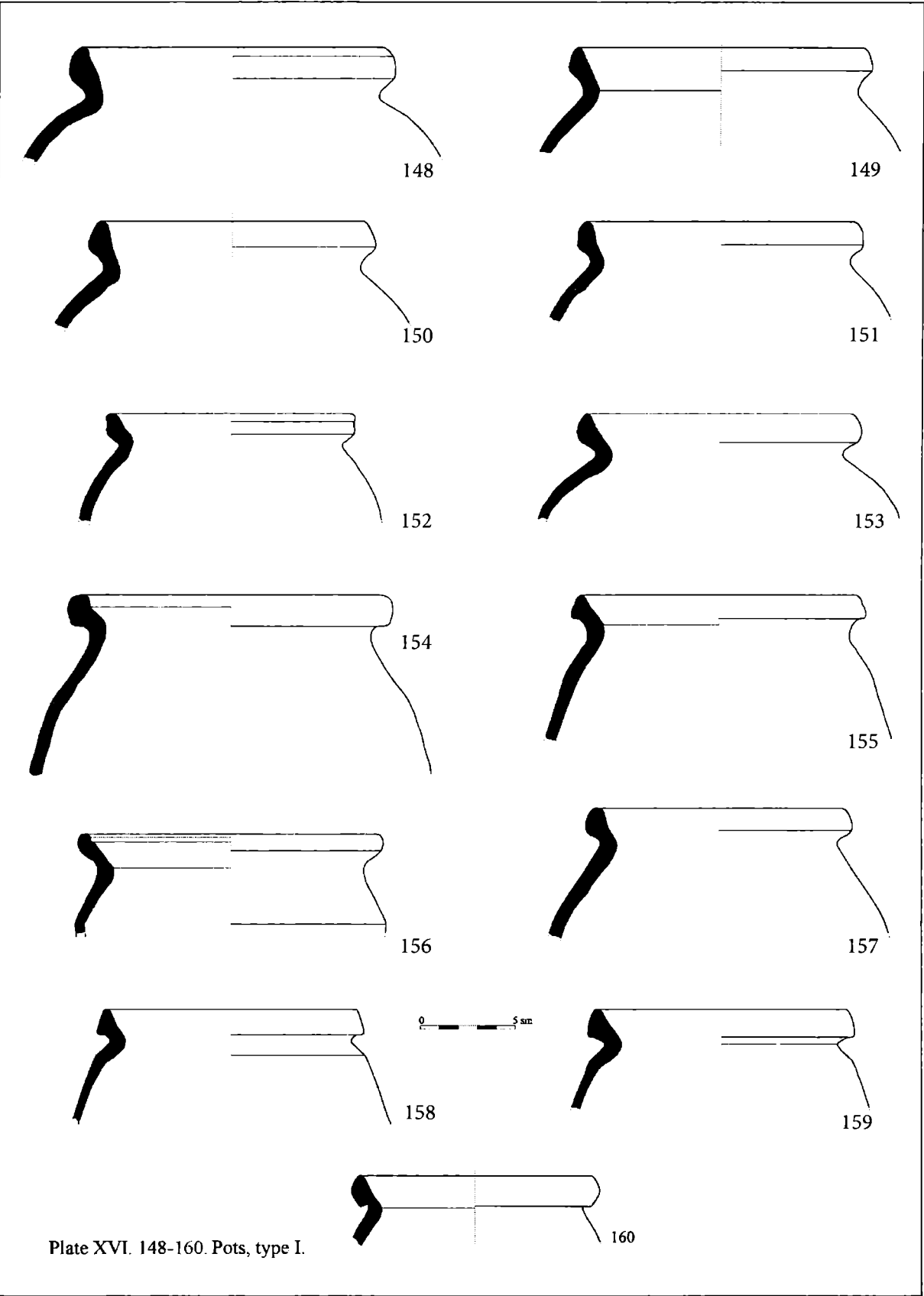


Plate XVI – 148–160 Pots, type I

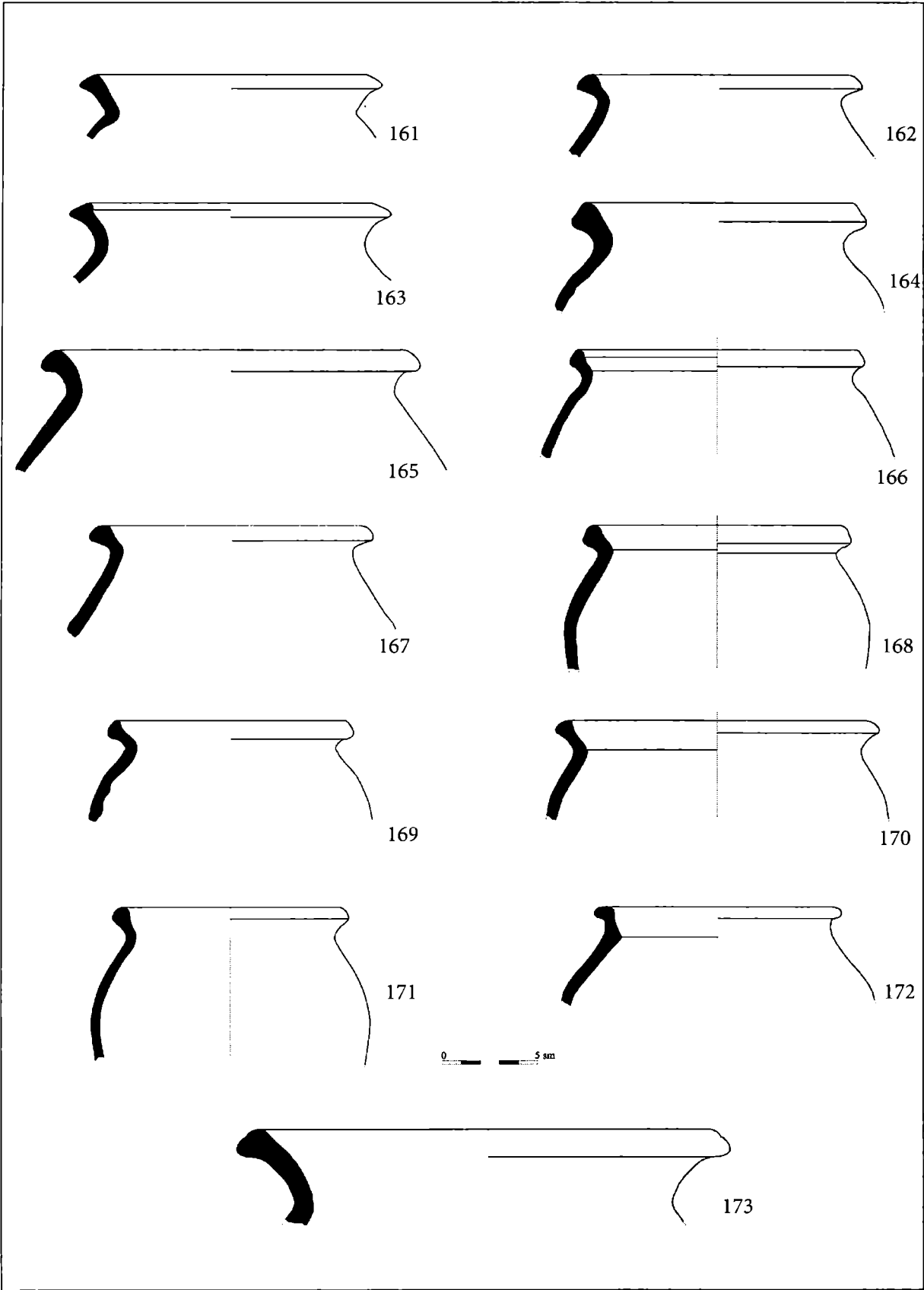


Plate XVII – 161–173 Pots, type II

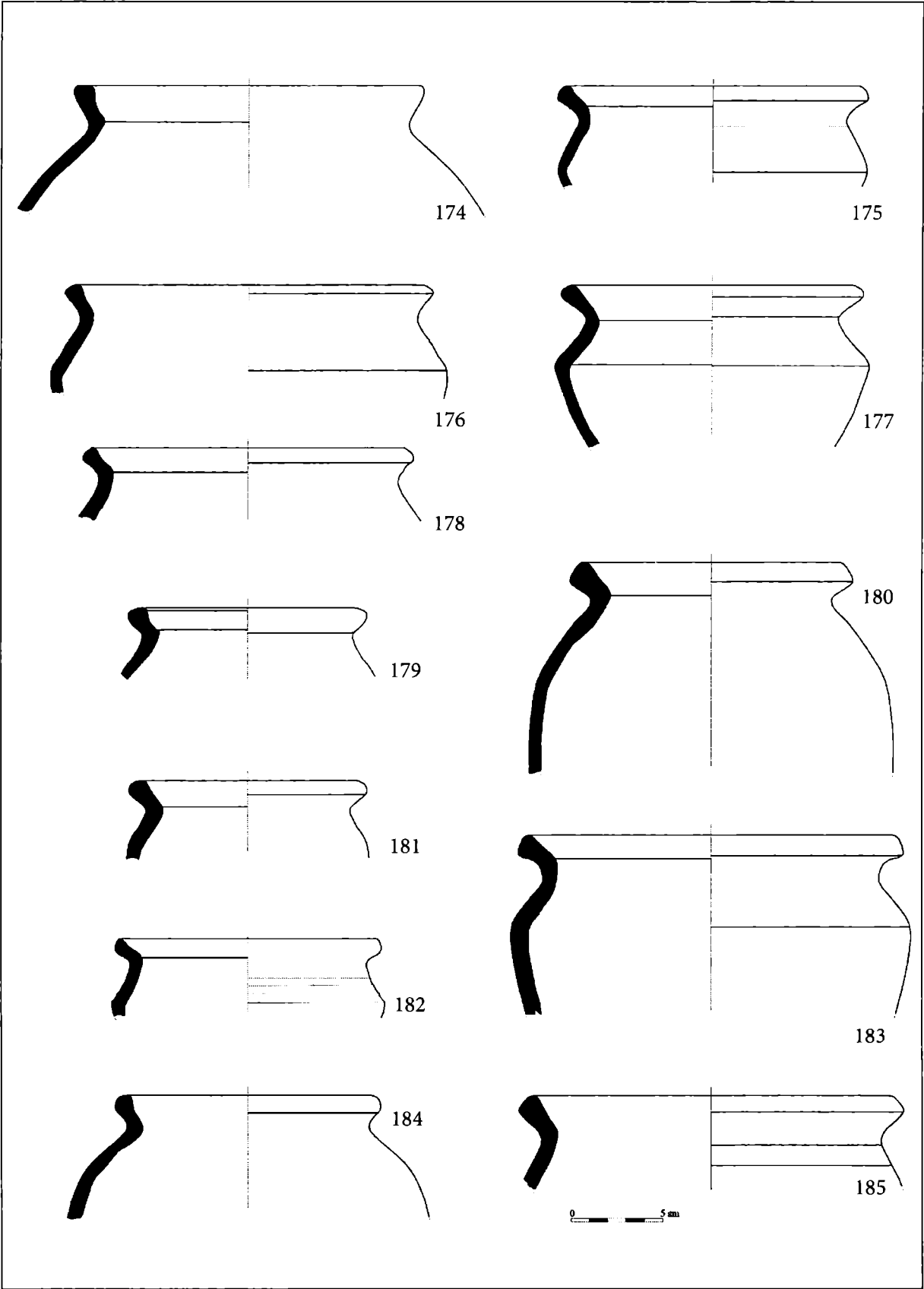


Plate XVIII – 174–185 Pots, type III