

The Thracian Pottery from the Antique Sites of the Lower Dniester (the 6th - 1st c. B.C.)

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The barbarian moulded pottery is one of the most important sources on the problem of the relations among the different tribes which had lived in the North-western Black Sea Region coast steppe. The considerable part of these ceramics was connected with Thracian tribes. We proceed from a position that the availability of the great number fragments of Thracian pottery can be assumed as the artefacts of this ethnic group. We may provide some geographical names from the ancient literary sources: "the Getic wilderness" is a place between Ister (Hister) and Tyras (*Strabo* 7. 3,4); an island of the Tyragetae which was located at the mouth of the Dniester river (*Pliny* 4. 82).

Thracian pottery complexes appear in all antique sites of the Lower Dniester (Tyra, Nikonium, Pivdennoje, Ovidiopolis I, Nikolajevka, Nadlimanskoje, etc.). These sites had been founded later than others on the Lower Bug and the Lower Danube, i.e. at the end of the 6th century B.C.¹ There are many potsherds of barbarian origin in the layers of this time. The Greek settlements on the right bank of the Dniester strictly differs from the sites of the left one. Nikonium, one of the large cities, has the representative group of Getic pottery (the end of the 6th-3rd c. B.C.). These represent about 30%². We may distinguish 5 types of these potsherds (Fig. 1).

The vessels of a cylindrical jar-shaped type are the most numerous in this group. They represent around 21-22% and were used during a period of the end of the 6th - 5th century B.C. If this type of vessels disappeared on the Lower Bug in the 5th century B.C., while similar ones were widely spread on the Lower Dniester. Then the number of these was diminished in the 4th - beginning 3rd c. B.C., and represents 12%. This type has different sizes and decorations.

The pots having Thracian features appeared at Nikonium during the period before the Roman occupation. This type of vessels includes several varieties of a shape which have an analogy at the Thracian sites. We must determine some pots with Scythian and Thracian characters as one. The presence of the pots having their rim projecting outwards as "a cornice-shaped lip". They were found at the Getic sites and occasionally on the Lower Dniester.

We have some sherds of a large earthenware pot (*korchaga*), but cannot reconstruct its shape completely. Vessels of this kind have a rim slightly projecting

outwards, a short neck, and pointed base. Another variant of these are the vessels having an uncurving or projecting inwards rim without a neck. The body surface is burnished or slipped. This pottery was found in all layers of the Nikonium site.

The bowls are various and numerous. They have a good burnished surface as a rule. The mugs are rarely located at Nikonium city. We have the unique fragments of these mugs. There are two kinds: a cylindrical mug and mug-scoop (ladle).

Among the sites of the Dniester estuary left bank at a settlement Nadlimanskoje III there is the example of an early village representing a pottery complex (Fig. 2; 1-6). It was an incompletely studied unfortified settlement which has a small area. The amphora fragments (75,3%) are the basic category of the pottery material³ from this site. We have the following correlation of the different pottery categories (excepting the amphorae):

- the black-glazed and painted pottery wares - 19%,
- the common pottery wares - 4%,
- the Scythian pottery wares - 27%,
- the Getic pottery wares - 7%.

In that way, the Getic and Scythian earthenwares's correlation represents 26% and 74%, respectively. We have the following types here: the cylindrical jars, pots, bowls, fruit-vases. The cylindrical jars same kind resemble those of Nikonium. The pots are of two kinds: vessels with a rim projecting outwards and pots having a rim projecting inwards. Some of them have a burnished surface. Only one kind of bowls was revealed: the unrestricted vessels with rounded-shaped body and a rim uncurving or projecting inwards. This group of bowls are burnished. Only a single stem fragment was found.

Another early settlement, Beljaevka I, is being excavating now⁴. The amphora fragments predominate here (61%). We provide the different ceramic-group correlation of the pottery complex:

- the black-glazed pottery wares - 11.2%,
- the common pottery wares - 48.6%,
- the Scythian pottery wares - 32.2%,
- the Getic pottery wares - 8%.

Thus, the Getic pottery represents 20% of the moulded ones. The collection of these types is usual for the country settlements which were disposed on the Dniester-estuary left bank. There are the cylindrical jars, large earthenware pots (*korchaga*), pots, and bowls.

We know the many antique sites of the 4th-3rd c. B.C., excluding the ones of the end of the 6th-5th c. B.C. on the Dniester-estuary left bank. An ancient large village nearby the modern Nadlimanskoje hamlet is better studied⁵. It was situated on a bank cape and partly destroyed by landslides. This site had a defensive-work

system (fosse and rampart). Nadlimanskoje is dated by the amphora stamps in the first quarter of the 4th - the end of the 3rd c. B.C.⁶ The amphora potsherds serve as the basic ceramics category (80%) as in the early period. The moulded vessels are more numerous than other wares (excepting the amphorae). The moulded wares consist of three groups: the imitated antique pottery, the Scythian and Getic ones. The last two groups can be compared as 4 by 1.

The moulded vessels without burnished finish prevail in the Getic ceramics. We might distinguish 8 types of the latter (Fig. 2; 7-22). The cylindrical jars are the most numerous kind (around 30%). These pots have their rim projecting outside or inside. We reveal in this type the miniature pots like the large ones with good burnished surface. Their decoration is usual for the large pots: a small knob, variety mouldings, and bosses. We have a small rim, body, and the base fragments from a large earthenware pot (*korchaga*). So we cannot reconstruct of these wares the whole shape. There are the shallow rounded, conical, or bell-shaped bowls. Burnished (25% of them without burnishing). Some of them have a vertical moulding which is placed under the rim. One bowl with a well burnished finish have the crooked flutes (it is a rare fact among the pottery for the 4th-3rd c. B.C.). The mugs are as rare as the "stemmed cups". These are analogous for the same vessels of this type, but were used later (this shape existed during the 2nd-1st c. B.C.). Also, rarely revealed, are the fruit-vase potsherds. We have some moulded wares with dotted ornament.

An antique settlement near Nikolajevka on the Dniester-estuary left bank and dated by the 4th-3rd c. B.C.⁷ It was destroyed during the last quarter of the 3rd century B.C. The amphorae calculation is 86%. We might provide the following correlation of the different pottery categories (excepting the amphorae):

- the black-glazed wares - 5.8%,
- the common pottery wares - 12.2%,
- the Scythian pottery wares - 66.5%,
- the Getic pottery wares - 15.5%.

A last group have the five types: the cylindrical jars, pots, large earthenware pot (*korchaga*), bowls, "stemmed cups" (Fig. 3; 1-12). The cylindrical jars are analogous with the vessels of the 4th-3rd c. B.C. from the cities of Tyras, Olbia, and so forth. They have midsize and primitive ornamentation. The large earthenware pots (*korchaga*) are of small size. Unfortunately, their shape is not reconstructed completely. We can provide the vessels with straight body, without a neck, and rim projecting outside. There are some wares having a neck which is decorated with a raised border. The bowls belongs to one type, they are rounded or bell-shaped. One group of bowls have the handle-knobs or horizontal loop-like handle, and the vertical moulding. The bowls, as a rule, have burnished surface. We have one stemmed cup. The analogous ones were found at Ovidiopolis (Fig. 3; 13-16).

Another picture comes from the Dniester-estuary right bank. As well known, the Getic pottery prevails over the Scythian one⁸. Tyras, undoubtedly, was a typical antique centre of the North-western Black Sea Region. Nonetheless, a number of features shows to us the important role of the barbarians in this city's existence. It is reflected in the pottery complex of Tyras. There we have numerous fragments of barbarian vessels. 15% of this pottery were located in a layer of the 3rd-2nd c. B.C. (excepting the amphorae). 17% of these were found in a layer of the 2nd-1st c. B.C. (in Olbia these are only 5% from a layer of the 4th-3rd c. B.C., and 8-10% of the 2nd-1st c. B.C.)⁹. However, we have the two groups: the Getic pottery - 76%, the Scythian one - 24%.

The layers of the end of the 6th-4th c. B.C. have been examined, but we hold the great number materials of this time. There are the 9 types of the Getic pottery from Tyras (Fig. 4).

The cylindrical jars are not more in number than at other early antique sites. These undecorated wares consist of 10% and were used during the 4th-1st c. B.C. We have three kinds of these. An early type is ornamented by raised borders with digital dents and moulded knobs. Numerous of these are burnished. The later wares are undecorated, but with moulded knobs and about 50% are burnished. A small number is well burnished, ones have been dated from the latter group. There are many large earthenware pots (*korchaga*) from Tyras which were used during the 4th-1st c. B.C. We can determine two types of these. The first: the large pots with their greatly widened upper body having the moulded knobs, arch-shaped handles, raised borders, and knobs. The second: the large pots with their greatly widened lower body and well burnished. The bowls were undecorated and hold a dating of the 4th-1st c. B.C. We have only one bowl of the 6th-5th c. B.C. There are four kinds of the bowls some of them with the rim cut off are dated of the 2nd-1st c. B.C. The mugs and stemmed cups (the 2nd-1st c. B.C.) were rarely located in Tyras. Also, the Dacian cup-lamps were found in the layers of the 2nd-1st c. B.C. period. As a rule, these have a conical shape, but sometimes they are represented as small thick-walled bowls. This type has been distinguished from some fruit-vases and lids.

The settlement Pivdennoje is a single antique site which was excavated on the Dniester-estuary right bank¹⁰. It is situated on the abrupt cape and was fortified with a rampart and fosse in antiquity. The amphorae from this site represent a main number (the 90%) of the pottery. The barbarian earthenware consists of the 83.2% of the other pottery. And the Getic one is - 64.1% of the Scythian wares. However, the different pottery types correlation is the following:

- the black-glazed pottery wares - 10.4%,
- the common pottery wares - 6%,
- the Scythian pottery wares - 29.9%,
- the Getic pottery wares - 53.3%.

The Getic ones show their resemblance with the same from Tyras (Fig. 5). We recognize seven types of these: the cylindrical jars, pots, large pots, bowls, mugs and fruit-vases. There are numerous pots with raised borders, moulded knobs and arch-shaped handles. The bowls are divided into two kinds. These types also represent mugs and fruit-vases.

Thus we can assert a constant presence of the Getic pottery in all chronological layers of the antique sites in the Lower Dniester area, from the beginning of the end of the 6th century to the middle of the 1st century B.C. This situation differs from the Lower Bug area. At Olbia and on the settlements of its chora, the Getic pottery is not present in the layers of the 5th - the last quarter of the 4th c. B.C. It appeared after Zopirionus' campaign only. Our data are witnesses for the differences of the interrelations between the Getae and the Greeks at the Lower Bug and the Lower Dniester.

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NOTES

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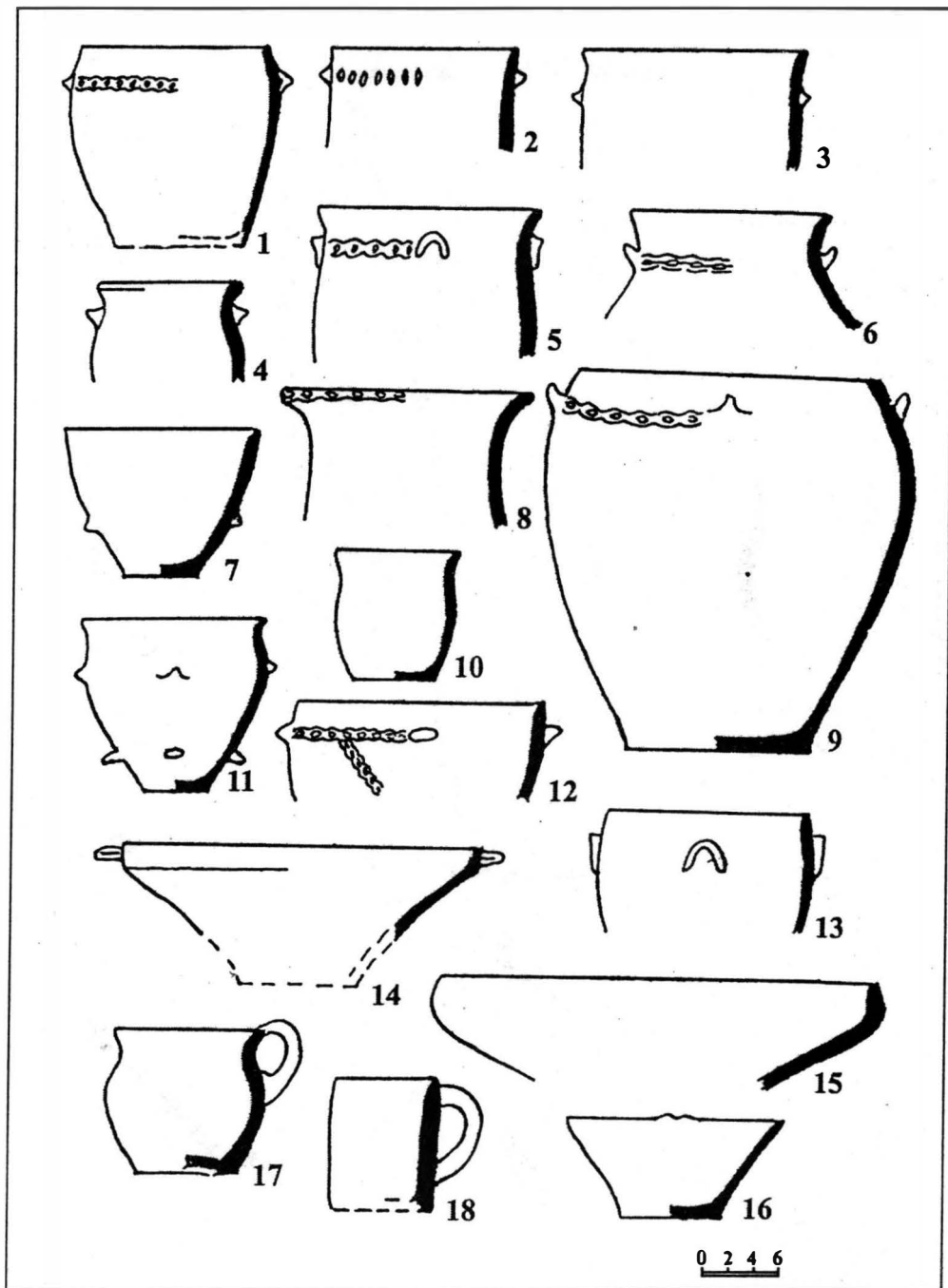


Fig. 1

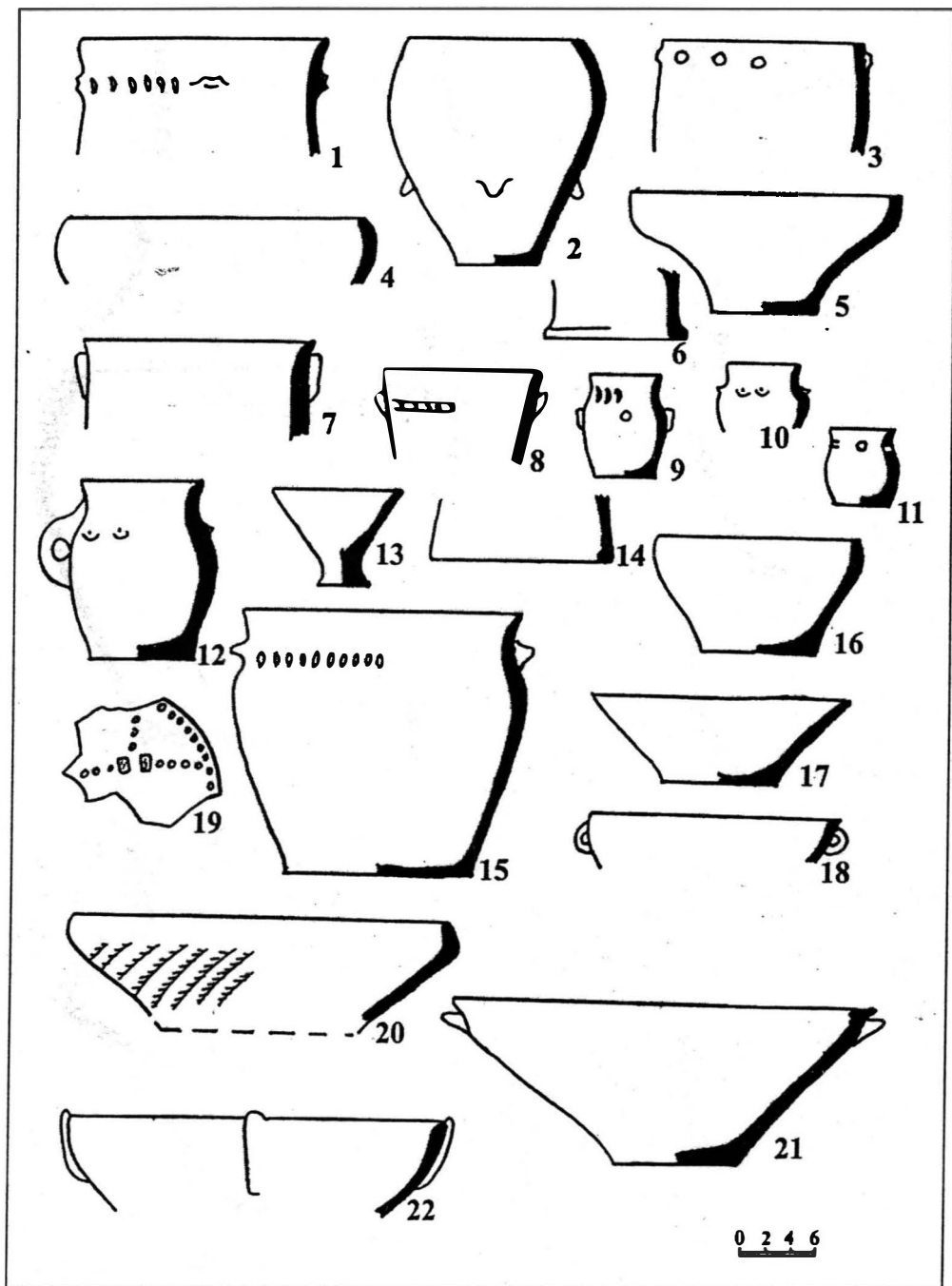


Fig. 2

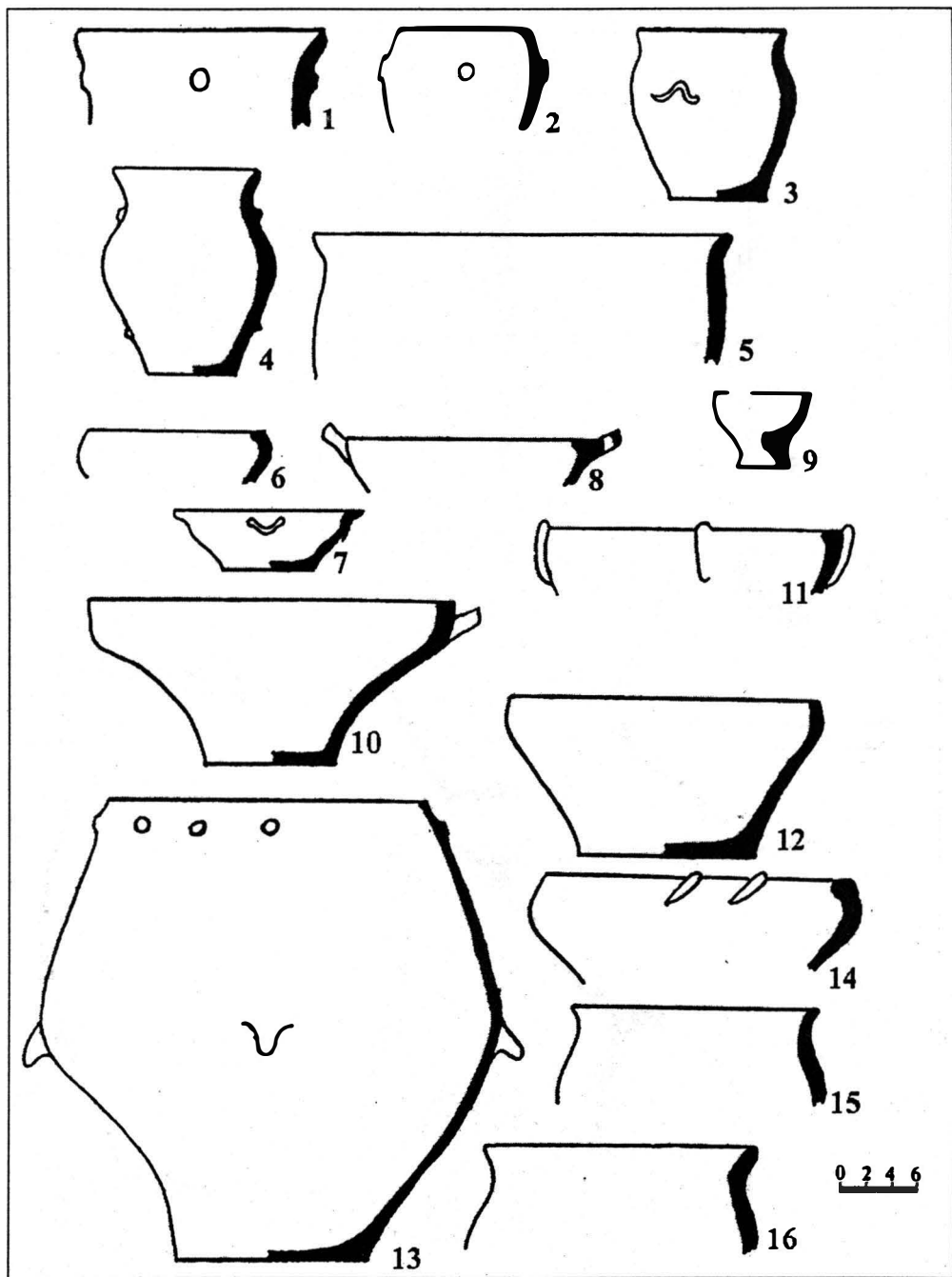


Fig. 3

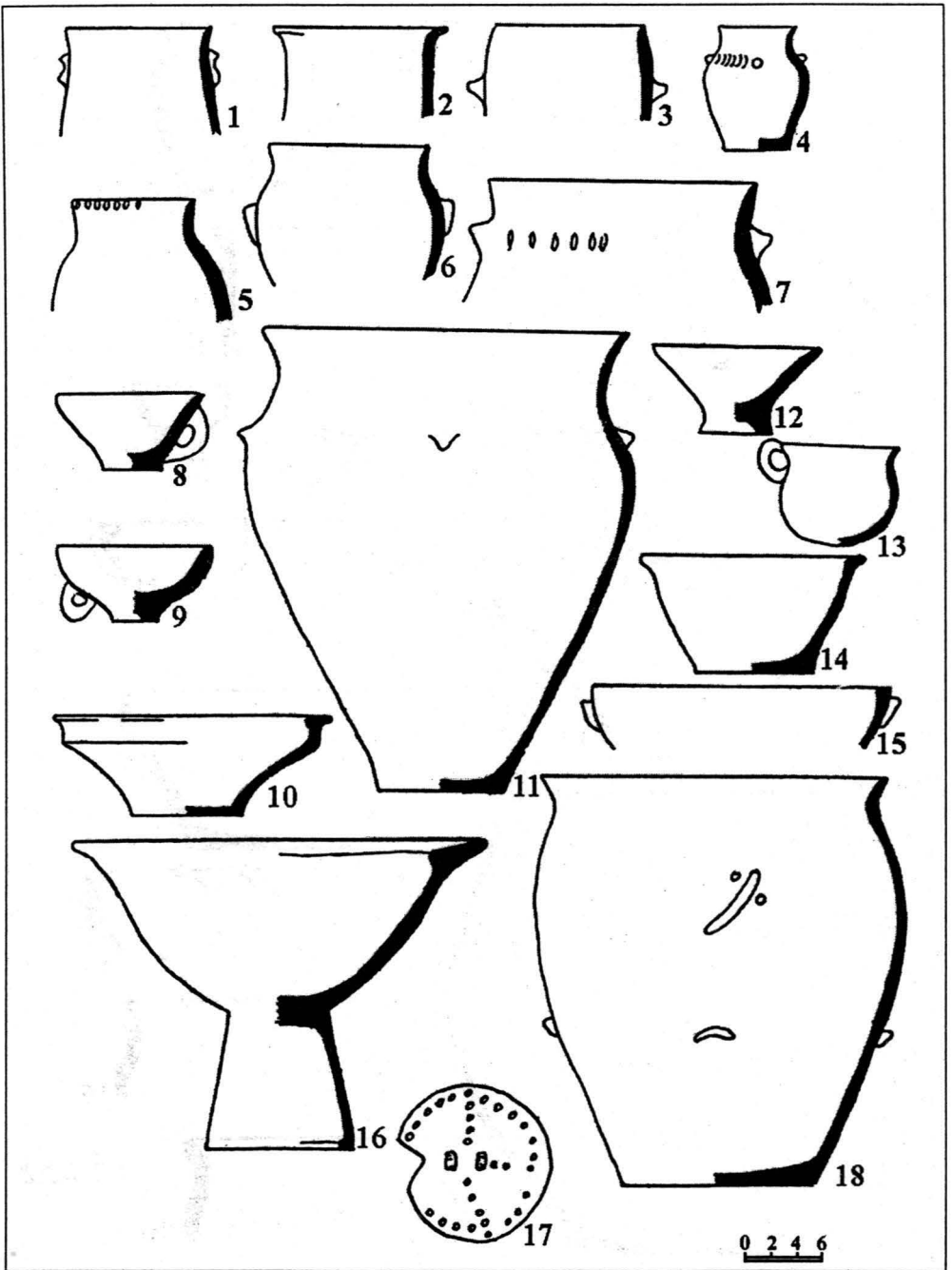


Fig. 4

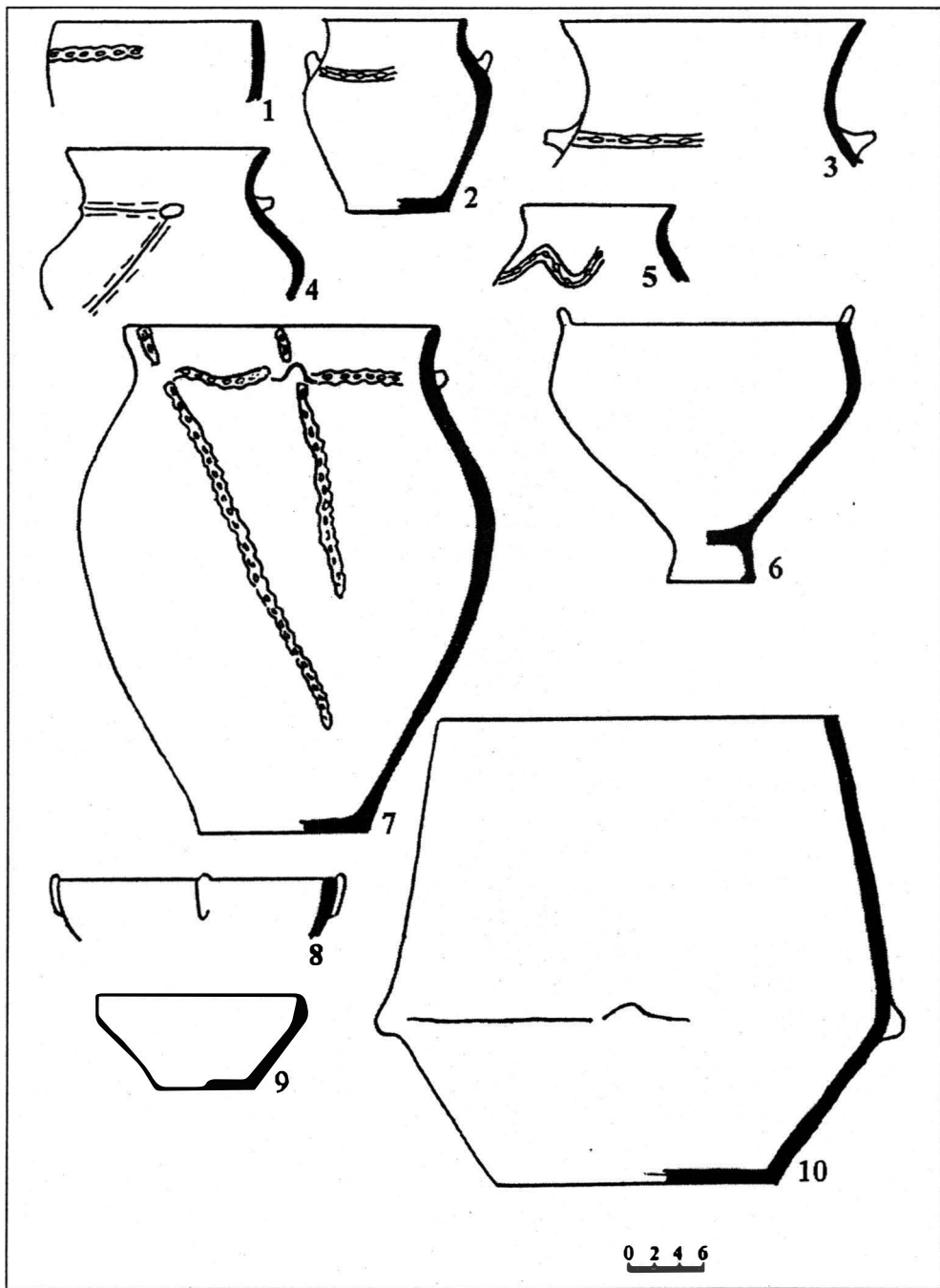


Fig. 5