

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF THE NORTHERN PONTIC REGION IN THE FIRST CENTURIES A.D.

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From the second half to the end of the 1st c. B. C. the Northern Pontic Greek cities have entered a new phase of the historical development-getting into the orbit of political interests of the Roman Empire. The first half of the 1st c. A. D. was an active growing period of the Roman land ownership in the Danubian area. On the basis of the local Greek cities structures a massive penetration of the Roman culture as well as of new social and cultural relations occurred.

In the 1st c. A. D. the Greek North-Western Pontic cities began to be rebuilt after their collapse caused by the Getic invasion. Some epigraphical documents show a massive reconstruction of some public sacred buildings as well as new fortifications of the cities. Archaeological evidence give some additional information on the buildings. A great number of architectural remains made from local limestones and imported marbles have been also uncovered. In my opinion only these details offer some conclusions about the development of the styles in the North-Pontic region in the first c. A. D.

It is worth noting that the separate questions of the development of the monumental architecture in Olbia, Tyras, Chersonesus Tauricus and some other cities were examined by the scholars¹, but the main attention was paid to the influence of the Roman traditions on the classical architecture of the whole region. That is why the aim of my paper is to observe some questions of the evolution of the architectural styles as a part of the 1st - 3rd c. Roman provincial architecture.

The evolution of the architectural styles of this time can be divided into two periods: 1) 1st c. A. D.; 2) 2nd c. to the middle or to the third quarter of the 3rd c. A. D. The main direction of the first period followed the local Hellenistic traditions in order building. It concerns mainly the Doric style. It is possible to retrace the late Hellenistic forms in all the Doric capitals until the 1st c. A. D. These details are well-known in the Pontic zone: to the North - Panticapaion, Chersonesus, Olbia, and very likely Tyras²;

the Southern area comprised Roman provinces Bithynia, Pontus³: to the West - Lower Moesia and Thracia⁴. Some of these Doric buildings are known from inscriptions in Panticapaion, a Doric building (temple ? portico ?) dedicated to Aspurgos⁵ in Olbia, a Doric portico excavated in the south-western part of the Roman citadel⁶. The authors of the investigations connect this building with the portico dedicated to Augustus and Tiberius known from an Olbian inscription⁷. Dio Chrysostomus relates that in Olbia there was a Zeus temple and a temple of Achilles till the end of the 1st c. A. D.⁸

As to the details of Ionic and Corinthian styles none of them can be dated nowa-days by the 1st c. A. D. That is why it is possible to draw some conclusions about the existence of common stylistic traditions in order building of Pontic cities in the 1st c. A. D. connected mainly with the Doric order.

The second period was connected with the great Roman political activity in all the Northern Pontic regions by the end of the 1st c. A. D. The permanent Roman military troops were distributed in the main cities of the region where the new defensive systems (citadels) were built - in Tyras, Olbia, Chersonesus and Bosporus cities. The result of this new political situation was the continuous progress in the new civic and cultural buildings and those connected with the Roman military administration. The periods of Trajan's and Hadrian's reign were well known as the time of the wide scope of building activity over the whole Empire, including the far-distant frontier. Each provincial city had a list of public and civic buildings connected with Roman military administration and the city municipality. The official architecture made the single demands to all the provincial administrative buildings. That is why their decorative system supposed the existence of the definitive collection of the architectural details for façades and interiors. As a rule, the building terms were so rapid that the import of fine marble details was much more advantageous than their local production.

It is well known that the reign of the first Antonini was the time of flourishing of the architecture in Asia Minor when the local Hellenistic building traditions were further developed. The most famous is Pergamian and Aphrodisian schools whose workshops supplied with numerous marble architectural details the provincial cities of all the Pontic region⁹. Their production can be really called "art-industry" (in accordance with M. Fischer)¹⁰. On the basis of the existence of the numerous quantity of marble decorative types it is very difficult (almost impossible) to find the similar ones. With the help of the marble pieces of decoration from Olbia, Tyras, Chersonesus. It is possible also that the whole Northern Pontic region was included into the Roman marble trade system¹¹. The long chain of marble details trade was closed in the Northern Pontus.

The largest collection of Asia Minor details comes from Tyras and Chersonesus. It includes the details of Ionic style bases, capitals of various forms and decorations and separate pieces of entablature (fig. 1-3). Only some of capitals were made from local limestone by architects who had come, to my mind, from Asia Minor (fig. 1-5, 9; 2-4, 6). The great number of details belongs also to Corinthian style. The collection consists from column and pilaster capitals (fig. 4-6; 9), cornices and pilaster fragments with flutes (fig. 11-15). The bases are very similar to Ionic ones, that is why there is a problem in their definition. Some large capitals from Chersonesus belonging to big monumental buildings (fig. 7; 8) are unique but the exact analogies are unknown. Palm-capital with Corythian decoration comes from Chersonesus (fig. 10). It seems to be an imitation of Pergamon style, from local limestone. The same forms of capitals are known in the Trajaneum Pergamon¹².

Besides the role of Asia Minor in the spreading of architectural details (the south direction) there was another one connected with the influence coming from Lower

Moesia as an western direction. A great number of these details made from local limestone and polychromic (mainly red) marble were found in Tyras and Olbia (fig. 16).

Statistics show that in the western region - Tyras and Olbia - only 50% of the whole quantity of the details belong to the production of Asia Minor while in Chersonesus there are more than 75%. This situation to my mind really reflects the main trade directions in 2 - 3 c. A. D. to the Northern Pontic cities.

Unfortunately it is impossible now to connect any details with the building remains excavated in situ. Only with the help of inscriptions the scholars know about the existence of the following temples and civic buildings in the cities of the region. In Tyras, for example, a big building with Ionic or Corinthian portico (temple?) was dedicated to Trajan or Hadrian¹³. In Olbia there was the temple of Apollo Prostates¹⁴, situated in the centre of the Roman citadel a well-known place where the inscriptions to that God were concentrated. Epigraphic documents show that the temples and special buildings dedicated to different Gods and Roman Emperors in Ionic style were built: to Serapis and Isis, Asclepios and Hygeia and Poseidon - in Olbia¹⁵, to Aphrodite - in Chersonesus¹⁶. Temples dedicated to Aphrodite, Poseidon, Zeus were built in some Bosphorus cities¹⁷. It is also known that in Olbia thermae were built by an architect from Nicomedia who came to Olbia from Tomis¹⁸. So it is possible to consider the existence of an usual practice to invite architects from Asia Minor for work in Pontic cities. This practice is well-known from Plinius the Young's letters to Trajan¹⁹.

Collection of the order details from the Northern Pontic cities offer the opportunity to draw some conclusions about the main directions of styles development in I-III c. A. D. The main one was connected with the famous architectural schools of Asia Minor while the second was bound to the local building tradition coming from the Danubian direction.

NOTES

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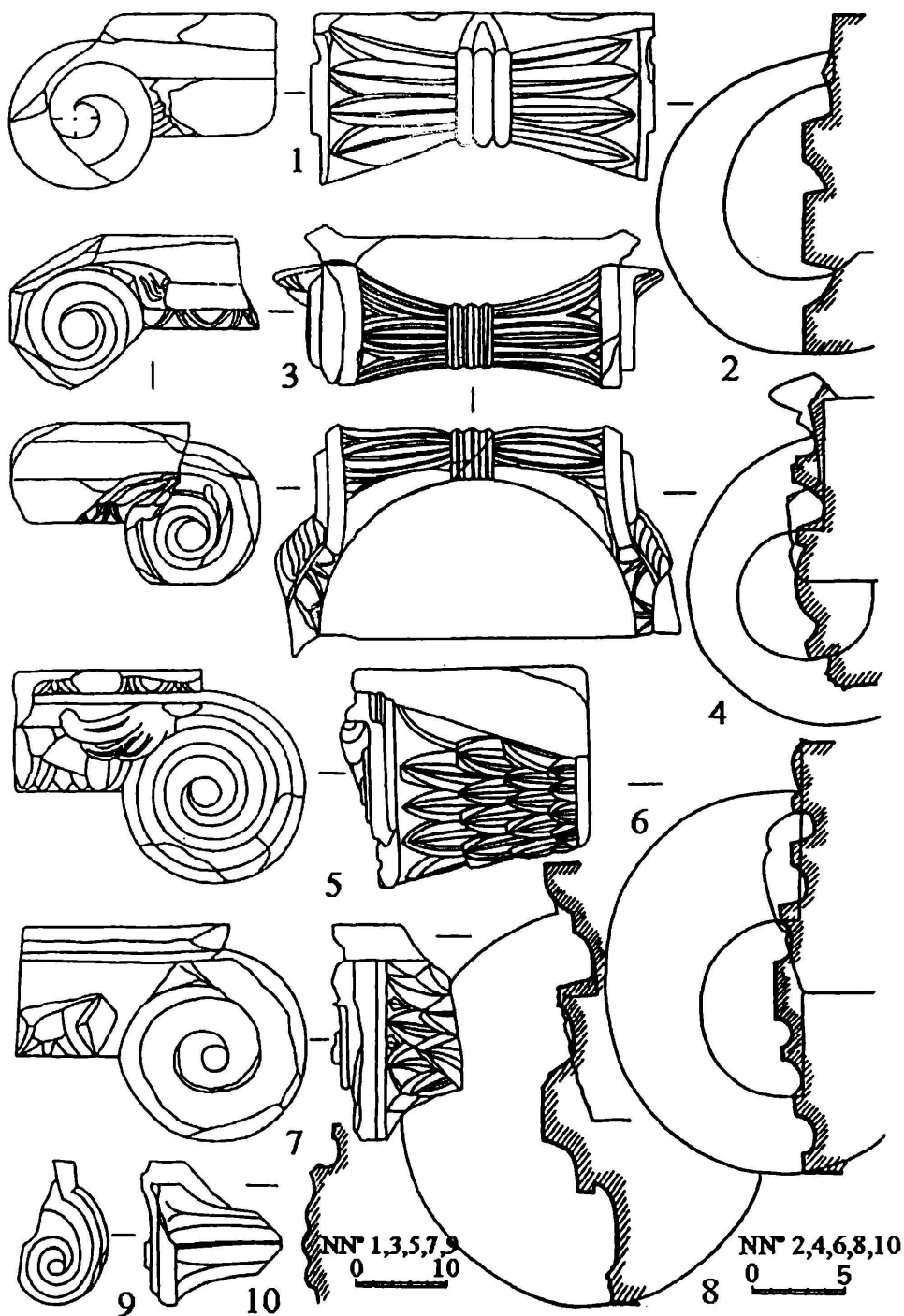


Fig. 1 Ionic capitals. Chersonesus : 1, 3, 7 - marble; 5, 9 - limestone.

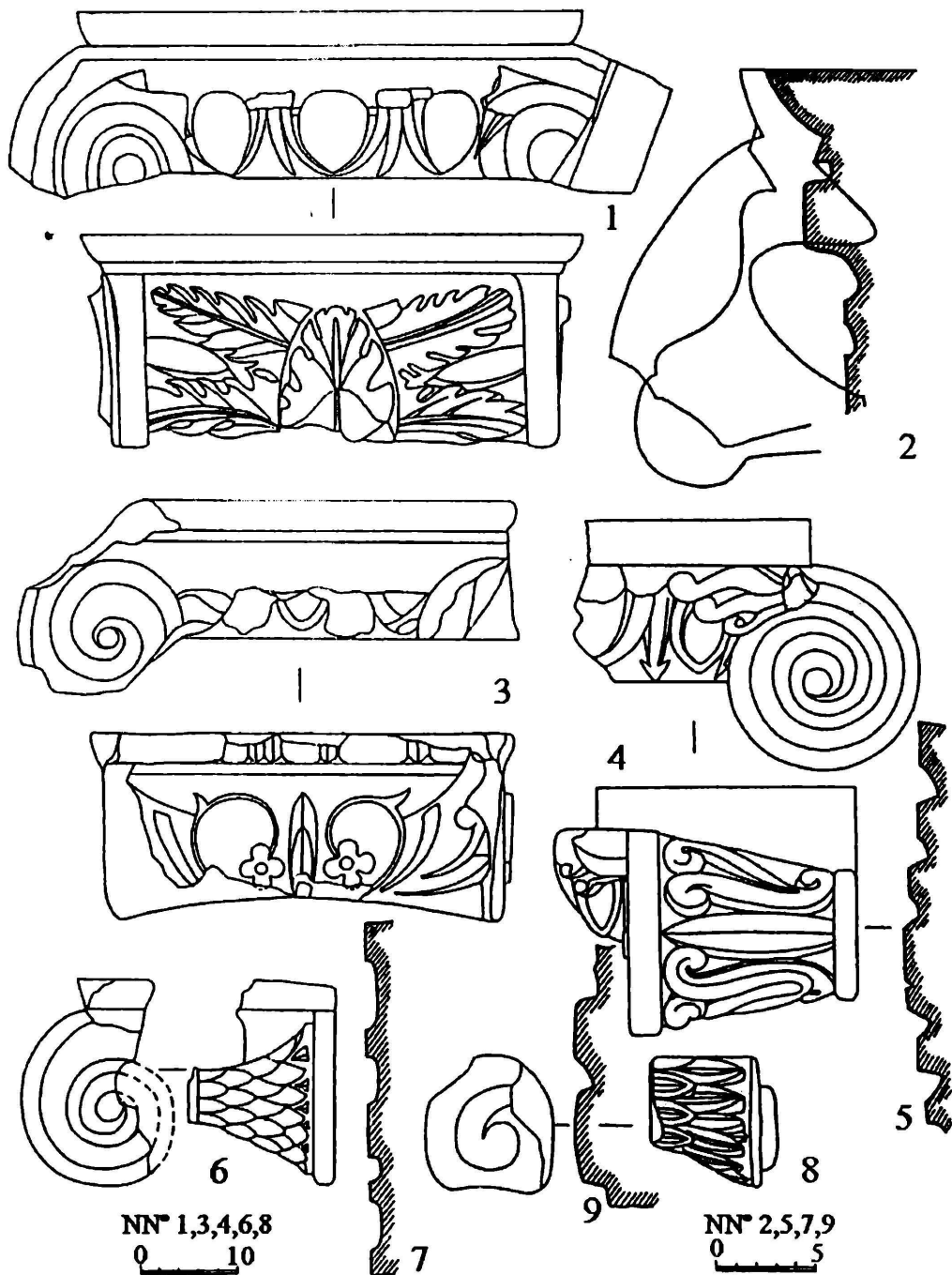


Fig. 2 Ionic capitals. Chersonesus : 1, 3, 8 - marble; 4, 6 - limestone.

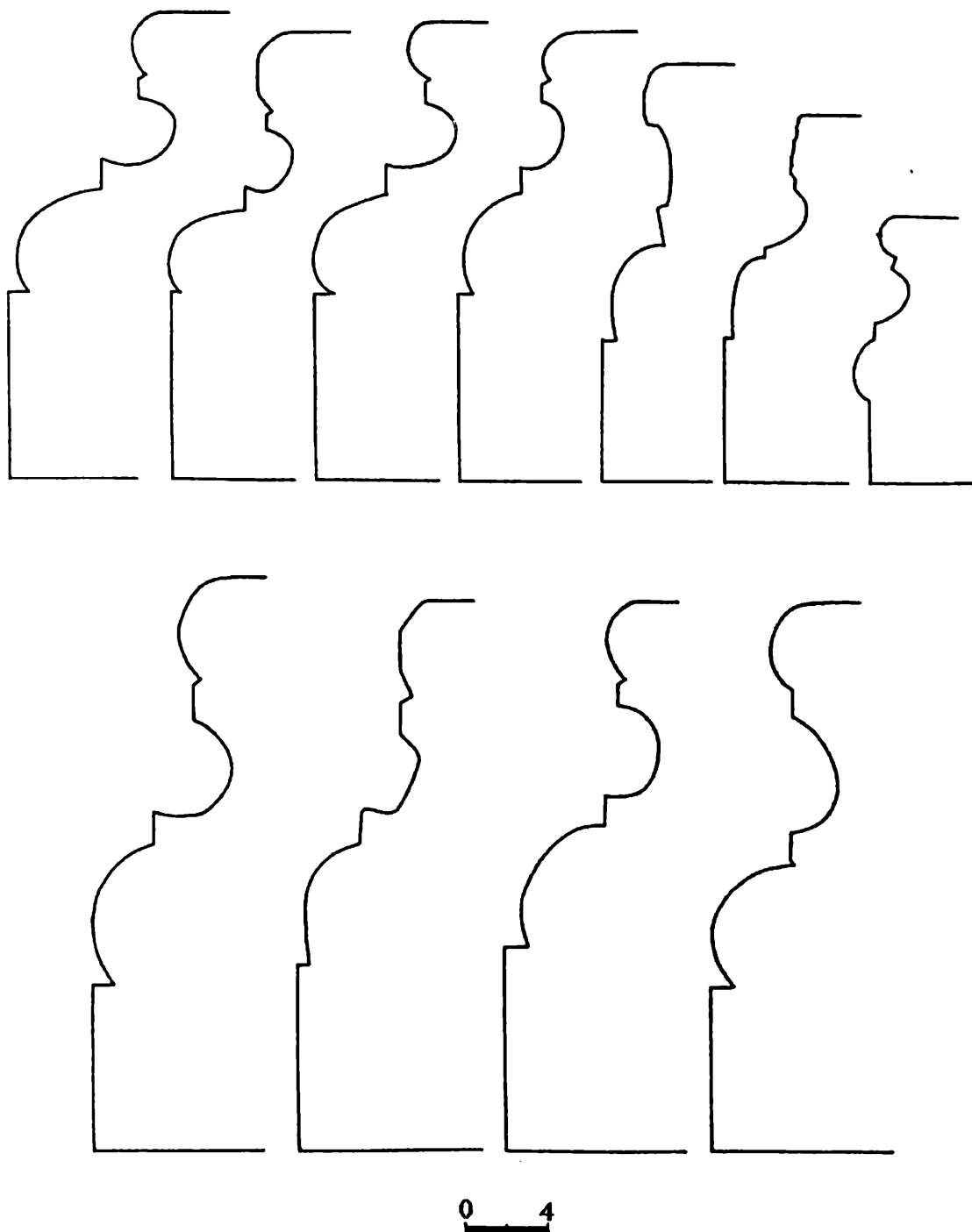


Fig. 3 Ionic (Corynthian ?) bases. Chersonesus. Marble.

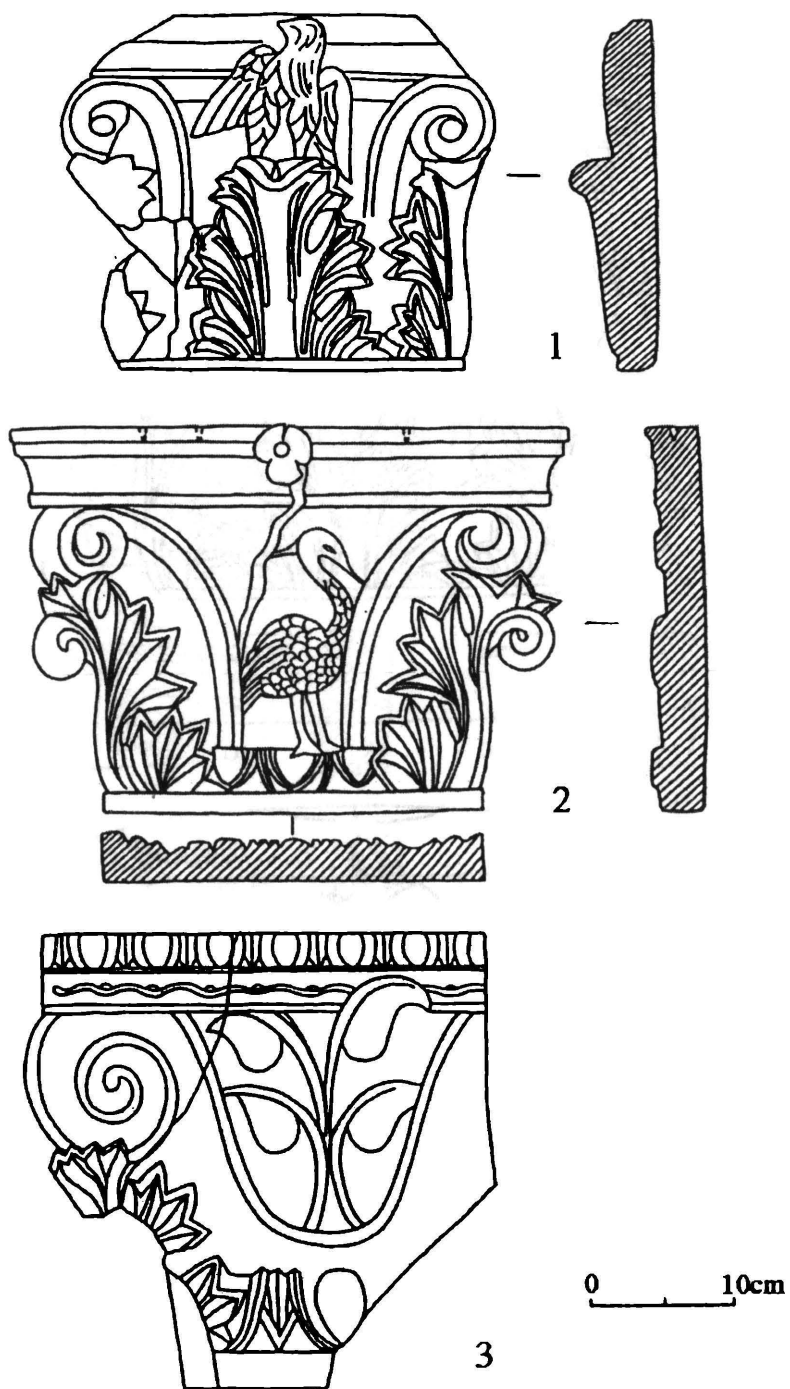


Fig. 4 Pilaster capitals. Corinthian style. Chersonesus. Marble.

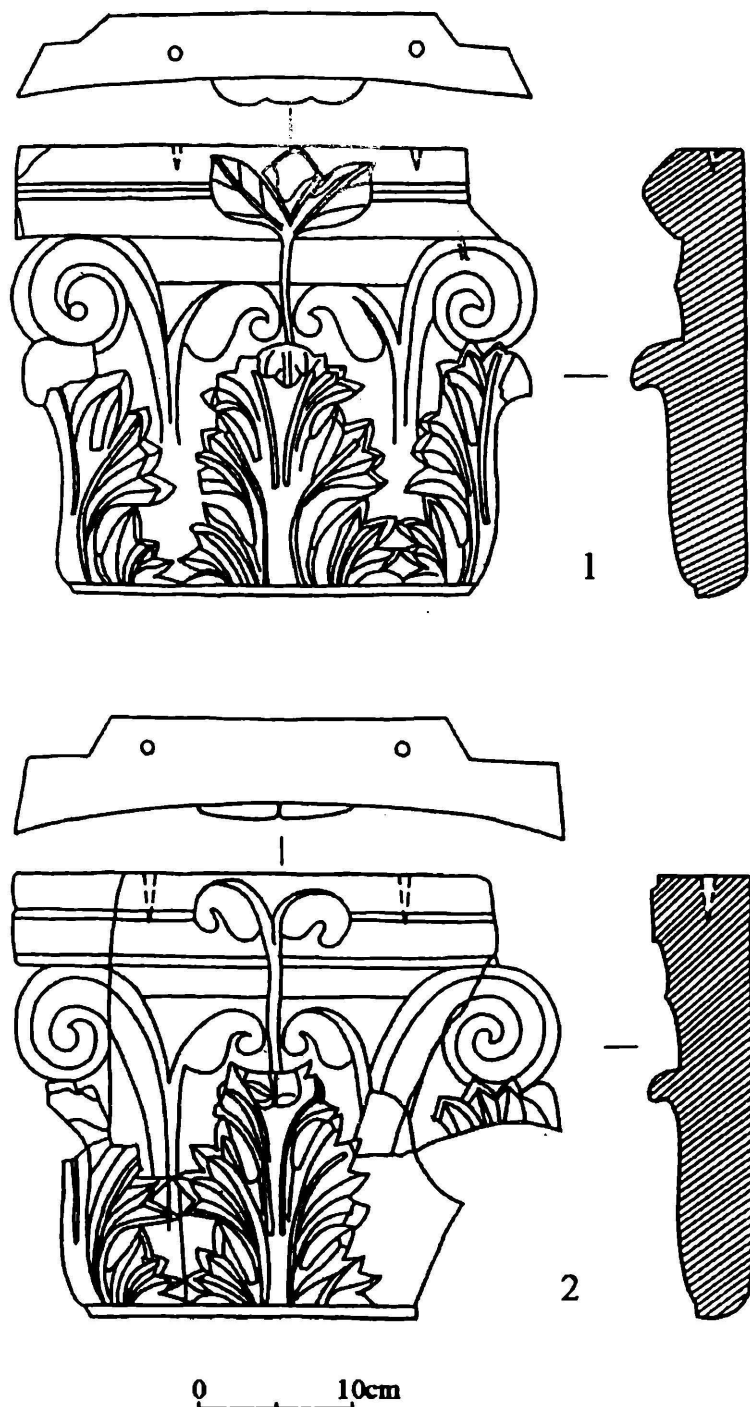


Fig. 5 Pilaster capitals. Corinthian style. Chersonesus. Marble.



Fig. 6 Fragments of Corinthian pilaster capitals. Chersonesus. Marble.

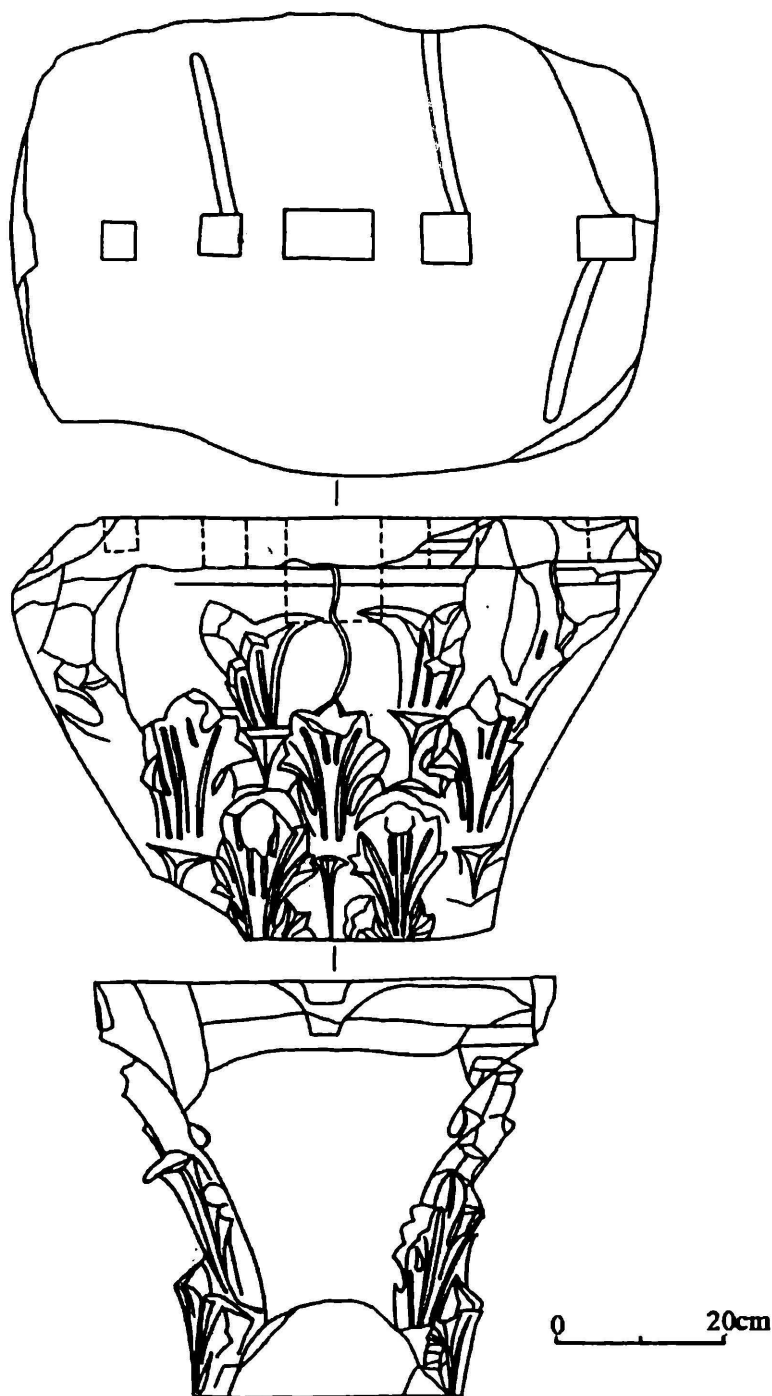


Fig. 7 Capital of Corinthian style. Bahchisaraj (from Chersonesus ?). Marble.

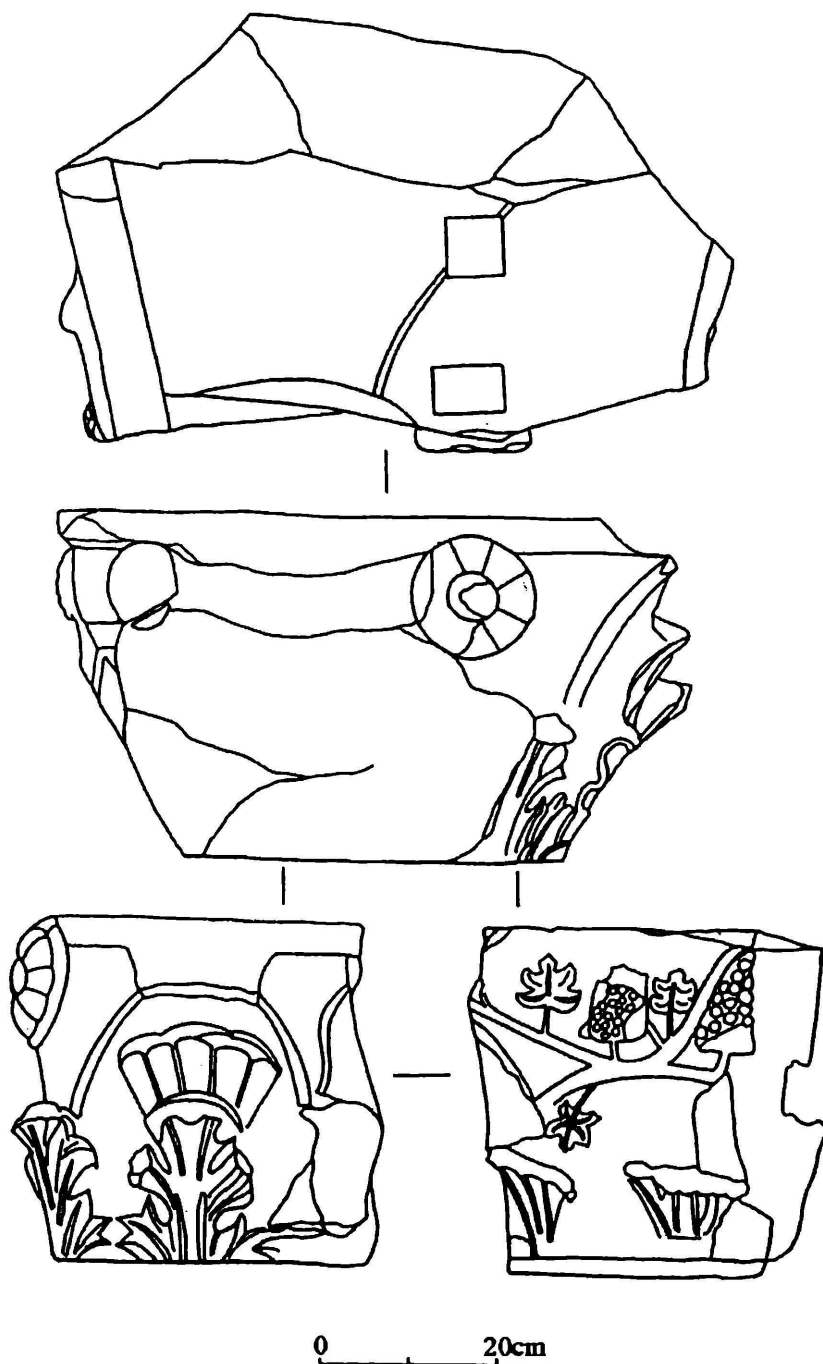


Fig. 8 Capital of Corinthian style. Chersonesus. Marble.

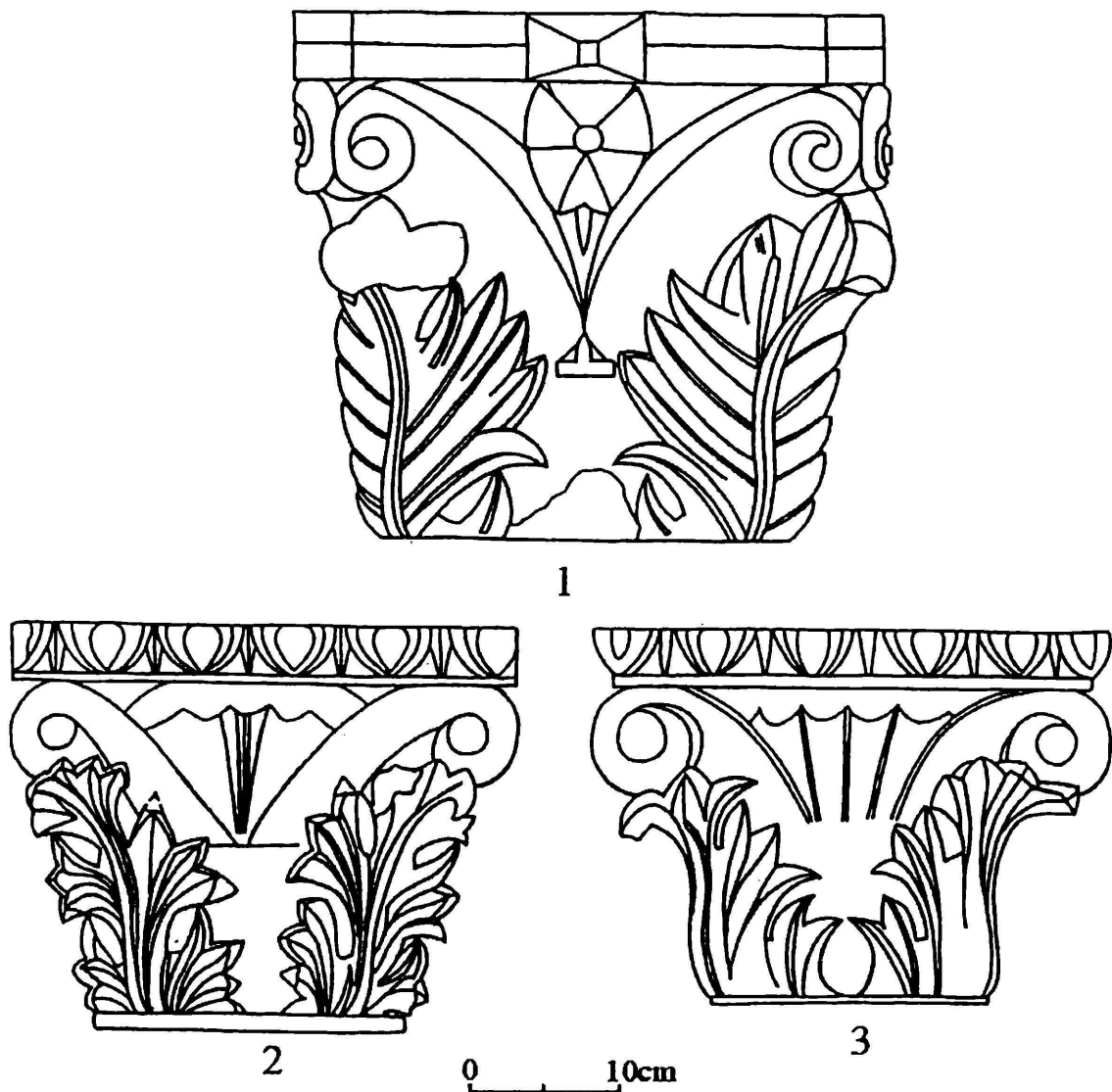


Fig. 9 Corinthian capitals. Chersonesus. Limestone.

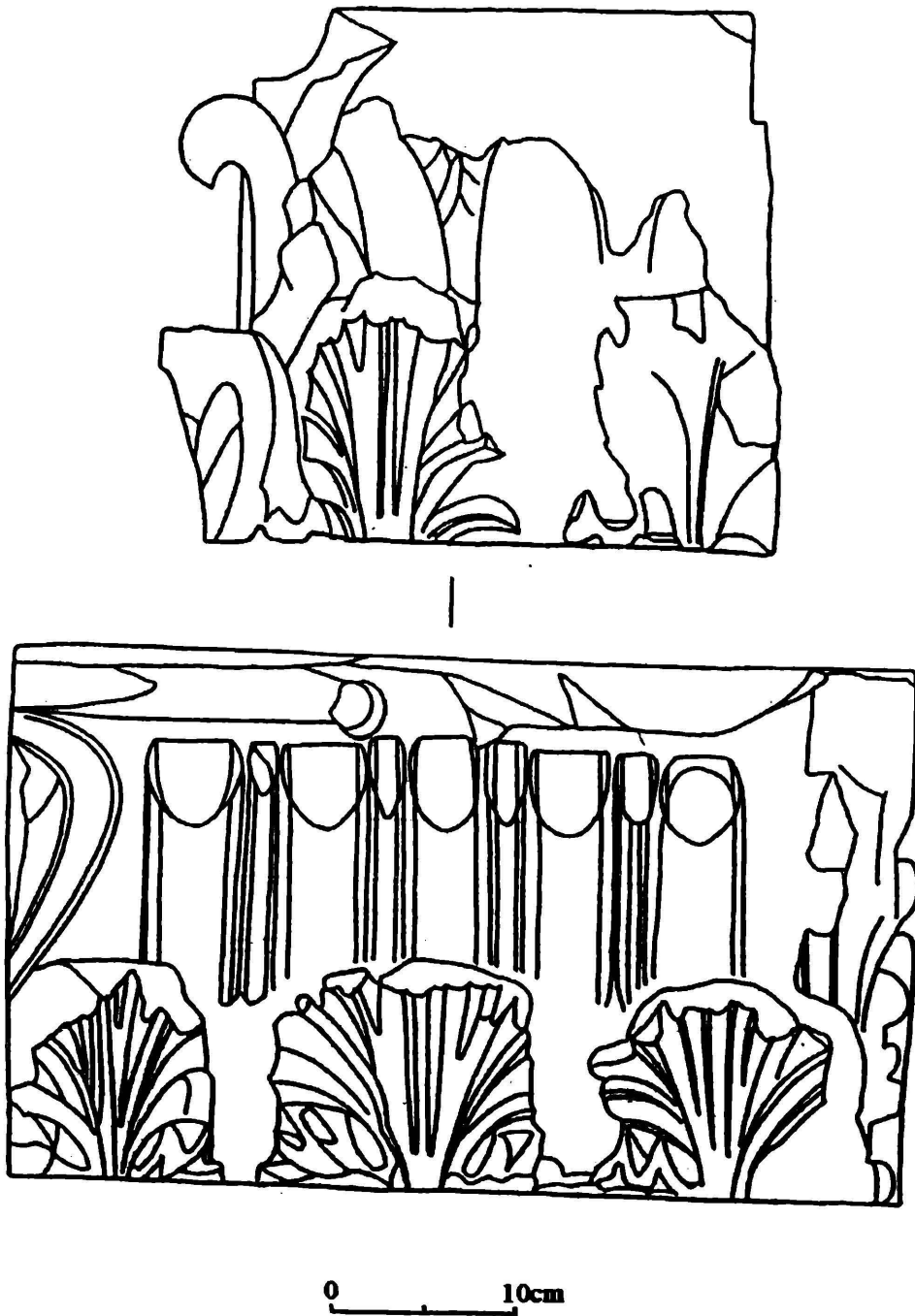
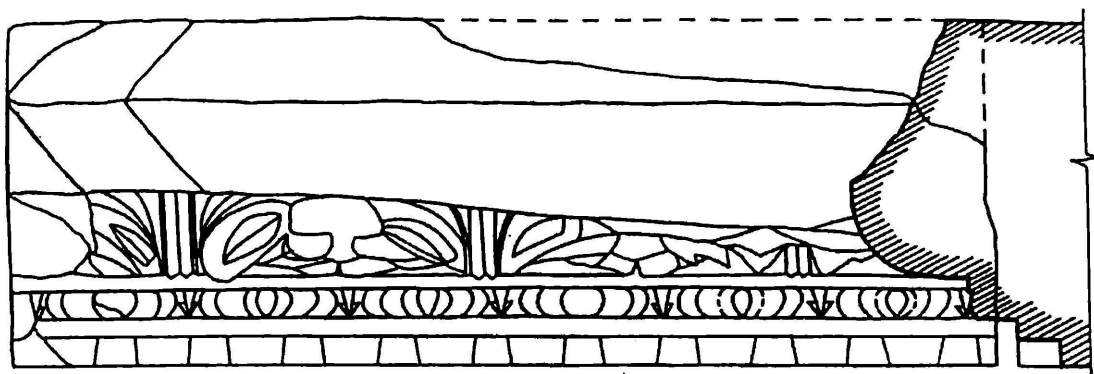
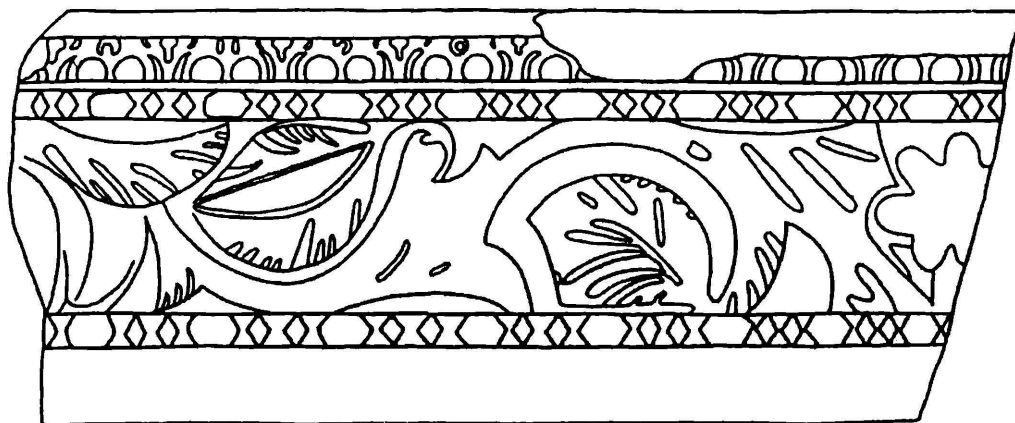


Fig. 10 Palm-capital. Chersonesus. Limestone.



1



2

0 10cm

Fig. 11 Corniche (1) and frieze (2) of Corinthian style. Chersonesus. Marble.

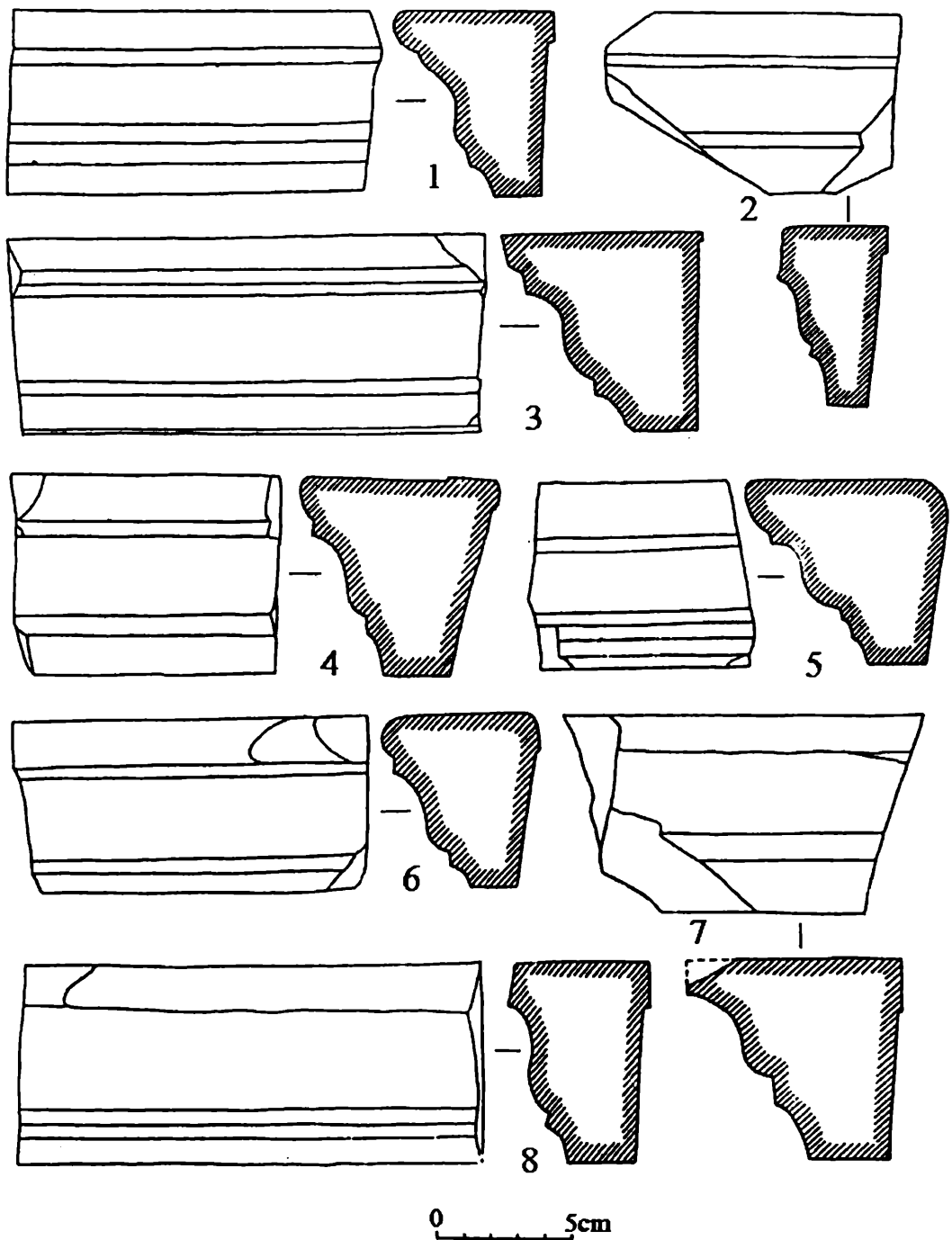


Fig. 12 Cornices. Chersonesus. Marble.

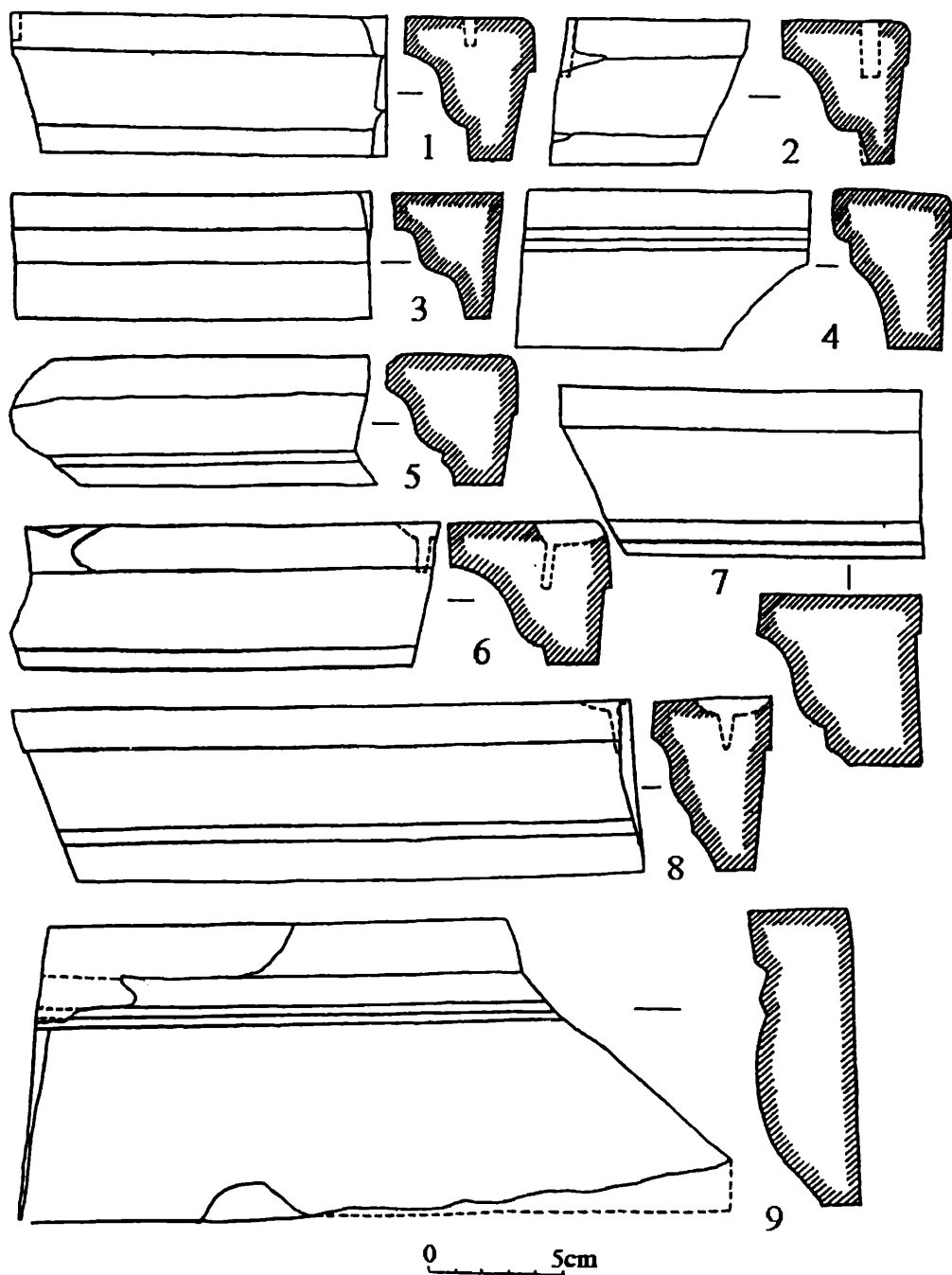


Fig. 13 Cornices (1-8) and base (9). Chersonesus. Marble.

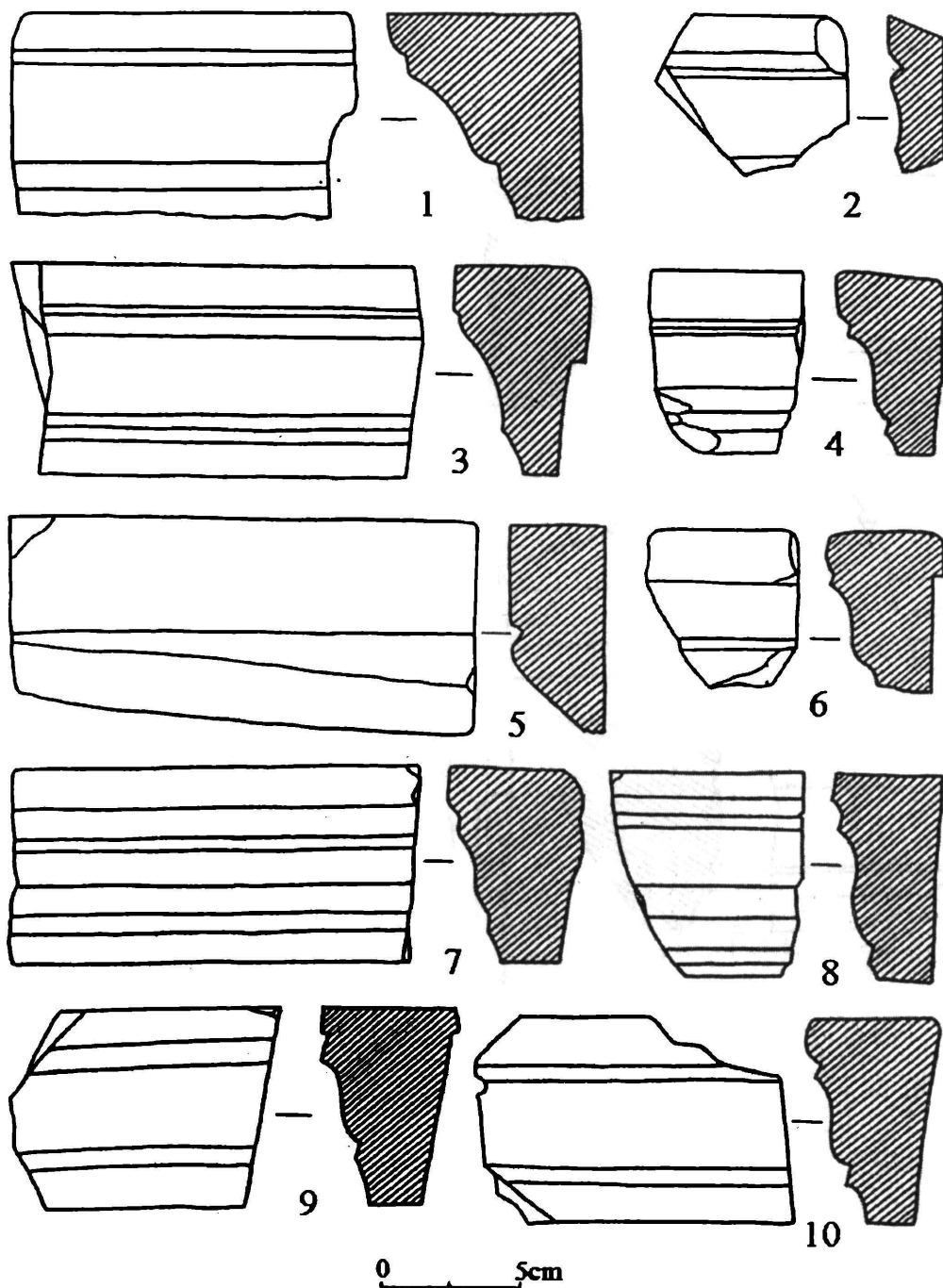


Fig. 14 Cornices. Olbia (1-3), Tyras (4-10). Marble.

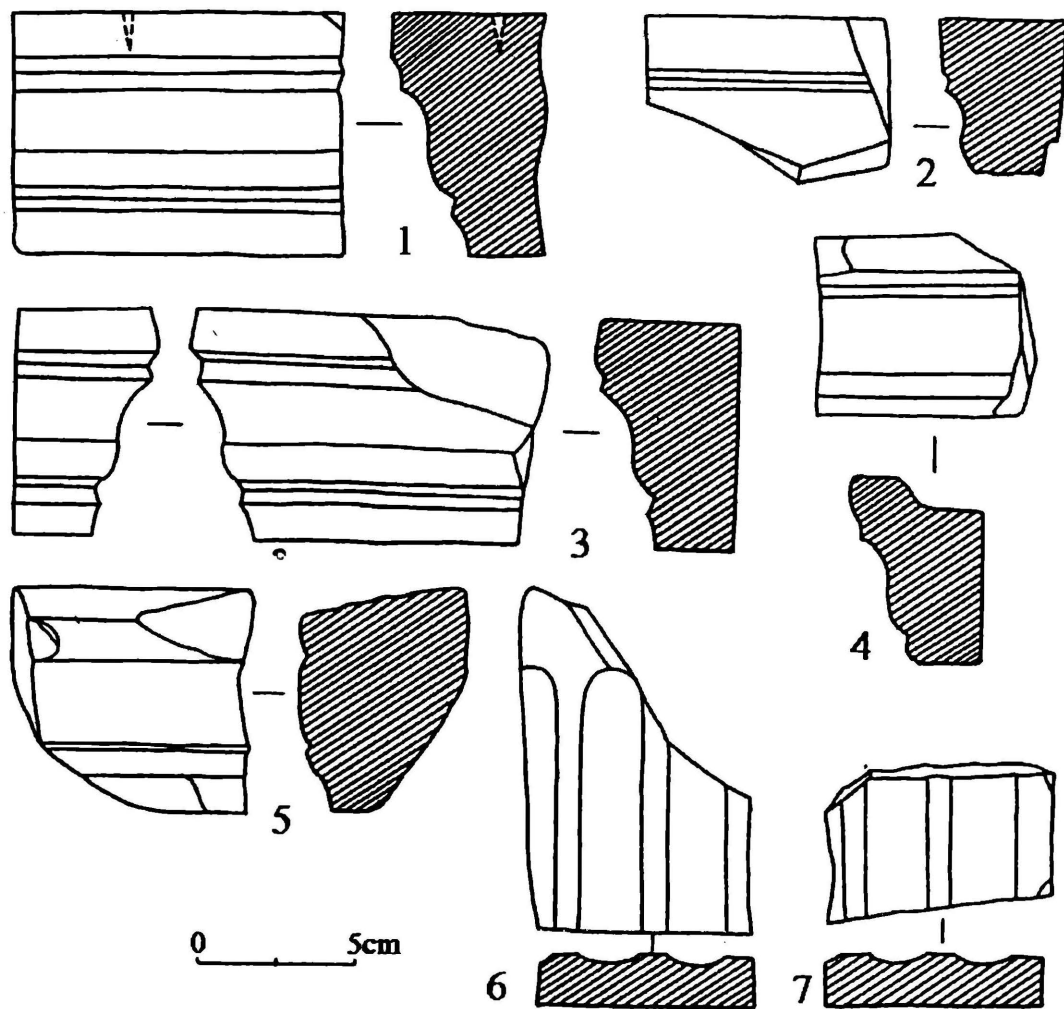


Fig. 15 Cornices (1-5), pilaster fragments (6-7). Tyras. Marble.

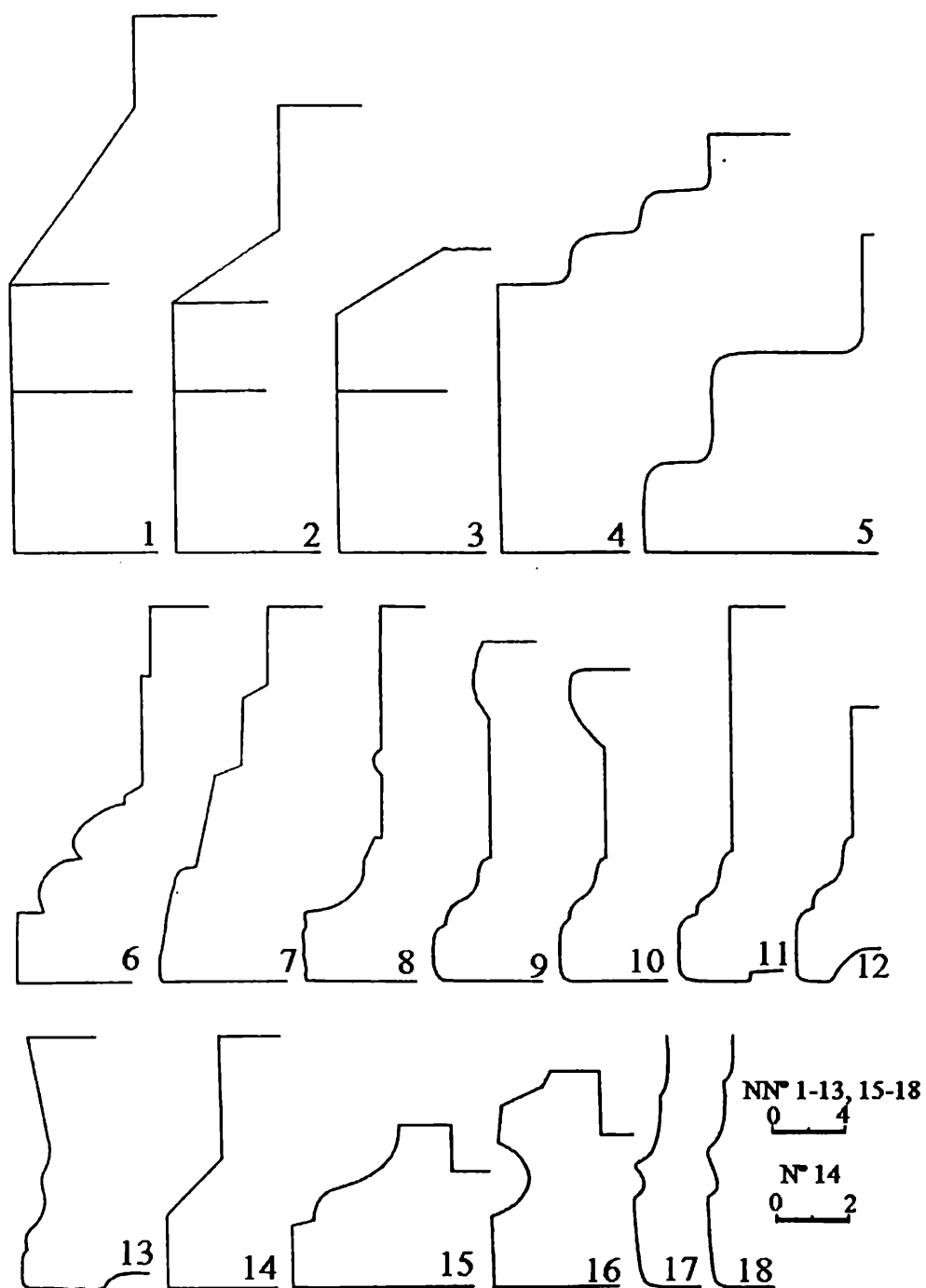


Fig. 16 Bases. Tyras (1-5), Olbia (6-16), Chersonesus (17-18). Limestone (1-8), marble (9-18).

