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THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF ROUND OINOPHOROS WORKSHOP IN LATE ROMAN TRIPOLIS

This study brings together the flasks uncovered at the ancient city of Tripolis in Lydia investigating their material and decoration; moulds uncovered were compared to the décor revealing the first evidence for local production at Tripolis in the 6th century AD. In the excavations conducted at Tripolis since 2012 a total of 271 fragments of oinophoroi and moulds used for their production, were uncovered at the Arched Structure, the House with Mosaics, Hierapolis Street East Portico, and Taberna 1. The clay fabric with muscovite content is of high quality and fine and almost all have silver-coloured mica coating which may be called silverwash. The wide colour range of the slip includes red, cream, brown and brick red. Moulded flasks feature decoration on both faces classified into geometric, floral and figural groups. In addition to geometric compositions with hourglass, wheel-of-fortune, boomerang and star motifs, architectural elements such as columns, colonnettes and aediculae are attested, as well as animal and human figures depicted in a variety of poses.

Introduction

Tripolis is located on the right bank of the Maiandros River, which formed the border between the ancient regions of Lydia and Phrygia, and today it lies within the territory of Buldan district in Denizli province (inner southwestern Anatolia) (fig. 1). Excavations and surveys have been conducted at the site of the ancient city since 2012 by the author and important archaeological evidence indicating settlement and traditional pottery production and consumption has been attested at a variety of sectors of the site from the Early Chalcolithic period through the 10th century AD¹.

The scope of this article covers the pottery flasks called oinophoros produced during the Late Antiquity, which were made and distributed from one or more centres in western and southern Anatolia². In the course of excavations at Tripolis fragments of round oinophoroi have been uncovered in almost every sector of the city in 2012–2015. The Hellenistic cryptoporticus, the Arched Building, which fell out of use due to being filled with silt and mud from flooding during the 5th and 6th centuries AD, still housed some production activities taking place in its east end as inferred (fig. 2). The portico between the Arched Building and the Hierapolis Street contained similar oinophoros fragments and even moulds. In

addition to the two find spots mentioned above, fragments of round flasks and their moulds have been uncovered in the shops, the House with Mosaics, the agora and the streets as well. The total number of oinophoros fragments found is 271 including 177 in the Arched Building, four in the Taberna, 20 in Hierapolis Street, 19 in the Colonnaded Street, 16 in the House with Mosaics, and 19 in the agora (figs. 3–5). The Arched Building also yielded eight fragments of moulds, one was uncovered in the East Portico of the Hierapolis Street and one in the Colonnaded Street, adding up to 10. Consideration of the find spots does not point to any connection between the areas of use of oinophoroi and civic or public architecture, but the Arched Building was clearly the most important find spot regarding their production.

Oinophoroi and moulds uncovered at Tripolis indicate production of one form in two sizes. The first group is larger with the round surface reaching 24 cm in diameter and decorated in relief. The second group of smaller size has a diameter of about 16–17 cm. The moulds also have parallel sizes with the small group having diameters of 16–17 cm and large group having a diameter of about 21–24 cm. Moulds, positives to be produced from them, and body fragments indicate that the oinophoros workshop at Tripolis produced vessels in both sizes (fig. 6).

Find spots of the oinophoros moulds cast much light onto their dating. The first find spot is the east end of the Arched Building. It has recently been established through excavations that the west end of the structure was abandoned following a devastating earthquake in the late 5th century AD³. The fallen voussoirs of the arches forming the east end of the Arched Building were taken to nearby parts of the city and reused.

¹ B. DUMAN, Son Arkeolojik Araştırmalar ve Yeni Bulgular Işığında Tripolis ad Maeandrum. Cedrus 1, 2013, 179–200.

² **Sagalassos:** H. ULENER/J. POBLOME, Sagalassos'ta Beklenmedik Bir Keşif: Yeni Bir Keramik Atölyesi. A New and Unexpected Potters' Workshop at Sagalassos. ANMED 12, 2014, 89 figs. 5–6 (between the second half of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th century); E. A. MURPHY/J. POBLOME, A late antique ceramic workshop complex: evidence for workshop organisation at Sagalassos (southwest Turkey). Anatolian Stud. 66, 2016, 191; 193–194 fig.6 D. – **Perge:** N. ATIK, Die Keramik aus den Stüdthermen von Perge. Istanbul Mitt. Beih. 40 (Tübingen 1995) 176–178; 180 Abb. 75–76 Kat. 395–397 Taf. 16,391.393.395–397 (4th century onwards).

³ E. HONIGMANN, Le cubriculaire Urbicus. Rev. Études Byzantines 7, 1949, 49. – According to Ammianus, the severe earthquake of AD 494 knocked down not only Tripolis but also Laodikeia and Hierapolis.

Following the earthquake, the east end was cleared of debris and two adjoining structures, possibly workshops, were built in Late Antiquity, and the assemblage of oinophoroi and mould fragments was uncovered in them. Finds from after the sixth century in the area where the oinophoroi and their moulds were uncovered are scarce. Therefore, it is thought that a workshop active in the 6th century AD produced these items. The homogeneity observed in the finds suggests that the workshop specialised in the production of oinophoroi.

Production Technique, Clay and Slip Properties

The oinophoroi were wheel-thrown in moulds; they are decorated in relief on both faces. The body halves produced from different moulds were united while the clay was still wet. Clay residue emerging from the joint between the halves appears on the inner surfaces. The bodies of the oinophoroi were produced from two moulds with a vertical join between the halves. The oinophoroi contain muscovite mineral. The fineness of the clay and its temper facilitated moulding with clear motifs not deforming much. With regards to slip, the flasks from Tripolis fall into four categories. Light buff and cream are the dominant colours but also there are a few examples in light brown and dark red. Furthermore, almost all of the examples have silvery mica coating (slip) which may be called *silverwash*. The clay colour attested in all the fragments is 7.5YR 8/3-7/4 and 10YR 7/4 (pink? very pale brown?).

Decorative Features

Both round faces of the oinophoroi are decorated in relief (fig. 8,1). The general composition has a central roundel surrounded by one or two bands, each one separated by a line in relief. The roundel and the bands around it have a variety of decoration which can be classified as follows:

- a. *Geometric Decoration*: This group comprises repeating motifs along the bands surrounding the roundel. The most common motifs include hourglass, wheel-of-fortune, spiral, star and boomerang. The wheels-of-fortune have either three or five petals curving right or left. The other common motifs are, according to their popularity, four- and six-pointed stars, double spiral, chevron, wavy lines, boomerang and circles (fig. 7,1–22).
- b. *Floral Decoration*: The roundel in the middle usually features floral decoration including vine branches and leaves, bunches of grapes; the band surrounding it usually has upright or horizontal leaves with veins, opium pods, and rosettes. The rosettes are found in three forms: a rosette within a circle of dots in relief; rosette within an almond?-shaped frame; and rosette within a wreath of ribbons (fig. 7,23–47).
- c. *Architectural Decoration*: Fluted columns are depicted sometimes alone and sometimes together with an arcade rising over them. Contemporary ampullae⁴ with similar decoration are found in Laodikeia (fig. 7,48–57).
- d. *Figural Decoration*: One small fragment bears the figure of a saint depicted frontally, with hair and beard rendered and mouth slightly ajar; however, the small size of the fragment does not allow much speculation. Another fragment depicts a male figure running left, rendered very simply, his garment waving back and his right hand holding a stick (or a club) is raised chasing after another figure. Among depictions with animal figures is one noteworthy example has a *biga* in the roundel. The necks and forelegs of two horses running right pulling the *biga* are preserved on the fragment. A leopard running left, a dog running right were probably part of a hunting scene. A similar scene is also found in Sagalassos⁵, and the dog is found on an example from Perge⁶. Furthermore, pigeon, eagle and rabbit figures found on very small fragments do not allow me to comment on the whole composition to which they belonged (fig. 8,2–9).

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⁴ C. ŞİMŞEK/B. DUMAN, Laodikeia'da Bulunan Ampullalar. *Olbia* 15, 2007, 97 Figs. 3–4.

⁵ M. WAELKENS/J. POBLOME (eds.), *Sagalassos, City of Dreams* (Limburg 2012) 171 (dated to the 5th century AD).

⁶ N. ATIK, Die Keramik aus den Stüdthermen von Perge. *Istanbuler Mitt. Beih.* 40 (Tübingen 1995) 176, 179, Abb. 76, 396.

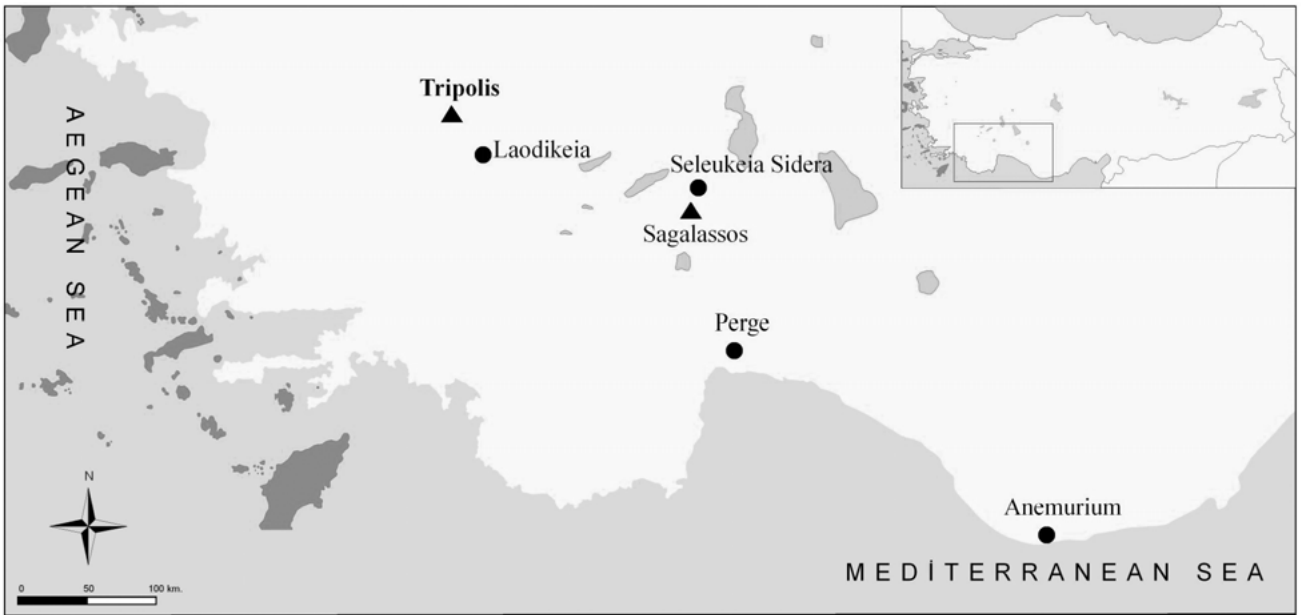


Fig. 1. Settlements mentioned in the article.

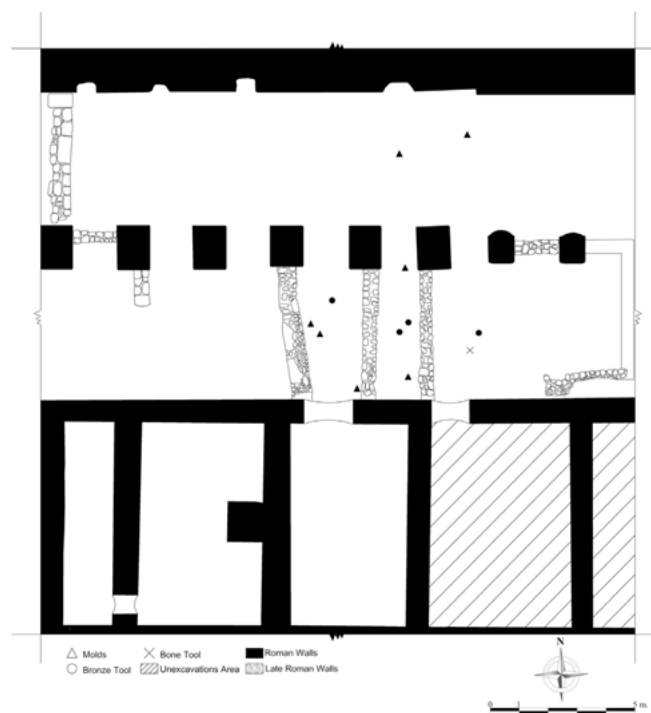


Fig. 2. Late Roman arrangements and finds inside the Arched Building.

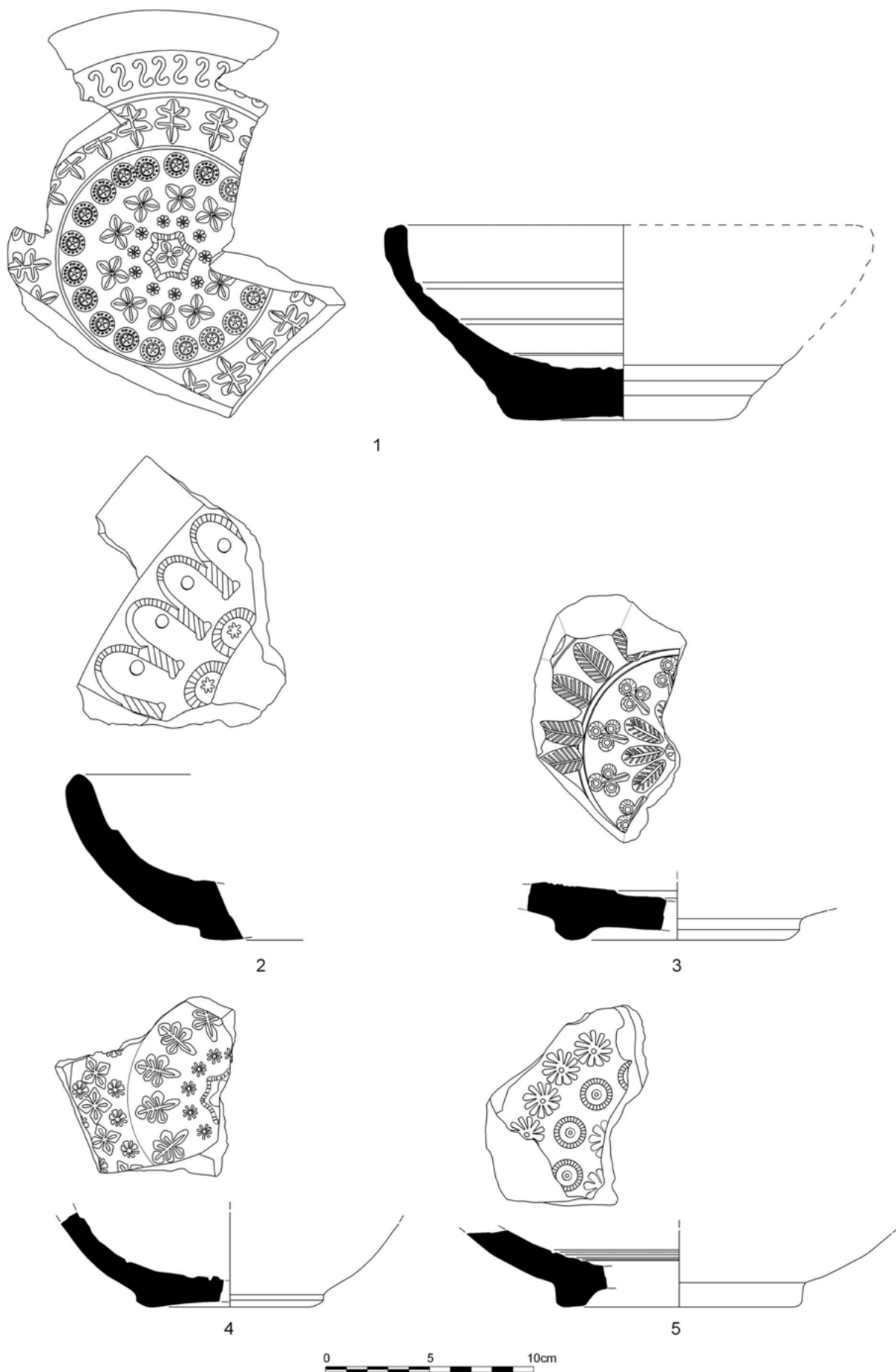


Fig. 3. Drawings of the oinophoros moulds.

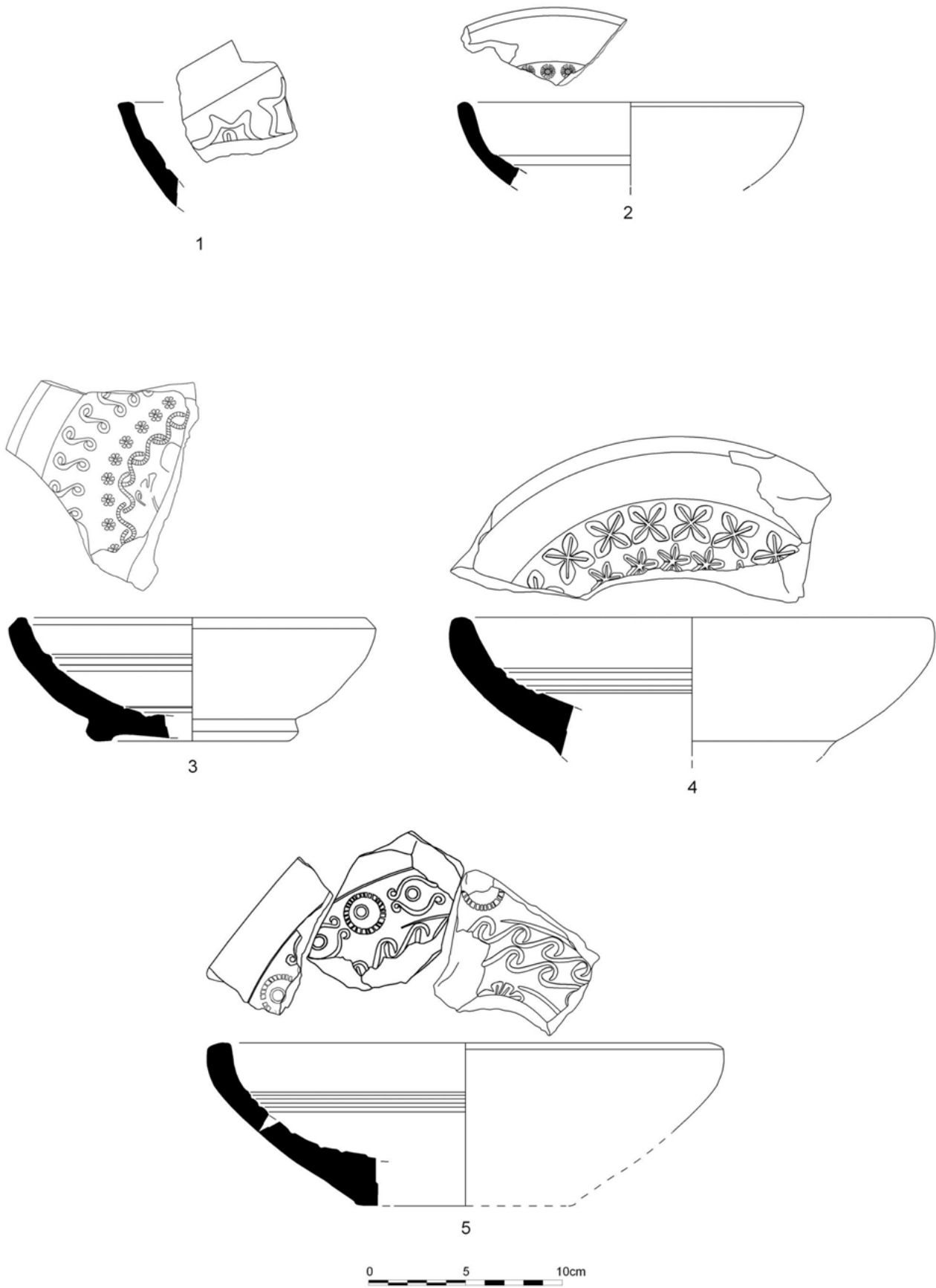


Fig. 4. Drawings of the oinophoros moulds.

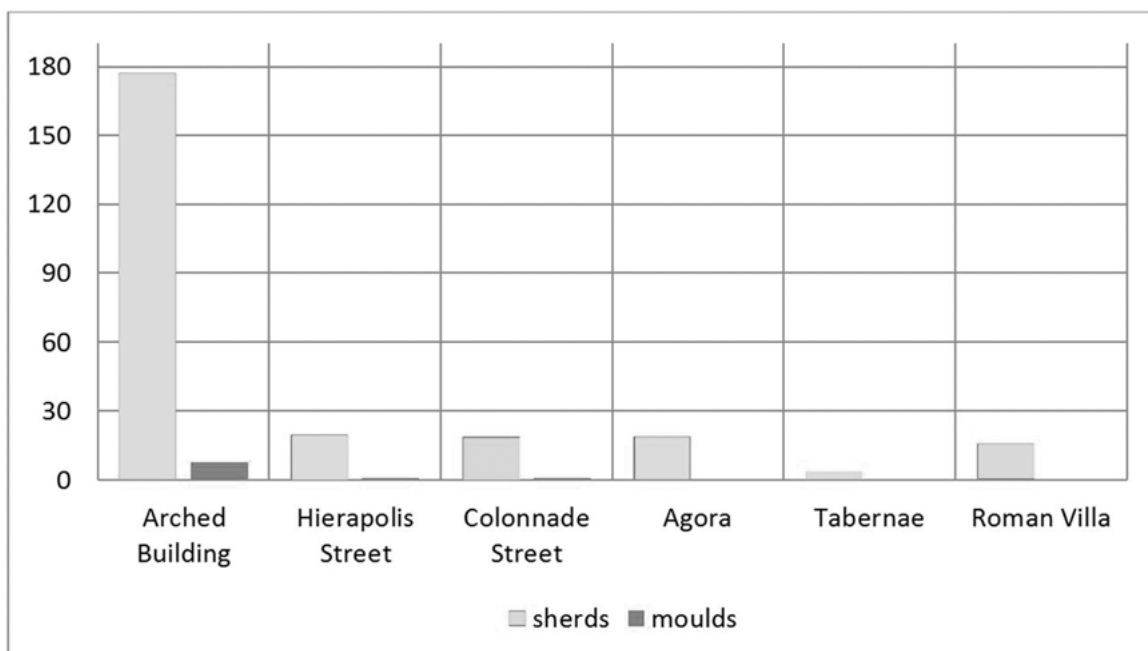


Fig. 5. Chart showing the distribution of oinophoros fragments and moulds across the structure.

Type	Mould Diameter	Potential Positive	Sherds diameter
1	17.2 cm.	16 cm.	16 cm.
1	18	17	17
2	22	21	-
2	24	22	-
2	24.8	24	24

Fig. 6. Table showing the diameters of the oinophoroi.

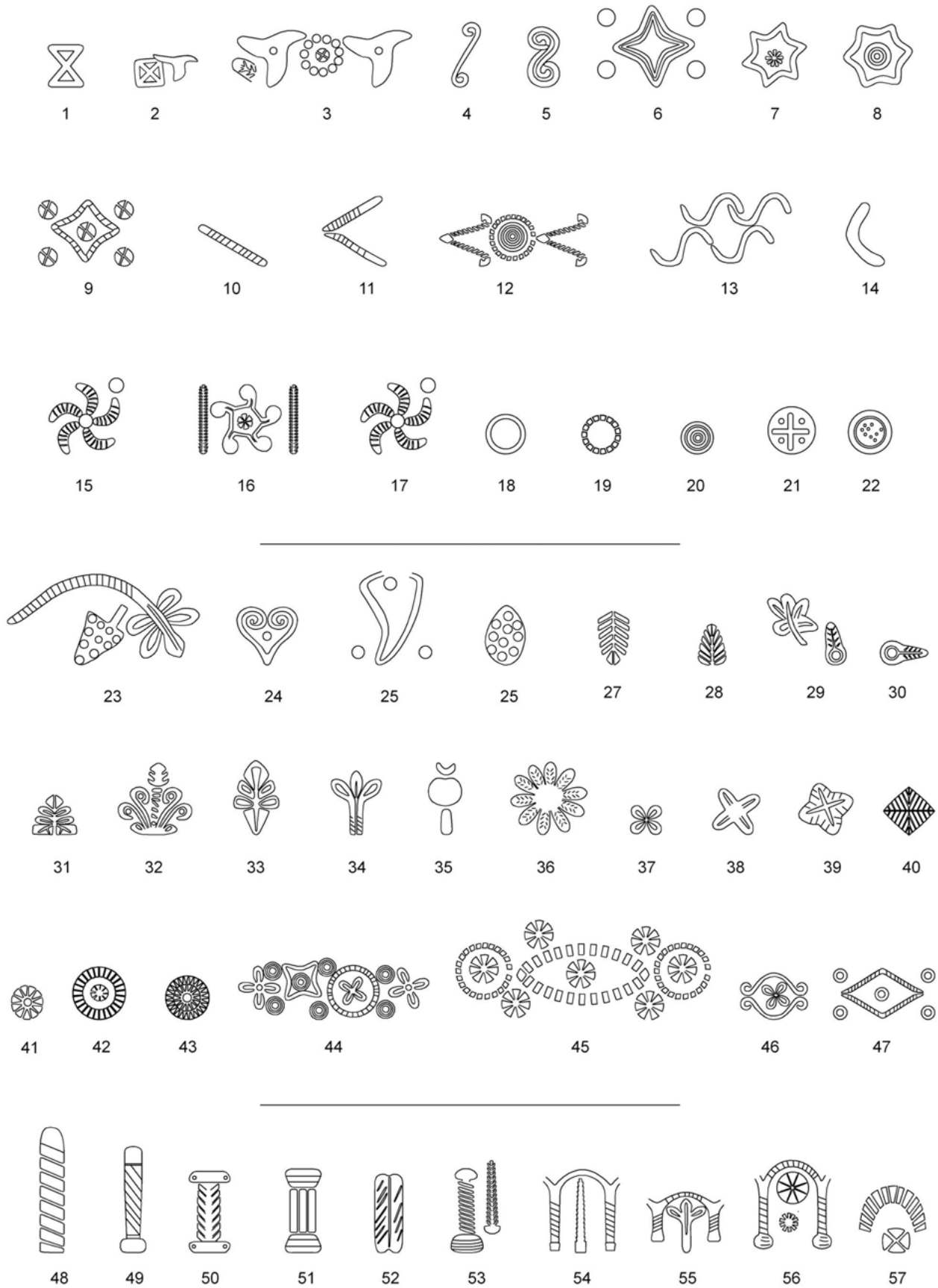


Fig. 7. Variety of decoration observed on the oinophoroi.

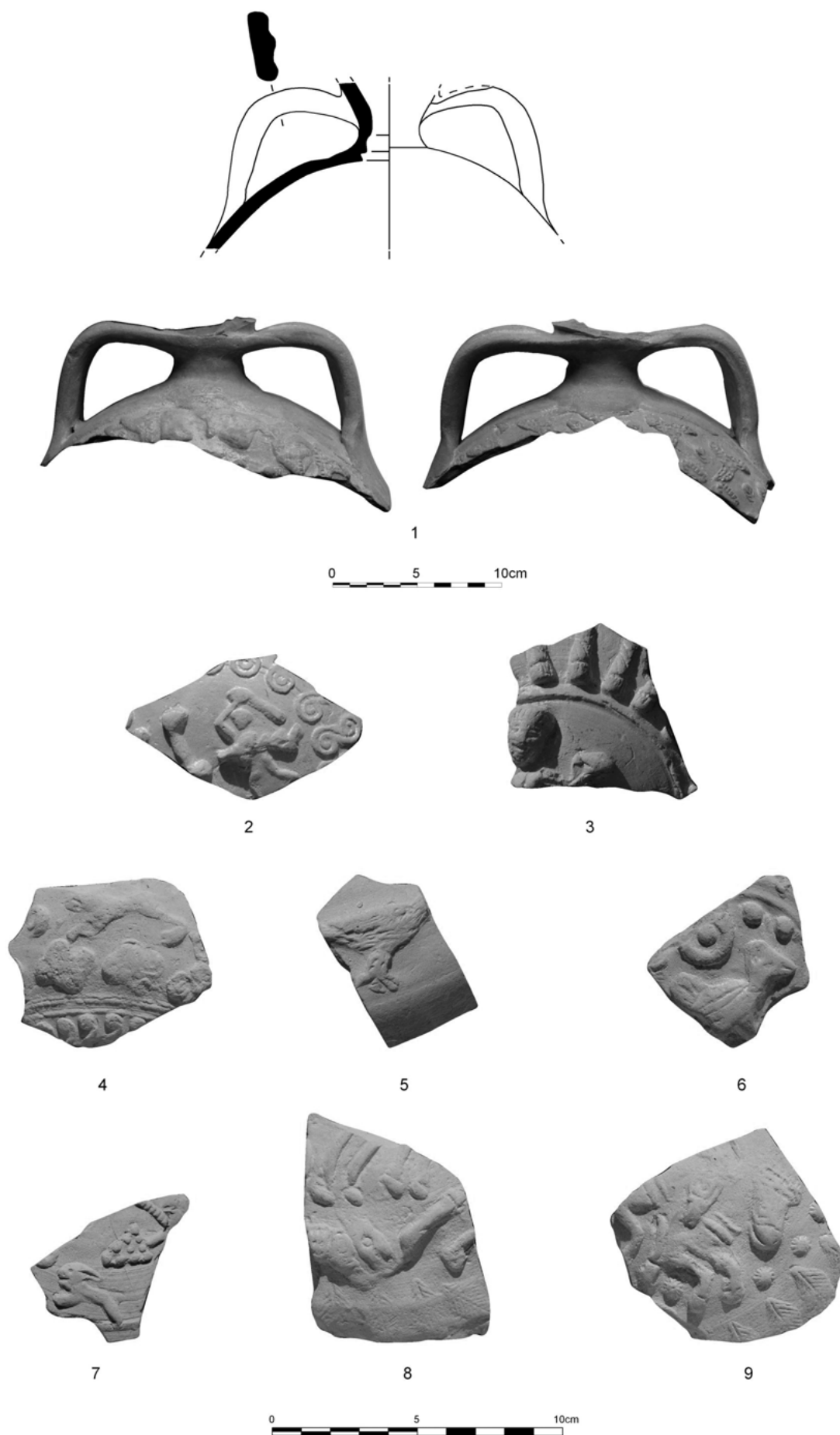


Fig. 8. Figural decoration observed on the oinophoroi.