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ROMAN POTTERY FROM A CISTERN IN PANTIKAPAION

Recent excavations in Pantikapaion under the auspices of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow discovered many interesting contexts of the Roman period.¹ Exploration of the cistern no. 145 was conducted in 1990 and 1999. The cistern represents a monumental rectangular construction with its sides oriented to the north, south, east, and west (**fig. 1**). The northern side of the reservoir is 4.56 m long, the southern - 4.52 m; the western and eastern sides are 3.90 and 3.80 m respectively. The maximum preserved depth of the cistern in the north-eastern corner is 3.7 m from the floor to the top of the wall.

Three main horizons have been detected in the fill of the cistern.

Horizon 1 was composed of rather loose dark-brown soil with medium and large stones, pieces of pink cement, numerous animal bones, pieces of charcoal, and shells of mussels. The thickness of that layer was about 0.6 m. Overall, the layer was rather uniform and probably was formed at one time. This horizon contained the majority of the ceramic material in the cistern. Aside from pottery sherds, numerous fragments of roof tiles came from this layer. The majority of stones with traces of pink cement and also fragments of pink cement broken off from the walls of the cistern were found in this horizon. It is worth noting that the majority of stones was found near the southern wall, which was more destroyed than the others. Also among the finds are large fragments of marble sculptures.² This horizon is dated to the 3rd century AD. This date is given by the fragments of light-clay narrow-necked amphorae of Shelov type D³, red-clay amphorae “with up-raised handles”,⁴ amphorae of the “Myrmekian” type,⁵ red-clay amphorae with multifaceted handles,⁶ and of the pink-clay wide-mouth amphorae.⁷ We should also note the presence of a large number of fragments of the earlier types of the light-clay amphora of Shelov type C.⁸

Horizon 2 was composed of dark-brown soil with small stones and a larger number of animal bones than in the lower layer. In this horizon several large limestone blocks were found; those were probably tossed into the cistern when it ceased to function. Numerous flat marble tiles come from this layer, as well as elements of the heating system – clay cones pierced with metal rods. The date of this horizon is given by fragments of the light-clay amphorae of Shelov’s type D,⁹ and also by fragments of vessels of Eastern Sigillata C and of Pontic Sigillata, as well as the “sunburst” lamps of the first half – middle of the 3rd century AD.

Horizon 3, of brown rather dense soil contained small stones and animal bones. In this layer fragments of handles that belong to the light-clay amphorae of Shelov’s type F,¹⁰ as well as a small number of fragments of amphorae with ridged walls were found. Thus, the date of the horizon is second half of the 3rd into the 4th century AD.

The south-western corner of the cistern appeared to be dismantled and the trench in its place was filled with a light-brown loose soil. On the bottom of the trench, practically on the wall of the cistern was found a silver coin of Rheskouporides V, dated to AD 267.

Amphorae

The amphora fragments found in the cistern are fairly standard for Bosporan assemblages of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. In the first place, present here are the light-clay amphorae of types C and D (D. Shelov’s classification), and also red-clay Bosporan amphorae (“storage” amphorae as well). In his recent works, S. Yu. Vnukov proposes that the light-clay amphorae with narrow necks were produced in *Heraclea Pontica*.¹¹

¹ V. TOLSTIKOV/D. ZHURAVLEV, Novye dannye k topografii Pantikapeya pervykh vekov n.e. In: V.N. Zin’ko (ed.), Bospor Kimmeriiskii I Pont v period antichnosti I srednevekov’ya. Materialy II Bosporskikh chtenii (Kerch 2001); V. TOLSTIKOV/D. ZHURAVLEV/G. LOMTADZE, Keramicheskiĭ kompleks pozднеllinisticheskogo vremeni iz Pantikapeya. In: V.N. Zin’ko (ed.), Bosporskie issledovaniya III (Simferopol’ 2003); D. ZHURAVLEV, Dva pifosa rimskogo vremeni iz Pantikapeya. In: A. A. Maslennikov/A. A. Zavoĭkin (eds), Drevnosti Bospora 3 (Moscow 2000); ID., Keramicheskiy kompleks rimskogo vremeni iz Pantikapeya. In: V. N. Zin’ko (ed.), Bosporskie issledovaniya II (Kerch 2002); D. ZHURAVLEV/G. LOMTADZE, Keramicheskiĭ kompleks II v.n.e. s akropolya Pantikapeya. In: A. A. Maslennikov/A. A. Zavoĭkin (eds), Drevnosti Bospora 2 (Moscow 1999); ID., Novye kompleksy rimskogo vremeni iz Pantikapeya. In: D. V. Zhuravlev (ed.), Bosporskie issledovaniya VIII (Simferopol’, Kerch 2005).

² TOLSTIKOV/ZHURAVLEV/LOMTADZE 2005 fig. 20.

³ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXVII fig. 91–93; SHELOV 1978, 18–19 fig. 7–8; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10.

⁴ ROBINSON 1959, 59; 69 pl. 15.K113; 73.P 822; ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXIII fig. 79; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26.

⁵ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXX fig. 72; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.12.

⁶ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXI fig. 75; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.18.

⁷ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXIV fig. 83; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.27.

⁸ SHELOV 1978, 18 fig. 6.

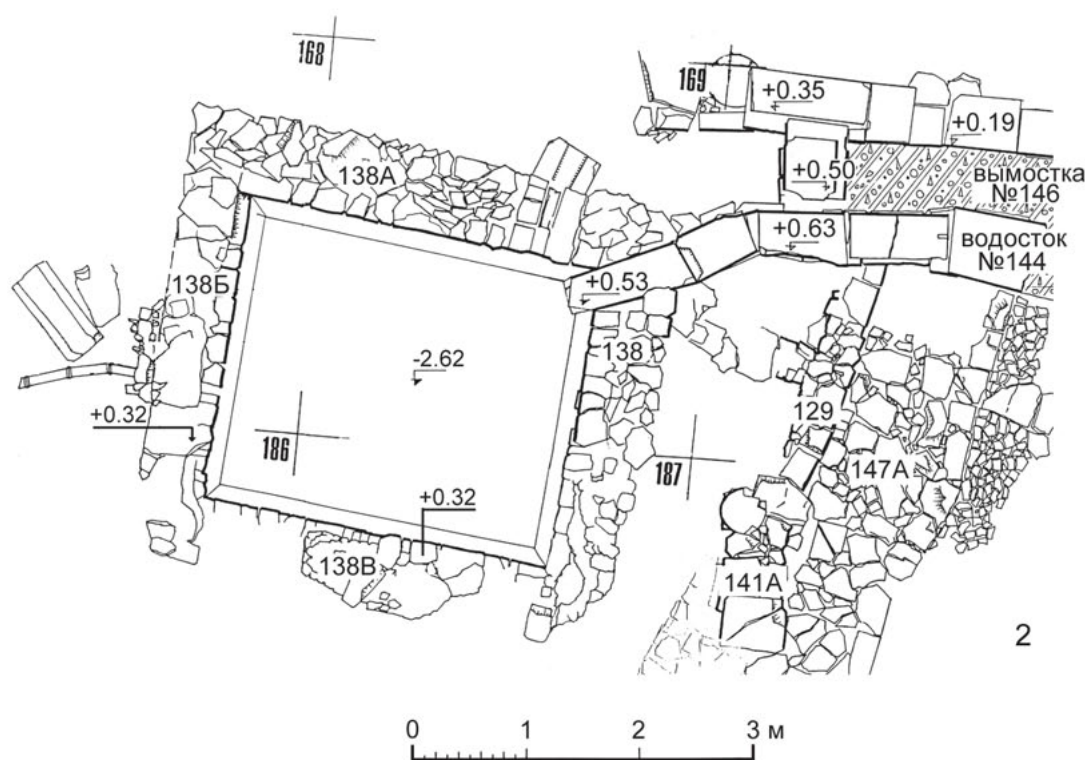
⁹ Ibid. fig. 7–8; ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXVII fig. 91–93; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.9.

¹⁰ SHELOV 1978, 19 fig. 10; ZEEST 1960 pl. XLI fig. 104–105; ABRAMOV 1993, 7.3, 7.4.

¹¹ S. VNUKOV, Prichernomorskie amphory I v. do n.e.–II v.n.e. (morphologiya) (Moscow 2003) 201.



1



2

Fig. 1. Pantikapaion, Cistern No. 145 on the acropolis.

Several necks of the type D amphorae were stamped. It seems that on two of them (one oval with ΠΑ and the other rectangular, with a vertically positioned ΘΗ) abbreviated names are given (fig. 3,2; 2,1). It is possible that these stamps are those of the makers. Another stamp (round with a Θ in the center and a partially preserved inscription around it ΕΙΠΙ ΤΟΟ[...]Θ) is possibly that of a magistrate (fig. 2,2). In addition, on the necks of the light-clay amphorae of the same type there was a graffito ΑΙ and a dipinto ΝΑ (fig. 3,1).

The red-clay amphorae present in the cistern are also quite conventional for Bosphoran ceramic assemblages of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. These are the so-called red-clay amphorae “with up-raised handles”,¹² amphorae of the “Myrmekian” type¹³; red-clay amphorae with handles with multifaceted profile,¹⁴ pink-clay amphorae with wide mouths.¹⁵ All these

vessels, except for the so-called “amphorae with up-raised handles”, possibly belong to the local (“Bosphoran”) production and are dated from the second half of the 2nd–first half of the 3rd century AD. As for the amphorae “with up-raised handles”, at this point it can only be said that such vessels were produced in various centres and were spread throughout the ancient world in the 2nd–4th centuries AD.¹⁶

¹² ROBINSON 1959, 69 pl. 15, K113; 73, P822; ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXIII fig. 79; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26.

¹³ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXX fig. 72; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.12.

¹⁴ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXI fig. 75; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.18.

¹⁵ ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXIV fig. 83; ABRAMOV 1993, 6.27.

¹⁶ ROBINSON 1959, 69 K113; J. A. RILEY, *The Coarse Pottery from Berenice*. In: J. A. Lloyd, *Excavations at Sidi Khrebish Benghazi (Berenice) II*. Libya Antiqua Suppl. 2 (Tripoli 1979) 189–193 (MR Amphora 7); J. W. HAYES, *The Villa Dionysos Excavations*,

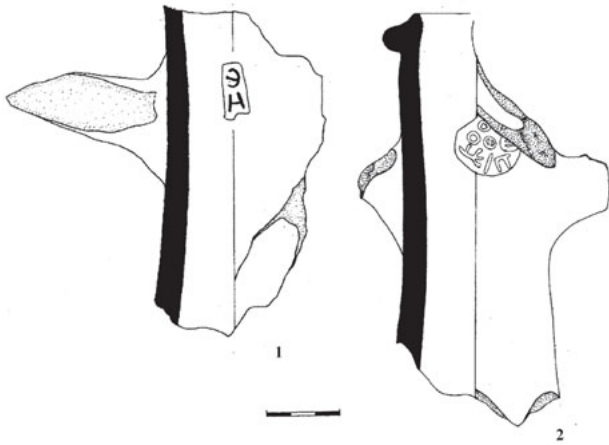


Fig. 2. Cistern No. 145. Selected amphorae.

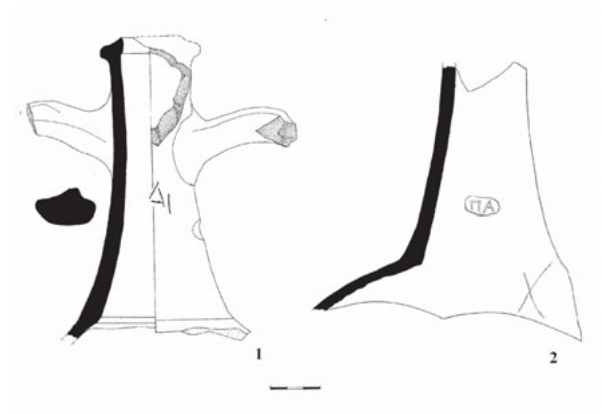


Fig. 3. Cistern No. 145. Selected amphorae.

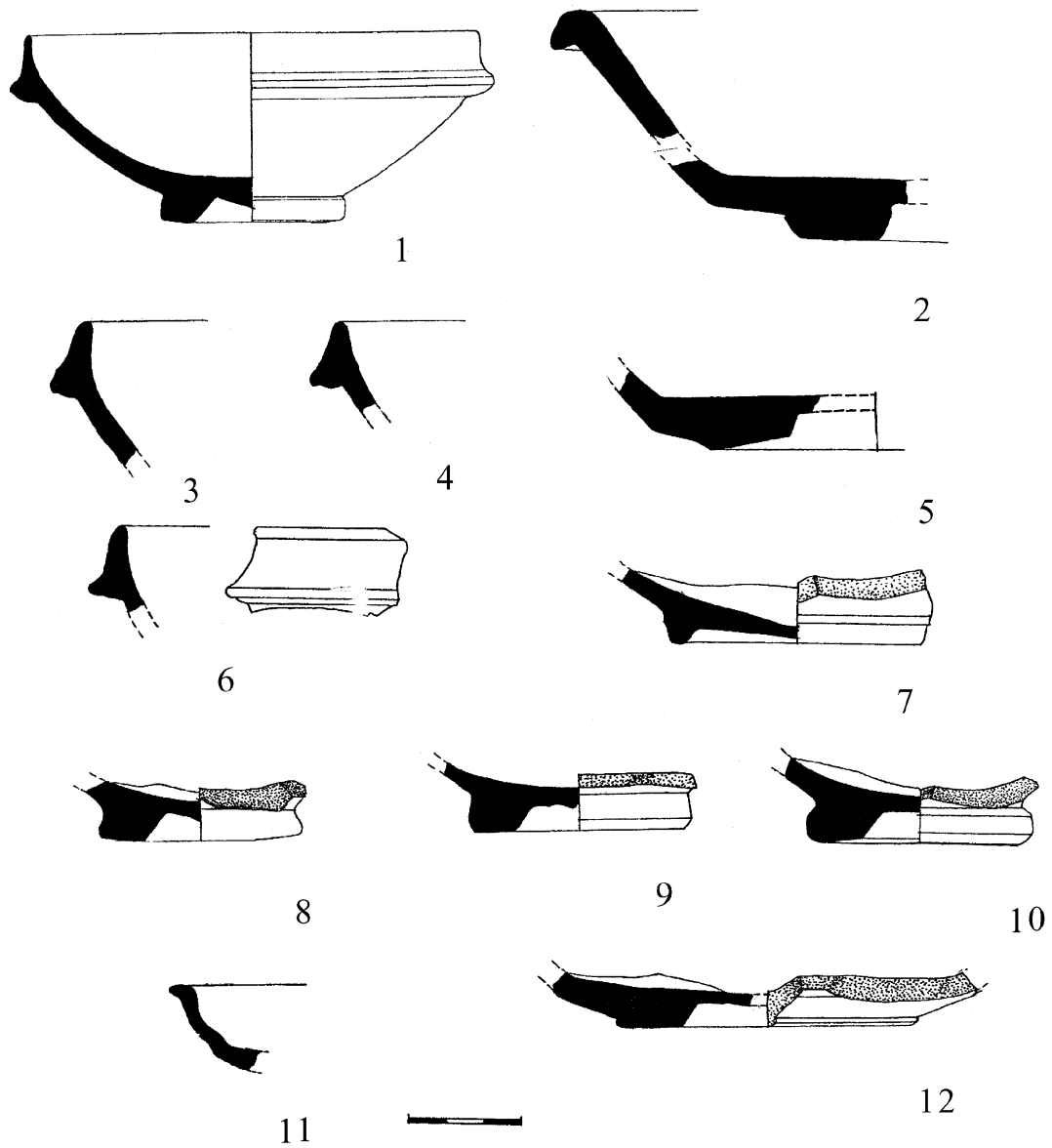


Fig. 4. Cistern No. 145. Çandarlı ware.

Terra sigillata

Except for several fragments of Eastern Sigillata B attributable to the 1st century AD, that ended up in the cistern because of the shifted soil, no other early material was detected.

Eastern Sigillata C¹⁷ (fig. 4). The presence of vessels of the Çandarlı type is witnessed in most centers of the North Pontic area of the Roman period. Among the pieces found in the cistern, there is a complete cup of Hayes form 3,¹⁸ that corresponds to the Bosporan types 13(M) and 14(T)¹⁹ (fig. 4,1). Such vessels are dated from the late 2nd–first half of the 3rd century AD. Many fragments of this form were also found (fig. 4,3,4. 6–10). Fragments of the bowls that represent Hayes forms 1 and 2²⁰ (fig. 4,2,5,12) correspond to the Bosporan types 29²¹ and 17(M)=18(T).²² These are also dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD. Also, there are several fragments that based on their clay and shape belong to the Çandarlı group (fig. 4,11), but which are not accounted for in any classification system. Their study and detailed publication will appear in the near future.

Pontic Sigillata is represented by a few forms only.²³ All the plates found in the cistern (fig. 5,1–4,6,7) belong to the Zhuravlev form 4.²⁴ Only a few examples have a decoration on the floor, and they may be earlier in date (fig. 5,1,3,6). Altogether, these fragments may be dated from the late 2nd to the first half of the 3rd century AD.²⁵

One fragment (fig. 6,2) is a rim of a Pontic form II plate according to Hayes' classification,²⁶ corresponding to form 9 of the new typology of Pontic Sigillata.²⁷ This form can be dated to the 2nd century AD, mainly to its second half. In addition, there were found fragments of bowls (fig. 6,1,3,4), and jugs (fig. 6,10–11). Quite a number of fragments of cups that belong to Hayes form V, identical to form 30 of Zhuravlev's classification²⁸ (fig. 5,5,8–11) and Hayes form VI²⁹ (fig. 5,12) has been found. The wide date-range for these cups extends from the 2nd to the early 3rd century AD.

In addition, the cistern contained a complete profile of a red-slip kantharos (fig. 6,5) with a cylindrical body³⁰ and a large number of fragments of such vessels. These kantharoi are dated to the late 2nd–early 3rd century AD.³¹ Such kantharoi are widely distributed throughout the North Pontic area³² and also in *Heraclea Pontica*.³³ The main period of production of vessels of this type falls between the late 2nd–first half of the 3rd centuries AD. Variations of these vessels exist until the mid 3rd century AD.³⁴ Later, the shape of these kantharoi is simplified even more, the handle-attachments practically disappear, and the walls become thicker. Such a vessel was found, for example, in the necropolis of Tas-Tepe, and is dated to the 4th century AD.³⁵ Similar vessels are also known from the necropoleis of Druzhnoe³⁶ and Chernorechenskoe.³⁷

Out of the relatively rare forms found in the cistern, we draw attention to a rim fragment of an oval plate of Pontic production with decoration in relief (fig. 7,5). Among the fragments found in the cistern, we can tentatively distinguish several that might have been produced in the territory of modern Bulgaria: such are fragments of vessels with impressed ornament (fig. 7,3,4,6), and a fragment of a cup decorated en barbotine (fig. 7,2). I would like to emphasize the

similarities between Moesian and Pontic Sigillata in terms of shapes, as well as in quality of clay and slip. It is possible that a fragment of a handle from a vessel with a pressed-in ornament also belongs to this group (fig. 7,7), but it remains questionable since this problem is not sufficiently dealt with in literature.

Other pottery

A series of red-clay jugs covered with white slip was also found in the cistern (fig. 9,2–8). Finds of such vessels are known from Pantikapaion, Chersonesos, and from other cities of the North Pontic area. Also, we would like to mention a rim of a jug with an incised wave-like ornament (fig. 10,1).

Knossos: the Pottery. *Annu British School Athens* 78, 1983, 155 (Type 37); C. PANELLA, *Oriente ed Occidente: Considerazioni su alcune anfore «egeae» di età imperiale a Ostia*. In: *Recherches sur les amphores grecques. Actes du Colloque international organisé par le CNRS, l'Université de Rennes II et l'École française d'Athènes*. *Bull. Corr. Hellénique Suppl.* 13 (Athènes, Paris 1986) footnote 36; D. P. S. PEACOCK/D. F. WILLIAMS, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy, an Introductory Guide* (London, New York 1986) 193–195 (class 47 etc.).

¹⁷ On imports of the Eastern Sigillata C into the North Pontic area see ZHURAVLEV 2002, 245 fig. 4.

¹⁸ HAYES 1972, 321 fig. 64.

¹⁹ KNIPOVICH 1952, 303; 315–316 fig. 3,4–5.

²⁰ HAYES 1972, 318–321 fig. 64.

²¹ L. F. SLANT'eva, *Krasnolakovaya keramika iz raskopok Ilurata. Materialy Issledovaniya Arkheologii SSSR* 85 (Moscow 1958) 296–297 fig. 11.

²² KNIPOVICH 1952, 304–305; 316–317 fig. 5,2–3.

²³ More information on Pontic Sigillata can be found in ZHURAVLEV 2002, 254–261; ID. 2005, 141–142; 148–149.

²⁴ ZHURAVLEV 2005 pls. 7–9.

²⁵ ID. 2007, 146–147.

²⁶ HAYES 1985, 92–96.

²⁷ ZHURAVLEV 2007 pl. 3,14.

²⁸ IBID. pl. 8–9.

²⁹ HAYES 1985.

³⁰ ZHURAVLEV 2007, Form 34.

³¹ IBID. pl. 13–14.

³² T. KNIPOVITSCH, *Untersuchungen zur Keramik römischer Zeit aus den Griechenstädten an der Nordküste des Schwarzen Meeres*. I. Die Keramik römischer Zeit aus Olbia in der Sammlung der Eremitage. *Mat. Röm.-Germ. Keramik* 4 (Frankfurt a. M. 1929) Taf. III,37; V. I. KADEEV/S. SOROKHAN, *Ekonomicheskie svyazi antichnykh gorodov Severnogo Prichernomor'ya v I v. do n.e.–V v.n.e. (na materialakh Khersonesa)* (Khar'kov 1989) fig. 23. 1; M. ZOLOTAREV, *Kubok s posvyascheniem Zevsu Dimeranskomu iz okrug Khersonesa*. *Kratkie Soob. Inst. Arh.* 168, 1981, fig. 1; N. Z. KUNINA/N. SOROKINA, *Steklyannye bal'zamarii Bospora*. *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha XIII* (Leningrad 1973) fig. 4,48; D. SHELOV, *Tanais i Nizhniy Don v pervye veka nashej ery* (Moscow 1972) 132; T. BLAVATSKAYA, *Nadpis' na sosude iz Kimmerika*. *KSIIMK* 43, 1952, fig. 21; N. ONAIKO, *Raskopki poseleniya na Maloi zemle*. *Kratkie Soob. Inst. Arh.* 124, 1970, fig. 31. 11; N. SEKERSKAYA, *Krasnolakovaya keramika pervykh vekov nashej ery iz Nikoniya*. In: *Severnoe Prichernomor'e* (Kiev 1984) fig. 4,4.

³³ *Herakleia Pontike. Forschungen zur Geschichte und Topographie*. In: *Forschungen an der Nordküste Kleinasien* 1 (Wien 1972) 55 Taf. 9; 10a,1.

³⁴ T. ARSEN'EVA/D. SHELOV, *Raskopki yugo-zapadnogo uchastka Tanaisa*. *Arkh. Pam. Nizhnego Podon'ya* 1, 1974, pl. VIII,5.

³⁵ A. PUZDROVSKIY/Y. P. ZAITSEV/I. NENEVOLYA, *Novye pamyatniki III–IV vv. V Yugo-Zapadnom Krymu*. *MAIET* 8 (Simferopol' 2001) fig. 7,12.

³⁶ I. N. KHRAPUNOV, *Mogil'nik Druzhnoe (III–IV vv.n.e.)*. *Monumenta Studia Gothica* 2 (Lublin 2002) fig. 77,13; 98,7.

³⁷ A. I. AIBABIN, *Etnicheskaya istoriya rannevizantijskogo Kryma* (Simferopol 1999) pl.XIII,12.

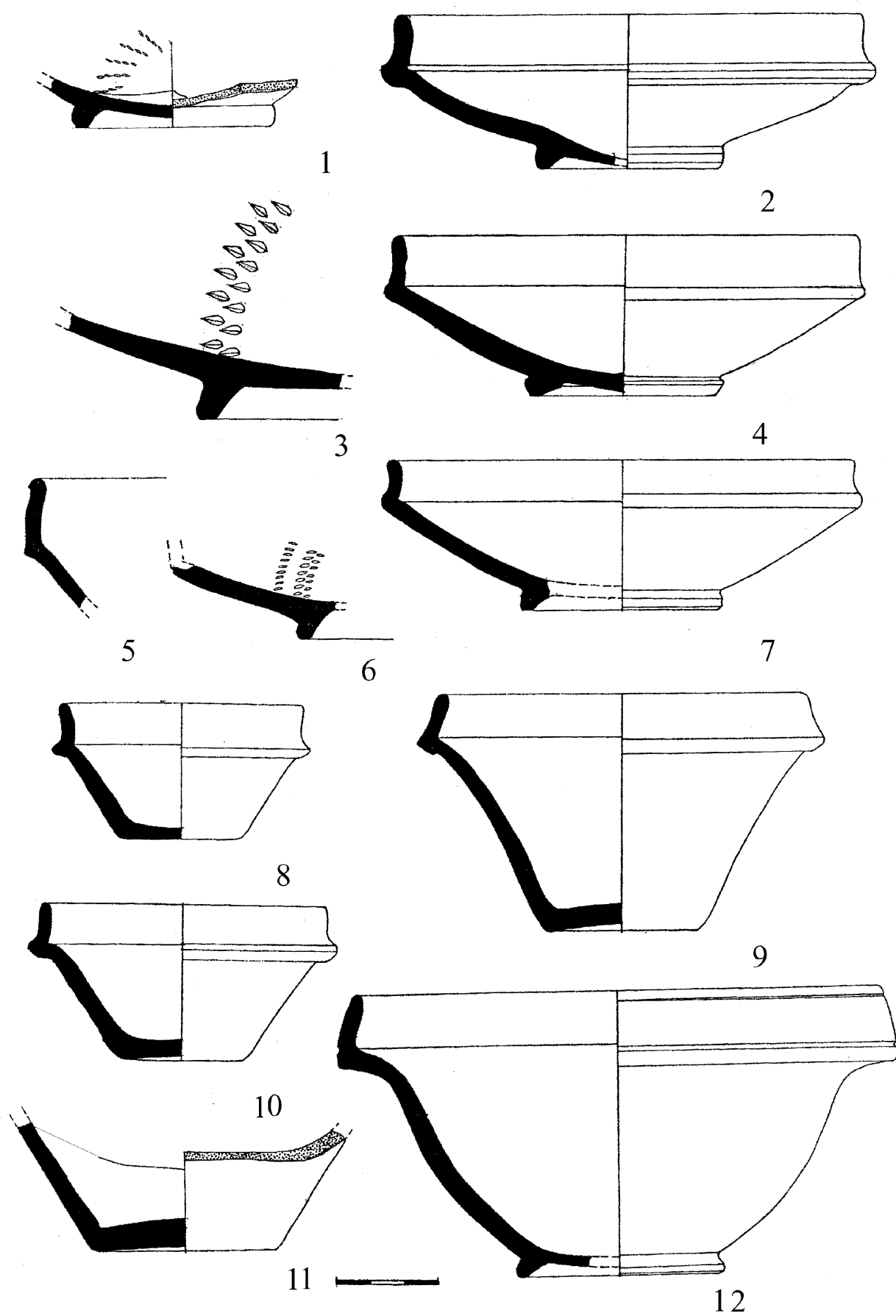


Fig. 5. Cistern No. 145. Pontic Sigillata.

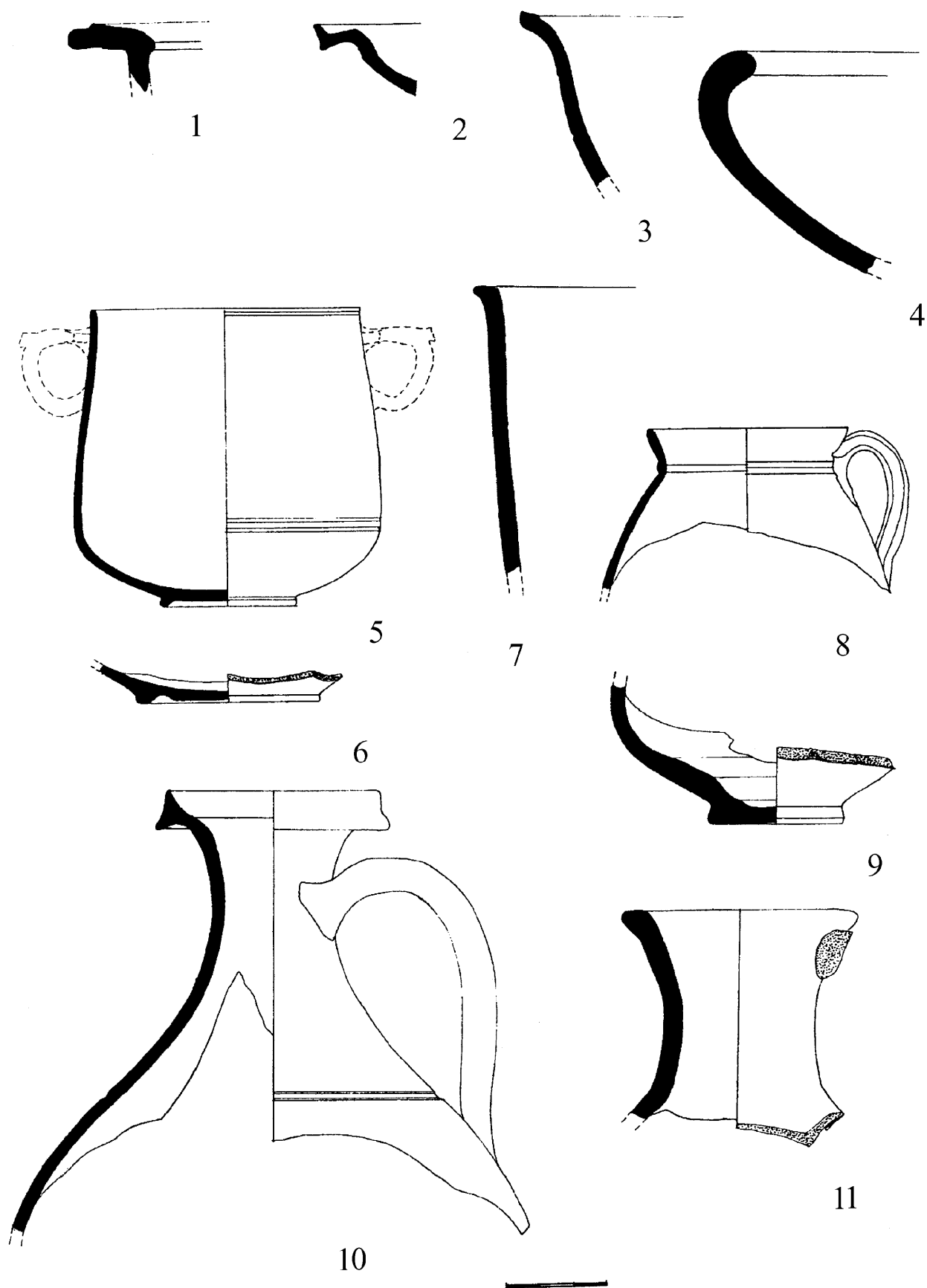


Fig. 6. Cistern No. 145. Pontic Sigillata and Red Slip pottery.

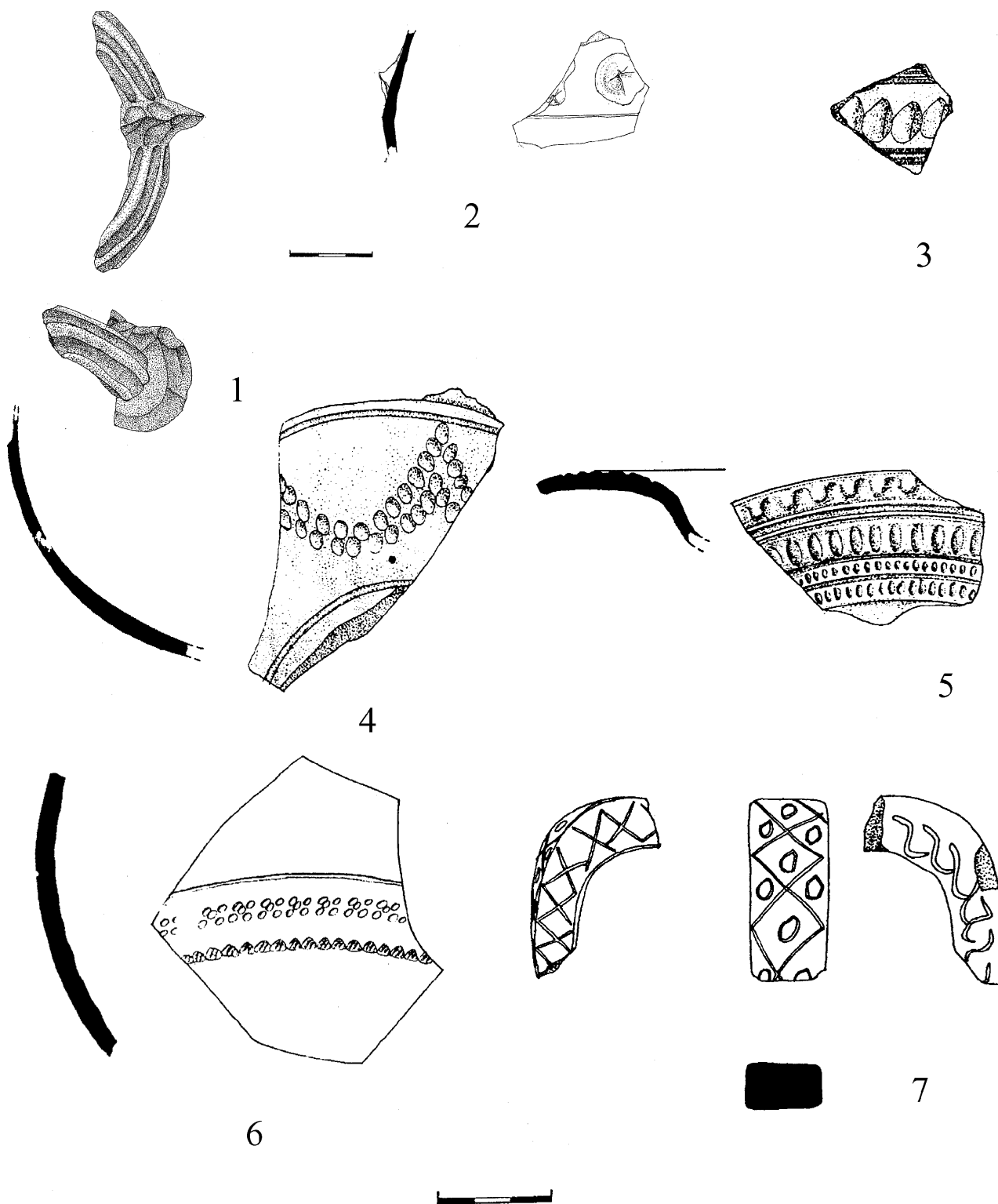


Fig. 7. Cistern No. 145. Pontic or Moesian Sigillata.

Several fragments of one-handled cups with globular body were found in the cistern. They belong to form 1 of these cups³⁸ and are one of the most widespread classes of pottery in the Pontic area. Similar vessels are also known in the Mediterranean and belong to the so-called “Aegean” variant.³⁹ The probable prototype of these cups can be found among Italian *pareti sottili* vessels,⁴⁰ popular in the 1st century AD.⁴¹

In addition to the finds already described, a number of fragments that belong to coarse ware has been found. Among them are fragments of pots and pans (**fig. 10,3–5**), oinochoai (**fig. 8,1**), casseroles (**fig. 8,2–3**), and beakers (**fig. 8,4,7,8**). Most probably these vessels were produced locally,⁴² although some finds of imported coarse ware are also known from Pantikapaion.⁴³ It is possible that two upper parts from two red-clay cups were imported (**fig. 8,7–8**) (Phocaeen?). Also found in the cistern were two loom-weights: one with two crossed lines on both sides (**fig. 10,6**) and another stamped with an impression of a key (**fig. 10,7**).

Lamps

Among the lamps found in the cistern, a group of the “sunburst” type is of utmost importance for the dating (**fig. 11,1–3**). In Chersonesos, where the majority of these lamps comes from, they have been found in contexts dated from the 3rd–4th centuries AD. According to the majority of scholars, their manufacture begins in the second quarter of the 3rd century AD⁴⁴, but possibly somewhat earlier. In any case, large numbers of them were found in the basements of Tanais, destroyed in the mid 3rd century AD.⁴⁵

In addition, the following lamps were also found in the cistern: a round lamp of Loeschke type VIII, decorated on the shoulders with an ornament in relief (**fig. 11,4**), three Bosporan lamps of grey clay (**fig. 11,5–7**), and a fragment of a hand-made leaf-shaped lamp. All these shapes are the most typical for the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.⁴⁶ Another very popular type of lighting-equipment is represented by several legs of incense burners (**fig. 9,1**), parallels for which are known, for example, from Gorgippia⁴⁷.

Fragments of wheel-made vessels with holes made of red or grey clay are often found in the excavations of Pantikapaion (**fig. 10,2**). The diameter of the holes is 0.5–0.8 cm. The archaeological meaning and reconstruction of such fragments has not attracted much of scholars’ interest. They are usually determined as “Durchlass” or “incense-burners” and are described in field reports together with examples of kitchen or ritual ware. But it is also possible, that they were a part of lanterns.⁴⁸ We know several lanterns of closed shape found in Egypt, Anatolia and Cyprus.⁴⁹

Conclusions

It appears that we are dealing here with two levels of filling in the cistern: at first, the soil that represents horizon 1 was thrown in and the cistern stood for a while filled for only 0.6–0.7 m. The fact that the layer of cement on the walls remained *in situ* up to a height of 0.4–0.8 m, whereas the

cement layer above that level fell off, strengthens this hypothesis. The presence of a large number of the earlier amphora fragments in this layer allows us to infer that the cistern was filled on a single occasion with the soil (taken from nearby) dating from the mid 2nd–beginning of the 3rd century AD.

Afterwards, the cistern was filled in gradually. The fill is not very homogeneous, but we have no grounds to suspect a large chronological difference between horizons 1 and 2. It is quite likely that towards the end of the 3rd century AD the cistern was not completely filled, but that some of its walls were still visible above the ground. This assumption explains why and how horizon 3 was formed, which contained some material dated from the 4th century AD (for example, fragments of the amphorae of Shelov type F).

³⁸ ZHURAVLEV in press.

³⁹ ROBINSON 1959, pl. 7, G117, G182; pl. 9, J10, J11, J34; J. W. HAYES, *Paphos III. The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery* (Nicosia 1991) fig. XXII,17; V. R. ANDERSON-STOJANOVIĆ, *Stobi. The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery* (Princeton 1992) Pl. 26,218–222; E. B. DUSENBERY, *Samothrace. The Necropolis. Catalogues of Objects by Categories* (Princeton 1998) 803–807 S153-3; XS-199; S218-F-3; S233-1 etc.

⁴⁰ D. ZHURAVLEV, *O proiskhozhdenii pontiyskoi sigillaty. Pervaya Abkhazskaya Mezhdunarodnaya konferentsiya* (Sykhum 2006) 165–169.

⁴¹ M. T. MARABINI MOEVS, *The Roman Thin Walled Pottery from Cosa* (1948–1954). *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 32, 1973, 237–238 Form LXVIII; A. RICCI, *Ceramica a pareti sottili*. In: EAA *Atlante delle forme ceramiche II. Ceramica fine romana nel bacino mediterraneo* (tardo ellenismo e primo impero) (Roma 1985) 267–268, Tipo 1/122 Tav. LXXXV,2.

⁴² I. B. ZEEST 1957, *Pantikapeiskaya keramika sarmatskogo vremeni* (po materialam raskopok Pantikapeya 1945–1949 gg. Materialy issledovaniya po Arkheologii SSSR 56 (Moscow 1957) fig. 1–4.

⁴³ See e.g.: D. ZHURAVLEV/G. LOMTADZE, *Keramicheski kompleks II v.n.e. s akropolia Pantikapeya*. In: A. A. Maslennikov/ A. A. Zavoikin (eds.), *Drevnosti Bospora 2* (Moscow 1999) 101 fig. 5,37–39.

⁴⁴ S. B. SOROCHAN, *Pro tak zvani rubchasti svitil'niki z Khersonesa*. *Arkheologiya* (Kiev 1982). 38; L. CHRZANOVSKI/D. ZHURAVLEV, *Lamps from Chersonesos in the State Historical Museum – Moscow*. *Stud. Arch.* 94 (Roma 1998) 135.

⁴⁵ T. M. ARSEN'EVA, *Svetil'niki Tanaisa* (Moscow 1988) 45.

⁴⁶ See e.g.: *Ibid.* pl.XVIII.

⁴⁷ I. T. Kruglikova, *O goncharnoî masterskoî Gorgippii*. *Sovetskaja Arkh.* 2, 1962, fig. 3,1.

⁴⁸ D. ZHURAVLEV, *Ob odnom vide osvetitel'nykh priborov: lanterny v Severnom Prichernomor'e?* In: V. N. Zin'ko (ed.), *Bosporskie issledovaniya* (Simferopol-Kerch 2006), 162–171.

⁴⁹ D. M. BAILEY, *A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum III. Roman Provincial Lamps* (London 1988) Q2000; Q2357; *id.*, *A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum I. Greek, Hellenistic, and Early Roman Pottery Lamps* (London 1975) Q495–496; etc.

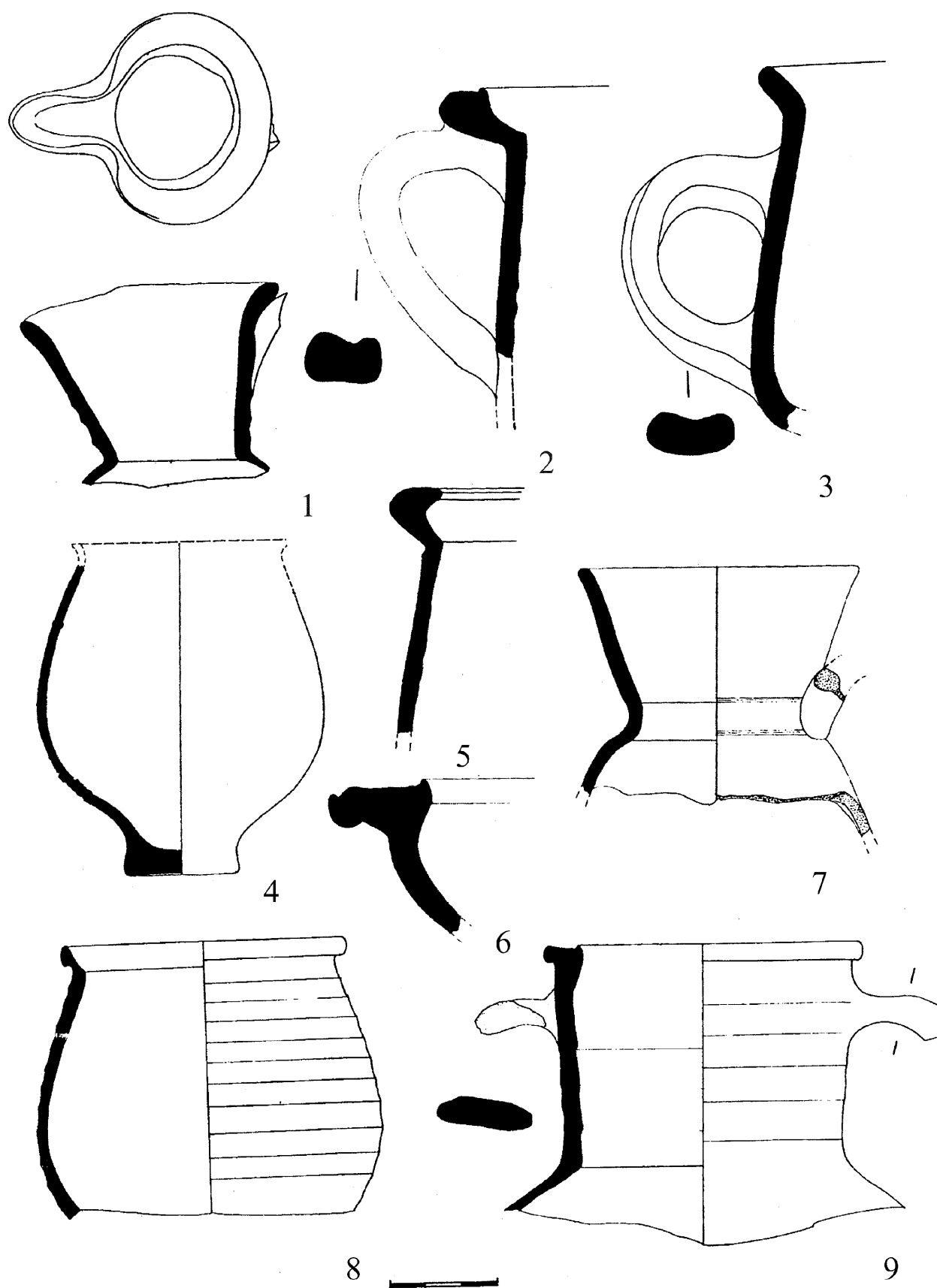


Fig. 8. Cistern No. 145. Coarse ware.

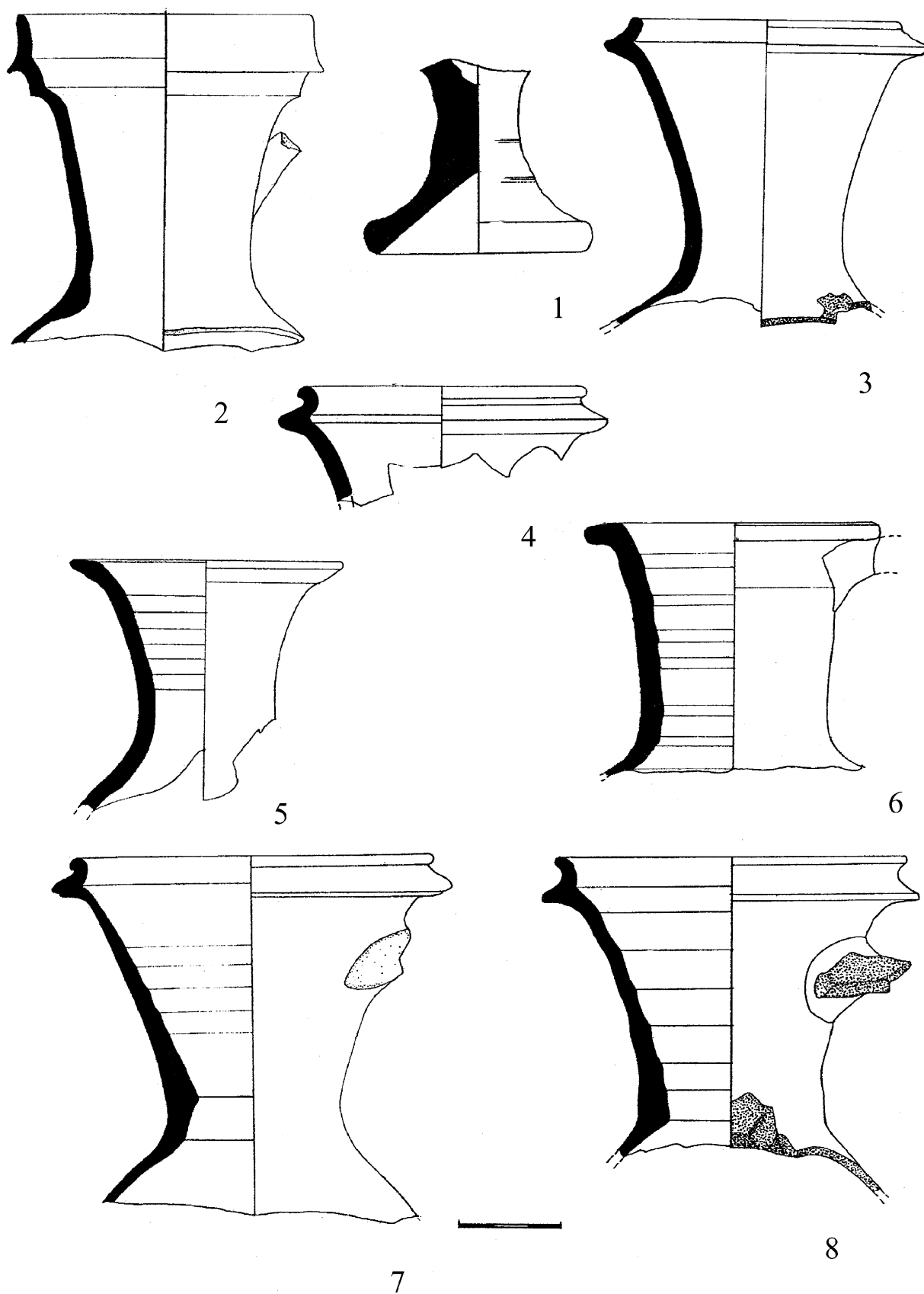


Fig. 9. Cistern No. 145. Coarse ware.

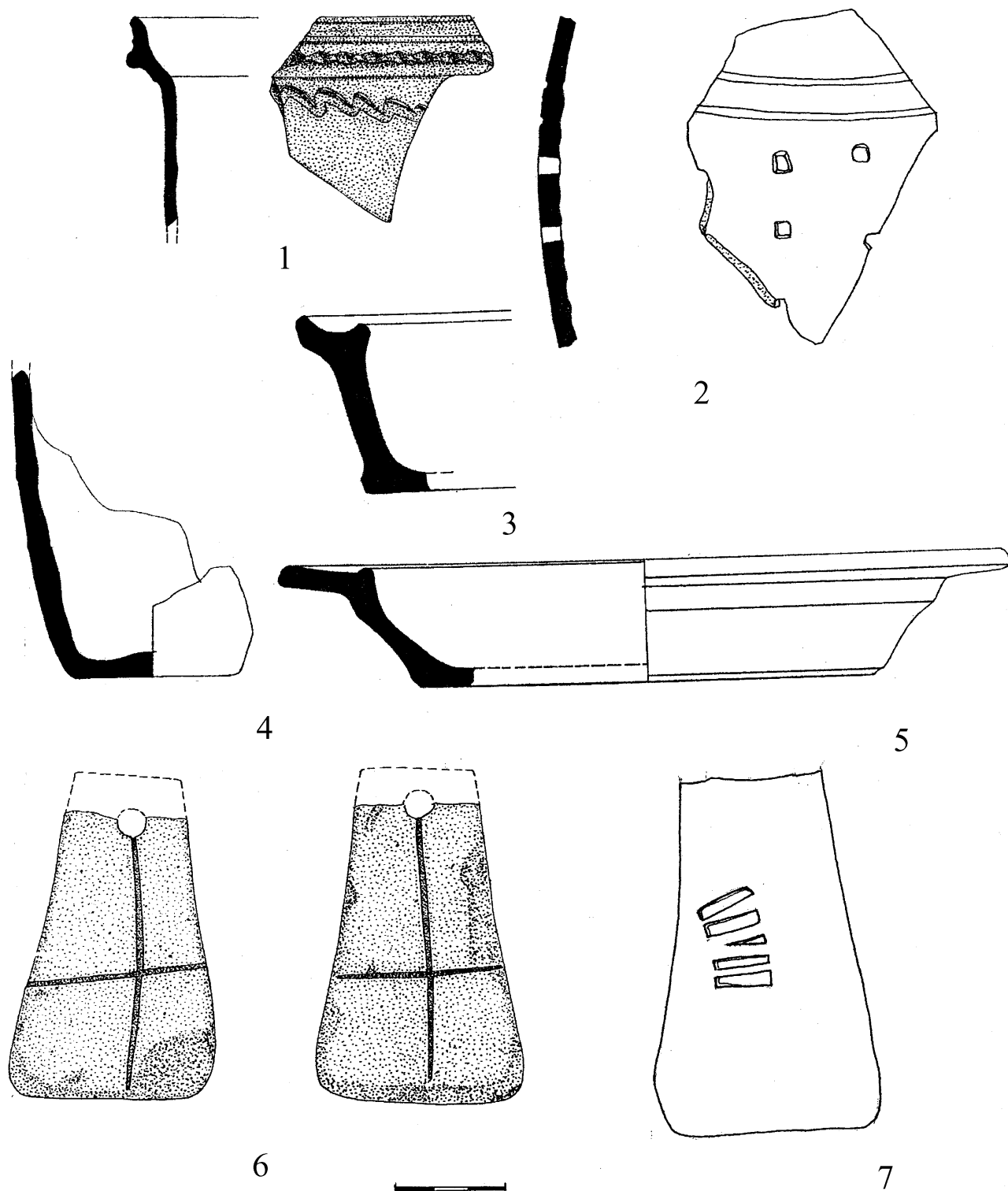


Fig. 10. Cistern No. 145. Coarse ware and miscellaneous finds.

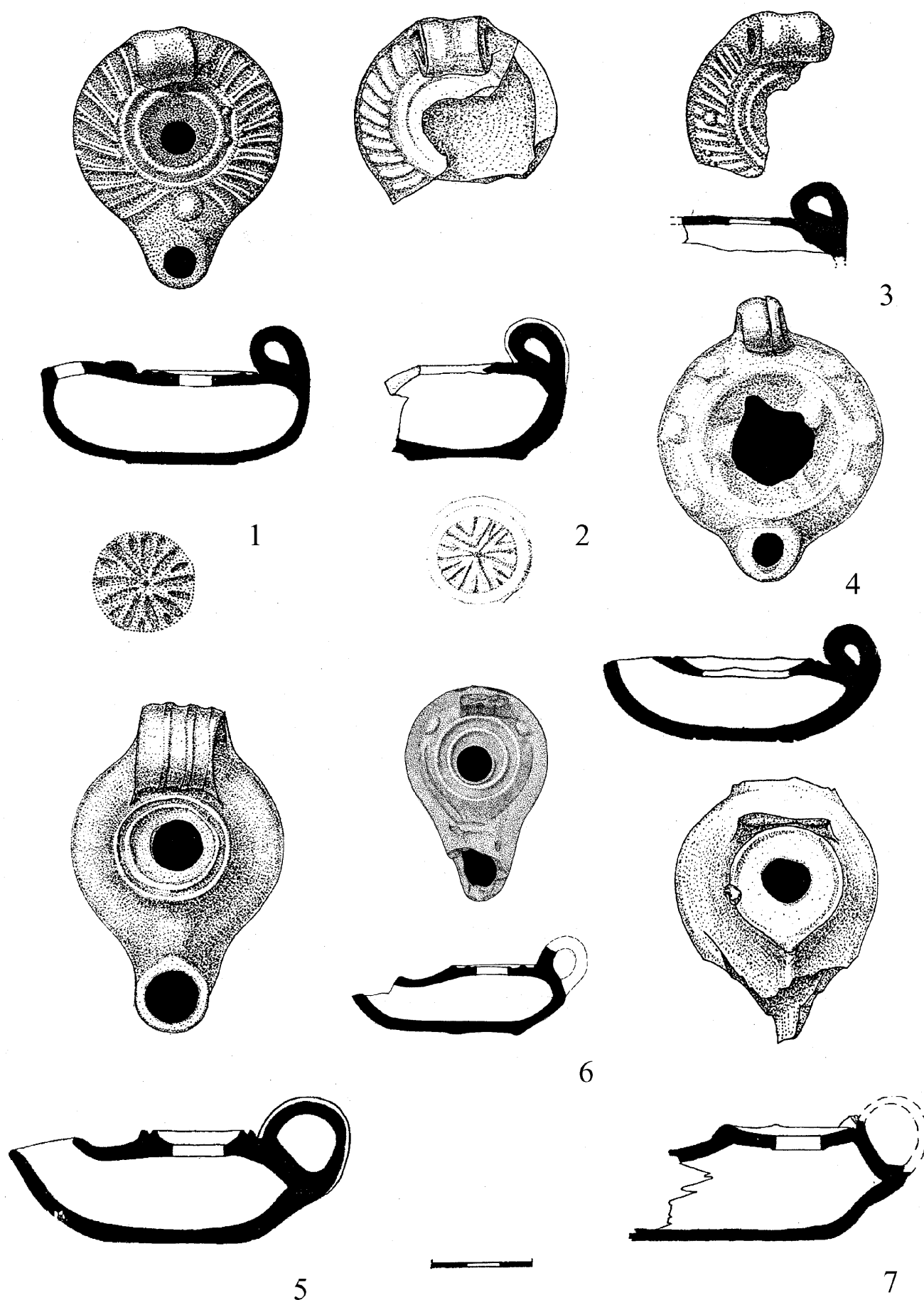


Fig. 11. Cistern No. 145. Lamps.

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