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POTTER OR ARTIST? CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF ROMAN POTTERY DECORATED WITH INCISIONS, IMPRESSIONS AND STAMPS FROM POTAISSA

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Abstract: This article covers 29 Roman ceramic vessels decorated using various techniques, mainly contributing significantly to the enrichment and expansion of the repertoire of stamped pottery. All the vessels presented originate from extensive preventive archaeological research conducted at Romana Square no. 17, an area located in the central part of ancient Potaissa (Turda, Romania). In addition to a brief overview of the techniques and tools most commonly used by potters, the article provides a detailed description of the decorative stamped motifs (vegetal, geometric, zoomorphic), incised, or created through finger impressions. Finally, the catalogue of the studied ceramics offers a more detailed analysis of their archaeological context.

Keywords: *Roman Dacia, Roman art, stamped pottery, local production, preventive archaeology.*

In general, the study of pottery can provide important insights into trade and the daily life of a society. To extract such information, researchers often turn to related sciences, such as ceramic fabric analysis. Classifications, whether based on functionality or other criteria, help organize information, facilitating the correlation of data with existing knowledge or vessel analogies. However, focusing solely on visual analysis is not always sufficient, as vessels with similar decorations may have been produced using entirely different techniques that can only be identified through meticulous analysis.¹ In this regard, ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological studies are also valuable, offering a clearer understanding of the entire pottery manufacturing process.²

The stamping technique, whether featuring geometric, zoomorphic, anthropomorphic motifs, or potter's or workshop inscriptions, is not uncommon in the study of ceramics. It is well known that potters used various stamps to decorate their vessels. At Potaissa, vessels stamped with semicircles composed of small quadrilaterals and leaves or palmettes are frequently found.³ A *sigillum* was discovered in 1912 in the area of the pottery workshops,⁴ supporting the idea of local production of these types of ceramics. To date, there

¹ MCGOVERN 1989, 63.

² LIVINGSTONE SMITH 2007.

³ ANDONE-ROTARU/NEDELEA 2018, 75, Fig. 7/8.

⁴ CĂȚINAȘ 2007, 123–124, Pl. II/1; CĂȚINAȘ 2010, 214–216, Pl. I/1.

are few studies on decorating tools in Roman Dacia, but discussions regarding *sigillia* used for stamping vessels and the molds for *terra sigillata* produced in Dacia are relatively well-established.⁵ Additionally, a broader discussion exists in general regarding the tools used for ceramic decoration in Dacia,⁶ forming a foundational study on this topic. Such *sigillia* (stamps) used for ceramic decoration have been published by I. Mitrofan, originating from the production workshops at Micăsasa.⁷ Some of these were crafted from repurposed bone fragments,⁸ similar to the example from Potaissa.

Certainly, in the case of decorative stamps, it can be assumed that their use stemmed from the prevailing taste or the ancients' attraction to various ornamental motifs or, more generally, to the distinctive appearance of vessels. This likely "compelled" the potter to master certain decorative techniques, elevating them to the level of an artist. This perspective also helps explain imitations of glass or metal vessels, which, when made of clay, allowed for more affordable acquisition by a broader clientele, being less expensive.

The method of decorating ceramic vessels using a comb is among the least mentioned in specialized literature, even though it is frequently employed. Generally, such tools could be made of iron⁹ or perishable materials,¹⁰ which is why they are so rare among archaeological finds. On the other hand, rollers are much better represented in Roman vessel ornamentation. These tools come in various sizes and shapes, some with serrated edges,¹¹ others flat or featuring intricate patterns.¹² As expected, improvised techniques in ceramic craftsmanship are often observed, although this aspect remains one of the least discussed. From the very moment the vessels are shaped on the potter's wheel, the craftsman uses their own hands both to form and to decorate the pieces. Often, we can find the traces or fingerprints of the potters on the finished products. Additionally, various metal blades were used to decorate or incise lines into the soft clay.¹³ It is not uncommon for potters to make use of whatever tools are at hand or repurpose various objects, giving them a new function. Evidence of this can also be seen in vessels decorated using a *strigil*.¹⁴

Equally illustrative are the uses of keys for decorating construction materials.¹⁵ It is not unlikely that a wide range of tools or household objects were employed by potters and that the improvisation of new instruments was also part of their creative process. Ceramic studies do not typically address this aspect, even though it is far from negligible. The methodology for researching this category of archaeological material must closely align with an understanding of ancient

practices, and the research itself should go beyond merely narrowing down the data to technical aspects.

The ceramics decorated with incisions, finger impressions, or stamped motifs discussed in this study originate entirely from a large-scale preventive archaeological investigation carried out between 2021 and 2022 in the central area of ancient Potaissa (modern-day Romana Square no. 17, Turda, Cluj County, Romania). The archaeological survey uncovered a series of buildings with civil functions, the most significant being a possible *insula* (Pl. I–IV). The team of archaeologists from the local museum in Turda completed the excavation only in the first two surfaces (labeled SP I and SP II), which is why it is not surprising that a large portion of the vessels discussed here come from these areas. The subject is not addressed in terms of the forms and functionality of the vessels, but rather individually, treating each vessel separately, taking into account their analogies and the fact that some feature multiple decorative motifs (as seen in the repertoire of stamped forms in Pl. X) on the same vessel.

The first vessel, out of a total of 29, is an imitation of Drag. 37 bowls (Pl. V/1) with a more complex decoration. On the upper part, there is a semicircular decoration (S6 variant¹⁶), at the ends of which circular shapes (C1) are stamped. Beneath these, palm-like motifs (or leaves from variant P7) are placed, under which the same circular shapes, as seen at the ends of the semicircles, appear. Between these palm motifs, rosettes (R1) are stacked at the top, and leaves (P2) are placed at the bottom. Similar decoration has been discovered in the *retentura sinistra* of the fort from Gilău,¹⁷ as well as at Lazuri (Satu Mare) or Zalău,¹⁸ and even in the fort from Potaissa.¹⁹ For the rosettes of variant R1, we have very close analogies on ceramics discovered on Cheii²⁰ and Romana²¹ streets. More distinct analogies can be found in the Roman settlements from Suceagu-Rădaia (Cluj County), where similar stamps of leaves flanked by palm-like motifs have been identified,²² as well as vessels with identical palmettes (variant P7) from the fort at Călugăreni²³ (Mureș County).

The next two vessels are identical both in terms of decoration and typology, both being imitations of Drag. 37 bowls (Pl. V/2–3). The semicircular decoration at the top (S4) has good local analogies.²⁴ A unique feature in the stamped ceramics from Potaissa are the columns (G1) placed at the ends of the semicircles. However, although different in typology, columns situated below semicircular stamps have been identified at Porolissum.²⁵ In the studied examples, between each column are stamped heart-shaped palmettes (H2), the simplified forms of which have been previously discovered in the civilian area on ceramics fired in a reducing

⁵ REGEP VLASCICI 2008, 88–94; CĂTINAȘ 2010, 214–215, Pl. I/1; LĂZĂRESCU/SIDÓ 2018, 34, Fig. 3/1–7; RUSU-BOLINDEȚ/BOTIȘ 2018, 45, 88–89, 110, nr. 110, 221–224, 285–286.

⁶ COCIȘ 1996, 109–118.

⁷ MITROFAN 1995, 186, Pl. V/2.

⁸ BĂLTĂC 2018a, 215–216, Fig. 6/7.

⁹ MURPHY/PROBLOME 2012, 204, Fig. 2/b.

¹⁰ PERRY 2015, 44.

¹¹ MITROFAN 1995, 177, 186, Pl. 5/1; MITROFAN/POP 1997, 880, Pl. II/4; LĂZĂRESCU/SIDÓ 2018, 84, Fig. 3/8–12; EGRI 2018, 119, Fig. 7/1.

¹² BUISSON 1991, 34, 38, fig. 4; PASTOR 2006, 290, Fig. 2, 4.

¹³ MURPHY/PROBLOME 2012, 210, Fig. 2/h.

¹⁴ MCKENZIE-CLARK 2015, 140.

¹⁵ BAUMANN 2018, 234, Fig. 10.

¹⁶ A similar semicircular decoration has been identified in the neighboring site at Napoca, see RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, Pl. LXIX/36.

¹⁷ ISAC 1997, 392, 395, Pl. II/12.

¹⁸ MATEI/STANCIU 2000, Pl. 87/1, 88/2; 146/1–2.

¹⁹ CĂTINAȘ 1984, 486, Fig. 10/45.

²⁰ CĂTINAȘ 1980, 89, Fig. 6/4.

²¹ CĂTINAȘ 1997, 29, Fig. 5/4.

²² LĂZĂRESCU/OPREANU/COCIȘ 2016, 53–54, Fig. 53/4–5.

²³ SIDÓ 2022, 528, Pl. III/18.

²⁴ CĂTINAȘ 1982, Pl. III/38.

²⁵ GUDEA 1980, 136–137, Pl. XXIV/110.

atmosphere.²⁶ Heart-shaped stamps (variant H1) can also be found on a plate, placed successively around the entire lip (Pl. V/4). Locally, similar decoration can only be found in a comparable form in the legionary baths,²⁷ but in this case, the analogy from Napoca²⁸ is much more fitting.

On the walls of a bowl (Pl. V/5), similar decorative motifs to those of the previous vessels stand out, with semicircular stamps made from small successive rectangles (S1) at the upper part. At the ends of these semicircles, vertical linear shapes (G2) are arranged. Beneath each semicircle is a serpentine stamp (F1). At Potaissa, stamped decoration in the form of the letter “S” was discovered during the excavations in the *cella vinaria*.²⁹ Although found on vessels of different typologies, such stamped decoration can be found over a much larger area in the northern part of Dacia, at Napoca,³⁰ Porolissum³¹ and Zalău.³² The following bowl (Pl. V/6) also belongs to the series of vessels stamped with semicircles, at the ends of which are vertical lines. In this case, the vessel, made of fine fabric, was fired in a reducing atmosphere. Once again, the decorative motifs have analogies at Potaissa, including both the semicircles (S3) with the ends pointing downward³³ and the vertical lines (G4) or the leaves (P1) placed between them. Similar vegetal motifs appear on a Drag. 37 bowl discovered in the Legio V Macedonica fort.³⁴ Nearby, at Aiton, during archaeological research carried out between 1969–1973, similar decorations were reported.³⁵ A suitable analogy may also be found in the example from Porolissum, a vessel also fired in a reducing atmosphere with similar decoration (except for the leaves), discovered in the fort during the excavations at the *porta praetoria*.³⁶

The palmettes or leaves prove to have been in high demand at Potaissa. An imitation of a Drag. 30 bowl (Pl. VI/1) continues the variety of this motif. In this case, the decoration is more simplified, with only sequences of downward-facing palmettes (P4) and vertical lines made of small rectangles with rounded ends (G3) visible. Although the lines are very similar to the last vessel presented, the palmettes are a new variation, with good analogies at Napoca.³⁷ More distinctive palmettes in form and arrangement (P6) can be found on another small fragment of a bowl (Pl. VI/2). In this case, the palmettes are arranged obliquely, in the shape of the letter “V”, with small simple circles (C3) stamped at the base. In the fort from Călugăreni, there are vessels stamped with a similar arrangement of palmettes,³⁸ and such vegetal motifs have also been reported among the finds from Aiton.³⁹ A

very good analogy can be found further away, at Aquincum, where this decoration is considered Pannonian.⁴⁰ The following two Drag. 30 bowls are identical both in terms of typology and decoration (Pl. VI/3–4). These are stamped with leaves (P3) arranged in two slightly oblique registers; the leaves in the upper register are oriented downward, while those in the lower register are positioned in the opposite direction. Beyond the identical stamps from Potaissa,⁴¹ similar vessels or motifs are widespread in the area, especially in forts, such as examples from Buciumi,⁴² Porolissum,⁴³ Gilău,⁴⁴ Cășeu,⁴⁵ Gherla,⁴⁶ Ilișua⁴⁷ or Cristești.⁴⁸ Additionally, we observe these motifs with a very narrow dating range between 117–161 AD in the *vicus* from Napoca.⁴⁹ Elongated, slightly thinned palmettes, with individual leaves very well represented (P5), resembling wheat spikes, are found on a Drag. 37 bowl (Pl. VI/5). These are placed obliquely on the wall of the vessel. Once again, the analogies are varied and abundant. At Potaissa, identical decoration was identified in the fort, on a vessel of the same typology.⁵⁰ As with the previous vessel, this decoration might indicate an affinity among the soldiers from the northern part of the province for stamped palmette motifs, especially considering the similarities between the analogies. Similar forms can be found in the forts from Porolissum⁵¹ and Călugăreni,⁵² the *vicus* from Napoca⁵³ or Cicău,⁵⁴ as well as at Cristești.⁵⁵ An unusual vessel in terms of local decorative repertoire is a Drag. 37 bowl (Pl. VI/6). The decoration consists of slightly stylized oblique palmettes (P8), arranged successively, one next to the other, under which are semicircular stamps with the ends facing upwards (S2). Although it appears atypical for the area, similar vessels have been published from discoveries at Cristești⁵⁶ (Mureș County).

The last vessel, stamped with semicircular motifs made from small rectangles with tapered ends facing upwards (S5), is also a Drag. 37 bowl (Pl. VI/7). It has a good analogy, including typologically, in Turda, among the discoveries from Traian Street (near the one found in Romana Square), with the only difference being the positioning of the stamped semicircles, which are oriented upwards.⁵⁷ A similar type and position of the decorative motif, as the one found on Traian Street, has been discovered in the *vicus* from Cicău,⁵⁸

²⁶ CĂȚINAȘ 1984, 482, Fig. 2/8.

²⁷ NEDELEA 2020a, 350, Fig. 14/3.

²⁸ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 273, Pl. XLIII/201, LX/201; in this case, the stamp was also applied on a plate, yet of a different type, specifically Curle 15.

²⁹ CĂȚINAȘ/BĂRBULESCU 1979, 109, Fig. 5/7; CĂȚINAȘ 1982, Pl. IV/67; BĂRBULESCU 1994, 111, 114, Fig. 21/2.

³⁰ ANTAL/PUPEZĂ 2010, 63, Pl. II/2.

³¹ FILIP 2008, 152–153, 191, Pl. LXI/395, CXLII/695.

³² MATEI/STANCIU 2000, Pl. 282/12.

³³ CĂȚINAȘ 1997, 28, Fig. 4/11.

³⁴ NEDELEA 2020, 15, Pl. LIII/6.

³⁵ BLĂJAN/CERGHİ 1978, 23, Fig. 3/1.

³⁶ GUDEA 1980, 122, Pl. VI/27.

³⁷ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 272, Pl. LXX/180.

³⁸ MAN 2006, 115, Pl. II/7.

³⁹ BLĂJAN/CERGHİ 1978, 23, Fig. 3/1.

⁴⁰ NAGY 2017, 9, Fig. 14/5.

⁴¹ CĂȚINAȘ 1982, Pl. V/83.

⁴² CHIRILĂ *et alii* 1972, 41, Pl. XXXVI/6.

⁴³ GUDEA 1980, 139, Pl. XXVII/129.

⁴⁴ ISAC 1997, 396, Pl. V/34; BARB 2012, 15, Pl. XXVIII/34.

⁴⁵ ISAC 1997, 397, Pl. XII/72.

⁴⁶ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 1999, 783, 785–786, Pl. IX/30, XIV/53.

⁴⁷ GAIU/PROTASE/MARINESCU 1997, 54–55, Pl. XXXIV/17.

⁴⁸ MAN 2011, 128, 133, Pl. LII/146, LIX/184.

⁴⁹ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ/COCIȘ 2005, 151–152, Fig. 9/39,41, 19/99–100; RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 288–290, 300, Pl. LVI/275–276, LVII/283–284, LXIII/336.

⁵⁰ NEDELEA 2020, 15, Pl. LIII/4.

⁵¹ GUDEA 1980, 128, Pl. XIV/62; FILIP 2008, 164, Pl. LXXXVI/491.

⁵² SIDÓ 2022, 528, Pl. III/17–18.

⁵³ BOLINDEȚ/COCIȘ 2005, 160, Fig. 19/97.

⁵⁴ WINKLER/TAKÁCS/PÁIUȘ 1979, 161, Fig. 28/8.

⁵⁵ MAN 2011, 115, 127, Pl. XXXV/57, L/140.

⁵⁶ MAN 1999, 148, 151–152, Pl. V/20, XI/46.

⁵⁷ CĂȚINAȘ 1984, 482, Fig. 4/13.

⁵⁸ WINKLER/TAKÁCS/PÁIUȘ 1979, 161, Fig. 30/1.

as well as in the *latus sinistrum* of the fort from Cășeu.⁵⁹ Another rarer decoration is the Drag. 30 bowl (Pl. VI/8), on whose body are stamped successive serpentine lines, made of small squares (F2). It is not surprising that at Potaissa there is a very good analogy, with a typologically identical vessel, including in terms of reduction firing, as well as with a similar serpentine/wavy decoration, discovered on Hașdeu Street.⁶⁰ However, outside, these types of motifs are not very widespread; although, similar motifs can be found in the Roman castrum from Porolissum.⁶¹

Among the stamped vessels from Romana Square no. 17, a local variant, larger than the usual size of Déch. 72 cups, is found (Pl. VII/1). An interesting feature is the decorative motif made of two rows of successive *ovolo* (L2) with their ends facing downward, although typically these are oriented upward. While there are analogies at Potaissa⁶² and nearby at Napoca,⁶³ it is possible that this decorative motif indicates a Pannonian influence, given the similar models from Aquincum.⁶⁴ Another rarity in terms of decoration is represented by a Drag. 30 bowl (Pl. VII/2), whose body is entirely decorated with successive rows of small overlapping *lunulae* (L1). Similar *lunulae* can be found in the decorative repertoire from Napoca,⁶⁵ a very good analogy can also be found at a relatively large distance, in Vel'ký Meder⁶⁶ (Slovakia), where, although the vessel is typologically different, the stamped motif's shape and arrangement are similar.

The last two stamped vessels discussed are a Drag. 37 bowl (Pl. VII/3) decorated with two rows of concentric circles (C2) and a bowl stamped with rows of rosettes (R2) separated by rouletted horizontal lines (Pl. VII/4). Regarding the circular stamps, very good analogies can be found locally on Cheii street⁶⁷ and in the fort of Legio V Macedonica,⁶⁸ as well as more widely at Porolissum,⁶⁹ Napoca,⁷⁰ Gilău⁷¹ and Râșnov.⁷² On the other hand, the bowls with rosettes are relatively common among local discoveries, with identical stamps being well known at Potaissa.⁷³ The same rouletting decorated pattern can be observed on the wall of another cup (Pl. VII/5), fired in a reducing atmosphere, from a semi-coarse fabric. The design consists of small successive rectangles, with the imprinted lines arranged horizontally in six overlapping rows. At Potaissa, this pattern can be seen on the foot of a vessel found on Cheii street,⁷⁴ near the area excavated in Romana Square. Similarly, overlapping six-row pattern can also be found at Porolissum⁷⁵ and Aquincum.⁷⁶ Another semi-coarse vessel, in this case a cooking pot

(Pl. VIII/1), is decorated on the body with horizontal overlapping rows, though this time the pattern is wavy, created by using a different technique.

Two unique vessels in terms of manufacturing and decoration technique are characterized by a fine fabric, with a well-polished gray slip, imitating metal vessels (Pl. VIII/2–3). The shape stands out with its rounded rim, delimited by a horizontal groove, and a bulging body, with chattered decoration on the upper part. In Dacia, Déch. 72 cups with similar decoration have been found at Apulum.⁷⁷ Similar cups, both in shape and decoration, have been identified at a greater distance, at Augusta Raurica.⁷⁸ Also, using a distinct technique, the decoration on the shoulders of a jug (Pl. VIII/4) was made through incision, imitating the “*cut glass*” technique typical of glass vessel decoration.

On the other hand, a common vessel among the discoveries is the fragment of a *dolium* decorated with geometric motifs, semicircular lines, and wavy patterns (Pl. VIII/5). Despite the large number of examples found, I consider it relevant to mention a very good analogy of this fragment discovered at Râșnov.⁷⁹ Geometric decoration can also be found on a cup (Pl. VIII/6), the wall of which features oblique lines intercalated in the shape of rhombs. The closest analogy for this piece is found at Porolissum on a vessel with a similar shape and decoration.⁸⁰ Identical decoration can also be found at Durostorum,⁸¹ with the difference being in the vessel's typology. A more geographically distant example can also be found in a *statio* between Aventicum and Augusta Raurica, at Solothurn⁸² (Switzerland).

The following vessels presented are two imitations of Drag. 44 bowls (Pl. VIII/7–8), made of fine fabric, one fired in a reduction atmosphere and the other in an oxidizing one, both covered with a reddish and grayish slip. Just below the rim, there are rows of impressions made by the potter using his fingers. Although there are not many examples of vessels decorated in this manner, the similarities found at Zalău,⁸³ Stupini “Fânațele Archiudului”⁸⁴ (Bistrița Năsăud County), as well as the more distant example from Poetovio⁸⁵ (Ptuj, Slovenia), are quite significant.

The last two vessels under discussion are handles of Drag. 39 trays. The first one is likely a local imitation, with a simple decoration on the upper part consisting of two crossed incised lines forming an “X”, while the inner edge of the rim is decorated with a beaded or twisted line (Pl. IX/1). The second tray fragment provides much more detailed information due to its decoration; the oval pattern on the rim was made in a mold, while the two dolphins, oriented left-right, were obtained by scratching or incision (Pl. IX/2). The analogies are striking and help identify the origin of the vessel in the Pontic region. In this context, the trays discovered at Panticapaeum⁸⁶ (Bosporan Kingdom), which are identical in

⁵⁹ ISAC 1997, 396–397, Pl. VIII/59, X/63.

⁶⁰ CĂȚINAȘ 1984, 484, Fig. 6/25.

⁶¹ FILIP 2008, 111, Pl. II/8.

⁶² CĂȚINAȘ 1984, Pl. VI/109.

⁶³ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, Pl. LXXI/249; NAGY 2017, 12, Fig. 17/16.

⁶⁴ NAGY 2017, tab. 56; NAGY 2022, 212, Fig. 6.

⁶⁵ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, Pl. LXIX/70.

⁶⁶ VARSİK 2005, 284, Pl. 3/19.

⁶⁷ CĂȚINAȘ 1980, 89, 91, Fig. 5/5.

⁶⁸ NEDELEA 2020, 14, Pl. LII/1.

⁶⁹ GUDEA 1980, 143–144, Pl. XXX/159.

⁷⁰ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 304–305, Pl. LXV/368.

⁷¹ ISAC 1997, 392, 395, Pl. II/9.

⁷² GUDEA/POP 1971, 56, Pl. XX/2.

⁷³ CĂȚINAȘ 1982, 89, Pl. V/70–71; BĂRBULESCU 1994, Fig. 21/3.

⁷⁴ CĂȚINAȘ 1980, 101, Fig. 11/7.

⁷⁵ GUDEA 1996, 224, Pl. XL/14.

⁷⁶ NAGY 2017, 11, tab. 113/4.

⁷⁷ WINKLER/TAKÁCS/PĂIUȘ 1979, 258, Pl. VI/63.

⁷⁸ SCHUCANY/MATTMANN 2019, 387–388, T9 type.

⁷⁹ GUDEA/POP 1971, 51, Pl. XXXIII/1.

⁸⁰ FILIP 2008, 171, Pl. CI/537.

⁸¹ BĂLTĂC 2018, 220, Fig. 8/4.

⁸² SCHWARTZ 2000, 36, 52, Pl. 10/123.

⁸³ MATEI/STANCIU 2000, Pl. 175/1, 176/16.

⁸⁴ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ *et alii* 2018, 34, no. 67.

⁸⁵ JANEŽIČ/SCHINDLER KAUDELMKA 2022, 176, Fig. 7.

⁸⁶ ZHURAVLEV 2002, 280–283, Fig. 30/2; ZHURAVLEV 2024, 147,

shape (including the lateral grooving), as well as those found in the area between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains,⁸⁷ or in Moesia Inferior, such as those from Tuchenitsa⁸⁸ (Bulgaria), are particularly relevant. A closer example can be found at Romula, where a tray decorated with two dolphins positioned similarly has been discovered, but in this case, the dolphins are in relief.⁸⁹ Given the route of the Legio V Macedonica before its arrival at Potaissa, it is not excluded that the presence of such a vessel could have been a result of the military's affinity for Pontic products.

Taking into account the decorative motifs presented, one can observe a local prevalence for vegetal stamps, but also a tendency to imitate aspects of Pannonian or Pontic pottery. Furthermore, the analogies shown indicate that Potaissa follows a local trend, with most of the vessels having parallels in the northern part of Dacia. Additionally, the great variety of decorations reveals that local potters displayed considerable skill, showcasing their artistic talents. The inhabitants' affinity for beauty, beyond the utilitarian function of the vessels, is well represented at Potaissa, from the smallest and most common objects to monumental art. In this context, the pottery makes only a small contribution to the understanding of local artistic expression.

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CATALOGUE

L – length / W – width / Th. – thickness / H – height / D – diameter / inv. no. – inventory number CR – roman building

Pl. V/1 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25759V; stamped motifs: R1, C1, P2, P7, S6; dimensions: D_{body} 24 cm / L 7,4 cm / W 6,4 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP IX/2021–2022).

Pl. V/2 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25768V; stamped motifs: H2, P2, G1, S4; dimensions: D_{body} 25 cm / L 6,5 cm / W 5,9 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP III/2021–2022).

Pl. V/3 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25769V; stamped motifs: H2, P2, G1; dimensions: D_{body} 24 cm / L 4,7 cm / W 4,2 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP IV/2021–2022, from the wall rubble).

Pl. V/4 – Plate, rim fragment – inv. 25800V; stamped motif: H1; dimensions: D_{rim} 30 cm / L 6,1 cm / W 4,7 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP IX/2021–2022).

Pl. V/5 – Bowl, body fragment – inv. 25764V; stamped

motifs: G2, F1, S1; dimensions: D_{body} 13 cm / L 7,8 cm / W 4 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP I/2021–2022, on the collapsed roof).

Pl. V/6 – Bowl, body fragment – inv. 25771V; stamped motifs: P1, G4, S3; dimensions: L 4,2 cm / W 5,6 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VI/1 – Drag. 30 bowl imitation, rim and body fragment – inv. 25761V; stamped motifs: P4, G3; dimensions: D_{rim} 11 cm / L 7,4 cm / W 7 cm / Th. 0,5 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VI/2 – Bowl, body fragment – inv. 25762V; stamped motifs: C3, P6; dimensions: L 6,1 cm / W 3,5 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VI/3 – Drag. 30 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25766V; stamped motif: P3; dimensions: D_{body} 11 cm / L 5,4 cm / W 6 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, in the room enclosed by walls Z1, Z10 and Z11).

Pl. VI/4 – Drag. 30 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25773V; stamped motif: P3; dimensions: L 4,8 cm / W 4 cm / Th. 0,6 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VI/5 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25770V; stamped motif: P5; dimensions: L 4,8 cm / W 3,5 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP I/2021–2022, north to well G147).

Pl. VI/6 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, body fragment – inv. 25767V; stamped motifs: P8, S2; dimensions: D_{body} 22 cm / L 6,7 cm / W 5,5 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP VI/2022).

Pl. VI/7 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, rim and body fragment – inv. 25797V; stamped motif: S5; dimensions: D_{rim} 12 cm / L 6,7 cm / W 6 cm / Th. 0,5 cm (SP IX/2021–2022).

Pl. VI/8 – Drag. 30 bowl imitation, rim and body fragment – inv. 25772V; stamped motif: F2; dimensions: D_{rim} 13,5 / L 6 cm / W 7,1 cm / Th. 0,4 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VII/1 – Déch. 72 cup, rim and body fragments – inv. 25776V; stamped motif: L2; dimensions: D_{rim} 16 cm / L 9,8 cm / W 9,3 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, in the room enclosed by walls Z10, Z15, Z7/1 and Z8).

Pl. VII/2 – Drag. 30 bowl imitation, rim and body fragments – inv. 25777V; stamped motif: L1; dimensions: D_{rim} 24 cm / L 14,9 cm / W 9,5 cm / Th. 0,6 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, between walls Z18 and Z11).

Pl. VII/3 – Drag. 37 bowl imitation, rim and body fragments – inv. 25763V; stamped motif: C2; dimensions: D_{rim} 22 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP II/2021–2022).

Pl. VII/4 – Bowl, body fragment – inv. 25765V; stamped motif: R2 (also decorated with a roulette wheel); dimensions: L 3,8 cm / W 3,3 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VII/5 – Cup, body fragment – inv. 25818V; decorated with a roulette wheel; dimensions: D_{body} 8 cm / L 4,7 cm / W 4,5 cm / Th. 0,3 cm (SP I/2021–2022, pit G159).

Pl. VIII/1 – Cooking pot, body fragment (secondary burning on both sides) – inv. 25775V; wavy pattern; dimensions: D_{body} 12 cm / Th. 0,4 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1).

Pl. VIII/2 – Beaker, rim fragment (metal vessel imitation) – inv. 25799V; dimensions: D_{rim} 11 cm / L 6,2 cm / W 5,3 cm / Th. 0,5 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, between walls Z18 and Z4).

Pl. VIII/3 – Beaker, body fragments (metal vessel imitation) – inv. 25798V; chattered decoration; dimensions: D_{body} 14 cm / Th. 0,3 cm (SP III/2021–2022, in the pit that interrupts wall Z6).

Pl. VIII/4 – Jug, body fragment – inv. 25760V; incised grape

Fig. 9/1.

⁸⁷ IVANOV 2022, 163–165, no. 179–187.

⁸⁸ KAMISHEVA 2005, Pl. 12.

⁸⁹ POPILIAN 1997, 12, Fig. 10/2; BONDOC/DINCĂ 2005, 73.

bunches (or leafs?) pattern; dimensions: L 7 cm / W 6,9 cm / Th. 0,4 cm (SP I/2021–2022, on the clay floor).

Pl. VIII/5 – Dolium, body fragment – without an inventory number; decorated with curved and wavy lines; dimensions: L 6,6 cm / W 3,8 cm / Th. 1 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, in the room enclosed by walls Z7/1, Z8, Z10 and Z15).

Pl. VIII/6 – Cup, rim and body fragment – inv. 25774V; rhombus-shaped decoration made of oblique lines; dimensions: D_{rim} 12 cm / L 6,4 cm / W 6,2 cm / Th. 0,6 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1, in the room enclosed by walls Z5 and Z6).

Pl. VIII/7 – Drag. 44 bowl imitation, rim and body fragments – inv. 25805V; decorated with finger impressions; dimensions: D_{rim} 27 cm / L 5 cm / W 8,2 cm / Th. 0,8 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. VIII/8 – Drag. 44 bowl imitation, rim and body fragments – inv. 25806V; decorated with finger impressions; dimensions: diam. 26 cm / Th. 0,5 cm (SP I/2021–2022).

Pl. IX/1 – Drag. 39 tray handle – inv. 25810V; geometric decoration with intersecting straight lines; dimensions: L 7,5 cm / W 6,5 cm / Th. 0,5/0,8 cm (SP II/2021–2022).

Pl. IX/2 – Drag. 39 tray handle – inv. 25794V; zoomorphic decoration (dolphins) and stamped and incised geometric motifs; dimensions: L 14 cm / W 6,3 cm / Th. 0,7 cm (SP I/2021–2022, CR1).

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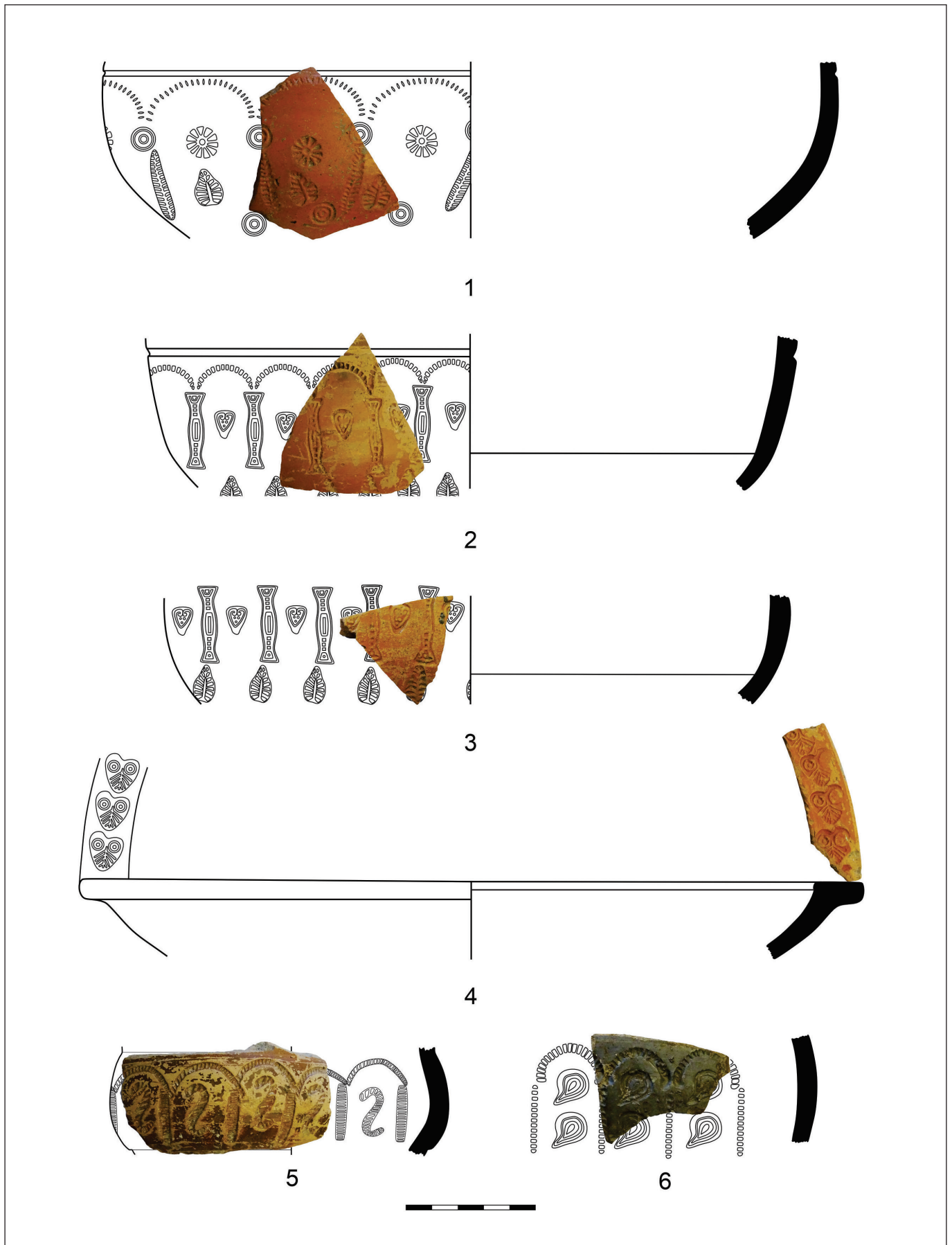
Pl. I. Aerial plan of the archaeological researched area (source Google Maps).



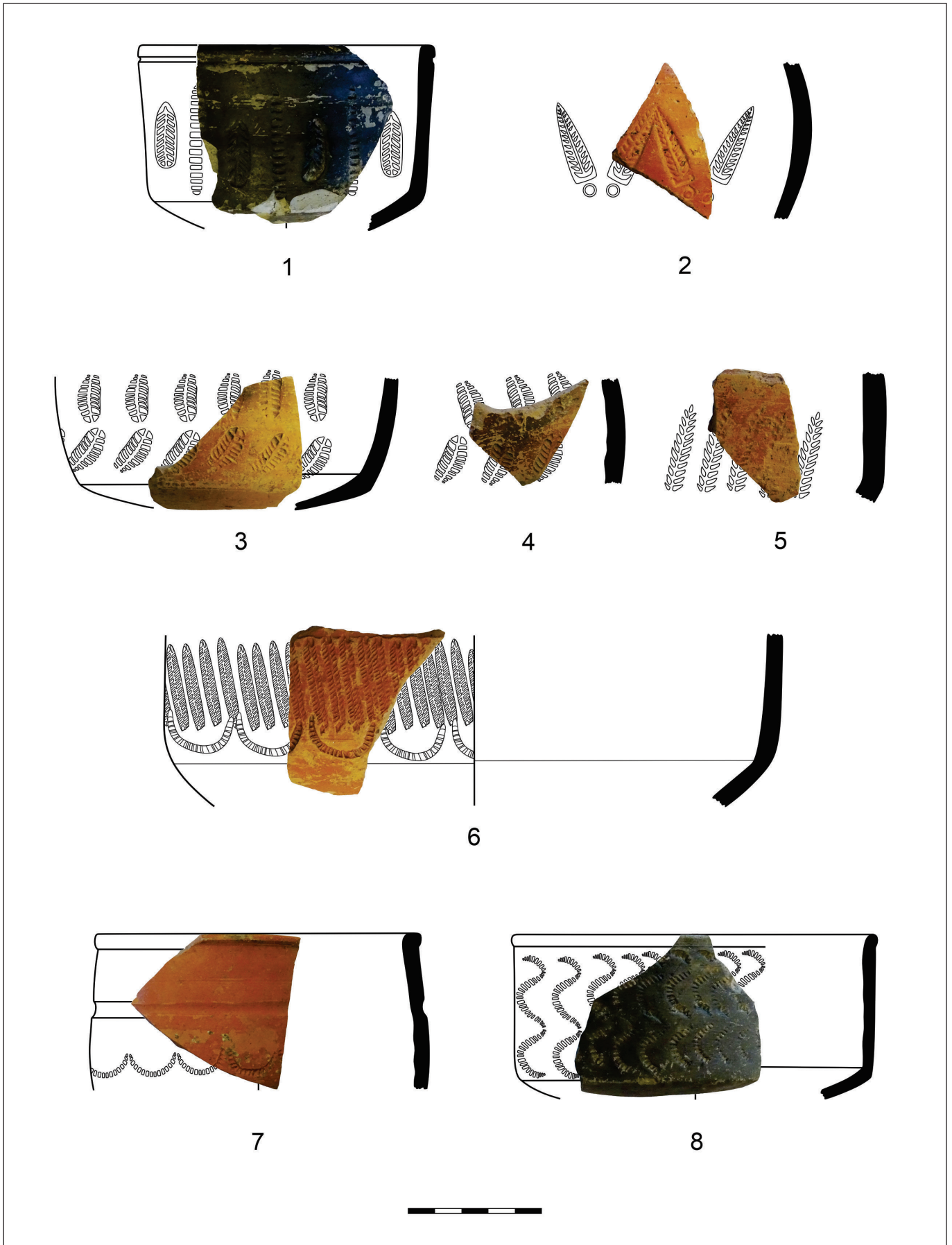
Pl. II. Detailed aerial photo of the researched surfaces (photo credit Marius Romilă).



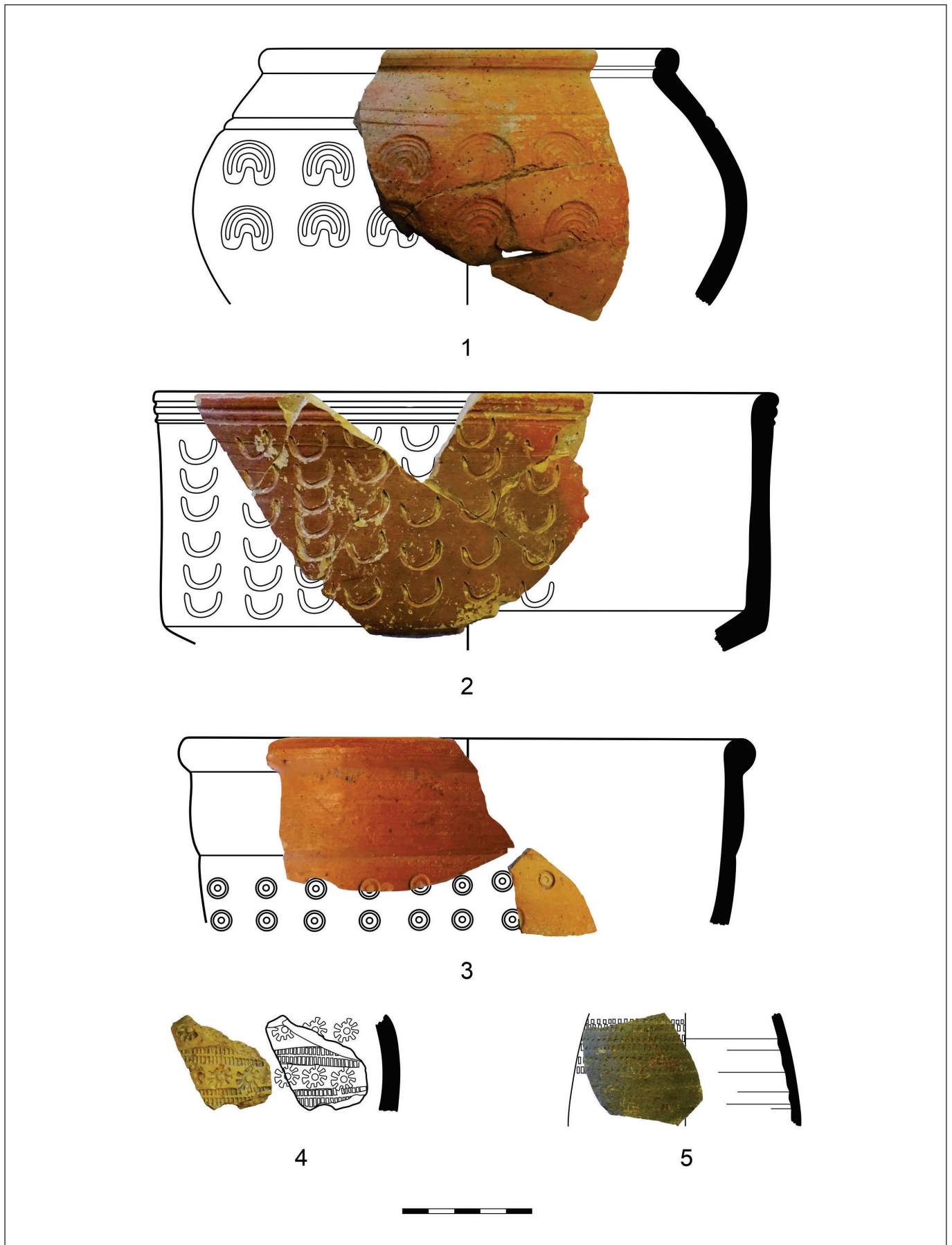
Pl. IV. Surface SP IX and material distribution (photo credit Marius Romilă).



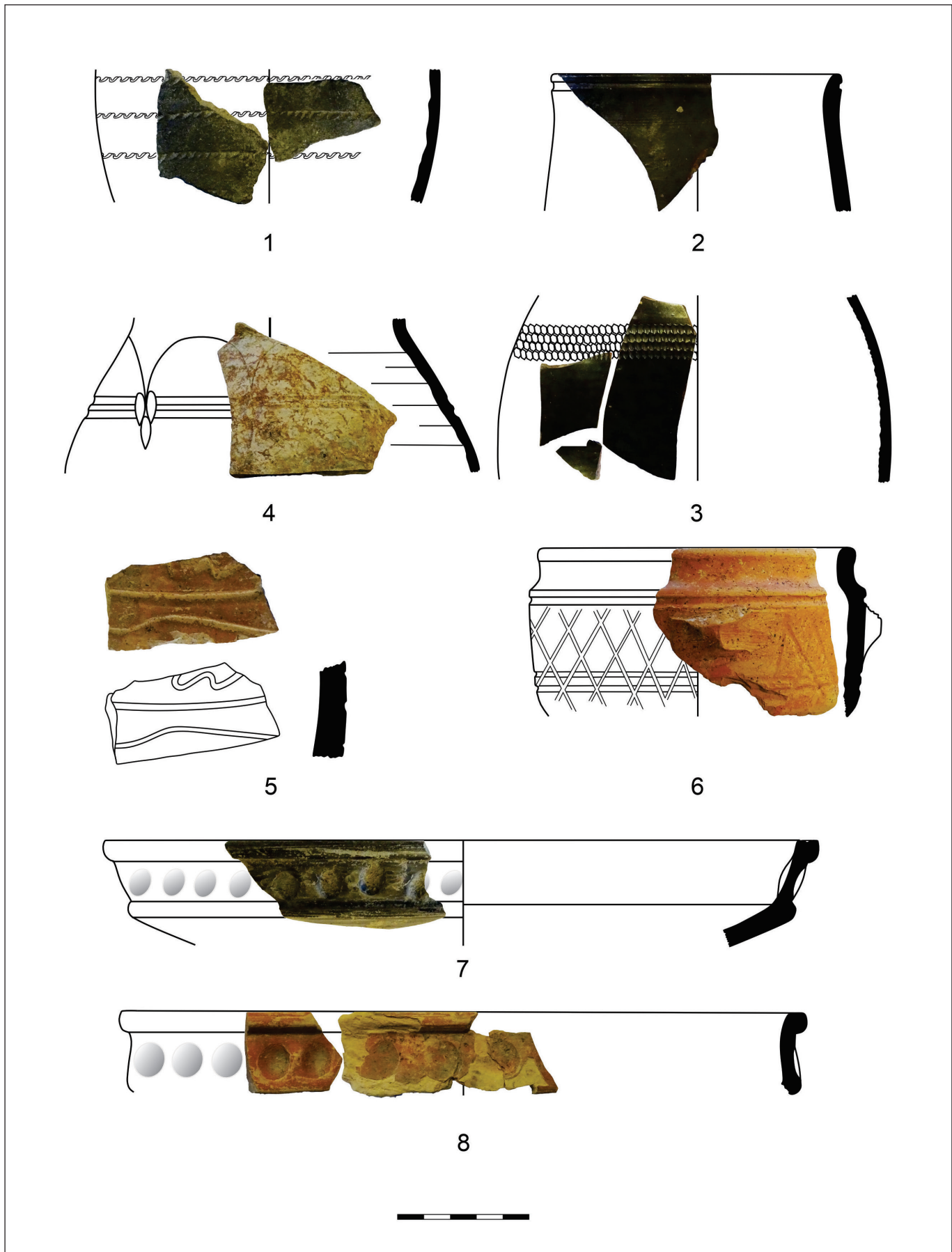
Pl. V. 1-3 Drag. 37 bowls; 4 Plate; 5-6 bowls.



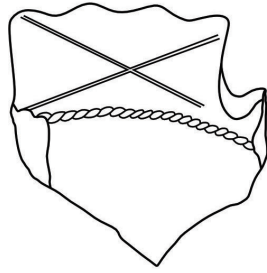
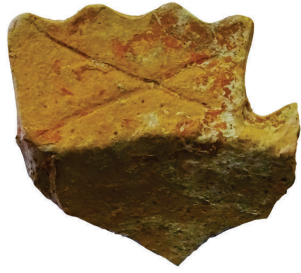
Pl. VI. 1, 3-4, 8 Drag. 30 bowls; 2 unknown type bowl; 5-7 Drag. 37 bowls.



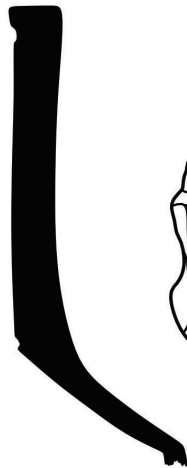
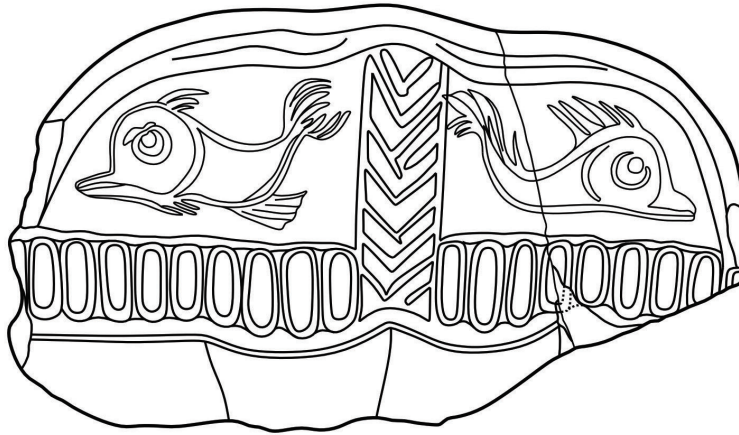
Pl. VII. 1 Déch. 72 cup; 2 Drag. 30 bowl; 3 Drag. 37 bowl; 4 bowl; 5 cup.



Pl. VIII. 1 cooking pot; 2-3 beakers; 4 jug; 5 dolium; 6 cup; 7-8 Drag. 44 bowls.



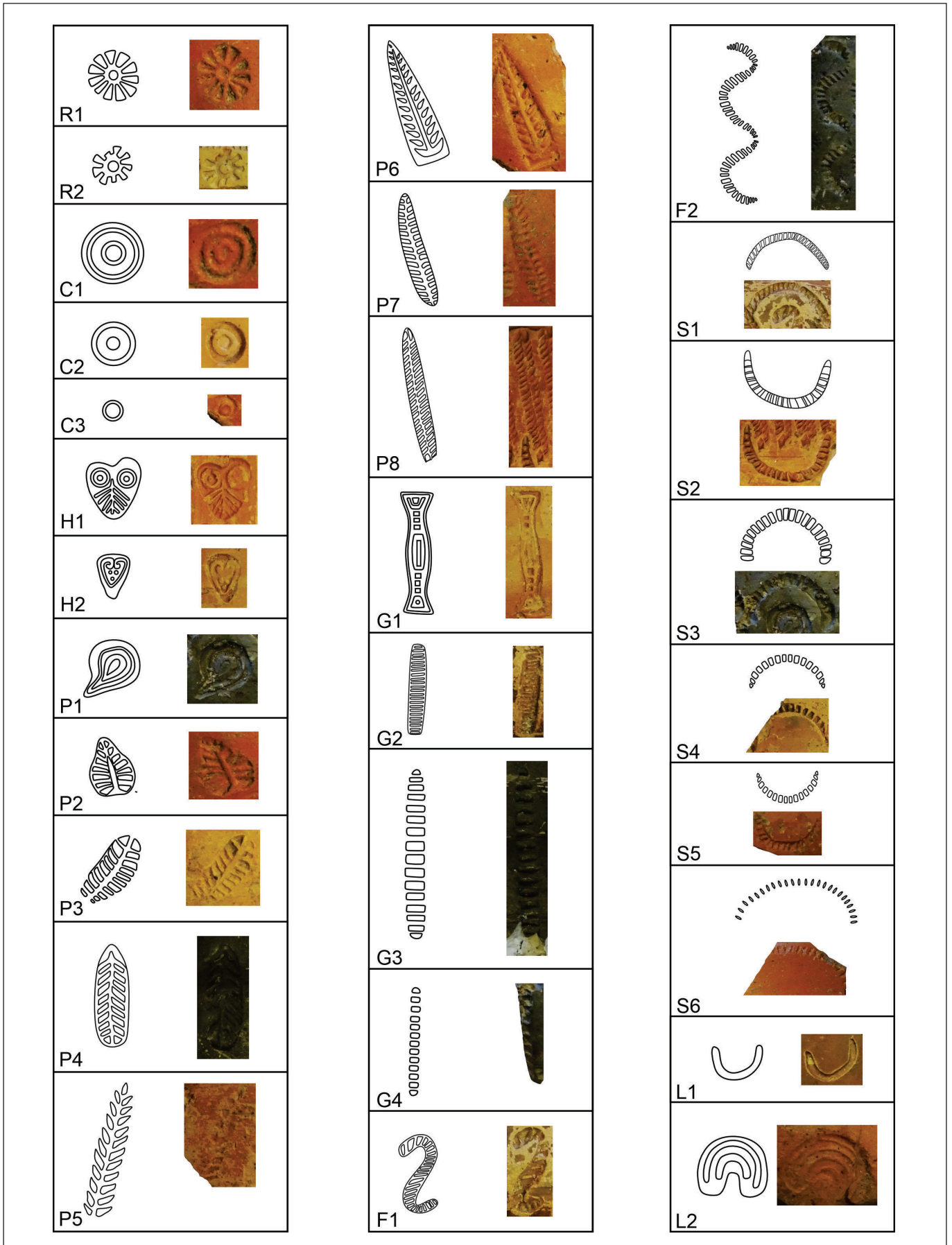
1



2



Pl. IX. Drag. 39 tray handles.



Pl. X. The catalogue of stamped decorative motifs.