

EARLY AND MIDDLE BRONZE AGE STRATIGRAPHY AND POTTERY FROM AEGINA KOLONNA

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This paper tries to demonstrate the development of pottery found at Aegina Kolonna from the Early Helladic III period to the beginning of the Middle Helladic period.¹ It will also attempt to compare the stratigraphic excavation results from the two main excavation areas with each other, namely the fortification wall (Fig. 1 A), and the so called inner city to the west (Fig. 1 B). The excavations of the fortification wall in the late 60's and 70's were directed by the late Hans Walter and Florens Felten and formed

the basis of the stratigraphic exploration of Aegina Kolonna.² Important additional evidence for the stratigraphic sequence was obtained during the 1993 to 2002 excavations directed by F. Felten and Stefan Hiller in the so called prehistoric inner city, particularly in area 19³ (Fig. 1). Based within the SCIEM 2000 project a new excavation was initiated in 2002 with a primary focus on the Middle Bronze Age and the transition to Late Bronze Age.⁴

At Aegina Kolonna three phases of occupation



Fig. 1 Aegina Kolonna, schematic plan

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¹ For discussion and comments we would like to thank F. Felten, J.B. Rutter and D. Scallan, who read and corrected the manuscript. As our studies are not yet finished, the paper presents state of our research.

² WALTER and FELTEN 1981; GAUSS and SMETANA 2003; GAUSS and SMETANA 2004. For the labelling system used to catalogue material from the old excavations see: GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 472 n. 16; GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1158 n. 56.

³ FELTEN and HILLER 1996; GAUSS and SMETANA 2004.

⁴ FELTEN *et. al.* 2003, 54–63; FELTEN *et. al.* 2004, 114–126.

	<i>Settlement Sequence</i>	<i>Ceramic Sequence</i>
Neol to EH I	I	Phase A (with subphases A1, A2, etc.)
	II	Phase B
EH II	III	Phase C
	III (Rebuilding)	Phase C
EH III	IV	Phase D
	V (Destruction)	Phase E
	V (Reconstruction)	Phase E
EH III / MH	VI	Phase F & Phase G
	VII	Phase G
MH	VIII	Phase H
	VIIIA	Phase H
	IX	Phase I
MH / LH	X	Phase J & Phase K
LH		Phase K

Fig. 2 Aegina Kolonna, Early and Middle Bronze age settlement and ceramic sequence

have been distinguished for the Early Helladic III period (Kolonna IV, V and VI), whereas four settlement phases (Kolonna VII to X) have been differentiated for the Middle Helladic period (Fig. 2). Until now the same terminology has been used for describing the sequence of ceramic phases, which in our opinion is liable to be misunderstood. We therefore suggest that a clear distinction should be made between the stratigraphic sequence of these settlement phases and the sequence of ceramic phases⁵ (Fig. 2). The settlement phases Kolonna VI and VII are marked on Figure 2 by a grey background, as the correlation of settlement and ceramic phases is most difficult.⁶

The stratigraphic sequence of the settlement phases Kolonna IV to Kolonna VI can be best demonstrated with the help of the excavations in the area of the fortification wall (Fig. 3). Above bedrock a fill layer was found (Fig. 3, 1), containing mainly Early Helladic II sherds and a few Early Helladic III sherds. On top of that a floor was identified, covered with fill (Fig. 3,

2; 4, 11–14). The walls and the floor are attributed to the settlement phase Kolonna IV.⁷ The few characteristic sherds can be assigned to an early stage of the Early Helladic III period and define our ceramic phase D. On top of that a floor with an impressive destruction layer was identified. This destruction horizon characterises the end of settlement phase Kolonna V⁸ (Fig. 3, 3; 4, 8–10). In the heavily burnt debris approximately 120 complete or almost complete vessels have been found.⁹ This pottery defines our ceramic phase E.¹⁰ After the destruction the occupation ends in this area of the settlement. The ruins were filled up with stones and formed the basis for the newly erected fortification wall (Fig. 3, 4; 4, 1–7).¹¹ The construction of the fortification wall defines the settlement phase Kolonna VI.¹² It is important to note that no architectural remains of the Kolonna VI settlement other than the fortification wall were found in this excavation area. Thus ceramic deposits characterising the pottery of the Kolonna VI settlement are more or less absent.¹³

⁵ GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1158–1159.

⁶ The terms used in the chart are preliminary, as neither the work of Lydia Berger, who studied the Early Helladic II stratigraphy and pottery, nor our own research are finished yet. Our final goal would be the creation of a common pottery phasing system for the entire assemblage of Bronze Age pottery found at Aegina Kolonna.

⁷ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 23–28 (Kolonna IV settlement). See also: GAUSS and SMETANA 2002, 12–13; Taf. 1; GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 472–474.

⁸ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 28–42.

⁹ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 108–117; GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 474–478.

¹⁰ GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 373–478. GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1160–1163.

¹¹ WALTER and FELTEN 1981.

¹² WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 43–50 (Kolonna VI settlement).

¹³ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 140. The pottery from Fundgruppen XXIII, XXXIV and XXV was found in the Kolonna VI fortification wall. Fundgruppe XXII was associated by

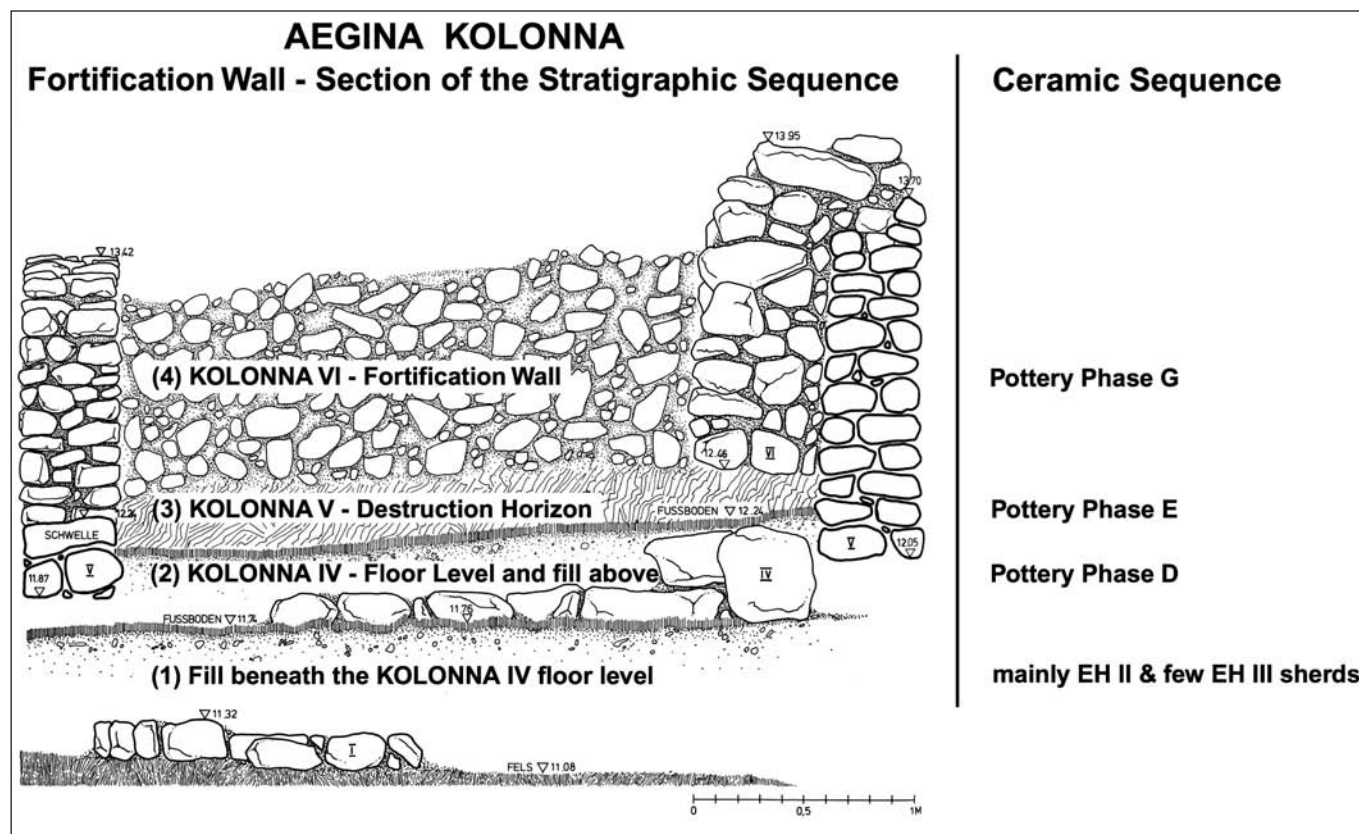


Fig. 3 Schematic sequence in the area of the fortification wall, based on WALTER – FELTEN 1981, 44 fig. 36

Therefore most important are the results of the newly studied sherds from the fill of the Kolonna VI fortification wall (Fundgruppe XXIV) (Fig. 4, 1–7), as the dating of the sherd material provides a terminus post quem for the erection of the fortification wall.¹⁴ The number of sherds found in and beneath the wall is not large. Most fragments show ordinary Early Helladic III features, not much different from phase E pottery. However, one sherd (XXIV-13) shows features not common until the transition to the Middle Bronze Age (Fig. 4, 6). Moreover the rim fragment joins with a vessel already published by H. Walter and F. Felten¹⁵ (Fig. 5). The best parallels for this kind of a solidly painted and burnished vessel with horizontal grooves on the exterior of rim and shoulder and on the interior of the rim are found at the so called Transitional Phase at Lerna.¹⁶ At Kolonna, these horizontal grooves make

their first appearance in pottery phase G (see below page). At the moment, and stressing the fact that the final conclusions have not yet been drawn, we feel the fortification wall of Kolonna VI was erected at the transition to the Middle Bronze Age. We therefore have to raise the question whether or not the Kolonna VI settlement phase should still be called purely Early Helladic III rather than Early Helladic III to Middle Helladic. As house remains and well stratified ceramic deposits of the Kolonna VI settlement have not been found until recently, we do not know if the Kolonna VI settlement lasted for some time. Neither architectural nor ceramic subphases have been distinguished yet for the Kolonna VI settlement.

In the next phase of occupation, Kolonna VII, which is not shown on Figure 3, the fortification walls were strengthened and new entrances built.

stylistic criteria with the Kolonna V settlement by H. WALTER and F. FELTEN (1981, 145). This association has been criticized by RUTTER 1983, 107; RUTTER 1995, 643. Fundgruppe XXII was found on top of the destruction debris of the Kolonna V settlement. It was deposited when the fortification wall of the Kolonna VIII settlement was erected.

¹⁴ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 145 (Fundgruppe XXIV) The sherd material was studied in summer 2003 and in spring 2004.

¹⁵ WALTER and FELTEN 1981, 175 Katnr. 442; Taf. 121 (XXXVII-1).

A different stratigraphic situation has been found in the western part of the settlement, in the so-called inner city. The following explanations focus mainly on the excavation results of area 19. Unfortunately no traces of the Kolonna IV settlement have been discovered. In general this occupation level is lacking in the inner settlement apart from a few exceptions.¹⁷ Traces of a heavily burnt floor horizon (layer 19/38) are situated directly above what remains of the Early Helladic II occupation levels¹⁸ (Fig. 6). The vessels found on the floor are, rather, similar to the pottery found in the destruction debris of the Kolonna V settlement.¹⁹ Therefore the pottery from context 19/38 may be attributed to our ceramic phase E and the floor horizon is to be correlated with the Kolonna V settlement phase.

In contrast to the excavation area of the fortification wall, the occupation and habitation at area 19 does not cease with the destruction. Especially interesting is the fact that immediately above the burnt floor another floor horizon was determined (layer 19/36). The fill above the floor contained few sherds of little significance (Fig. 7).²⁰ At the moment it is not clear to which settlement phase this floor horizon may be attributed and whether the pottery in the fill above the floor is to be linked with our ceramic phase E or phase F. Perhaps the floor is part of the rebuilding phase immediately after the destruction of the Kolonna V settlement.²¹

Above this floor horizon and fill another floor layer was distinguished (layer 19/28). On this floor, which was partly covered with an ashy layer, at least 12 complete or nearly complete vessels were found (Fig. 8–12). The characteristic elements of this context may be summarised as follows: The large proportion of pattern painted-pottery (Fig. 8; 11, 2–5;

12, 2–4) is remarkable and differs from the sparsely pattern-painted vessels of our ceramic phase E. New vessels appear, with shapes, decorative motifs and technological features²² unknown in ceramic phase E (Fig. 11, 1, 4, 5; 12, 1, 3, 4). Nevertheless, syntax and motifs of the pattern painted pottery can be placed within the corpus of Early Helladic III pottery. Finally, characteristic elements of the Middle Bronze Age pottery, such as “real matt painted” or so called lustrous decorated pottery, are not present. We therefore use context 19/28 to define our ceramic phase F. According to our present knowledge, ceramic phase F may belong to a very late/final stage of the Early Helladic III period. Most important are the following four vessels (Fig. 8; 11, 1, 4, 5; 12, 1, 3, 4):

The large narrow necked jar (Fig. 8) is exceptional with respect to its size and the quality of its pattern painted decoration. Two alternating motifs, multiple triangles with a cross-hatched centre and cross-hatched rectangles, decorate the shoulder.²³ The combination of these two motives seems to be a late and perhaps also typical Aeginetan feature²⁴ (Fig. 13, 1). Another exceptional find is the large ovoid narrow-necked jar (Fig. 11, 1; 12, 1); it is handmade, solidly painted with an orange paint and highly burnished. According to macroscopic and petrographic analysis it is of Aeginetan origin. A completely preserved neck and rim of the same shape was found in another context that is also attributed to pottery phase F (Fig. 13, 2).

The beaked jug (Fig. 11, 4; 12, 3) is pattern painted with a Dark-on-Light decoration consisting of vertical bands with hatching and, below the handle, a multiple triangle with cross-hatching. Fragments with a similar pattern painted decoration from other excavation areas may belong to the same vessel

¹⁶ ZERNER 1978, 191, characterising the Transitional pottery: “Cups and bowls have rounded bodies which swell at the shoulder. Shoulder zones and interiors of rims were incised with horizontal lines. [...]” We are thankful to J.B. Rutter and C. Zerner for the comments on vessel XXXVII-1 and this class of pottery in general. See also RUTTER 1995, 626: “But not until Phase 3 does such decoration become widely used in a variety of classes and positions and on a fairly wide spectrum of shapes. The combed version of such ornament, which is typical of the Solidly Painted and Burnished class, above all on handmade kantharoi and Bass bowls, surely imitates the equivalent decoration on contemporary vessels of precisely the same shapes, but wheel-made, in the Fine Burnished Gray Class.”

¹⁷ GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1160 mit Schlußfolgerungen.

¹⁸ The Early Helladic II remains belong to a late phase (phase E according to L. Berger).

¹⁹ WALTER and FELTEN 1981; GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 472–474; fig. 2–6.

²⁰ Number 1 is a solidly painted and un-burnished closed vessel, number 2 a tiny fragment of a Light-on-Dark pattern painted vessel of non-Aeginetan origin.

²¹ GAUSS and SMETANA 2003, 472; GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1159, 1161.

²² Such as the handle attachment of the kantharos (shape Rutter XI; 44 Ill. C-5). Compare with RUTTER 1995, 209–210 catnr. 1053; fig. 84, 1053.

²³ Multiple triangles with a cross-hatched center are not found within the corpus of pattern painted Early Helladic III pottery at Lerna.

²⁴ At Lerna in the Argolid both motifs seem to be unknown.

shape, including a larger fragment of spout and neck that was found during the pre-WW II excavations under the direction of Gabriel Welter (Fig. 13, 4–7). The pattern painted bowl with the slightly incurving rim and with a rim handle is another new vessel shape (Fig. 11, 5; 12, 4). The way how its paint is applied may remind of matt painted pottery of the Middle Helladic period. However, the motif of the cross-hatched rectangles is an Early Helladic III motif, known for instance from the large amphora (Fig. 8; 13, 1) but also from other bowls with an incurving rim found during new as well as the pre-WW II excavations (Fig. 13, 8–10). Until now the cross motive and the row of dots have been unknown in the repertoire of the Early Helladic III painted pottery at Aegina Kolonna.

It is also most important to note that most vessels are according to macroscopic and petrographic inspection (Fig. 11, 1; 12, 1) of local Aeginetan origin. However, a Cycladic influence or inspiration is perceptible. Having in mind the opposing opinions on the synchronisation of the Cycladic and Mainland chronologies in the Early Bronze Age throughout the last two decades, Aegina Kolonna and especially context 19/28 are of fundamental importance for solving these problems.²⁵ A Cycladic influence is obvious for the beaked jug (Fig. 11, 4; 12, 3), which is made of local clay and decorated in Early Helladic III manner but imitating a common Cycladic shape. Close comparisons have been found at Phylakopi on the island of Melos.²⁶

A Cycladic or perhaps even further eastern inspiration has been perceived for the solidly painted and burnished narrow necked jar (Fig. 11, 1; 12, 1; 13, 2), but no exact parallels have been found so far. The best comparison is a Cycladic import found in a slightly later context at Kolonna itself (Fig. 14). Roughly similar vessels with a somehow less accentuated narrow neck and rim handle (solidly or pattern-painted) are known for example from Kolonna,²⁷ Phylakopi²⁸ or Samos (Fig. 13, 3).

When does the Early Bronze Age end at Aegina

and when does the Middle Bronze Age begin? And what does its pottery look like?²⁹ We assume that the stratigraphic sequence of excavation area 19 at Kolonna also provides information regarding what the context dating for the transition of Early to Middle Bronze Age might look like. Above the floor layer 19/28, a fill consisting of two strata was perceived, which contained mainly small sherds with few matching pieces. Nevertheless, the pottery shows characteristics not present in the previously described ceramic phase F. We therefore use it to define our ceramic phase G.

In contrast to our ceramic phases E and F the amount of fine grey pottery increases in phase G. This is true for imported pottery but also for that which is locally manufactured (Fig. 15, 1–4; 16, 1–4). For the first time so-called potters' marks are found on local Aeginetan pottery (Fig. 15, 4; 16, 4). Dark burnished so-called Bass Bowls (Fig. 15, 5–6; 16, 5–6) are a characteristic shape for the previous ceramic phases. They are still common, but now the rim may have a more angular profile and for the first time horizontal grooves or incised lines are found on the exterior and interior of the rim and shoulder.

For the first time unpainted and burnished or smoothed bowls with an incurving rim appear, all made of light brown to buff clay (Fig. 15, 7–9; 16, 7–9). The increasing amount of vessels made of light brown to buff clay is to be distinguished from the pottery of phases E and F. Matt painted pottery of Aeginetan origin is absent and this is also true for Minoan imports.³⁰ But for the first time few fragments of imported lustrous decorated pottery (Fig. 15, 10–11; 16, 10–11) and imported Light-on-Dark matt-painted pottery can be found (Fig. 15, 13). The fragment of an incised closed vessel (Fig. 15, 12; 16, 12) is much worn; originally it was solidly painted and burnished and might belong to a large duck vase.

The medium to coarse pottery (Figs. 17–18), also shows changes in shape and surface treatment. The surface of the entire vessel is generally speaking smoothed. This stands in real contrast to the pottery

²⁵ See in particular GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1165–1166 with references.

²⁶ GAUSS and SMETANA 2004, 1164 n. 92; GAUSS and SMETANA (in print). For similar vessels said to come from Melos see: ZERVOS 1957, 120 fig. 130–132; 1125 fig. 144.

²⁷ The fragments of Fig. 13, 3 were published by KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997, 131 catnr. 63; fig. 74, 63; pl. 9, 63; see also 133 catnr. 72; fig. 75, 72; pl. 10, 72.

²⁸ ATKINSON et. al 1904, pl. 8, 7 and 152 fig. 134 (with small spout on the side of the body).

²⁹ See also GAUSS and SMETANA 2002, 15–16 n. 33–36. For the division between Early Helladic III and the Middle Bronze Age see in particular: ZERNER 1978, 4. 6–12. 22–25. 191–192 and RUTTER 1986.

³⁰ For the first appearance of Minoan imports at Aegina see: GAUSS 2006.

from ceramic phases E and F where traces of coarse burnishing on the shoulder and especially on the interior of the rim were rather common. At the same time the transition from shoulder to rim becomes more angular.³¹

Hopefully further research will provide us with more distinguishing features.

SUMMARY

To avoid misunderstandings we would like to differentiate between settlement phases and ceramic phases. For the latter, a preliminary numerical order is used, starting with phase D. Our final goal would be to establish a common pottery phasing system for the entire assemblage of Bronze Age pottery at Aegina Kolonna.

Occupation levels belonging to the settlement phase Kolonna IV are sparse. The associated pottery shows characteristic features, which define our ceramic phase D.

Traces of the Kolonna V settlement have been found throughout the entire excavation area west of the fortification wall. The Kolonna V settlement ends in a massive destruction horizon. The pottery found in this horizon is uniform and defines our ceramic phase E.

In at least two different places a floor level was found immediately above the destruction horizon. The pottery associated with the floor and the fill above is not very significant. At the moment it is not clear to which settlement and ceramic phase this horizon may be attributed.

A large complex of pottery – deposit 19/28 – defines our ceramic phase F. To our present knowledge it may be dated to a final stage of the Early Helladic III period. New vessel shapes and motives appear and a Cycladic influence is perceptible. A correlation of ceramic phase F and Phylakopi phase I–ii is likely.

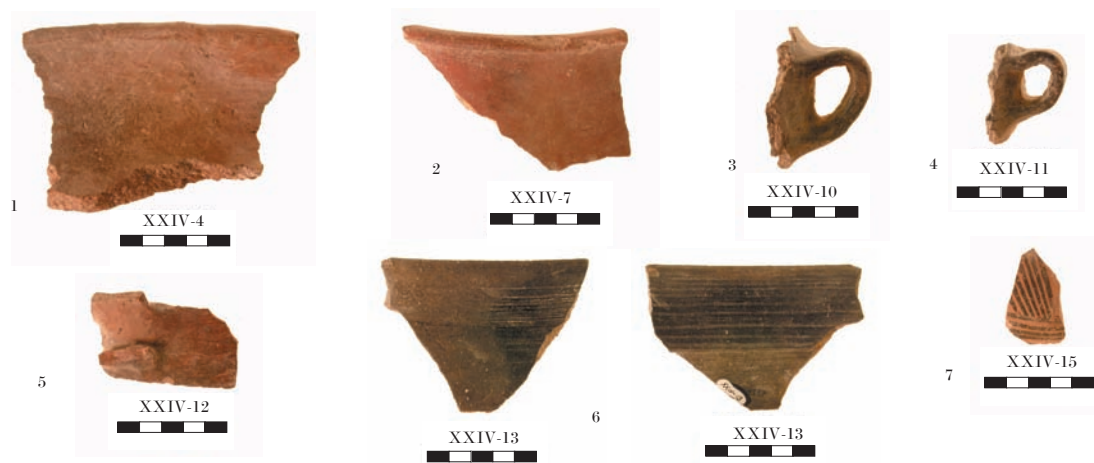
The layer found on top of ceramic phase F contained numerous small sherds with few joining pieces. The pottery shows features not present in the previous ceramic phase F and we therefore use it to define our ceramic phase G.

The fortification wall of the Kolonna VI settlement was erected at the transition to the Middle Bronze Age. The latest pottery found in the fill of the fortification wall belongs most likely to our ceramic phase G.

The features of the phase G pottery assemblage prove that there was an increase in imported as well as locally produced grey pottery. For the first time so-called potters' marks appear on the locally produced pottery. Furthermore it is important to note the increase of open vessels made of light brown and buff clay. Unpainted bowls with an incurving rim, so-called lustrous decorated pottery and matt-painted pottery appear for the very first time. Both of the latter are imported and found only in small quantities, whereas bowls with an incurving rim are frequently found. Aeginetan matt-painted pottery as well as Minoan imports are absent. We therefore assume that the pottery of phase G shows the transition from the Early Helladic to the Middle Helladic period.

³¹ See also MARAN 1992, 187 with similar observations and criticism on DIETZ 1991, 33.

Pottery from the fill of the Kolonna VI fortification wall (ceramic phase G)



Pottery from the destruction horizon of the Kolonna V settlement (ceramic phase D)



Pottery from the floor and fill above the Kolonna IV settlement (ceramic phase D)

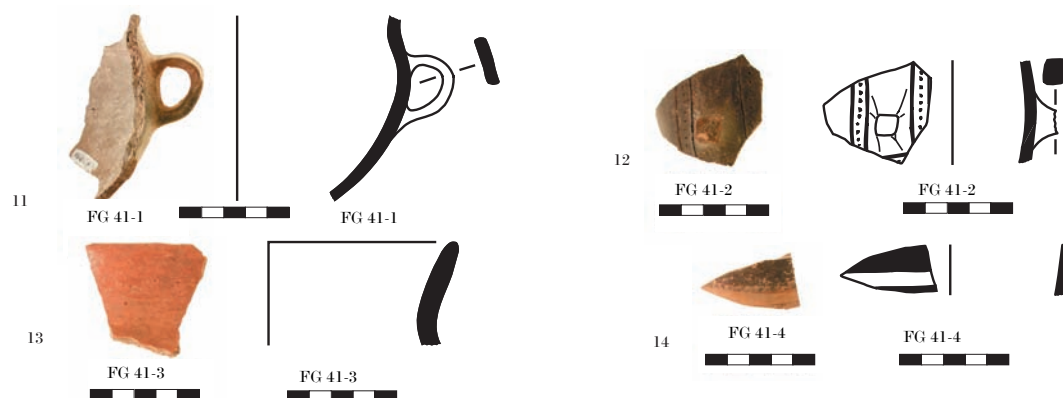


Fig. 4 Pottery from the sequence of the fortification wall (photos): 1) XXIV-4; 2) XXIV-7; 3) XXIV-10; 4) XXIV-11; 5) XXIV-12; 6) XXIV-13; 7) XXIV-15; 8) XVIIIg-1; 9) XVIIIg-4; 10) XVIIIg-03; 11) FG 41-1; 12) FG 41-2; 13) FG 41-3; 14) FG 41-4

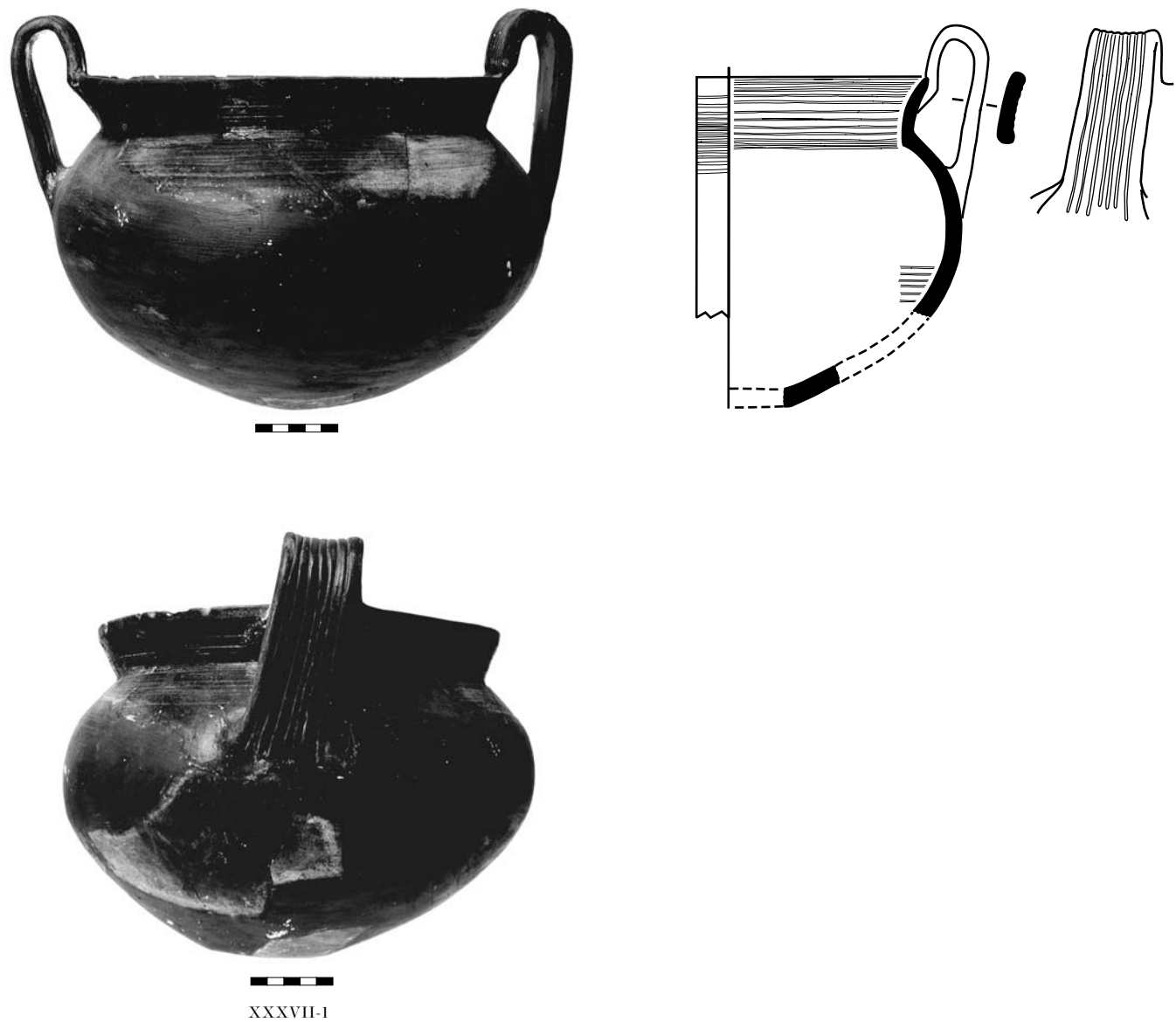


Fig. 5 Kantharos XXXVII-01 photo and drawing (first published by WALTER – FELTEN 1981, 175 cat. 442; pl. 121, 442)



Fig. 6 Pottery from contexts 19/38 and 19/36 (photos): 1) 19/38-01; 2) 19/38-02; 3) 19/38-10; 4) 19/38-06; 5) 19/38-26; 6) 19/38-27; 7) 19/36-01; 8) 19/36-02

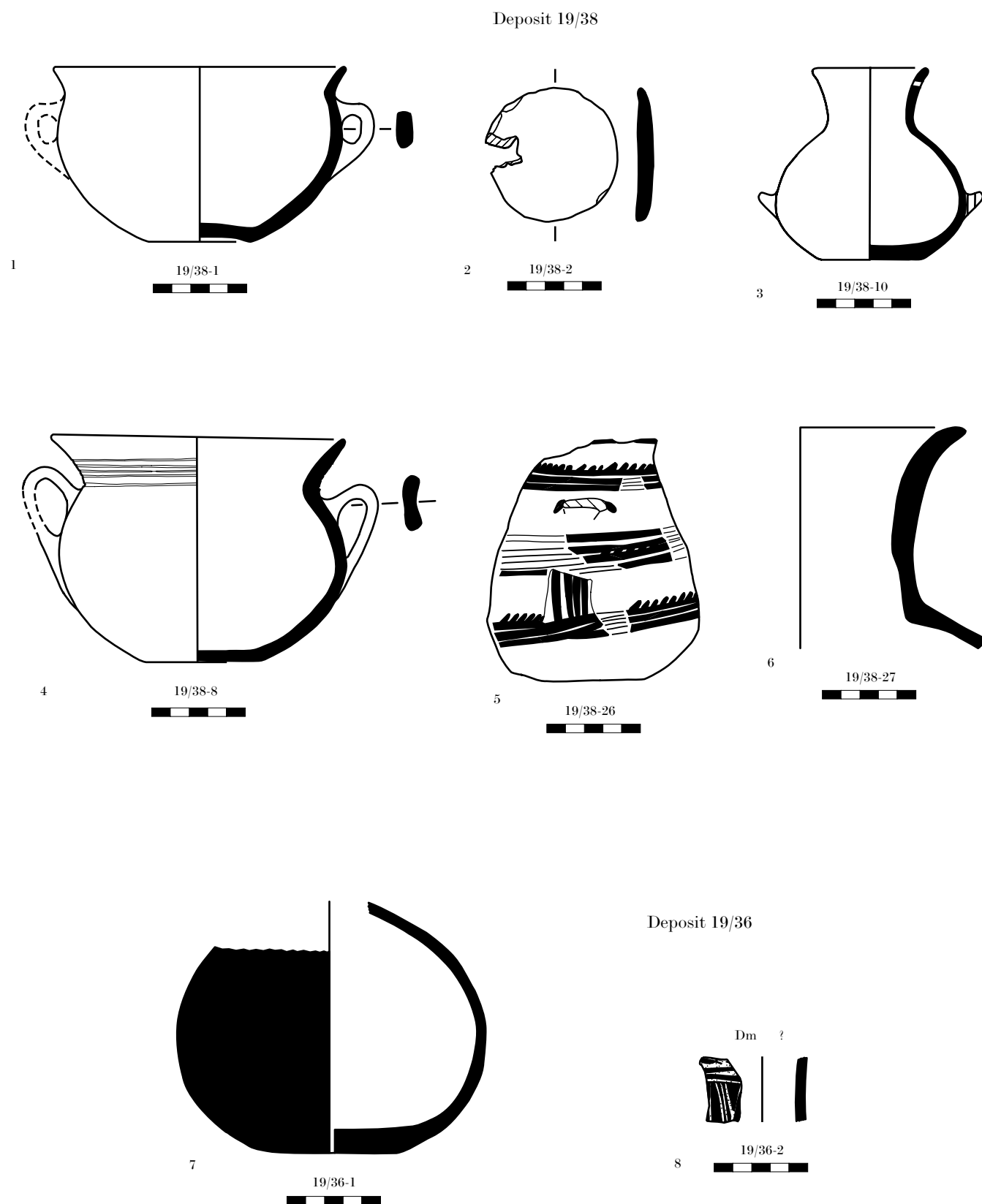


Fig. 7 Pottery from contexts 19/38 and 19/36 (drawings): 1) 19/38-01; 2) 19/38-02; 3) 19/38-10; 4) 19/38-06; 5) 19/38-26; 6) 19/38-27; 7) 19/36-01; 8) 19/36-02

Deposit 19/28

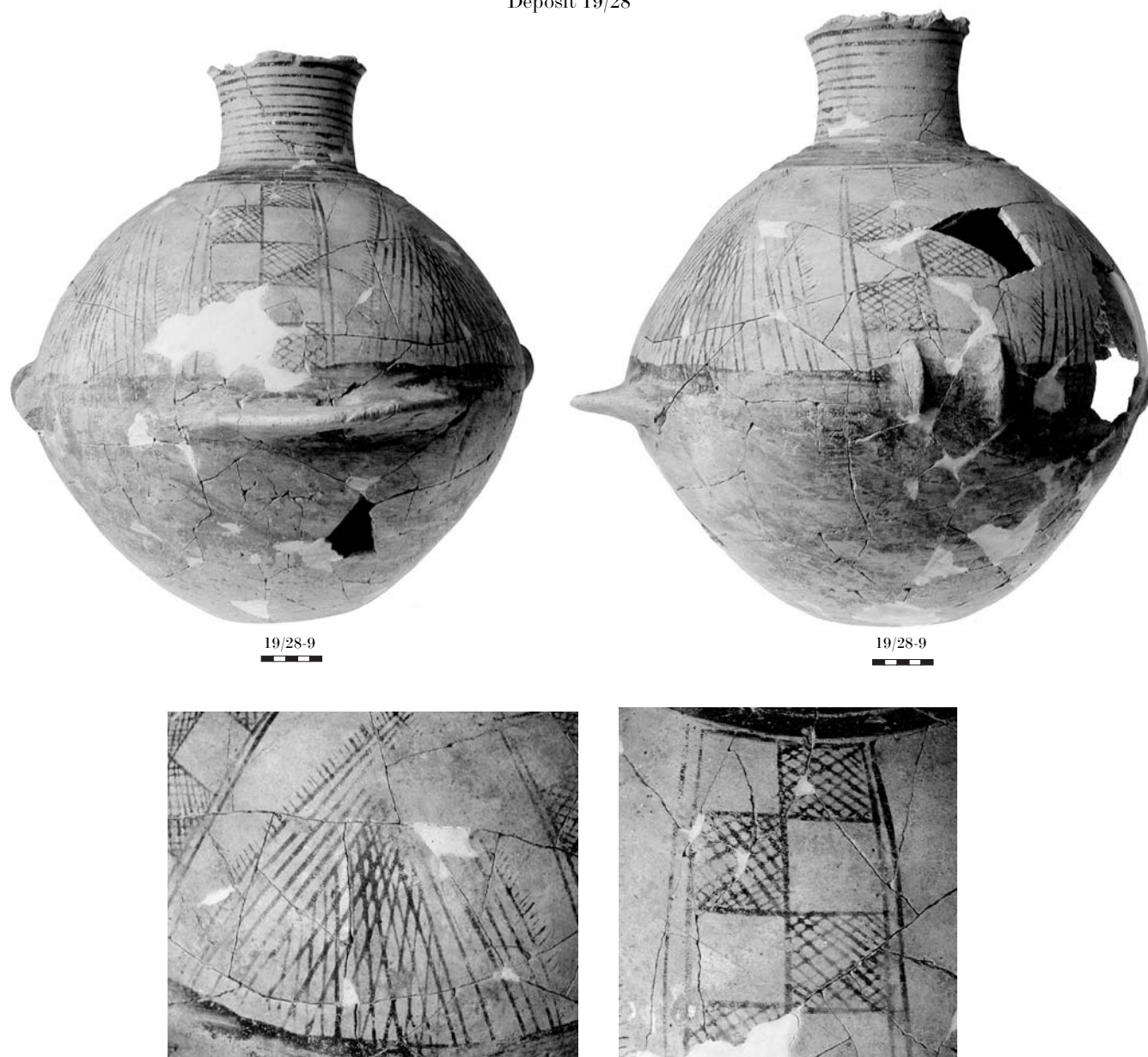


Fig. 8 Pottery from context 19/28 (19/28-9)

Deosit 19/28



Fig. 9 Pottery from context 19/28 (photos): 1) 19/28-8; 2) 19/28-10; 3) 19/28-44; 4) 19/28-14; 5) 19/28-18; 6) 19/28-35; 7) 19/28-15

Deposit 19/28

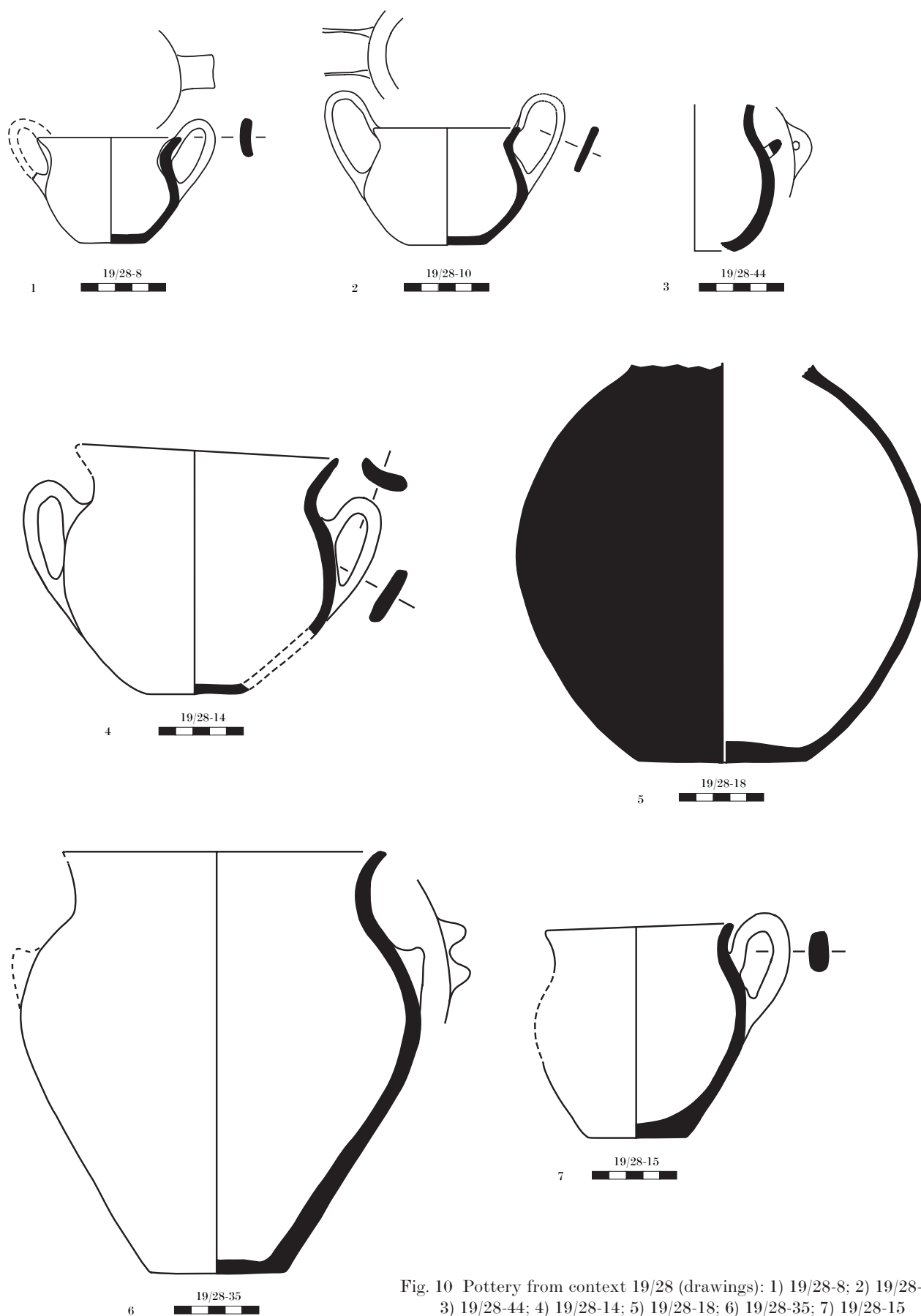


Fig. 10 Pottery from context 19/28 (drawings): 1) 19/28-8; 2) 19/28-10; 3) 19/28-44; 4) 19/28-14; 5) 19/28-18; 6) 19/28-35; 7) 19/28-15

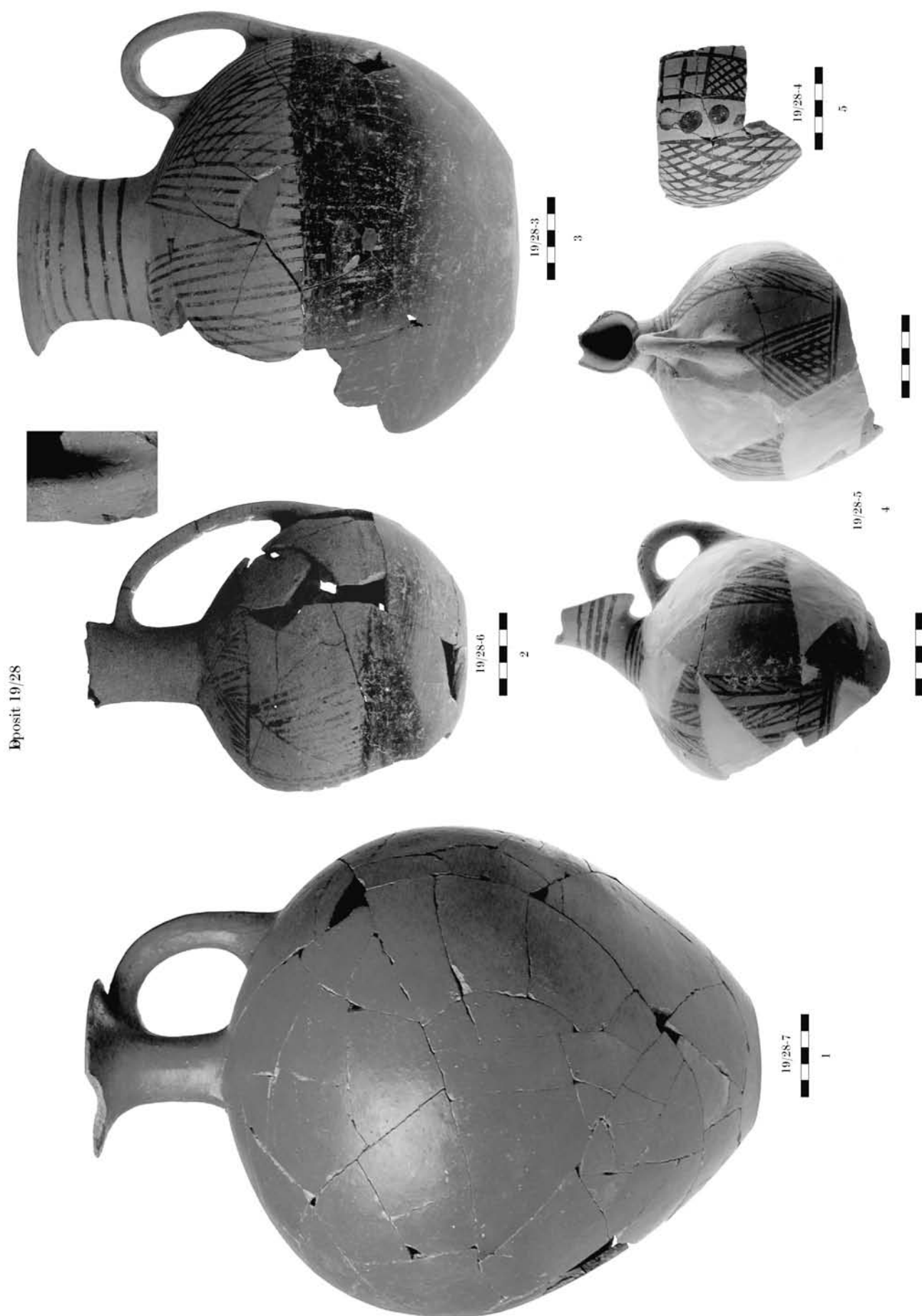


Fig. 11 Pottery from context 19/28 (photos): 1) 19/28-07 ; 2) 19/28-06; 3) 19/28-03; 4) 19/28-05; 5) 19/28-04

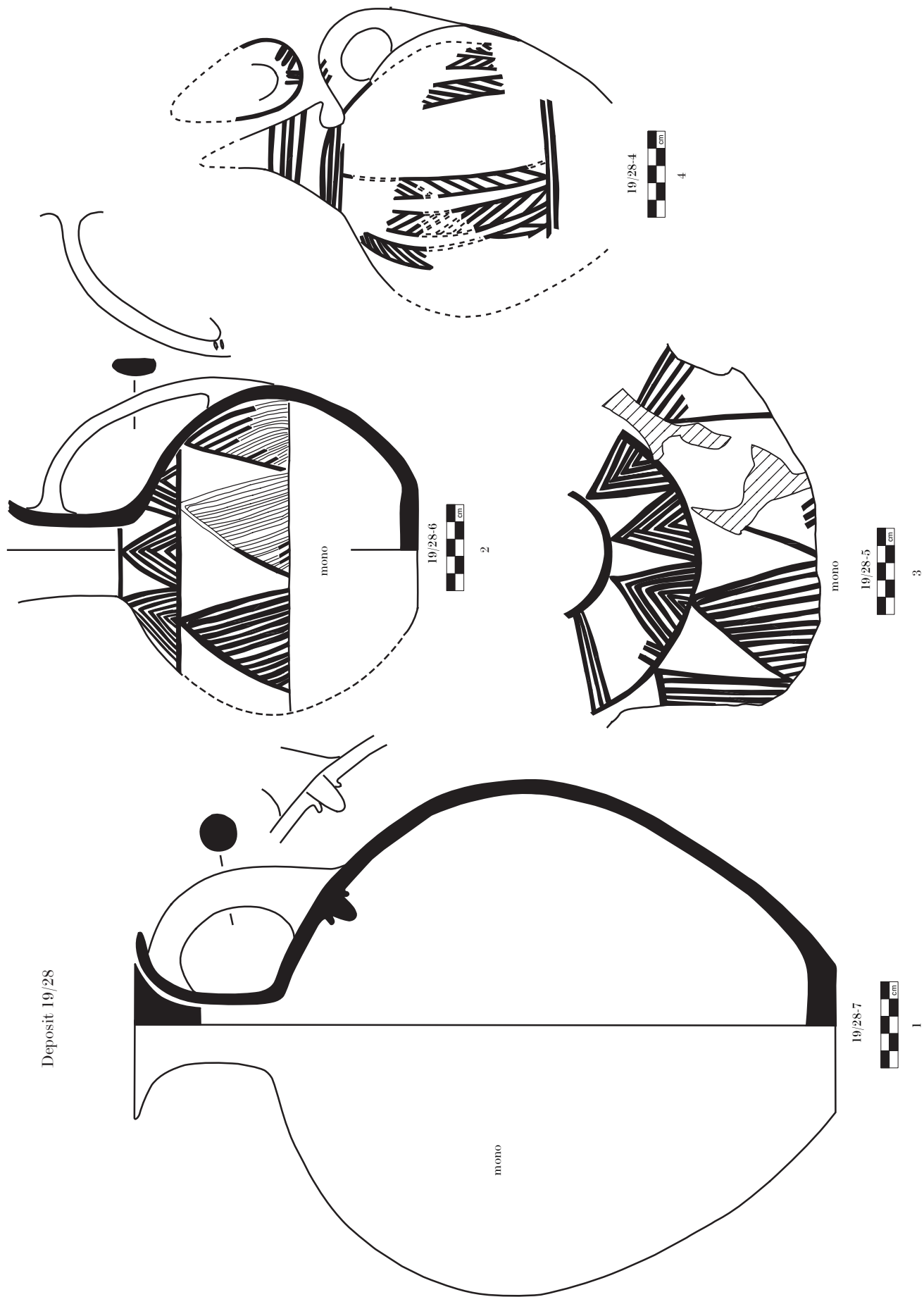


Fig. 12 Pottery from context 19/28 (drawings): 1) 19/28-07 ; 2) 19/28-06; 3) 19/28-05; 4) 19/28-04

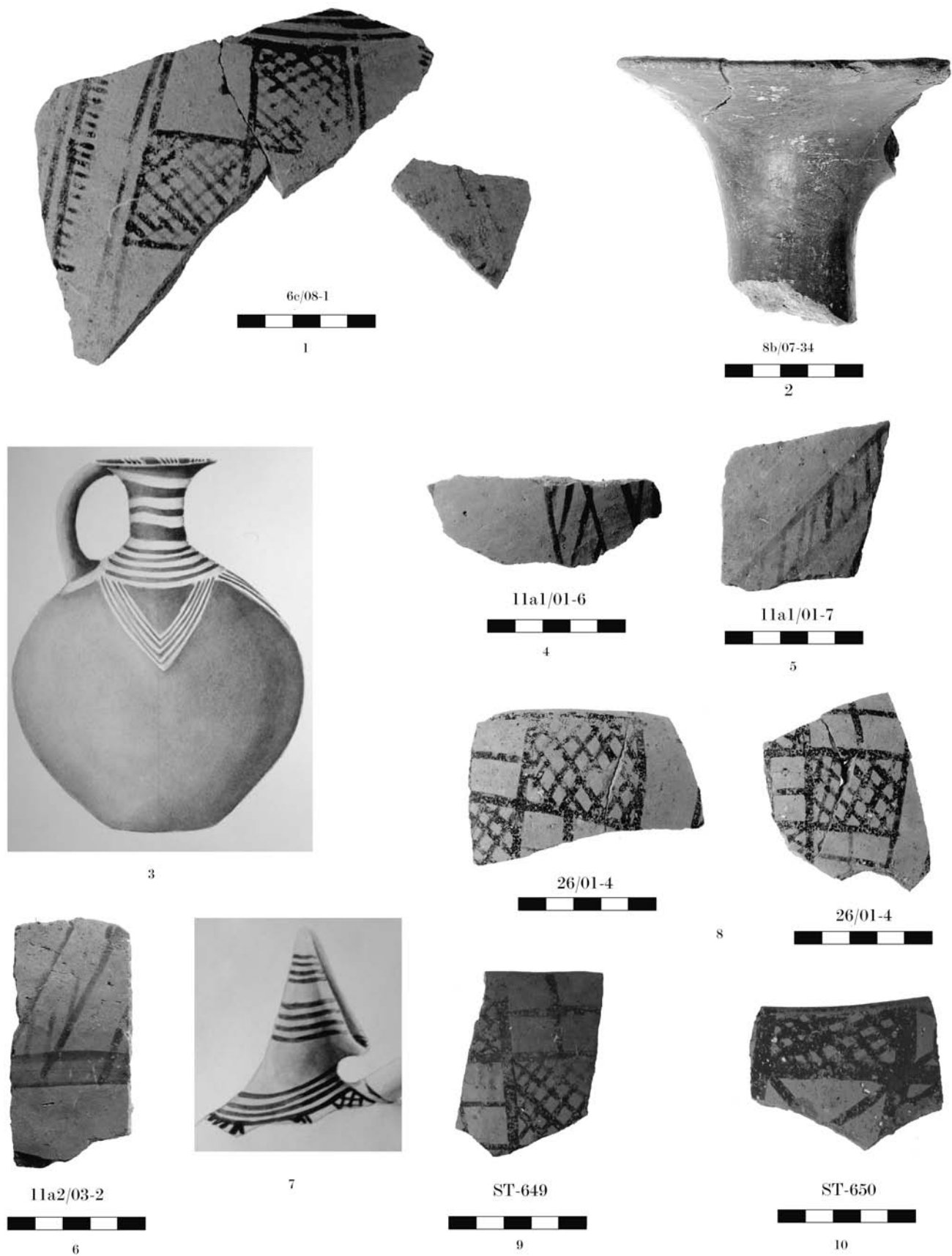


Fig. 13 Comparisons to context 19/28: 1) 6c/08-1; 2) 8b/07-34; 3) Alte Grabung (Photo DAI Athen, Neg. Ägina 504, Archiv Institut Klassische Archäologie Univ. Salzburg); 4) 11a1/01-06; 5) 11a1/01-07; 6) 11a2/03-2; 7) Alte Grabung (Photo DAI Athen, Neg. Ägina 483, Archiv Institut Klassische Archäologie Univ. Salzburg); 8) 26/01-04; 9) ST-649; 10) ST-650

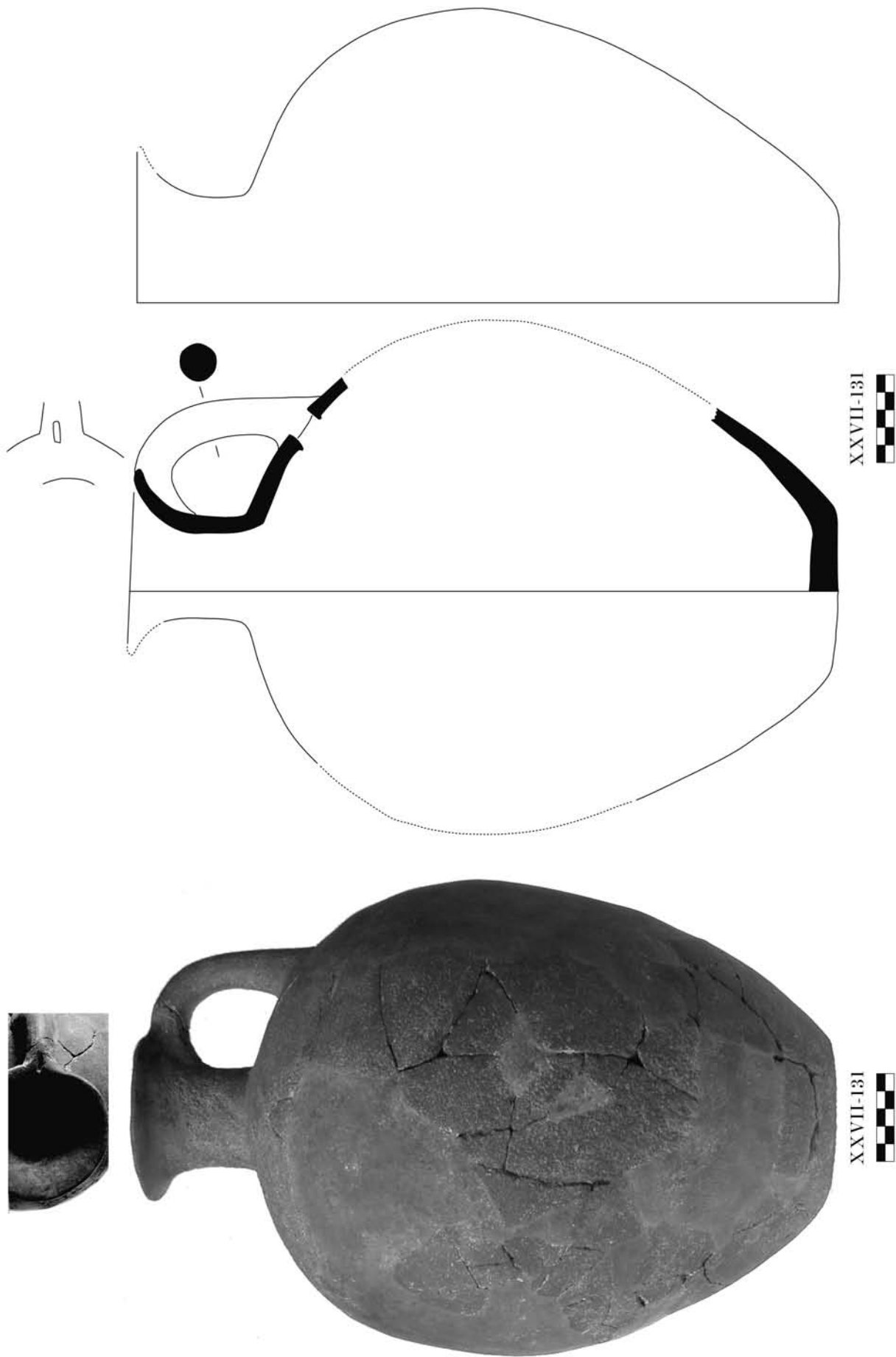


Fig. 14 XXVII-131 (photo and drawing)

Deposit 19/23

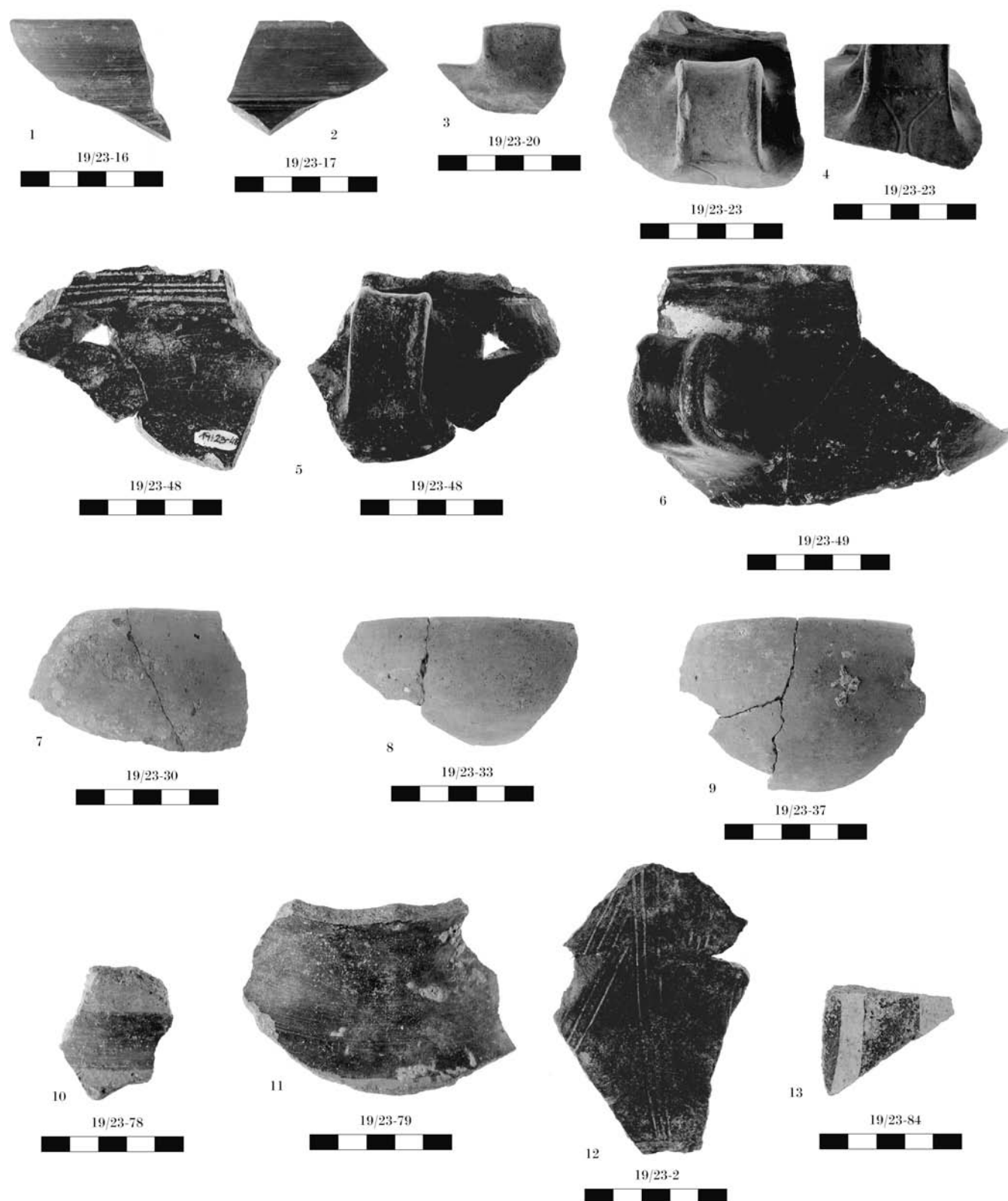


Fig. 15 Pottery from context 19/23 (photos): 1) 19/23-16; 2) 19/23-17; 3) 19/23-20; 4) 19/23-23; 5) 19/23-48; 6) 19/23-49; 7) 19/23-30; 8) 19/23-33; 9) 19/23-37; 10) 19/23-78; 11) 19/23-79; 12) 19/23-03; 13) 19/23-84

Deposit 19/23

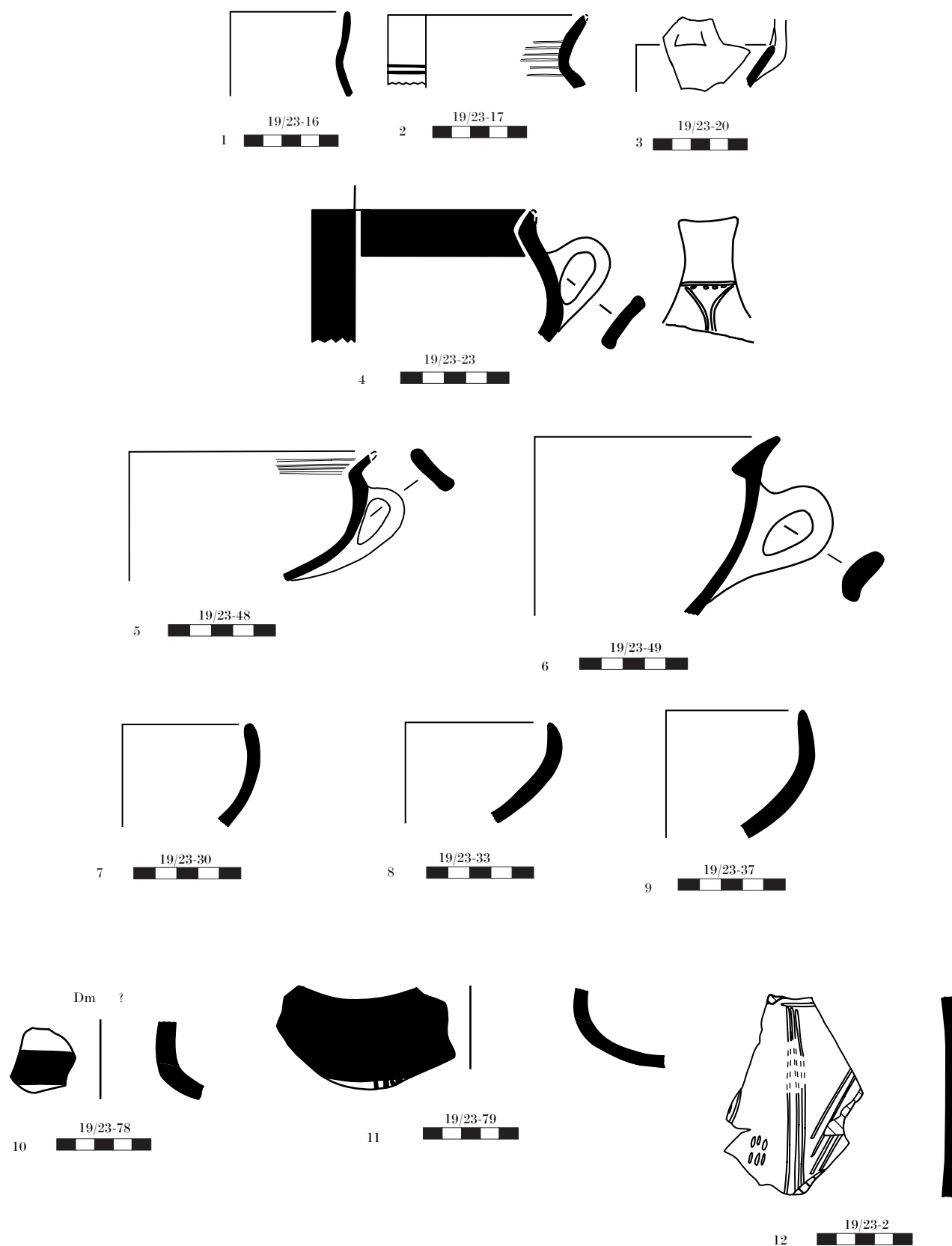


Fig. 16 Pottery from context 19/23 (drawings): 1) 19/23-16; 2) 19/23-17; 3) 19/23-20; 4) 19/23-23; 5) 19/23-48; 6) 19/23-49; 7) 19/23-30; 8) 19/23-33; 9) 19/23-37; 10) 19/23-78; 11) 19/23-79; 12) 19/23-03; 13) 19/23-84

Deposit 19/23

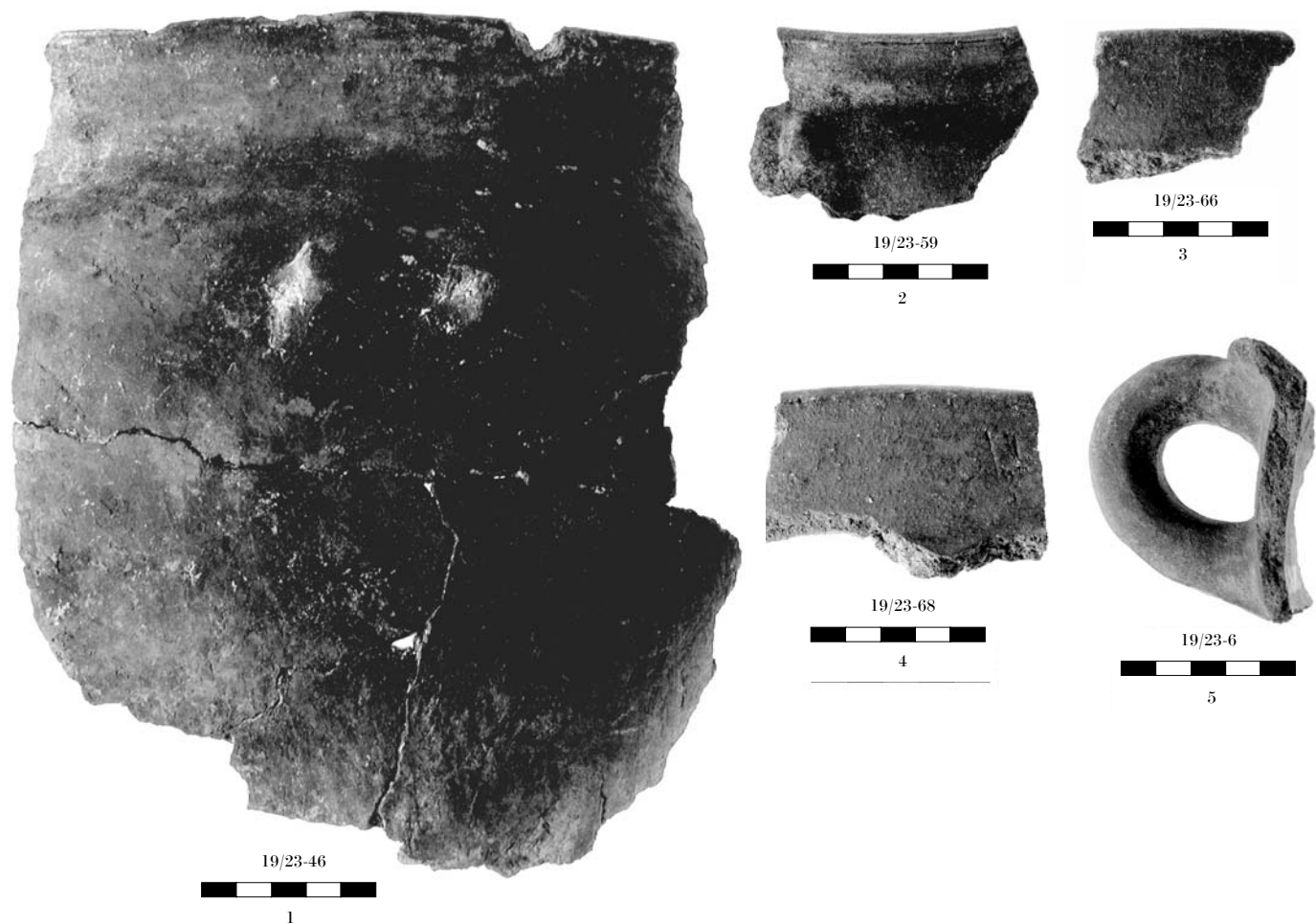


Fig. 17 Pottery from context 19/23 (photos): 1) 19/23-46; 2) 19/23-59; 3) 19/23-66; 4) 19/23-68; 5) 19/23-06

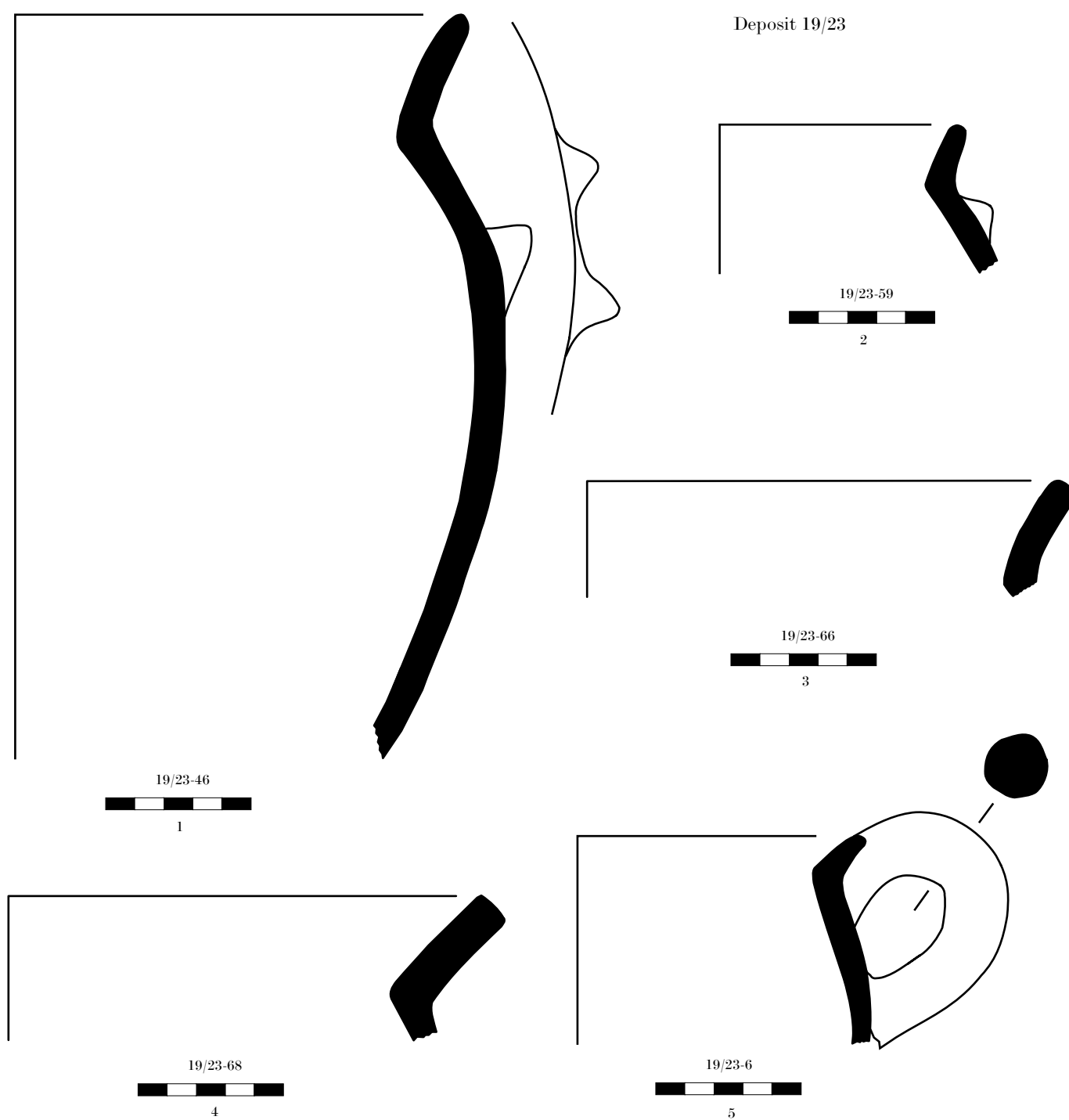


Fig. 18 Pottery from context 19/23 (drawings): 1) 19/23-46; 2) 19/23-59; 3) 19/23-66; 4) 19/23-68; 5) 19/23-06

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