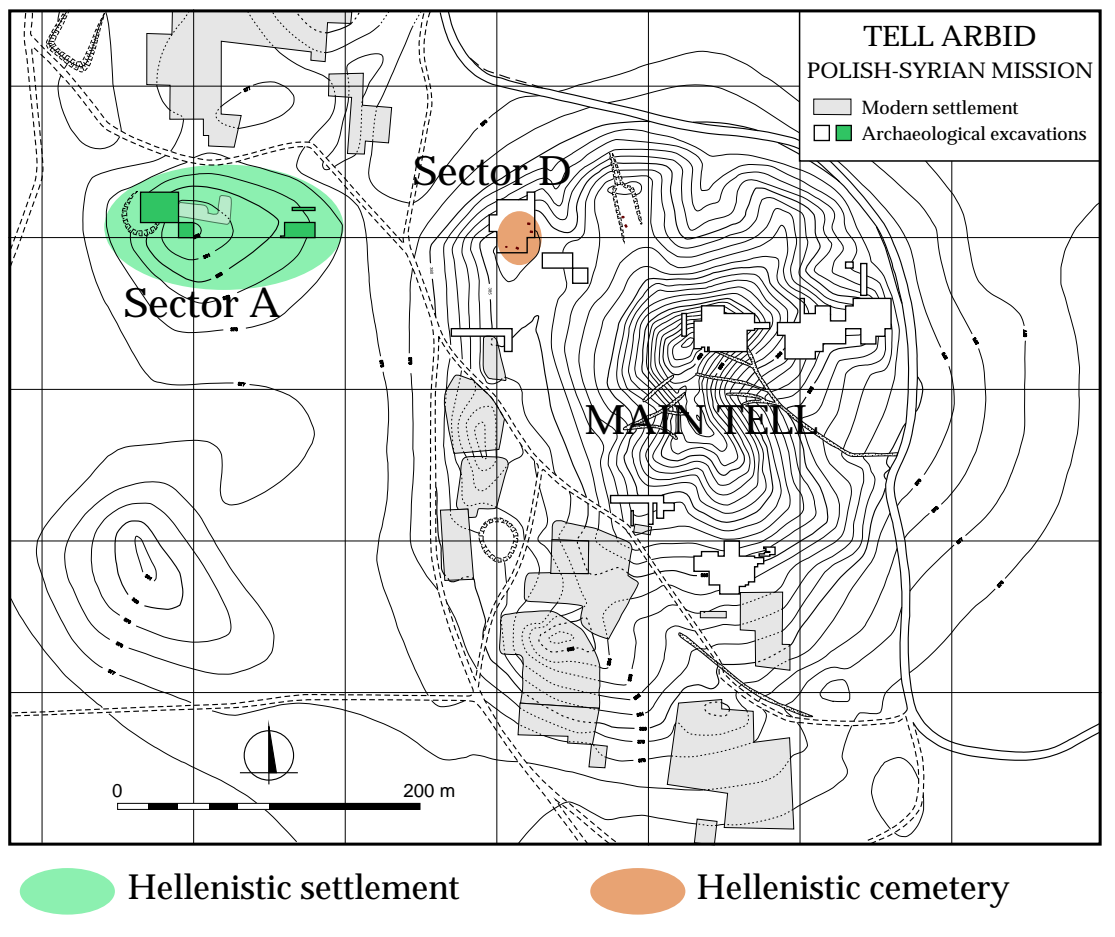


# HELLENISTIC POTTERY FROM TELL ARBID (SECTOR A)



Tell Arbid is a vast (over 38 ha) site in north-eastern Syria. It consists of a main tell and three low hills to the west of it. A Hellenistic settlement was located on the middle one (Sector A). It was oval in plan and less than 2 ha in size. The western and eastern parts of the sector have been archaeologically investigated.

A stratigraphic analysis confirmed the presence of five phases of Hellenistic settlement at Tell Arbid. They lasted from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (as attested by finds of black-gloss pottery) to 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup>(?) century BC (green-glazed pottery).

In the western part of the sector the most densely built-over area of the Hellenistic settlement was encountered, attributed to phase 3. It is made up of the fragments of two large rectangular houses and a fragment of a courtyard. A coin of Demetrius II Nicator (145-126 BC) found on one of the courtyard's floors provides a *terminus post quem* of this phase.

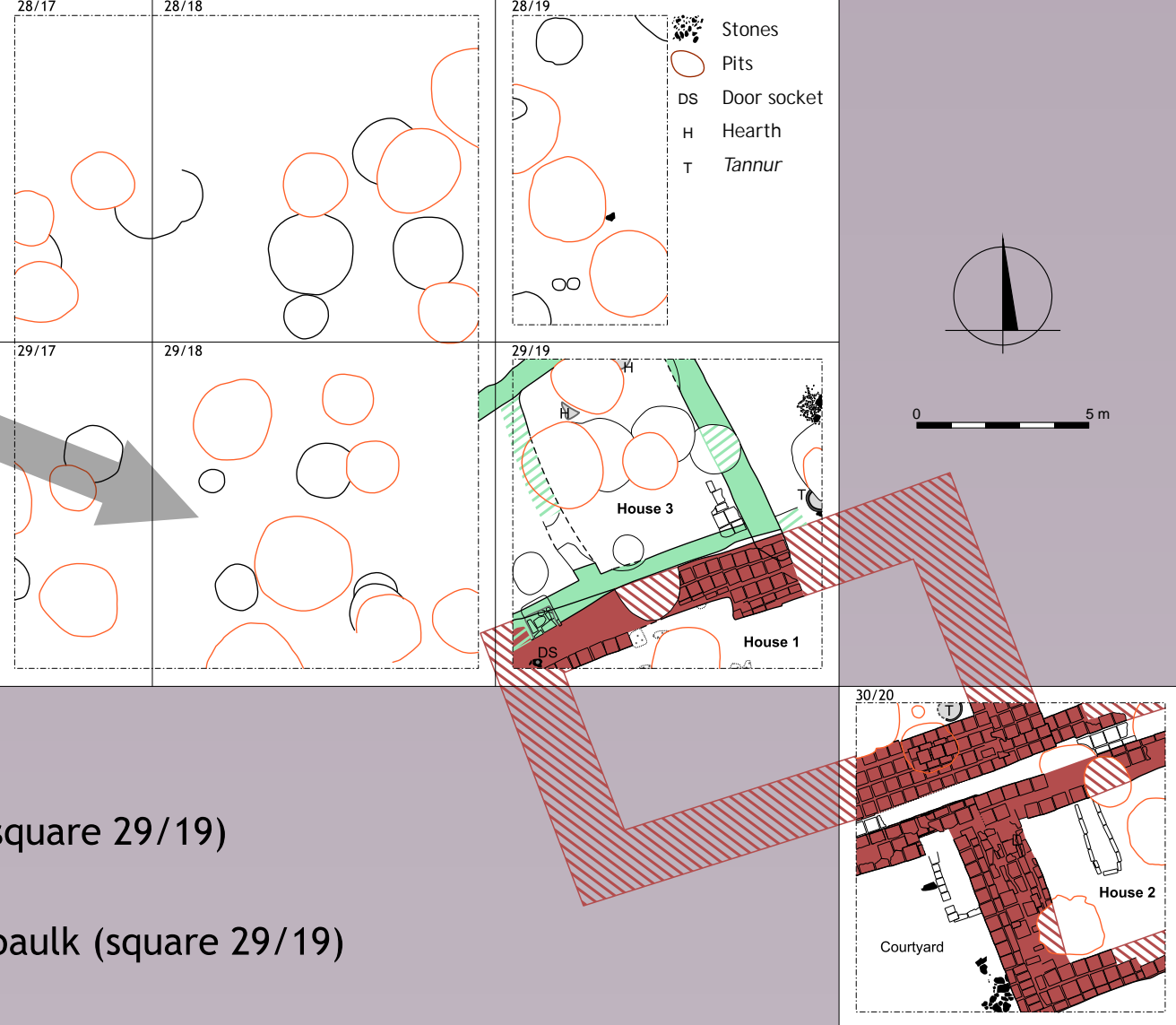
A feature characteristic for the Hellenistic settlements both at Tell Arbid and on other sites in the Syrian Jazirah is the abundance of bell-shaped storage pits. They can be up to 2 meters deep and reach 2 meters in diameter at the bottom. The pits are usually found secondarily filled with ashes and numerous potsherds, mostly of a Hellenistic date. Modern damage to the site hampers the pits' attribution to separate settlement phases. However those attributable to phase 5 contained numerous fragments of black-slipped tableware.

A Hellenistic cemetery was located approximately 100 meters east of the settlement, on the north-western part of the main tell (Sector D). Six graves have been excavated there so far. All were inhumations with different sets of grave goods - from a single coin in the deceased's mouth to a set for wine consumption.

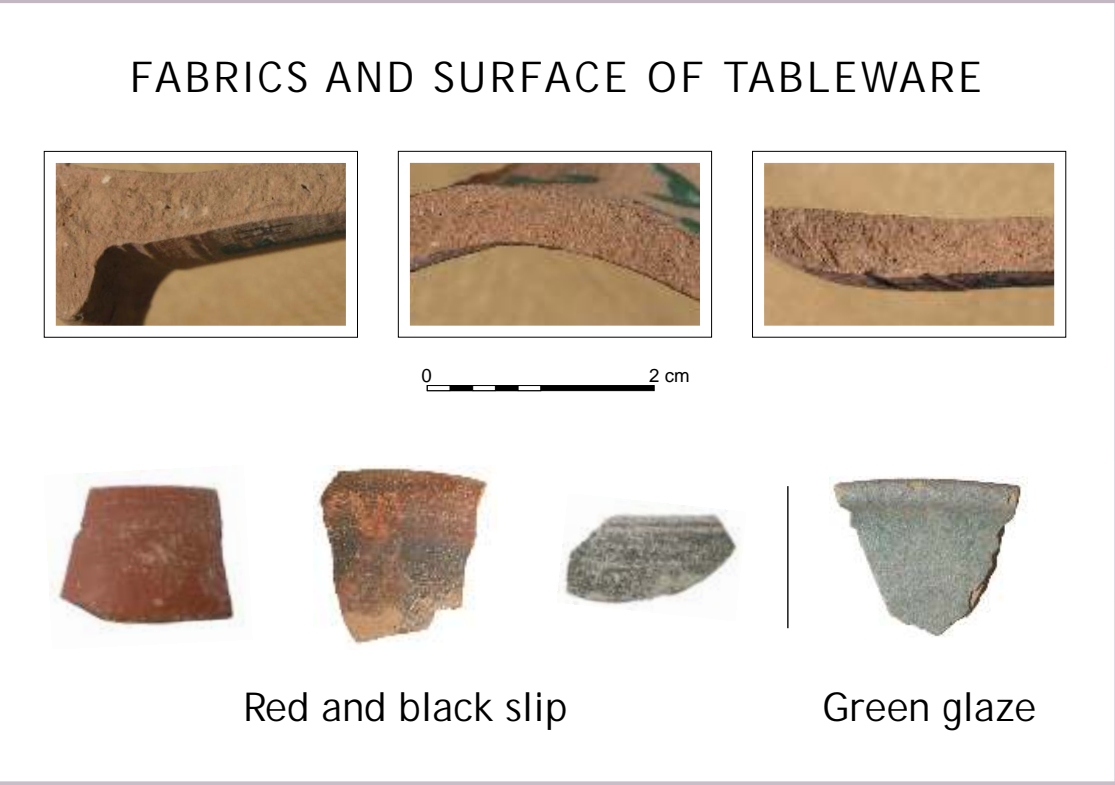


Hellenistic settlement remains in the western part of Sector A:

- Phase 1. House 3 (green)
- Phase 2. Traces of a usage level visible in a baulk (square 29/19)
- Phase 3. House 1, 2 and courtyard (brown)
- Phase 4. Fragments of a wall and floor visible in a baulk (square 29/19)
- Phase 5. Pits (orange)



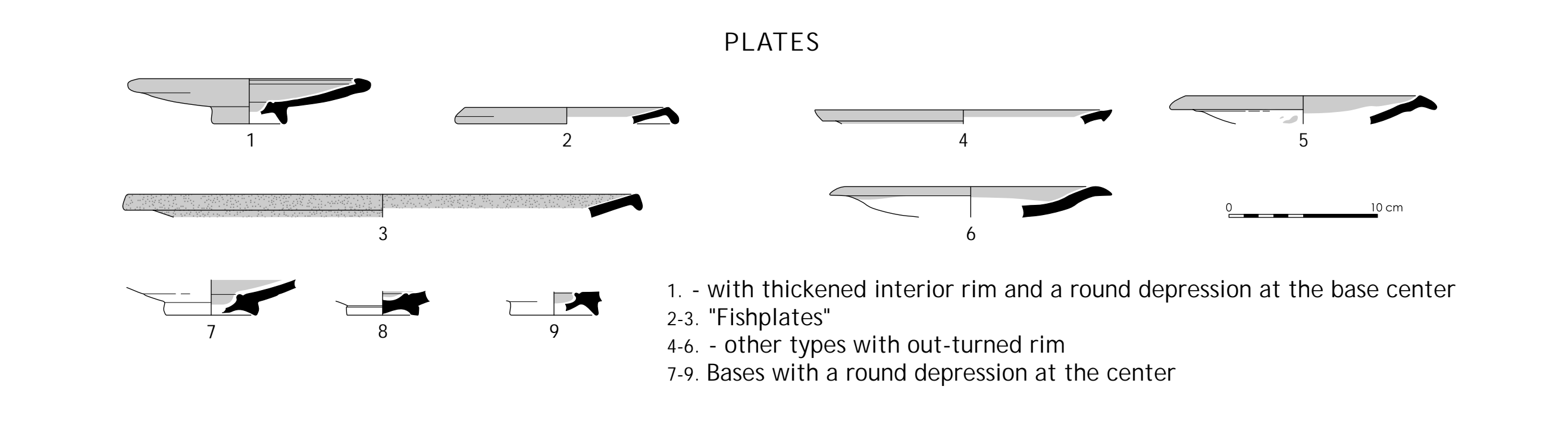
## SLIPPED TABLEWARE



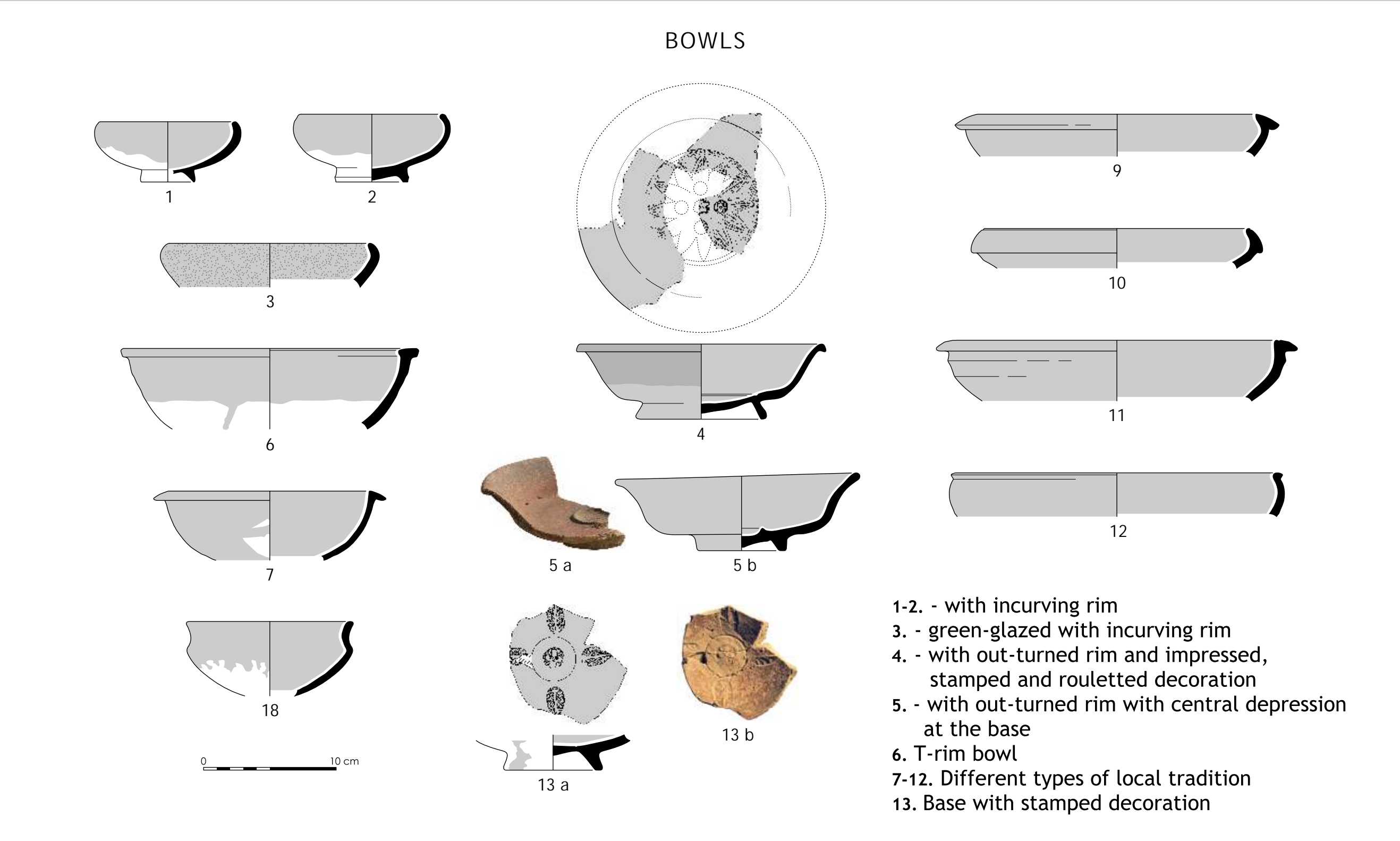
Slipped tableware was present in all phases. It was made of a very fine clay with a small lime admixture. The surface of the vessels was covered - partly or whole - with red (hues from orange to brown) or black slip.

Open forms are most popular, representing two pottery traditions:

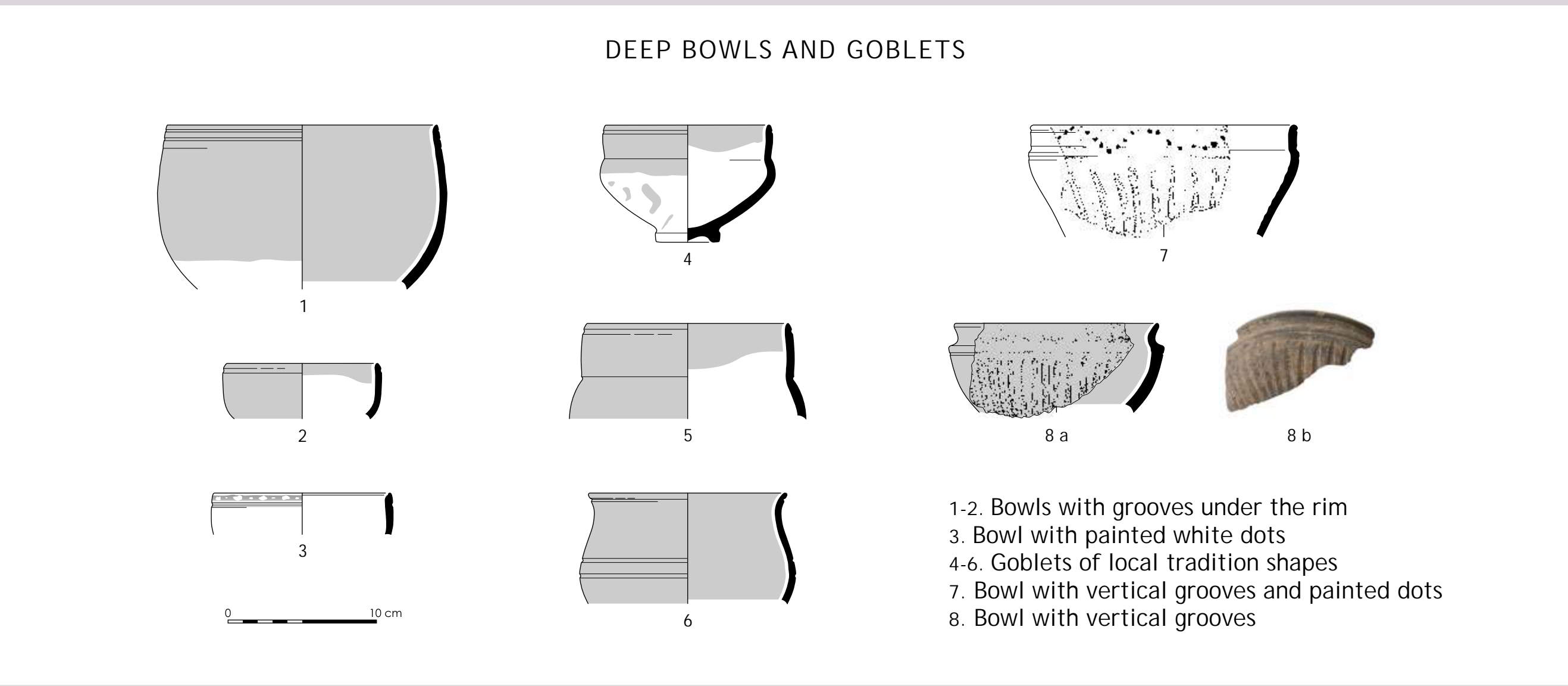
- w forms deriving from a western tradition, common throughout all of the Hellenistic world: bowls with incurving rim and bowls with out-turned rim, fishplates and plates with a deep round depression at the center of the base. Judging by the quality of their manufacture, especially of the slip, the vessels were local imitations of Eastern Sigillata.
- w forms originating in a Mesopotamian tradition (e.g. post-Assyrian goblets) but identical in technological aspects with the imitations of Eastern Sigillata.



- 1. - with thickened interior rim and a round depression at the base center
- 2-3. "Fishplates"
- 4-6. - other types with out-turned rim
- 7-9. Bases with a round depression at the center



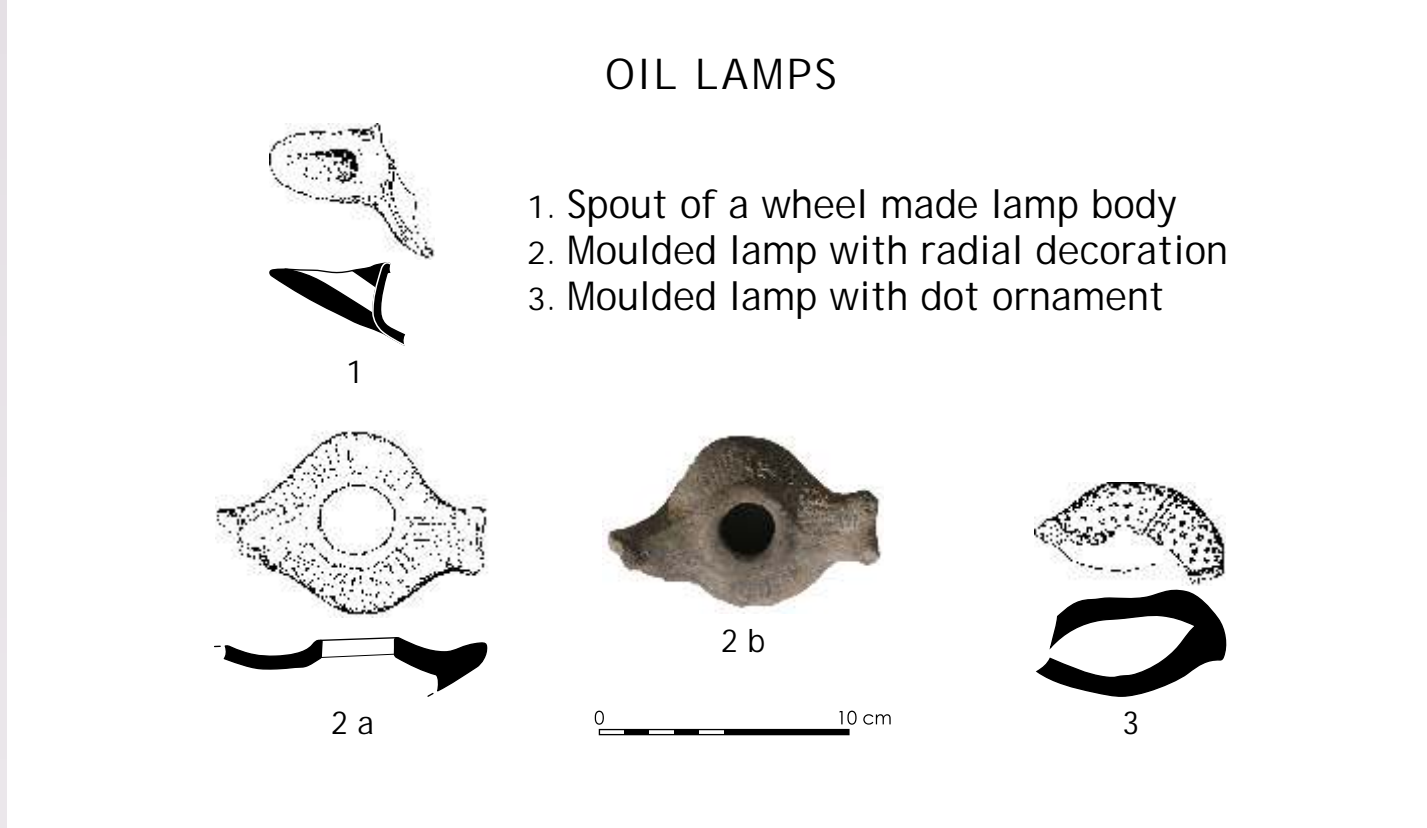
- 1-2. - with incurving rim
- 3. - green-glazed with incurving rim
- 4. - with out-turned rim and impressed, stamped and rouletted decoration
- 5. - with out-turned rim with central depression at the base
- 6. T-rim bowl
- 7-12. Different types of local tradition
- 13. Base with stamped decoration



- 1-2. Bowls with grooves under the rim
- 3. Bowl with painted white dots
- 4-6. Goblets of local tradition shapes
- 7. Bowl with vertical grooves and painted dots
- 8. Bowl with vertical grooves



1. Vessel base



- 1. Spout of a wheel made lamp body
- 2. Moulded lamp with radial decoration
- 3. Moulded lamp with dot ornament

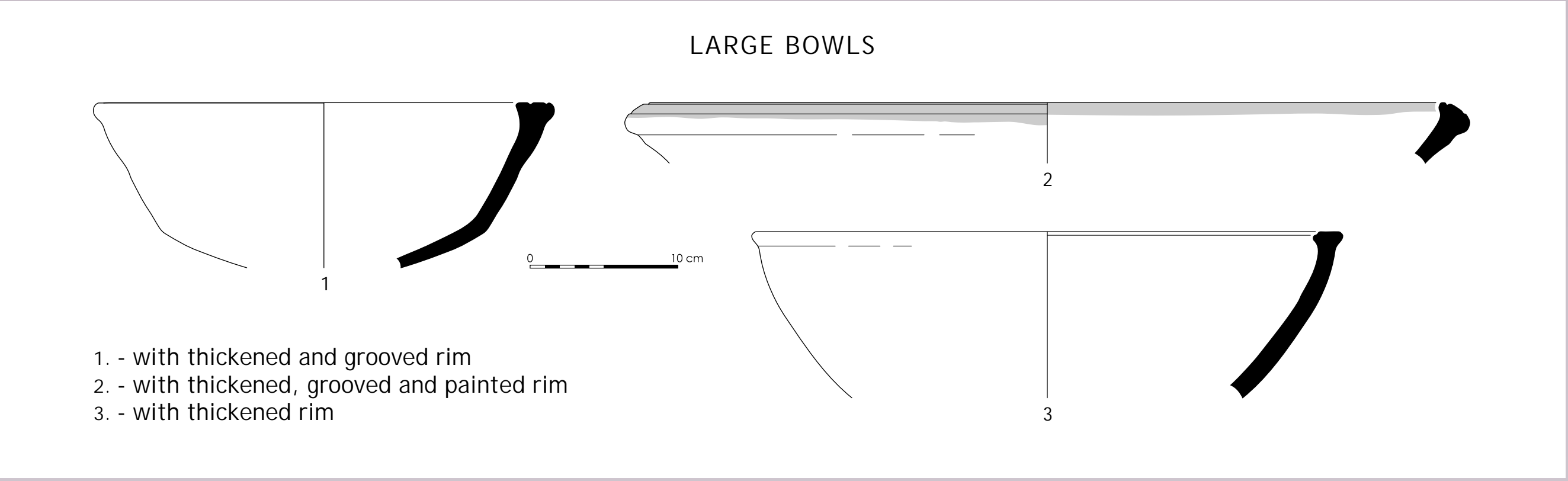
## COMMON WARE



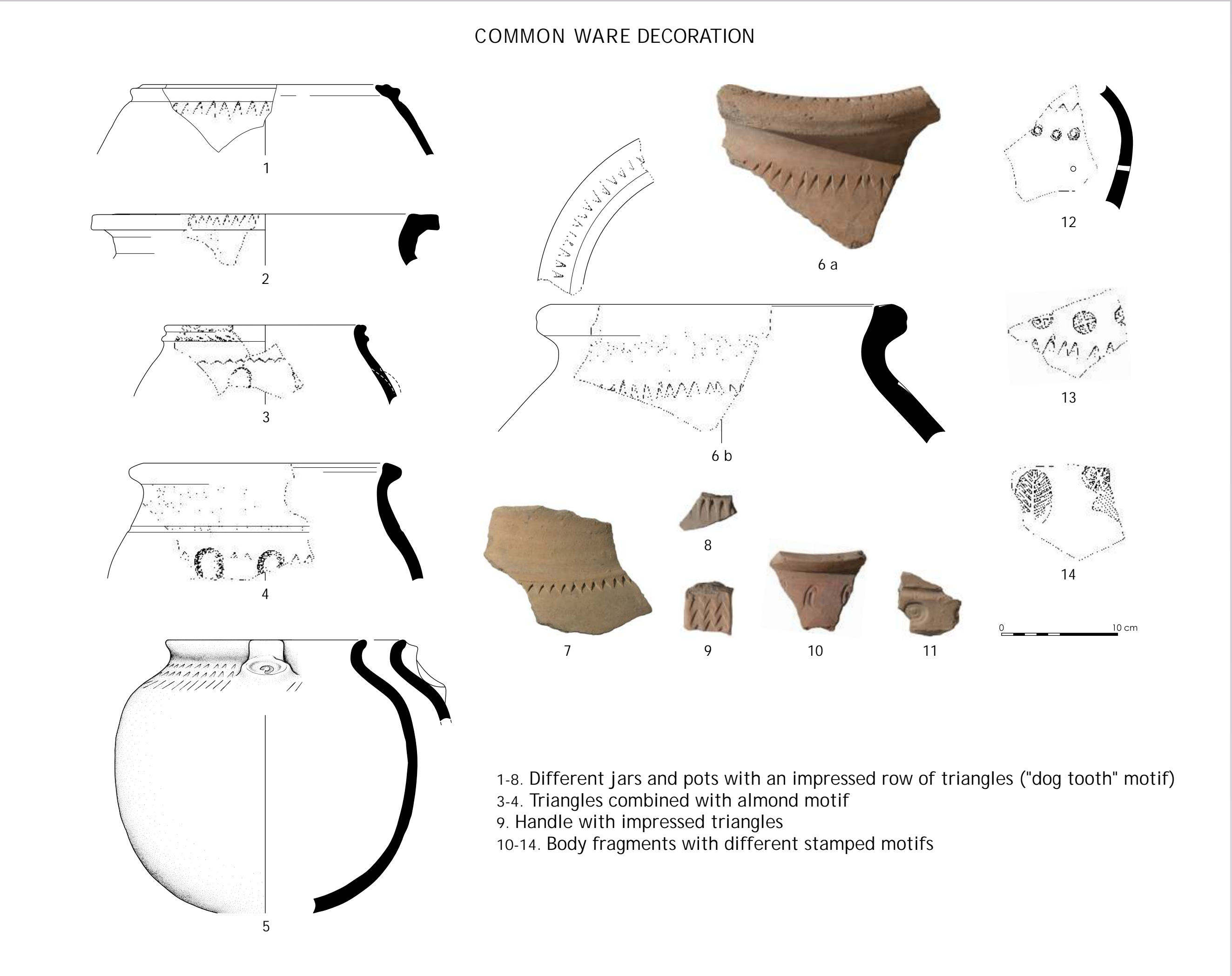
The forms, decoration and technology of common ware attest to a continuation of local traditions going back to the Neo-Babylonian period. Closed forms are most popular: jars of all sorts, including jars with rolled-over rim and storage vessels. The only open form is amply represented by big bowls with thickened and grooved rim.

A characteristic decoration of closed shapes, distinctive for Northern Mesopotamia, are triangles impressed in a single row round a vessel's shoulders or neck (so-called "impressed dog-tooth"). Other forms of decoration include stamped almonds, spirals and rosettes, as well as painted decoration.

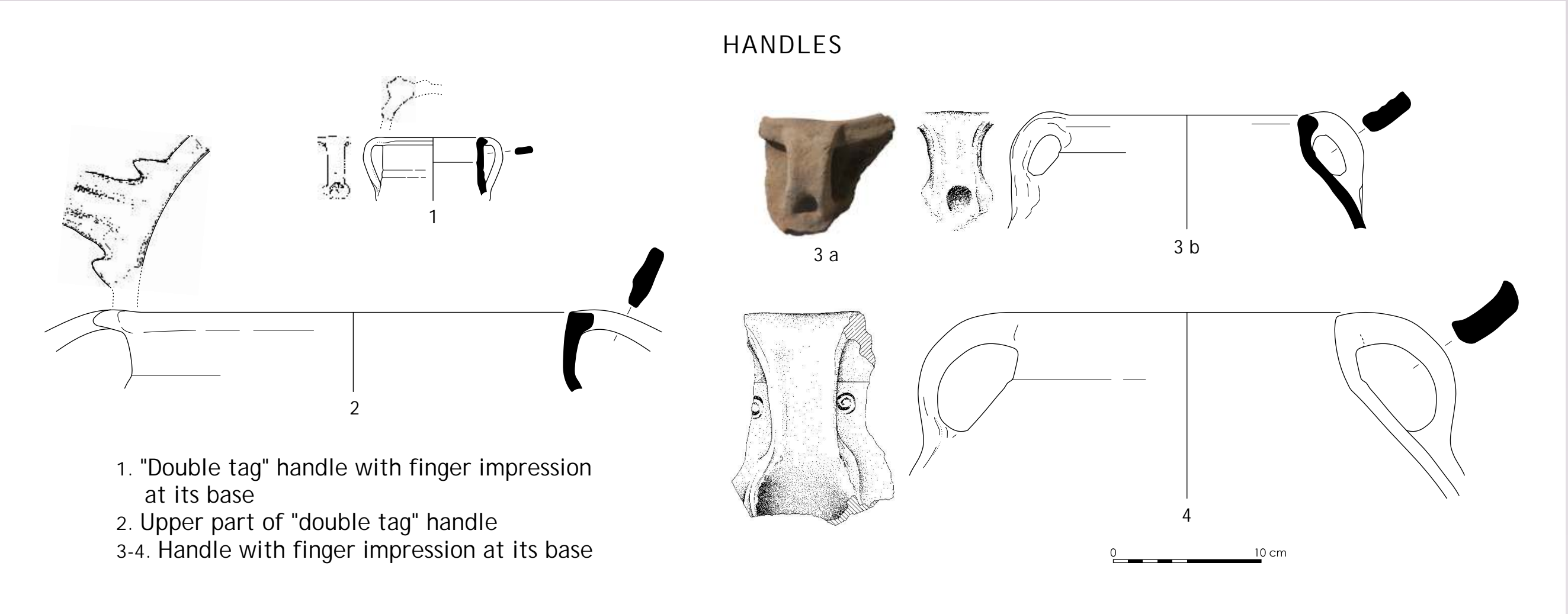
Double tag handles and handles with finger impressions at the base are a characteristic feature of common ware vessels.



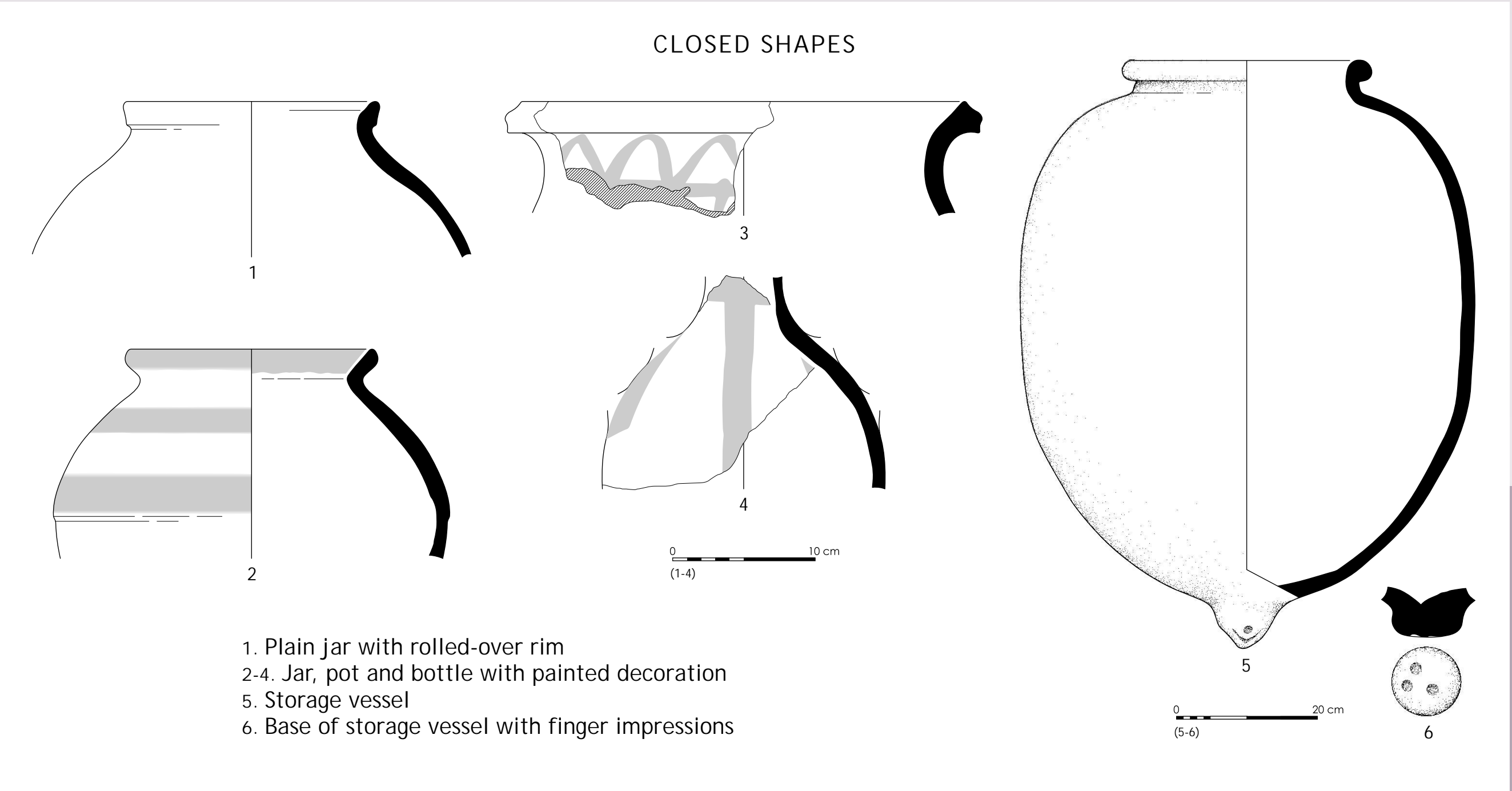
- 1. - with thickened and grooved rim
- 2. - with thickened, grooved and painted rim
- 3. - with thickened rim



- 1-8. Different jars and pots with an impressed row of triangles ("dog tooth" motif)
- 3-4. Triangles combined with almond motif
- 9. Handle with impressed triangles
- 10-14. Body fragments with different stamped motifs



- 1. "Double tag" handle with finger impression at its base
- 2. Upper part of "double tag" handle
- 3-4. Handle with finger impression at its base



- 1. Plain jar with rolled-over rim
- 2-4. Jar, pot and bottle with painted decoration
- 5. Storage vessel
- 6. Base of storage vessel with finger impressions