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AFRICAN RED SLIP WARE IN LYDIAN *TRIPOLIS*

The African Red Slip Ware presented in this study originates from the excavations of *Tripolis*. The city is located within the municipal boundaries of Yenicekent, Buldan, Denizli, Turkey. In the ancient period, it was significantly to be at the convergence of the Lydian, Carian, and Phrygian territories (**fig. 1**). The African Red Slip Ware was evaluated in this study on the basis of information obtained from both the surveys and the excavations in one of the border towns in the south-eastern region of *Lydia*. Traces of life in and around the city date from 3 500 BC. Construction as a polis with a grid street plan began in the Hellenistic period. During the Roman period, *Tripolis* was similar to the neighboring cities such as *Hierapolis*, *Laodicea*, and *Blaundos* in terms of urban planning and architectural construction.

Whether in contexts, the examples of African Red Slip Ware found in stratified layers of the structures during the excavations between 2012 and 2014 provide valuable insight into the occupational phases of structures found in *Tripolis*. Pottery items such as Eastern Sigillata A, Eastern Sigillata B, Eastern Sigillata C, Cypriot Sigillata, Sagalassos Red Slip Ware, and African Red Slip Ware, which are commonly found in many ancient cities excavated around Anatolia, are also found in the excavations in *Tripolis*. Examples of the above-mentioned pottery groups make up a portion of the imported material used in *Tripolis*.

African Red Slip Ware, produced around Tunisia between the 1st and 7th centuries AD, is represented in the excavations carried out in *Tripolis* in recent years by a total of 145 pieces; of these 85 could be attributed to specific forms, while 20 of them were bases and 40 of them were body sherds (**fig. 2**).

The pottery of the ten different form groups detected in the studies were found in such areas as the Arched Building, the House also known as 7S/8H, the *tabernae*, the Hierapolis Street, the Colonnaded Street, the Late Roman Agora, northern extension of the Hierapolis Street, and the Vaulted Building. Some of the sherds detected in the sectors were found on the Streets with mixed layers as well as in private and public buildings with cleaner stratification. Of these buildings, the House, the *tabernae* and the Arched Building (preserved up to roof level) are striking for the coins and other small object finds which provide us with crucial chronological data (**fig. 3**).

Although African Red Slip Ware (here in after referred to as ARSW) has been found in large quantities in the archaeological excavations carried out particularly in the

Mediterranean countries and especially on the coastal strip within the Anatolian boundaries so far, we have not many finds reported concerning the African Red Slip Ware (here in after referred to as the ARSW) of the ancient cities located in the inner regions. In this sense, the pottery of Tunisian origin obtained as a result of the three-year archaeological research in *Tripolis ad Maeandrum*, enabled us to obtain important information from the chronological data provided by the groups in which the pottery concerned was distributed besides the overseas relationships of the city .

The first information is about the fact that the use of ARSW in the city commenced with Form 45 in the 3rd century AD. The pottery which had a gradually increasing trend recorded an important increase as of the same century and peaked in the second half of the 4th century (**fig. 2**). This increase is not directly connected with the buildings where the sherds were found and likewise shows parallelism with the coin finds detected together with the ARSW. Hence, it seems probable to mention that production and commercial activities began to fall sharply in *Tripolis* as of 375 AD. Is this sharp fall an indication of an earthquake or more likely Phocaeen Red Slip ware, which might have been replacing African Red Slip Ware at this time¹.

The representation of *Tripolis* at the level of Episcopacy in the Council of *Nicaea* in 325 AD was stated in several different sources². However, the change in the function of some buildings and the traces of renovation activities in some buildings after the earthquakes that occurred in *Tripolis* in the midst of the 4th century AD are revealed in the excavations progressing each year. Therefore, the decrease in the pottery and coin finds detected in the city almost by half after the midst of the 4th century AD. Here are the main forms detected and belonging to the African Red Slip Ware obtained in *Tripolis*:

Hayes form 45A–B: Even though the form has three types, only one of the examples obtained in *Tripolis* (**fig. 5,2**) is of type A³ and the upper part of the rim contains a decoration of successive parallel lines. On the other hand, five examples

¹ HAYES 1972, 323.

² H. GELZER/H. HILGENFELD/O. CUNTZ, *Patrum Nicaenorum nomina Latine, Graece, Coptice, Syriace, Arabice, Armeniace* (Stuttgart, Leipzig reprint 1995) 67.

³ HAYES 1972, 62; 65 form 45,2; ID. 2008 fig. 31,974; GASSNER 1997, 148 Taf. 49,590.

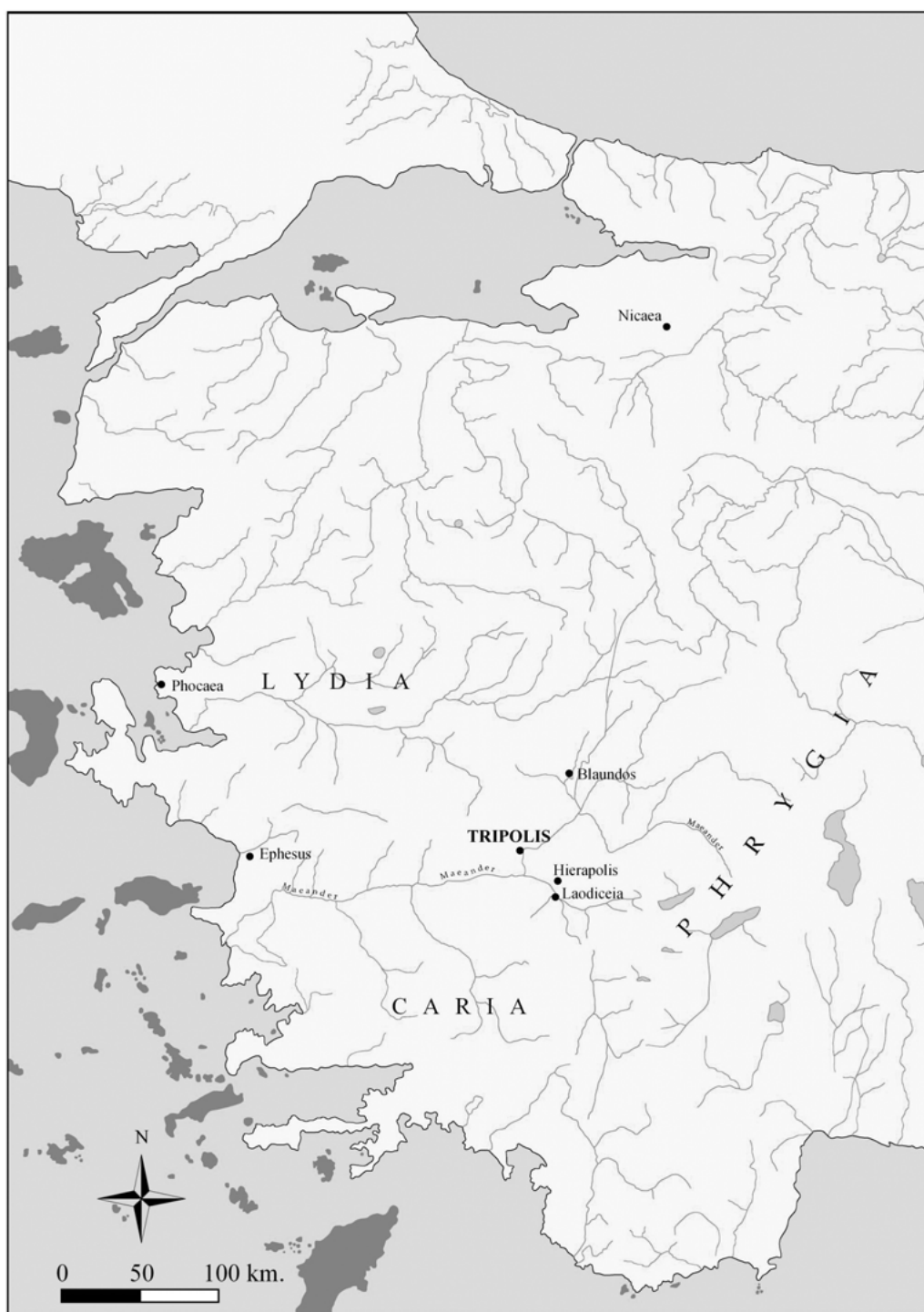


Fig. 1. Map of Western Anatolia.

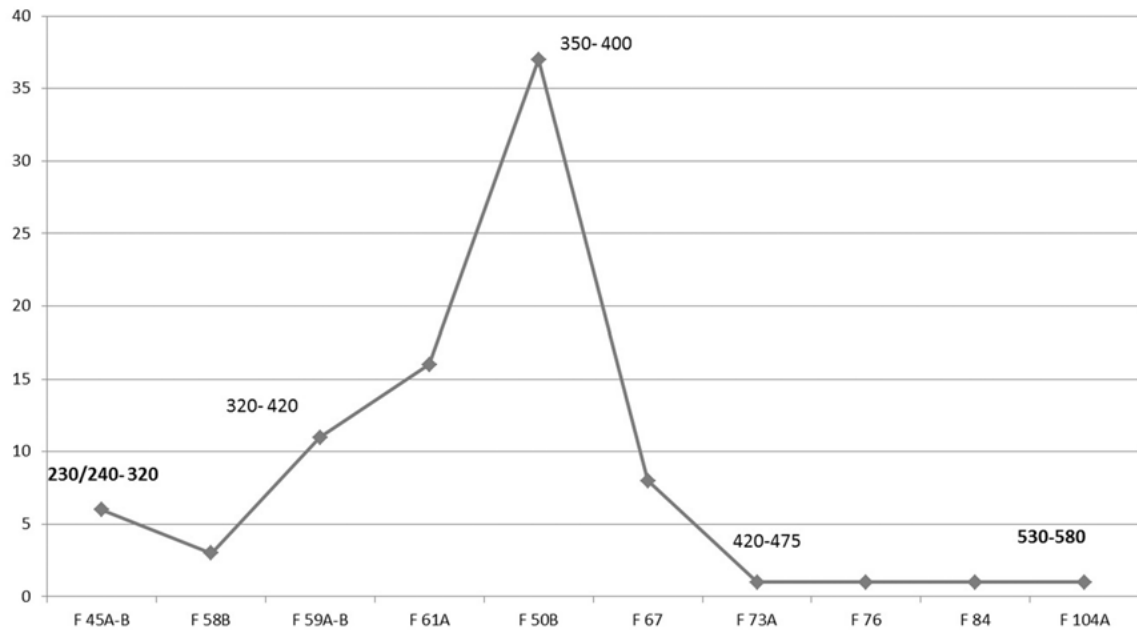


Fig. 2. Coin finds from the Arched Building.

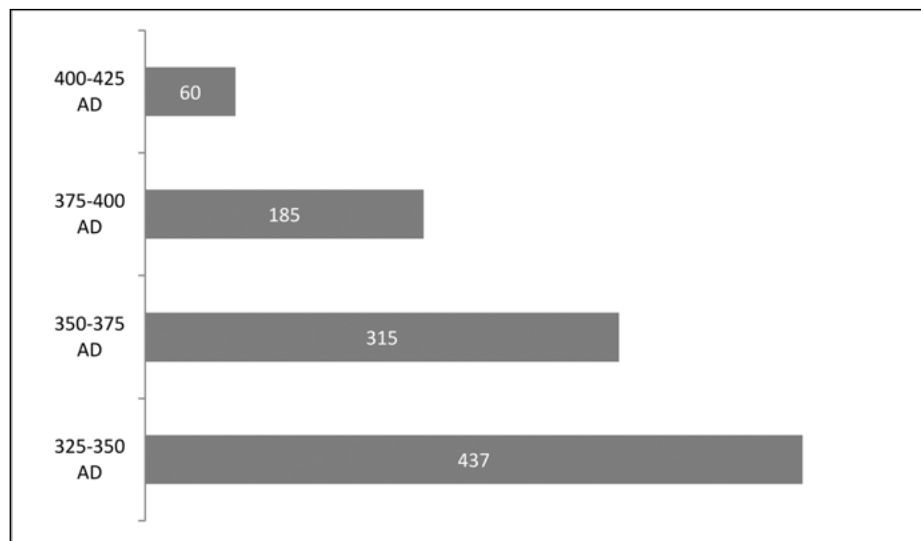


Fig. 3. Coin finds from the Arched Building.

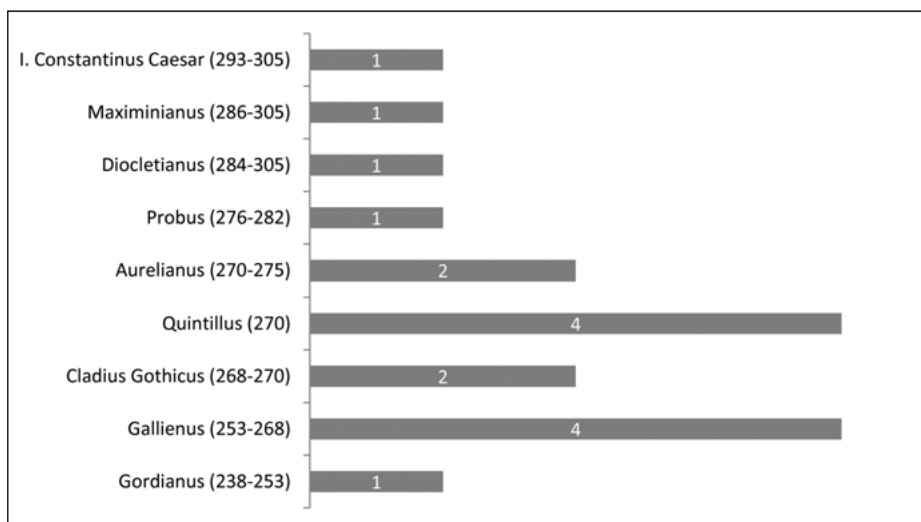


Fig. 4. The distribution of the coins found in the *tabernae* as a context with form 45 A-B according to emperors. ⁷

(fig. 5,1,3) are of type B⁴. Their rim diameters range from 22 to 30. The majority of the examples of the form belonging to both types were found in a single context together with 17 coins at the taberna (fig. 4) – the use of which ended upon an earthquake that occurred in the last quarter of the 3rd century AD – adjacent to the north of the Colonnaded Street in the east-west direction in *Tripolis*. Although all coins are dated to some period between 238 and 305, thirteen of them are dated to some period between 250 and 275 AD. Hayes suggested circa 230/40–320 AD for group B⁵. The only example obtained in the Athenian Agora was found in the context of 267/268 AD.⁶ Thanks to the closed context obtained at the taberna, the examples from *Tripolis* can also be dated to the third quarter of the 3rd century.

Hayes form 50B: As in many cities⁷, the ARSW belonging to this form detected in *Tripolis* constitutes the most considerable (42 %) assemblage among the pottery (fig. 5,4–5). This form, generally with rim diameters in the range 24–26 cm, also has examples with a minimum rim diameter of 20 cm and a maximum rim diameter of 32 cm among the finds. The fine slip is seen on the entire interior surface but only at the rim on the exterior in the majority of the vessels. The majority of the finds were detected in the building called the Arched Building. Although the building concerned was constructed in the Early Hellenistic Period, it was used with various repairs until the late 4th century AD. The chronological trend in the few examples obtained in the upper levels of the Roman Tabernae apart from the Arched Building and in the House also indicates the first half of the 4th century AD.

Hayes form 58B: The three examples found in *Tripolis* (fig. 5,6–7) were detected at three different excavation sites (the Arched Building, the Colonnaded Street, and the House). The form, in which the sherds with rim diameters varying between 22 and 37 cm were included, was dated to 290/300–375 AD by Hayes.⁸ An example particularly detected in the area of the House in *Tripolis* was found together with a coin dated to the era of Valentinian I (364–375 AD). Hence, the late 4th century may be suggested for the examples from *Tripolis*.

Hayes form 59A–B: It ranks third among the ARSW found in *Tripolis* in terms of the frequency of finds. The majority of the examples obtained were detected on the Colonnaded Street and in the Arched Building. The rim diameters of the finds other than the deep plate with a rim diameter of 24 cm are generally greater than 29 cm (max. 38). The exterior of the only example we may include in Form 59 A⁹ contains a vertically impressed series of flutes (fig. 5,9), whereas no decoration is seen on the other examples attributed to Form 59 B (fig. 5,8,10). For both types of the form found in *Tripolis*, the period between the middle of the 4th century A.D. and the late 4th century AD can be supported with the coin finds.

Hayes form 61A: It is the second most prolific form

group detected in *Tripolis* (fig. 6,11–12). A total of 16 sherds were found on the Colonnaded Street in particular as well as in the Arched Building, the House, and the Late Roman Agora (the Western Portico of the Agora and the Northern Portico of the Agora). Two groups as 23–26 cm and 31–38 cm may be formed for the rim diameters. The dates suggested by Hayes for Type A with a shallower body are circa 325/400–420 AD.¹⁰ The coins particularly unearthed at the first level of the Area of the House in *Tripolis* were dated to some period between the third quarter of the 4th century AD and the first quarter of the 5th century AD.

Hayes form 67: The form detected in the city is represented with eight examples (fig. 6,13–16). Their rim diameters range from 22 to 35 cm. There is generally a single groove in its upper part close to the rim (fig. 6,14–15); the number of grooves is two in one example (fig. 6,16); and one example was made with no grooves (fig. 6,13). In all sherds, the slip has a more slippery and smooth surface and appears slightly brilliant on the interior as compared with that of the exterior. The appearance is completely matt on the exterior. Considering the decorations, Hayes detected three different groups and dated the three groups to different periods between 360 and 470¹¹. Since the examples from *Tripolis* were generally obtained in the form of the upper half of the body and edge sherds, they were dated to the second half of the 4th century depending on the coins found in the Arched Building regarding the element of dating.

Hayes form 73A: The find from the Colonnaded Street is represented with a single example. Notches at the rim are seen in this type (fig. 6,17). As the layers on the Street are generally mixed, the first half of the 5th century AD – suggested by Hayes¹² – can also be suggested for the find from *Tripolis*.

Hayes form 76: The fragment representing a single example of this form was found in the Vaulted Building. Its rim diameter is 30 cm, and a single notch is visible due to its broken edge (fig. 6,18). The date of 425–475 AD, suggested by Hayes¹³, can also be suggested for the find from *Tripolis*.

Hayes form 84: Although it constitutes one of the common forms within the ARSW, it is represented by a single example in *Tripolis* (fig. 7,19). Because it was obtained from a mixed layer on the Colonnaded Street, we have to accept the date of 440–500 AD – suggested for the form by Hayes – as the element of dating¹⁴.

Form 104A: The rim diameter of the fragment belonging to this form – a find from the Western Portico of the Late Roman Agora – was 39 cm, and it was evaluated as the only example (fig. 7,20). Dated to 530–580 AD by Hayes¹⁵, this form chronologically constitutes the last example of the ARSW forms found in *Tripolis*.

Decorated tondo fragments: Impressed decorations such as palm branches (fig. 7,21–23), concentric circles (fig. 7,23–24), concentric circles with dot fringes (fig. 7,25),

⁴ HAYES 1972, 64 fig. 2,10; ID. 2008, 75.

⁵ ID. 1972, 65.

⁶ ID. 2008, 74; 219 fig. 31,976.

⁷ ID. 1972, 68–73; ID. 2008, 75 footnote 55. For the finds from the agora, see *ibid.* fig. 32,995–998; GASSNER 1997, 148 Taf. 49,591.

⁸ HAYES 1972, 96.

⁹ *Ibid.* 96–100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 107; HAYES 2008, 77.

¹¹ ID. 1972, 112–116; ID. 2008 fig. 34,1081–1090.

¹² ID. 1972, 121–124; ID. 2008, 78; 228 fig. 34,1109.

¹³ ID. 1972, 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 133.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 166.

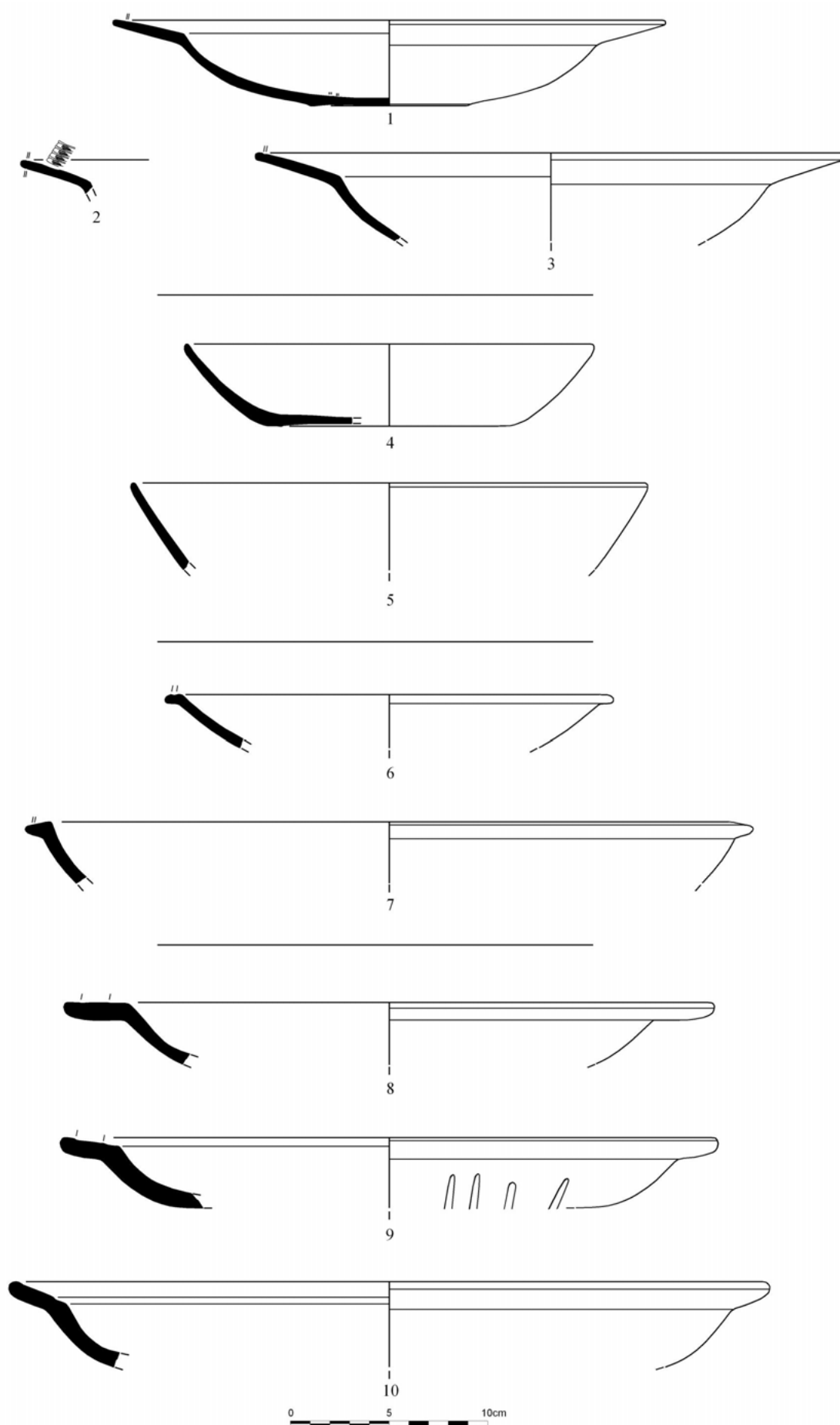


Fig. 5. 1–3 form 45; 4–5 form 50; 6–7 form 58; 8–10 form 59.

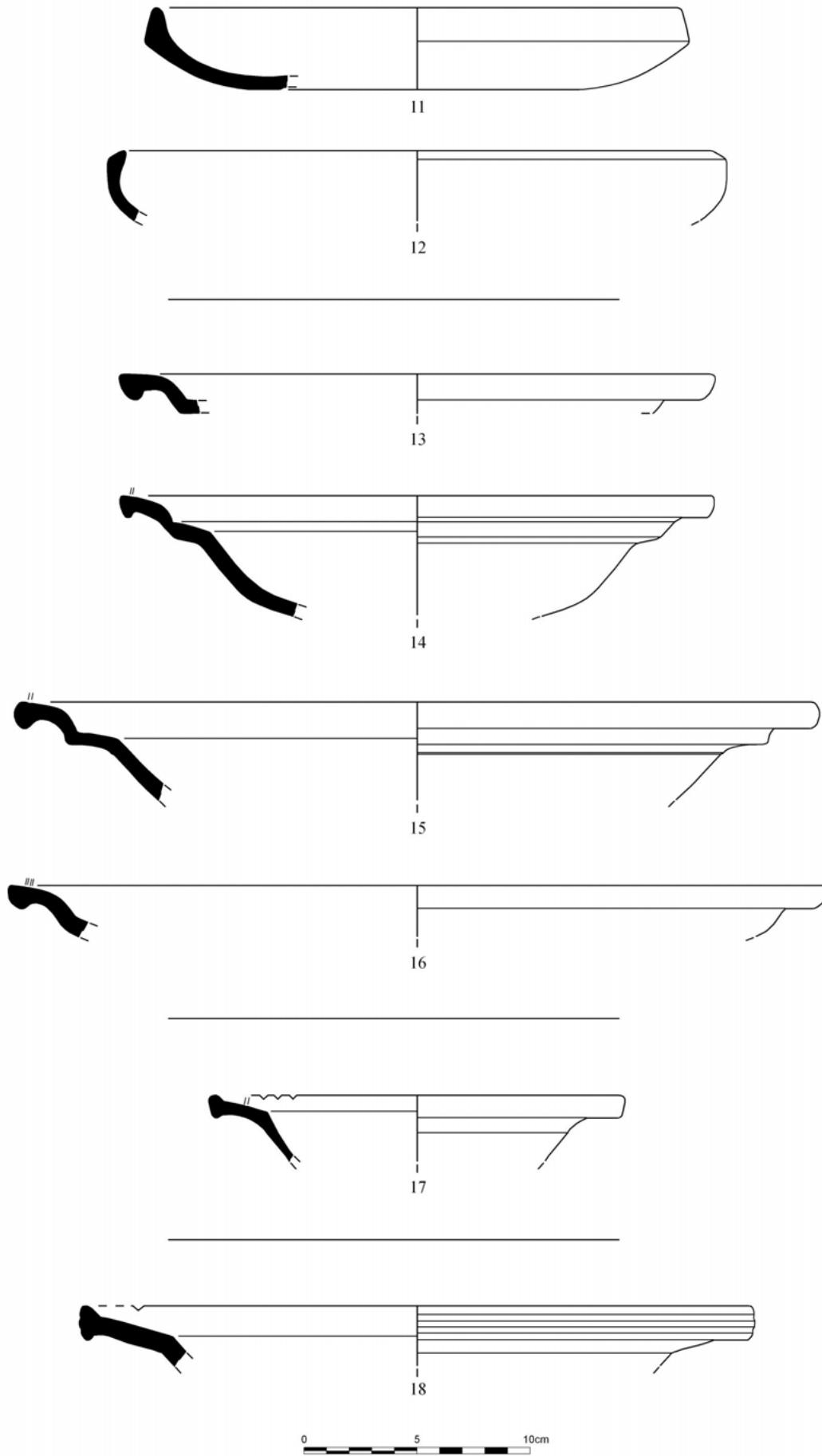


Fig. 6. 11–12 form 61; 13–16 form 67; 17 form 73; 18 form 76.

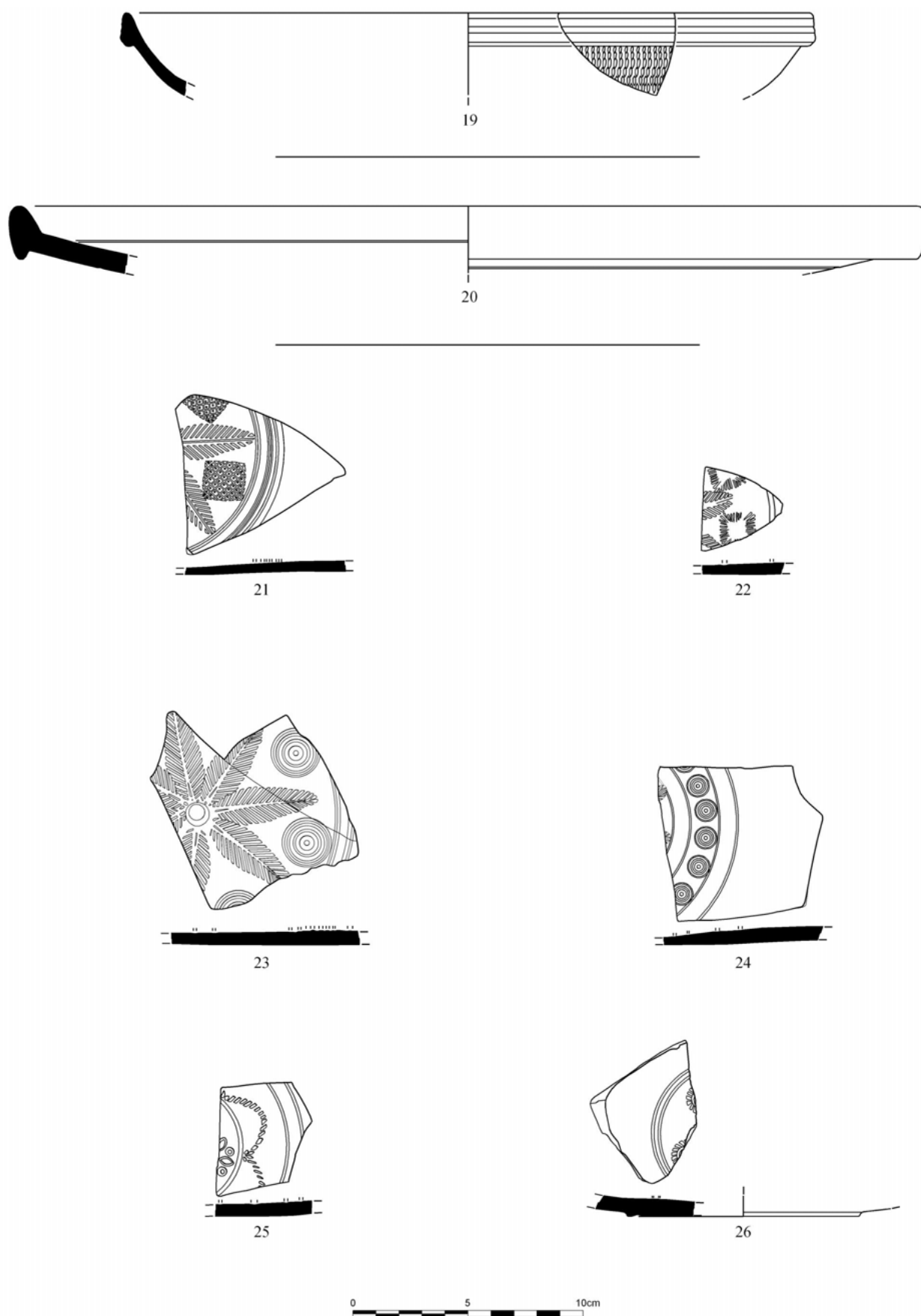


Fig. 7. 19 form 84; 20 form 104A; 21–26 tondo decorations.

rosettes (**fig. 7,26**), and grille patterns (**fig. 7,21**) on six fragments, the forms of which cannot be determined clearly (**fig. 7,21–26**), appear in the tondo of some plates belonging to the ARSW group detected in *Tripolis*.

The sherds of ARSW found in the excavations carried out in *Tripolis* – one of the border towns of the Lydian Region – in the last three years were encountered in almost every excavated building. The finds which enabled us to acquire

important data about the use of ARSW-type pottery in the inner regions also allowed us to acquire essential information on the potential of the material of the same type to be unearthed in the excavations in the following period.

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