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LATE ANTIQUE POTTERY FROM AN *INSULA* SOUTH OF THE WEST-MARKET IN *MILETUS* (TURKEY)

During 1994 and 2004 W.-D. Niemeier carried out excavations in *Miletus* focusing on the exploration of the Bronze-Age settlement and the temple of Athena. During his fieldwork, Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique contexts were also discovered. Among the most interesting of these late contexts is an *insula* situated in the South-West of the temple of Athena and South of the West-Market¹.

The area around the temple of Athena in *Miletus* was heavily modified from Late Hellenism onwards, when, as it seems, the sanctuary had already lost much of its impact. By the 3rd century AD the temple seems to have been in ruins, its religious impact gone, while residential buildings grew within the Imperial and Late Imperial period². Unfortunately, most of these buildings had been unearthed in the early 20th century and the documentation is not too precise when it comes to descriptions of the later layers. Roman finds from these spots, especially the pottery, have never have been studied in detail³.

The *insula* discovered and partly unearthed during W.-D. Niemeier's excavations South-West of the Athena temple sheds some new light into Milesian houses and their development from the Early Imperial into the Early Byzantine period.

The house in discussion (**fig. 1**) was built right on top of the ruins of the Mycenaean contexts in the Early Imperial, probably Augustan period. It was undertaken several modifications and renovations before it was ultimately destroyed in the late 6th/7th century AD. As the investigation of these contexts is still in progress, any results presented here are of preliminary character.

Since the main interest of W.-D. Niemeier's fieldwork was the Bronze-Age settlement, the *insula* was only partly excavated. The original entrance to the unit was accessible via the North-South road and led into a corridor (**fig. 1,A**). The corridor provided access to a larger room on the right (**fig. 1,B**) as well as two smaller rooms on the left (**fig. 1,C,D**).

Straight ahead, a larger, to the most part unexcavated space, most probably a court (**fig. 1,H**), could be entered via a large marble threshold. Further rooms could be accessed from the court; two of them in the North-East were excavated (**fig. 1,E/F,G**). In these two rooms, the complete stratigraphy from construction to the end of use was preserved, only parts of the upper strata in the very North were disturbed by the roots of olive trees as well as an old trench.

In the Southern rooms the excavations were stopped at the Late Antique floor levels. It seems that after the destruction of the house everything that was either worth something or could be used elsewhere was removed before the debris material was leveled. This might explain why floor coverings have been removed and even some of the large top stones of the drainage that had transported the waste water from the court to the road were removed. Thus, determining specific functions of the rooms B, C, and D based on the finds is not possible.

The latest diagnostic sherds in Rooms A, B, and C contain fragments of jars in a fabric that has been described as "mica-dusted" ware in Sarachane and as "gilded-ware" in Pergamon (**fig. 2,1–2**). The common feature of this ware is a golden-micaceous slip that gives the surface a characteristic golden shimmer. It is mainly known from later periods (Late Byzantine and Ottoman). Some rather thin-walled jugs, on the other hand, occur in earlier, late 6th/early 7th century contexts: an example from Sarachane was found in a mid-7th century deposit⁴, S. Japp contextually dates the examples from Pergamon into the late 6th century and even suggests Pergamon as a production-site⁵. Similar jugs have also been reported from Sagalassos, where this ware appears from the late 6th century onwards⁶.

Other late finds include fragments Early Byzantine lamps with palmette-holds (**fig. 2,3–4**) which regionally appear in the late 6th and first half of the 7th century⁷, fragmented *am-*

¹ A first overview can be found here: SOSSAU/HINTERMANN 2013, 175–181.

² A. V. GERKAN, Kalabaktepe, Athenatempel und Umgebung. Milet 1,8 (Berlin 1925) 59–60; 82–86; 92–93; A. MALLWITZ, Gestalt und Geschichte des jüngeren Athenatempels von Milet. Istanbul Mitt. 25, 1975, 67–90 esp. 86–88; W. HELD, Heiligtum und Wohnhaus. Ein Beitrag zur Topographie des klassischen Milet. Istanbul Mitt. 43, 1993, 371–381; ID., Das Heiligtum der Athena in Milet. Miles. Forsch. 2 (Mainz 2000) 92–93.

³ The same applies for other domestic buildings of the Roman period discovered to the West of the Athena temple, at the "Westmauer", West of the Bouleuterion, and Roman finds from the so-called "Südschnitt". For exact references see SOSSAU/HINTERMANN 2013, 175 note 36.

⁴ J. W. HAYES, A Contribution on A Seventh-Century Pottery Group. Dumbarton Oaks Papers 22, 1968, 203–216 esp. 212–213 fig. G 100–102; ID., Excavations at Sarachane in Istanbul 2. The Pottery (Princeton N. J. 1992) 49.

⁵ S. JAPP, Die sog. Gilded Ware – eine mutmaßlich frühbyzantinische Keramikgefäßgruppe in Pergamon. Istanbul Mitt. 60, 2010, 461–474; EAD., Byzantinische Feinkeramik aus Pergamon. In: F. Daim/J. Drauschke (Hrsg.), Byzanz – Das Römerreich im Mittelalter 2,2. RGZM Monogr. 84 (Mainz 2010) 863–875 esp. 864–866; 865 fig. 1–2.

⁶ A. K. VIONIS ET AL., A Middle-Late Byzantine Pottery Assemblage from Sagalassos. Hesperia 79, 2010, 423–464 esp. 437–438 fig. 9.

⁷ For lamps with palmette handholds compare esp. LADSTÄTTER 2008, 117–120 esp. 116 fig. 23; 148–149 K307–K320 Pl. 332–333, K307–K317.

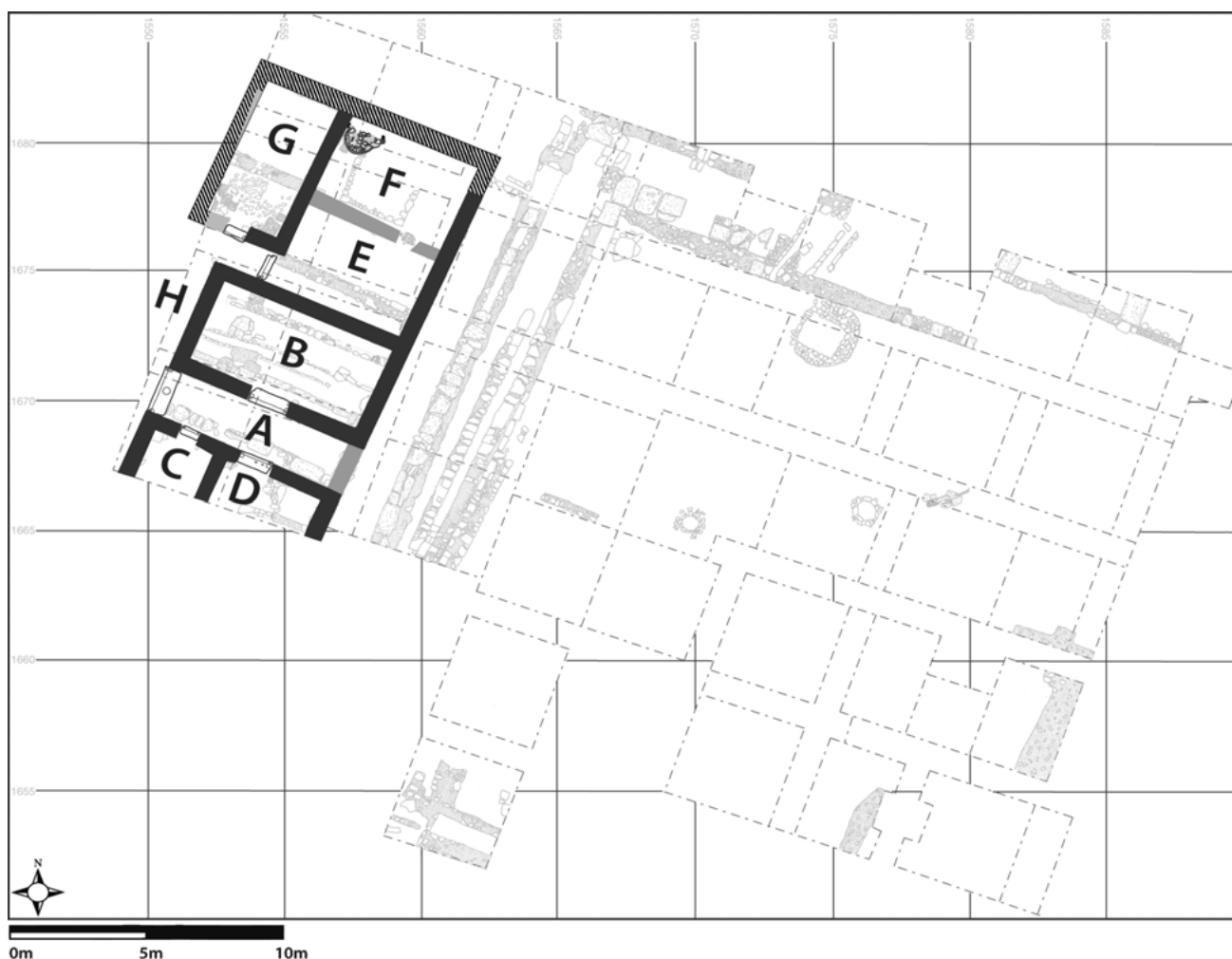


Fig. 1. Map of the *insula* South of the West Market and South-West of the Athena temple.

pullae which are common from the 5th until the 7th century AD⁸, and a jug with a graffito on its shoulder (fig. 2,5)⁹. The fine ware is predominated by Late Roman coated ware with Hayes LRP form 3¹⁰ appearing most frequently.

In the two Northern rooms, a different situation was encountered: the debris does not seem disturbed as in the previous rooms. Since the North wall of the building is not preserved, it is not clear if the rooms had an additional access from the road. In the tiny room G, an earlier wall was removed to improve the size of the room. Finds from this room's debris include a pilgrim flask (fig. 3,1)¹¹ decorated with crosses as well as two 5th–7th century AD *ampullae* (fig. 3,2–3). While *ampullae* are often believed to have served as containers of holy water¹², pilgrim flasks, which start to appear in the mid of the 6th century AD and run into the first half of the 7th cen-

tury AD were purchased as eulogies in pilgrims churches¹³. Fine ware is again dominated by Late Roman coated ware, and again, Hayes LRC form 3 (fig. 3,6–11) occurs most frequently. Fragments of Late Antique glass chalices (fig. 3,4–5)¹⁴ date to the same period as the previously shown objects. The coarse ware includes an upper part of a 6th/7th century AD Samos Cistern type amphora (fig. 3,12)¹⁵ and an almost complete large basin in buff ware¹⁶ (fig. 3,13).

⁸ Preserved examples are discussed below and displayed in fig. 3,2–3: METAXAS 2005, 67–123.

⁹ The Graffito reads ΠΙΕΖΗΕΥΚΥΠΙ. („drink and enjoy life, my Lord“, read by D. Feissel).

¹⁰ HAYES 1972, 329–338.

¹¹ For parallel form/decoration compare S. LADSTÄTTER, Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit. In: F. Daim/J. Drauschke (ed.): Byzanz – Das Römerreich im Mittelalter 2,2. RGZM Monogr. 84 (Mainz 2010) 508 fig. 19.

¹² METAXAS 2005, 65 (with discussion of other suggestions); 93–95.

¹³ W. ANDERSON, An Archaeology of Late Antique Pilgrim Flasks. *Anatolian Stud.* 54, 2004, 79–93.

¹⁴ For parallels see e.g. B. CZURDA-RUTH, Hanghaus 1 in Ephesos. *Die Gläser. Forsch. Ephesos* 8,7 (Wien 2007) Pl. 32; 33.

¹⁵ First described by H. P. ISLER, Heraion von Samos. Eine frühbyzantinische Zisterne. *Mitt. DAI Athen* 84, 1969, 206–207 Pl. 85–88.

¹⁶ Fragments of large, deep basins occur in other rooms, too. Closely comparable basins appear in late antique Ephesian contexts from the 5th to the 7th c. AD: LADSTÄTTER 2008, 133 K129 (with decorated rim); 134 K144 Pl. 289; K 129; 290 K144 (5th c. contexts); V. GASSNER, Das Südtor der Tetragonos-Agora. *Keramik und Kleinfunde. Forsch. Ephesos* 13,1,1 (Wien 1997) 162 nr. 654 (5th c. context); P. TURNOVSKY, The morphological repertory of Late Roman/Early Byzantine Coarse Wares in Ephesos. In: J. M. Gurt I Esparraguera/J. Buxeda i Garrigos/M. A. Cau Ontiveros (eds.), LRCW 1. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry 1. BAR Internat. Ser. 1340 (Oxford 2005) 637; 642 fig. 2 (7th c. deposits); EAD., Late Antique and Byzantine Pottery of the Church of St. Mary in Ephesos. An introduction. *RCRF Acta*

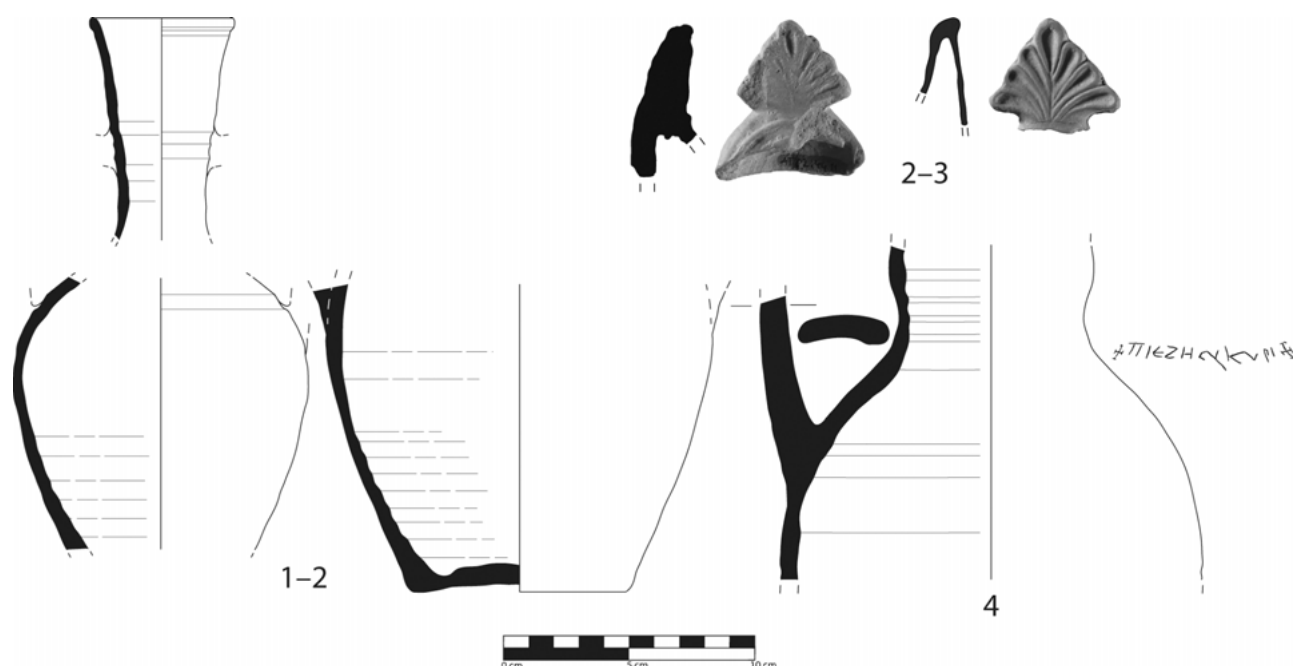


Fig. 2. A selection of ceramic finds from rooms A, B, and C: **1–2** jars in mica-dusted ware/gilded-ware; **3–4** lamps with palmette-shaped handholds; **5** jug with graffito.

Similar to Room G, the latest occupational floor of room E/F – a simple stamped earth floor – was covered with a brick, tile, and stones debris. The latest architectural modification is a simple wall dividing the room into two smaller units. Its bedding trench contained a rim fragment of LRC form Hayes LRP 3/10 from the mid or even the second half of the 6th century AD (**fig. 4**)¹⁷, which provides a *terminus post quem* for the wall's construction.

Before the room was divided, it probably functioned as a workshop¹⁸. In its North-West corner, a kiln was discovered. The pottery of the room's debris contained mainly coarse ware. Most interesting is an accumulation of fragments of vessels we have previously addressed as bell-lids. Fragments of this form were exclusively found in this room and are to our present knowledge not present in other contexts in Miletus. Literally hundreds of mostly rim and wall fragments and five complete handholds/bases were discovered and fortunately, the complete profile of the vessel could be reconstructed in several cases (**fig. 5**). The shape is remarkably uniform: the diameter of the vessels varies between 18 and 21 cm; the fabric is soft and micaceous and shows singular large inclusions of lime.

The only close parallels to this form in Eastern contexts are two fragmented lids from unit 1 in Terrasse House 2 in *Ephesos*¹⁹ and bell-shaped lids reported from *Elaiussa Sebaste*²⁰. In both cases, the find contexts date into the late 6th or the 7th century AD. Other bell-lids have been found during excavations in the Panagia field at Corinth (24) in 5th to 7th century AD contexts. But while size and form are similar, the form of the handhold differs. In fact, the Milesian vessels resemble so-called tajines which are still used as an utensil for food preparation in North-Africa. The particular inverted form of the handhold allows to fill the top with cold water, which causes the steam to circulate inside the lid. Consequently, these lids are better suited for the preparation of stews and similar steamed foods rather than for baking. Until now, however, there are neither any indications for specific vessels, which these lids might have covered, nor can they even be addressed as lids with certainty. In what way they connect with the function of the room remains an open question. In Western Late Roman contexts, similar vessels with small, flat bases instead of invert “handholds” occur in 3rd–4th century AD contexts. They are interpreted as bowls²¹,

39, 2005, 222–223 fig. 8,3 (7th c. contexts); G. LÜDORF, Römische und frühbyzantinische Gebrauchskeramik im westlichen Kleinasien. Typologie und Chronologie. Internat. Arch. 96 (Rahden 2006) 117.

¹⁷ A transitional form (HAYES 1972, 333–335) which dates into the mid or even the second half of the 6th c. in Ephesian contexts: S. LADSTÄTTER/R. SAUER, Late Roman C-Ware und lokale spätantike Feinware. In: F. Krinzing et al. (eds.), Spätantike und mittelalterliche Keramik aus Ephesos. Arch. Forsch. 13 (Wien 2005) 150; 174 nr. 76–77.

¹⁸ Below the Late Antique strata, an earlier floor was discovered which we currently believe is to be dated into the late 2nd or 3rd c. AD. Presumably, the later workshop had served for activities connected with the preparation of food in the Late Imperial period.

¹⁹ S. LADSTÄTTER, Keramik. In: F. Krinzing (ed.), Hanghaus 2 in Ephesos. Die Wohneinheiten 1 und 2. Baubefund, Ausstattung, Befunde Textband Wohneinheit 1. Forsch. Ephesos 8,8 (Wien 2010) 193; 194 fig. 7,3–4.

²⁰ M. RICCI, Elaiussa Sebaste. Context, production and commerce. In: B. Böhlendorf/A. Osman Uysal/J. Witte-Orr (eds.), Çanak. Late Antique and Medieval Pottery and Tiles in Mediterranean Archaeological Contexts. Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Late Antique, Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman Pottery and Tiles in Archaeological Context, Çanakkale, 1–3 June 2005. Byzas 7 (Istanbul 2007) 178; 177 fig. 4,25.

²¹ Camulodunum form 306: P. BIDWELL/A. CROOM, The Camulodunum/Colchester type series. In: R. P. Symonds/S. M. Wade, Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971–86. Colchester Arch. Report 10 (1999) 482. I thank Paul Typers for making me aware of that shape and especially R. P. Symonds for the discussions of the form.

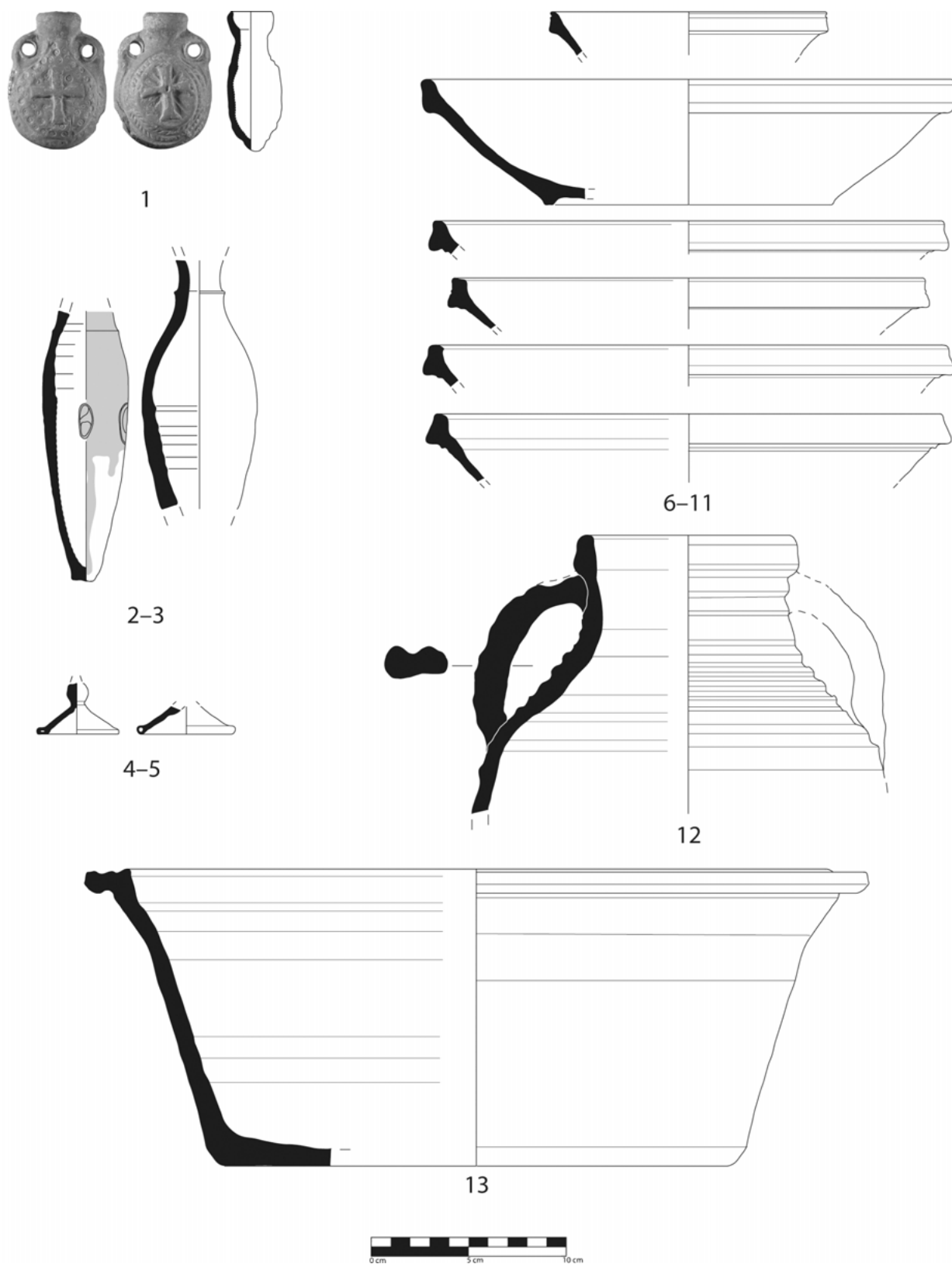


Fig. 3. A selection of finds from room G: **1** a pilgrim's flask; **2-3** ampullae; **4-5** glass chalices; **6-11** bowls in LRC ware, Hayes form 3; **12** Samos Cistern Type amphora; **13** large basin.

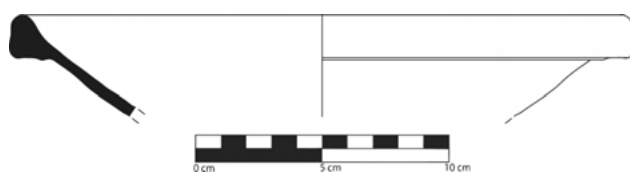


Fig. 4. Bowl in LRC ware, transitional form Hayes 3/10.

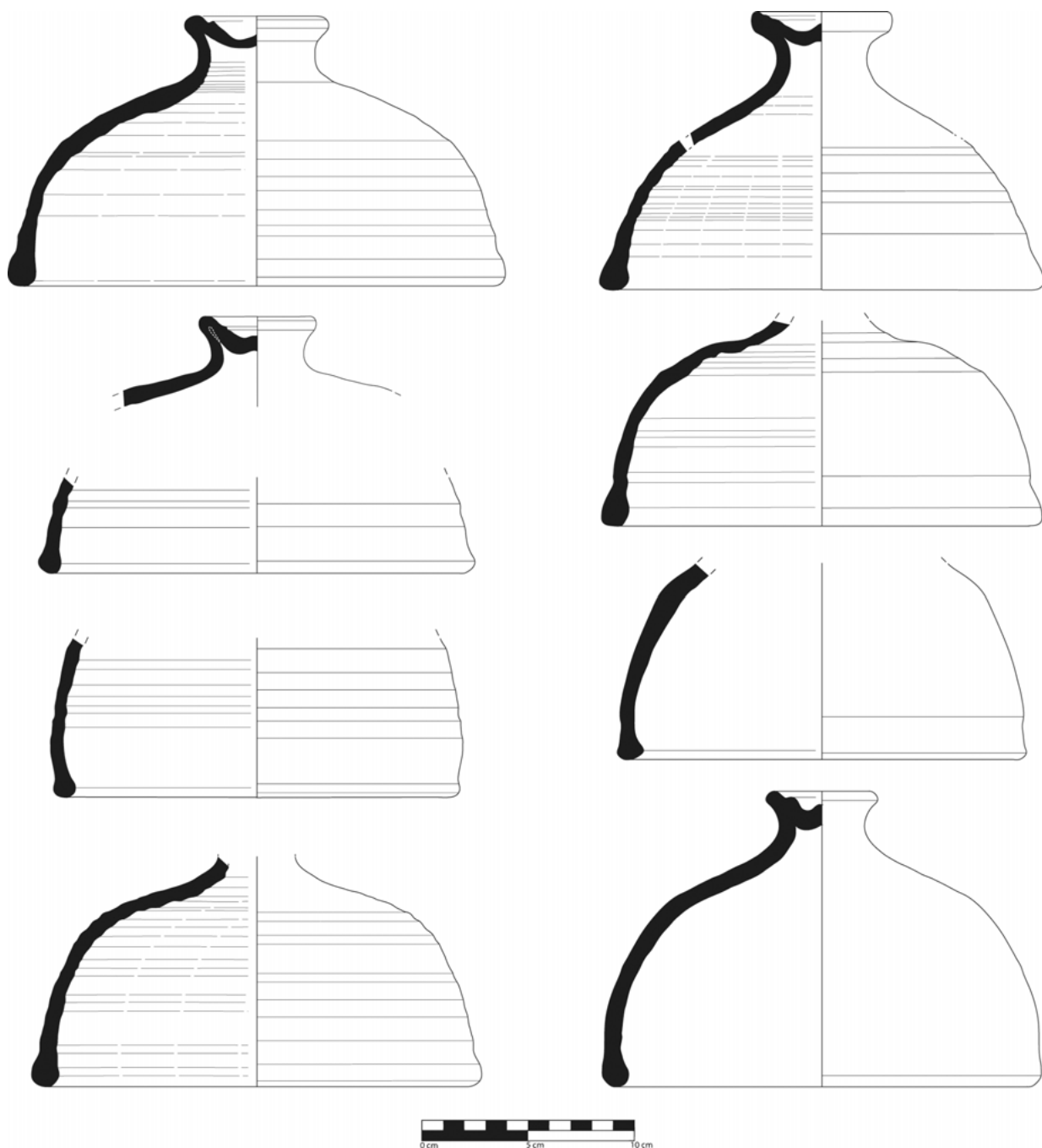


Fig. 5. Selection of bell-lids found in room E/F.

sometimes in ritual contexts²², or “capsules” used to protect more delicate wares during the firing process of kiln runs²³. If a connection between vessels and our bell-shaped lids in late Eastern contexts is valid or not can not yet be answered and will be subject of future research on this form.

Other coarse ware finds in this stratum include jars and jugs, smaller fragments of cooking wares²⁴ as well as smaller fragments of amphorae. Fine ware is represented in small fragments of African red slip wares and LRC ware, form 3 representing the latest datable specimen.

Even though only a part of the house is preserved, it comes clear that it was used and modified in Late Antiquity.

A. von Gerkan assumed that until the middle of 6th century AD the city of *Miletus* had shrunken to only half of the size

of the Imperial city²⁵. If his dating of the so-called Justinian city-wall based on an inscribed block was correct, the area discussed above was outside the city-wall of *Miletus* in the middle of the 6th century. C. Foss was the first to raise historical doubts about this theory. He suggested a later date for the construction of the city-wall in connection with reports of Persian and Arab raids in the environment of *Miletus* in the 7th or even 8th century AD²⁶. But apart from historical and literary sources he lacked archaeological evidence supporting his assumption. During the past years, however, more and more archaeological contexts support a later construction date of the Early Byzantine city wall in the late 6th or 7th century AD²⁷. This means that the area of the West Market and also our *insula* had been *intra muros* until its destruction.

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²² I.e. in *Apulum* (Liber pater sanctuary): M. FIEDLER, Kultgruben eines Liber Pater-Heiligtums in Apulum. Ein Vorbericht. *Germania* 83, 2005, 95–125 esp. 98–100.

²³ For this interpretation see S. LOESCHKE, Töpfereiabfall d. J. 259/260 in Trier. Aus einer römischen Grube an der Lois Lintzstraße. *Trierer Jahresber.* 13, 1921, 107; D. HAUPT, Römischer Töpfereibezirk bei Soller, Kreis Düren. Bericht über eine Ausgrabung. In: *Beiträge zur Archäologie des römischen Rheinlands* 4. Rheinische Ausgr. 23 (Köln 1984) 459; C. HÖPKEN/B. LIESEN, Töpfereiabfall des 3. Jahrhunderts aus Köln. *Kölner Jahrb.* 28, 2005, 760 fig. 6, 10–14; 763. I thank Bernd Liesen for bringing these contexts to my awareness.

²⁴ For a recent overview over Late Antique Milesian utilitarian and cooking wares see N. SCHWERT, Utilitarian and cooking wares from the baths of Faustina in Miletus (Turkey). In: N. Poulou-Papadimitriou/E. Nodaru/V. Kilikoglou (a cura di), LRCW4. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry 4. The Mediterranean a market without frontiers, BAR Internat. Ser. 2616 (Oxford 2014) 677–684 (apart from the decorated discs, the forms of cooking and utilitarian wares discussed in N. Schwerdt’s paper appear in our contexts, too).

²⁵ A. v. GERKAN/A. REHM, Die Stadtmauern, Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899 (Berlin, Leipzig 1935) 114–117.

²⁶ C. FOSS, The Persians in Asia Minor and the end of Antiquity. *English Hist. Rev.* 90, 1975, 721–743; C. FOSS, History and Archaeology of Byzantine Asia Minor. *Collected Stud. Ser. CS315* (Aldershot Hampshire 1990).

²⁷ Most recently: P. NIEWÖHNER, Neue spät- und nachantike Monumente von Milet. *Arch. Anz.* 2013, 175–181.

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