



## Dolphins in the Ionian-Adriatic Basin. Hellenistic Moldmade Ware from Orikos, Southern Illyria (Excavations 2012–2020)

*Carlo De Mitri*

Orikos is located at the southern end part of the Bay of Vlorë, in a lagoon area. Protected by the Karaburun peninsula, the site overlooks the Straits of Otranto, the southern section of the Adriatic kolpos, where the Ionian and the Adriatic Seas meet (**fig. 1**).

In the early years of this century (2007–2010), the Albano-Swiss Mission carried out several activities to understand the archaeological complexity of this site and to define its life phases<sup>1</sup>. Since 2016, a systematic excavation campaign took place in different areas of the settlement and, together with the excavations, a study of the pottery and of different other finds was carried out<sup>2</sup>.

This paper presents the Hellenistic Moldmade Ware found in Orikos in the excavation activities during the years 2012 and 2020.

To the three specimens already known<sup>3</sup>, additional fragments of Moldmade Ware can now be added (**fig. 2**), most of them from the destruction levels of the Idric multi-functional monument in Area 5 (nos. 6–19). Others originate in Area 4 (nos. 20–28), where the Hellenistic walls and a bastion have been recognized, the latter probably with a defence function at an entrance to the city. Few specimens come from the north gate of the fortifications in Area 3 (nos. 3–5); while one specimen each is from the Monoptero, Area 1, and from the enclosure wall of the acropolis, Area 2 (nos. 1–2).

The predominant shape is the bowl, almost exclusively with the mastoid body in different sizes, close to the so-called ›Attic type‹<sup>4</sup> (**fig. 3, 1**), often the variant with the configured molded feet (**fig. 3, 2**). Other attested forms are the dish (**fig. 3, 5**) and the krater, the latter with two different types that also correspond to different areas of production: the chalice krater (**fig. 3, 4**),

1 BERETI ET AL. 2013.

2 Annual reports of excavations and pottery studies about Orikos are published in ›Schweizerisch-Liechtensteinische Stiftung für archäologische Forschungen im Ausland‹; for the latest, with previous bibliography, see: DE MITRI – LOPRIENO 2020 and TERRIER ET AL. 2020.

3 BERETI ET AL. 2013, 117–119.

4 SIEBERT 1980.

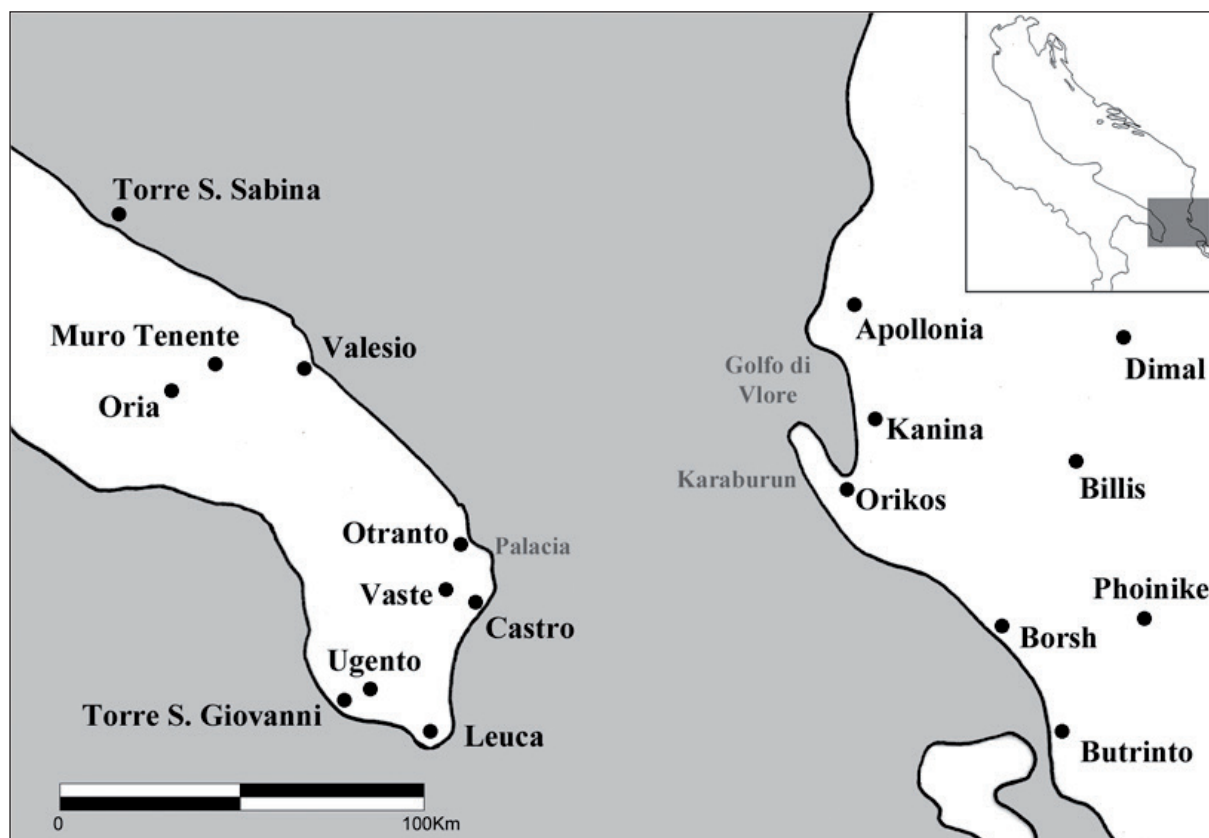


Fig. 1 : The Straits of Otranto.

of Illyrian manufacture<sup>5</sup>, and the deep hemispherical krater with molded feet (fig. 3, 3), perhaps made in a Greek/Corinthian atelier<sup>6</sup>.

The dish is not a common shape in the morphological repertoire of relief ware, with specimens known in Eretria and, above all, in the macro area between the southern Epirus and the northern Peloponnese; a single find is from Dimal, a city in southern Illyria<sup>7</sup>.

All the ceramic fragments have been retrieved almost exclusively from the levels of destruction and obliteration of structures that date to the first half of the 1st century BCE, or are residual in late antiquity layers. The dimensions in the catalogue are given in cm., and the reconstructed diameter indicated is always the internal one. The description of the decoration runs from top to bottom.

The colour values for clay and coating given in brackets were determined using the ›Munsell soil color charts‹. The general study of pottery and assemblages found in Orikos is still in progress.

5 SHEHI 2014, 134–135.

6 JAMES 2018, 127–129.

7 For Eretria, see ACKERMANN 2013, 36 figs. 12–13; for the occurrence in southern Epirus, see TSANTILA 2012, 83 fig. 88; for the dish from Lousoi in the northern Peloponnese, see MITSOPOULOS-LEON 1996; for Dimal, see FENN – RÖMER-STREHL 2016, 207 fig. 7b.

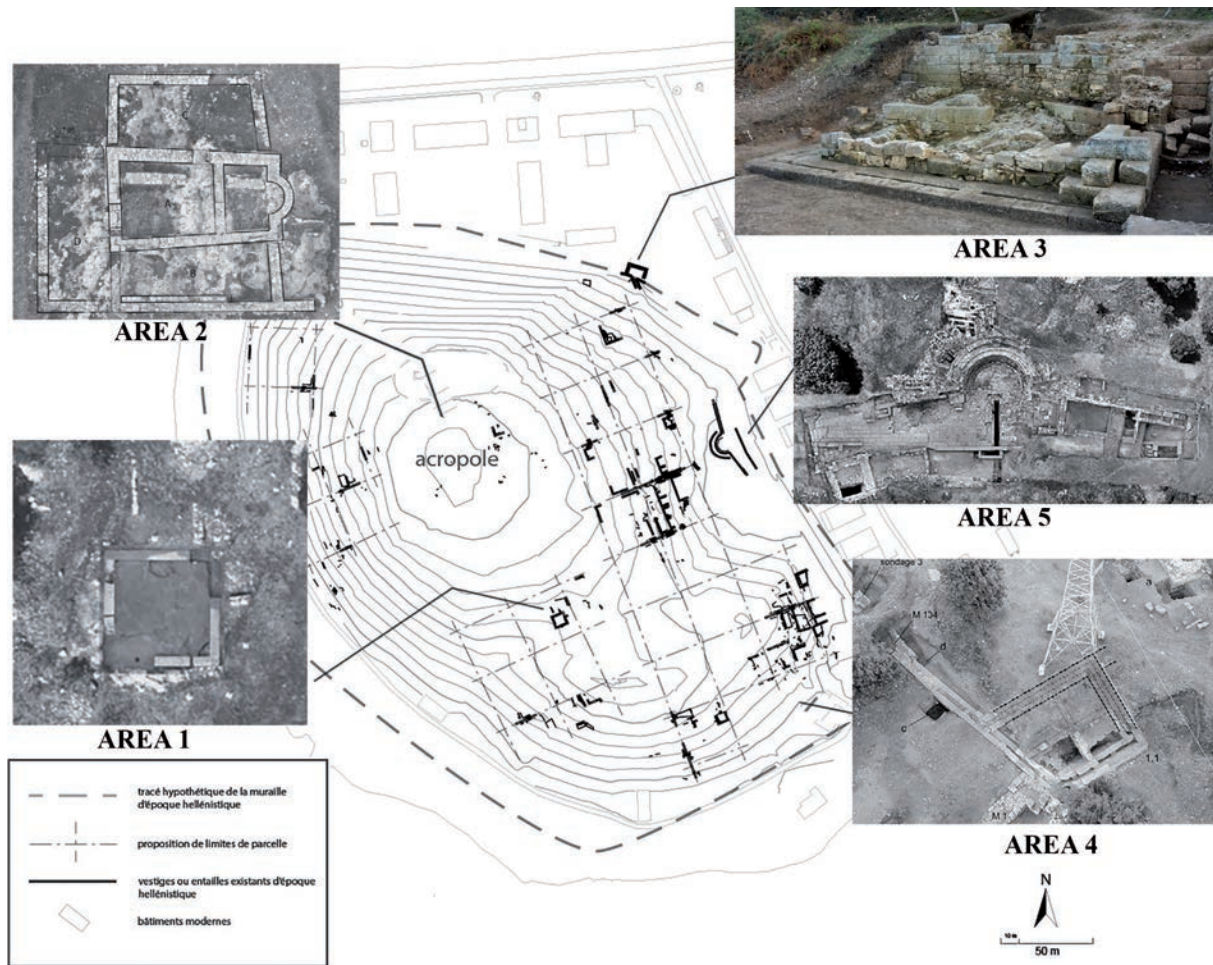


Fig. 2 : Excavation areas in Orikos (based on TERRIER ET AL. 2020).

## Catalogue

### 1. OR12- 019 (fig. 4)

H. 3.6; W. 2. 8.

Small wall fragment of bowl.

Clay soft, without visible inclusions, orange-reddish (7,5 YR 7/4). Slip, almost completely worn, thin, light red (10 R 5/8).

Decoration: under a ridge, lotus leaves alternating with stems.

### 2. OR16 AM5 – 02 (fig. 4)

H. 2; W. 2.2.

Small wall fragment of bowl.

Clay soft dull pale reddish (2,5 YR 6/4). Slip completely worn.

Decoration: circular nodules.

### 3. OR13 PN3 103.12 (fig. 4)

H. 4.3; W. 3.6.

Wall fragment of bowl.

Clay without visible inclusions, pinkish-beige (5 YR 7/4). Slip, partially worn, dark brown to black.

Decoration: imbricate nodules in imitation of pine cones.

### 4. OR16 PN3 139.55 (fig. 4)

H. 3.1; W. 1.7.

Small wall fragment of bowl.

Hard clay without visible inclusions, hard dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: beading between two ridges; palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette above double spirals. Under the ridge unrecognisable pattern.

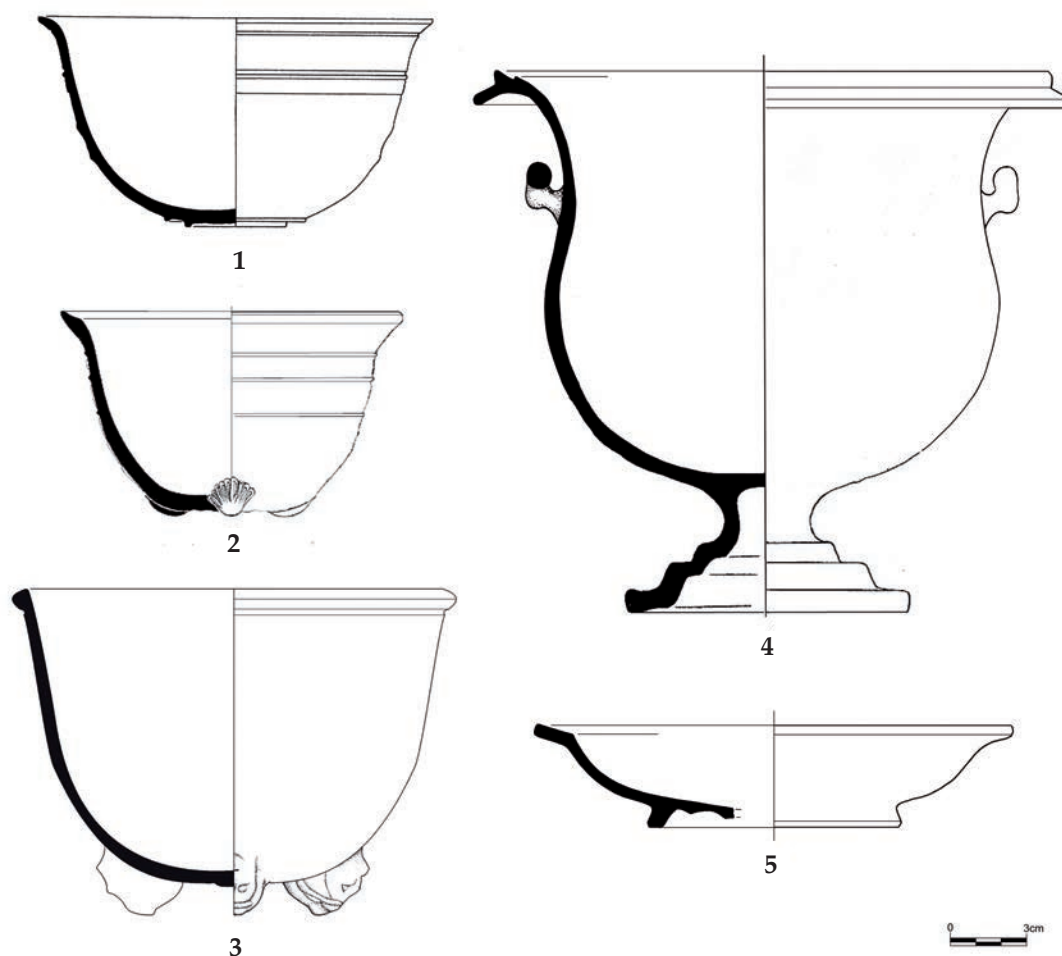


Fig. 3 : The Shapes attested in Orikos (based on ROTROFF 1982, JAMES 2018, TSANTILA 2012).

**5. OR17 PN3 146.32 (not ill.)**

H. 3.5; Dm. bottom 5.

Part of lower body of bowl with part of foot. Clay without visible inclusions, pink-beige (7,5 YR 8/4). Slip, partially worn, reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: imbricate small leaves; floral medallion; feet in form of molded mask.

**6. OR13 18.2 (fig. 4)**

H. 2.9; W. 2.7.

Small wall fragment of bowl.

Clay light pinkish-yellow (7,5 YR 7/4). Slip, partially worn, brownish-black (7,5 YR 2/2).

Decoration: band of ovoli; figured decoration under ridge.

**7. OR16 FMV56.4 (fig. 4)**

H. 4.4; W. 4.2.

Wall fragment of bowl.

Clay soft, some tiny white inclusions, dull pink (2,5 YR 7/6). Slip, partially worn, dark brownish-black (10 YR 2/1).

Decoration: acanthus leaves.

**8. OR14 FMV 25.2 (fig. 5)**

H. 4.6; Dm. rim 14.

Slightly flaring rim and wall fragment.

Clay, some tiny white inclusions light pinkish-yellow (7,5 YR 7/4). Slip reddish-brown (2,5 YR 7/8).

Decoration: below the rim beading between two ridges; palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette; in the lower part of the body leaves and floral pattern under more beading between two ridges.

**9. OR19 FMV 187. 2 (not ill.)**

H. 4.8; W. 4.

Wall fragment of krater(?).



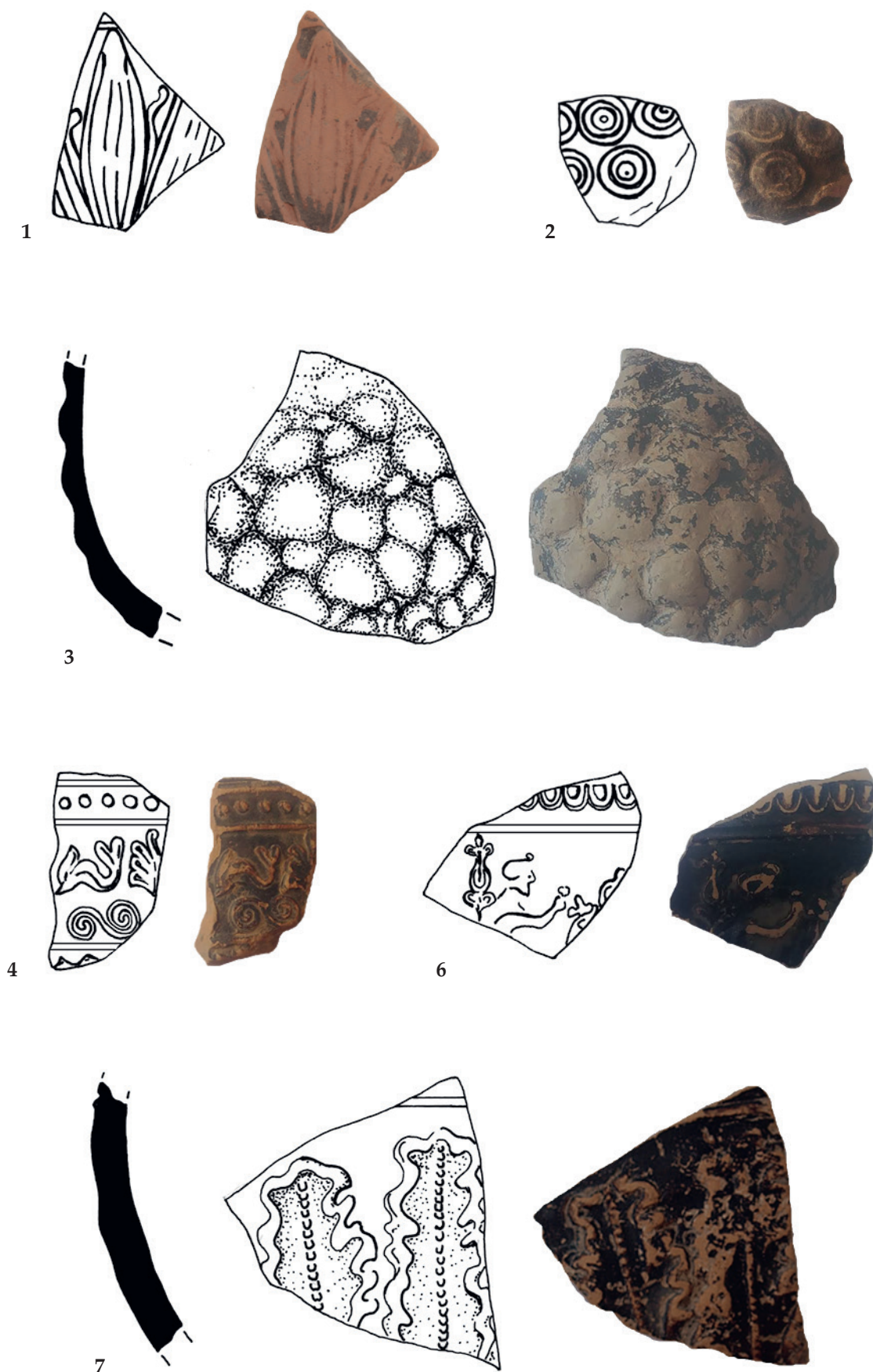


Fig. 4: Cat. 1–4. 6. 7 (scale 1 : 1).

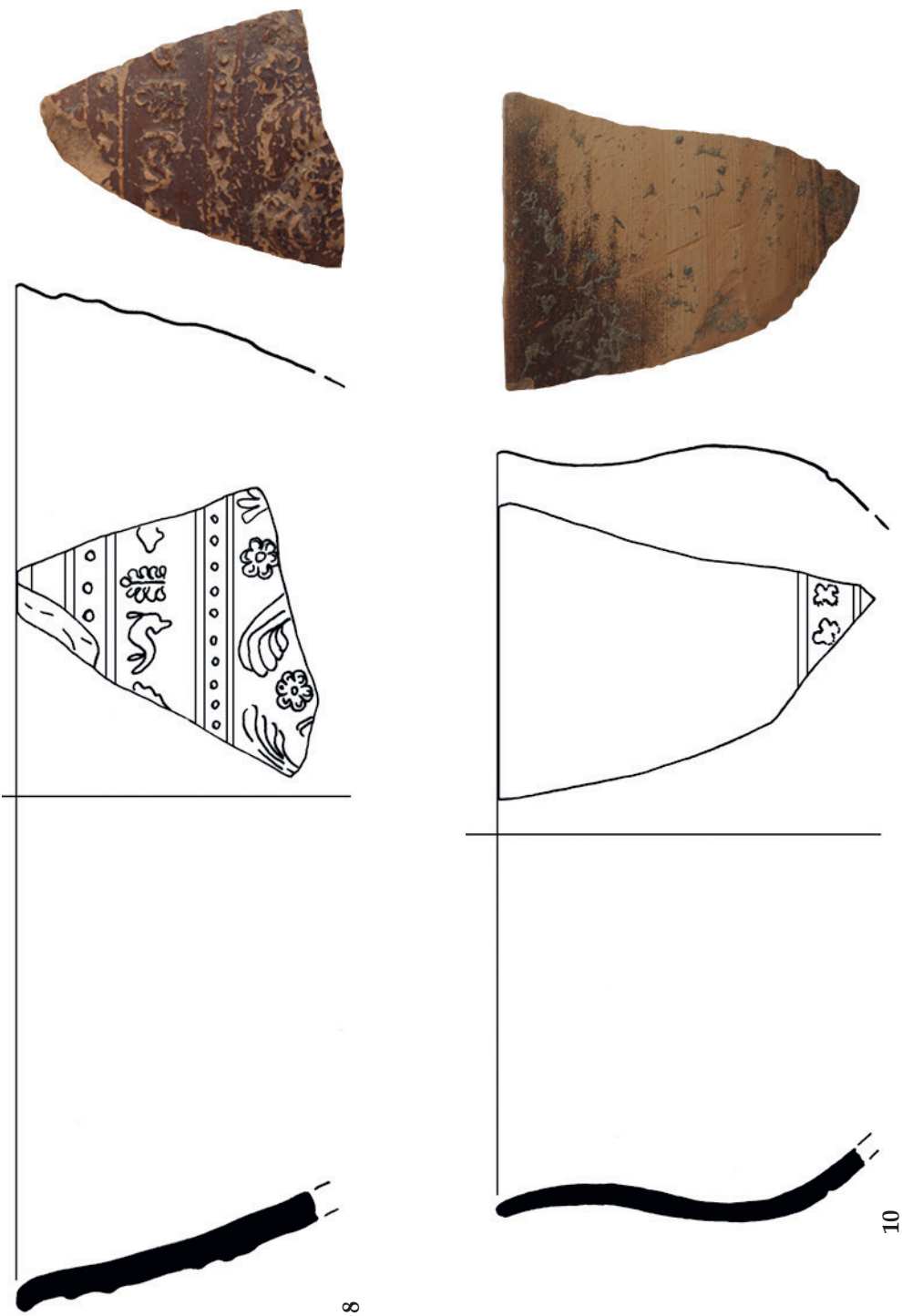


Fig. 5 : Cat. 8, 10 (scale 1 : 1).

Hard clay dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration unrecognisable.

**10. OR19 FMV 160.35 (fig. 5)**

H. 5. 3; Dm. rim 11.

Outturned rim and wall fragment of bowl.

Clay hard, pinkish-brown (5 YR 6/4). Slip dull, thin, partially worn, reddish-brown (2,5 YR 7/8).

Decoration: rosettes between two ridges in the lower section of the wall.

**11. OR19 FMV 160.35 (fig. 6)**

H. 2.7; W. 2.4.

Small wall fragment of bowl.

Hard clay without visible inclusions, hard dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: under ridges nymphaea caerulea petal and rosette.

**12. OR19 FMV 178.1 (fig. 6)**

H. 4.5; Dm. rim 16.4.

Slightly flaring rim and wall fragment of bowl.

Hard clay without visible inclusions, hard dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: double band with beading between two ridges; palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette; more beading between two ridges; imbricate leaves in the lower section of the wall.

**13. OR19 FMV 183.2 (fig. 6)**

H. 2; Dm. rim 11.

Slightly flaring rim fragment of bowl.

Hard clay without visible inclusions, hard dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: beading between two ridges and band with palmette alternating with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette.

**14. OR19 FMV 201.6 (fig. 7)**

H. 2.4; Dm. rim 11.5.

Wall fragment of bowl with slightly flaring rim.

Hard clay without visible inclusions, hard dull pinkish (5 YR 6/4). Slip reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: beading between two grooves; leaves in the lower section of the wall.

**15. OR20 FMV 229.3 (fig. 7)**

H. 6.7; Dm. bottom 3.2.

Fragments of lower part of bowl and feet.

Clay soft, slightly micaceous dull pinkish-cream (7,5 YR 7/3). Slip thin, almost completely worn, brownish-black (7,5 YR 3/2).

Decoration: vine leaves and tendrils; nymphaea lotus petals and between them at the top stylized lizard (?); floral medallion; appliqué feet in the form of molded shells.

**16. OR19 FMV 164.26 (fig. 8)**

H. 4; Dm. rim 18.8; Dm. bottom 9.

Several fragments of dish with projecting rim, wall and ring foot.

Clay soft, with few very small white inclusions, slightly micaceous pinkish (7,5 YR 7/4). Slip brownish-red (10 R 5/8).

Decoration: guilloche on the upper face of the rim. Between concentric beading, palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette above double spirals.

**17. OR19 FMV 176. 2 (fig. 9)**

H. 1.6; Dm. bottom 8.7.

Foot fragment of dish.

Soft little micaceous pinkish (7,5 YR 7/6). Slip completely worn.

Decoration: so-called ›Macedonian shield‹: three concentric semicircles with strobilos (or whirlwind) in the centre; the concentric semicircles are outlined by rows of beading.

**18. OR19 FMV 179.10 (fig. 9)**

H. 1.3; Dm. bottom 10.

Foot fragment of dish. Soft slightly micaceous pinkish (7,5 YR 6/6). Slip completely worn.

Decoration: so-called ›Macedonian shield‹: three concentric semicircles with strobilos (or whirlwind) in the centre; the concentric semicircles are outlined by rows of beading. Three concentric rows of beading in the inner central part of the dish.



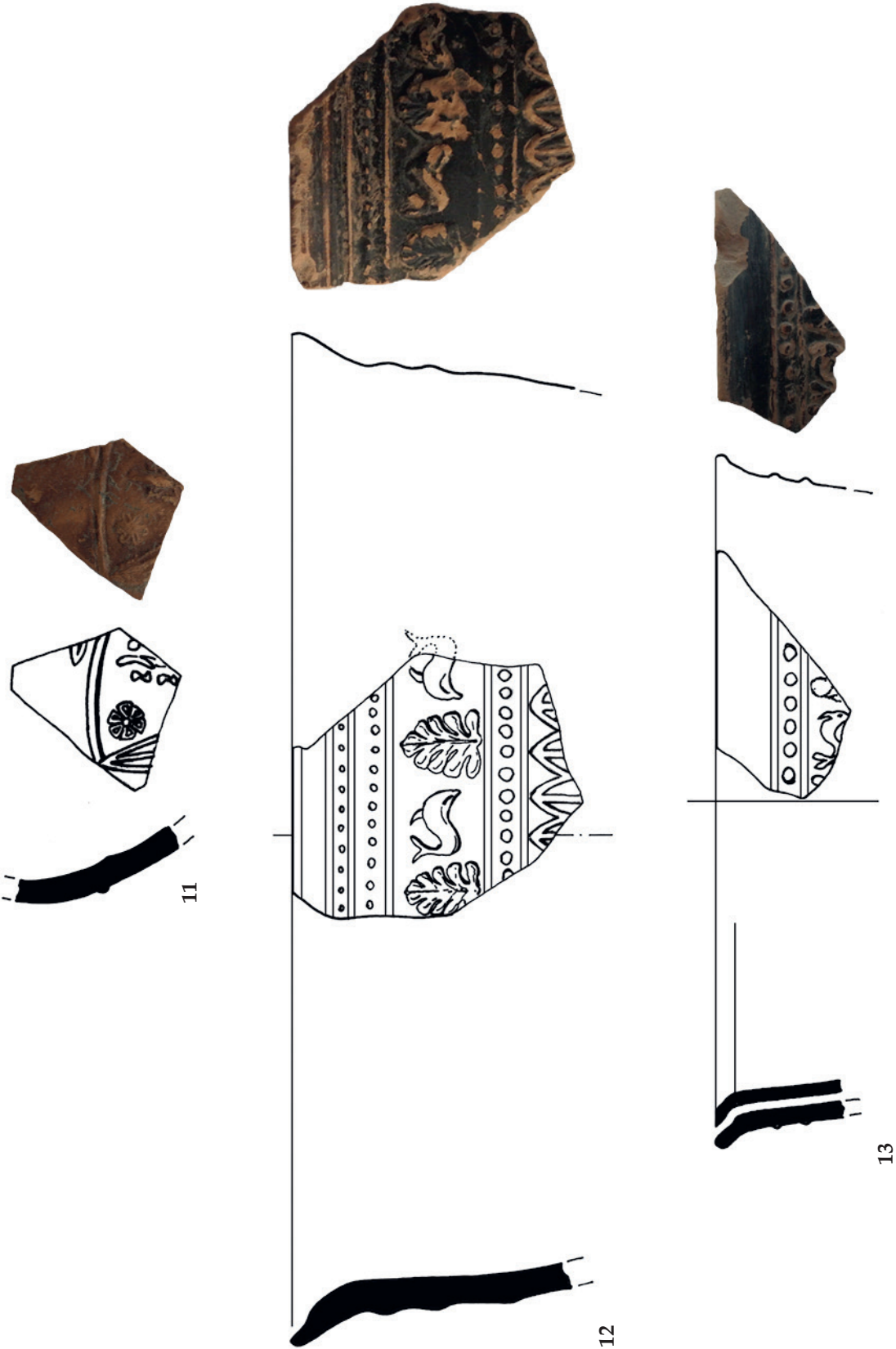


Fig. 6 : Cat. 11-13 (scale 1 : 1).





Fig. 7 : Cat. 14–15 (scale 1 : 1).



Fig. 8 : Cat. 16.



Fig. 9 : Cat. 17-18 (scale 1 : 1).

**19. OR19 FMV 171.5 (fig. 10)**

H.12.8; Dm. rim 22.

Several chalice-shaped krater fragments with molded rim, wall and recurved handle.

Clay hard with small inclusions reddish-yellow (7,5 YR 7/6). Slip, partially worn, dark red (10 R 3/6).

Decoration: under concentric ridges a row of double spirals and a row of the so-called ›Galatian shield‹; pattern with acanthus leaves folded at the top.

**20. OR19 MS4 117.8 (fig. 11)**

H. 4.3; Dm. bottom 3.2.

Bottom part of body and feet. Clay light red (2,5 YR 7/6). Slip dull light red (2,5 YR 6/6).

Decoration: double spirals; beading between two ridges. Imbricate nymphaea lotus petals; floral medallion; appliqué feet in form of molded mask.

**21. OR19 MS4 118.9 (fig. 11)**

H. 3.6; Dm. rim 9.2.

Wall fragment of bowl with slightly flaring rim.

Clay hard, reddish-yellow (5 YR 7/6). Slip, partially worn in the upper part, dark-brown (7,5 YR 3/4).

Decoration: palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette; beading between two double ridges; fern leaves.

**22. OR20 MS4 315.24 (fig. 12)**

H. 4.3; Dm. rim 11.5.

Wall fragment of bowl with slightly flaring rim.

Clay hard, reddish-yellow (5 YR 6/6). Slip dark-brown (7,5 YR 3/4).

Decoration: palmette alternates with antithetical dolphins flanking palmette; imbricate small fern leaves.

**23. OR20 MS4 237.22 (fig. 12)**

H. 2.6; W. 2.4.

Wall fragment of bowl.

Clay hard, reddish-yellow (5 YR 6/6). Slip black (5 YR 2,5/1).

Decoration: imbricate fern leaves.

**24. OR20 MS4 237.32 (fig. 12)**

H. 2.3; W. 1.9.

Wall fragment of bowl with slightly flaring rim.

Clay soft brownish-gray (7,5 YR 5/2). Slip dark grayish-brown (10 YR 3/2).

Decoration: band of ovoli and unrecognisable pattern, maybe stylized dolphins.

**25. OR20 MS4 295.24 (fig. 13)**

H. 5; Dm. rim 15.

Wall fragment of bowl with slightly flaring rim.

Clay soft reddish-yellow (7,5 YR 7/6). Slip, partially worn, thin, reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: beading between two ridges; band with clusters of grapes and vine leaves; more rows of beads between two ridges; band with rosette and unrecognisable element.

**26. OR20 MS4 295.25 (fig. 13)**

H. 4.5; W. 2.2.

Fragment foot and wall of bowl.

Clay soft, some tiny white inclusions, dull pink (2,5 YR 7/6). Slip, partially worn, dark brownish-black (10 YR 2/1).

Decoration: acanthus leaves alternating with nymphaea caerulea petals; appliqué foot in form of molded shell.

**27. OR20 MS4 325.3 (fig. 14)**

H. 6.6; W. 6.9.

Bottom part of body and feet.

Clay soft orange-reddish (7,5 YR 7/4).

Slip, almost completely worn, thin, reddish-brown (7,5 YR 4/6).

Decoration: band of ovoli between double ridges. Acanthus leaves alternating with acanthus leaves folded at the top; floral medallion; appliqué feet in form of molded shell.

**28. OR20 MS4 295.1 (fig. 15)**

H. 9.2; Dm. bottom 6.8.

Bottom part of deep hemispherical body fragment and feet.

Clay very light buff (10 YR 8/4). Slip, partially worn, black.

Decoration: two grooves in the upper section of wall; three appliqué feet in form of molded mask.



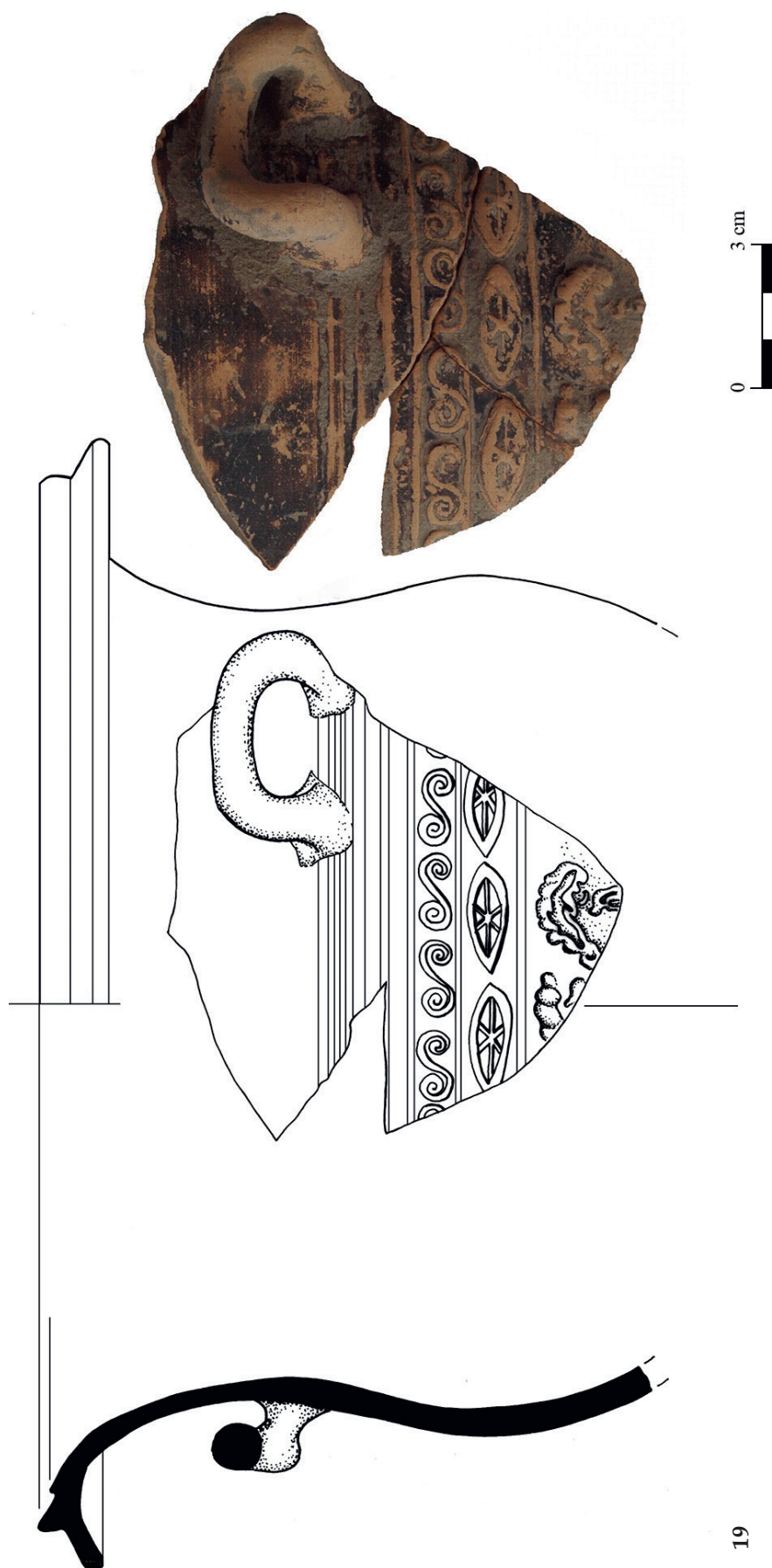


Fig. 10 : Cat. 19.



Fig. 11 : Cat. 20-21 (scale 1 : 1).

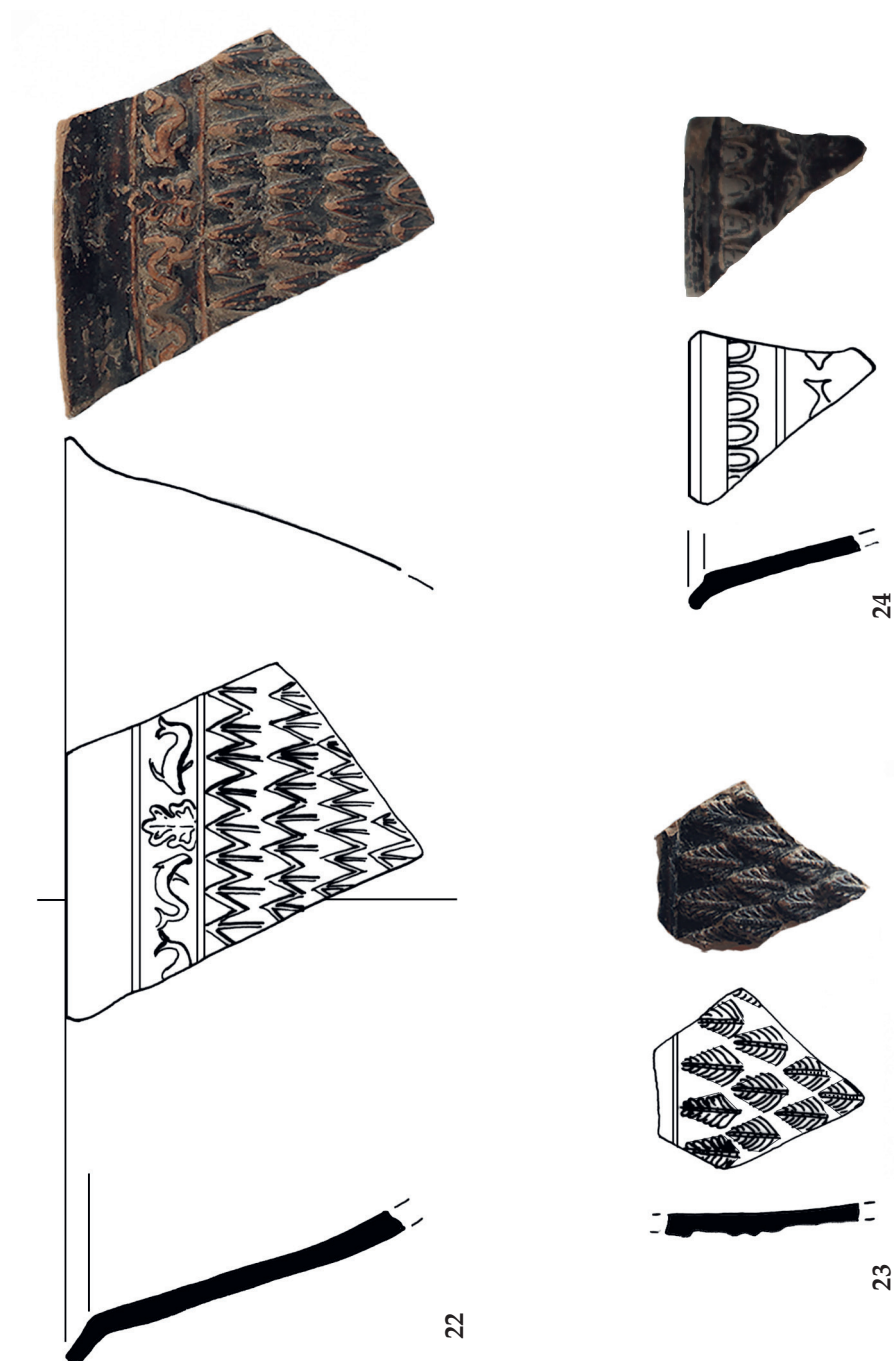
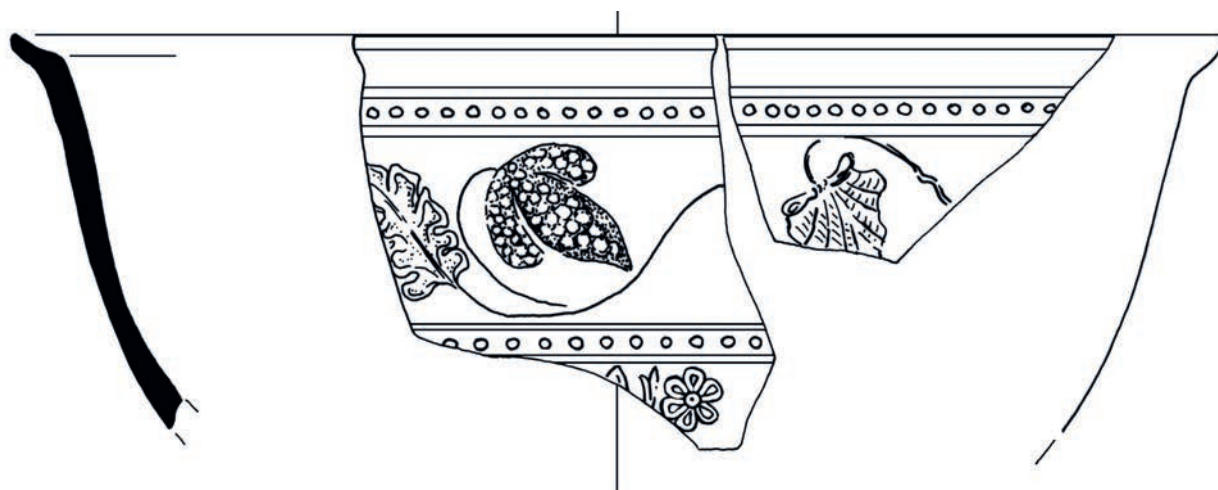


Fig. 12 : Cat. 22-24 (scale 1 : 1).



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Fig. 13 : Cat. 25-26 (scale 1 : 1).



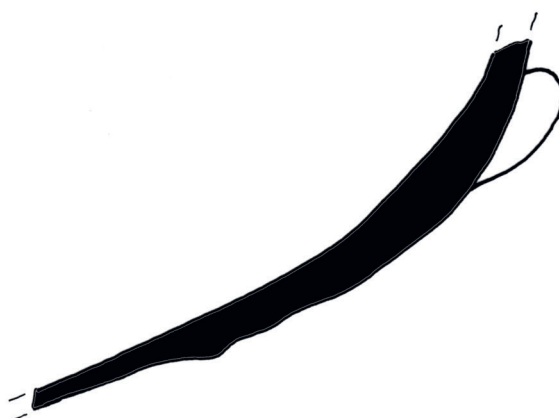
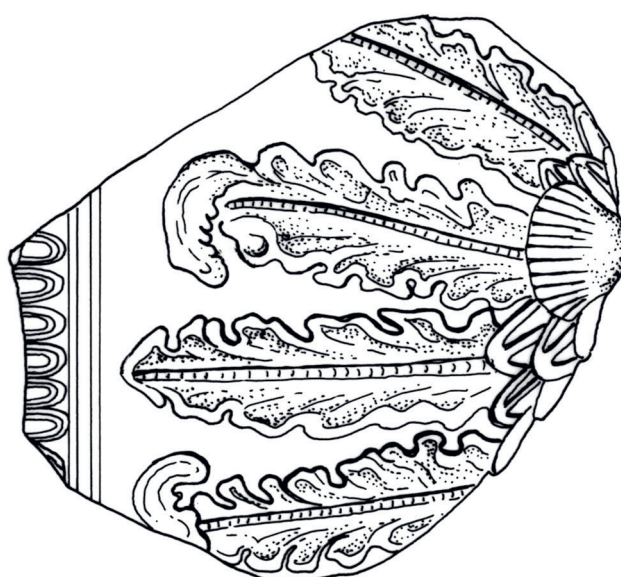


Fig. 14: Cat. 27 (scale 1 : 1).



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Fig. 15 : Cat. 28 (scale 1 : 1; drawings 1 : 2).

The presence of Hellenistic relief ware in Orikos had already been attested in earlier investigations: Three wall fragments of moldmade bowls related to the Dyrrhacchium production represent the previously identified Hellenistic relief ware in Orikos<sup>8</sup>. Now, based on the macroscopic characteristics of the clay and the slip coating, the new data document the link with the Illyrian production, and, above all, the Epirote production; only the deep hemispherical krater could be of Corinthian production<sup>9</sup>.

The main decorative repertoire of moldmade bowls adheres to that common in the ateliers active in a close production district, located within the territories overlooking the Gulf of Patras, both in the northern Peloponnese and in Aetolia and Acarnania up to the Ambracian Gulf and Thesprotia<sup>10</sup> (**fig. 16**). Yet, predominantly it tallies with the pottery produced in the workshop of Cassope, comprising very stringent parallels.

In the Cassope production, bowls with molded feet in the form of shells or masks are prevalent, similar to those from Orikos (**fig. 17**). Other motifs of decoration like nodules and the vegetal leaves occur as well as two dolphins flanking a palmette (**fig. 18**) and the so-called ›Macedonian shield‹ (nos. 17–18). The later pattern, until now known only on bowls, was used in various eastern Aegean ateliers<sup>11</sup> and also in the workshops in Epirus and on the Peloponnese. Furthermore, bowls with the ›Macedonian shield‹ were exported to the West, as data in Sicily and in the Torre Santa Sabina shipwreck indicate<sup>12</sup>.

The dolphin was a particularly favoured motif in moldmade ware all over the Mediterranean world, from the Ionian-Adriatic basin to the Aegean-Levantine sector. Linked to the Dionysian world, the imagery confirms the use of drinking vessels in symposia<sup>13</sup>.

The findspots of some moldmade ware with this motif are located in southern Illyria and Epirus, with vessels made in Cassope and, probably, in Phoinike.

The study of the material culture of Orikos in the Late Hellenistic period confirms that this city was strongly engaged in a commercial network in Illyria, Epirus, and maybe Achaia. Furthermore, the ongoing study of the amphoras indicates that Orikos was also open to the Italian markets.

### Acknowledgement

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8 BERETI ET AL. 2013, 117–119.

9 Similar bowls were found in Butrint, see: ALEOTTI ET AL. 2020, 50 fig. 4, 1. On top of these bowls there is often painted decoration (West Slope ware).

10 For an overview of Illyrian production see: SHEHI – GALATY 2013 and GAMBERINI 2016; the production centres of the Aetoloacarnania area are discussed in TSANTILA 2013; the Cassope workshop in GRAVANI 2001. There are also some similarities with the workshop of Pella, but the Macedonian production seems to be later, from the beginning of the 1st century BCE, see AKAMATIS 1993.

11 The earliest ›shield bowls‹ appear in Pergamon (DE LUCA – RADT 1999, 100–102) and then spread to Macedonia as well (BLAŽEVSKA 2006 and DROUGOU – TOURATSOGLOU 2013, 51 figs. 7–8).

12 In Sicily bowls with this pattern are attested in Palermo (PUPPO 1995, 109–112) and Eraclea Minoa; for the specimen from Torre Santa Sabina, see SIEBERT 1977.

13 PIETTRE 1996.







Fig. 16 : Sites with production indicators:  
1. Dyrrhacchium; 2. Triport; 3. Byllis; 4. Amantia; 5. Phoinike; 6. Corfù; 7. Gitana; 8. Cassope; 9. Ambracia; 10. Stratos; 11. Thermos; 12. Xrusobitsa; 13. Oneiade; 14. Pleurono; 15. Naupacto; 16. Pella; 17. Aigion; 18. Corinth; 19. Elis; 20. Lousoi; 21. Argo.



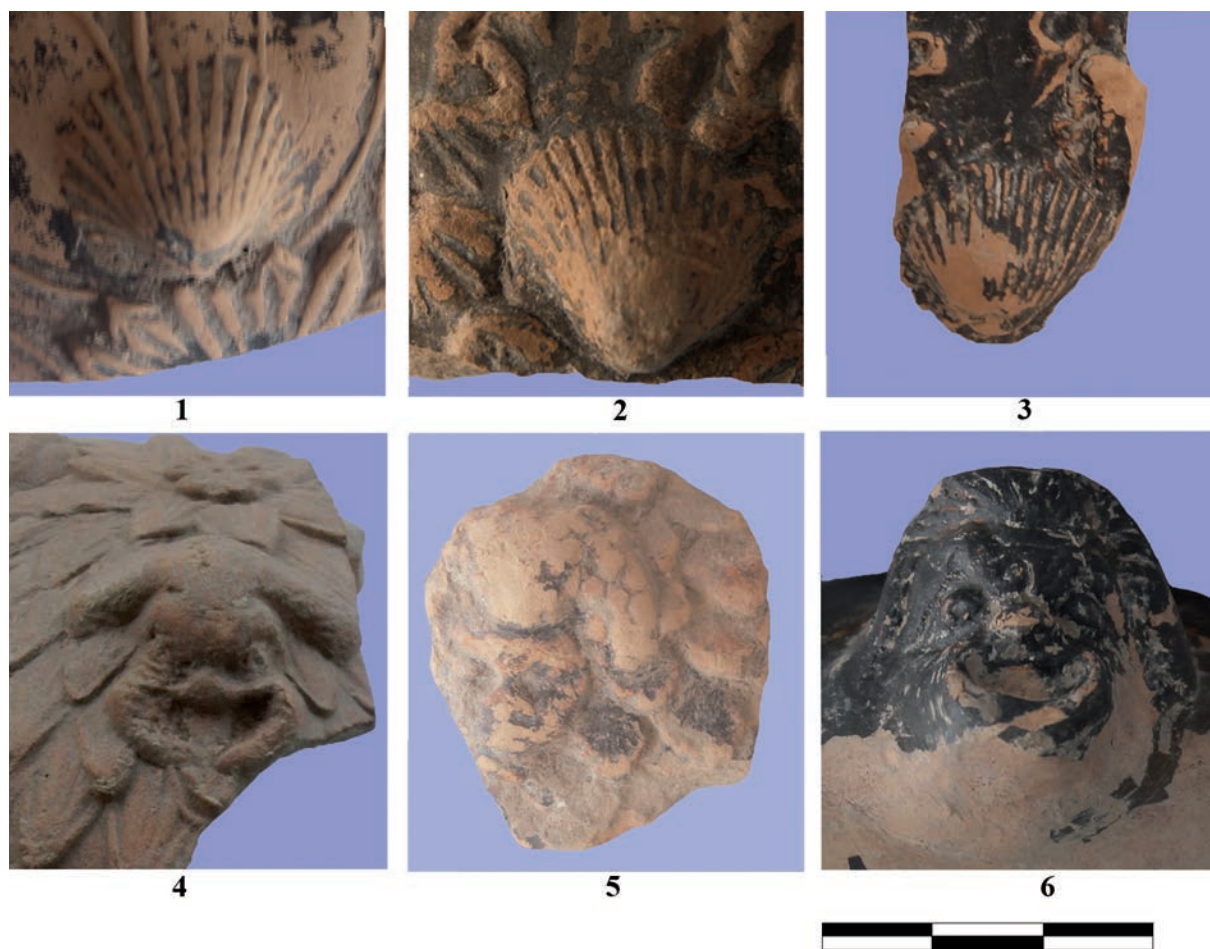


Fig. 17 : 1–5. Molded feet documented on bowls of Illyrian and Epirotan workshops  
(1: no. 15; 2: no. 27; 3: no. 26; 4: no. 20; 5: no. 5);  
6. Molded feet documented on kraters (no. 28) of a Greek / Corinthian atelier.

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Fig. 18 : Pattern with dolphins and palmette documented in Orikos  
(1: no. 4; 2: no. 8; 3: no. 12; 4: no. 21; 5: no. 22; 6: no. 16; 7: no. 13).

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