

**PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ON CERAMIC PRODUCTIONS OF
THE ISLAMIC PERIOD FROM THE MIDDLE ORONTES REGION:
A REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLAGE FROM APAMEA**

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Abstract

L'étude présentée ici fournit une évaluation préliminaire des productions céramiques de la période islamique attestées dans la région du Moyen Oronte. Elle se focalise, en particulier, sur un assemblage représentatif provenant des récentes investigations archéologiques effectuées par l'équipe du Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine de l'Université libre de Bruxelles dans le quartier nord-oriental de la ville d'Apamée de Syrie. L'analyse du matériel a permis d'identifier la présence sur le site de céramiques de production locale, glaçurées et non glaçurées, qui témoignent de l'existence d'une installation modeste mais intensive, probablement rurale, datée du 13^e et 14^e siècles. L'auteur se propose ici de mettre en évidence les changements et les permanences relatifs à cet assemblage afin de construire une première chrono-typologie qui puisse être une référence pour la région.

Introduction

The Middle Orontes region, broadly comprises between the towns of Homs to the south and Jisr al-Sughur to the north, has shown, since earlier periods, an intense settlement activity, strongly influenced by favourable environmental and climatic conditions. Nevertheless, the systematic study of its historical landscapes and archaeological sites has started rather late and it focused, at the very beginning, primarily on pre-Islamic settlements¹. Until recent times, the most important archaeological excavation which also referred to the Islamic period, was carried out in Hama between 1931 and 1938 by the Danish Archaeological Mission [Poulsen and Riis 1957]. The work published by Poulsen in 1957 provides, in fact, important data concerning ceramic productions attested in Central Syria during the Islamic period and it still offers a reference model for the whole region.

It is only in the past decade that new archaeological researches have been conducted in order to investigate more in detail the characteristics of the Islamic occupation of this area. In 2003, the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAMS) and the German Archaeological Institute of Damascus (DAI) surveyed the area between al-Rastan and Shayzar, in the vicinity of Hama, with the intent of documenting ancient settlement activities. The study has allowed to detect the presence of several small settlements dated to the Islamic period, that witnesses the significant population growth occurred in Middle Islamic times. In this period, almost none of the main sites of the region is occupied or re-occupied, while new villages and minor centres are founded *ex novo* [Bartl and al-Maqdissi 2007: 233]. Furthermore, the archaeological project carried out since 2002 at Qal'at Shayzar (University Ca' Foscari of Venice)² and the investigations of the north-eastern

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1 It is in particular from the seventies that deeper researches have been conducted in the region. In those years Courtois investigated the Bronze Age tells to the north of Hama [Courtois 1972]; later, in 1988, a group of researchers surveyed the area between Rastan and Shayzar, focusing mainly on prehistoric settlements [Sanlaville, Besancon, Copeland e Muhsen 1993]; in 1999–2000 survey campaigns were carried out in the Homs region by Philip *et al.* [Philip *et al.* 2002] and more recently, further investigations have been conducted by Fortin [2007] and Bartl and Maqdissi [2007].

2 From 2002, the University Ca' Foscari of Venice (Dir. Cristina Tonghini) and the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums

quarter at Apamea (Université Libre de Bruxelles)³, started in 2003, are providing an important contribution to the collection of new data, especially concerning settlement activities and material culture.

In this contribution, the author aims to present a preliminary picture of the archaeological documentation emerging from recent investigations carried out in the region. In particular, the ceramic assemblage issued from a representative sector of the bathroom complex in the north-eastern quarter of Apamea (Sector C), recently investigated by the archaeological team of the Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine of the University of Brussels (ULB), will be presented in detail. Even if quite restricted, this *corpus* offers various elements of discussion concerning the characteristics of the ceramic productions spread in the region during the Islamic period and, especially, during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Investigations at Apamea: presentation of the archaeological context

The archaeological site of Apamea (Fig. 1), usually known for its classical and byzantine history, can also be considered, for different reasons, as a representative context of the settlement history of the Middle Orontes region during the Islamic period.

Capital of the roman province of *Syria Secunda* and later administrative centre of an archdiocese, the town of Apamea remains until the Arab conquest one of the most important urban centres of the region. The study of transformations and changes occurred from 636 (Arab conquest) is still in progress and constitutes one of the main issues focused by recent archaeological investigations conducted in the site (Université libre de Bruxelles). Even if the features of the occupation during the different Islamic periods have not been completely documented yet, archaeological researches have provided so far new interesting data. During the Middle-Islamic period (12th – 15th centuries) a substantial transformation of the settlement features of the site has been noted by archaeologists: if the citadel of Qal'at al-Mudiq [Dangles 2004: 189–204], located to the west, becomes a strategic centre already from the 10th century, the low town (where the classical town of Apamea on the Orontes is settled) seems to be only partially occupied: just few quarters of the site show archaeological signs of an occupation between the 12th and 14th centuries and attest the presence of a modest but intense rural occupation⁴.

In this contribution, the author focuses on the archaeological investigations program carried out in the north-eastern quarter of Apamea from 2003. The project aims at documenting and reconstructing the settlement activities of a neuralgic area of the town, located between the northern walls and the colonnade streets (the *cardum*), over a long span of time. The archaeological research brought to light an imposing thermal complex that seems to be in use from the 2nd to the 7th century and that was later reoccupied as inhabited area undoubtedly until the Mamluk period (14th cent.). The archaeologists identified six occupational phases to be attributed to the Islamic period (Phases

of the Arabic Republic of Syria developed an archaeological project at Qal'at Shayzar, *Progetto Shayzar: Study and Valorisation of a Muslim Citadel of the Middle Orontes (Syria)*, that aims to investigate features, origins and evolutions of a fortified settlement in Central Syria and to document the development of constructive techniques in relation to the context of military architecture of the region. Moreover, a conservation and restoration program has begun in 2004 in order to enhance the rich architectural heritage of the site [www.progetto-shayzar.it].

3 The new research program at Apamea, started in 2002 under the direction of Prof. Didier Viviers (Université libre de Bruxelles), is mainly focused on the extensive archaeological investigations of the north-eastern quarter of the ancient town. The excavations brought to light an imposing thermal complex, occupied, with various purposes, until the Mamluk period [Viviers 2006, 109–122]. Archaeological investigation in this sector are still in progress.

I would like to thank the team of the Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine (ULB) for their collaboration and sustenance during the study of this assemblage.

4 So far, just the area of the north-eastern quarter has brought to light a significant documentation of the Middle Islamic period. Anyway, previous researches conducted at Apamea [Rogers 1972 and 1984] and data emerging from the study of surface material suggest that other small occupations, dated between the 12th and 14th centuries, were probably located in the ancient city.

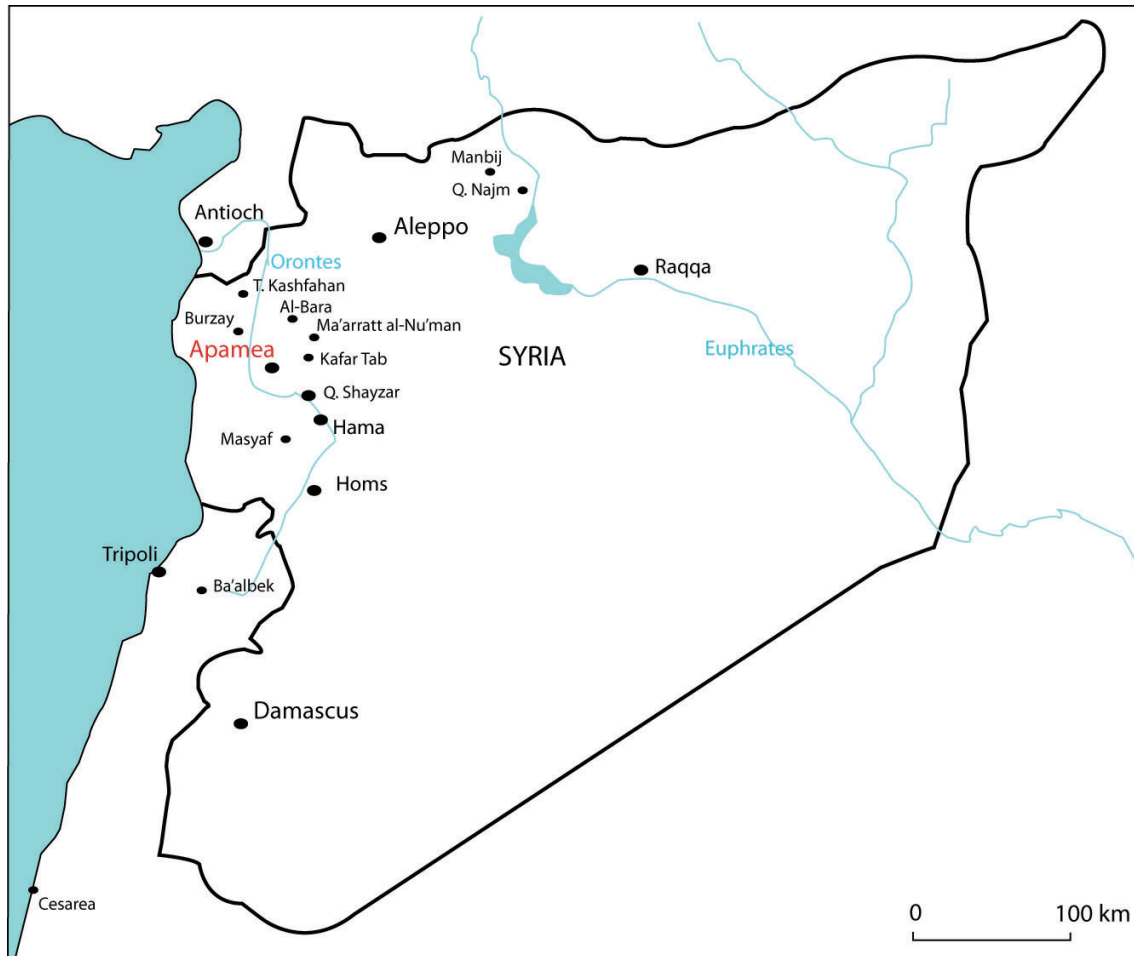


Fig. 1: Location of the site of Apamea.

2–7) that are characterised by the exploitation of the entire area of the bathroom complex and by the creation of new small spaces (rooms with plain soil usually arranged with *tannurs*) that follow the general disposition of the existing structures.

This article will focus on a representative context of the bathroom complex, Sector C, located to the south-west of the excavated area (Fig. 2).

At the very beginning of the Islamic occupation (Phase 2), the sector doesn't undergo substantial changes or adjustments. It is just partially re-arranged with a new pavement and some of the doors are closed. Various modifications of the space occur during the following phases. In Phase 3, one of the dividing walls is removed, creating a big room all over the sector. Some collapses determine the need of re-paving the area during Phase 4, when also two *tannurs* are settled in the north-western corner. Phase 5 and 6 are marked by several arrangements that mainly consist in the installation of new soils and *tannurs*; part of the space collapses at the end of Phase 6. The last occupation (Phase 7) is very circumscribed and the area is in a very bad state, but it is probably still occupied, as attested by the presence of some *tannurs*.

The abandon of the sector is marked by the collapse of the remaining structures, probably caused by a seismic event.

The ceramic assemblage

The material presented in this contribution comes from the south-western sector of the bathroom complex at Apamea (Sector C) and constitutes a sample of the ceramic assemblage dated to the Islamic



Fig. 2: The bathroom complex in the north-eastern quarter at Apamea. Location of Sector C.

period collected in the area. Furthermore, from a more general view, it also provides interesting indications of the repertoire of Islamic pottery productions spread in the Middle Orontes region between the 12th and 14th centuries.

The publication of the Islamic pottery typology from the north-eastern quarter of Apamea is currently in progress and it will appear integrated to stratigraphic data in the collection of the Académie Royale de Belgique.

In this paper, some central issues will be approached in detail in order to define evolution and continuity of the ceramic groups identified on the site and to provide a valid chronology for this assemblage.

The *corpus* presented here consist mainly of common ware productions: *glazed wares*, *cooking wares* (partially covered by a layer of uncoloured glaze) and *unglazed ware* (mostly handmade). A preliminary observation of fabrics suggests that all these ceramic groups were locally produced, but no wastes or kiln traces have been identified so far. Residual and unfortunately not well documented in the investigated context is the group of *Siliceous Ware (Fritware)*.

Glazed Ware

Among the ceramic productions identified in sector C, *Glazed Ware* is certainly the group that offers more cues of reflexions and information about chronology. The analysis of this assemblage, in fact, allows to identify evolutions in vessels shapes and variations in groups occurrences, according to the different occupational phases.

Almost all of the glazed fragments collected in sector C present a red body (iron rich fabric with mineral inclusions, *Munsell Soil Color Charts*: 2.5YR 5/6 – 4/6, red-dark red), that is also common to cooking wares.

Three different types of surface treatment have been identified among the glazed material: 1) Slip painted decoration under transparent coloured lead glaze; 2) Incise decoration through a layer of slip, covered by transparent coloured lead glaze and 3) Monochrome glaze usually applied on a thin layer of white or creamy slip.

All objects belonging to *Glazed Ware* seem to have been employed as tableware (bowls).

Slip Painted Ware is the most common group among glazed productions (60 fragments; 62,5%), abundantly documented during all the Islamic phases. During phases 3–5, two different types of *Slip Painted Ware* have been documented in this sector: the first one, scarcely attested, is characterised by thin lines of slip, which create elaborate interlacing decorative patterns, covered by a light yellow glaze, sometimes with green splashes (Pl. 1: 1–3); while the second one is characterised by thicker lines of slip, which form quite simple decorative motifs, covered by a yellow or green glaze (Pl. 1: 4–10). Both types are exclusively associated to open forms. The first one appear with a unique type of bowl, with slightly carinated walls and simple or quite rounded rim (Pl. 1: 1–3). This form is well documented in the region of Tripoli between the end of the 13th century and the beginning of 14th century [Salamé-Sarkis 1980: fig. 25, 27–28]. Other parallels dated to the same period, can be found, for example, at Khirbat al-Burin [Kletter and Stern 2006: fig. 19: 4] and Homs [Rugiadi 2001/2: fig. 15: 150; fig. 16: 177].

The second group presents a more diversified variety of shapes. The bowl with carinated walls and ledge rim (Pl. 1: 4–5) is attested in the sector during all the Islamic phases and constitutes the most common form of the *Slip Painted* assemblage. This bowl is profusely documented in all the Bilād al-Shām: at Damascus, it is attested in the Ayyubid period [McPhillips 2004: fig. 34] but also in Mamluk contexts. Véronique François rather notices that during the Ayyubid period, *Slip Painted Ware* is characterised by a red porous fabric, still documented in the Mamluk phases, when a finer orange fabric also appears [François 2008: fig. 18–700; 2009: 271, fig. 4: 17]. More to the south, a similar bowl, with wider and quite squared ledge rim, is usually dated to the 12th and 13th centuries [Stern and Avissar 2005: fig. 7: 7, 9–11].

During phases 3–5, other bowl types are also attested, but in lower quantity: flared bowls (Pl. 1: 6); slightly carinated bowls with thickened or rounded rim (Pl. 1: 7) and hemispherical bowls with simple rim (Pl. 1: 8). These shapes have been documented in Damascus [McPhillips 2004: fig. 33; François 2009: fig. 4: 18]; Tripoli [Salamé-Sarkis 1980: fig. 28: 2] and Israel [Avissar et Stern 2005: fig. 7: 6; Getzov 2000: fig. 24: 13]. Few exemplars of lamps are also attested (Pl. 1: 10).

During phases 6 and 7, some changes have been observed in *Slip Painted Ware*. First of all, only the group with simpler decoration is documented, while the group with a more elaborate decoration disappears in this area (as in the rest of the bathroom complex). Furthermore, the most common shapes attested during this period are carinated bowls with ledge rim and flared bowls with simple rim (Pl. 1: 4–6), while other types disappear.

Monochrome glaze ware is quite poorly documented in sector C (20 fragments). It is characterised by a red fabric (*Munsell Soil Color Charts*: 2.5YR 5/6 – 4/6 red-dark red) usually covered by a beige or whitish slip and by a thin layer of transparent lead glaze, mostly green coloured (few fragments with uncoloured glaze have also been documented). *Monochrome glaze ware* seems to increase in the very last phases of the Islamic occupation of the area (Phases 6 and 7), without approaching the quantity of *Slip Painted Ware*. As already explained, these two glazed groups are characterised by a similar fabric; they also share the same morphological repertoire: bowls with thickened rim (Pl. 2: 6, 9), sometimes slightly carinated (Pl. 2: 7) and flared bowls with simple rim (Pl. 2: 10).

The outer surface of *monochrome glaze ware* is often covered by slip and glaze, but just in the upper part of the vessel. In Southern Bilād al-Shām, flared or curved bowls with simple or rounded rim are attributed to the Mamluk period, from the second half of the 13th century to the 15th century and later [Stern and Avissar 2005: fig. 4: 1–2; Lazar 1999: fig. 2: 3]; the same chronology has been attributed to vessels found in Tripoli [Salamé-Sarkis 1980: fig. 30: 4–9].

Glazed fragments with incised decoration are extremely rare in sector C. They are characterised by thin incisions executed on a layer of beige slip and covered by a well preserved yellow glaze. Once again, the ceramic material presents a red fabric, similar to that of groups previously described.

This kind of fabric has been employed also for a unique shard, a small bowl with a ledge rim covered by a turquoise glaze on the inner surface and by a layer of creamy slip on the outer one (Pl. 2: 8).

Although not well represented (14 fragments) and exclusively residual, *Fritware* (glazed siliceous ware) provides valid chronological data that allow to contextualise the different phases identified by the archaeologists and to provide a chronological framework for common productions.

Just two fragments of *fritware* have been collected from earliest phases (Phase 3–5): a small jug with two handles, decorated with lustre and cobalt blue (Pl. 2: 1) and a fragment of a dish with a ledge rim, covered by a monochrome turquoise glaze. The first object is very well executed: the outer surface is decorated with fine decorative motifs, painted with a chocolate coloured lustre and the inner surface is covered by cobalt blue, except for the upper part, where an horizontal band of lustre runs all over the rim. The fabric is rose and compact.

The features of fabric and the kind of decoration allow to date this vessel to the late 12th – early 13th century [Tonghini 1998: fritware 2, 46–51].

Among the fragments belonging to the latest phases of the Islamic occupation (Phases 6–7), we noticed three objects simply covered by a turquoise glaze and two shards painted in black under a transparent turquoise glaze (Pl. 2: 4–5). They are all characterised by a porous white-yellowish body. This material is in a very bad state of preservation (fragmentary and deteriorated); just two fragments of open forms have been identified: two small bowls with simple or ledge rim (Pl. 2: 2–3). Since shape and decoration cannot provide chronological data because of fragmentary conditions, the characteristics of fabric allow to identify this material. *Fritwares* with a porous yellowish body are usually dated to the Mamluk period [Tonghini 1998: fritware 3, 51–55].

Cooking Ware

Well documented in sector C and in the bathroom complex more in general, is the group of red *cooking ware* (120 fragments). In fact, except for one fragment of handmade cooking ware characterised by a calcareous body with calcite, it constitutes the unique ceramic group employed for cooking food. The morphological repertoire mainly consists of closed forms and in particular of globular pots. Just few exemplars of pans have been documented in this area.

Earlier shapes attested in sector C are globular pots with folded rim (Pl. 3: 1–3) and pots with short neck and everted rim (Pl. 3: 5–7). The first type is abundantly documented until the abandon of the space (Phases 3 – 7).

This is the most common shape of Northern and Central Syria during the Middle Islamic period (12th – 14th cent.), as attested in various sites of the region: Rahba-Mayadin [Rousset 1996: fig. 61: 606–609], Damascus [McPhillips 2004: fig. 44: 10–11], Rusafa [Knötzele 2006: taf. 31: 1–9], Qal‘at Ja‘bar [Tonghini 1998: fig. 145: f, g], Tripoli [Salamé-Sarkis 1980: fig. 37: 8] and Hama [Poulsen 1957: 240]. Short neck pots probably appear earlier in the region, during the 11th century and continue to be documented until the 13th century [Knötzele 2006: taf. 31: 11].

On the contrary, the morphological repertoire of *cooking wares* from Southern Bilād al-Shām differs: during the Crusaders period a globular neckless pot with everted rim predominates; while since the Mamluk period the most common shape becomes a lengthened pot with thick everted rim [Avisar and Stern 2005: fig. 39].

From phase 4, a variety with a wider folded rim appears in sector C (Pl. 3: 4) and, in later phases (Phases 6 and 7), pots with short neck disappear. Finally, a new shape is documented from phase 6: a globular pot with a ribbed rim, probably covered by a lid.

As regards open forms, pans have been documented exclusively in the earliest phases (Phases 3–5). They are usually hemispherical or rounded vessels with a thickened or ribbed rim, equipped with two horizontal handles (Pl. 3: 8–9).

Glazed pans with red fabric become popular in Bilād al-Shām from the 12th century. Some chronological distinctions have been made by Avisar and Stern for the ceramic material identified in Israel [Stern and Avisar 2005: 96–98, fig. 41], where productions of the Crusaders period are characterised by a red fabric covered by a thick and well preserved glaze; while Mamluk productions have a brown or orange body and a thin layer of glaze. They share some morphological similarities: the most spread shape for both productions is a pan with flared walls and everted rim, equipped with basket handles.

All objects employed for cooking purposes were glazed on the interior (transparent uncoloured glaze) in order to create an impermeable surface more suitable for cooking. Some splashes of glaze can be found also on the exterior, below the rim, but just for decorative reasons.

Unglazed Ware

Unglazed Ware is very common in sector C and represents the 54% of the whole ceramic *corpus* of this area (257 fragments). Unlike *Glazed Ware* and *Cooking Ware*, it presents a calcareous body, quite porous, beige or green coloured (*Munsell Soil Color Charts*: 5Y 7/3 pale yellow - 2.5YR 7/2 light grey).

Among unglazed productions, *Handmade geometrically painted ware* constitutes the most representative group (253 fragments), but, even if well documented in the sector, the number of minimum forms identified is quite exiguous. Fragments belong to few standardised forms: jars with long neck and simple or slightly everted rim and decorated handles (Pl. 4: 1–2); dishes with flat base (Pl. 5: 1–2); basins with flat base and flared walls (Pl. 5: 3–5) and small jugs (Pl. 4: 3–4, 7, 10).

All objects have been moulded by hand using the coiling technique: traces of clay joints are still visible on the inner surface. Objects usually present a painted decoration, often representing geometrical figures, that is located on neck, shoulders and handles. They are usually painted in red (the colour of painting can change because of the firing temperature) and more rarely in red and black. The bichrome painting is usually associated to a finer decoration (Pl. 4: 4; Pl. 5: 6–7). Finally, some finds are decorated with deep incisions, roughly executed, as in the case of a small jug found in phase 5 (Pl. 4: 7).

The *handmade geometrically painted ware* (HMGPW) appears in Bilād al-Shām at the 12th century and reaches its highest diffusion during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods; it is still produced in the Ottoman period, when the technique seems to deteriorate [Avisar and Stern 2005: 113]. This ceramic production is mainly documented in rural contexts, where it seems to replace in part wheel-made productions [Johns 1998: 65–93]. Nevertheless, various urban sites, such as Damascus [McPhillips 2004: fig. 67; François 2008: fig. 17–800], Hama [Poulsen 1957: 270–274, fig. 1000–1035] and Jerusalem [Tushingham 1985: 145, 150] have attested a small presence of *handmade geometrically painted ware*.

The emerging archaeological frame probably reflects the social and political situation of the

period: the Ayyubid and Mamluk times are marked, in fact, by an important population growth, that involves above all rural areas. Consequently, new cheap and easily moulded productions, like *HMGPW*, begin to be massively produced. Even if probably produced in the vicinity of the finding contexts, this ware gains a certain popularity all over the Bilād al-Shām, where a quite standardised morphological and decorative repertoire is documented.

As regards the site of Apamea, some not well-finished fragments (wastes or more probably, second choice objects) have been identified during the excavations of the bathroom complex; this can suggest that *handmade geometrically painted ware* was probably produced not too far from the site. This rests just an hypothesis, since archaeologists don't dispose of more precise data.

As regards chronological evaluations, the material from Apamea doesn't provide valid indications about morphological or decorative changes related to this group. *Handmade geometrically painted ware* is documented since the first occupation of sector C (Phases 2 and 3) and continues to be attested, without significant variations, until the abandon of the space (Phase 7).

Only four fragments of *Mouldmade Ware* were found in sector C. The most interesting piece is a jug issued from phase 3 (Pl. 5: 8). The moulded decoration stands on the shoulders and it is characterised by a series of spirals inscribed in vertical bands. Three fragments, richly decorated with geometrical motifs (Pl. 5: 9–11), belong probably to pilgrim flasks. All the material presents a quite porous beige-green calcareous body.

Mouldmade Ware is well documented in the Bilād al-Shām: at Hama, Poulsen ascribes this group, and in particular that of pilgrim flasks, to the very last occupational phase at the citadel, before the Mongol invasion in 1401 [Poulsen 1957: 270–274, fig. 1000–1035]. Moreover, the author reports the finding of some moulds, suggesting that Hama was probably a production centre. A find, very similar to Apamea big jug, has been identified in Jerusalem, where, on the basis of archaeological evidence, moulded jugs are in use from the beginning of the Ayyubid period until the Mamluk period [Tushingham 1985: 145, fig. 35: 38]. In Damascus, McPhillips identifies a consistent group of fine moulded ware characterised by thin walls and smooth surface, not documented among the material of sector C in Apamea. Some objects more similar to those presented here have also been identified, but in lower quantity [McPhillips 2004: 168–170]: they have a porous buff or pale yellow body associated with an epigraphic, vegetal or figurative moulded decoration, common to pilgrim flasks. This group is attested for the first time in 12th century and continues to be abundantly documented in later periods (13th – 14th cent.). Remains of a Damascene workshop that produced pilgrim flasks during the Mamluk period have been identified at the beginning of the 20th century [Sauvaget 1932].

Typical shapes of the Mamluk *moulded ware* production are flasks with rounded body and flasks with flat body, both with handles emerging from the base of neck [Avisar and Stern 2005: 117, fig. 49]. The Mamluk material is usually adorned with elaborate geometric, floral or figurative patterns as well as with blazons and inscriptions (in this case usually related to Mamluk heraldry).

Conclusions

The archaeological excavation of sector C, in the south-western area of the bathroom complex of Apamea, provides a representative sample of ceramic productions dated to the Islamic period. The analysis of this assemblage, together with the stratigraphic documentation of the area, allows to date this occupation to the 13th and 14th centuries. In this period, the entire complex was occupied by a modest but intense settlement characterised by the presence of small rooms, usually equipped with one or more *tannur*, organised following the preserved structures of the bathrooms.

The archaeological documentation and the analysis of the finds provide evidence for a continuous occupation of the area, that can be divided, on the base of the collected data, into two main periods: 1) *phases 3, 4 and 5* (13th cent.); 2) *phases 6 and 7* (late 13th – 14th cent.).

This sequence finds valid correspondences in the study of the ceramic assemblage discussed

in this contribution. As already explained, in fact, during phases 3, 4 and 5, two decorative types of *Slip Painted Ware* have been documented (the first one characterised by a fine and quite complex decoration and the second one, larger in quantity, by a simpler decoration). On the contrary, from phase 6, just the second type is attested. Moreover, the variety of forms associated to this group seems larger during the first period; later, just bowls with flared walls and carinated bowls with ledge rim are attested.

The archaeological evidence also reports the increment of *monochrome glaze wares* during phases 6 and 7.

Some evolutions have been attested also in regards to the group of *cooking ware*. If the globular pot with everted rim continues to be documented during the whole period of the occupation, the type with short neck disappears after the phase 5. Furthermore, in phase 6 the globular pot with ribbed rim starts to be attested. Finally, open forms (pans) have been documented exclusively in the earliest phases (Phases 3–5).

The presence of some finds with a siliceous body (*Fritware*), even if attested as residual materials, seems to confirm this picture. Fragments with a porous body covered by a turquoise glaze, probably associated to Mamluk productions, have been issued only in later phases.

Unfortunately, this study doesn't bring relevant chronological data concerning changes and evolutions of *Unglazed pottery*. On the one hand, *Moulded ware* is not well documented in the site and consequently doesn't offer relevant cues of discussion; the few fragments collected in the area have been documented in all the Islamic phases and are broadly dated to the 13th and 14th centuries. On the other hand, *Handmade geometrically painted ware*, which represents the most large ceramic group of this *corpus*, seems to be not subjected to any variations in style or shape.

The recent archaeological seasons at Apamea have provided a great amount of evidence in support of the study of common ware productions attested in the region, allowing to illustrate a usually underrepresented territory. The ceramic assemblage discussed here provides a preliminary frame of groups spread in this area in the 13th and 14th centuries and constitutes a point of departure in the creation of a valid chronotypology.

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Captions of Plate 1 to 5

(Pl. 1) Slip Painted Ware

1. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent yellow glaze (AP.04.IV.67.7, Phase 5). Diam. 15 cm.
2. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent yellow glaze (AP.04.IV.130.50, Phase 5)
3. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent light green glaze (AP.04.IV.124.26, Phase 4). Diam. 29 cm.
4. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent yellow glaze (AP.05.I.29.26, Phase 3) Diam. 35 cm.
5. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent green glaze (AP.05.I.59.18, Phase 3). Diam. 38 cm. Photo by Aude Vanlathem.
6. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent green glaze (AP.04.IV.130.47, Phase 5). Diam. 25 cm.
7. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent yellow glaze (AP.06.I.5.21, Phase 5). Diam. 19 cm.
8. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent green glaze (AP.06.I.3.14, Phase 7).
9. Bowl, Slip painted decoration under transparent yellow glaze (AP.04.IV.130.3, Phase 5). Photo by Aude Vanlathem.
10. Lamp, Slip painted decoration under transparent green glaze (AP.04.IV.130.5, Phase 5). Photo by Aude Vanlathem. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).

(Pl. 2) Fritware and Monochrome Glaze Ware

1. Small jug, Fritware decorated in lustre and cobalt blue (AP.04.IV.212.27, Phase 4); Diam. 6 cm. Photo by Aude Vanlathem. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
2. Dish or bowl, Fritware with turquoise glaze (AP.04.IV.129.14, Phase 6).
3. Dish or bowl, Fritware with turquoise glaze (AP.04.IV.129.14, Phase 6).
4. Fritware painted in black under transparent turquoise glaze (AP.04.IV.30.32, Phase 7). Photo by Aude Vanlathem.
5. Fritware painted in black under transparent turquoise glaze (AP.04.IV.30.31, Phase 7). Photo by Aude Vanlathem.
6. Dish or bowl, green glaze ware (AP.04.IV.67.6, Phase 7).
7. Bowl, green glaze ware (AP.05.I.30.41, Phase 6).
8. Bowl, turquoise glaze ware (AP.04.IV.212.20, Phase 4).
9. Bowl, green glaze ware (AP.04.IV.30.29, Phase 7). Diam. 15,5.
10. Bowl, green glaze ware (AP.04.IV.30.3, Phase 7). Diam. 22,5 cm.

(Pl. 3) Cooking Ware

1. Cooking pot (AP.04.IV.130.39, Phase 5). Diam. 17 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
2. Cooking pot (AP.04.IV.130.9, Phase 5). Diam. 17 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
3. Cooking pot (AP.04.IV.30.22, Phase 6). Diam. 19 cm.
4. Cooking pot (AP.04.IV.30.23, Phase 6). Diam. 18,5 cm.
5. Cooking pot (AP.05.I.30.26, Phase 3). Diam. 14 cm.
6. Cooking pot (AP.06.I.15.29, Phase 3). Diam. 13,5 cm.
7. Cooking pot (AP.05.I.30.17, Phase 3). Diam. 17,5 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
8. Pan (AP.05.I.56.39, Phase 3). Diam. 21,5 cm.
9. Pan (AP.05.I.59.5, Phase 3). Diam. 15,5 cm.

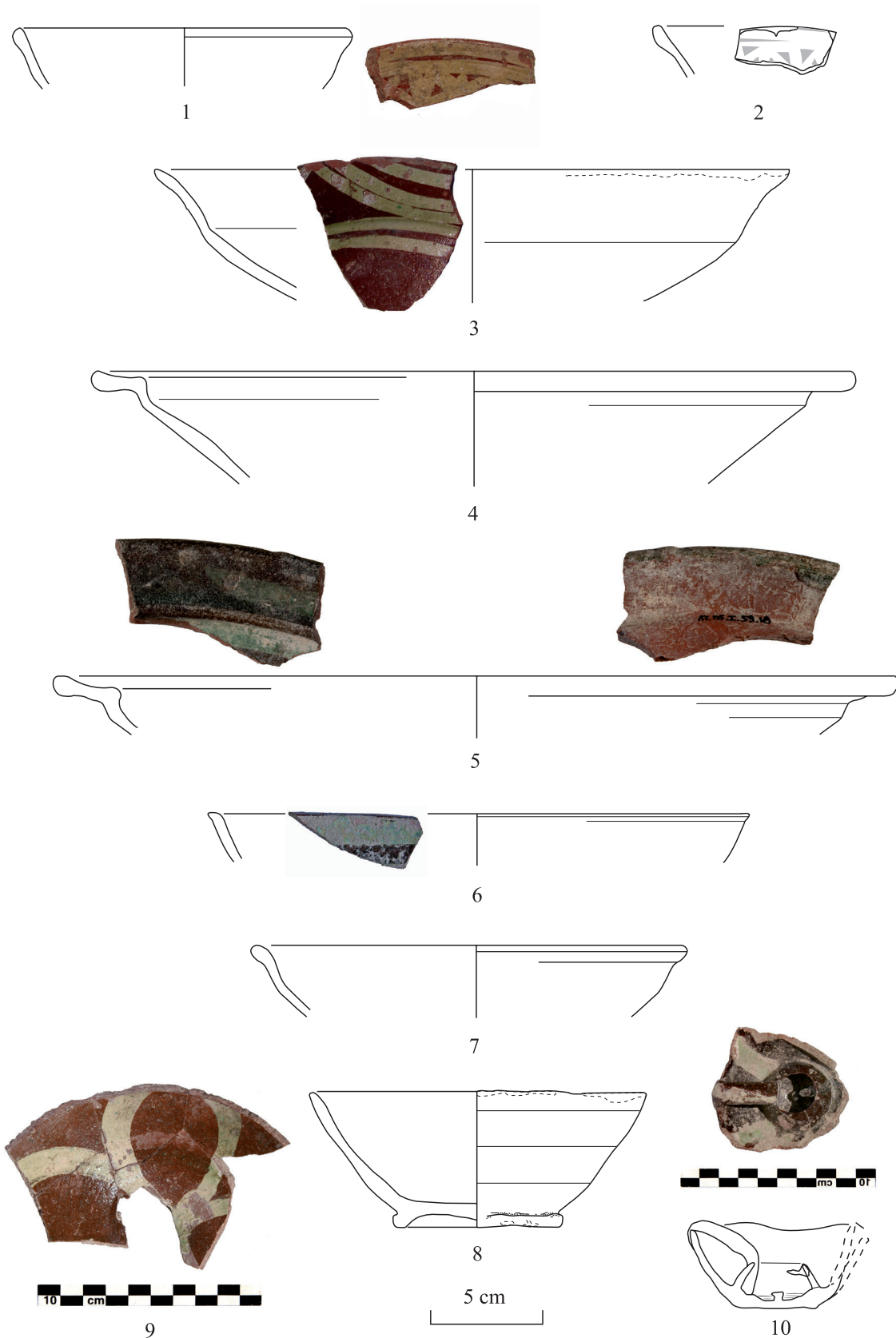
(Pl. 4) Handmade Geometrically Painted Ware

1. Jar (AP.04.IV.130.57, Phase 5). Diam. 16,5cm.
2. Jar (AP.05.I.28.20, Phase 4). Diam. 13,5 cm.
3. Jug (AP.05.I.59.3, Phase 3). Diam. (rim) 5 cm; (base) 4,5 cm. Photo by Aude Vanlathem. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
4. Jug, painted in black and red (AP.04.IV.73.2, Phase 7). Diam. 6 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
5. Handle of a jug (AP.04.IV.173.11, Phase 6).
6. Handle of a jar (AP.04.IV.130.70, Phase 5). Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
7. Handmade jug with incised decoration (AP.04.IV.130.18, Phase 5). Diam. 6,5 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).

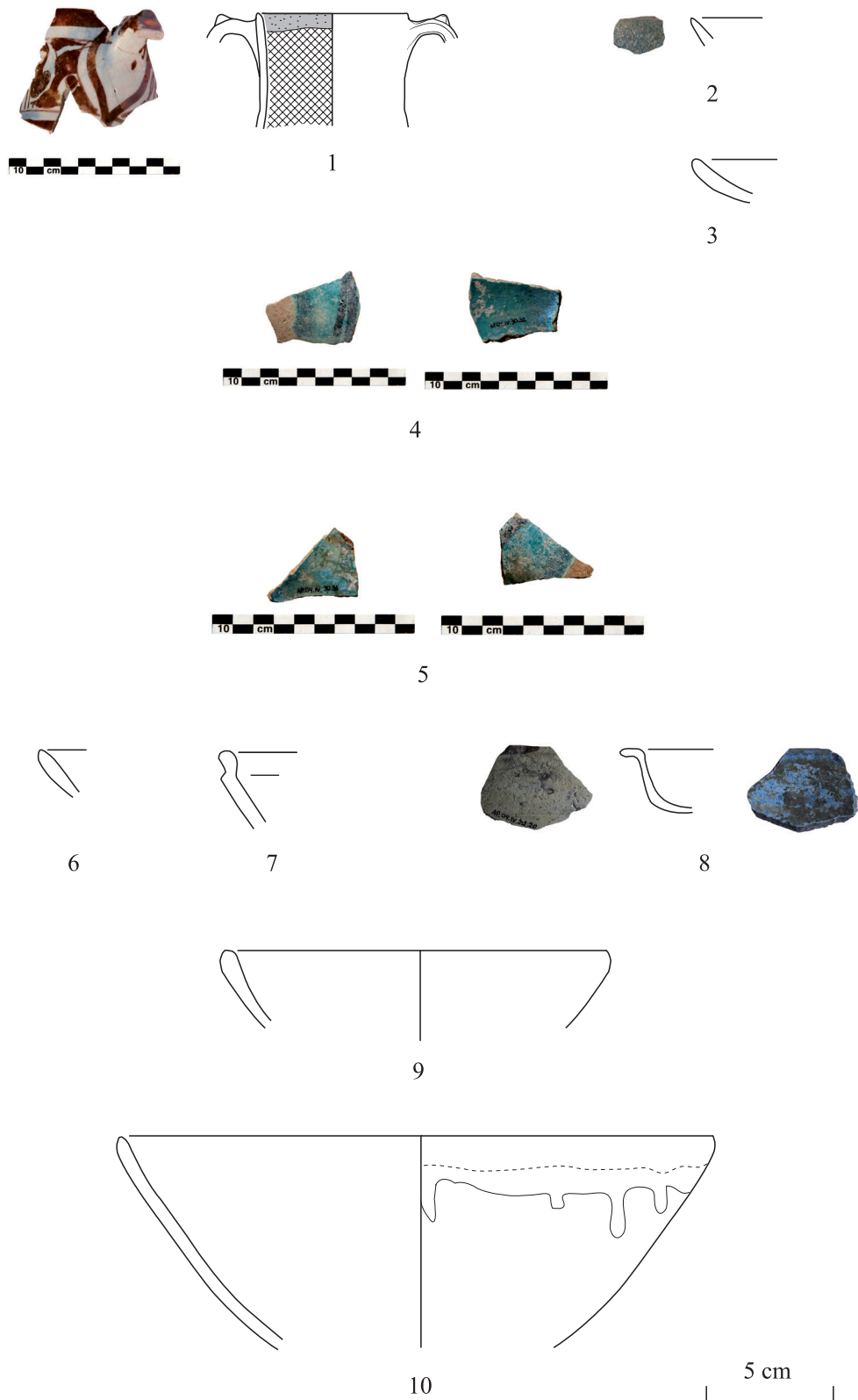
8. Jar (AP.04.IV.30.30+35, Phase 7). Diam. 7,5 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
9. Jar (AP.04.IV.30.34, Phase 7). Diam. 13,5 cm.
10. Spouted jug (AP.05.I.56.4, Phase 3). Diam. 8 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).

(Pl. 5) *Handmade Geometrically Painted Ware and Moulded Ware*

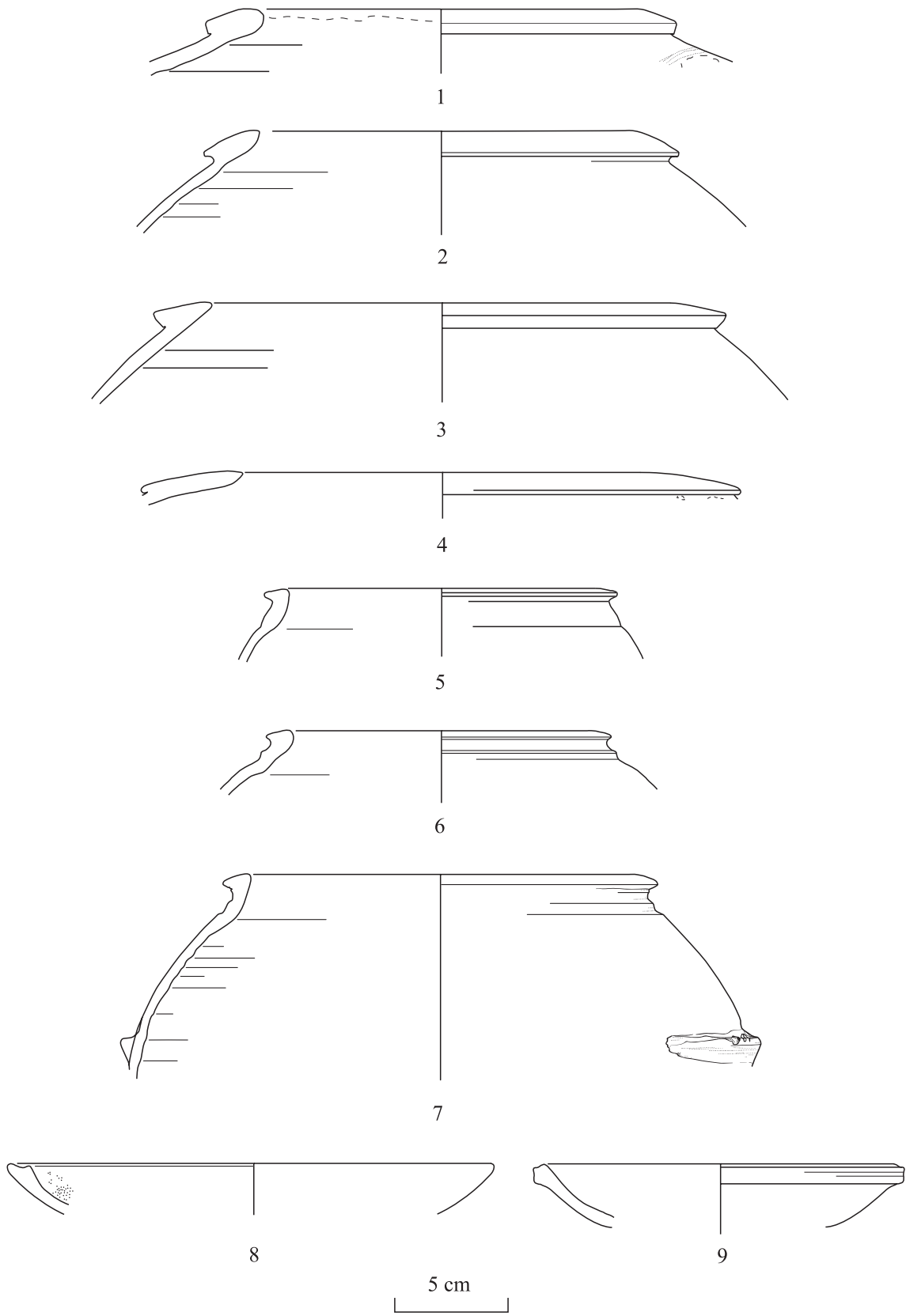
1. Dish (AP.05.I.59.16, Phase 3). Diam. (rim) 17,5 cm; (base) 14 cm.
2. Dish (AP.04.IV.173.3, Phase 6). Diam. (rim) 14 cm; (base) 10 cm.
3. Basin (AP.05.I.56.9, Phase 3). Diam. 23 cm. Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
4. Basin (AP.05.I.30.4, Phase 3). Diam. 25,5 cm.
5. Basin (AP.05.I.29.27, Phase 3). Diam. 29 cm.
6. Fragment painted in black and red (AP.04.IV.130.27; Phase 5).
7. Spout painted in black and red (AP.05.I.28.19, Phase 4).
8. Big jug, Moulded Ware (AP.05.I.56.47, Phase 3). Drawing by Anja Stoll (CReA – ULB).
9. Fragment of pilgrim flask, Moulded Ware (AP.06.I.6.1, Phase 4).
10. Fragment of pilgrim flask, Moulded Ware (AP.04.IV.130.42, Phase 5).
11. Fragment of pilgrim flask, Moulded Ware (AP.04.IV.117.15, Phase 7).



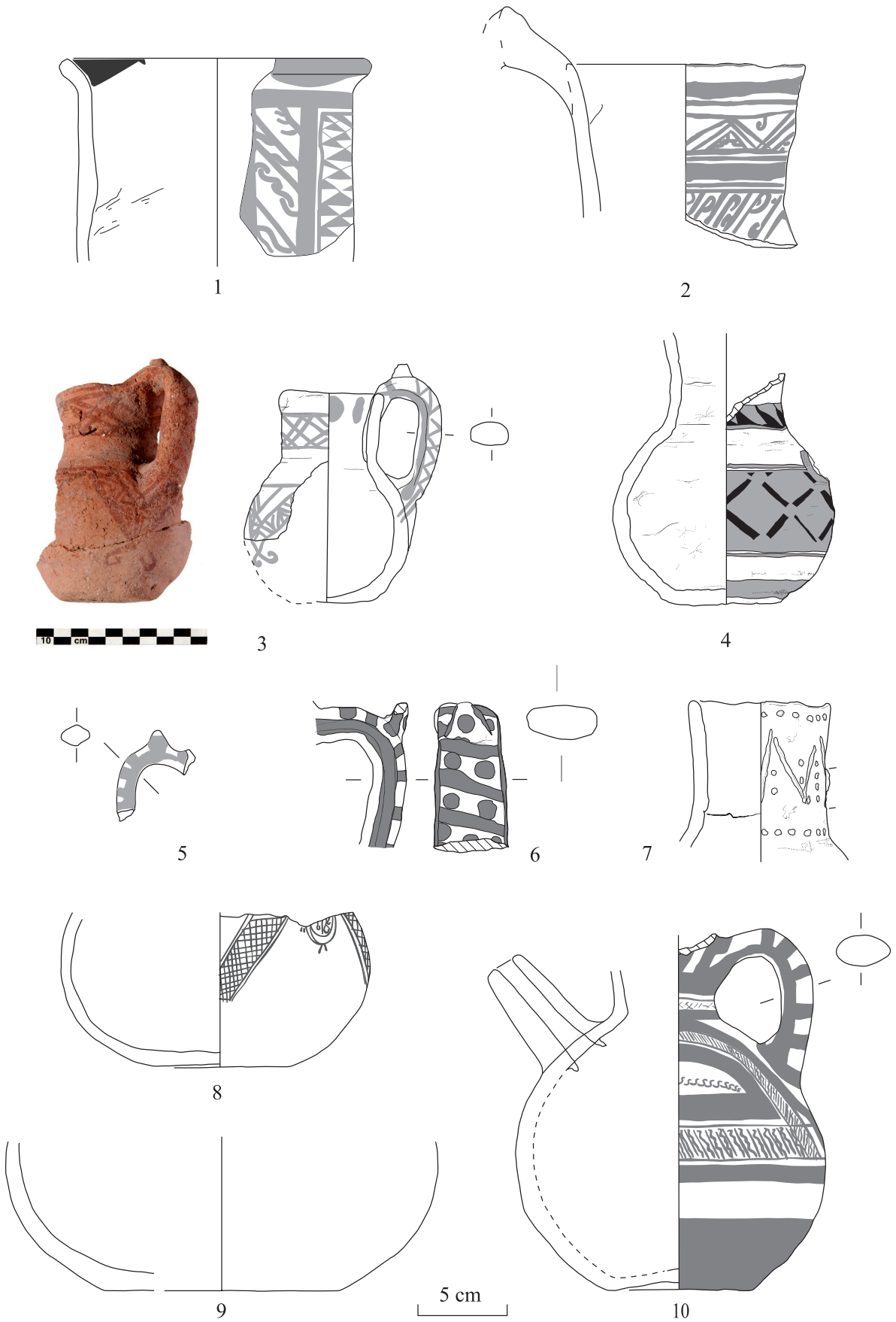
Pl. 1: Slip Painted Ware



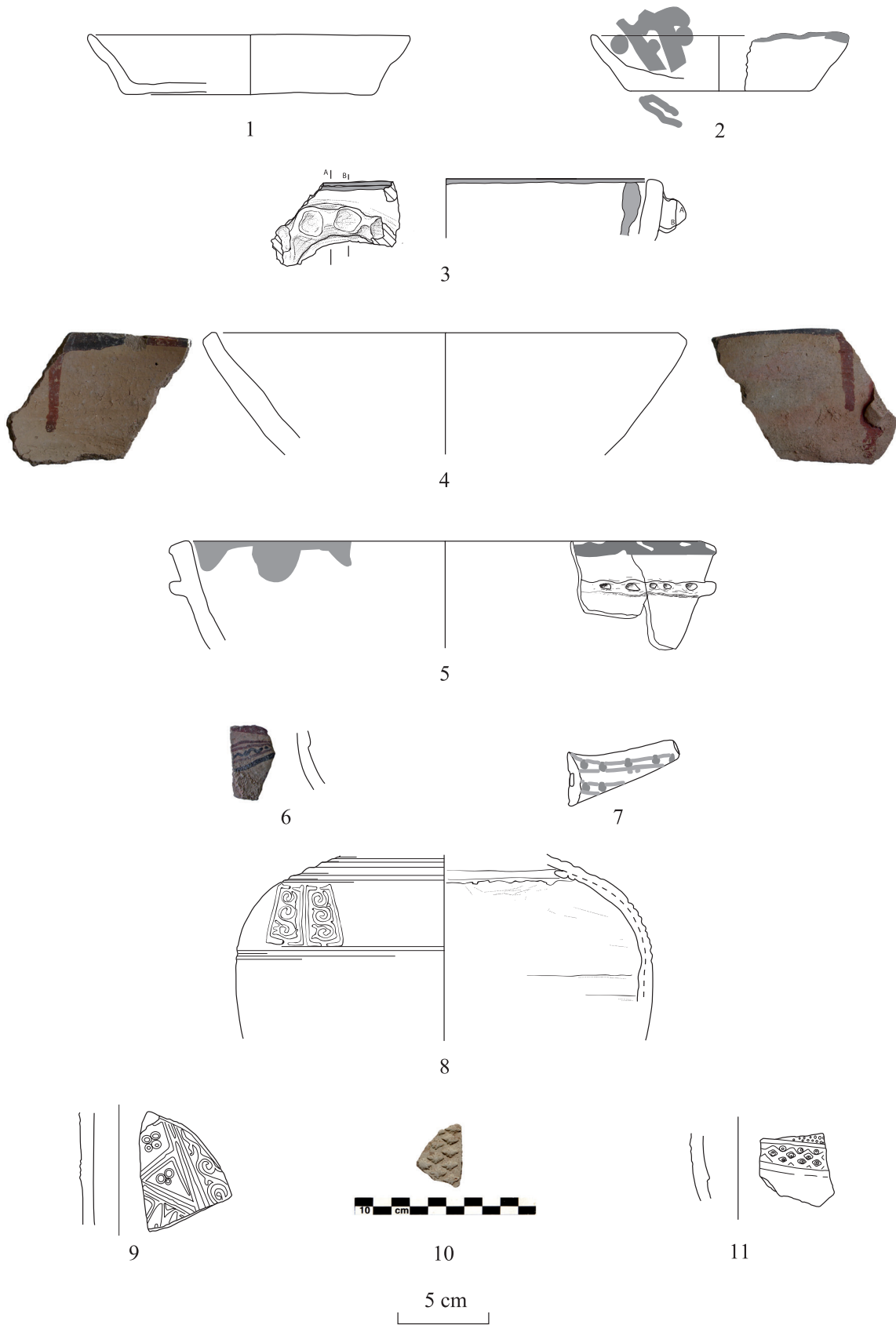
Pl. 2: Fritware and Monochrome Glaze Ware



Pl. 3: *Cooking Ware*



Pl. 4: Handmade Geometrically Painted Ware



Pl. 5: Handmade Geometrically Painted Ware and Moulded Ware