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## THE RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE OF NIKONION. THE RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH 2009-2011

**ABSTRACT** As a result of archaeological research carried out in 2008-2011 in ancient Nikonion, the settlement phases were revealed, referring to the declining phase of settlement of the city, the late and early Hellenistic and Late Classical periods. The declining phase dates back to the 1st-3rd century BC. Registered monuments indicate the presence of stone structures. However, due to the intensive agricultural exploitation of this place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the exposed remains of the structure are badly damaged. They do not allow for the reconstruction of the buildings' form, size and spatial development. The next settlement level is poorly preserved in architectural objects but manifests in the uncovered source material, mainly table ceramics. The most interesting, due to the state of preservation, are the remnants of architecture dating back to the early Hellenistic period. As a result of the research, a house was found consisting of at least six rooms with partially preserved stone and clay floors. The level relating to the Classical period was captured only as a result of surveys. However, it indicates a different spatial layout of the emerging architecture. The article presents the remains of architectural objects referring to individual phases and source material, allowing for their chronological interpretation.

**Keywords:** Black Sea, colonization, Greek polis, house

**ABSTRAKT** W wyniku badań archeologicznych przeprowadzonych w latach 2008-2011 w antycznym Nikonion odsłonięto fazy osadnicze, nawiązujące do schyłkowej fazy osadnictwa miasta, okresów późno- i wczesnohellenistycznego oraz późnoklasycznego. Faza schyłkowa sięga I-III wieku p.n.e. Zarejestrowane zabytki wskazują na obecność budowli kamiennych. Jednak ze względu na intensywną eksploatację rolniczą tego miejsca w XIX i na początku XX wieku odsłonięte pozostałości konstrukcji są bardzo zniszczone i nie pozwalają na odtworzenie formy, wielkości i zagospodarowania przestrzennego budynków. Kolejny poziom osadnictwa jest słabo zachowany pod względem obiektów architektonicznych, ale objawia się odkrytym materiałem źródłowym, głównie ceramiką stołową. Najbardziej interesujące, ze względu na stan zachowania, są pozostałości architektury datowane na wczesny okres hellenistyczny. W wyniku badań odnaleziono dom składający się z co najmniej sześciu pomieszczeń z częściowo zachowanymi podłogami kamiennymi i glinianymi. Poziom odnoszący się do okresu klasycznego został uchwycony jedynie w wyniku badań sondażowych jednak wskazuje na inne rozplanowanie przestrzenne rysującej się architektury. W artykule przedstawiono pozostałości obiektów architektonicznych nawiązujące do poszczególnych faz i materiału źródłowego, pozwalające na ich chronologiczną interpretację.

### Introduction

Nikonion, placed in the north-western part of the Black Sea, was situated near Olbia Pontica – the main Greek polis in the area, and Tyras – the colony established at the same time or slightly later than Nikonion (Fig. 1). The present site is placed near Roksolany village, Ovidiopol oblast, close to Odessa in Ukraine.

Systematic works on the site began in 1957, it was carried out by M.S. Sinitsyn from the University of I. Miecznikov in Odesa, in 1980 archaeologists from the university were joined by researchers from the Archaeological Museum, who since 1985 have been conducting independent

excavations at the site. The head of the research was initially S. Zaginajlo and then N.M. Sekerska.

The Polish excavations were carried out as part of a research project on the study of the development of Greek settlement on the north-west coast of the Black Sea and the contacts of the ancient Greeks with the local communities. The project leader was prof. Mariusz. Mielczarek who initiated the scientific project and started the archaeological works of Polish team in Nikonion in 1995;<sup>1</sup> in 1995-2008 the excavations were carried

<sup>1</sup> Mielczarek, Okhotnikov, Sekunda: 1997.



Fig. 1. The localization of archaeological site of Nikonion

out by prof. M. Mielczarek, dr. Jacek Rakoczy, dr. M. Olszta-Bloch, dr. Inga Głuszek,<sup>2</sup> in 2009-2011 archaeological research was conducted by dr. Inga Głuszek as part of the KBN grant of dr. M. Olszta-Bloch. Further studies of source materials obtained during excavations and their interpretation in the context of previous archaeological research was the subject of studies by dr. hab. Inga Głuszek, prof. UMK under a 2018 NCN grant.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2008-2011 the excavations have focused on the area of Trench VII located in the central part of the area identified with the archaeological site (Fig. 2). The trench was established on a slight hill (48.18 m above sea level) with western and southern exposure. In total, the remains of permanent settlement dating back to four periods were discovered. The youngest phase of Nikonion settlement is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD refers to the declining phase of the city. The next

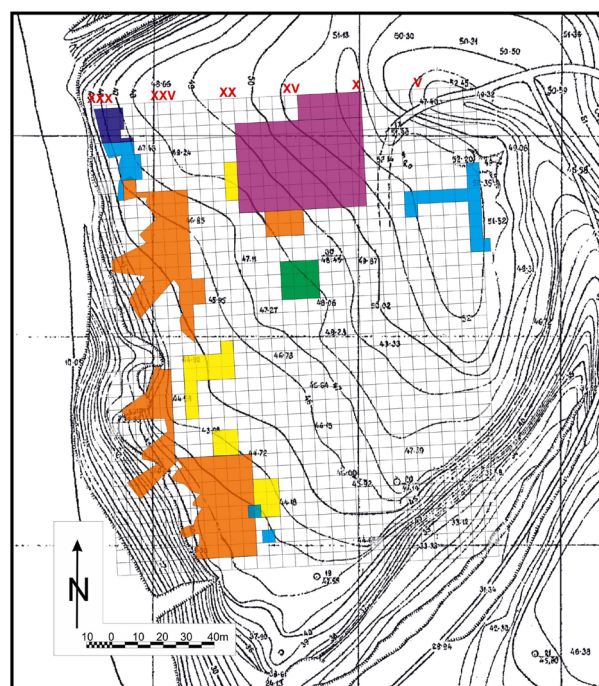


Fig. 2. The map of the Nikonion with areas of excavations

one, very poorly represented by preserved architectural structures, is dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> century BC; the third level, the best preserved, is dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Relics of the older settlement level relating essentially to the 5<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC was captured in one areas of trench VII. The architectural construction has been exposed to a small extent, what not allowed for providing any conclusions about spatial layout and state of preservation of discovered architectural remains. Remnants of the youngest settlement phase are relatively well preserved in the study area; traces of settlements dating to the Late Hellenistic period have been preserved very vestigially, the discovered constructions referred to the Late Classical - Early Hellenistic period are in the best condition; while the level of settlement dating to the Classical period was discovered only partially and can't be fully analysed.

#### The declining phase of the city

Registered constructions referring to the period 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> AD period do not allow for the reconstruction of buildings or assessment of the spatial

<sup>2</sup> I would like to take this opportunity to thank the researchers from Odessa Natalia Michailovna Sekerskaya and Sergey Borysovich Okhotnikov and Igor Brujako for their support and fruitful cooperation. Words of thankfulness should also go to professor Mariusz Mielczarek, who began and still continues to conduct archaeological research in the northern Black Sea region, his support and encouragement were crucial for the Author in the process of writing of that article.

<sup>3</sup> The article is a result of study conducted by the author as a part of a project "Antyczne Nikonion – analiza i weryfikacja danych z badań archeologicznych 1957-2013", which has been funded by the National Centre of Science granted on the basis of decision number 2018/02/X/HS3/01263.



Fig. 3. The 1st-3rd century AD settlement phase, floor C (phot. E. Kozłowska)

layout of the discovered structures. Precise chronological assessment of this level and subsequent settlement phase at the site is difficult to analyse due to the fragmentary preserved remains of buildings resulting from agricultural activities carried out at the site and activities related to obtaining stones for secondary use on homesteads of the nearby village of Roksolany. The assessment of the stratigraphic and chronological situation is also hindered by illegal robbery activities aimed at obtaining artefacts that are then sold on the illegal antiquarian market. As a result of these activities, the stratigraphy of settlement levels is strongly disturbed, parts of architectural constructions have been destroyed and the source material, acting as a chronological marker in recorded contexts, is often mixed and thus not entirely reliable. The systematic excavations conducted at the central part of the site revealed that the destructive activities of illegal works affected not only the ground levels but also reached deeper levels of ancient settlement in Nikonion. As a result, this situation allows only to indicate the general, imprecise, chronological framework of the recorded settlement phases.

During archaeological works, the remains of stone floors and traces of domestic exploitation of the area dated to 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD were discovered.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The detailed description of the other houses discovered in Nikonion dated to the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD compare Bruyako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaya 2008: 22-27; the further study about Nikonion in Roman era Mielczarek 2021: 15-25.

The constructions were discovered in the north-eastern (squares 1,7,8 – floors A, B) and south-western (square 6 – floor C) parts of trench VII (Fig. 3).

Under the stone floor A, five children's burials<sup>5</sup> were discovered. Three graves were found under the eastern part of the slabbing, the other two were located under the northern part of the floor. Among the burials, three bodies were placed in a single transport amphora, while in two cases fragments of different amphorae, other storage and handmade vessels were used to form a ceramic construction of the burials (Fig. 4).

All graves are single burials, not oriented towards each other or the sides of the world. The human bones were preserved to varying degrees, and in two cases it was possible to determine the anatomical position of the body on its side. In the burials, transport amphorae dating from the second to the third century AD were used. Burials 1, 2, 3 were placed in the northern part at the eastern border of the trench. For the burial 1 and 2 the Bosporian jugs were used. There are also known other examples of this jug types from Nikonion.<sup>6</sup> The vessels of that type are known from Bosporus sites.<sup>7</sup> The finds of similar jugs are known from Olbia, dated to 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>8</sup> The other finds are from Kozyrka and Mologa archaeological sites, where they are dated to 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>9</sup> The burial 3 was constructed from fragments of various storage vessels except body fragments of amphorae and handmade jugs a lower part of Bosporian jug and lower part of pale clay amphora was used. The amphora belongs to type S IVA1 by Vnukov dated to the second quarter the beginning of last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The burial 4 and 5 were placed at the northern border of north-eastern part of the trench. For burial 4 the red clay Bosporian jug was used. In the case of burial 5 single amphora was used. The amphora is lacking of the neck and rim but it can be said that the shape and fabric is close to the Peacock class 27 dated to the mid-1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> During previous excavations, child burials placed in amphorae or other resource vessels were already recorded in Nikonion – graves 287, 288: OFAM 90575/2 tab. 7, 8-11; graves 2, 3: tab. 42. 76-78; OFAM 80887/1, no 9.

<sup>6</sup> Bruyako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaya 2008: 34; *ibid.* 11 5, 6; 12.

<sup>7</sup> Gaydukevich 1952: 168; Gavrilov 2002: 188, *ibid.* 9.3.

<sup>8</sup> Krapivina 1993: 104.

<sup>9</sup> Burakov 1976: 102.

<sup>10</sup> Peacock 1982: 142-143. The shape can be





Fig. 4. The child burial 4, excavations 2008  
(phot. E. Kozłowska)



Fig. 5. The Late Hellenistic settlements phase.  
The fragments of architecture structure  
(phot. E. Kozłowska).

Recorded traces of settlement prove the modest form of existence of the inhabitants of Nikonion of this period. The limited assortment of find objects, where the most of them are everyday use vessels and tools, with a small proportion of imported or considered luxury items testifies to the limited role of the Nikonion in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

#### Late Hellenistic phase of settlement

During archaeological research, many examples of pottery dating back to the Late Hellenistic period were also discovered. These are both examples of transport amphorae and tableware, including imported products of black gloss, red slip, and gray ware pottery. In group of black gloss pottery the examples of hellenistic kantharos, plate and fish-plate, oinochoe and bowls of Athenian production and of other centres can be recognised.<sup>11</sup> The red slip pottery is represented by bowl with incurved rim (Pl. 1.1) and a plate (Pl. 1.2),<sup>12</sup> among grayware with black slip the examples of plates (Pl. 1.3) and bowls are present (Pl. 1.4).<sup>13</sup> In the case of transport amphorae, there are mainly examples of Sinope, Knidos and Chersonesus amphorae

(Pl. 1.5-7).<sup>14</sup> The half of cylindrical bead of bluish glass mass was also found.<sup>15</sup> Extremely interesting in this context are the discoveries of black gloss pottery representing not only Athenian but also others centres of productions<sup>16</sup> Italian pottery belonging to the Campana A group.<sup>17</sup> Noteworthy is also the find of a handmade figurine depicting a standing male figure (Pl. 1.8). The figurine is one of the best preserved example of anthropomorphic figurine known from Nikonion dated by context to Late Hellenistic period, the other figurines are partially preserved, not so well made in details and referred to the first centuries of AD.<sup>18</sup> Figures depicting a human or animal figure are found in Scythian sites, including the Belskoe site. They are often assigned a cult significance.<sup>19</sup> The comparable figurines are known also from Tyras and Albești site.<sup>20</sup>

Due to the strong destruction and mixing of the source material in the layers, this level of settlement is very rudimentary. The only permanent structure referring to this period is a fragment of the wall consisting of two levels of stones with

compared with types: Pélichet 1946: no 47; Callender 1965: no 10; Oelmann 1914: no 76.

<sup>11</sup> The examples of black gloss Athenian pottery can be compared with Rotroff 1997: pl. 30. 300, 301, fig. 36. 484, fig. 48. 673, 678, fig. 51, 730, fig. 63. 1012, fig. 64. 1040.

<sup>12</sup> Krapivina: 291, 293, fig. 1. 12, 13.

<sup>13</sup> Handberg, Stolba, Ushakov 2008: 168, 171, fig. 6. r, n.

<sup>14</sup> Monachov 2003: 154-156, tab. 104-106 – Sinope type III D-E, IB; Monachov 2003: 109-110, tab. 77 – Knidos type II- F, G; Monachov, Kusnetsova, Churekova 2017: 170-171, ChT 42, 43, 44 – Chersonesus type V, VI.

<sup>15</sup> Alekseeva 1978: 43, tab. 27.93 – type 186.

<sup>16</sup> Głuszek 2018: 212-219.

<sup>17</sup> Głuszek 2019: 7-18.

<sup>18</sup> Bruyako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaya 2008: 77, ris. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Shramko 1975: 125-127, fig. 16 1.

<sup>20</sup> Samoylova 1988: ris. 34; Buzoianu, Barbulescu 2008: 375, pl. XC, 51, 52.



a compacted clay floor adjacent to the wall (Fig. 5). Amphora fragments were leaning against the wall, a fragment of a lamp and a bone handle and a blade of knife were also discovered on the floor. The handle of the knife was constructed of two bone plates, between which a blade was placed, the bone handle has been preserved in 2/3 of the length (Pl. 1.9 a, b). As already mentioned, the chronological horizon referring to the Late Hellenistic period is well drawn in the horizon of artefacts, but apart from the described case, it is difficult to relate the finds to specific spatial constructions. It can be assumed that most of the stone structures were demolished and reused to erect later complexes dating back to the first centuries AD.

Due to the fact that we do not have a chronologically unambiguous source material combined with very rudimentary traces of permanent settlement, especially from the Late Hellenistic horizon, it is difficult to indicate a clear chronological boundary between both phases of settlement. The settlement level from the Late Hellenistic period, well manifested in the chronological horizon through artefacts, mainly ceramics, is poorly related to the residual remains of utility structures such as houses or other traces of settlement activity, e.g. storage pits. This level could be degraded as a result of the reuse of most of the stone raw material in subsequent structures erected, moreover, it could represent a not as compact and extensive development plan as the older level, referring to the Early Hellenistic period. A limited and uncomplicated form of settlement in the Late Hellenistic period may indicate depopulation of part or all of the Nikonion area. However, no traces of destruction, fire or other violent event breaking the settlement continuity either between the late Hellenistic level and the phase referring to the first centuries of our era or the late and early Hellenistic phases have been recorded, at least in the examined part of the site.

#### Early Hellenistic period

The best preserved residential structure dates back to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> - the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. By 2011, six rooms had been unearthed, four exposed in their entirety (room 1, 2, 3, 6), and two (room 4, 5), the actual shape of which was not fully recognized (Fig. 6).

The house faces north-west, the entrance door has not been discovered, the arrangement of the southern wall allows us to assume that it is the

outer wall of the building.<sup>21</sup> This is evidenced by the registered design features, the discovered south-west corner and the method of arrangement and degree of processing of the stones forming the outer face of the walls. During the excavations, no traces suggesting that the southern wall could continue further west, beyond the corner were found. In addition, the excavation of area placed at the south from the wall revealed no traces of the other buildings. The lengths of individual parts of the southern wall, including the lengths of the gaps between the individual walls of the structure, allow us to conclude that it had a total length of 16.83 m (Fig. 7). The other walls that we can, with some probability, identify as external are the east and west walls. Unfortunately, they have been preserved fragmentarily, which, together with the inability to determine their end, makes it impossible to estimate their total length. In order to be able to determine their course with greater certainty, it is necessary to continue research in the not-yet explored parts placed to the north from trench VII.

The western wall consists of walls numbered 12 and 10. To the north of wall 10, no further remains of the wall were discovered, so its further course cannot be determined. There are significant gaps between the walls, but in no case can it be said that these are intentional construction procedures. The lack of continuity in the walls results from the destruction and dismantling of part of the wall, e.g. to obtain building stone. At the moment, it can only be determined that the western wall had a length of at least approx. 8.35 m (including the length of the gaps between the registered walls). Due to the uncovered south-west corner, it can be assumed that this is the outer wall of the house. However, based on the state of preservation of the walls, it is not possible to indicate whether any of the construction breaks is a remnant of the entrance to the building. The exposed part of the eastern wall consists of only one wall, number 16. The length of this wall is 3.4 m. Most likely, it formed a corner with a wall of 15 southern walls. The length of the eastern wall on the exposed section, including the missing parts of the wall, hypothetical reconstructed, can be estimated

<sup>21</sup> Mr Jan Augustyniak analysed the state of preservation and spatial layout of the house as part of his BA thesis. The presented summary tables and the analysis of the state of preservation and quality of the walls exposed during archaeological research were part of the bachelor's thesis. The BA thesis: <https://apd.umk.pl/diplomas/138760/> [access 01.09.2022].



Fig. 6. The Early Hellenistic period, the residential building (draw. I. Głuszek, M. Pomianowski)

approximately at 5.47 m. However, there is no certainty that it is the outer wall of the house.

Determining the course of the walls and the final layout of the house in its northern part raises the most doubts. Due to insufficient archaeological investigations, we are unable to determine how the northern wall ran and whether any part of it has been uncovered at all.

In the house itself, 6 rooms were unveiled, of which room 6 is the largest, and 3 the smallest. All rooms are on a plan close to a square, except for room 3, which has a rectangular plan. It is not excluded that there are more rooms, but to determine this further research on the site is necessary. In the whole house, only two walls of the rooms have been preserved along their entire length. The first of them (wall 1) is the eastern wall of room 2 and at the same time the western wall of room 1. The second is the southern wall of room 2, which is also part of the outer wall of the southern wall of the building. In this section, the part of the south wall marking room 2 is 2.74 m. The remaining walls were preserved only fragmentarily, and their course was hypothetically established or impossible to carry out due to lack of data.

The material from which the walls were made was partially machined, i.e. some of the stones bore the marks of face processing, but not all. Especially those of smaller sizes, constituting a kind of complement between larger stones, were not machined. The threads of the walls were connected with each other with clay mortar. Analysing the remains of the best preserved walls, it can be seen that the stones of the largest size were used to build walls 13 and 3. At the same time, these are the walls that form the sides of rooms 6 and 2, which are the only uncovered rooms with a stone floor.

In the case of walls 11 and 12 forming about half of the southern wall, we can find some of the largest discovered stones with average dimensions: 42 x 34, 40 x 56, 52 x 38 cm. Between them there are smaller stones, measuring less than 15 x 15 cm. Both types of stones, larger and smaller, are evenly distributed along the length of the entire wall, most often with larger ones constituting external and internal faces and smaller ones closing the space between them.

In the case of residual walls, such as walls 8, 4 and 5, we are not able to say much due to their state of preservation. However, it seems, especially on the basis of the analysis of wall 5, that the internal walls of the house were built of smaller stones rather than the external ones. The exception is wall 3, which is also a section of the wall of room 6, the largest in the house.

The stones that form the threads of the discovered fragments of the walls have not been subjected to geological analysis. However, taking into account the building material from which other structures were built, the remains of which were discovered in Nikonion, it can be assumed that the material used in the construction of this house were local varieties of shell limestone and/or imported stone of Aegean origin.<sup>22</sup>

There are several unexplained issues that are an extremely important element of knowing the original structure of the house, its shape and transformations. The wall marked with the number 7 is unique because it is the only one in this home complex that was made of mud brick. The dimensions of the brick from which the wall was made are 74 x 28 x 16 cm. The height to which the wall has been preserved is 92 cm. Stratigraphically it fits into the rest of the walls discovered around it, so it can be assumed it belongs to this house. From the west side, it ends naturally, suggesting a passage from room 5 to 4 right next to the stone partition wall (wall 5). This is the only passage between rooms that has been located on the basis of research. The issue of dating the wall 7 remains problematic. It is not known whether it was erected during the construction of the house, together with other walls, or whether it was created some time later, due to the sudden need to divide a larger room. We are also not able to say why it was decided to use this raw material for constructing the wall. This could have been influenced by the shortage of stone as a building material, or by the quick need to use more easily accessible and faster brick in construction.

<sup>22</sup> Sekerskaya 2001: 493.



The only clue we currently have is the dimension of room 5, very similar, almost identical to the area of rooms 1 and 2. It seems that this is not a coincidence, but a conscious project, which assumed the creation of several symmetrical rooms with the same area. Rather, it would suggest the creation of a wall of mud brick simultaneously with the rest of the house.

It should also be mentioned that at the site, at other discovered remains of structures, walls of mud brick were discovered, even if the building had stone walls, so it was a well-known and popular procedure.<sup>23</sup>

The critical area remains the northern part of the house, the least studied. While we can almost with absolute certainty determine the southern border, and with a high probability the western and eastern borders, the northern border requires further reconnaissance. The only remains of walls discovered in this area are poorly preserved wall 14, and wall 6, which was exposed only the face towards the inner house, the remaining part of the wall remained in the profile of the trench. This wall is controversial because of its non-obvious origin; it is impossible to say with absolute certainty whether it belongs structurally to this house or perhaps to Late Hellenistic buildings. Structurally, the wall is not associated with any belonging to the Early Hellenistic complex. In addition, the stratigraphic system in which the wall is deposited is disturbed by an illegal trench. During the archaeological research, an illegal large-scale robbery trench was registered in the north-western part of trench VII. As a result of these illegal activities, the stone floor of room 6 was partially damaged, and the illegal trench was widened below the floor level. That destroyed the stratigraphic system at the foundation level of wall 6 and subsequent lower settlement layers and made assessing whether wall 6 is connected with the building or represents the other architectural structure very difficult. If the wall is a part of the house, recognising its function (internal between rooms or structural wall of the building) is impossible at this research stage. Assuming hypothetically that wall 6 is part of the house structure and that it forms part of the outer northern wall together with wall 14, the house could have a base similar to a trapezoid (Fig. 8).<sup>24</sup> Such a construction solution is known from many examples of residential buildings from

the Mediterranean area, among others in Delos<sup>25</sup> and from areas on the Black Sea such as Berezan,<sup>26</sup> the applied design solutions can be also compared with examples from Chersonesus.<sup>27</sup>

wall no	length (cm)	width (cm)
1	470	50
2	596	62
3	356	58
4	66	62
5	150	48
6	246	no data
7	326	28
8	107	61
9	102	62
10	307	60
11	246	50
12	128	64
13	220	62
14	176	69
15	388 (78 cm wall + 34 cm gap + 62 cm wall + 18cm gap + 196 cm wall)	52
16	340	94-74

Fig. 7. The length of discovered walls of the residential building.

The analysis made by Jan Augustyniak in his BA thesis

Due to the incomplete archaeological research of the house structure, it can also be assumed that so far, only the southern part of the building has been recognized, and the remaining parts extend to the north. In this case, the house could be rectangular in design. Considering the known residential structures from Olbia, which referred to the Classical and Hellenistic period, the house II-7 from Olbia can be treated as an example of the proposed house shape for Nikonion.<sup>28</sup> Taking into account other examples of houses from Greek cities on the northern coast of the Black Sea, such

<sup>23</sup> Sekerskaya 2001: 492.

<sup>24</sup> The reconstruction of the spatial layout of the house was proposed by Jan Augustyniak in his BA thesis.

<sup>25</sup> Trümper 2005: 119-121.

<sup>26</sup> Chistov 2017: 139.

<sup>27</sup> Carter et al. 2000: 725-728.

<sup>28</sup> Kryzhickij, Leypunskaya 2010: 336, ris. 13.

as Olbia<sup>29</sup> or Chersonesus,<sup>30</sup> and the fact that the excavations conducted so far did not reveal the entire structure, it cannot be ruled out that the house discovered in Nikonion was larger and its spatial layout could have been more extensive.

As already mentioned, on the basis of the preserved fragments of the wall, we can hypothetically assume the course of some walls, and thus give the averaged area of some rooms. In this case, it will be rooms 1 – 30.8 m<sup>2</sup>; 2 – 31,44 m<sup>2</sup>; 5 – 32.27 m<sup>2</sup>.

The interior of **Room 1** on the eastern side was heavily damaged as a result of excavations of a robbery nature. On the intact floor level, a cluster of household pottery was located. Among the fragments of red- and orange-clay bowls and jugs, as well as two transport amphorae, which were almost completely reconstructed. The first amphora comes from Thasos (II-C) and belongs to a type with a broad chronology V – beginning of the 3rd century BC<sup>31</sup> (Pl. 2.1), while the second one is related to Knidos (type I) and refers to the third quarter of the 4th century BC<sup>32</sup> (Pl. 2.3). In room 1, there are also several examples of black gloss vessels, including a kantharos dated to the last quarter of the 4th - third quarter of the 3rd century BC and a bowl dated to the third quarter of the 4th century BC.<sup>33</sup> Noteworthy is also a lead object in the shape of a cone, probably a weight (Pl. 2.6). The object is low has a wide round base, in the upper part an ornament in the form of radially diverging incisions is visible. The finds of a similar shape come from Scythian burials dating back to the 4th century BC.<sup>34</sup>

The part of **room 2** structure was destroyed by illegal trench. In the intact part, a fragment of the stone floor and a layer of compacted clay have been preserved, which could have been an independent floor or was a levelling layer for stone slabs. In the room a clay spindle, conical in shape, round in cross-section was found. On the stone floor, several examples of black gloss pottery were found. This is an example of a Bolsal vessel dating back to the second quarter of the 3rd century BC, whose technological features indicate that it comes from a non-Athenian, as yet unidentified, production center. Another finds of black gloss vessels are

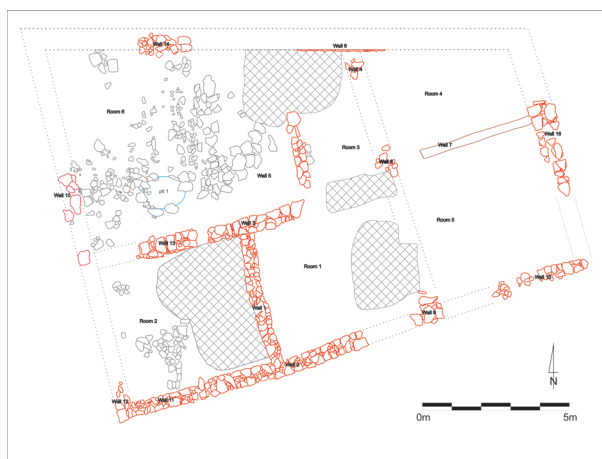


Fig. 8. The residential house from Nikonion – spatial layout reconstruction proposal. The shape of the house was proposed by Jan Augustyniak in his BA thesis

three Athenian bowls dated to the last quarter of the 4th – the first quarter of the 3rd century BC. The assemblage also includes a plate dated to the last quarter of the 3rd century BC.<sup>35</sup> In this case, the stratigraphic interpretation is ambiguous. The find comes from the area near the illegal trench, which means that a disturbed stratigraphic and chronological sequence cannot be excluded. Room 2 also includes finds of Sinope, Heraclea Pontica and Thasos transport amphorae. The Sinope amphora dates back to the end of 4th century BC - beginning of the 3rd century BC<sup>36</sup> (Pl. 2.4). The amphora of Heraclea Pontica is dated to the end of the 4th - first quarter of the 3rd century BC<sup>37</sup> (Pl. 2.5). The third amphora of Thasos is heavily damaged. It can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC<sup>38</sup> (Pl. 2.2). The other finds from room 2 are net weight made of a pottery body sherd and stone and a half of spindle whorl were find (Pl. 2.7, 8, 9).

The interior of **room 3** was in the northern part disturbed by the illegal trench, while in the remaining space there was a floor made of compacted clay. On the floor near the western wall (wall 5), two amphorae from Thasos<sup>39</sup> and Sinope<sup>40</sup> were discovered. Another amphora from Ikos was dug into the floor of the room, preserved intact (Fig. 9).

<sup>29</sup> Kryzhickij, Leypunskaya 2010: ris. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Buyskich 2008a: 92, ris. 3. Buyskich 2008b: 106 – 138.

<sup>31</sup> Monachov 2003: 71, tab. 47.

<sup>32</sup> Monachov 2003: 102-103, tab. 71-72.

<sup>33</sup> Głuszek 2021: 31-32, cat. 3, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Terenozhkin, Il'inskaya 1977: 172, ris. 13. 19 – Gaymanovo Pole, burial mound 16.

<sup>35</sup> Głuszek 2021: 32-33, cat. 2, 6, 7, 10, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Monachov 2003: 150, tab. 102 – amphora of Sinope variant II-S.

<sup>37</sup> Monachov 2003: 137, tab. 96 – amphora of Heraclea Pontica variant II-A-2.

<sup>38</sup> Monachov 2003: 73, tab. 50.3.

<sup>39</sup> Monachov 2003: 71, tab. 47. 1, 6, 7 – variant II-S-1.

<sup>40</sup> Monachov 2003: 148, tab. 101. 3 – variant I-E.



The amphora on the basis of the coincidence of the form it is connected with the production dated to the half - third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>41</sup> It is also worth mentioning the whole clay spindle, which is distinguished by large dimensions and high quality of preparation.

The exposed floor of **room 4** is made of compacted clay. On its surface, two clusters of transport amphorae were found. In one there were two amphorae from Heraclea Pontica and one amphora of Mende, leaning against the northern wall. On the neck of the Mende amphora there was graphite H and dipinto II. The first amphora from Heraclea Pontica is dated on the first half of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>42</sup> The second amphora of Heraclea Pontica has survived in several fragments. It can be dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC).<sup>43</sup> The proportions and profile of the neck and body of Mende amphora allow the amphora to be dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, probably to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, as indicated by the morphological features of the vessel.<sup>44</sup> In the second group there was an amphora of Sinope and Heraclea Pontica. Both amphorae relate chronologically to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>45</sup> From room 4 there is also known fragment of black gloss oil lamps (Pl. 3.1). The fragment is part of the lamp's reservoir covered with black gloss. Similar lamps found on the Athenian Agora are classified as type 25A,<sup>46</sup> the shape is also close to Istmia type VIID,<sup>47</sup> the type is dated back from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

The archaeological material from **room 5** is mainly household pottery like amphoras and tableware pottery, including a gray ware bowl and fishplate. The bowls (Pl. 3. 2-4) with incurving rim represents shape also known from Tyras, Olbia and other Pontic sites,<sup>48</sup> the second vessel is fish-plate (Pl. 3.5) close in shape to the find from Tyras and

Panskoye necropolis.<sup>49</sup> On the floor of the room, a fragment of two beads made of glass mass were also found (Pl. 3.6, 7). The first one is small with a round shape slightly flattened at both ends,<sup>50</sup> the second has more cylindrical shape with flattened surface at both ends. The beads are blue in colour with slightly white, dark blue dots in a white and blue border.<sup>51</sup> Similar beads are known, among other things, from Corinth, dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC and even 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>52</sup>

The stone slabs in **room 6** have been preserved only partially, because the structure was disturbed by the illegal trench. On the floor, an ostrakon containing almost the full text of a private letter was found (Pl. 4.1ab). The message at the two preserved parts of the letter is an example of correspondence between the inhabitants of the house. On the basis of epigraphic analysis, it is dated to the second half of the IV – the beginning of the third century BC.<sup>53</sup> In room 6 also examples of black gloss pottery were found, like a fragment of a jug, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and a bowl referring to the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Both examples of vessels come from non-Athenian, as yet unidentified, production centres.<sup>54</sup> Among the finds related to the stone floor, a significant group of transport amphoras from Sinope was found, the dating of which is arranged in two chronological groups. The first group (Pl. 4.2) contains three Sinope amphorae date back to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>55</sup> The second chronological group (Pl. 4.3) includes two amphorae relating to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>56</sup> In the northwest corner of the room there is a pit where another stamp of Heraclea Pontica was found (Pl. 4.4), it can be dated to the 50's-30's of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>57</sup> In the pit there was also a fragment of a black gloss kantharos with an ornament of ivy threat at the external wall (Pl. 4.5). The drinking vessel can be dated to the last decades of

<sup>41</sup> Monachov, Kuznecov 2009: tab. 5-4, 6; Monachov, Feodoseev 2013: ris. 5-3, 4; Monachov et al. 2017: 103, Ik.7; 2019: 155, Ik.2.

<sup>42</sup> Monachov 2003, tab. 91.4.

<sup>43</sup> Monachov 2003: 126-127, tab. 86. 4-6.

<sup>44</sup> Monachov 2003: 93-94, tab. 64. 2; 65. 3-4.

<sup>45</sup> Monachov 2003, tab. 90.4, 8 or tab. 92.6 – Heraclea Pontica; Monachov 2003, 102, 4, 5 – Sinope.

<sup>46</sup> Howland 1958: 71, pl. 10, 38, no. 296 – type 25 A Prime.

<sup>47</sup> Broneer 1977: no. 129, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Samoilova, Ostapenko 2009: 60, fig. 4. 3-4; Buyskich 2006: 39, ris. 2. 10-12; Buyskich 2012: 48, ris. 1. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Samoilova, Ostapenko 2009: 56, fig. 1. 23; Handberg, Stolba, Ushakov 2008: 168-171, fig. 8b.

<sup>50</sup> Alekseeva 1975: tab. 16.30 – type 31g.

<sup>51</sup> Alekseeva 1975: tab. 15.16 – type 84.

<sup>52</sup> Davidson 1952: 292, pl. 121. no. 2427; Alekseeva 1975: 55-56.

<sup>53</sup> Awianowicz 2009: 196-198; 2011: 237-239; Awianowicz, Rakoczy 2011: 1-5.

<sup>54</sup> Głuszek 2021: 33, cat 11, 13.

<sup>55</sup> Monachov 2003: 149-150, tab. 102 – variant II-“B”.

<sup>56</sup> Monachov 2003: 153-154, tab. 104 – variant III-S.

<sup>57</sup> Kats 2007: Annex V, 430.

the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>58</sup> In addition, in the pit a spindle whorl of trapezoid shape and net weight made of a recycled fragment of pottery were found.

A residential complex with registered buildings can be dated on the basis of the obtained material to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the end of the building's operation dates back to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

Its spatial layout indicates that it was a fairly extensive complex, hypothetical variants of spatial planning indicate that it was a construction typical of the studied area, found in Greek cities on the Black Sea and in Mediterranean centres. So far, no similar structure has been located in Nikonion, perhaps due to the continuous secondary use of stone material in the city in latter phases of settlement. All the more so this house stands out against the background of the previously recognized architecture of the city from the 4<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Not only because of its size, but also the amount of stone building material used, which, as already noted, was a material that was difficult to access. In addition, the location of the building indicates the central part of the Early Hellenistic Greek city.

#### The Classical period phase settlement

The next phase of settlement was recognised only in one part of the trench VII, as a result of small sondage trench established in room 2. The exploration revealed the older level of settlement represented by a fragment of stone wall and a clay floor of a different spatial layout than the level of Early Hellenistic period.

The extracted artefacts like three fragments of red figure vessels, three fragments of black gloss cups and a fragment of skyphos, two fragments of grayware bowls and one fragment of oinochoe allow for general chronological assumption of the construction to the last decades of 5<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The first fragment belongs to closed type vessel with decoration close to Kleophon Painter, 440-430 BC (Pl. 5.1), the next fragment of skyphos (Pl. 5.2) can be dated to 410-400 BC, the last fragment also belonged to skyphos (Pl. 5.3) which decoration is close to Far Boy Group, 400-375 BC.<sup>59</sup> The black gloss Bolsal and



Fig. 9. Amphora from room 3  
(phot. E. Kozłowska)

cup-skyphos with stamped decoration at the floor of the vessels can be dated to the last decades of 5<sup>th</sup> - beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>60</sup> The grayware vessels represents shapes which also can be referred to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>61</sup> (Pl. 5. 4-6).

#### Conclusions

In the result of archaeological research carried out in Nikonion in 2008-2011. It was possible to identify a settlement sequence dating from the Late Classical period to the early Roman period. As a result of the research, four settlement phases were revealed, characterized by a different spatial arrangement of architectural (residential) structures. The oldest exposed level, dating back to the Classical period, was captured due to the survey in room 2. The discovered structure, a fragment of a stone wall and clay floor, indicates an architectural system of a different plan than the house dating from the Late Classical period - Early Hellenistic period representing the younger phase of settlement in the city. Despite the many damages caused by illegal excavations, the house structures have been preserved in such a way that it is possible to reconstruct the spatial layout of the house. As a result of the research, three rooms and partially three more were fully exposed. However, complete recognition of the size and plan of the house can only be made as a result of further excavation. The exposed house presents a construction that can be associated with architectural solutions known from other Black Sea sites, such as Berezan and Olbia. The next settlement phase is poorly recognized due to the residual architectural relics. However, the source material related to

<sup>58</sup> Rotroff 1997: 84, fig. 5. 28, 30 – shape; 90, fig. 10.102, 107 – pattern of decoration.

<sup>59</sup> Głuszek 2017: 101, 102, 107, cat. 2, 4, 12.

<sup>60</sup> Sparkes, Talcott fig. 6. 557, 595.

<sup>61</sup> Buyskich 2012: 53, ris. 6. 1-3; 57, ris. 10.1.



the preserved structure allows for determining a chronological horizon referring to the Late Hellenistic period. The youngest phase, the declining period of the city's functioning, dates from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Registered structures – fragments of stone floors and walls do not allow the reconstruction of buildings. Due to the severe damage and disturbance of the stratigraphic sequences resulting from numerous illegal excavation excavations, precise determination of the chronological boundaries is difficult. The Late Hellenistic phase and relics dating back to the Roman period are the least preserved. In both cases, the preserved constructions do not allow the reconstruction of the buildings. As a result of this state of affairs, the explanation of the settlement situation in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> century BC - 1<sup>st</sup> century AD requires further archaeological research, especially since the source material related to the last phase of settlement relates to a large extent to the period of the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Nevertheless, the preserved structures prove the long-term and continuous use of the site not only in the Classic and Hellenistic periods associated with the presence of the Greeks on the northern coast of the Black Sea but also with the development of settlement in the first centuries of our era. In light of previous archaeological research, this settlement phase was recorded only in the north western part of the site. However, the relationship between the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman phases must be clarified.

Archaeological research has brought a lot of interesting material, including a private letter, the content of which refers to the inhabitants of the Early Hellenistic house. The archaeological research also showed changes in the spatial arrangement between successive chronological phases determined based on registered archaeological monuments.

#### Archives

- OAM 90718/2 – Otchet o rabote nikonijsskoh ekspedicii Odeskogo Archeologicheskogo Muzeya NAN Ukrainy w 1988 g.  
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 OAM 95085/2 – Otchet o rabote nikonijsskoh ekspedicii Odeskogo Archeologicheskogo Muzeya NAN Ukrainy w 1997 g.  
 OFAM 80887/2 – Otchet o rabote nikonijsskoh ekspedicii Odeskogo Archeologicheskogo Muzeya NAN Ukrainy w 1998 g.

- OFAM 86966/6 – Otchet o rabote nikonijsskoh ekspedicii Odeskogo Archeologicheskogo Muzeya NAN Ukrainy w 1976 g. Albom ilyustracii.  
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Plate 1. The Late Hellenistic period, archaeological finds  
(draw. A. Dzwonek, J. Barańska, I. Głuszek)



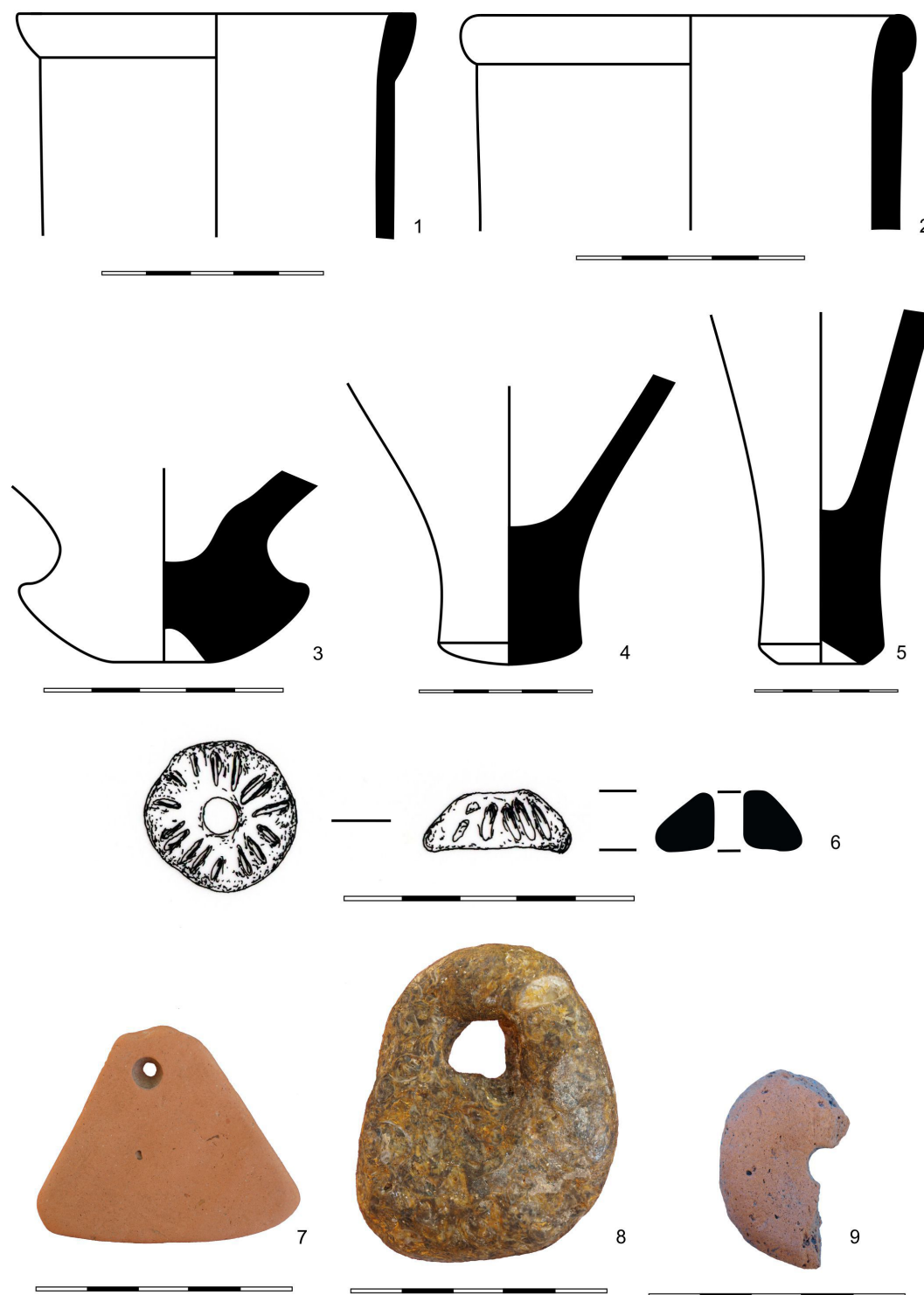


Plate 2. Residential house, archaeological finds, room, 1, 2  
(draw. A. Dzwonek, I. Głuszek, phot. E. Kozłowska)

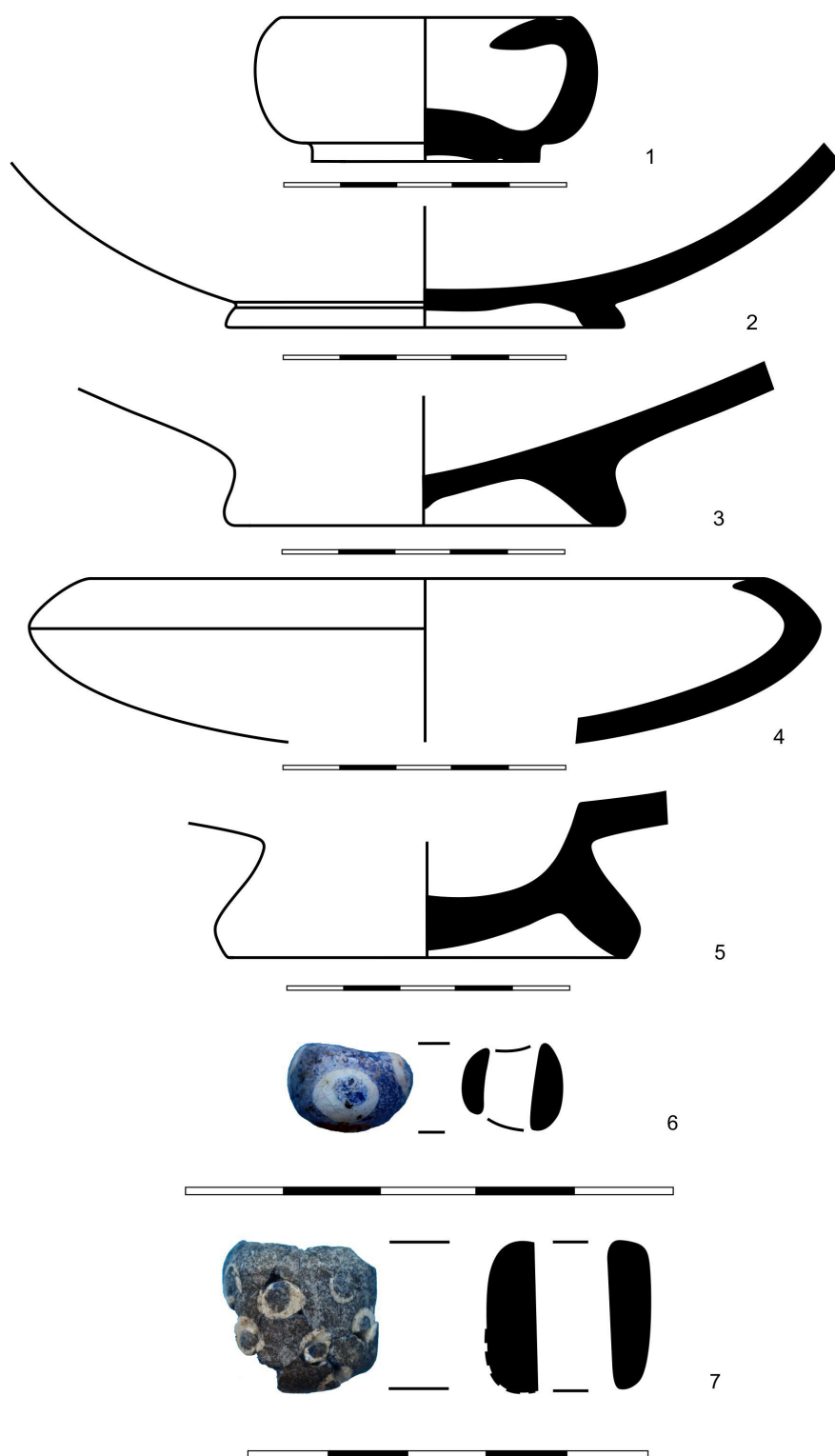


Plate 3. Residential house, archaeological finds, room, 4, 5  
(draw. A. Dzwonek, I. Głuszek, phot. E. Kozłowska)

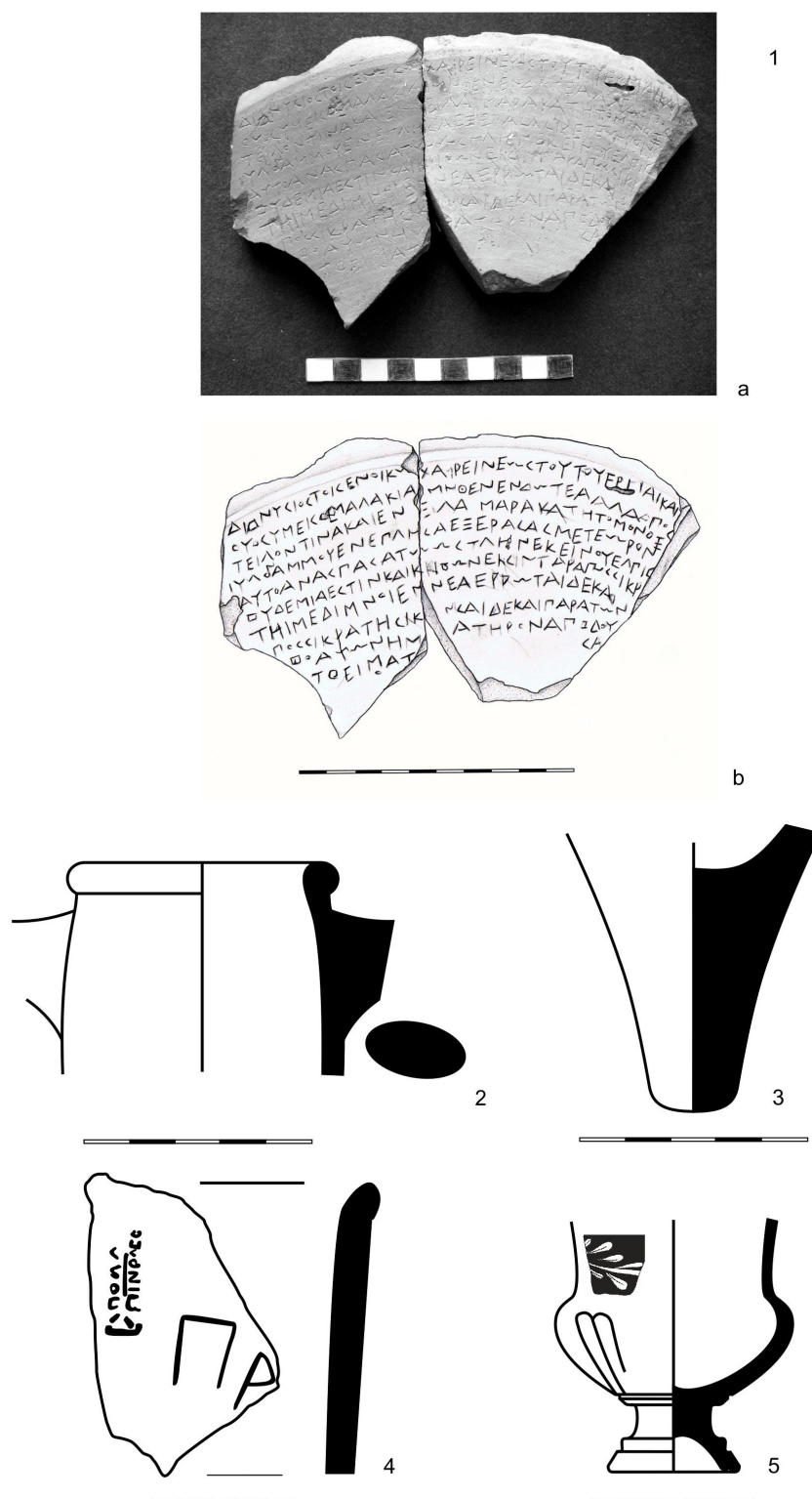


Plate 4. Residential house, archaeological finds, room, 6  
(draw. A. Dzwonek, I. Głuszek, phot. E. Kozłowska)



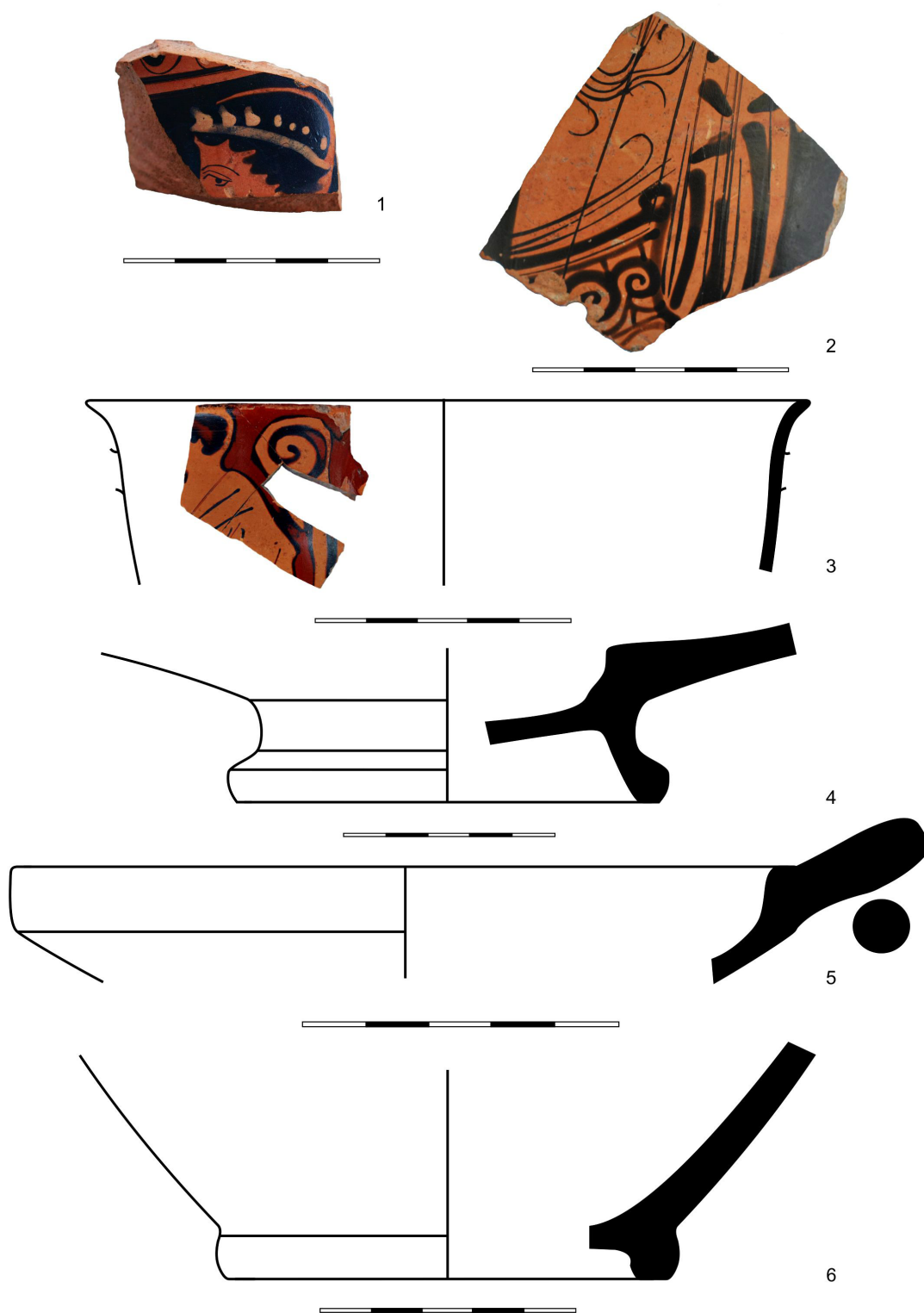


Plate 5. The Classical period, archaeological finds  
(draw. A. Dzwonek, I. Głuszek, phot. E. Kozłowska)