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RED SLIP POTTERY FROM LAODICEA/PHRYGIA

Laodicea is located on the western tip of the Phrygia region, 6 km northwest of the Denizli Province and sits on a relatively high platform amidst a topographically rugged terrain.¹ The archaeological excavations at the site that started in 2003 have unearthed structures in approximately a 4 square kilometer area and include the Columned Main Street (Syria Boulevard), Nymphaeum A (Fountain of Septimius Severus), Temple A (Sebasteion), Central Bath, Western Theatre, Eastern Byzantine Gate, Northern and Eastern Towers of the Eastern Byzantine Gate, South Roman Villa, Northern Workshop, Stadium Street, Nymphaeum B, Latrina, Asopos Hill, Northern Theatre the Stadium and necropoli scattered throughout the city. Whether in context or by landfill, examples of Eastern Sigillata and Late Roman Red Slip Ware found inside the stratigraphic layers of the before mentioned structures during the excavations, provide valuable insight for the utilization stages of structures found at *Laodicea*. Pottery like Eastern Sigillata A (ESA), Eastern Sigillata B (ESB), Eastern Sigillata C, Cypriot Sigillata, Sagalassos Red Slip Ware (SRSW) and African Sigillata, which are commonly found in many ancient cities excavated around Anatolia, are also found in excavations at *Laodicea*. Examples from the mentioned pottery groups make up a portion of imported material used in *Laodicea*.

1. Eastern Sigillata A (fig. 1,1–5)

Excavation work at *Laodicea* has identified only a very limited amount of ESA group. However, there is an abundance of red slip pottery, which is considered within the ESB and SRSW groups. With regard to the location of *Laodicea*, it is not surprising that excavations have only yielded a limited amount of ESA, which is considered to originate from a center in Northern Syria or nearby. Although unearthed ESA is limited in *Laodicea*, the number of ESB, which was produced in Tralleis according to ancient written sources and recent clay analyses,² are in the hundreds. One of the most important factors which result in finding more ESB among the red slipped pottery of *Laodicea* is that *Laodicea* and Tralleis were rather close to one another and that during the

period in question there was a road network between these two cities which facilitated their trade. In total, eight pieces of ESA were found at *Laodicea*: in the Southern Roman Villa, Temple A, House A, the Sanctuary Portico and as Surface Findings. The clay in all the samples is yellow (10 YR 7-8/4), and the slip with a standard colour and quality is red (2.5 YR 4-6/8). Smudging can be seen on potteries slipped with the immersion technique, particularly on the exterior. From the DSA ware that has been included in this paper, samples **nr. 1** and **2** are pieces from a plate rim, sample **nr. 5** must be from a base that accompanies such plates. Sample **nr. 3** belongs to a bowl with full profile. Whereas, sample **nr. 4** belongs to the base of a footed bowl.

When compared to the samples found at other centers, this type of shape, which includes the **nr. 1** wide rimmed plate fragment, it is seen that they usually have rim diameters ranging between 26 and 40 cm. The rims of this plate type found at *Laodicea* are between 33 and 34 cm, so they can be considered to belong to this group. At the Athenian Agora they are dated between late 2nd century BC and the first half of the 1st century AD.³ Because the sample found at the Southern Roman Villa with mosaic decorations comes from a mixed layer, the chronology determined for such plates at the Athenian Agora currently seems to be the most comparable date at hand. The base fragment **nr. 5** is most likely from a base belonging to these wide rimmed plates found in this group.⁴ The plate with vertical rim (**nr. 2**) is the only fragment found to be ESA. Hayes classifies similar plates within plates form 38 and form 39. The plate fragment found as a surface finding in *Laodicea* has a rim diameter of 18 cm, making it closer to form 39. Hayes considers this as a rare plate form and the date suggested for it is around 60–80/100 AD.⁵

The sample **nr. 3**, which is a vertical rimmed bowl with a full profile, was recovered at a settlement area referred to as House A. The full profile with a 8 cm. diameter strongly suggests that this fragment belongs to a sauce bowl.⁶ This

³ HAYES 2008, 21–23 fig. 1,1–17.

⁴ The wide based plates considered within the “plate with narrow foot” in the Athenian Agora are usually dated between the 2nd and 1st century BC: HAYES 2008, 21–22 fig. 2,18–29.

⁵ HAYES 1985, I form 38–39 tav. 5,14–16.

⁶ Even though the shape is not very widespread in the cities within the Mediterranean Basin, the sample which shows little differences in the profile and has a wider rim diameter is considered within the form 13B by Hayes and is dated between the mid 1st century BC and early

¹ C. ŞİMŞEK, *Laodikeia (Laodikeia ad Lycum)* (Istanbul 2007) 1.

² T. TAKAOĞLU, *New Light on the Origins of Eastern Sigillata B Ware. Anadolu Ark. Katkılar 65. Yaşında A. Yaylalı'ya Sunulan Yazılar*, 2006, 263–270006.

structure was last used in the Late Roman–Early Byzantine Period. In relation to the first phases of the Syrian Boulevard, the excavation work carried out in 2007 revealed lead glazed pottery, a few fragments of relief ware dishes and grey ware plate fragments about 50 cm underneath the late period walls that can be seen on the surface. The most accurate date that can be suggested for all these findings is approximately 30–50 BC. Therefore the same date could be suggested for the bowl fragment **nr. 3**. The tall base fragment **nr. 4** that may belong to a crater was found at Temple A. The base fragment found at Temple A could be dated to the first quarter of 1st century AD, or slightly later.

Although the number of **DSA** at *Laodicea* is rather limited in comparison to other groups of findings, shapes that can be dated to 100 BC were recovered at the Roman Villa with mosaic decorations and the Sanctuary Portico. This is significant in regards to indicating the early stages of these structures in which the potteries were found.

2. Eastern Sigillata B (figs. 1,6–33; 2,34–50)

ESB makes up the largest group of fragments found amongst all the sigillata unearthed at *Laodicea*. Whether excavations or surface surveys, almost all the structures within the city contained potteries from this group. The number of ESB fragments found during survey is around fifty. The second area of concentrated findings is Asopos Hill – the early settlement area of the city. Known as Plot 293, this site was excavated by the Denizli Museum in 2001, which revealed **DSB**. Museum excavations also revealed lead glazed bowls, grey ware bowls and relief ware bowls in addition to **DSB**. However, due to the lack of stratigraphic records, it is not possible to make a sound interpretation with the available data and information. The number of fragments recovered at Temple A excavations is around ten. The Northern Necropolis is another site containing **DSB** group material amongst current excavations.

The **DSB** findings that were recovered reveal morphological differences. Although paste and slip characteristics of the recovered fragments show some difference, most of the material included in this group present yellowish red, reddish yellow or in between tones (2.5 YR 5/8 and 2.5 YR 4/8, 2.5 YR 6/8) whilst some samples differ from the majority with a brown clay colour. High concentrations of mica within the clay have been identified in the majority of fragments. Pottery fragments with lower concentrations of mica have also been found. Visible lime is also strikingly large but these particles are smaller in some examples. Among the **DSB** with high mica concentrations, there are also samples which seem to have undergone better clay refining treatments other than lime and mica. The majority of the shape repertoire consists of open vessels like inturned, outturned, flat, vertical rimmed

plates and dishes and their variations. Only two examples of closed vessel were recovered. There was only one recovered example of a semi open vessel – the cantharos. The forms identified are almost equally distributed between ESB 1 and ESB 2 groups. 59 base fragments were recovered in addition to the forms mentioned above.

Various decorations can be observed on some of the recovered material in the ESB group. Some decorations are in the form of rouletting on the mouth or upper part of the body of plates and bowls. On some examples, these decorations are on the outer surface but closer to the base. In addition to rouletting and etching decorations, there are also decorations on the outer surface of certain plates and bowls that have been made using the barbotine technique. Located on the upper outer surface of bowls, four of the decorations made using the barbotine technique consisted of double spirals, with an additional single example: a stylized depiction of a mask.

Some of the ESB plates and bowls recovered, the ESB 1 group in particular reveals various stamps in its tondos, in the form of figures and inscriptions. The most frequently encountered figurative item in these stamps is the rosette, followed by others like planta pedis and wild goat. There are 21 stamps consisting various names and words in Ancient Greek and Latin. Some frequently recovered inscriptions include: KOIP/ANO, P.A, MAI/[...], ΔΙΟΝΥΚΙΟC, EPW, [...] IO, ΔΩ/PON⁷, ΔW/PON, IATI/OCH, ΛNO/O.M, ΚΤΩ/ΧΙΩ, C.SE, CSE.⁸, ΙCΙΑΩ- POY, [...]PH/[...]Y, TY/XH, XA/PIC⁹.

A downfall in the demand for ESA in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin led consumers to seek new wares and the demand was met with the introduction of ESB on the market. ESB reached *Laodicea* around the mid-1st century BC and during the reign of Augustus it reached its peak in *Laodicea*, as it did in the entire Mediterranean. Considering the current findings, ESB was last used in *Laodicea* at the beginning of 2nd century AD. The level of prosperity and population of *Laodicea* in the 1st century AD suggests that imports were not only limited to Tralleis. Other than the local products made in Tralleis, products of metropolises such as Ephesus must have also reached *Laodicea* as a result of various commercial activities. Although most of the ESB found at *Laodicea* were imported, it is very possible that local *Laodicean* workshops produced imitations of this material. Though current findings are not adequate to prove that *Laodicean* potters produced imitations of ESB. Meanwhile, it is also possible that large-scale producers from Tralleis and Ephesus opened branches in *Laodicea*. These ideas will become clearer with future excavations and new findings.

⁷ E. UNTERKIRCHER, Terra Sigillata aus dem Heraion von Samos. Mitt. DAI Athen 98, 1983, 173–214; 199 Abb. 9,S11.

⁸ For some similar examples see: *ibid.* 199 Abb. 9,S2; S. ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER, Subsidiary Factories of Italian Sigillata Potters. In: H. Koester (ed.), Ephesos Metropolis of Asia. An Interdisciplinary Approach to its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture. Harvard Theol. Stud. 41 (##### 1995) 217–228 fig. 1; EAD., C. Sentius and his commercial connections. In: C. Abadie-Reynal (ed.), Les céramiques en Anatolie aux époques hellénistique et romaine. Actes de la table ronde d'Istanbul, 22–24 mai 1996 (Paris 2003) 117–119 Pl. 75,5; V. MITSOPOULOS-LEON, Die Basilika am Staatsmarkt in Ephesos. Kleinfunde 1. Teil: Keramik hellenistischer und römischer Zeit. Forsch. Ephesos IX,2/2 (Wien 1991) Taf. 162,H198.

⁹ J. W. HAYES, Four Early Roman Groups from Knossos. Annu. British School Athens 66, 1971, 249–275; esp. 258 fig. 8,14.

1st century AD: HAYES 1985 form 13B tav. 2,11; K. M. KENYON, Roman and Later Wares: Terra Sigillata. In: J. W. Crowfoot/G. M. Crowfoot/K. M. Kenyon, Samaria-Sebaste 3: The Objects from Samaria (London 1957) 281–306 form 2B fig. 73,17. – A similar example to the bowl in question was found in Knossos, in a context dated to the end of the 1st century BC: G. FORSTER, The Roman Period. In: J. N. Coldstream/L. J. Eiring/G. Forster (eds.), Knossos Pottery. Greek and Roman. British School Athens Stud. 7 (London 2001) 137–167.

3. Eastern Sigillata C (fig. 2,51–54)

Eastern Sigillata C¹⁰ originates in north-western Anatolia and the number of findings at *Laodicea* is currently quite low. Most of the current examples have been recovered during surface surveys. The rarity of these fragments, which can be compared with 2nd–3rd century AD Eastern Sigillata C examples, could be explained by the popularity of Sagalassos ware in *Laodicea* during that period. Most of the recovered fragments have a slip colour close to orange-red. Examples of this group found at *Laodicea* are mostly Hayes form 3.¹¹

4. Cypriot Sigillata (fig. 3,55–59)

Pottery groups identified during the current excavation works at *Laodicea* include examples of Cypriot Sigillata found at the Columned Main Street, Asopos Hill and during surface surveys. The paste colour ranges between 2.5 YR 5/8, 6/6, 7.5 YR 7/6, 5/4 and although the slip colour is different on the inner and outer surfaces it generally is 2.5 YR 6/8, 5/8. Mica and lime inclusions are visible with the naked eye in some examples. The pottery fragments that reach 30 in total are mostly of Hayes form P 18A¹². Besides the shape consisting of various groove decorations, the remaining findings include cups similar to Hayes form P33¹³ and the inturned bowls as seen in Hayes form P 29.¹⁴ Fragments found at *Laodicea* that were classified under Cypriot Sigillata are generally from the 1st and 2nd century.¹⁵

5. Sagalassos Red Slip Ware (figs. 3,60–83; 4,84–110)

Significant amounts of SRSW fragments were recovered during the ongoing excavation work at *Laodicea*, particularly at the Early Byzantine Towers along the Syria Boulevard and inside the Southern Roman Villa with mosaic decorations. Located in the Pisidia Region, Sagalassos was home to red slip pottery production that started in the 1st century BC and 1st century AD, and continued in different forms until the 7th century AD.¹⁶

Out of the 42 main forms identified at Sagalassos, 31 of them were found at the excavations of *Laodicea*, in the Southern Roman Villa, at the Eastern Byzantine Gate and in both towers on either side of that gate. Eight different SRSW forms were identified among the potteries found at the Southern Roman Villa. Findings include the forms 1A100, 1B101, 1B190, 1C140, 1C151, 1C160, 1C161 and 1C170. All of the before mentioned forms were popular choices of the

3rd century and the first half of the 4th century AD. Just like the other findings, the coins, metal, glass and bone objects unearthed at the Southern Roman Villa have been dated to 3rd and 4th century AD.

Compared to other sectors under excavation at *Laodicea*, the number of findings and form repertoire is significantly higher at both towers located to the north and south of the Eastern Byzantine Gate. Excavation work that has taken place at the towers has identified 22 different forms of SRSW. Forms 1C140, 1C160, 1C161 and 1B190, which were popular in the first half of the 4th century AD make up approximately 70% of the Red Slip potteries recovered at the towers. The concentration of findings of the mentioned fragments stand out as important archaeological material suggesting that the towers were filled in the first of 4th century AD at the earliest. The SRSW group that was found in almost every structure in the *Laodicea* excavations, particularly at the North-South Towers of the Eastern Byzantine Gate and the Southern Roman Villa can be dated between the first half of the 3rd century AD and first half of the 4th century AD. Besides the African Red Slips, Cypriot Sigillata and Çandarlı Ware found abundantly in coastal towns, the demand for red slip bowls in inland regions was supplied by large-scale production facilities in Sagalassos and spread to a wide geography¹⁷. Considering the close proximity of *Laodicea* and Sagalassos and the superior quality of its goods it is not surprising that *Laodiceans* preferred this type of pottery.

6. African Red Slip Ware (fig. 5,111–122)

Different forms of African Red Slip Ware plates are amongst findings that have been discovered during the excavations at *Laodicea*. The most common finding is the wide rimmed plate. Examples of this type found at *Laodicea* include **112** and **113**. Similar versions of **112** have been found at the Athenian Agora and dated middle and the third quarter of the 5th century AD.¹⁸ Whereas sample **113** shows similarity with F38 found at the Athenian Agora and is dated to 460–475 AD.¹⁹ Besides the main form found mostly at residential settlements in *Laodicea*, there are nonetheless different forms of plates and bowls from the African Red Slip Ware Group, although much less frequent (**fig. 5,111.114–122**). In the ancient period, *Laodicea* was located in a relatively strategic area, at the crossroads of Phrygia, Caria, Lydia and Pisidia. In keeping with this location, *Laodiceans* came to use red slip pottery intensively, starting from the Early Roman Imperial Period. When the recovered samples are evaluated, it can be seen that romanization in the city was rather effective from the 1st century BC onwards not only through architecture and sculpture but also through potteries.

¹⁰ HAYES 1985, 71–78 tav. 16–17; 18,1–4; ID., Cypriote Sigillata. Report Dep. Ant. Cyprus 1967, 66–77.

¹¹ ID. 1985, 78 tav. 18,3.

¹² Ibid. tav. 19,8–9.

¹³ Ibid. tav. 20,11.

¹⁴ Ibid. tav. 20,8.

¹⁵ Ibid. 84; 86.

¹⁶ J. POBLOME ET AL., The Clay Raw Materials of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware: A Chronological Evaluation. In: M. Waelkens/J. Poblome (eds.), Sagalassos 4. Report on the survey and excavation campaigns of 1994 and 1995. Acta Arch. Lovaniensia Monogr. 9 (Leuven 1997) 507; POBLOME ET AL. 1993, 114.

¹⁷ J. POBLOME, Production and Distribution of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware. A Dialogue with the Roman Economy. In: M. Herfort-Koch/U. Mandel/U. Schädler (eds.), Hellenistische und kaiserzeitliche Keramik des östlichen Mittelmeergebietes. Kolloquium Frankfurt 24.–25. April 1995 (Frankfurt a. M. 1996) 75–103 Taf. 24,5.

¹⁸ HAYES 2008, F84 fig. 35,1120; ID., Late Roman Pottery (London 1972) fig. 44,q.

¹⁹ ID. 2008 fig. 35,1119.

Lying at the crossroads of four regions led to rapid economic growth in the city, especially during the Early Roman Empire Period. It is very likely that import and export activity at the city peaked during this period. This argument is backed by the red slip ware found at the excavations at *Laodicea*, dated from the Roman Empire Period. Besides using analogic studies based on material to seek the origins of the potteries to ultimately identify the cities with which *Laodicea* traded potteries, learning the trading routes and the raw material used for exchange is the main aim of these studies. Road networks between cities that are likely to be used for pottery trading play an important role in the development of commercial activities between cities. Therefore the cities *Laodicea* is connected to by a road network essentially outline the routes of the potteries imported to the city and play an important role in helping us pinpoint their place of production. In this context, *Laodicea* was connected to

the sea and the west overseas via the ancient roads coming from Ephesus-Tralleis on the West and Perge-Kibyra on the South; and it also has access to the East through the Apameia-Antiocheia-Iconium route, via Tarsus and Issus. *Laodicea* had become the main center of this region as a consequence of its prosperous economy brought by all these connections. Considering this data, it is easier to explain the origins of the import material used in *Laodicea*. *Laodicea* produced pottery for its own demand during the Hellenistic Period and a sense of self-sufficiency had settled in the community. However, this perception altered during the Roman Imperial Period during which red slip pottery dominated the market. Archaeological methods and mineralogical analysis prove that *Laodicea* became inclined to use products from Ephesus, Tralleis and particularly Sagalassos.

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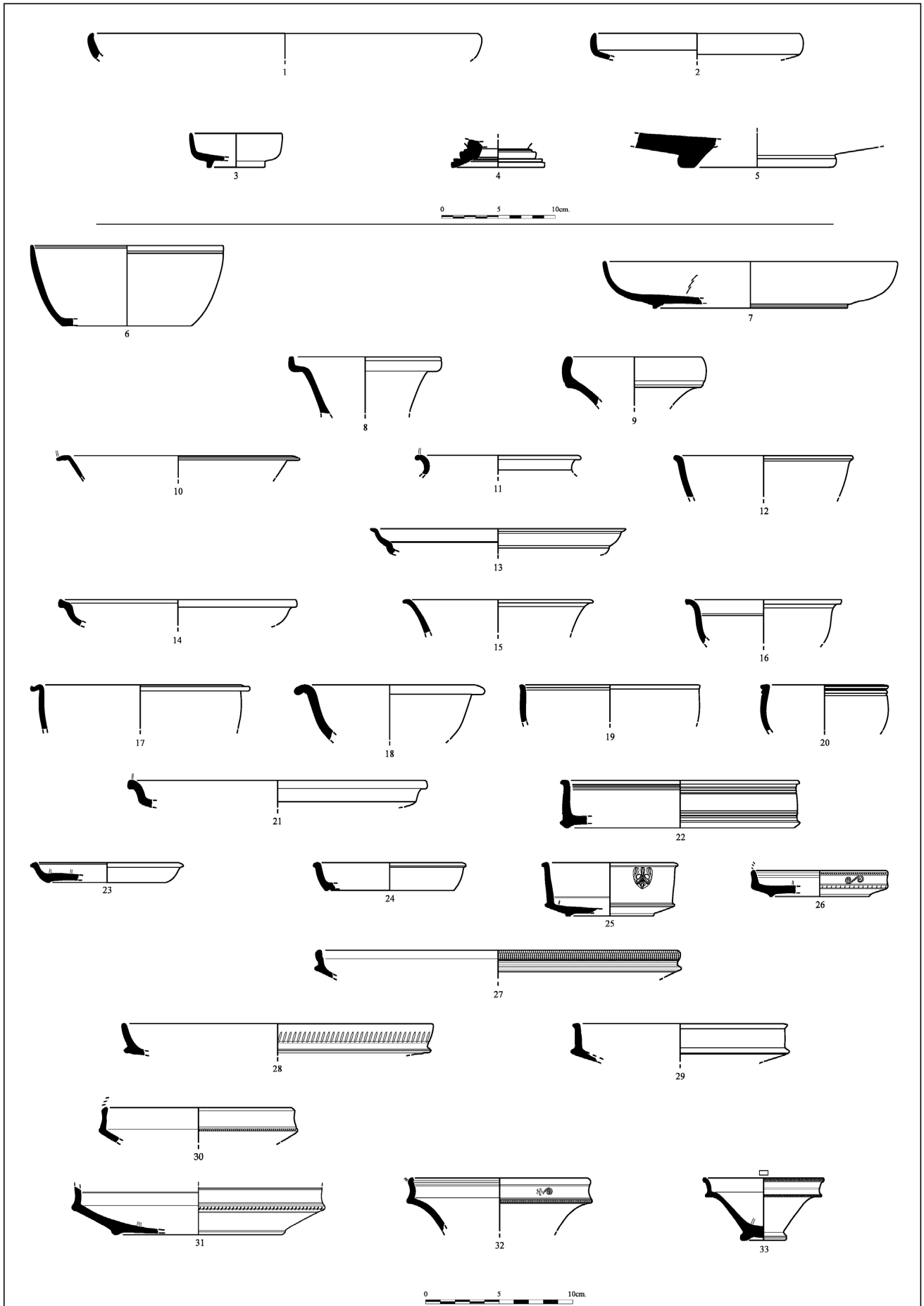


Fig. 1. 1–5 Eastern Sigillata A; 6–33 Eastern Sigillata B.

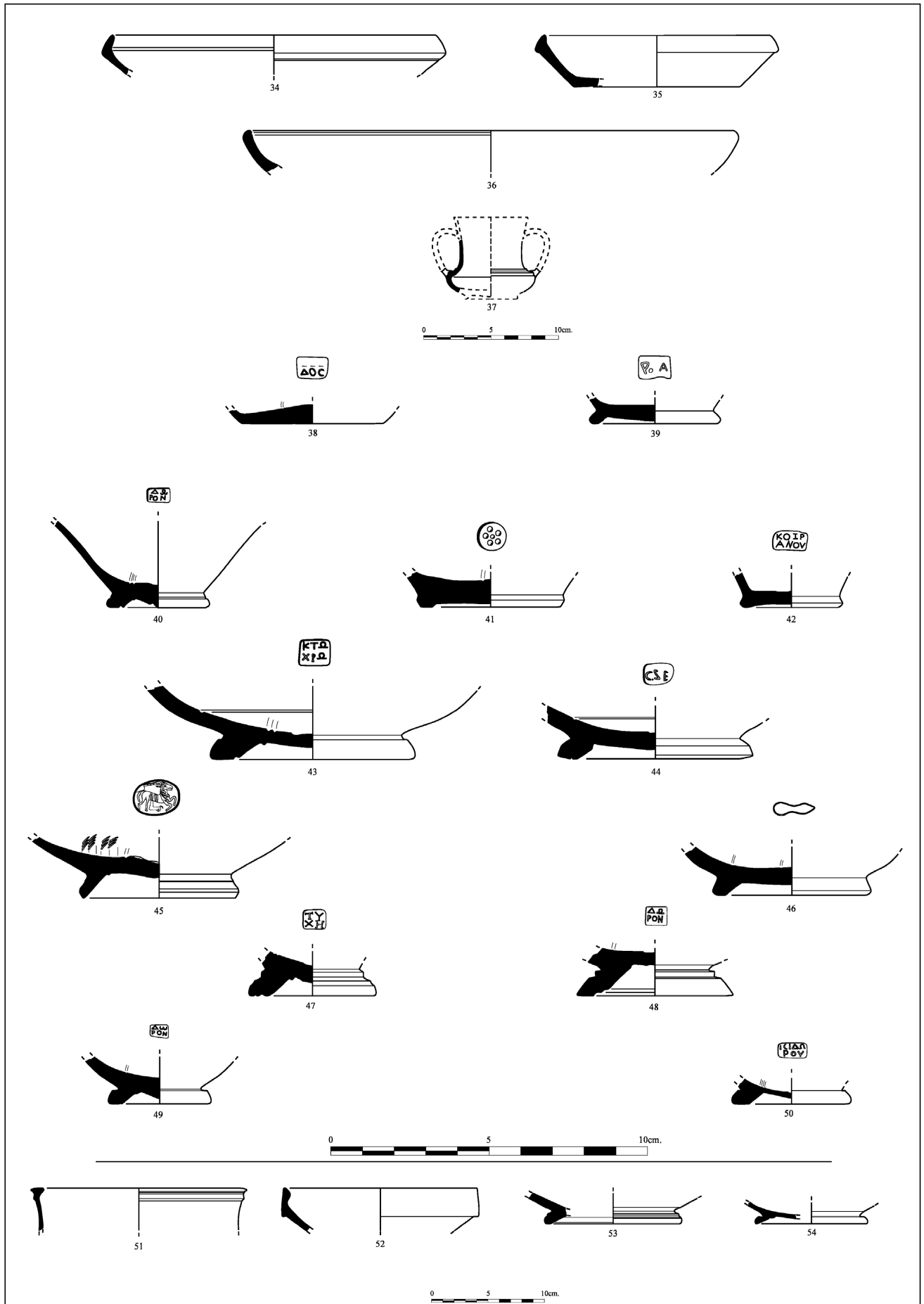


Fig. 2. 34–50 Eastern Sigillata B; 51–54 Eastern Sigillata C.

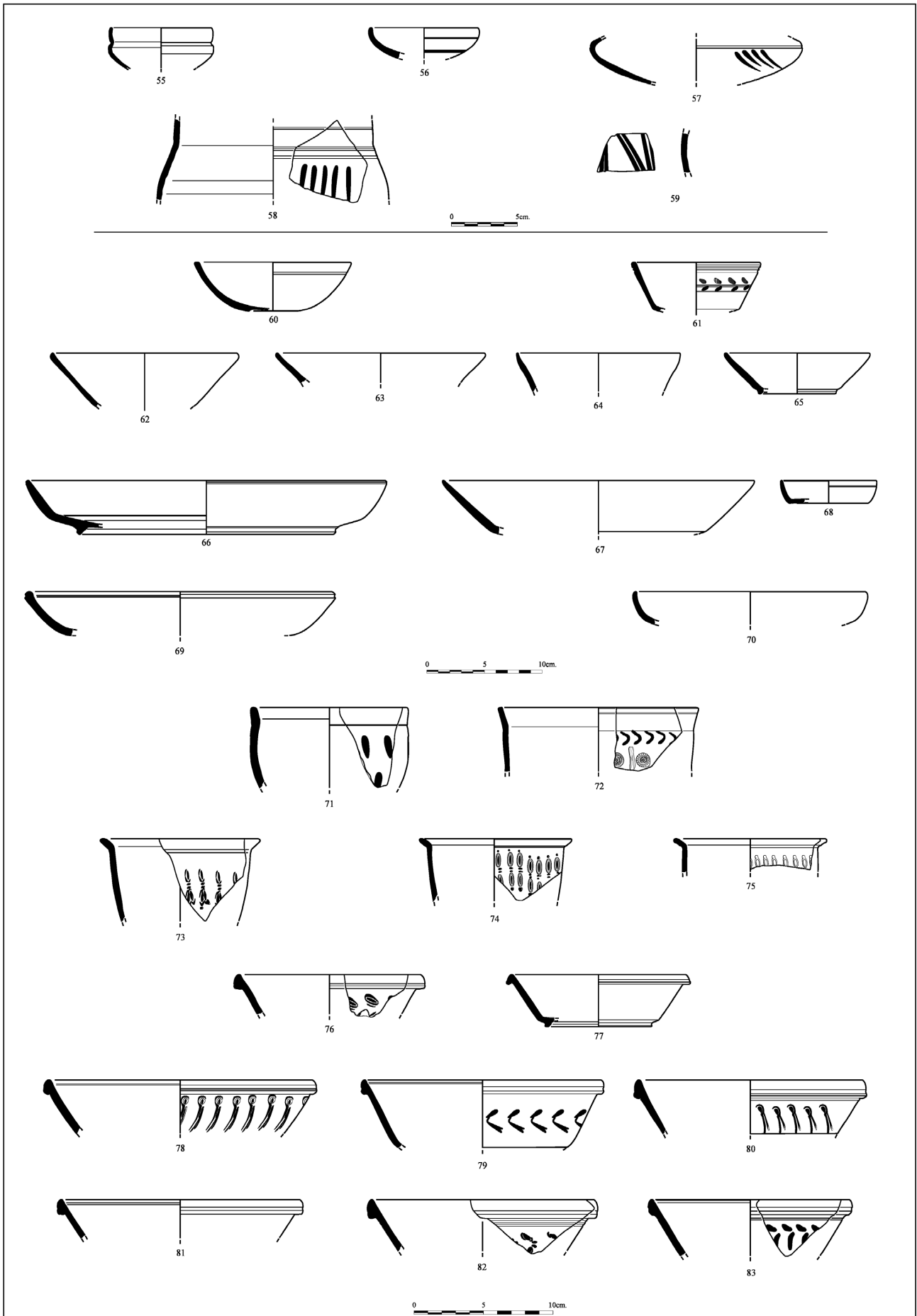


Fig. 3. 55–59 Cypriot Sigillata; 60–83 Sagalassos Red Slip Ware.

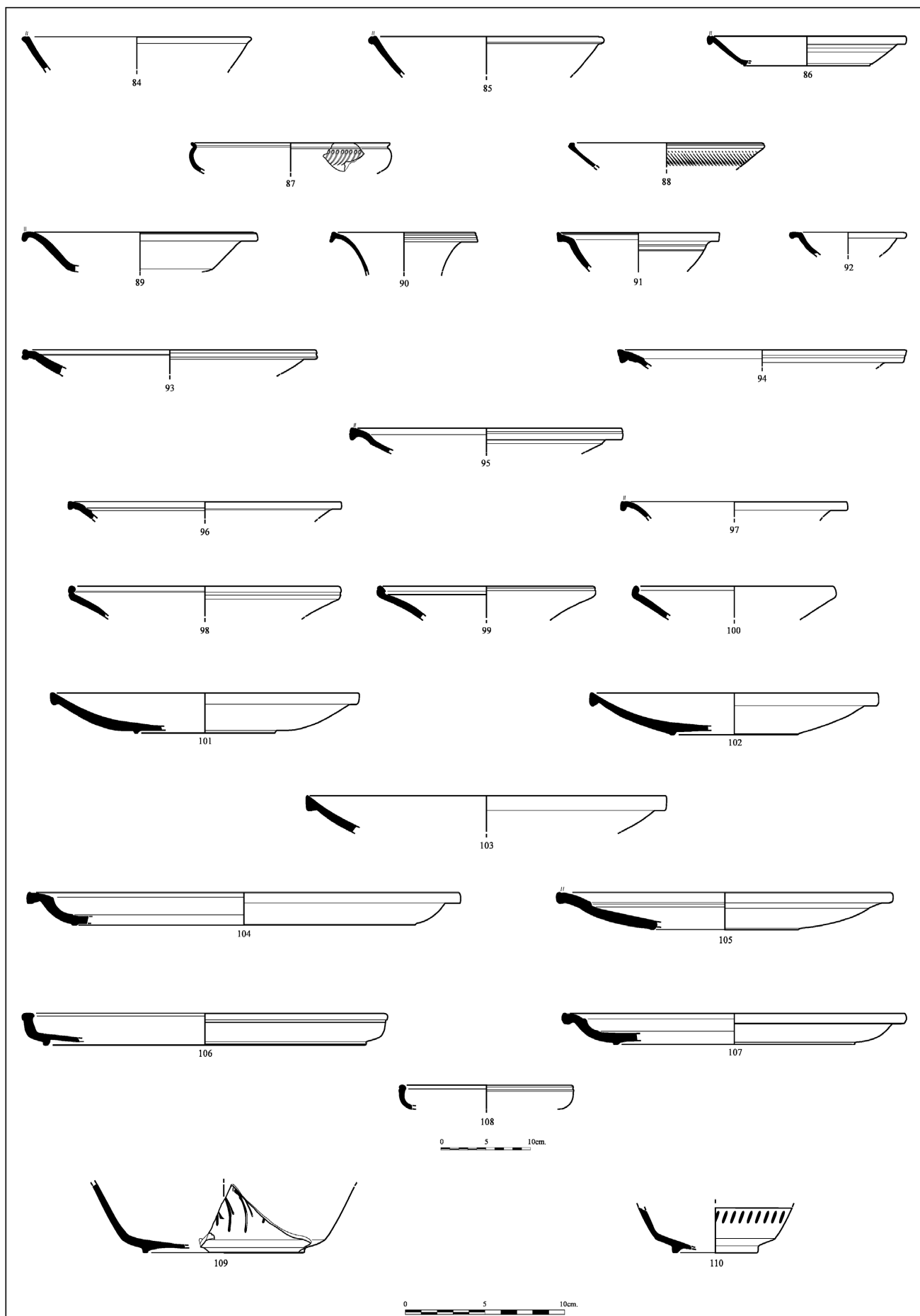


Fig. 4. 84–110 Sagalassos Red Slip Ware.

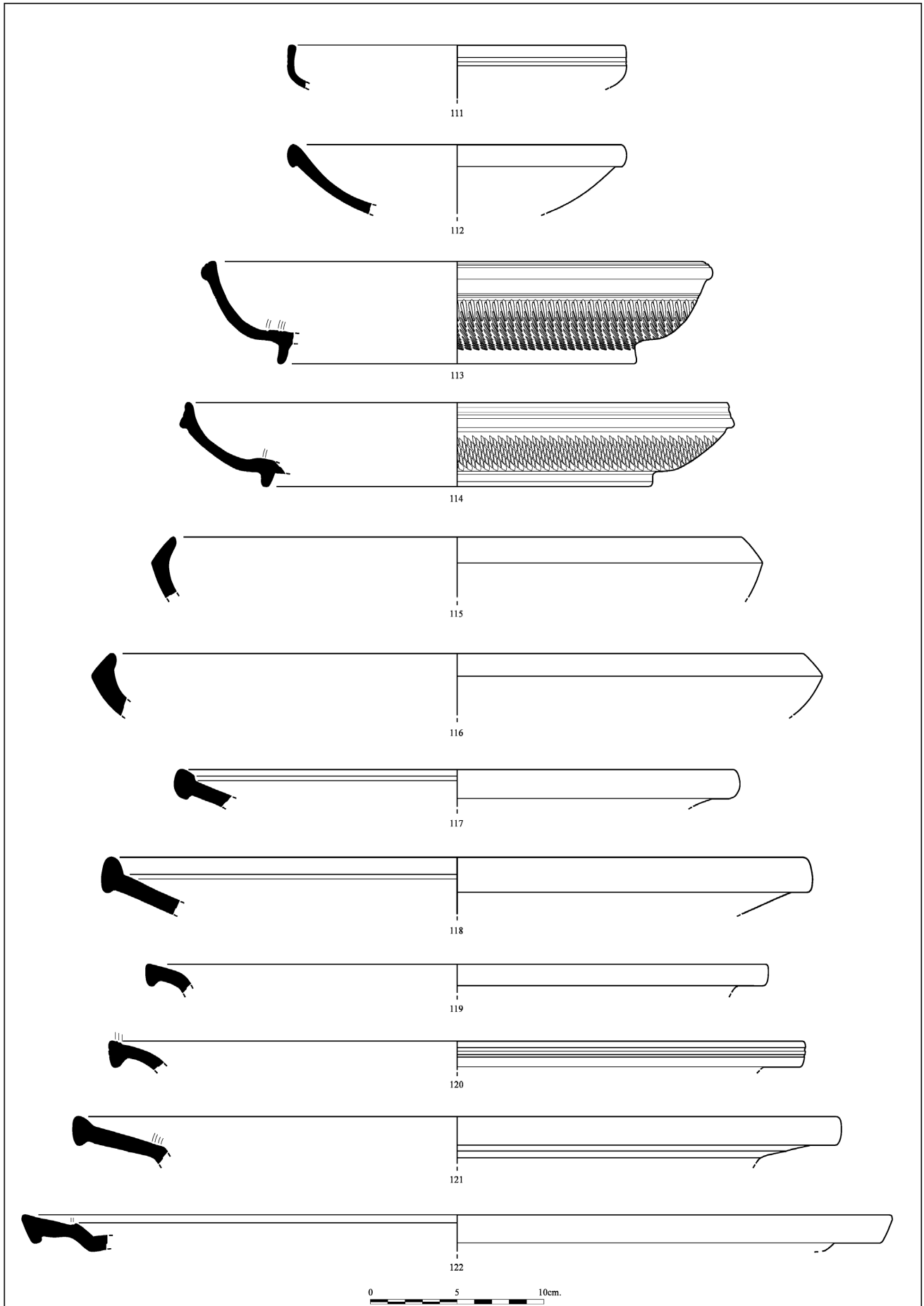


Fig. 5. 111–122 African Red Slip Ware.

