

CHAPITRE 15

NEOLITHIC POTTERY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HUMAN REMAINS FROM TAHADART

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Dozens of Neolithic pottery pieces were found at the Tahadart site. It is only surface material, which was spread in the area within a radius of a dozen or so meters from the skeleton described in chapter 13. There are only nine decorated pieces of the pottery. One piece is the part of the base, four are rims and five are belly fragments. Only these artifacts (10 pottery fragments) were analyzed.

DECORATION

Decoration can be found in the three parts of the vessel: on the rim (Fig. 1:4), near the outer rim (Fig. 1: 3, 4, 5; 2: 1, 4) and on the belly (Fig. 1: 2, 6; 2: 2, 3). Decoration was made using of the following techniques: impressing, engraving, incising and plastic technique. Decoration is vertically schemed in only one piece (Fig. 2: 2). On the rest of the vessel fragments, decoration is horizontally patterned. In one case the number of incisions and their interdependent localization is unrestricted (Fig. 2:2). It is possible that a similar situation applies to another fragment, where the number of impressions and their interdependent localization also is not strictly kept (Fig. 1: 5). There can be one or more decoration types on the fragments of the vessels and they can be made with different techniques. Engraving occurs in five cases. These are engraved lines, horizontally patterned. On three fragments they are put separately and regularly (Fig. 1; 4, 6; 2: 3), maybe also in a fourth case (Fig. 2: 4). On one fragment, lines are grouped in the parallel placed segments (Fig. 1: 2). In two cases this decoration is found together with impressed and incised decoration. One piece of the pottery is impressed decorated with curved posts lying near the outer rim as well as on the rim of the vessel (Fig. 1: 4). In the second example quite regular incisions can be found (Fig. 1: 6). Impressing can be found together with the plastic technique in three cases and in two of them also with incising. On one fragment there are plastic belts in the horizontal scheme with impressed nail decoration and also incisions horizontally patterned (Fig. 2: 1). On the other piece there are plastic belts crossed on the square with finger-impressed decoration and knob. They are accom-

panied by irregular incisions (Fig. 2: 2). Two above-mentioned fragments come from one vessel. On the third fragment of the pottery there is a plastic belt with finger-impressed decoration in a horizontal pattern. It is accompanied by triangular impresses, probably put in unrestricted way (Fig. 1: 5). One fragment is impressed decorated. Decoration can be found in repeating horizontally curved triangles (Fig. 1: 3).

TECHNOLOGY

The material was analyzed from the point of view of the basic features of the technological system. All of the vessel fragments were grouped into two classes depending on the thickness of the walls. Four fragments (8-10 mm) belong to the first group and six (11 mm and more) to the second one. The surface of the pottery, outer as well as internal, can be defined as mealy. The following tempers were mixed into the paste: crushed pottery – 10 fragments; crushed shells – 2; crushed rocks – 6; plant remains – 1 (minimal amount). Two classes of temper granulation were separated: first - < 1 mm – 7 fragments, second – 1-3 mm – 3 fragments.

MORPHOLOGY

It is almost impossible to define the typology of the material because it is considerably crushed. Only part of the artifacts can be defined more or less. The only fragment of the base belongs probably to the sieve. Following fragments – rim and base – derive from a single vessel, probably an amphora. Considerable thickness of the walls of the remaining fragments indicate that those vessels were quite big, some maybe storage vessels (Fig. 1: 3).

CHRONOLOGY AND CULTURE

The character of surface sites does not allow technologically homogenous material to be obtained. Even more, stratigraphy cannot be observed. Taking into account the character of this site and the minimal number of sherds found, the analysis of the material is based mainly on the stylistic fea-

tures of the decoration.

Among the artifacts, there are fragments of pottery with decoration comparable to that discovered at Dar es-Soltan site, layer B. Most (Fig. 1: 2, 4, 5, 6; 2: 2, 3, 4) can be included in group I, as defined by Armond Ruhlmann. These are mainly engraved and incised lines, diagonal and sinuous, placed mostly parallel in different schemes. Also the plastic belt decoration with finger impresses was included among this group (A. Ruhlman 1951: 102, 103). One fragment can be included in group III. This decoration is made with use of rectangular, round, etc. sectioned single stick or comb. Those impresses can be put in horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines. They also form differentiated schemes (A. Ruhlman 1951: 102, 103).

The pottery of layer B in Dar es-Soltan was defined as belonging to the Early Neolithic period of Ibero-Maurusian tradition (A. Ruhlman 1951: 109). Similar fragments sharing this tradition were also found in the caves in Oran (L. Balout 1955: 470). However, it is doubtful, as in the material from layer B at Dar es-Soltan, there are also Capsian elements and in the pottery European influences as well (L. Balout 1955: 474). A bell-shaped vessel that Ruhlmann qualifies as a local product (A. Ruhlman 1951: 101) is interpreted by Balout as a result of European influences coming from the west through Gibraltar (L. Balout 1955: 482). There were few fragments of pottery deco-

rated with shell impresses in this layer (A. Ruhlman 1951: 103) and it could also suggest European influences. In consequence, layer B at Dar es-Soltan site should be dated to the later period. Some researchers are of the opinion that the stratigraphy of this site should be analyzed once again. They date it to the Middle Neolithic period, between 4900 and 3900 BC (J.P. Daugas et al 1989: 685). Taking into account the above consideration, the pottery from Tahadart can be assigned to the Middle Neolithic period.

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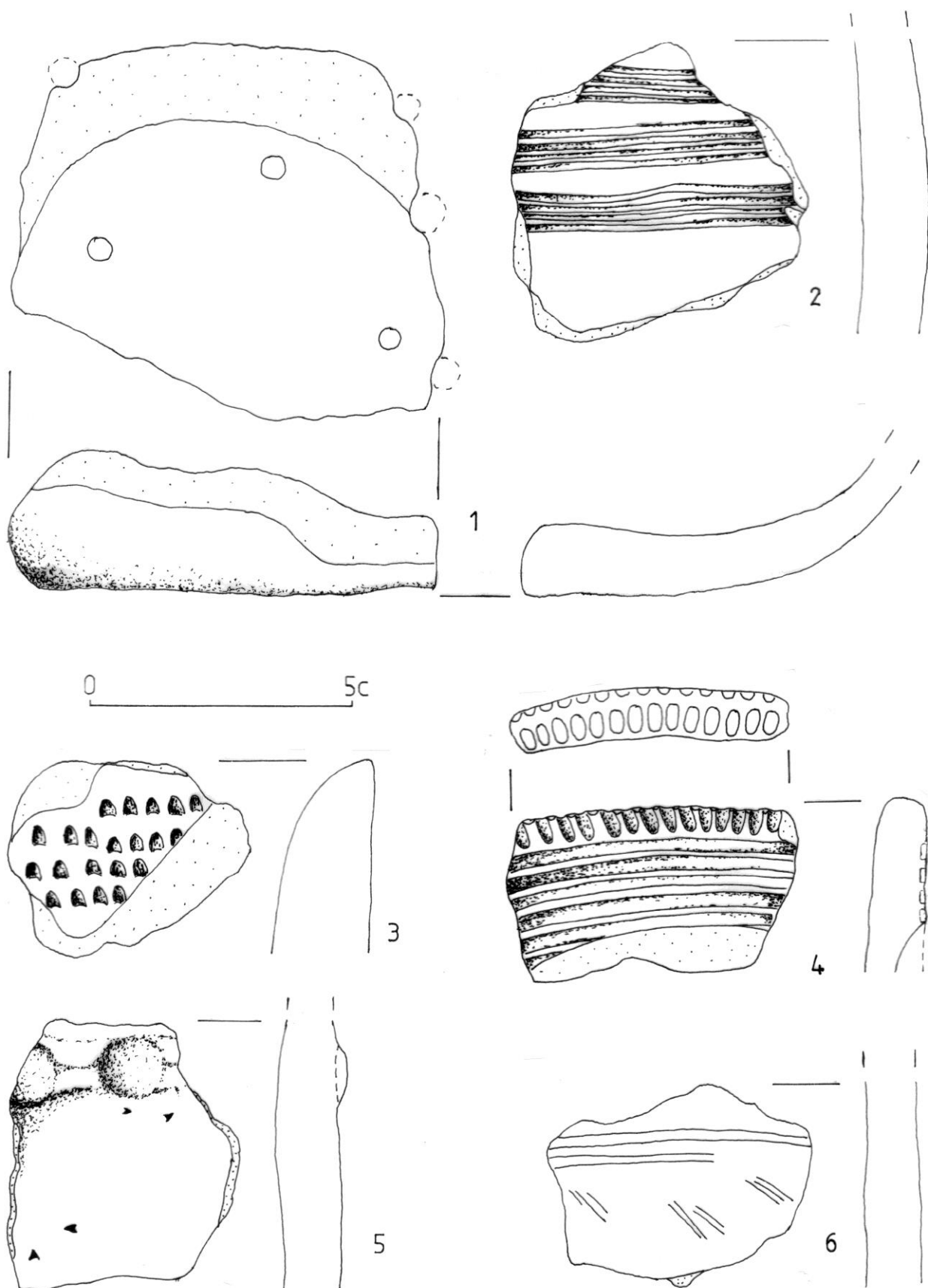


Figure 1. Neolithic pottery from Tahadart.

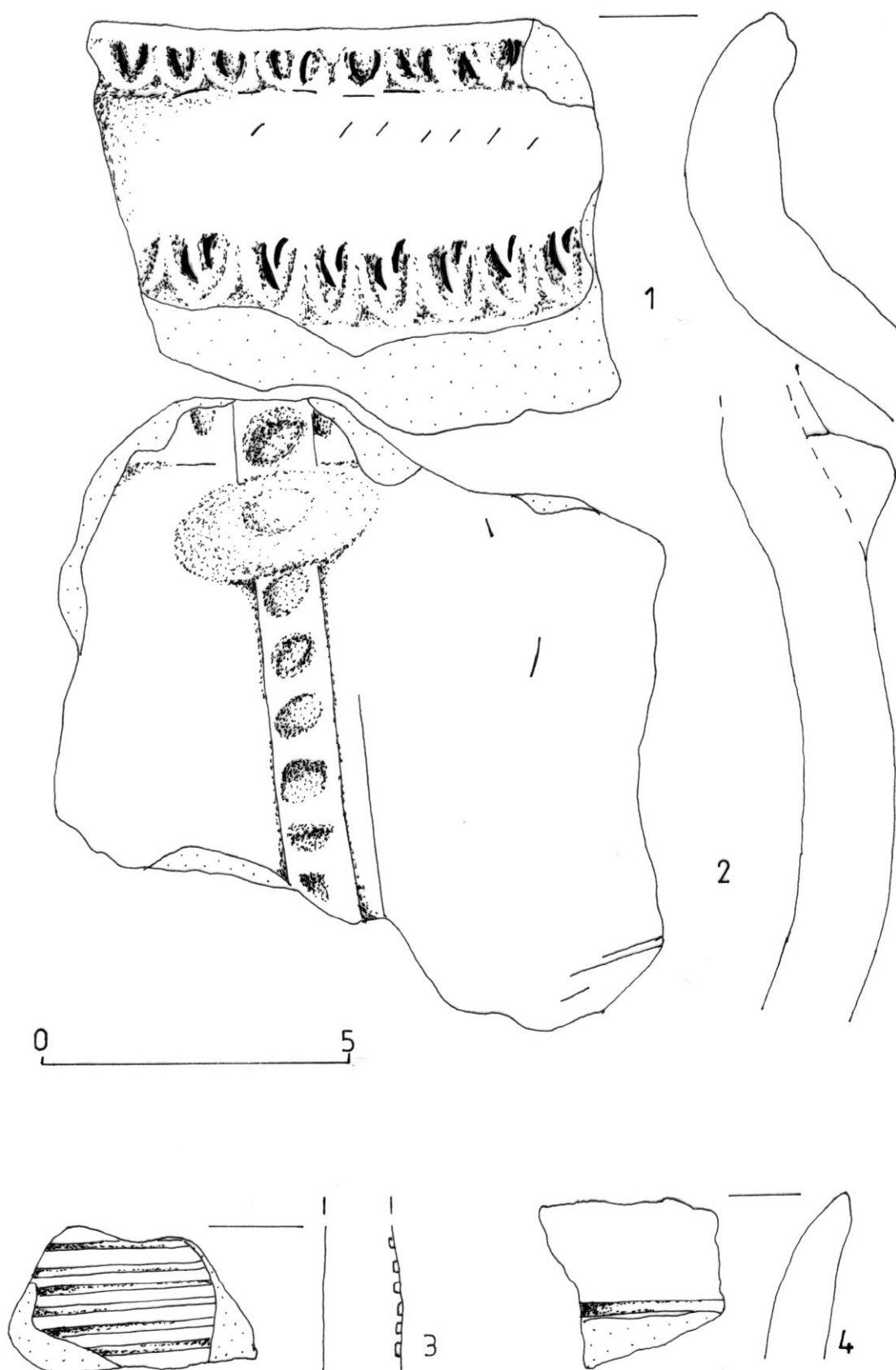


Figure 2. Neolithic pottery from Tahadart.