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ROMAN LAMPS IN THE COLLECTION OF SZÉKELY NATIONAL MUSEUM

One of the most vital parts of the inherent utilities for a civilized existence in the roman period was lighting. From most common lighting devices to complex one, Romans used lamps for their practical use and for comfort inside their homes. This way they were able to replace the most out of the natural light, in the night. The "consecrated" forms used in antiquity were those issued during the Greek period and developed by the Roman world the closed lamps, the "classic" ones.[1] With the usage of patterns starting with the 4th century BC enabled such artefacts to be produced almost industrially.[2] This was this specific object spread throughout the entire Roman Empire.

The components of the most common lamps are: *infundibulum* – the container were the fuel and the wick was held; *discus* – the central part which covered the container; *orificium, oculus* – filling orifices pierced therein and decorated with geometric, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figure; *margo* – the shoulder of the lamp located between the rim and the reservoir walls sometimes decorated with geometric and vegetal figures; *rostrum* – the beak of the lamp attached to the container, sometimes the reservoir could have several beaks and according to the number of beaks on the lamp we have: *monolychnis, monomyxus, bilychnis* (two beaks), *trlychnis* (with three), or *polychnis*, *polimyxus* (with several); *ansa* – the handle whenever it existed, was stuck to the reservoir for an easier manipulation.

In the collections of Székely National Museum from Sfântu Gheorghe (Covasna County) we have identified 11 roman lamps, most of them in an excellent preservation state. Few of them are acquisitions or donations, but most of them are archaeological discoveries from the local roman forts: Olteni, Boroşneul Mare, Comalău (Covasna County).

Catalogue of discoveries:

1. Open channel lamp – X Loeschcke type *(Pl. 1/1)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: very good;

D – L = 9.5 cm, D = 4.5 cm, H = 3.5 cm

Description: Discus decorated with a 1.6×1.38 cm human mask in relief, framed by the two filling-holes. The shoulder has two prominences; oblong nozzle. On the channel from the nozzle there is an "airing" orifice. Base decorated with grooves circles encircling the stamp *FORTIS* with capital letters of 0.5 cm in relief (c). The fine soapy ochre-brick fabric is covered by an orange-brick firnis mark. On the nozzle there are burning marks and traces of usage. Analogy – Ivány 1935, 316, no. 4549-4560

Place of discovery: Unknown, probably *Aquincum* (Budapest, Hungary), donation of the Zala Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága, 2005

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 54.6.1

Dating: 1st – 3rd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

2. Open channel lamp – X Loeschcke type *(Pl. 2/2)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: damaged, it was preserved the nozzle and half of the reservoir base, restored.

D – L = 7 cm, D = 3.5 cm, H = 2.5 cm

Description: Discus decorated with probably a human mask in relief, today destroyed, framed by the two filling-holes. The shoulder has two prominences; oblong nozzle. Base decorated with grooves circles encircling the stamp FORTIS with capital letters of 0.5 cm in relief (c). The fine soapy yellowish-brown fabric is covered by a firnis in the same colour. On the nozzle there are burning marks and traces of strong usage. Analogy: Alicu 1994, 171, no. 473, Pl. IX, fig. 15/147; Roman 1997, 442, no. 9, fig. 2/6, Pl. 1/6;

Place of discovery: Boroşneul Mare (Covasna County), 1973, *castrum*, in the northern corner.

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 16681

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

3. Monolychnis lamp – X Loeschcke type *(Pl. 2/3)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: very good

D – L = 14 cm, D = 7 cm, H = 4 cm

Description: Discus decorated with a representation that is very poorly preserved, it could be a very sketchy representation of the god Hercules, or maybe an athlete. The main character is sitting on at the base, and it seems that on his left is a small character. It may also depict a gladiator killing the opponent. The filling hole is situated under the base. Smooth discus, shoulder has two prominences; oblong nozzle. On the channel from the nozzle there is an "airing" orifice, at the end of it is a little damaged. It had a handle that is broken. On the nozzle there are burning marks. The fine ochre fabric is covered by an orange-

[1] ISAC, Adriana – ROMAN, Cristian-Aurel 2006, 21.

[2] Idem.

brick firnis. Analogy: Băluță 1989, 240; Popa-Buboi 1997, 80, fig. 2.

Place of discovery: Apulum-Șard (Alba County), with unknown find condition.

Keeping place: MNS, Nr. Inv.: 8266

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

4. Open channel lamp – X Loeschcke type *(Pl. 2/4)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: very good

D – L = 10 cm, D = 4 cm, H = 4 cm

Description: Smooth discus, shoulder with two prominences. At the base has three incised concentric circles, an illegible framing stamp, presumably *FORTIS*. On the channel from the nozzle is an "airing" orifice. Fine, dense ochre brown to coffee brown fabric, covered by an ochre firnis. Analogy: Băluță 1996, 92, no. 3, Pl. IX/3

Place of discovery: Unknown findspot[3].

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 142/1882

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

5. Lamp – VIII Loeschcke type *(Pl. 3/1a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: severely damaged, half of the disc the nozzle and the ring like handle were missing; restored.

D – L = 7 cm, D = 4 cm, H = 2.5 cm

Description: Concave discus, edged by a concentric groove. Ring like handle, ring shaped simple base. Analogy: Băluță 1996, 92, no. 3, Pl. IX/3

Place of discovery: Boroşneul Mare (Covasna County), *castrum*, 1947

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 11309

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

6. Lamp – VIII Loeschcke type *(Pl. 3/2a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: very good

D – L = 9.6 cm, D = 6.5 cm, H = 2.8 cm

Description: Concave discus, edged by a concentric groove. Ring like handle, ring shaped, simple base. The dense brick fabric is covered with a reddish firnis. Analogy: Băluță 1996, 92, no. 3, Pl. IX/3

Place of discovery: Târgu Secuiesc (Covasna County), downtown (Court nr. 3), with an amphora and other finds, 1972

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 16542

Dating: 2nd–3rd centuries AD

Bibliography: SZÉKELY, Zoltán 1975, 349, fig. 6/4.

7. Lamp – XIII Loeschcke type *(Pl. 3/3a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: severely damaged, the nozzle and half of the basin were missing, restored

D – L = 9 cm, D = 5.5 cm, H = 3 cm

Description: The circular shape with a slightly deep discus and flat base. It has a large reservoir hole. The fine and dense fabric has a grey colour. Analogy: Băluță 1965, 291, pl. VI/6.

Place of discovery: Olteni (Covasna County), the southern side of the *castrum*, 1988.

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 19358

Dating: 2nd–3rd centuries AD

Bibliography: Unpublished.

8. Lamp - Ivány type XLVIII *(Pl. 3/4)*

Material: clay, poor quality; State of preservation: good, burning marks

D – L = 9 cm, D = 6 cm, H = 3 cm

Description: Pear shaped body, discus with a wick hole, the nozzle with an "airing" orifice. Poor quality fabric, unevenly fired, dark brick red with brownish shadows. Seems like wheel made. The pieces are strongly used. Analogy: Ivány 1935, 120, type XLVIII.

Place of discovery: Comalău (Covasna County), *castrum*, 1942

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 9855

Dating: 3rd century AD

Bibliography: SZÉKELY, Zoltán 1943, p. 20, nr. 12, fig. X/12

9. Lamp *(Pl. 3/5a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: it was preserved only the right half of the lamp, and the nozzle and the discus was broken, restored.

D – L = 9 cm, D = 5.5 cm, H = 2.5 cm

Description: Pear shaped body, discus with a wick hole, it was restored inaccurate and today is very hard to classify it properly.

Place of discovery: Olteni (Covasna County), southern side of the *castrum*, 1988

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 19357

Dating: 3rd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished

10. Polilychnis Lamp *(Pl. 4/1a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: the handle and three nozzles were missing, restored

D – L = 12 cm, D = 7 cm, H = 3 cm

Description: Concave discus with five short nozzles proceeding from the high shoulder. Probably disc shaped handle, punched. Have a flat circular base. In the centre is a wick reservoir hole. The fine dense brown-ochre is covered with a red slip. Analogy: Cătinaş 1996, 67, no. 7

Place of discovery: Olteni, *castrum*, 1970

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 16396

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: SZÉKELY, Zoltán 1979, p. 65, fig. 7/13

11. Lamp *(Pl. 4/2a-b)*

Material: clay, fine fabric; State of preservation: the discus and the nozzle are broken

D – L = 12 cm, D = 10 cm, H = 3 cm

Description: This type of lamp is unique for the time, in the region. Instead of the handle it has a hole for the finger in the main body of the lamp. The rim seems straight unprofiled with the nozzle marked. Only the fine clay of grey colour, and the fact that it seems like wheel made could date it from the roman period. Analogy: the only analogy that we know so far comes from a drawing of G. Téglás from Crişcior (Hunedoara County), see Téglás 2005, 207, no. 18/147

Place of discovery: Unknown.

Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: A.1010 old inventory number, donation of Veres Ferencz before 1875

Dating: 2nd century AD

Bibliography: Unpublished.

[3] In the inventory book at this number were registrate printings.

12. Mould *(Pl. 4/3a-b)*
Material: clay, dense fabric; State of preservation: very good
D – L = 12 cm, L Lamp = 5.5 cm, H = 4 cm
Description: The mould of a circular lamp with rounded nozzle, the lower side matrix. The piece's lower side matrix has two impressed lays. The fine dense fabric has a brick colour.
Place of discovery: Olteni, *castrum*, before 1964.
Keeping place: MNS, Inv. Nr.: 15875
Dating: 2nd–3rd centuries AD
Bibliography: SZÉKELY, Zoltán 1979, p. 66, fig. 7/8.

Stamped lamps

As we know *FORTIS* is the best known and prolific lamps producer whose pieces were the most copied in the provincial workshop. The two lamps with this stamp are both preserved in very god condition. The first one is a donation from *Aquincum* is a very common lamp. The second one comes from the roman fort from Boroşneul Mare. In the Dacian provinces, the lamps with the stamp *FORTIS* are imports and especially, local imitations and they were discovered in the most Roman researched sites.[4] This should be the case, also with the lamp from Boroşneul Mare. Its best analogy comes from Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetuza, were the local workshop manufacture those types of lamps.[5]

Decoration

Only two of the lamps from this article have some decoration. On the no. 3 the decoration is very poorly preserved, we weren't able to identify the representation. It could be the god Hercules or a gladiator. The mask appears on no. 1 and very probable on no. 2. It is a human head, with long curly hair, big eyes and exaggerates opened mouth. Those representations are specific for the local workshop from Aquincum.[6]

Types

The majority of the lamps belong to the X Loeschcke type (no. 1, 2, 3, 4), two to the VIII Loeschcke type (no. 5, 6) one to the XIII Loeschcke type (no. 7), one to the Ivány type XLVIII (no. 8). A few of them due to their state of preservation are uncertain (no. 9, 11). Only one is a polilychnis lamp with five nozzles (no. 10). We have a mould (no. 12) also that matches perfectly with one of the lamps (no. 7).

Dating

Except the donations all the lamps are coming from archaeological diggings, but unfortunately the stratigraphic references from the diggings reports are very few. So the most useful way for dating was by analogies with discoveries from other sites.

Workshops

The roman lamps from the forts from Covasna County were a part of them imported from major settlements as Ulpia Traiana (as no. 2) or maybe Apulum (for no. 5), or from the south or the Pannonian provinces (no. 10 has a good analogy from Potaissa and Romula[7]). But some of them like no. 7 with the perfect match with the mould, or no. 8 and 9, seems like they are the product of local workshops according to the paste's characteristics, production (they are pottery wheel made lamps). A local product must be even no. 11 a particular lamp with no proper analogy, but wheel made and by a fine fabric that could also be from roman period.

The roman lamps are the reflection of the trade between the local community besides the roman forts from this region and the major settlements of roman Dacia, and in the same time, they show us a glimpse of the image of the internal production evolution and local provincial trade and also the status of the local communities development. The variety of types, proof an active economical life in Roman period, from the beginning of the existence of the province until the 3rd century AD. in this area.

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[4] ROMAN, Cristian-Aurel 2009, 65.
[5] ROMAN, Cristian-Aurel 2006, 548.
[6] IVÁNY, Dóra 1935, 316, no. 4549–4560.
[7] ISAC, Adriana – ROMAN, Cristian-Aurel 2006, 55, no. 92.

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Római mécsesek a Székely Nemzeti Múzeum gyűjteményében

(Kivonat)

A sepsiszentgyörgyi Székely Nemzeti Múzeum gyűjteményeiben található 11 római mécsest és a hozzájuk tartozó öntőformát mindeddig nem közölték önálló tanulmányban. A leletek fele adományként, a többi a Kovászna megye területén található római katonai táborok (Komolló, Nagyborosnyó, Oltszem) régészeti kutatása eredményeként gyarapította a múzeum gyűjteményét.

A mécsesek egy része (három darab) sorozatgyártott termék, amelyeken megtalálható a FORTIS cégjelzés, valamint két példányon a termékre jellemző maszk. Tipológiai szempontból a mécsesek a Loescke X (4 db), Loescke VIII (2 db), Loescke XIII (1 db), valamint az Ivány XLVIII (1 db) típusokba sorolhatóak, egy példány a több égésterű *polilychnis* kategóriába tartozik, míg két másik nem található meg a mécses-tipológiákban.

A mécseseket előkerülésük rétegtani helyzetének hiányában az ismert, Dácia provinciabeli leletek alapján kelteztük. Egy részük a tartomány nagy termelőközpontjaiból került ki, de megtalálhatók köztük olyan példányok is, amelyek helyi műhely termékei.

Opaițe romane din colecția Muzeului Național Secuies

(Rezumat)

În colecțiile Muzeului Național Secuiesc din Sf. Gheorghe există 11 opaițe (sau fragmente de opaițe) romane şi un tipar în bună stare de conservare. Ele nu au fost incluse într-un studiu comun până acum.

Dintre acestea jumătate provin din donații, iar restul din săpăturile arheologice efectuate la castrele romane din zonă, de la Boroşneul Mare, Comalău, Olteni. Trei sunt Firmalampen, la două dintre ele ştampila *FORTIS* fiind cât se poate de clară. Două fragmente prezintă şi decor sub forma unei măşti umane. Tipologic ele se încadrează în tipul Loeschcke X (4 buc.), tipul Loeschcke VIII (2 buc.), unul tipului Loeschcke XIII şi unul tipului Ivány XLVIII. Una dintre opaițe este de tip *polilychnis* cu cinci ciocuri. Două opaițe sunt incerte din punct de vedere tipologic.

Deoarece datele stratigrafice lipsesc, datarea lor s-a făcut pe baza analogiilor cu opaițe din alte centre ale Daciei romane. O parte din ele sunt importuri din marile centre de producție ale provinciei Dacia, dar câteva dintre ele, făcute la roată sau în tipar, sunt produse locale.

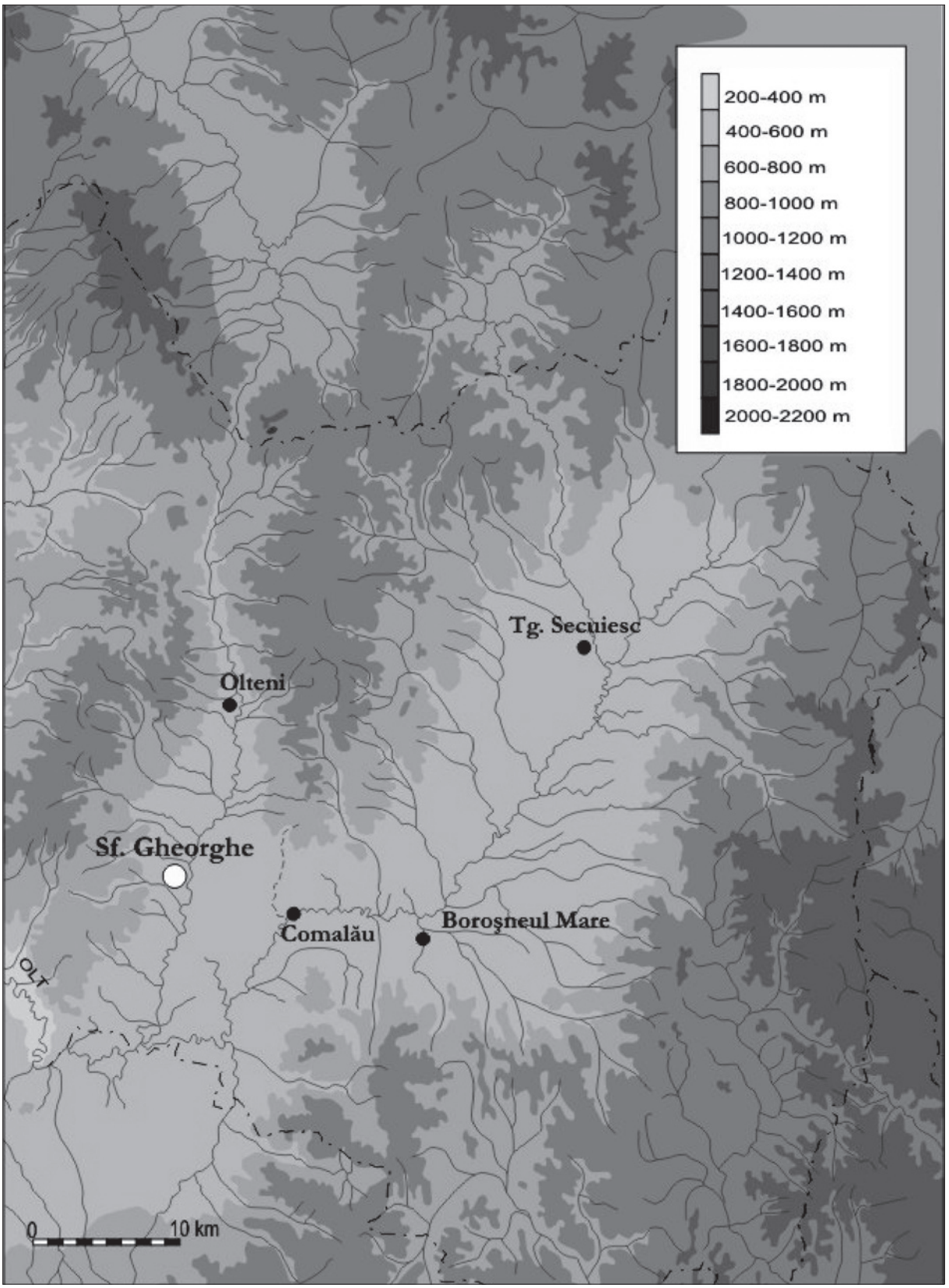


Plate 1. Find spot of roman lamps in Covasna County

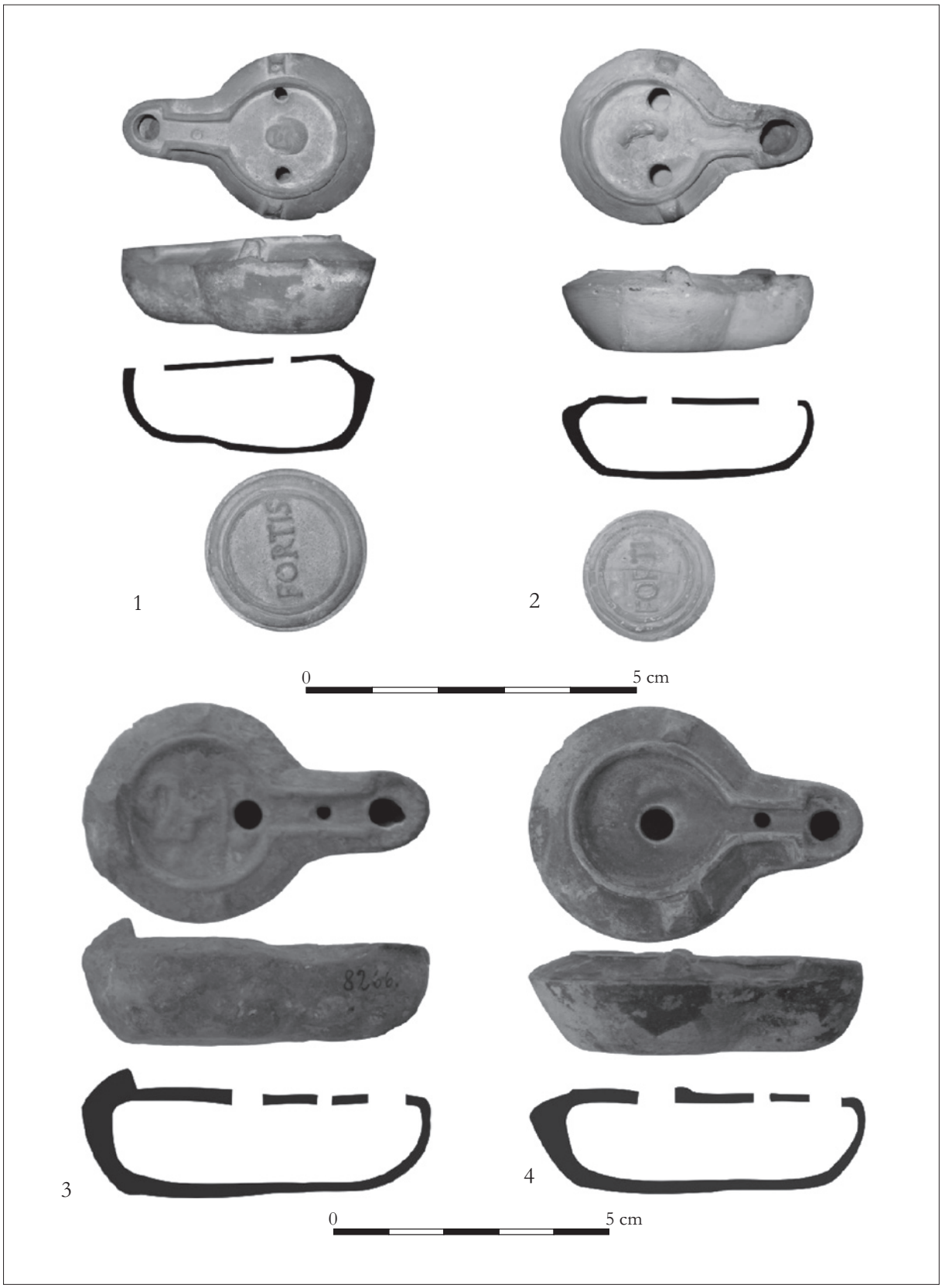


Plate 2.
1. Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 1; ***2.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 2; ***3.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 3; ***4.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 4

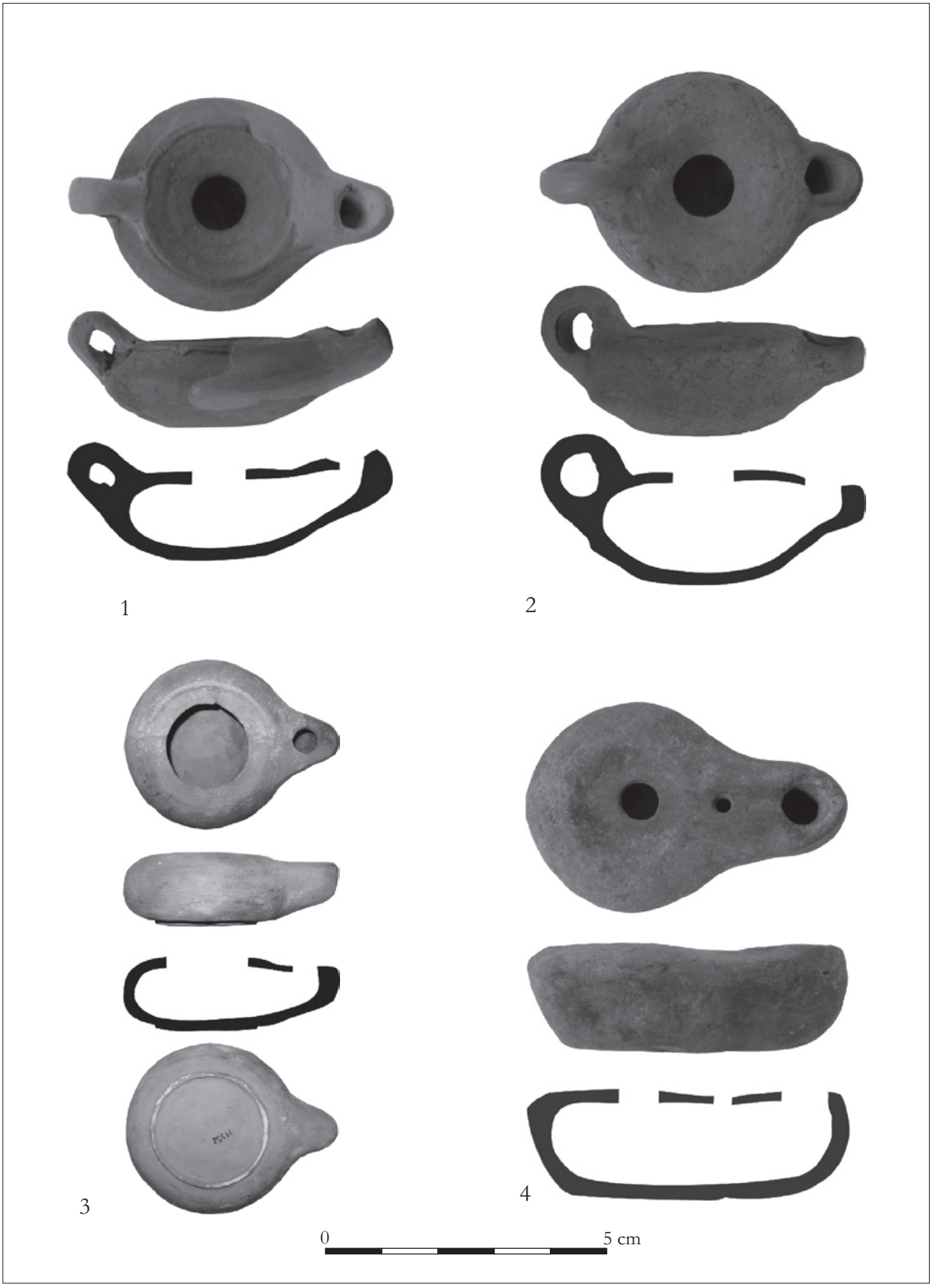
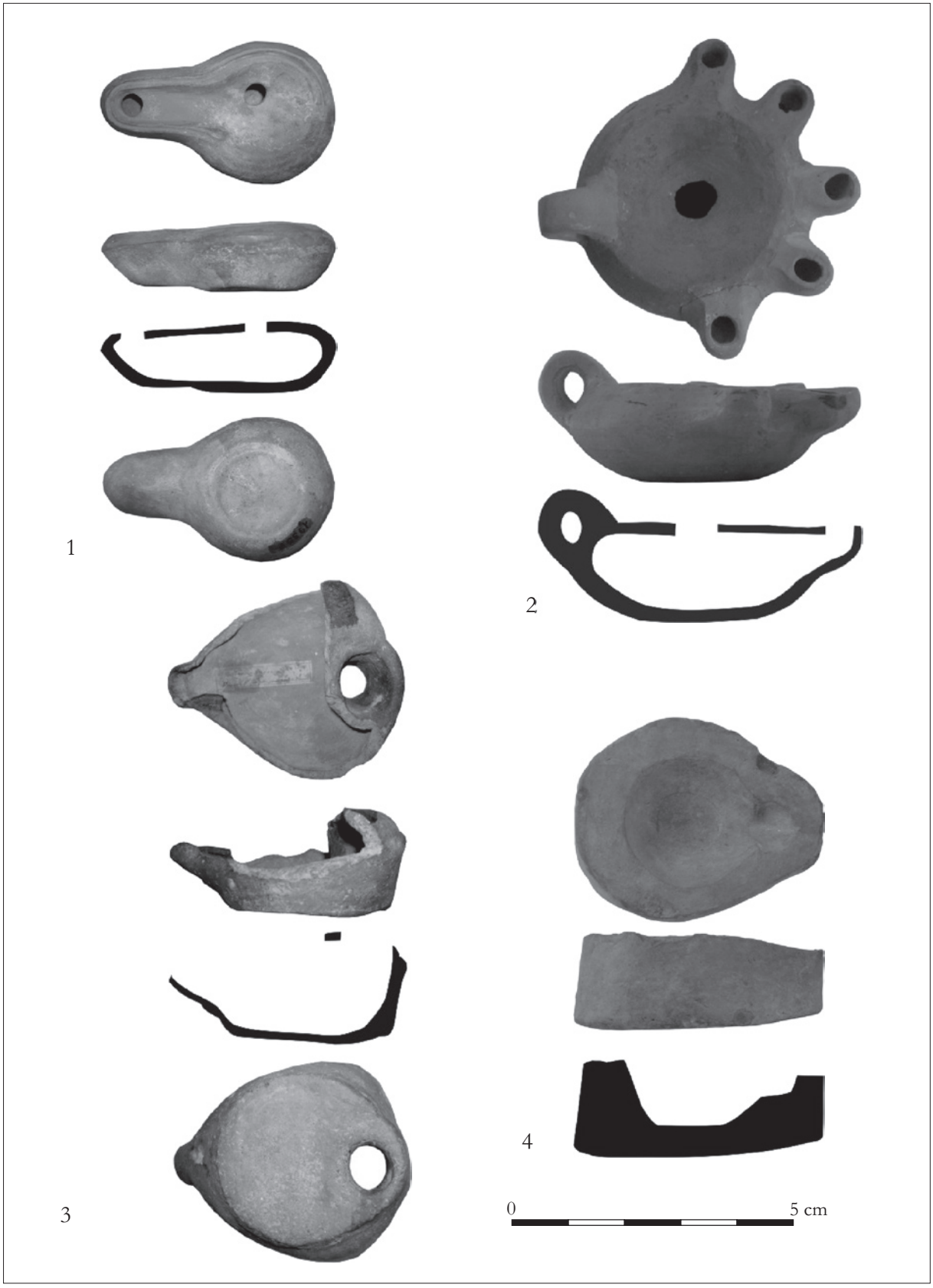


Plate 3.
1. Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 5; ***2.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 6; ***3.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 7; ***4.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 8



Plates 4.
1. Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 9; ***2.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 10; ***3.*** Oil lamp, catalogue nr. 11; ***4.*** Oil lamp mould, catalogue nr. 12