

## A RECENTLY IDENTIFIED CAVALRY SPORTS HELMET FROM AQUINCUM

Bronze plate fragments from the excavation surveyed by János Szilágyi were found in Aquincum Museum during the classification of the earlier collection. Csúcshegy mansion, Budapest IIIrd district is registered with a short note as archaeological site of the objects in the inventory. Detailed inspection proved that 11 helmet fragments are registered under 8 inventory numbers.

Inventory numbers of the fragments are in ascending order as follows:

**Fragment No. 1**, the largest one, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 7. (*Plate 1-2, Fig. 1.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 95 mm  
Height: 111 mm  
Thickness: 1,2 mm at rim,  
0,6 mm at decorated part

The fragment is a lower right portion of the rim. It shows the original rim in short section together with an irregular line of tiny dots in a distance of 12 mm from the rim. Roughly engraved pairs of lines in a 8-10 mm sequence are situated between the rim and the dotted line in perpendicular mounting. On the lower part of the fragment in connection with the perpendicular line an other line of dots bigger in size than the previous ones decorates the engraved part. On a 24 mm wide field a third line of dots formed by the largest dots continuous to the intact part of the rim at 5-8 mm below the second dotted line. The initiation of rim designed in almost rectangular bend to the neck can also be observed in traces on the lower edge of the fragment.

The frame described above surrounds the front and bottom part of the bended, round shaped fragment. Curl pattern embossed from the back side decorates the surface. The pattern is emphasised by bended carving on the front. The plate is slightly flattened out on the upper part of the fragment and patterns of embossed long hair and decorating cord can be observed on it. The fragment can be matched on to a circle with a diameter of 185 mm corresponding to a hat size of 58 (7 1/8 British). The best matching pair of this piece is fragment No. 7.

**Fragment No. 2**, Inv.No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 8. (*Plate 1-2, Fig. 2.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 55 mm  
Height: 24 mm  
Thickness: 0,5 mm

This fragment is most probably a portion of the bottom left rim without any embossed decoration. The

upper part is decorated with a double line of dots similar to the ones observed on the previous plate. The bottom portion is fragmented. The original rim section is missing. The fragment No. 8 is a part of the left corner of the helmet and can thoroughly be fitted with future surface to this part.

**Fragment No. 3**, Inv.No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 9. (*Plate 3-4, Fig. 3.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 62 mm  
Height: 63 mm  
Thickness: 0,5 mm

The embossed curl pattern emphasised by bended carving clearly appears on this fragment. The curl pattern is a relief design while the hair motif is flat like on fragment No. 1. The curls are smaller in size and support the idea that this fragment is a part of the back side of skull-piece.

**Fragment No. 4**, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 11. (*Plate 3-4, Fig. 4.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 13 mm  
Height: 19 mm  
Thickness: 1 mm

This fragment corresponds to a piece of the rim. The parallel lines of tiny dots in a distance of 10 mm from the edge of the rim and a pair of lines in perpendicular mounting are identified on it.

**Fragment No. 5**, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 12. (*Plate 3-4, Fig. 5.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 26 mm  
Height: 37 mm  
Thickness: 0.5 mm

The fragment is decorated with a piece of a human face formed by high relief technique. Right half of a high quality female(?) face together with hair motif is well preserved on this fragment. Nevertheless the female face motif represents a rarity among the helmet ornaments.

**Fragment No. 6**, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 14. consist of four separate parts.

6/a (*Plate 3-4, Fig. 6/a.*)

Dimensions:

Width: 28 mm  
Height: 21 mm  
Thickness: 0,6 mm

The fragment decorated with high relief technique is in close connection to the fragment No. 5 although there is no common surface between them. A hair pat-

tern, a deep carving on the middle and a field without decoration complete the plate.

6/b (Plate 3-4, Fig. 6/b.)

Dimensions:

Width: 41 mm

Height: 19 mm

Thickness: 0,5 mm

It is a round-shaped plate decorated with scale or feather-like pattern on one side while the rim is decorated with a grooved rib. On the other side leaning grooves and remains of a line of dots follow the line of the above mentioned narrow rib. A wing can be reconstructed from the motif embossed to the plate.

6/c (Plate 3-4, Fig. 6/c.)

Dimensions:

Width: 36 mm

Height: 21 mm

Thickness: 0,5 mm

The majority of the surface is covered by a dense, tiny groove framed by an embossed arch. A flat surface is connected to this section. The groove can be explained as a stylised feather representation. This fragment is most likely an other piece of the feather pattern.

6/d (Plate 3-4, Fig. 6/d.)

Dimensions:

Width: 24 mm

Height: 35 mm

Thickness: 0,4 mm

A slightly embossed hair motif designed from narrow, parallel ribs can be identified on the flat plate. There is a similar pattern on fragment No. 3.

**Fragment No. 7**, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 15. (Plate 1-2, Fig. 7.)

Dimensions:

Width: 63 mm

Height: 34 mm

Thickness: 0,9 mm

The plate is a fragment of the bottom rim of the helmet. On the upper part the same double line of dots in parallel positioning known already from fragment Nos. 1 and 2 can well be observed. On the bottom part the oblique-angled rim is highly fragmented and incomplete. The fragment can be located to the vicinity of fragment 1 because of its design.

**Fragment No. 8**, Inv. No. BTM Ro 64. 8. 16. (Plate 1-2, Fig. 8.)

Dimensions:

Width: 21 mm

Height: 30 mm

Thickness: 1,4 mm

Length: 51 mm

This is a fragment from the left corner of the helmet and suitable for reconstruction of the left front and side rim in short distance. On the top the double line of dots known already from fragment Nos. 1, 2 and 7 can be seen. There is a field without any decoration under this section. At the bottom the helmet rim can be observed in rectangular mounting with no decora-

tion, showing a slightly thickened profiled edge. The original rim width could be measured on it which proved to be 21-22 mm. There is a rivet hole with a diameter of 5 mm on the bended rim. The plate is pierced up to downwards.

The "Csúcshegy mansio" as archaeological site is cited in the inventory books in only one case when 151 items under a serial number 8 dated to 1964 representing a strongly selected group of findings, dated to the second half of 2nd century A. D. were taken to inventory. 1964 is the *ante quem* of the delivery of findings to museum, the *post quem* can not be identified. The exact place can not be determined by using data from the literature.

The word *mansio* is also not a clue for identification of the site. The expression *mansio* means station, quarter in the Finály's Latin Dictionary and either the Csúcshegy Villa or the Roman ruins observed by G. Alföldy can be fit but most probably the watchtower unearthed by J. Szilágyi at the foot of Csúcshegy is the site.

The word *mansio* is cited two times without the mention of any helmet finding in the literature<sup>2</sup> and archives data.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the archaeological evidences related to Csúcshegy site - dated back to the 2nd to 3rd century A. D. support the dating of the helmet fragments.<sup>4</sup>

The helmet rim fragment No. 8 has a great importance in the evaluation of the findings. The formation and decoration of the rim reduce the possible types to a group of cavalry helmets used in the late 2nd to early 3rd century A. D.<sup>5</sup>

The Robinson typology describes two groups of helmets applicable to this case; helmets of **auxiliary cavalry**<sup>6</sup> and of **cavalry sports**.<sup>7</sup> The fragment No. 8 rim piece can be alone related to more than one type of both main groups<sup>8</sup> therefore other fragments should be involved for a more precise morphological and typological classification.

However some facts disturb the preliminary conclusion:

1. The quality of fragment Nos. 8 and 5 contradicts to the quality of fragment Nos. 1 and 3.
2. How the hair curl motifs and face formed by high relief technique on fragment Nos. 5 and 6a can be attributed to one helmet?

Therefore further evaluation is required to prove whether the bronze plate fragments belong to the same artefact or not. Especially the classification of fragment No. 5 turned to be very important.

The Energy Dispersive X-ray Microanalysis performed on the surface of the plates supported strongly that the fragments belong to the same object<sup>9</sup>. This assumption was then later confirmed by microanalysis of the cross-sections<sup>10</sup>.

The first objective can be explained by a detailed study of fragment No. 1. Techniques used for making simple rim and high quality helmet can simultaneously

be evaluated on it and involving fragment Nos. 7, 2 and 8 the result is a cavalry helmet referring to cavalry sports helmet type E according to Robinson typology. The helmets No. 3 and partly 4 from Eining<sup>11</sup> give the closest parallels.

The cavalry sports helmet type E consists of two separate parts both fully decorated with embossed ornaments i. e. skull-piece and helmet mask. Female face motif is characteristic for type E helmets therefore on both the skull-piece and the mask embossed female curling hairs sometimes with jewels braided into to hair are typical but the mask certainly depicts a female face<sup>12</sup>.

The curly hair motif on fragment Nos. 1 and 3 and the face pattern on fragment No. 5 exclude the presumption that the discussed helmet would belong to the group of helmets of auxiliary cavalry. Hair curl motif occurs only on the helmets of the auxiliary cavalry type H where the body is made of iron and only partly covered by embossed bronze plates. The most typical example of this type is the iron helmet from Heddernheim and the bronze helmet diadem from Thorsberg Moor<sup>13</sup>.

Both cited examples show only a narrow embossed bronze plate framing without any traces of high relief technique while the fragment Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 8 belonging to rim relate more to a separate body than a cover.

The second objective can be answered by studying the helmets 2, 3 and 4 from Eining. All three helmet fragments are skull-pieces and refer to cavalry sports helmet type E but different in design. The Eining No 2 skull-piece represents the closest match to the Aquincum-Csúcshegy fragment (*Plate 5, Fig. 2.*). Not only the rim design but the pierced hole is also very similar to the features observed on fragment No. 8. Other similarity is the double line pattern band and the line of dots in conjunction with the band. The line is in leaning position on the Eining helmet while horizontal on the Aquincum-Csúcshegy helmet (see fragment Nos. 1 and 4). The style of separation of the embossed field and the plain stripe with a double line of dots pearl string is also the same in both cases (see fragment Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 8).

The most concerned fragment No. 5 with face representation can also be identified as a bust on the ridge based on the example of Eining helmet No. 2. This helmet is the only example for application a female(?) face – a sphinx(?) – on the ridge. In the vast majority of cases an eagle with spreaded wing appears on the ridge.

On the basis of Victoria portrayal on Eining helmet No. 2 the patterns on fragment Nos. 6b and 6c can be identified with high probability as feathers of Victoria's wing (*Plate 6*). The fragment Nos. 1, 3 and 6d however can not be explained using the Eining helmet No. 2 as model since there is no embossed hair curl motif on it. The possible explanations can be created to solve this contradiction.

1. The Aquincum-Csúcshegy helmet is a variation of cavalry sports helmet type E. Although this solution can not be excluded completely it looks a less probable alternative.
2. The fragments belong to two separate helmets. The Eining helmets No. 3 and 4 (*Plate 5, Fig. 1*) are the closest parallels of the Aquincum-Csúcshegy fragment Nos. 1, 3 and 6d but some differences can be observed. The vertical rim on fragment No. 1 differs from the design applied on Eining helmet Nos. 3 and 4. The line pattern band separates the hair curl from the face i.e. the mask. This feature does not exclude completely the relationship between the Aquincum-Csúcshegy and Eining helmets in case of the hair curl patterned ones (*Plate 7*).

The material testing protocols state the analyzed samples are made of the same material with high probability<sup>14</sup>. This observation does not exclude the assumption that plates deriving from the same casting were used in making two separate helmets. The Eining helmets prove that two or more cavalry sports helmets type E can occur in one lot, in one place. Although the survey of Aquincum-Csúcshegy helmet fragments is not thoroughly documented appearance of other fragments can be predicted.

## Summary

The bronze plate fragments registered as eight different inventory items can be classified with highest probability as cavalry sports helmet type E according to the Robinson typology. This classification is mostly supported by the evaluation of fragment Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 8.

This helmet type consists of two parts i.e. skull-piece and helmet mask. The cavalry sports helmet type E includes both skull-piece with female face decoration and mask. Only the quite rare skull-piece without mask can be reconstructed from the fragments.

Two variations of the same type of helmet were finally identified by detailed study of the fragments. The material testing and the Eining treasury also support this solution because it shows an example of appearance of two variations in one lot. The face motif on Eining helmet No. 2 is similar in design and only slightly different in finishing than the face on Aquincum-Csúcshegy fragment No. 5. The details of finishing on the Aquincum-Csúcshegy fragment show higher skills than that of the Eining helmet Nos. 2, 3, and 4. Although only a few fragments preserved fine details suitable for evaluation it seems likely that the Aquincum-Csúcshegy helmet can be considered as prototype of the Eining helmets.

The helmet fragments can be dated to the last third of 2nd century – first quarter of the 3rd century A. D. based on the chronology of the archaeological site, the Robinson and Kohlert typologies and the Eining helmets as closest parallels.

## Notes

1. FINÁLY, H., *A Latin Nyelv szótára*, Budapest 1884, 1191. o.
2. NAGY 1937, 25–60.; NAGY 1945, 185.; SZILÁGYI 1949, 71.
3. – 1933 Csúcshegy, Villa. Excavation of L. Nagy, 1933. BTM-AD: H 179/79.  
– 1934 Csúcshegy, graves. Excavation of S. Garády, 1934. BTM-AD: H 165/79, Hrsz: 20841, 20764, 21505.  
– 1941 Rábel telke. Explored by J. Szilágyi, 1941. BTM-AD: 690/78.  
– 1960 Csúcshegy 2. dűlő, Lénárt kert környéke. Site-surveying of G. Alföldy, 1960. BTM-AD: 1092/79.  
– 1960 Csúcshegyi árok és a 3. dűlő közti épület. Site surveying of G. Alföldy, 1960-ban. BTM-AD: 1092/79.
4. The hills around Óbuda were populated after the Marcomannic Wars in the turn of 2nd and 3rd century A. D. The moving out of the population from the city resulted the construction of Csúcshegy villa among others. See: NAGY 1937, 60., NAGY 1942, 472.
5. ROBINSON 1975, 89–135., GARBSCH 1978.
6. ROBINSON 1975, 89.
7. ROBINSON 1975, 107.
8. Like helmets of auxiliary cavalry type H, see ROBINSON 1975, 100–103, or cavalry sports helmets type D, E, G, H and I, see ROBINSON 1975, 118, 128, 130, 132.
9. The protocol of the metal analysis states: "The fragments are made of copper-tinzinc (Cu-Sn-Zn) alloy. The fragments can be parts of the same object. Although the analysis was performed on the surface the standard deviation values show no significant differences." Fragments Inv. No. 64. 8. 7., 64. 8. 8., 64. 8. 9., 64. 8. 12., 64. 8. 14., 64. 8. 15. were analyzed. The protocol is dated on March 27, 1993 and stored in BTM archive (No. 1743/94).
10. Cross sections of samples were investigated. The sample preparation was done in the laboratory of the National Museum while the analysis was performed at the Research Institute for Technical Physics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The sample preparation, analysis and evaluation is done by Márta Járó, the analyzer is operated by Attila Tóth. Their valuable contribution is greatly acknowledged. Short description of the method is the following: "The samples fixed by synthetic resin were polished in order to get a smooth surface to be analyzed. The surface was then coated by graphite and the analysis was done by Energy Dispersive X-ray Microanalysis." Fragments Inv. No. 64. 8. 7. and 64. 8. 12. were analyzed. The protocol is dated on May 31, 1993 and stored in BTM archive (No. 1744/94).
11. KELLNER 1978, 13–16, Tables 10–16.
12. The Visegrád mask, one of the two masks originating from Hungary belongs to this type. See Foktorok and Visegrád masks. GARBSCH 1978, 67. 21. T./4., 70. 24. T./4.
13. ROBINSON 1975, 100–101, Plates 273–276, 103, Plates 295–296.
14. See the protocols of material testing, Note 9 and 10.
15. See Note 4.
16. One group of the masks belonging to this type is dated to the end of 1st century, beginning of 2nd century A.D., while the Eastern varieties are dated to the 2nd–3rd century A. D. See ROBINSON 1975, 124–125.
17. GARBSCH 1978, 24. M. Kohlert classifies this type as type VI and dates to the second third of 2nd century–first third of 3rd centuries A. D.
18. The author brings the earthening of the helmet into connection with the destruction of Eining camp in 242–244 A. D. See KELLNER 1978, 37.

## List of abbreviations:

ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő	KELLNER 1978	KELLNER, H.: Der römische Verwahrfund von Eining. München 1978.
BudRég	Budapest Régiségei	NAGY 1937	NAGY L.: A csúcshegyi villa Óbudán. BudRég XII. (1937), 27–60.
GARBSCH 1978	GARBSCH, J.: Römische Parade-rüstungen. Katalog der Ausstellung. Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg 15. Dec. 1978 – 4. Feb. 1979. München 1978.		

NAGY 1942

NAGY L.: Temetők és temetkezés. In: Budapest története I. (1942), 472.

NAGY 1945

NAGY L.: Egy pincelelet az aquincumi polgárvárosban. Bud Rég XIV (1945), 155–202

ROBINSON 1975

ROBINSON, H. R.: The Armour of Imperial Rome. London 1975.

SZILÁGYI 1949

SZILÁGYI J.: Kutatások Aquincumból. I. Úti őrállomás a Csúcshegy tövében. ArchÉrt 76 (1949), 67–79.

## ÚJ LOVASSÁGI SPORTSISAK LELET AQUINCUMBÓL

A Budapesti Történeti Múzeumban nyolc külön leltári számon bejegyzett 164.8.7–9; 11, 12; 14–16 bronz lemeztöredéket minden valószínűség szerint a Robinson-féle tipológia **Sportlovas E** sisaktípusba sorolhatjuk. Ehhez a besoroláshoz főleg az 1., a 2., a 7. és a 8. számú lemeztöredékek értékelése nyújtotta a legtöbb támogatást.

Ez a sisaktípus két részből áll: a tarkó-sisakból és a hozzá illeszthető maszkból. A **Sportlovas E** típusba a női fej ábrázolásos tarkó-sisakok és maszkok tartoznak. A mi esetünkben a rendelkezésünkre álló töredékeink közül csak a meglehetősen ritka előfordulású tarkó-sisakhoz tartozó darabokat azonosíthattunk.

Az értékelés nyomán eddig ismereteink alapján nem lehet az Aquincum-csúcshegyi töredékeket egy és ugyanazon tarkó-sisakhoz kötni, ezért vetődött fel az egytípusú, de két különböző tarkó-sisak meglétének elképzelése, amit alátámaszthat az anyagvizsgálat mellett töredékeink legközelebbi párhuzamának tekintett einingi sisaklelet is, ahol egy lelőhelyen, sőt egy kincs-

leletben mindkét sisakvariáció előfordult. Az einingi párhuzam mellett szól a 2. sz. sisakon meglevő emberi arcábrázolás is, ami hasonló beállításban, de egy kissé eltérő kialakításban jelenik meg, mint az Aquincum-csúcshegyi 5. sz. töredéken. Az Aquincum-csúcshegyi töredékek kidolgozottsága, főleg a részletek tekintetében finomabb, mint az einingi 2., 3. és 4. sz. sisakok. Bár nagyon kevés töredék maradt fenn, a részletek kidolgozottságát ismerve mégis elmondható ezekről, hogy talán előképei lehettek az einingi sisakoknak.

A sisaktöredékeket a lelőhelyként megjelölt topográfiai terület kronológiai adatai,<sup>15</sup> a Robinson<sup>16</sup> és a Kohlert<sup>17</sup> tipológia, valamint sisaktöredékeink legközelebbinek tartott párhuzama, az einingi sisaklelet<sup>18</sup> alapján a 2. sz. utolsó harmada, a 3. sz. első negyede közé keltezhetjük.

KOCSIS László  
Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum

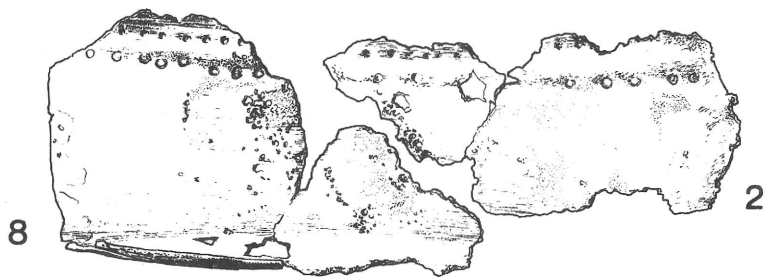


Plate 1.

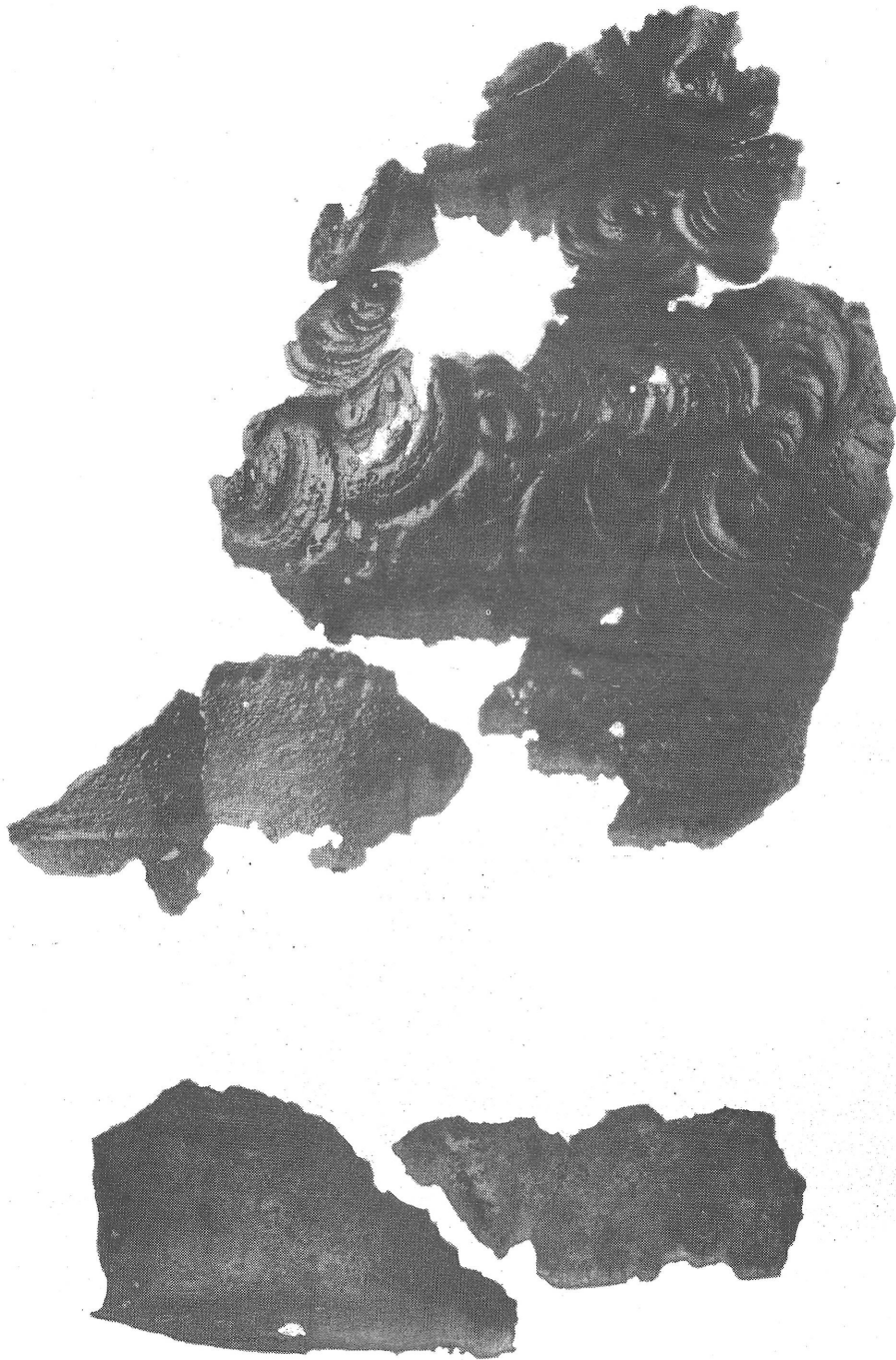
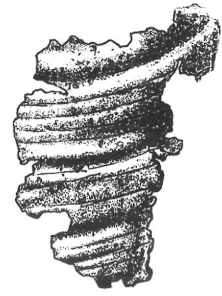


Plate 2.



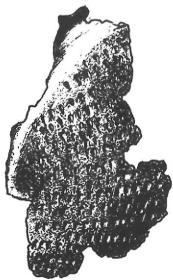
6d



6c



4



6b



6a



5



Plate 3.

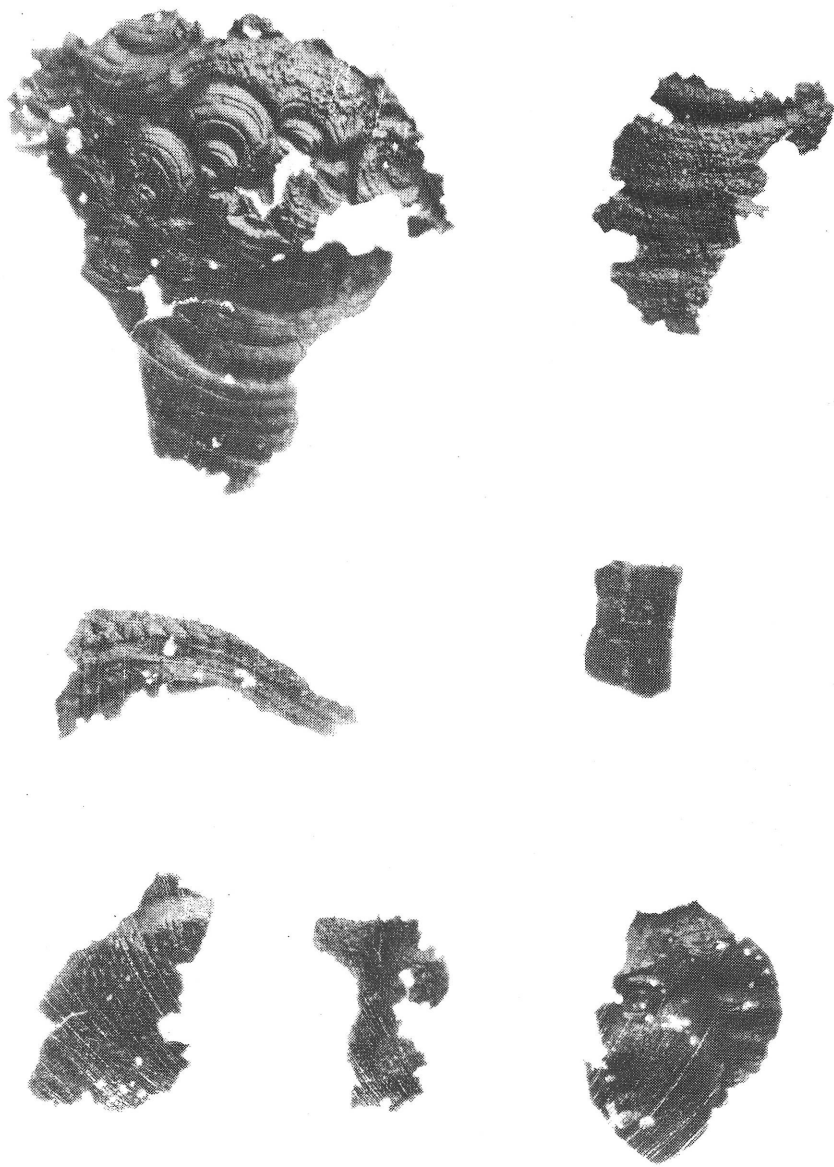


Plate 4.



Plate 5.

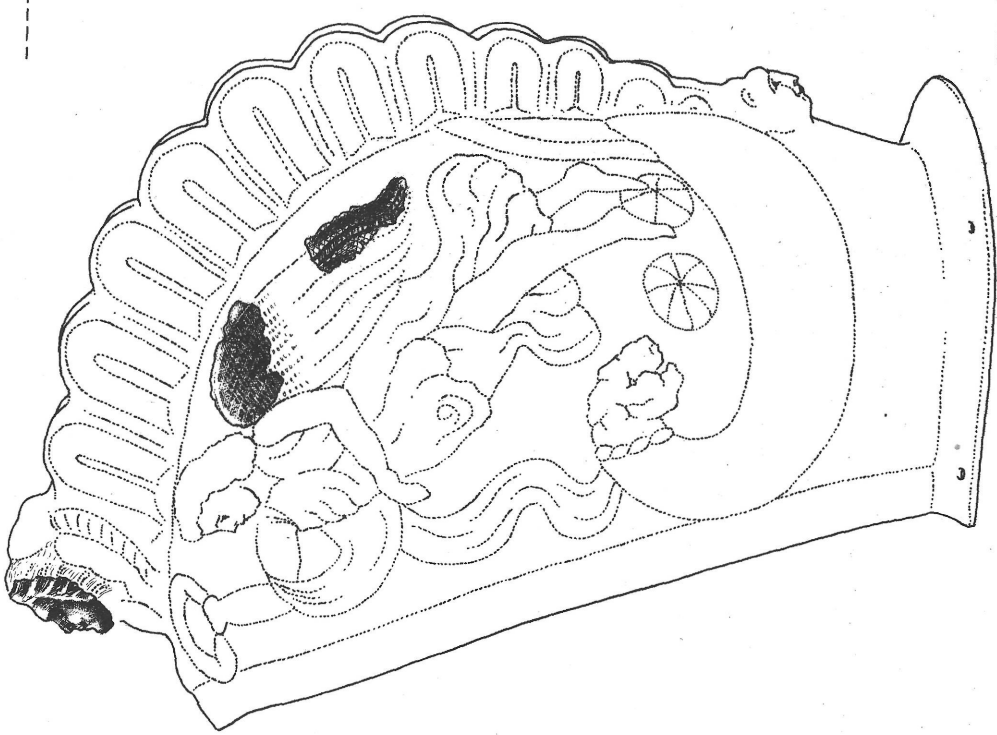
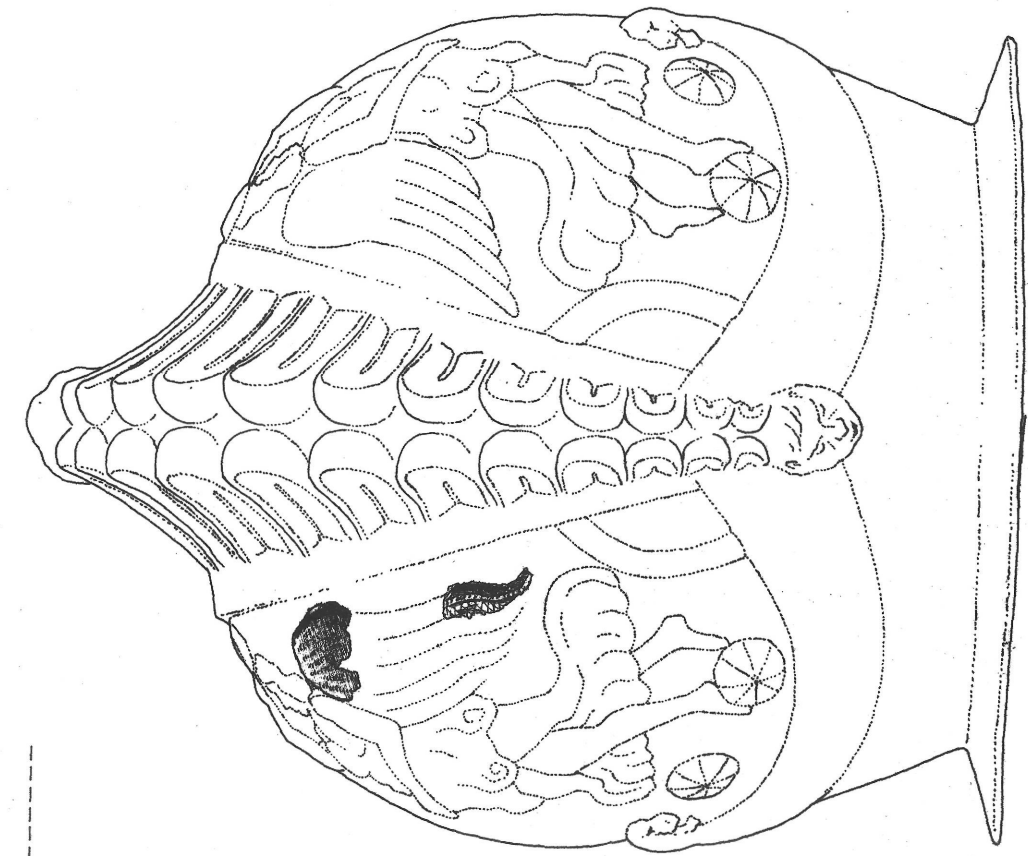


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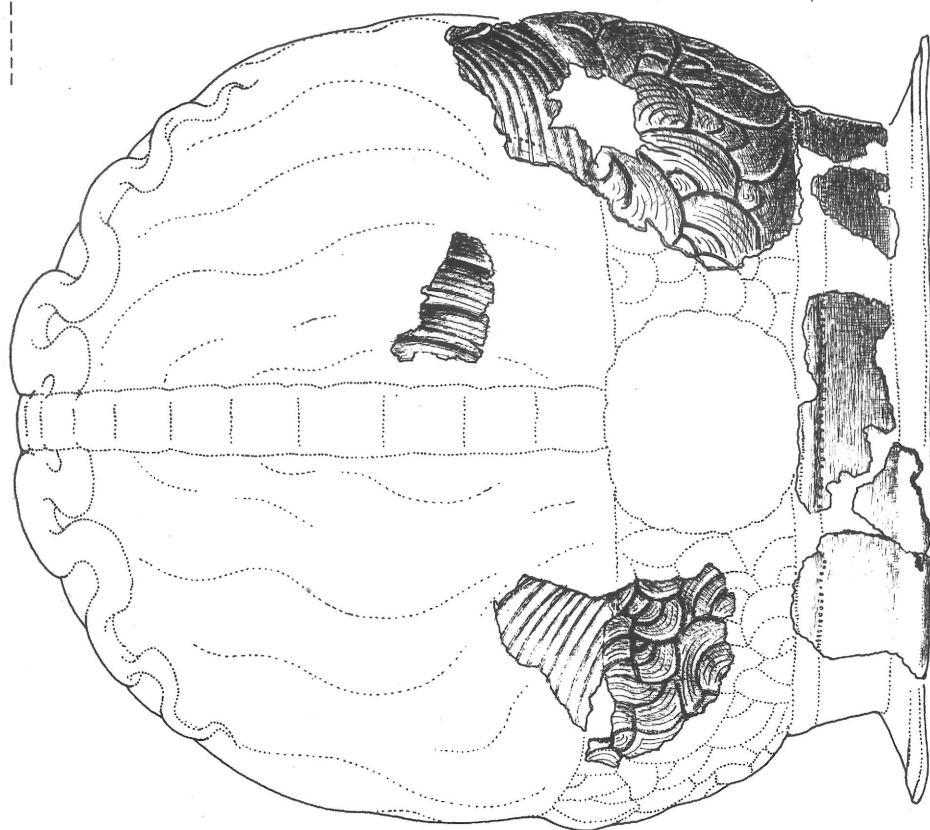
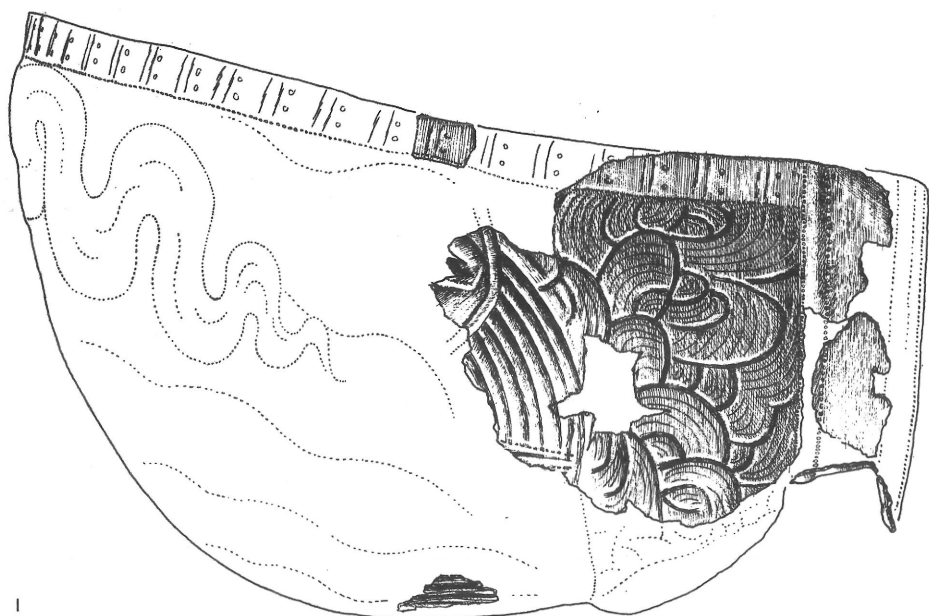


Plate 7.