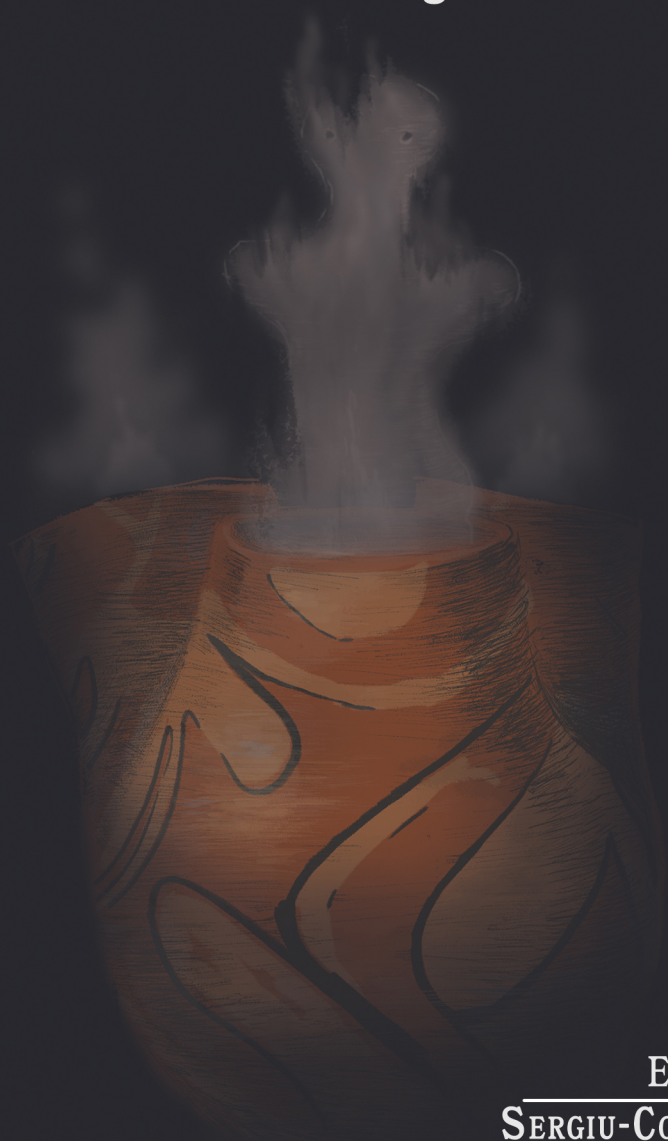


O INIMĂ DEDICATĂ TIMPURILOR STRĂVECHI

Profesorul Dumitru Boghian la 70 de ani



EDITORI:

SERGIU-CONSTANTIN ENEA
FELIX-ADRIAN TENCARIU
ANDREI ASĂNDULESEI
CIPRIAN-CĂTĂLIN LAZANU

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**O INIMĂ DEDICATĂ
TIMPURILOR STRĂVECHI**
Profesorul
Dumitru Boghian
la 70 de ani

Editori

**Sergiu-Constantin Enea, Felix-Adrian Tencariu,
Andrei Asăndulesei și Ciprian-Cătălin Lazanu**



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THE EPONYMOUS SITE OF TRYPILLIA CULTURE

Mykhailo VIDEIKO¹

Abstract. In the history of studying any archaeological culture, there comes an important moment—the discovery and investigation of its eponymous site. Today, far less is known about the eponymous site of the Trypillia Culture than, for example, about the Cucuteni site. Archival documents indicate that Vikentiy Khvoika began excavations near Trypillia in October 1897. Over time, the exact location of these excavations was lost, and by the 1930s no specialist could even approximate it. In the autumn of 2006, the author succeeded in determining the location of this Trypillia settlement. Further research culminated in the excavations of 2018, conducted by an expedition from the Kyiv “Borys Grinchenko” Metropolitan University. As a result, these 2018 investigations enabled the precise identification of the site between Trypillia and Shcherbanivka as the eponymous site of the Trypillia Culture. The excavations provided interesting archaeological materials, especially pottery. The site can be attributed to the BI-II stage of the Trypillia Culture. This eponymous settlement holds considerable importance for future research, as it represents one of the earliest phases of Trypillian settlement in the Middle Dnipro region and is among the largest known settlements of the Trypillia Culture from this period.

Rezumat. În istoricul cercetării fiecărei culturi arheologice există un moment definitoriu – descoperirea și cercetarea sitului eponim. Astăzi, despre situl eponim al culturii Trypillia se știe mult mai puțin decât, de exemplu, despre cel de la Cucuteni. Din documentele de arhivă reiese că Vikentiy Khvoika a început săpăturile lângă localitatea Trypillia în octombrie 1897. Pe măsură ce a trecut timpul, locul exact al acestor săpături a fost uitat, iar deja în anii 1930 niciun specialist nu îl mai putea identifica nici măcar aproximativ. Autorul a reușit să stabilească poziția așezării Trypillia în toamna anului 2006. Cercetările au fost completate prin săpături efectuate în 2018 de către expediția Universității Metropolitane „Borys Grinchenko” din Kiev. Astfel, investigațiile din 2018 au permis identificarea precisă a acestui sit, situat între localitățile Trypillia și Șcherbanivka, ca fiind situl eponim al culturii Trypillia. Săpăturile au oferit posibilitatea de a obține material arheologic interesant, în special ceramică. Așezarea poate fi atribuită fazei BI-II a culturii. Situl eponim este de interes pentru cercetări viitoare, atât ca una dintre cele mai timpurii faze de locuire trypilliană în zona mijlocie a Niprului, cât și ca una dintre cele mai mari așezări ale culturii în această perioadă.

Keywords: Trypillia, Trypillia Culture, eponymous site, BI-II stage, Dnipro, V. Khvoika.

Cuvinte cheie: Trypillia, cultura Trypillia, sit eponim, BI-II, Nipru, V. Khvoika.

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Tracing the lost excavation site: historical context and archival reconstruction

In the history of research on each archaeological culture, there comes an important milestone: the discovery and study of its eponymous site. Far less is known today about the eponymous site of the Trypillia Culture than, for example, about the Cucuteni site. In addition to numerous publications and a monograph by H. Schmidt published in 1932, a substantial monograph from 2004 is devoted to the Cucuteni site, detailing both the history of its discovery and all subsequent research (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Văleanu 2004).

Archival documents indicate that Vikentiy Khvoika began excavations near Trypillia in October 1897. These excavations continued intermittently until 1907. As early as 1913, the archaeologist received an open letter to conduct further excavations near Trypillia, but it remains unclear whether these actually took place (Fig. 1/1). In V. V. Khvoika's publication, two pages are devoted to the excavations near Trypillia, with a reference to one specific entry in a table (Khvoika 1901, 793-795, table XXI, 10). Finds from Trypillia were also illustrated in a 1904 article about the 1901 excavations "in the area of the Trypillia Culture" (Khvoika 1904). Certain excerpts from these works were repeated in Khvoika's final publication on the ancient inhabitants of the Middle Dnieper region, issued without illustrations in 1913 (Khvoika 1913). Later, only a few individual objects from Trypillia, lacking precise provenance, appeared sporadically in various publications.

Over time, the location of the excavations near Trypillia was forgotten, and by the 1930's no specialist could pinpoint it, even approximately. On the map of Trypillia Culture sites compiled from the 1934-1938 Trypillian expedition, the eponymous site was not marked, although some other excavation areas of V. V. Khvoika were still indicated (Passek 1940, map 2). Collections from the excavations near Trypillia were primarily stored in the Kiev Museum of History and Antiquities (Yakubenko 2006). Part of the researcher's archive is also located there, with the remainder in the Scientific Archive of the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Working with archival materials and some of the finds from the National Museum of the History of Ukraine allows a partial reconstruction of the original research and provides a broader range of artifacts than previously published.

The author succeeded in identifying the location of the Trypillia settlement in autumn 2006. Archival materials, including sketches from a field diary and a 1904 publication's map, were compared with modern satellite images and topographic maps. This research culminated in excavations carried out in 2018 by an expedition from the Kyiv Borys Grinchenko Metropolitan University.

Two versions of a panoramic view of the excavation site near Trypillia made by V. V. Khvoika are known. The original version appears in the researcher's field diary (Khvoika 1897, nr. 79).

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ИМПЕРАТОРСКАГО
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ИМПЕРАТОРСКАЯ
АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ
КОММИССИЯ.

29 Мая 1909 г.
№ 119
С.-Петербургъ
Зданіе ИМПЕРАТОРСКАГО Зимняго Дворца.

ОТКРЫТЫЙ ЛИСТЪ.
На 190 девятый годъ.

Выданъ этотъ листъ Хранителю Кіевскаго
Городскаго Музея Викентію Вячеславовичу
Хвойка

Императорскою Археологическою Коммиссіею на
право производства археологическихъ раскопокъ въ
теченіе 1909 года на земляхъ казенныхъ, обществен-
ныхъ и принадлежащихъ разнымъ установленіямъ
въ предѣлахъ Вышгорода, Бѣлгородки, Безра-
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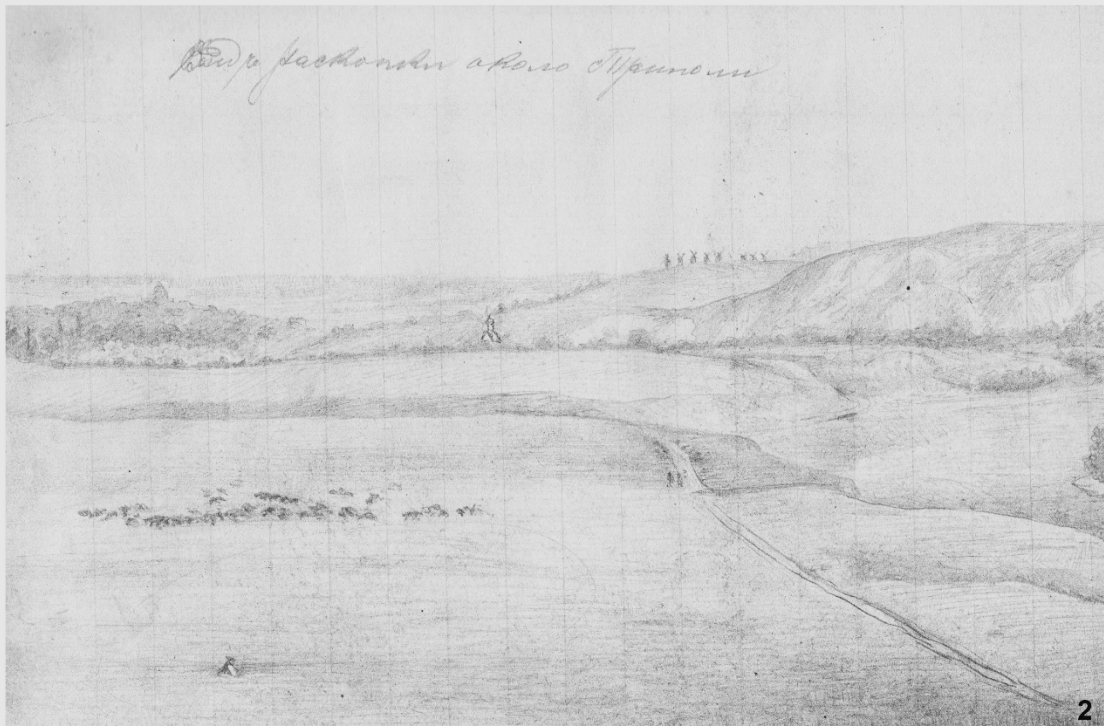


Figure 1. Trypillia: From the history of investigations. Top: Fragment of an open excavation permit list from 1909, issued for sites in the Kyiv region, including Trypillia. Bottom: A page from V. Khvoika's 1897 field diary showing the excavation area near Trypillia. Scientific Archive, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv.

This drawing (Fig. 1/2), occupying an entire notebook page, shows a view of the excavation field from an elevated vantage point. On the right is a river valley with a high right bank; the field, divided by a ravine, is crossed by a road receding into the distance. In the background, at the centre, is a hill with buildings, including what seems to be a church with a tall bell tower. To the right stand eight windmills atop an elevation. The hill and the height are separated by a valley containing another church. The caption at the top, written by V. V. Khvoika, reads: "View of excavations near Trypillia." This provides good reason to associate the drawing with the eponymous site.

The Scientific Archive contains another version of this panorama, part of a larger sheet (Khvoika 1897, nr. 119), drawn in pencil on a large piece of white paper (Fig. 1/2). This sheet is styled similarly to the illustrations that accompanied Khvoika's 1904 article, where images of excavation sites occupy the centre and related finds are arranged around them (Khvoika 1904, plate V). Its centrepiece is a panoramic view of the excavation area, including the previously mentioned elements, though noticeably revised (Fig. 2/1). In the foreground, on the slope overlooking the field, are two figures. One, standing partially turned toward the viewer, wears a pith helmet and holds a notebook and umbrella; nearby, seated on a folding chair with his back to the viewer, is a man in a jacket and hat. The first figure may be identified as V. Khvoika himself.

In the field, a few workers and excavation areas arranged in a circle are visible. The background has been refined and even expanded: a new height with three windmills appears on the left. The central hill features a more clearly drawn church with a bell tower, and to the right are now seven windmills instead of eight. Beyond the hills lies a wide river valley, likely that of the Dnipro. Although not signed, given the inscription on the earlier drawing, this likely represents the same site.

Evidence that the second drawing was intended for publication is found in a photograph from the researcher's archive (Khvoika 1897, photo 25a). This image shows four pencil drawings arranged into a new sheet. All of them once belonged to the previously mentioned A2 sheet. The largest drawing, showing the excavation panorama, is placed above three smaller drawings of individual excavations. At the top, Khvoika wrote: "View of excavations near the town of Trypillia, Kiev district" (Fig. 2/2). This photograph provides additional confirmation that both images depict the same area.

These panoramas present Trypillia as seen from the Krasnaya River valley, which flows into the Dnieper near the settlement. None of the churches or windmills depicted survive today. The view of the Dnieper valley has changed significantly since it was turned into the "Kaniv Sea" reservoir in the 1970s, as have Trypillia's modern boundaries. The Krasnaya River's slopes are now partially forested and partly built up with local estates, pushing Trypillia's borders several kilometres closer to Shcherbanivka. It is now impossible to reproduce the exact late 19th-century vista. Even with Khvoika's explicit note that the excavations took place "to the west of the village of Trypillia, 2 versts from the town... above the Krasnaya River opposite the village of Shcherbanevka" and other information (Khvoiko 1901, 793), pinpointing the site's exact location remained difficult.

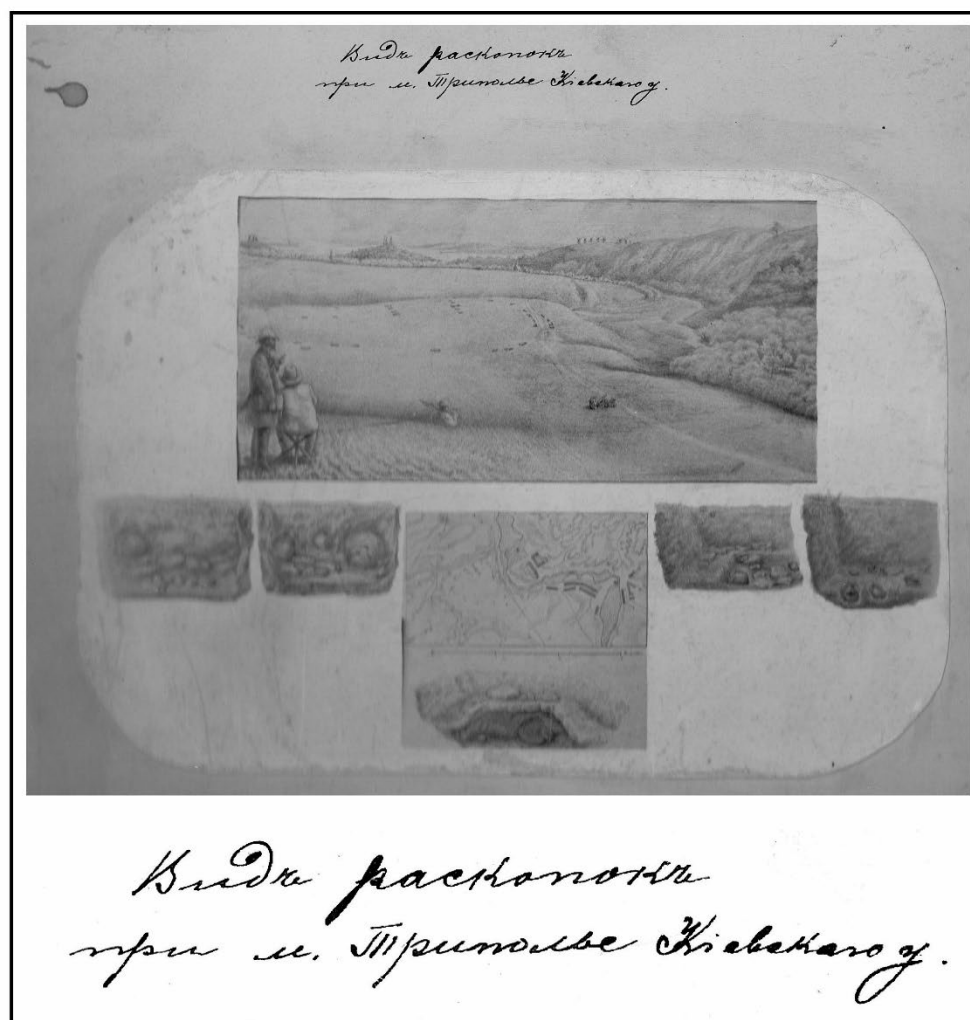
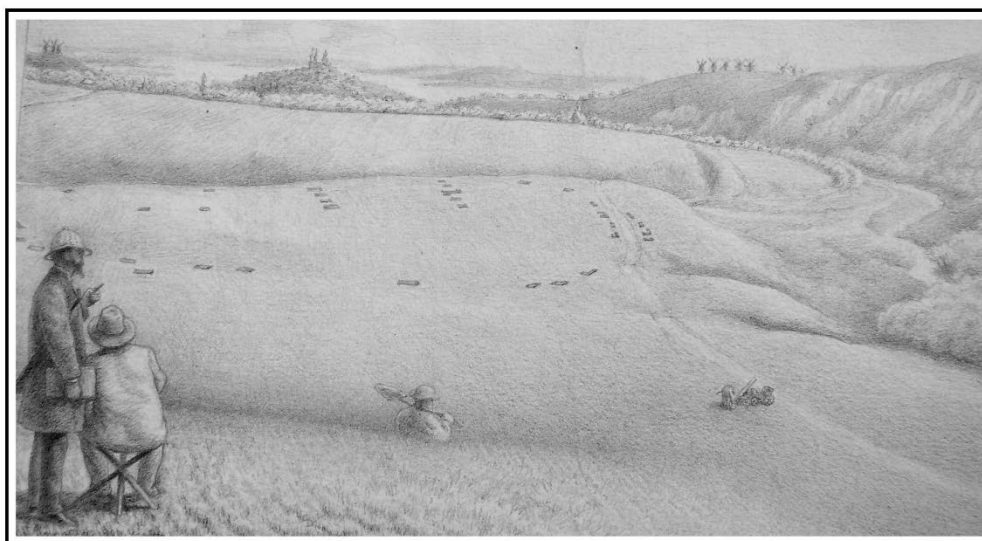


Figure 2. Trypillia: From the history of investigations. Top: Excavations near Trypillia: a drawing from a table prepared by V. Khvoika, based on a field diary sketch dated 1897; Bottom: A photograph of a prepared table featuring field drawings. The inscription at the top reads: "Excavations near Trypillia, Kyiv district." Scientific Archive, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv.

The settlement layout plan published by V. Khvoika in 1904 (Fig. 3/1) helped identify the site in the field. Using an old topographic map, it was possible to match the outlines of the river (Fig. 3/2) and thus determine the precise field where the excavations took place (Fig. 3). The researcher's statement that the settlement measured "about 2 versts in diameter" is clearly not accurate. Nonetheless, having the map allows a comparison with modern satellite images, enabling researchers to locate the settlement from the current boundaries of Trypillia (Fig. 4).

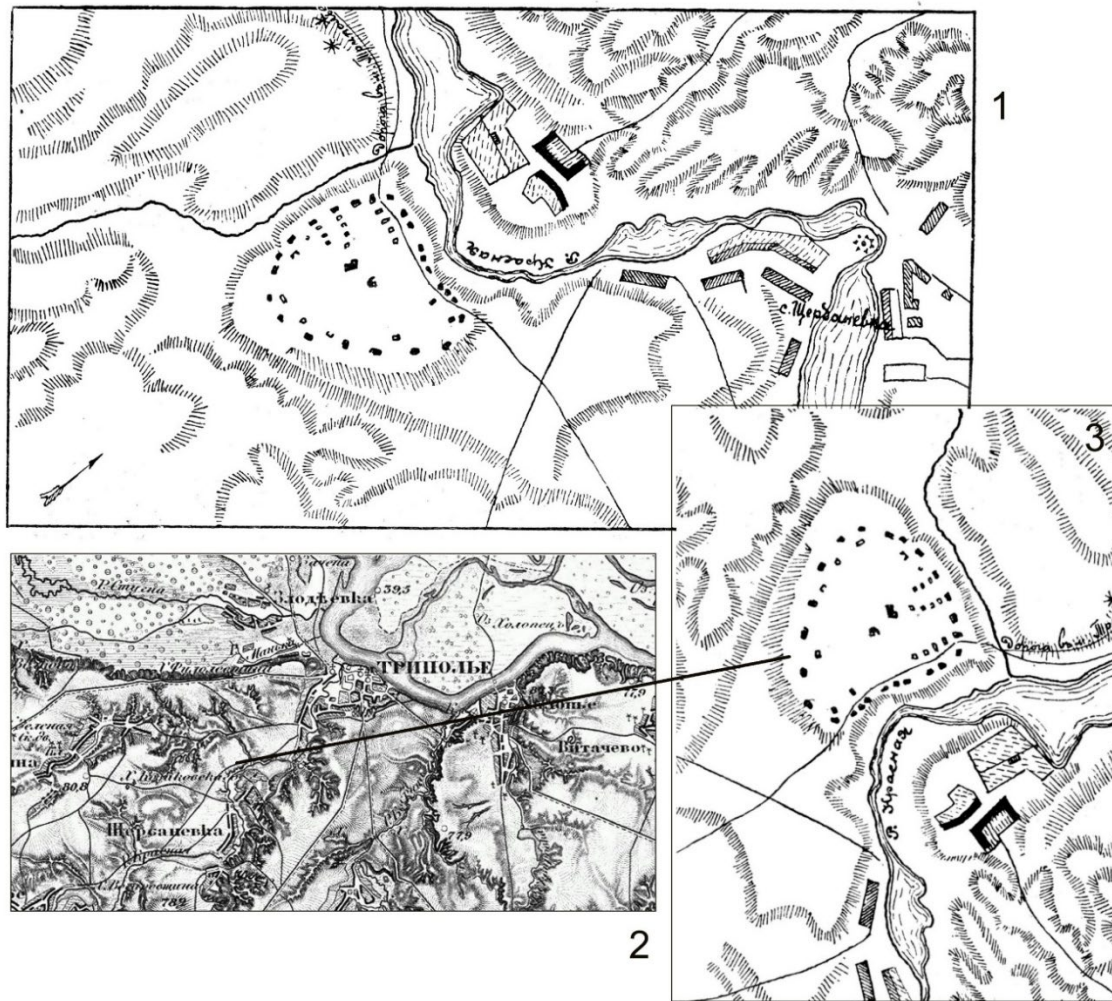


Figure 3. Trypillia: Old maps indicating the excavation area. 1. A schematic published by V. Khvoika in 1904; 2. A fragment of a map possibly used for the schematic; 3. A fragment of the schematic oriented to true North. The excavation site is marked by an arrow.

The road leading to Shcherbanivka still exists, crossing the ravine shown in the drawings. There is a hill above the field offering a panorama similar to that in the drawings. In 2003, a test pit was dug where accumulated plaster fragments were found (Videiko 2004). At a depth of 0.3-0.4 m below the modern surface, fragments of burnt plaster and ceramics-both with incised and painted ornaments-were discovered. The relative scarcity of surface material matches Khvoika's descriptions that many building remains were washed away and ploughed under (Khvoika 1901, 793).

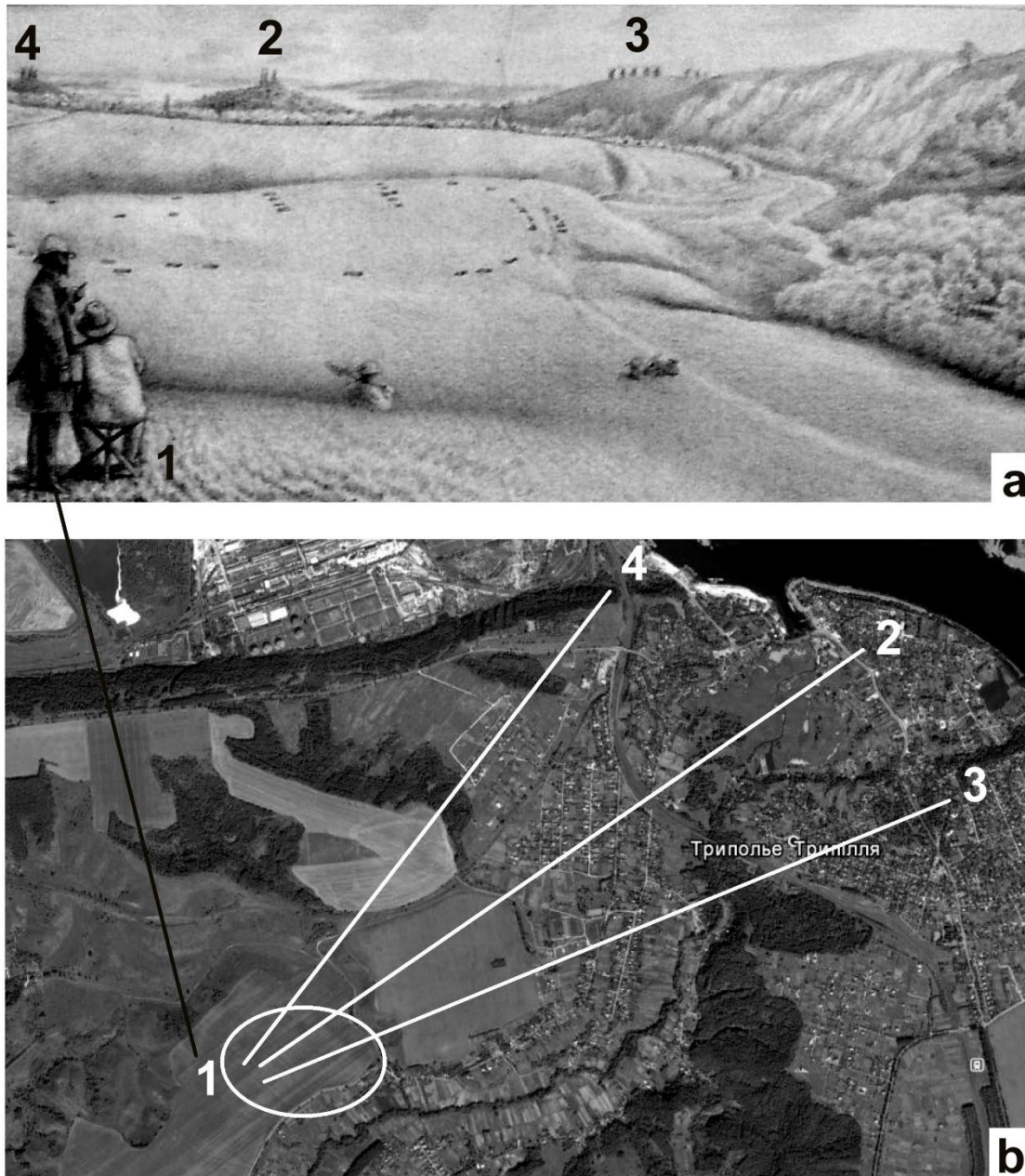


Figure 4. Excavations near Trypillia: Khvoika's panorama (a) vs. Satellite Image (b). 1. The vantage point from which V. Khvoika observed the excavation area near Trypillia; 2. The hill at the centre of Trypillia with a church; 3. Windmills to the right; 4. Windmills on Divich Gora (to the left). The excavation site is marked by a circle.

In total, the old diary plan shows thirty rectangular excavation areas of varying sizes, consistent with the number indicated in the 1901 publication (Khvoika 1897, nr. 98). Except for a few with small extensions, the rectangular areas differ in dimensions; the largest lies at the centre of the settlement. According to Khvoika, he found the remains of a building “about 14 meters in diameter” there (Khvoika 1901, 793). Using the largest excavation as a reference, their length averaged about 7 meters, with a width of about 4 meters. Some square trenches may have measured approximately 7x7 m. It is unlikely that any structure was fully excavated. The nature of the excavations can be inferred

from the researcher's descriptions (1901 publication) and sketches (Fig. 5). Remains of buildings were found in 20 of the excavations as accumulations of fired clay with broken vessels in various conditions. Diary entries note that some remains were discovered up to 65 cm below the surface.

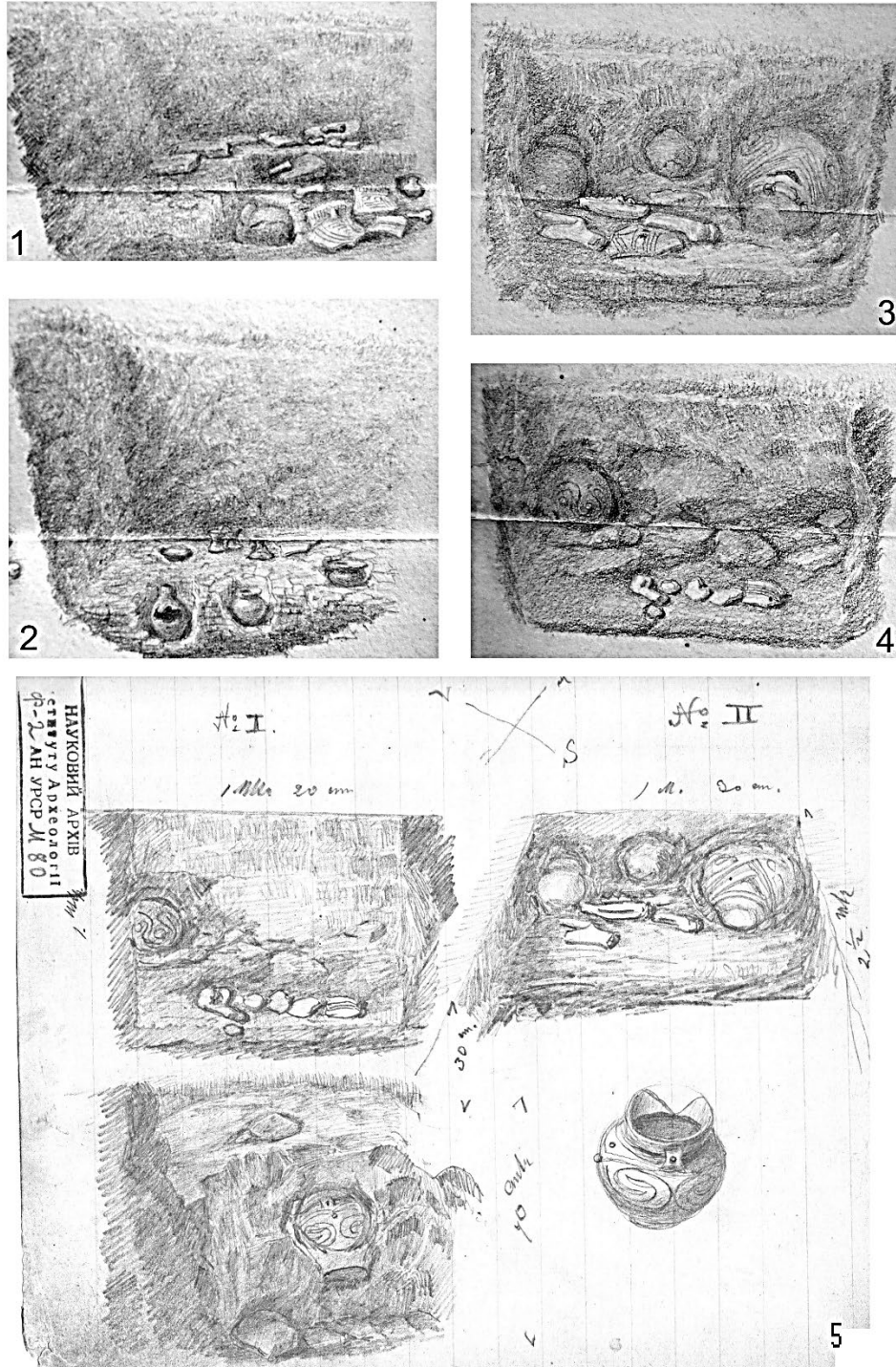


Figure 5. Trypillia: From the history of investigations: Top - Excavations at Trypillia in 1897, drawings by V. Khvoika; Bottom – Excavations at Trypillia in 1897, drawings by V. Khvoika, later used in preparing a larger illustration. Scientific Archive, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv.

Sketches from the field diary and on tables (Khvoika 1897, nr. 80, 91, 95, 119) show groups of different vessel types. One group includes a binocular-shaped vessel, a rounded cup, and three smaller items (Fig. 10). Another includes 11 different vessels—two pear-shaped, a pot, jugs, cups, a lid, and three binocular-shaped vessels. Slightly apart are two human skulls, near which another binocular vessel and a small cup were placed (Fig. 6/1). This likely corresponds to the assemblage Khvoika described in 1901, where human bones, including part of a skull, an arm, and a leg, were found in a large pear-shaped vessel (Khvoika 1901, p. 794). Both the drawing and the description note three binocular-shaped vessels, and the stated distance of 2 meters between the skulls and this find suggests some approximation in the sketch. Another page, dated October 3, 1897, depicts a group of vessels placed among pieces of plaster—two helmet-shaped lids, a pear-shaped vessel, bowls, and cups of various sizes (Fig. 6/2).

Particularly noteworthy is a large building uncovered at the centre. Its plaster accumulation reached 14 meters in diameter and sometimes consisted of four layers of fired clay. Khvoika may have encountered something akin to the “mega-structures” identified in recent research via magnetic surveys and excavations. These structures partly consist of plaster piles and partly of plaster arranged in a 1-2 m wide perimeter strip (Videiko, Burdo 2015). Khvoika emphasized that this building differed from others not only by its size but also by its multiple plaster layers—ordinary buildings had only one layer, likely an attic floor. Thus, ordinary buildings near Trypillia might have been single-story.

The rediscovery of Trypillia

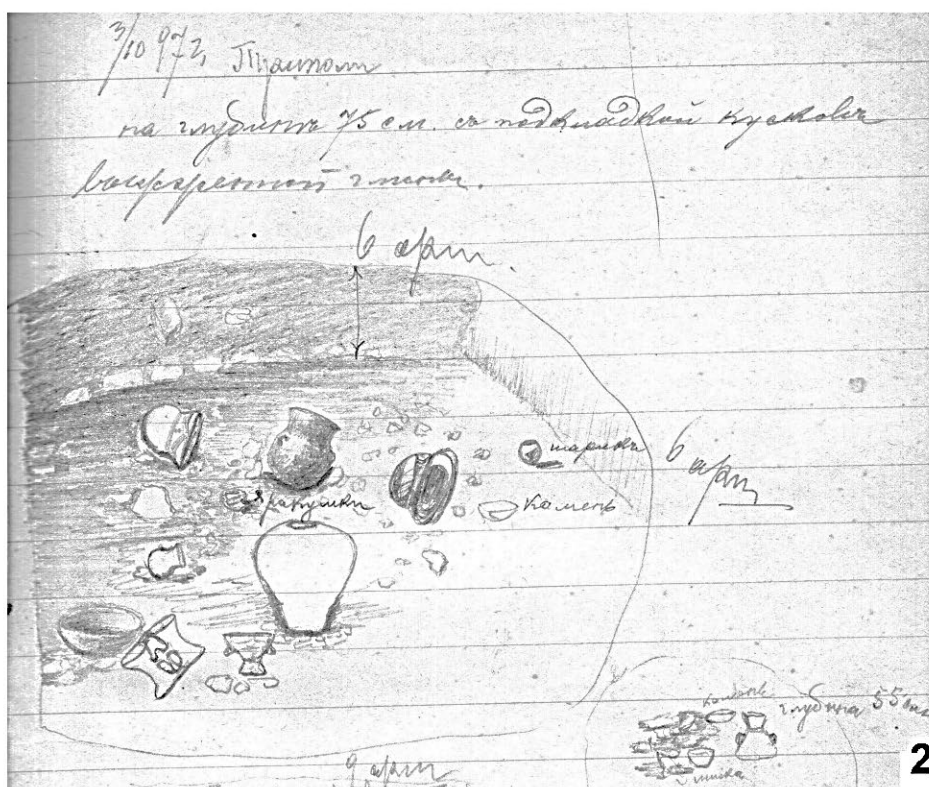
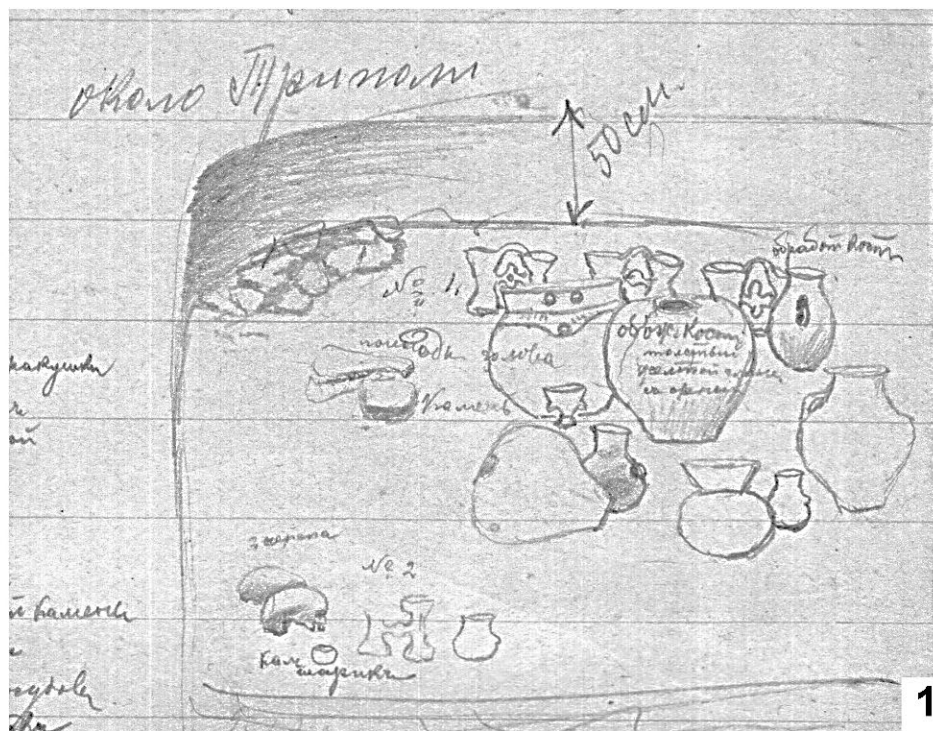
In 2018, researchers hypothesized that the site lay on a plateau between the villages of Trypillia and Shcherbanivka, along the modern outskirts of Trypillia (Videiko 2016, pp. 130-134). Comparing the area with Khvoika’s diary sketches confirmed several natural and artificial landmarks, including the Krasnaya River valley and various ravines of different sizes. An artificial feature—a field road—corresponds with the sketches (Fig. 9).

Today, the Krasnaya River meanders through a broad valley overgrown with willows and shrubs. Overall, its bends match those depicted by Khvoika. Of the ravines shown in the drawings and plans (Fig. 1-2), three have been identified: two small and one large. The reports state that the “sites” yielding the richest finds, including copper items, were located closer to the river bank (Khvoika 1901, p. 794).

Surveys between these ravines revealed traces of Trypillia Culture settlements. Small ceramic fragments and traces of Trypillia materials were noted on the surface of gardens, along with a few Early Iron Age ceramic fragments. This combination of natural features and Trypillia materials strongly suggests this is where Khvoika excavated in October 1897.

On the plateau’s slope facing the ravine, remains of buildings destroyed by ploughing were found, including burnt plaster fragments and small pieces of Trypillia ceramics—incised, unornamented, painted, and “kitchen” wares. The distance between these concentrations is about 300-400 m. Khvoika’s statement that the settlement measured

about two versts is clearly an overestimation; in reality, it spanned a few hundred meters. Nonetheless, it is currently the largest known BI-II stage site in this region.



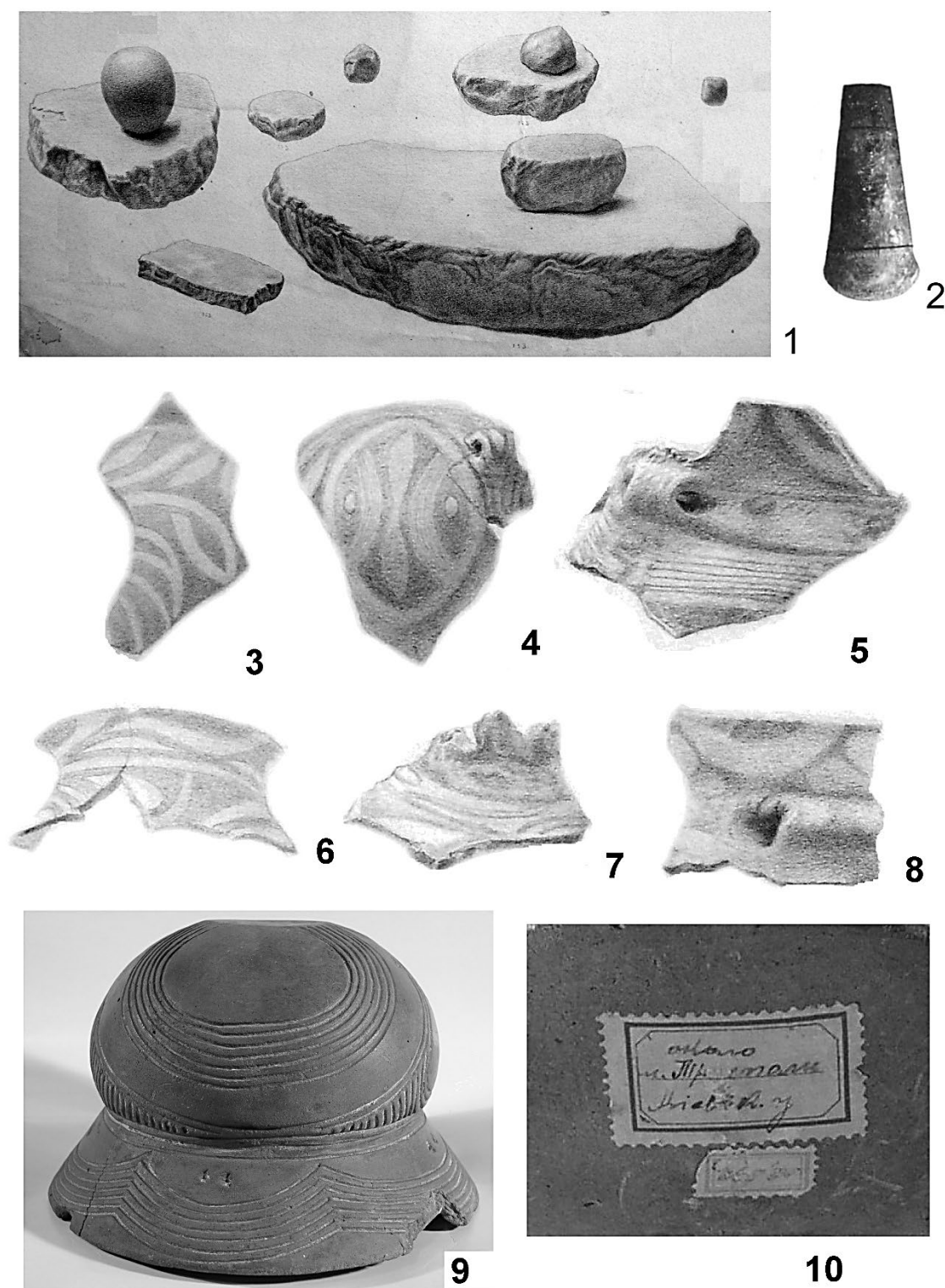


Figure. 7. Finds from the early excavations at Trypillia: 1. Stone tools; 2. Copper axe. Drawing (1) and photograph (2) published in 1901; 3–8. Fragments of painted pottery, likely from Trypillia. Drawings from a large table prepared by V. Khvoika for publication. Scientific Archive, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv; 9–10. Helmet-like lid and an old label indicating Trypillia as the findspot.



Figure 8. View of excavations near the Krasna River at Trypillia in the early 20th century: 1. Inscription at the top of the passepartout; 2. Photograph of the trench, with locations of vessels indicated; 3-4. Enlarged views of the finds. Scientific Archive, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv.

Several excavation areas are indicated along the road from Trypillia to Shcherbanivka (Fig. 9). Evidence suggests that the construction of this road damaged the remains of burnt Trypillia-era buildings, as fragments of plaster were found at its base in 2018. Trench No. 3, measuring 3x9 m, was opened opposite this find, oriented along the modern road (Fig. 9). From the start, dark soil with artifacts at depths greater than 0.5 m indicated the presence of an ancient pit. The pit's bottom, cut into the yellow loess, was found at a depth of 2.4 m. In the lower fill (below -1.8 m), small fragments of charred wood were well preserved alongside bone and pottery fragments (Figs. 3, 4). Half the pit's width may have been about 4 m, suggesting a total width of up to 9 m and a length of at least 12 m.



Figure 9. Contemporary views of the site and the 2018 excavations near Trypillia: 1 The site location (photo from 2003), with trenches 1-3 indicated; 2. The ancient roadway, noted in the 1897 field diary, with trench 3 (2019) visible on the right; 3. Finds discovered in the pit; 4. A section of the trench 3 profile.

Khvoika noted that at Trypillia, building remains were sometimes found at depths of only 50 or 20 cm (Khvoika 1901, 794). Thus, if any building had been present at excavation No. 3, it would likely have been found. Khvoika excavated several pits up to 1.5 m deep, finding lumps of burnt plaster, ceramic fragments, and animal bones (Khvoika 1901, 793). The 2018 pit measuring about 9x12 m might have been a clay extraction area. The accumulation of cultural remains on its slopes (including large amounts of charcoal in the lower part) and gradual infilling resemble the 2013 findings at the large pit near building B17 in the Nebelivka settlement (a Trypillia Culture site), which also exceeded 10x14 m (Videiko *et alii* 2014, fig. 1.1; 12; 14).

Pottery finds from the 2018 excavations fall into four groups: “kitchen” ware (Cucuteni C type), pottery with incised ornament, painted pottery, and plain pottery (Figs. 10-15). “Kitchen” wares are made from clay tempered with crushed shell, varying in color from black and dark brown to yellow-red. They are mostly pots, sometimes with striped smoothing in the lower part. The upper parts are decorated with stamps, comb impressions, applied “pearls”, and small handles (Fig. 10). These finds resemble the “Culture A” materials from Shcherbanevka, Veremya, and Trypillia (Khvoika 1901; 1904; Khvoika 2006; Kozlovska 1926), as well as pottery from Kolomytsiv Yar (Videiko, Burdo 2007; Videiko *et alii* 2018).

Pottery with incised decoration is made of clay with sand admixture and polished surfaces, in colors ranging from black and dark brown to brown and red-brown (Figs. 11-12). By contrast, Khvoika’s “Culture A” ceramics with recessed ornament, mainly from burnt building remains, are typically yellow-brown, red-brown, or rarely red. The red and yellow hues may be due to firing conditions when buildings burned. Sometimes traces of white paste in the incised lines are visible, characteristic of “Culture A” pottery. Forms include lids (anthropomorphic and helmet-shaped), pear-shaped vessels, and pots (Figs. 11, 12).

The painted pottery group includes fragments of various forms-hemispherical bowls, cups, helmet-shaped lids, amphorae, and sphero-conical vessels (Figs. 13-15). Paint was applied in red over a white or yellow-brown slip. Such painted pottery appears in Khvoika’s diary sketches (Videiko 2016, fig. 12) and in summary tables associated with the XI Archaeological Congress report (Videiko 2016, fig. 15).

Plain (unpainted) pottery includes whole vessels, vessel clusters, and numerous fragments. These are black or dark brown, and forms include hemispherical bowls, cups, pots, helmet-shaped lids, and amphorae. Such ceramics are depicted in Khvoika’s sketches and “Culture A” publications (Khvoika, 1901; 1904), as well as from Kolomytsiv Yar (Videiko *et alii* 2017; Videiko *et alii* 2018).

Comparing the 2018 pottery finds with archival sketches shows a high degree of similarity, sometimes complete identity, with the materials Khvoika discovered at the eponymous Trypillia site between 1897 and 1907. Overall, the ceramic assemblage matches that of BI-II stage sites in the Middle Dnieper region (Khvoika, 1901; 1904; Videiko *et alii* 2017; Videiko *et alii* 2018) and generally corresponds to the so-called “Eastern Trypillia Culture” (Tsvek 2006).



Figure 10. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: Kitchen ware fragments from trench 3.

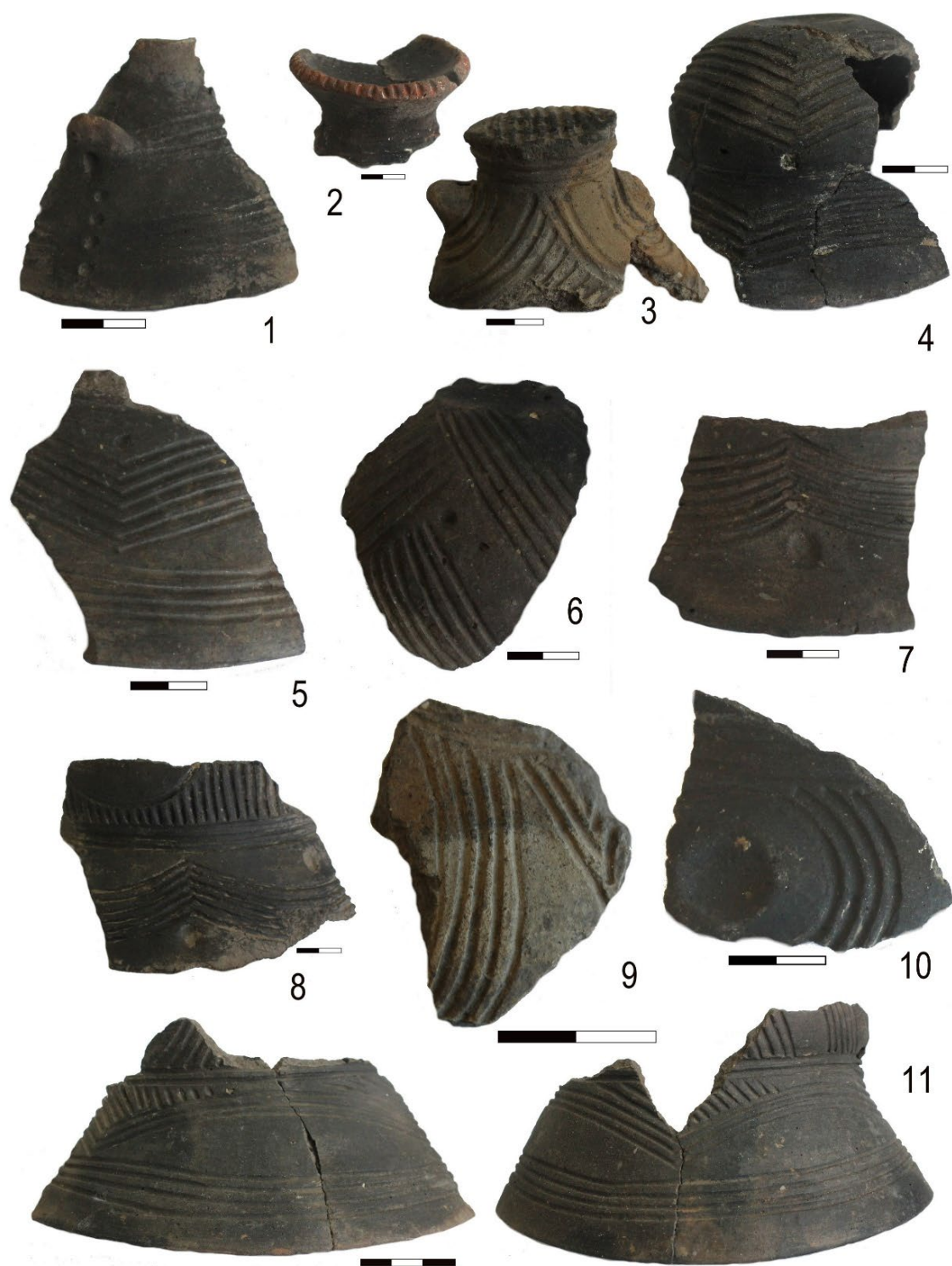


Figure 11. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: Pottery fragments with incised decoration from trench 3: 1-3. Anthropomorphic lids; 4-11. Helmet-shaped lids.



Figure 12. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: Pottery fragments with incised decoration from trench 3: 1. Fragments from a pot with a round stamp; 2–10. Fragments from pear-shaped vessels of various sizes.

The relatively large quantity of painted ceramics may result from differences in how materials accumulated in ground structures vs. buried contexts. A wide assortment of painted ware and a relatively high frequency of finds also characterize Kolomiysiv Yar, another BI-II stage settlement in the region. In this regard, both sites differ significantly from “Eastern Trypillia” settlements such as Shkarovka and Veselyj Kut.

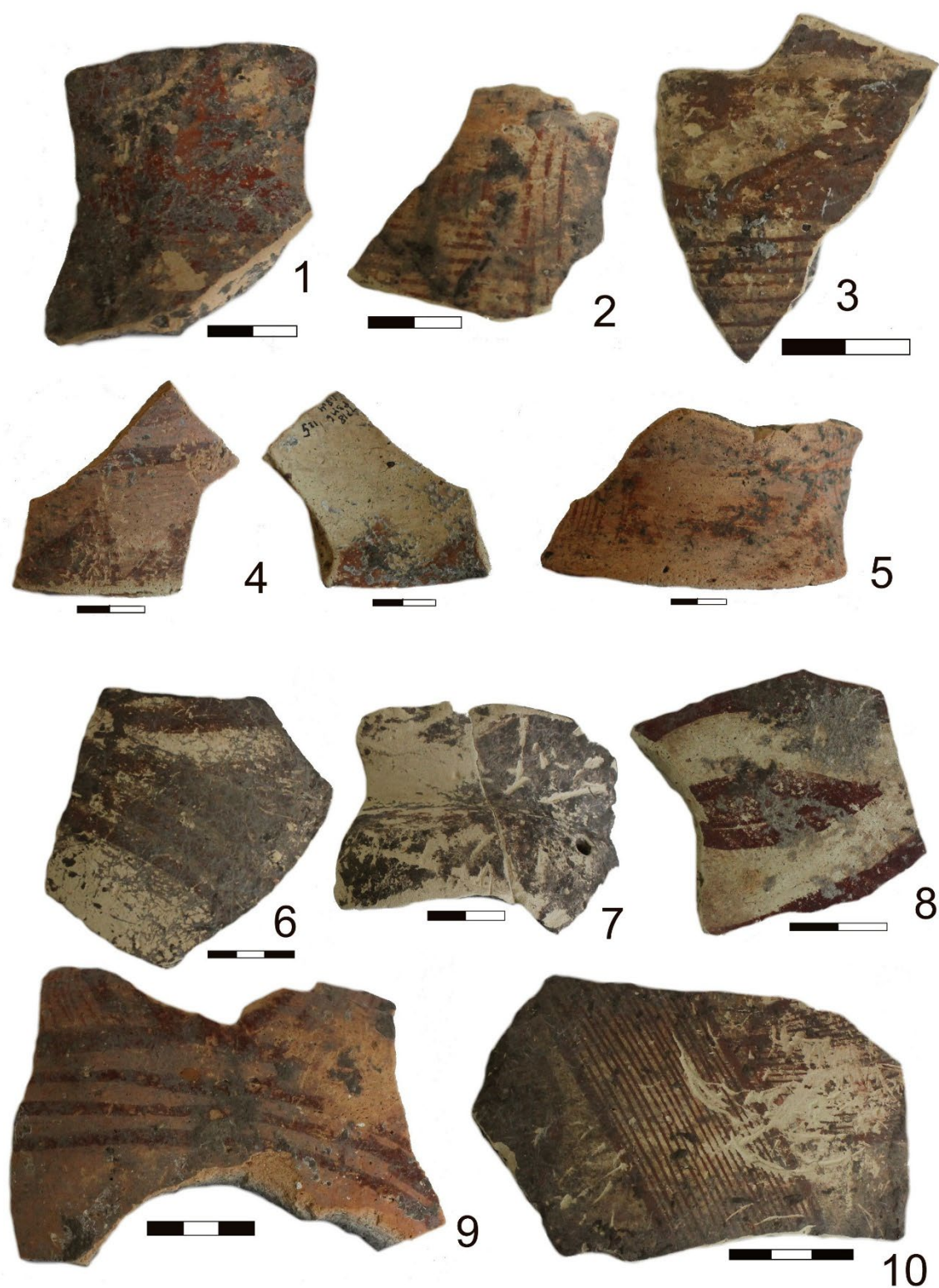


Figure 13. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: painted pottery from the trench 3; 1-2. fragments from goblets; 3. amphorae; 4, 5, 7. helmet-like lids; 6, 8, 9-10. sphero-conical vessels.

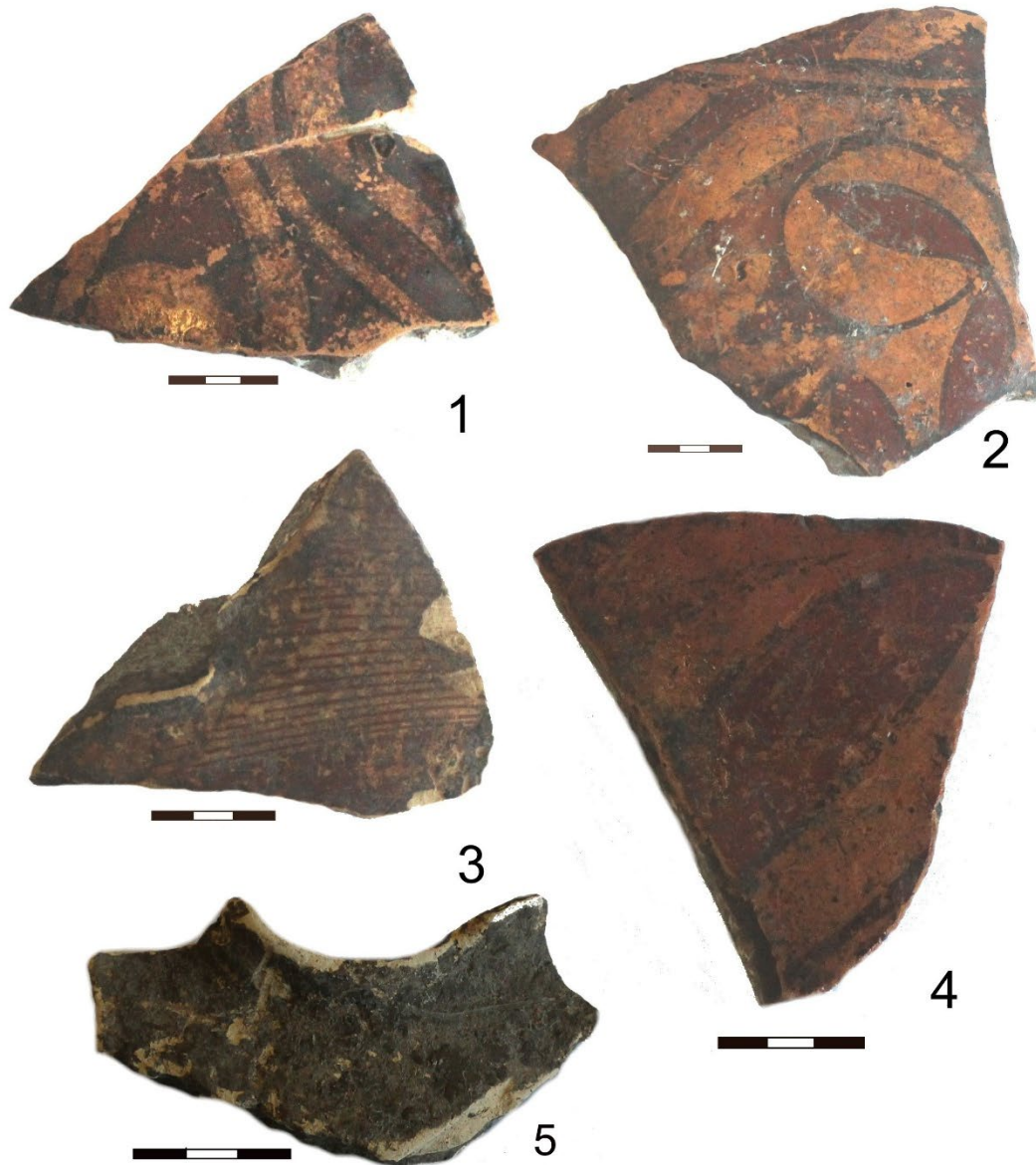


Figure 14. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: painted pottery from the trench 3: 1-4. fragments from spherico-conical vessels; 5. pear-like vessel.

Conclusion

The 2018 investigations allowed for the definitive identification of the site between Trypillia and Shcherbanivka as the eponymous settlement of the Trypillia Culture. Excavations yielded valuable material, especially pottery. The site can be attributed to the BI-II stage of the Trypillia Culture. Although the findings generally align with the “Eastern Trypillia Culture” ceramic complex (according to E. V. Tsvek), the relatively large number and variety of painted ceramics stand out, suggesting possible local production. It appears that a tradition of a multi-component ceramic complex emerged here during the BI-II stage and persisted until the end of the CI stage.

This eponymous settlement is thus of considerable interest for future research as one of the earliest Trypillia Culture settlements in the Middle Dnipro region and one of the

largest of its period. For a long time, our understanding of the earliest Trypillia occupation in this area was based on data from poorly published investigations nearly a century old. Over the last 15 years, archaeological studies of early sites have significantly changed this situation. Excavations and surveys at Dereviana, Dolyna, Kopachiv (Kolomiysiv Yar), Pluty, and Posadova Gora (Trypillia) have expanded the corpus of BI-II stage settlements in this area to 13, enabling more detailed analysis of their internal chronology and origins.

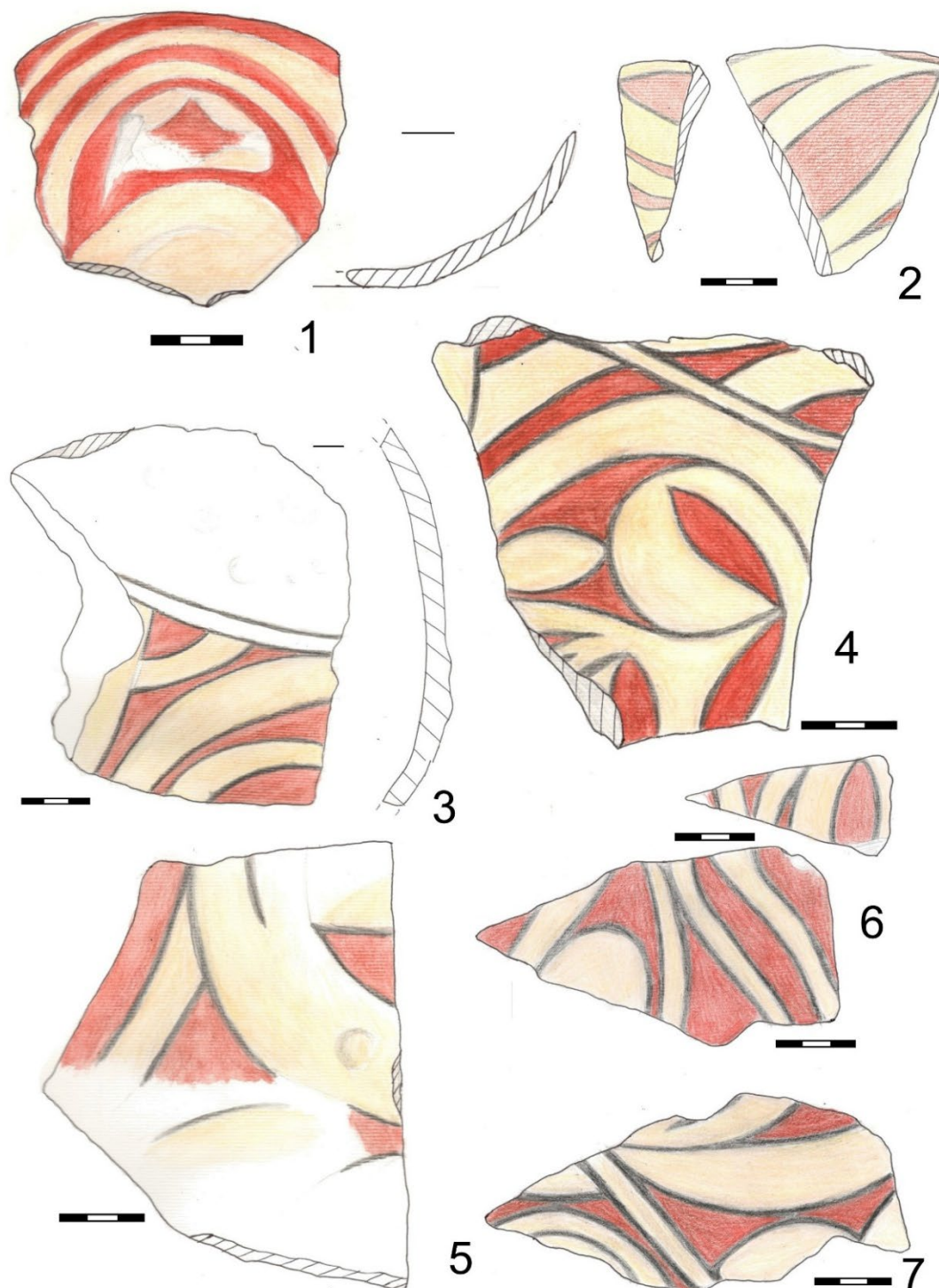


Figure. 15. Trypillia, 2018 excavations: painted pottery from the trench 3: 1. fragment from hemispherical bowl; 2-7. large sphero-conical vessel.

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