

THE CERAMICS COLLECTION
AT PREAH KHAN TEMPLE, ANGKOR

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Preah Khan Conservation Project

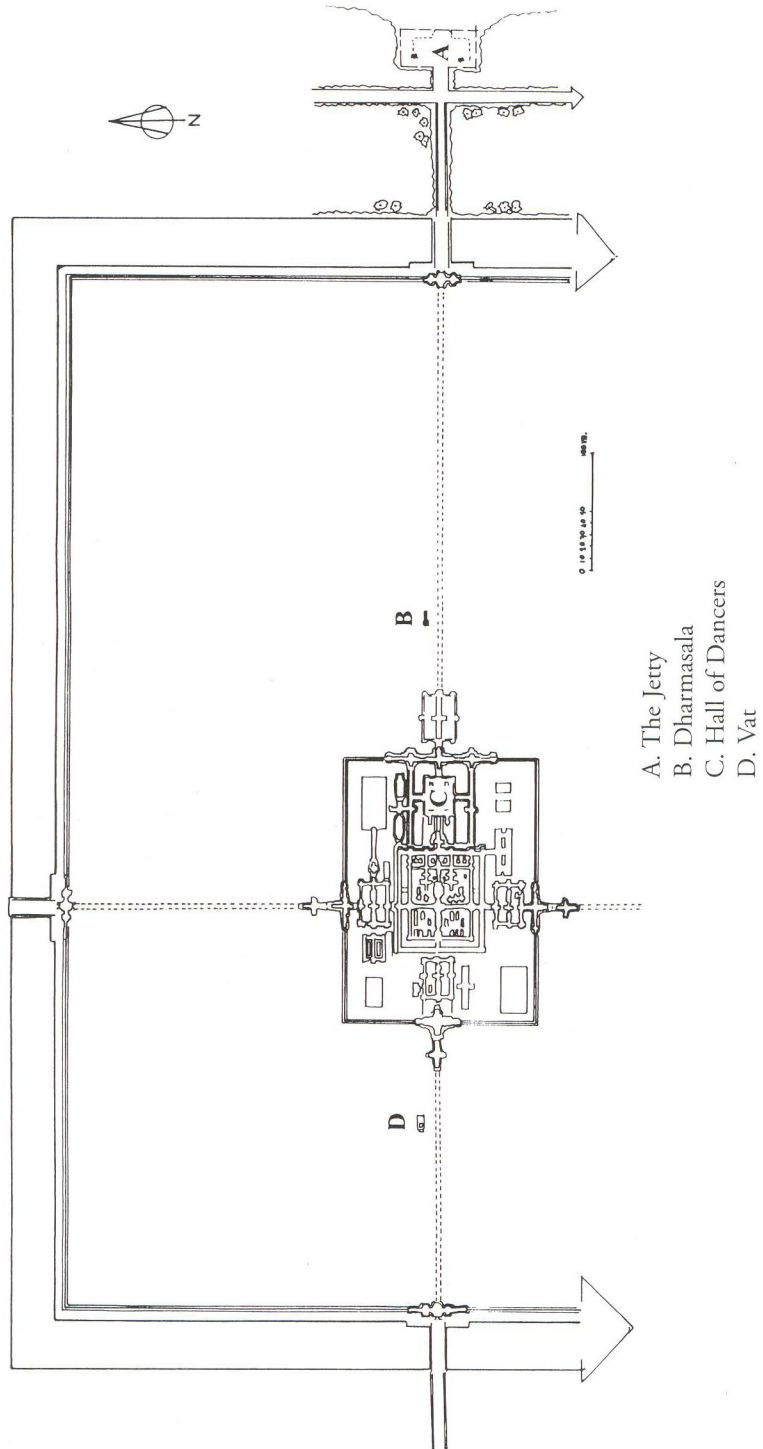
I. Introduction

Built in the late 12th century, the temple of Preah Khan is a Mahayana Buddhist complex which would seem to have been occupied well after the end of its founder's reign (Jayavarman VII) in the early 13th century. The Preah Khan Conservation Project was first established by the World Monuments Fund (WMF) at Angkor in 1989. Over the past ten years, the project has carried out numerous excavation campaigns in accompaniment to conservation work at the temple. Excavated areas include the Jetty, the Dharmasala, the Hall of Dancers and the "Vat", a stone platform surrounded by Buddhist border stones which is thought to be the site of a Theravada sanctuary posterior to the main temple. (See Plan.)

II. The Ceramics Collection at Preah Khan

The ceramics collection at Preah Khan represents a small database of archaeological excavation materials for the study of Khmer civilization and temple architecture. The collection includes unglazed and glazed Khmer ware, as well as porcelain.

The ceramics from Preah Khan come from a number of successive phases at the site. Some of the unglazed earthenware and green glazed pottery from excavations beneath Preah Khan's Vat may predate the building of the main temple in 1191. The unglazed and green glazed roof tiles from the Dharmasala probably relate to wooden structures built at the same period as the main temple, and were found with three reconstructed vessels of brown glazed ware. A range of dark brown and brown glazed pot bases, and a large yellow painted storage jar, were found at the Hall of Dancers. These, and unglazed bottle rims and cover handles from the Vat, date to the same period as the use of the temple. The unglazed roof tiles and lotus-decorated end tiles from the jetty come from a wooden structure built some time after the main stone temple, while a small light-green glazed jarlet was found under re-used stone blocks. Fragments of Chinese porcelain were also found in the jetty area, and alongside earthenware sherds at the site of Preah Khan's Vat, which was most likely constructed at some time between the 13th and 16th centuries.



Plan of Preah Khan and locations of the excavation sites

III. List of ceramics found at Preah Khan

The World Monuments Fund archaeological team has concentrated on recording the location of finds, the dimensions of vessel parts, their shapes and surface treatment, paint, slips and glaze. This ceramics collection includes samples taken at four different locations within the area of the Preah Khan temple. Following is a detailed illustrated list of ceramic findings made by the WMF team over the course of excavations at Preah Khan.

Vessels

Figure 1: Pieces of bottle stoppers, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.

Figure 2: Bottle rims

- 2.1: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.2: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.3: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed orange, from the Vat.
- 2.4: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed dull orange, from the Vat.
- 2.5 : Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed orange, from the Vat.
- 2.6: Piece of curved bottle rim, squared lip, unglazed bright reddish brown, from the Vat.
- 2.7: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.8: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.9: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed dull yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.10: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.11: Piece of curved bottle rim, rounded lip, unglazed dull orange, from the Vat.
- 2.12: Piece of curved bottle rim, squared lip, unglazed orange, from the Vat.
- 2.13: Piece of curved bottle rim, pointed lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.14: Piece of curved bottle rim, pointed lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.
- 2.15: Piece of curved bottle rim, squared lip, unglazed light yellow orange, from the Vat.

Figure 3 : Bottle necks

- 3.1: Piece of bottle neck, unglazed orange, from the Vat.
- 3.2: Piece of bottle neck, unglazed reddish brown, from the Vat.

Figure 4: Necks, shoulders, and bodies of bottles

- 4.1: Piece of bottle neck and shoulder, unglazed orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.2: Piece of bottle neck and shoulder, unglazed dull orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.3: Piece of bottle shoulder and body, unglazed light gray, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.4: Piece of bottle body, unglazed light yellow orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.5: Piece of bottle shoulder and body, unglazed light yellow orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.6: Piece of bottle shoulder and body, unglazed orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.

- 4.7: Piece of bottle body, unglazed light yellow orange, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.8: Piece of bottle body, unglazed light yellow orange, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.9: Piece of bottle body, unglazed dull orange, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 4.10: Piece of bottle body, unglazed dull reddish orange, 5mm thick, from the Vat.

Figure 5: Pots

- 5.1: Piece of pot body with three grooved lines, exterior brown glazed, (under glazed reddish brown), 6 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.2: Piece of pot base with double grooved lines, exterior brown glazed (under glazed light yellow orange), from the Vat.
- 5.3: Piece of gray pot body with single and double grooved line, exterior dark brown glazed, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.4: Piece of gray pot body with single grooved lines, painted light gray, from the Vat.
- 5.5: Piece of dull orange pot body with many grooved lines, exterior dark brown glazed, 9 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.6: Piece of light gray pot with many grooved lines, 8 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.7: Piece of light gray pot body with many grooved lines, exterior brown glazed, 6 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.8: Piece of brownish gray pot body with impressed decorations, exterior brown glazed, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.9: Piece of light gray pot body with impressed decorations, interior and exterior brown glazed, 4 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.10: Piece of gray pot shoulder with impressed decorations, exterior brown glazed, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.11: Piece of pot tubular neck, interior and exterior brown glazed, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 5.12: Part of greenish yellow brown reconstructed pot with impressed decorations on shoulder, exterior brown glazed, from Dharmasala.
- 5.13: Part of light gray pot body with double grooved decoration, exterior brown glazed, from Hall of Dancers, Preah Khan.
- 5.14: Part of gray pot body with many grooved decorations, exterior brown glazed, from Hall of Dancers.
- 5.15: Part of dull orange pot shoulder and body with double groove on shoulder, exterior brown glazed, from Dharmasala.
- 5.16: Part of gray pot shoulder and body with impressed groove on shoulder, exterior brown glazed, From Dharmasala.
- 5.17: Part of dull yellow orange pot body with an animal head decoration, exterior brown glazed, from Hall of Dancers.
- 5.18: Part of brownish gray pot neck with double grooved decorations, exterior brown glazed, from Hall of Dancers, Preah Khan.
- 5.19: Part of gray pot shoulder and neck with grooved line and wave decorations, exterior brown glazed, from the Vat.

- 5.20: Pot cover, exterior brown glazed, from the Vat.
- 5.21: Pot base (unglazed pedestal), interior and exterior brown glazed, from the Vat.
- 5.22: Light gray pot base, exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.23: Greyish yellow brown pot base, interior and exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.24: Pedestal pot base, exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.25: Gray pedestal pot base, exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.26: Half of gray pedestal pot base (under glazed red), exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.27: Light gray pedestal pot base, interior and exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.28: Part of grayish olive pedestal pot base, interior and exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.29: Brownish gray pedestal pot base, exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 5.30: Yellowish gray pedestal pot base, exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.

Figure 6: Storage jars

- 6.1: Storage jar rim and body with grooved lines and shell decorations, interior and exterior yellow olive painted, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 6.2: Piece of yellowish gray storage jar base, interior and exterior brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 6.3: Piece of grayish yellow brown storage jar base with single and double grooved decorations, yellowish brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.
- 6.4: Piece of dull orange storage jar body, exterior dark brown glazed, from the Hall of Dancers.

Figure 7: Olive gray glazed jarlet (after reconstruction), ht. 3.7 cm, diam. 4.85 cm, from the jetty.

Figure 8: White porcelain

- 8.1: Piece of white porcelain bowl rim and body, light grayish white transparent, 7 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.2: Part of white porcelain bowl, transparent light green, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.3: Piece of white porcelain box cover with molded relief, transparent light gray, 4 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.4: Piece of white porcelain box cover with molded relief, transparent light gray, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.5-6: Pieces of white porcelain box body with molded chrysanthemum, exterior light green glazed, 4 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.7: Piece of light gray white porcelain box, body with molded chrysanthemum, exterior light gray glazed, 2 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.8: Piece of white porcelain box body with molded cross, exterior light green glazed, 5 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.9: Piece of white porcelain bowl or box body, white molded relief, exterior grayish white glazed, 4 mm thick, from the Vat.
- 8.10: Piece of white porcelain jar with molded chrysanthemum, exterior light gray glazed, 2 mm thick, from the Vat.

Architectural ceramics

Figure 9: Decorated roof finial, light yellow orange unglazed: 1-6 are from the jetty; 7 from the Hall of Dancers.

Figure 10. 1-2: End tile with convex body and lotus decor, light yellow orange unglazed, from the jetty.

Figure 11: Convex tiles

- 11.1-11.3 : Convex tile (face up) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), interior green glazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.4: Reconstructed convex tile (face up) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), orange unglazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.5: Reconstructed convex tile (face up) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), light orange unglazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.6: Reconstructed convex tile (face up) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), dull orange unglazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.7: Reconstructed convex tile (face down) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), exterior green glazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.8: Reconstructed convex tile (face down) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), light gray unglazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.9: Reconstructed convex tile (face down) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), dull orange unglazed, from the Dharmasala.
- 11.10: Convex tile (face down) with a protrusion on the underside (this is an interlocking tile to form overlay roofing), dull orange unglazed, from the Dharmasala.

IV. Conclusions

Ceramics are a major part of the Khmer cultural heritage. Vessels for cooking and storage, and objects for religious ritual, fulfilled the domestic and ceremonial needs of the Kingdom. Further research on ceramics findings will help us appreciate the importance of different areas of the Preah Khan complex in terms of the daily life of the Angkorian people, and their descendants. Ceramics were used for specific social purposes and can inform us about the daily use of the temple complex over a long period of time.

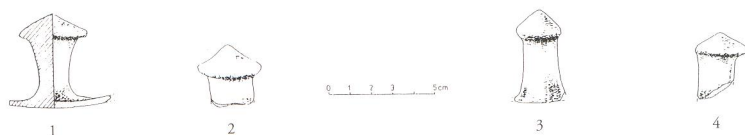


Figure 1. Bottle stoppers

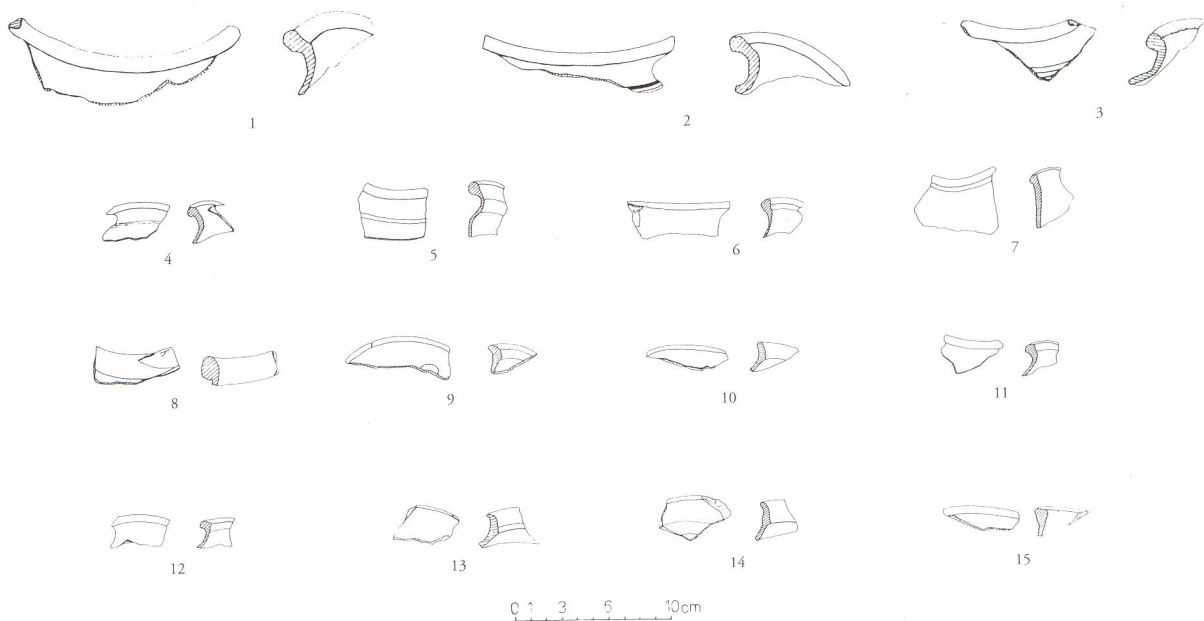


Figure 2: Bottle rims

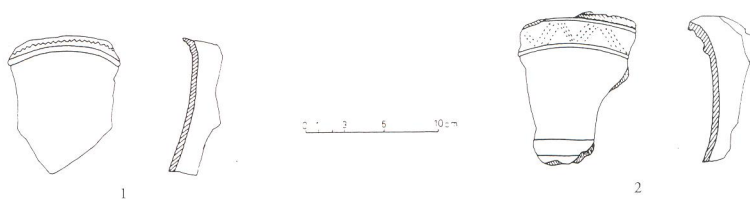


Figure 3: Bottle necks

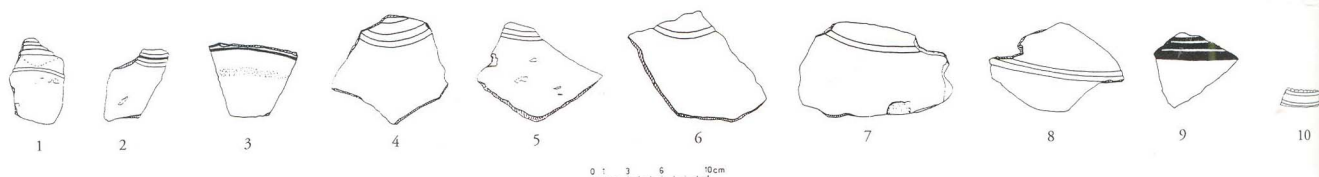


Figure 4: Necks, Shoulders, and Bodies of bottles

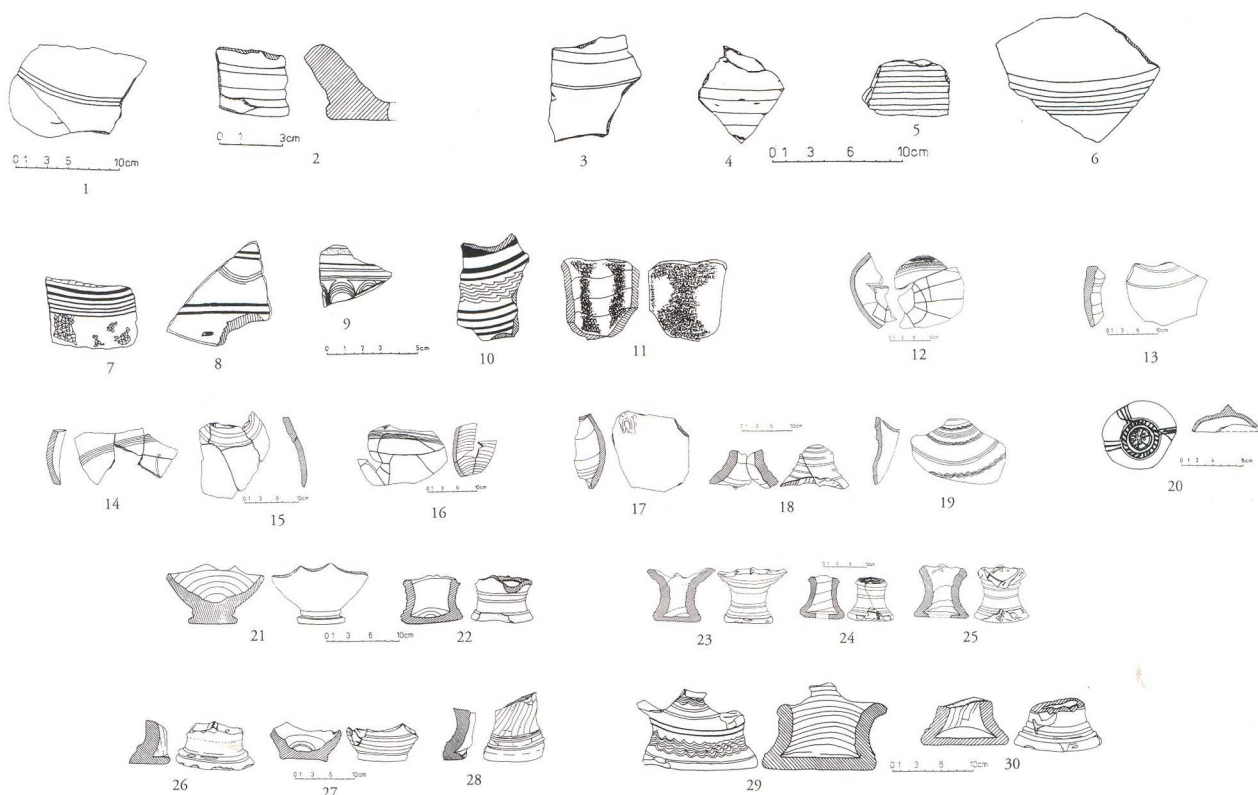


Figure 5: Pots

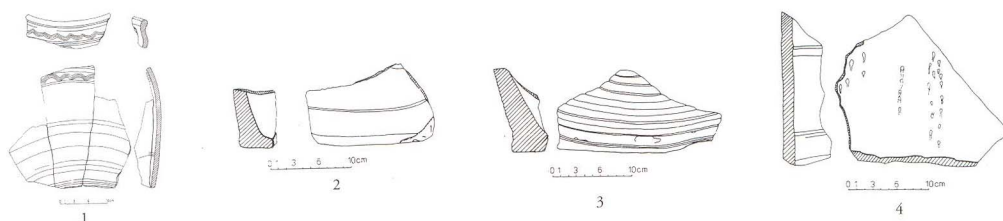


Figure 6: Storage jars



Figure 7: Reconstructed jarlet



Figure 8: White porcelain

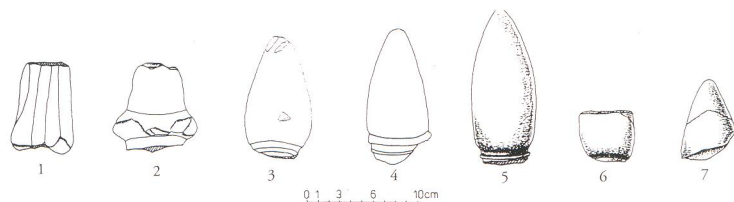


Figure 9: Roof finials

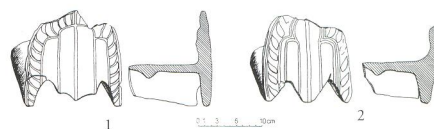


Figure 10: Roof finials

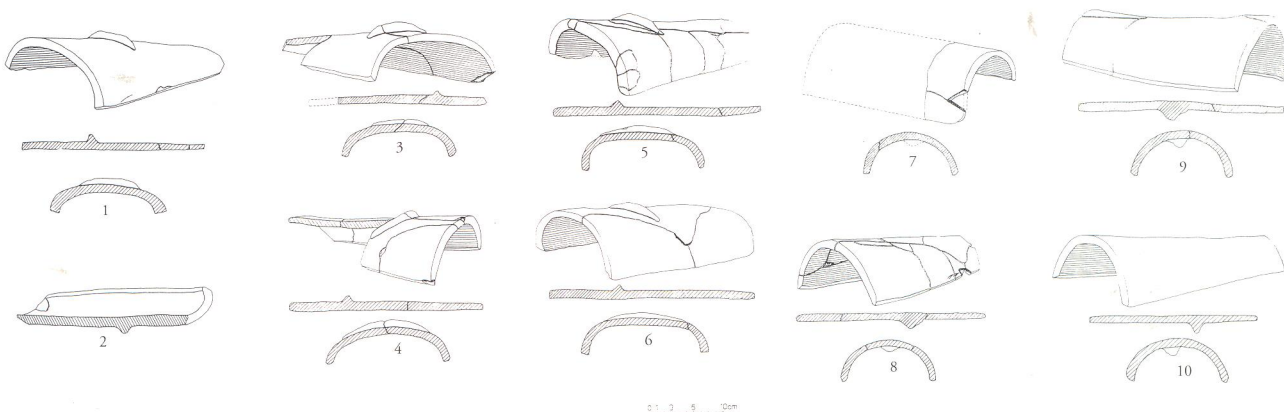


Figure 11: Convex tiles