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## Regarding about the Cultural Attribution of Hill Forts in Braslav Poozerye

By Alexander Yegoreichenko

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*Keywords:* Dnieper-Dvina Culture, Early Hatched Ware Culture, Late Hatched Ware Culture, Hill fort Tarilovo, Hill fort Zazony, Hill fort Ratjunki, Settlement Podvarinka.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Braslav Poozerye is located in the northwestern part of Belarus. It is characterized by intermittent hilly and flat terrain, a large amount of lakes (more than 200) and thick network of mostly small rivers. There was spreading of mainly hill forts, rarely fortified settlements located on the esker ridge starting from the Late Bronze Age.

The most part of fortified settlements is known since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Information about it is included in archaeological maps of F. Pokrovsky prepared for the IX and X Archaeological Congresses (Pokrovsky 1893: 1 – 164; Pokrovsky 1899: 1 - 161). Later, until the end of 1970-s study of those sites except sporadic visual inspections (L. Alekseev, L. Duchic, V. Shadyro, M. Cherniavsky, etc.) wasn’t carried out. Singular finds of smooth and hatched pottery formed the basis of attribution these fortified settlements to Dnieper-Dvina Culture or Hatched Ware Culture (Tret’jakov 1966: 175; Sedov 1970: fig. 5; Mitrofanov 1978: fig. 1; Shadyro 1985: 108; Duchic, Mitrofanov 1994: 180, 181).

First excavation of fortified settlement Ratjunki was realized by L. Duchic in 1978, 1979, 1981 years. It was investigated 236 sq. m. there. She noted in mutual with A. Mitrofanov article that pottery from bottom horizon refers to Dnieper-Dvina Culture and Hatched

Ware Culture. Authors emphasized that early jar-shaped and slightly-profiled pots dominated among hatched pottery. Carinated vessels of the late stage occur much less frequently (Duchic, Mitrofanov 1994: 167 - 171).

Since 1992 purposeful investigation of early fortified settlements in Braslav Poozerye has been carried out by the author. During this period he has provided widespread excavations in hill forts Tarilovo (Uklja), Zazony, Ratjunki and in the settlement Podvarinka. As a result of received material and previous data the author divided one in that moment Hatched Ware Culture into two separate archaeological cultures: 1) Early Hatched Ware Culture, which was possessed of Late Bronze Age features (early stage of Hatched Ware Culture by other researchers’ periodization); 2) Late Hatched Ware Culture (late stage of Hatched Ware Culture) (Yegoreichenko 2006).

Fulfilled archaeological research of fortified settlements in Braslav Poozerye allowed providing clearer delimitation between Hatched Ware Culture and Dnieper-Dvina Culture. It is assumed that the border took place from North to South along the line of hill forts Zazony – Ratjunki – Tarilovo (Yegoreichenko 1996: 8 – 11; Yegoreichenko 2006: 15). However, last years the thesis about the presence of Hatched Ware Culture population in this region was contested by some researchers. Firstly it was announced by A. Medvedev. In 2000 at hill fort Ratjunki he finished the excavation area (60 sq. m.) of 1999 year (this excavation was started by A. Yegoreichenko) and provided new earthwork on the area of 96 sq. m. As a result A. Medvedev concluded that the site had had Dnieper-Dvina Culture attribution on the basis of his own small volume excavation. The only thing he admitted was “some influence of Hatched Ware Culture in the pottery assemblage” (Medvedev 2002: 156). In next publications A. Medvedev stopped to remark the presence of Hatched Ware Culture inhabitants at hill forts of Braslav Poozerye, there was area of Dnieper-Dvina Culture population in his opinion (Medvedev 2001a: 69; Medvedev 2011b: 26).

Some other Belarusian researchers have the similar position. Z. Haritonovich particularly admits existence of hatched vessels including carinated vessels which are typical for Late Hatched Ware Culture of first centuries AD. However, she makes surprising conclusion that “the pottery assemblage of hill forts in northwestern Belarus allows to classify them (vessels –

*Author: e-mail: yegor\_alex@mail.ru*

A.Y.) to Dnieper-Dvina Culture and there are no reasons to associate it with Hatched Ware Culture" (Haritonovich 2008: 177).

Such diametrically opposite views on ethno-cultural situation in Braslav Poozerie in the end of 2nd millennium BC – first half of 1st millennium AD force to reconsider this issue. It should be noted that there are practically no distinctions between items of Hatched Ware Cultures and Dnieper-Dvina Culture except pottery assemblage. However, there are complications, firstly in Early Hatched Ware Culture and early stage of Dnieper-Dvina Culture ware. Both of them are characterized by entirely jar-shaped and slightly-profiled forms. Nevertheless there are a number of principal differences. Dnieper-Dvina Culture is characterized by mainly smooth vessels; Early Hatched Ware Culture is characterized by mainly hatched vessels. Although, hatching on some Dnieper-Dvina Culture pottery is distinguished, in particular, from hill fort Ratjunki. Pots of Dnieper-Dvina Culture have relatively small walls (0.4 – 0.7 cm). Slightly-profiled pots of Dnieper-Dvina Culture have shot inverted or vertical rim; rims of Hatched Ware Culture vessels are elongated and inverted. Last-mentioned ones don't have holes below lips of rims. It is specific feature of Dnieper-Dvina pottery. Pots of both archaeological cultures contain dotted impressions along a neck as decoration. However, they are different in size. Average diameter of dots is 0.3 – 0.5 cm on Dnieper-Dvina pots and 0.5 – 0.7 cm on Hatched Ware Culture vessels.

Fundamental difference between pottery assemblages came on since the beginning of AD.

Carinated pots began to prevail in Late Hatched Ware Culture (Yegoreichenko 2006: 73 – 79, tab. 42 - 44). Profiled vessels with elongated rims were prevailing in Dnieper-Dvina Culture in first centuries AD. Proceeding from these criteria, consider pottery assemblages of investigated fortified settlements in Braslav Poozerie once more.

## II. HILL FORT TARILOVO (UKLJA)

The fortified settlement is characterized as hill type. It is situated for 1.5 km northwestern of Uklja villiage. Hill fort Tarilovo is studied by A. Yegoreichenko in 1992 – 1994. Investigated area composed 178 sq km. Thickness of occupation layer fluctuated from 1.1 m in central part to 3.2 m along the edge of the site.

Pottery of the hill fort on the base of technique of surface treatment is represented by following types: 1) hand-made smooth vessels of Dnieper-Dvina Culture; 2) hand-made hatched pottery of Hatched Ware Cultures; 3) hand-made smooth, coarse and plastered vessels dating the middle – third quarter of 1st millennium AD (Tab. 1). Two last-mentioned were typical for top layers and it is not interesting for this study.

Dnieper-Dvina pottery was situated mainly into bottom deposits of occupation layer. They are divided into jar-shaped and slightly-profiled pots by shape (Fig. 1). Their ratio was approximately equal into IX – X stratums. Slightly-profiled pottery prevailed into VIII stratum and jar-shaped vessels were in the majority on the contrary into VII stratum.

Table 1 : Hill fort Tarilovo. Distribution of rims by layers

Stratum	smooth		hatched			coarse	plastered
	1*	2	1	2	3	1	1
I	16	2	–	–	2	3	1
II	29	2	–	2	4	–	2
III	44	4	2	1	8	9	1
IV	31	7	4	–	21	–	2
V	24	5	2	1	32	1	–
VI	15	6	–	1	22	1	–
VII	15	7	–	2	17	–	–
VIII	12	20	1	–	4	–	–
IX	3	2	–	–	–	–	–
X	5	3	–	–	–	–	–
Subsoil	5	5	–	1	1	–	–
In all	199	63	8	8	48	14	6

\*1 – jar-shaped, 2 – slightly-profiled, 3 – carinated vessels.

Hatched pottery is known since VIII stratum, but it prevails into VII – V stratums. Hatched vessels are divided into three groups by shapes of their rims: 1) jar-shaped; 2) slightly-profiled; 3) carinated (Fig. 2). It should be mentioned that rims of first and second groups are sporadic. Carinated pots prevailed. Basing on those observations the author concluded that the hill

fort had been found by population of Dnieper-Dvina Culture in the 1st millennium BC (exact chronology is impossible due to lack of limitedly datable items). The arrival of new inhabitants brought hatched pottery treated to the end of 1st millennium BC – the beginning of 1st millennium AD. It is not excluded that the prior

settlement of Dnieper-Dvina population was burned by newcomers (Yegoreichenko 1996: 10).

### III. HILL FORT ZAZONY

The hill fort is located at southern outskirts of the village, on the top of the hill-outlier, height of which is 8 meters above the surrounding terrain. It was investigated by A. Yegoreichenko in 1995 – 2000. During that period 434 sq. km. were studied. In the result of excavation it was determined that the settlement had been monocultural in the Iron Age. There is no material of Dnieper-Dvina Culture at the hill fort. However, there are finds dating since third quarter of the 1st millennium AD for the middle of 11th century as well as everywhere in this region.

Pottery assemblage of hill fort Zazony was formed as well as at other fortified settlements in this territory from three basic groups. Jar-shaped and slightly-profiled vessels were dominant (Tab. 2, Fig. 3, 4). Smooth pots of these shapes prevailed in upper stratum. They don't have any relations to the classic Iron Age. Chronologically smooth vessels are linked to pottery of the unfortified settlement located on the foothill and are dated to the second half of 1st millennium AD. Cultural characteristic of this material is associated with the Balts of the middle – third quarter of 1st millennium AD and Smolensk-Polotsk Long-Barrow Culture of the last quarter of 1st millennium AD.

Table 2 : Hill fort Zazony. Distribution of rims by layers

Stratum	smooth		hatched		
	1*	2	1	2	3
I	38	13	11	–	2
II	168	79	29	7	8
III	138	78	95	35	22
IV	87	58	88	40	26
V	33	14	57	20	4
VI	34	21	48	17	–
VII	2	4	12	9	–
VIII	3	3	10	6	1
IX	1	3	4	2	–
Subsoil	10	2	15	2	–
In all	514	275	369	138	63

\*1 – jar-shaped, 2 – slightly-profiled, 3 – carinated vessels.

Hatched vessels are represented by three types. Dominant group was jar-shaped ware (Tab. 2). The second place by number is slightly-profiled pots. Carinated vessels were found in small amount in upper deposits of occupation layer.

### IV. HILL FORT RATJUNKI

The hill fort is situated at southern outskirts of the village, on the top of the hill-outlier, height of which is 8 – 12 meters above the surrounding terrain. In 1978, 1979, 1981 L. Duchic recovered 252 sq. km. at platform of the hill fort. In 1999, 2001 – 2007 excavation of the settlement was provided by the expedition of Belarusian State University under the leadership of A. Yegoreichenko. In the course of investigation 854 sq. km. were studied. In the result of excavation it was revealed that the settlement includes layers dating since the end of 2nd millennium BC for the 13th century AD. Duration and intensity of residence didn't contribute to the clarity of stratigraphic analysis. Unfortunately, the occupation layer was very mixed.

Deposits of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age belong to three archaeological cultures: Dnieper-Dvina Culture, Early Hatched Ware Culture, and Late Hatched Ware Culture. Rims of smooth and hatched vessels

were distributed in the following way (Tab. 3). However, it should be recognized that fragments of upper parts of vessels belong not only to Dnieper-Dvina Culture, but also to layers of the second half of 1st millennium.

Jar-shaped ones prevail among rims of Dnieper-Dvina Culture (Fig. 5). They are either vertical, or turned-in. Some rims were ornamented by two ways. There were holes below lips of rims (Fig. 5: 2) or dotted impressions inflicted at regular intervals in one line (Fig. 5: 1, 6) or at some combinations (Fig. 5: 3).

Slightly-profiled pots of Dnieper-Dvina culture belong to two types. Some of them have short slightly inverted rims (Fig. 6: 1, 3), other have elongated vertical or inverted rims (Fig. 6: 2, 4 – 7). The ornamentation is the same as that of jar-shaped vessels: holes and dotted impressions (Fig. 6: 2, 4 – 7).

Jar-shaped and slightly-profiled pots are typical for the pottery of Early Hatched Ware Culture. Moreover jar-shaped vessels prevail (Tab. 3). Vertical rim and disordered hatching of entire surface are typical for these ones. Some specimens have comparatively large dotted impressions inflicted in one line (Fig. 7: 1, 3, 7). Slightly-profiled pots are characterized by vertical or inverted rims. Their bodies are covered by chaotic hatching (Fig. 7: 2 – 5, 4, 7). Some vessels are

ornamented by dotted impressions below lips of rims (Fig. 7: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8).

*Table 3* : Hill fort Ratjunki. Distribution of rims by layers

Stratum	smooth		hatched		
	1*	2	1	2	3
I	25	1	1	–	10
II	53	7	25	6	41
III	51	8	44	20	53
IV	29	8	31	15	57
V	18	3	18	6	27
VI	6	1	4	2	8
VII	7	1	3	7	26
VIII	6	1	7	2	–
IX	2	1	–	–	–
X	3	–	–	–	–
XI	–	–	–	–	–
XII	4	2	1	–	–
XIII	5	1	1	–	–
XIV	1	–	–	–	–
Subsoil	42	–	3	5	2
In all	252	34	139	63	224

\*1 – jar-shaped, 2 – slightly-profiled, 3 – carinated vessels.

Singular carinated pots are typical for Late Hatched Ware Culture. Their concentration was observed into II – V stratum (Tab. 3). These vessels are divided into two groups by profiles of their upper parts: 1) with straight turned-in rims (Fig. 8: 3, 5; Fig. 9: 4); 2) with vertical rims (Fig. 8: 1, 2, 4; Fig. 9: 1, 2, 5). Hatching on carinated vessels has regular outlines in contrast to pots of Early Hatched Ware Culture. Usually it was inflicted from the ripple to the bottom and had vertical orientation. Other ornamentation is not characterized for this pottery as well as in northeastern Lithuania and southwestern Latvia.

## V. SETTLEMENT PODVARINKA

Settlements located on the esker ridge are rarely found archaeological resources. Throughout Braslav District they are known in Edagaly, Slobodka,

and Podvarinka. Such settlements hadn't been investigated before 2010. During their inspection it was revealed that the occupation layer was slight and was dated to the very end of Late Bronze Age mainly to Iron Age. Settlement Podvarinka was located at southern part of the long esker ridge. Its western part was damaged by trenches and pillboxes of the First World War. The occupation layer was traced approximately throughout 100 m and its thickness was on average 0.3 m. It was mounted to 1.1 m only in three hollows. The occupation layer included extremely few findings, although items are dated since the end of 1st millennium BC for 11th century AD.

Interest for us pottery material as well as from other fortified settlements belongs to three archaeological cultures: Dnieper-Dvina Culture, Early and Late Hatched Ware Cultures (Tab. 4).

*Table 4* : Settlement Podvarinka. Distribution of rims by layers

Stratum	smooth		hatched		
	1*	2	1	2	3
I	5	3	3	–	27
II	8	2	6	–	36
III	4	11	9	–	22
IV	13	2	1	4	128
V	5	–	–	–	37
VI	3	–	2	1	64
VII	1	–	1	–	27
VIII	–	1	–	–	7
In All	39	19	23	5	348

\*1 – jar-shaped, 2 – slightly-profiled, 3 – carinated vessels.

Fragments of smooth Dnieper-Dvina pottery were situated into bottom layers and belong mainly to jar-shaped vessels (Fig. 10). Findings of jar-shaped and

slightly-profiled pots of Early Hatched Ware Culture were also singular (Tab. 4). The overwhelming majority of

vessels were represented by carinated shapes of rims (Tab. 4; Fig. 11, 12).

Thus, opinion of Alexander Medvedev and Z. Haritonovich about attribution of Braslav Poozerye exceptionally to Dnieper-Dvina Culture is untrue. By the beginning of the 1st millennium AD this territory entirely passes under control of Late Hatched Ware Culture.

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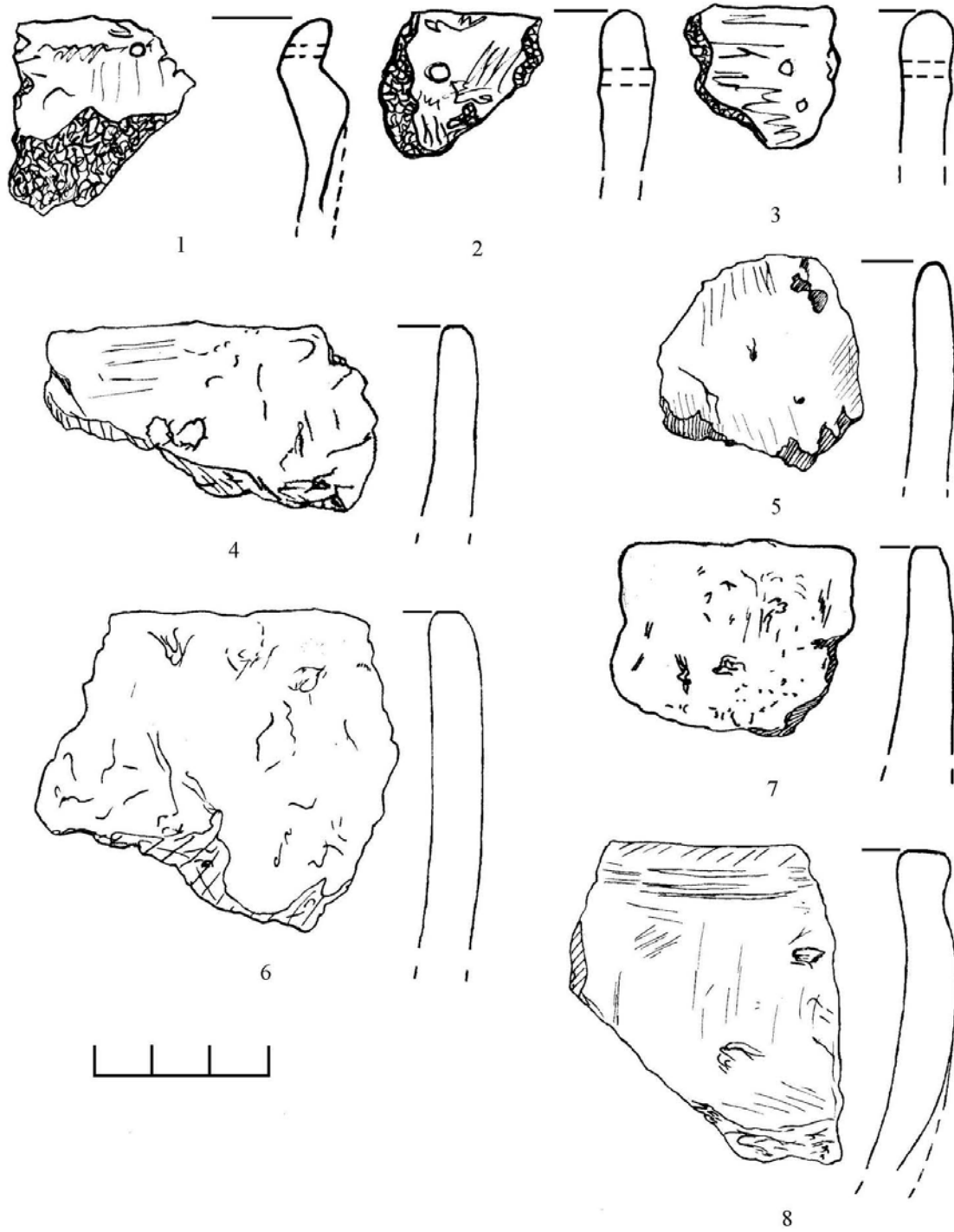


Figure 1 : Hill fort Tarilovo. Pottery of Dnieper-Dvina Culture.

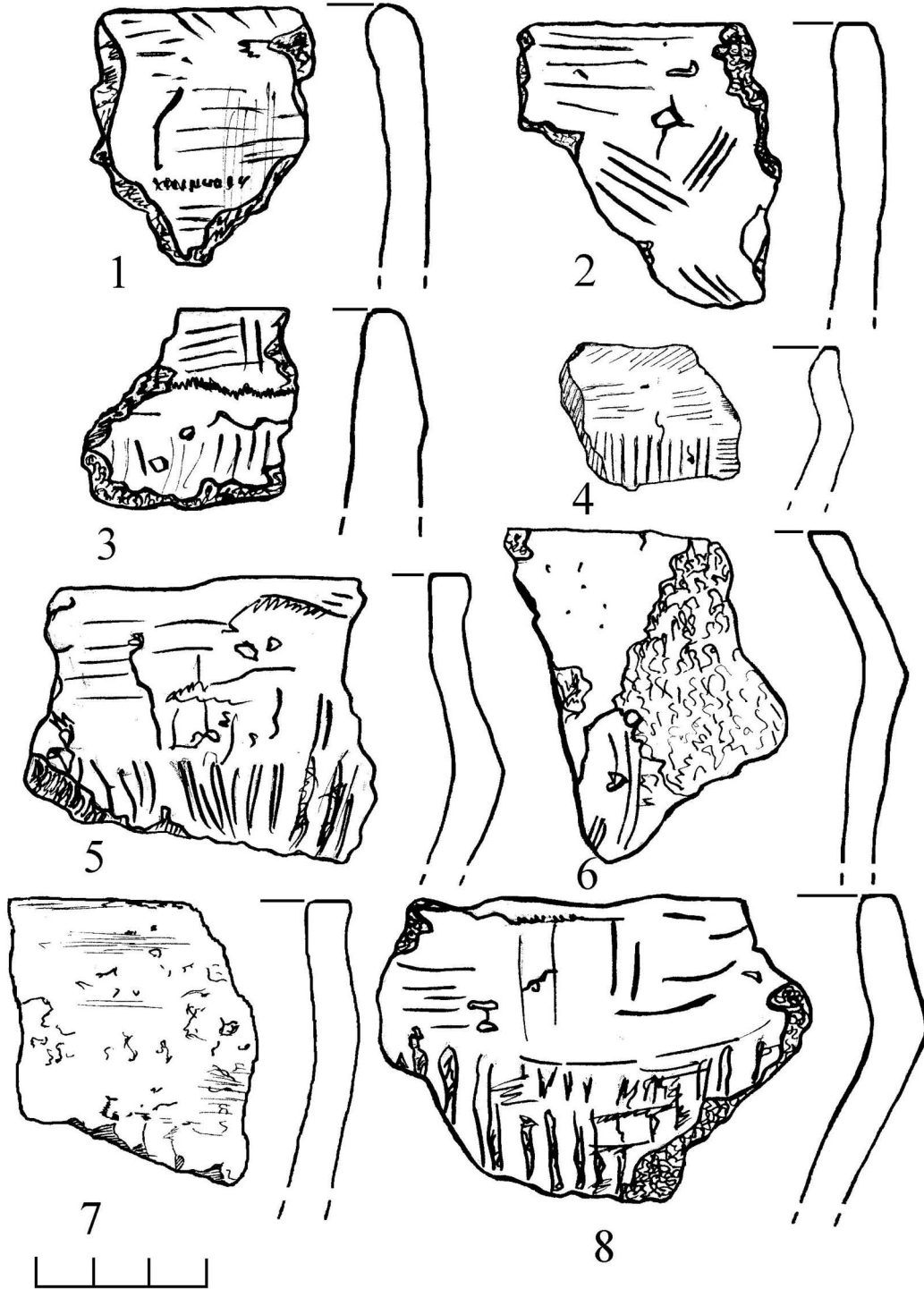


Figure 2: Hill fort Tarilovo. Vessels of Hatched Ware Cultures.



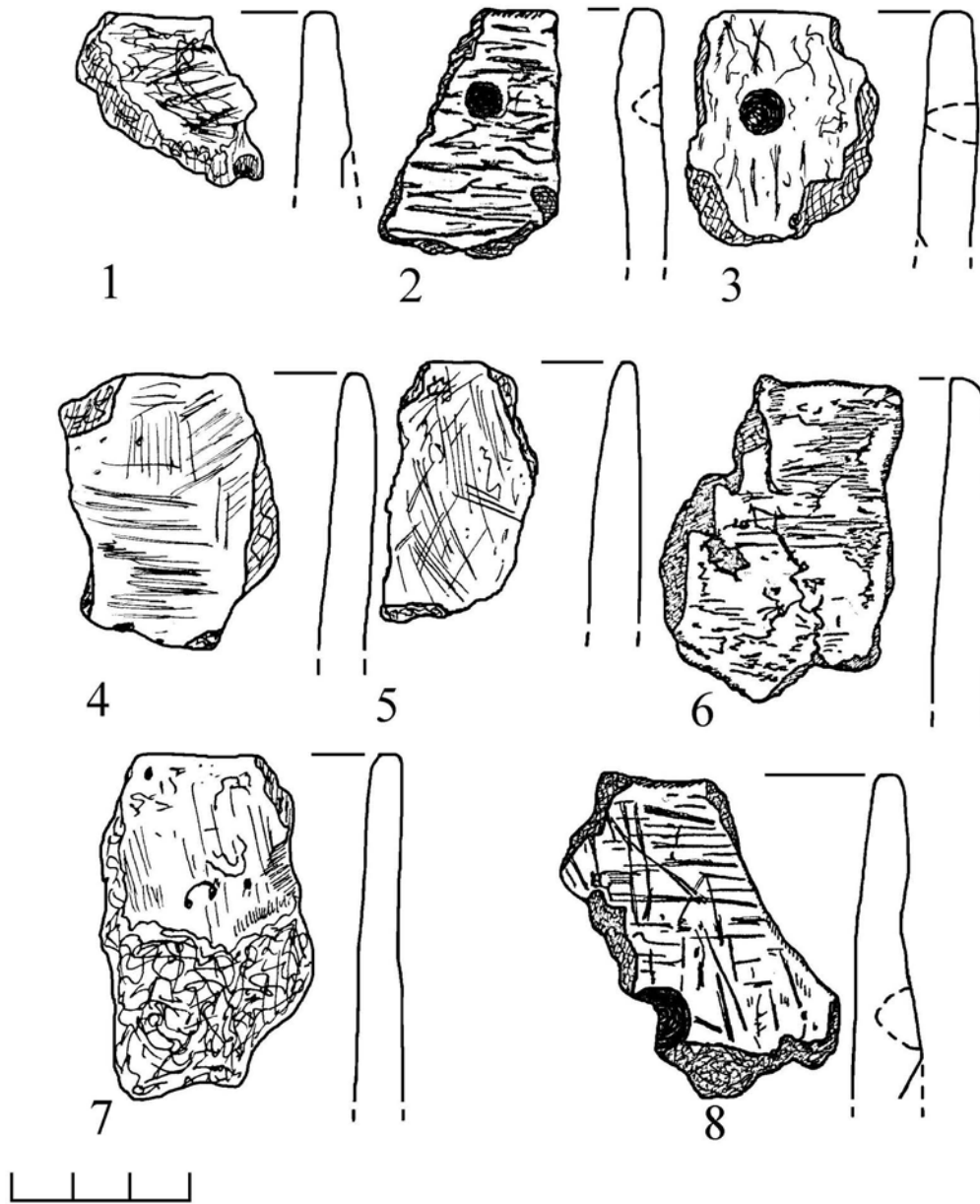


Figure 3 : Hill fort Zazony. Vessels of Early Hatched Ware Culture.



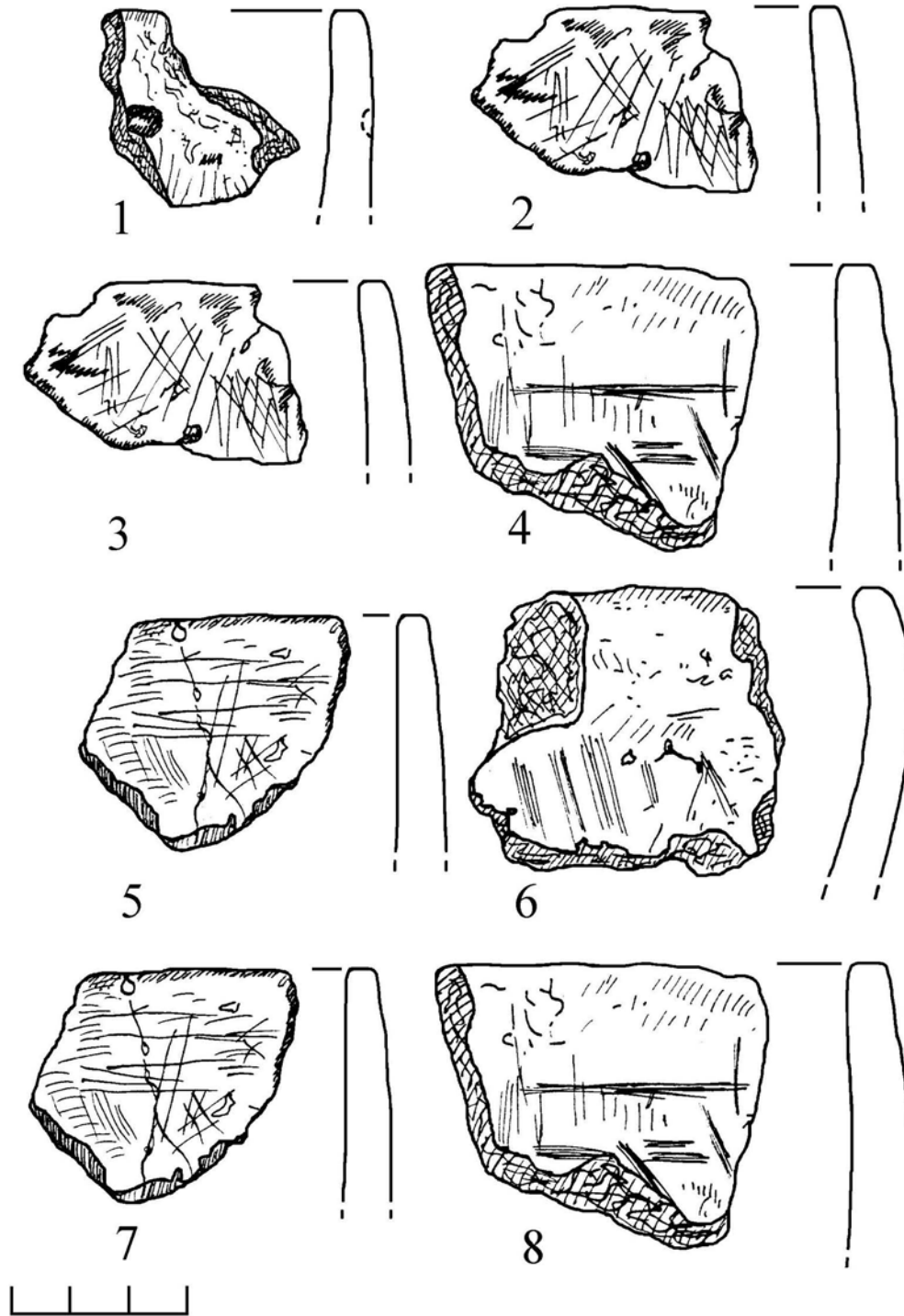


Figure 4 : Hill fort Zazony. Vessels of Early Hatched Ware Culture.

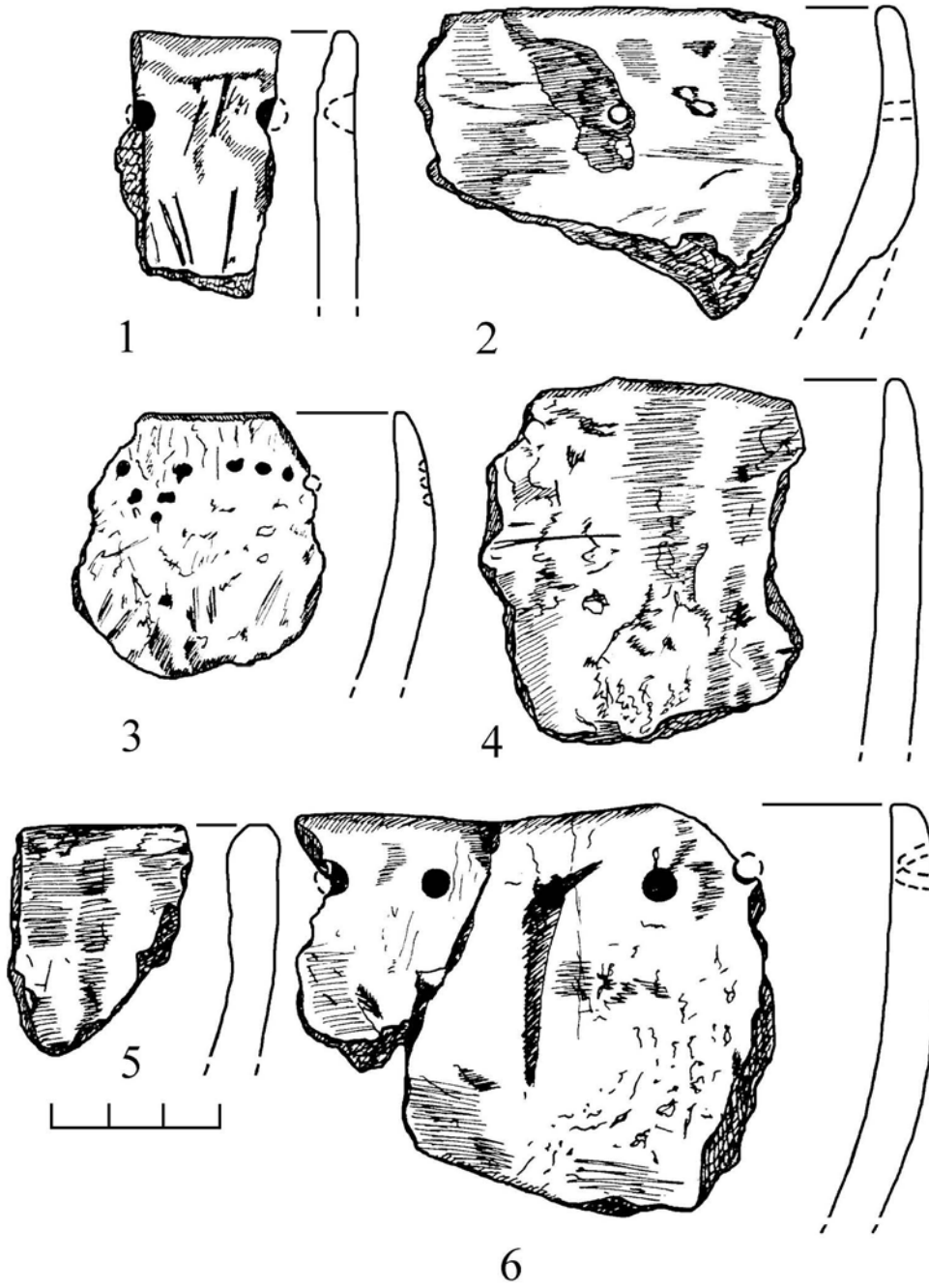


Figure 5: Hill fort Ratjunki. Jar-shaped vessels of Dnieper-Dvina Culture.

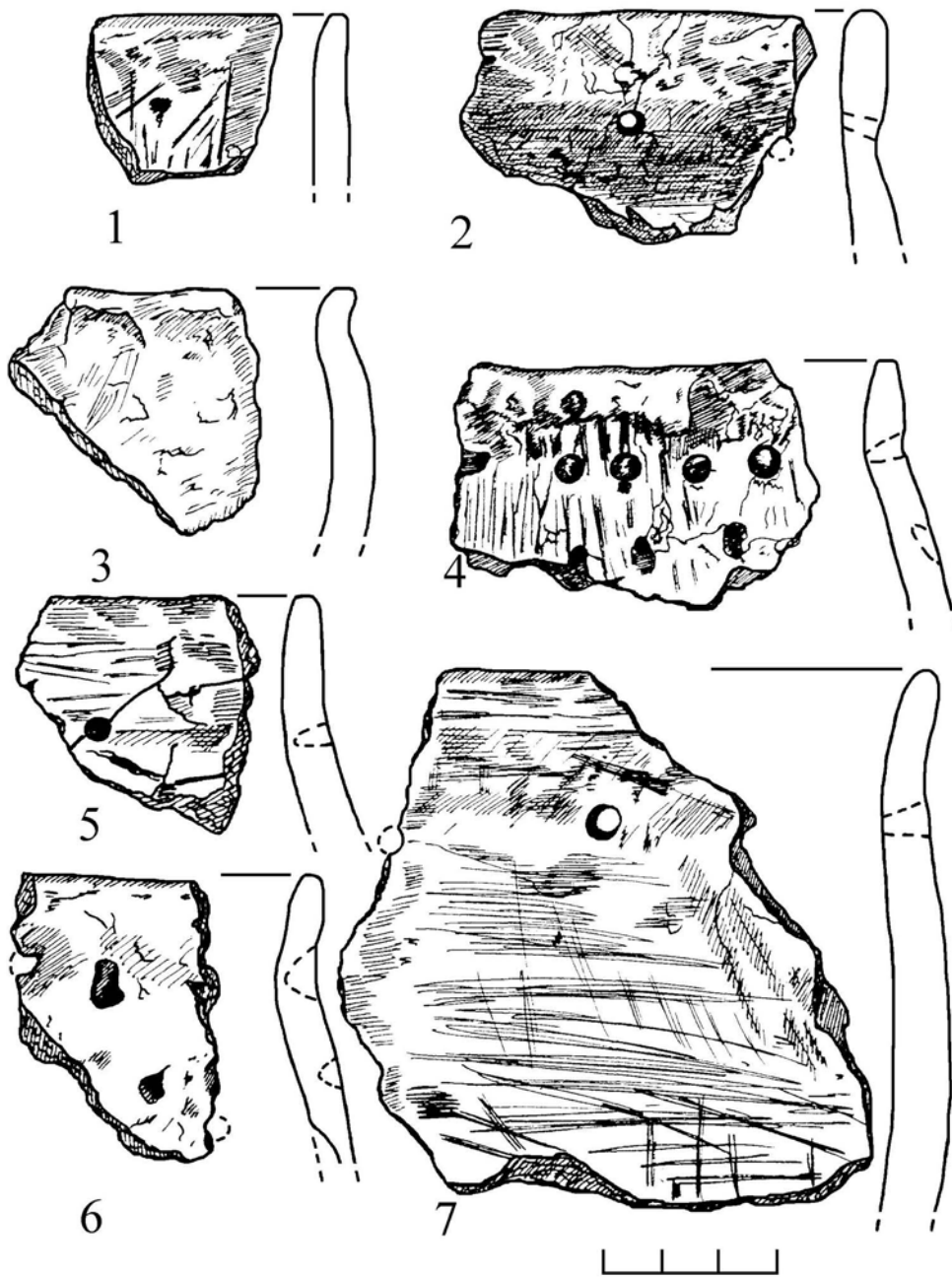


Figure 6 : Hill fort Ratjunkiv. Slightly-profiled vessels of Dnieper-Dvina Culture.

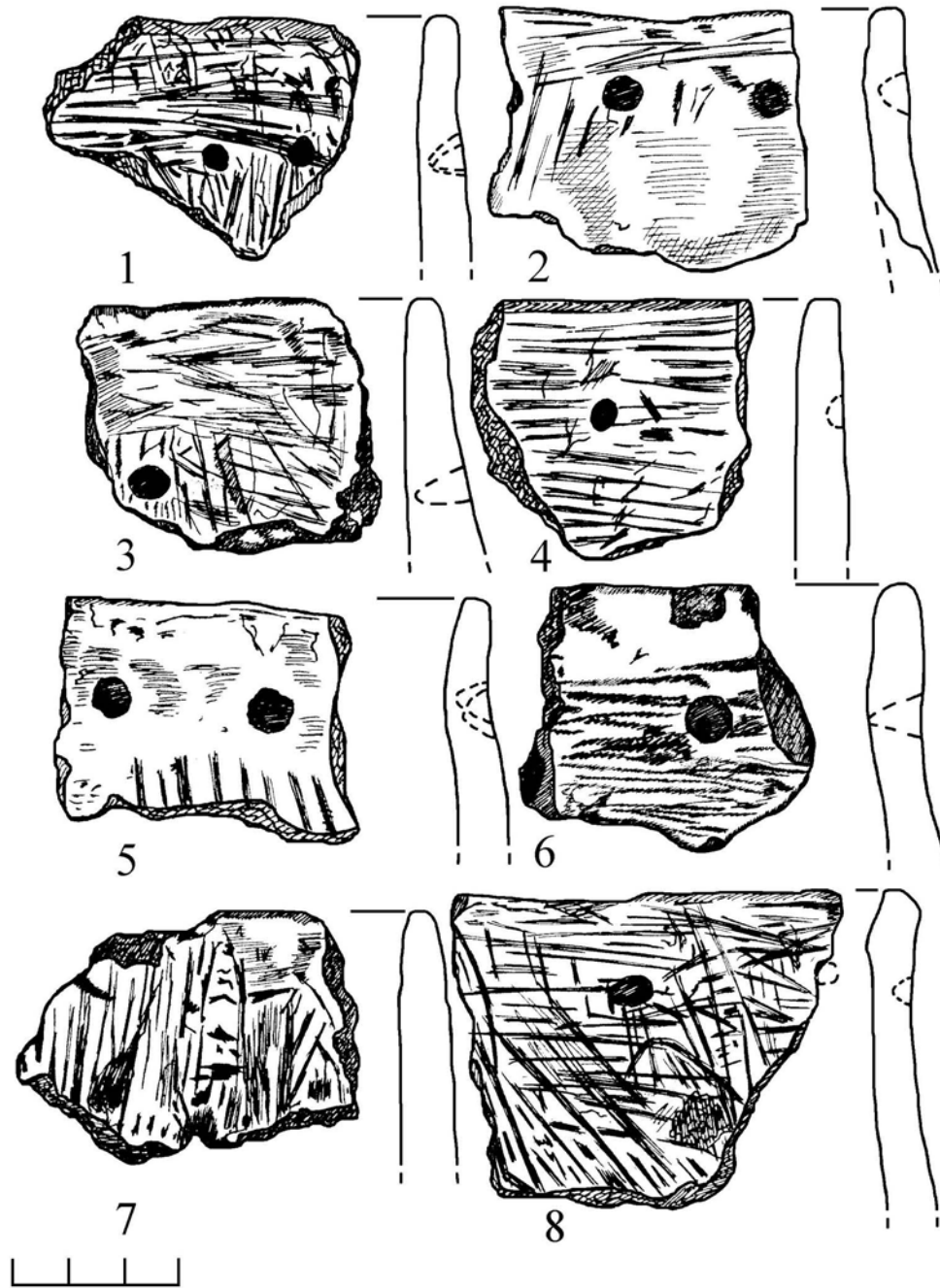
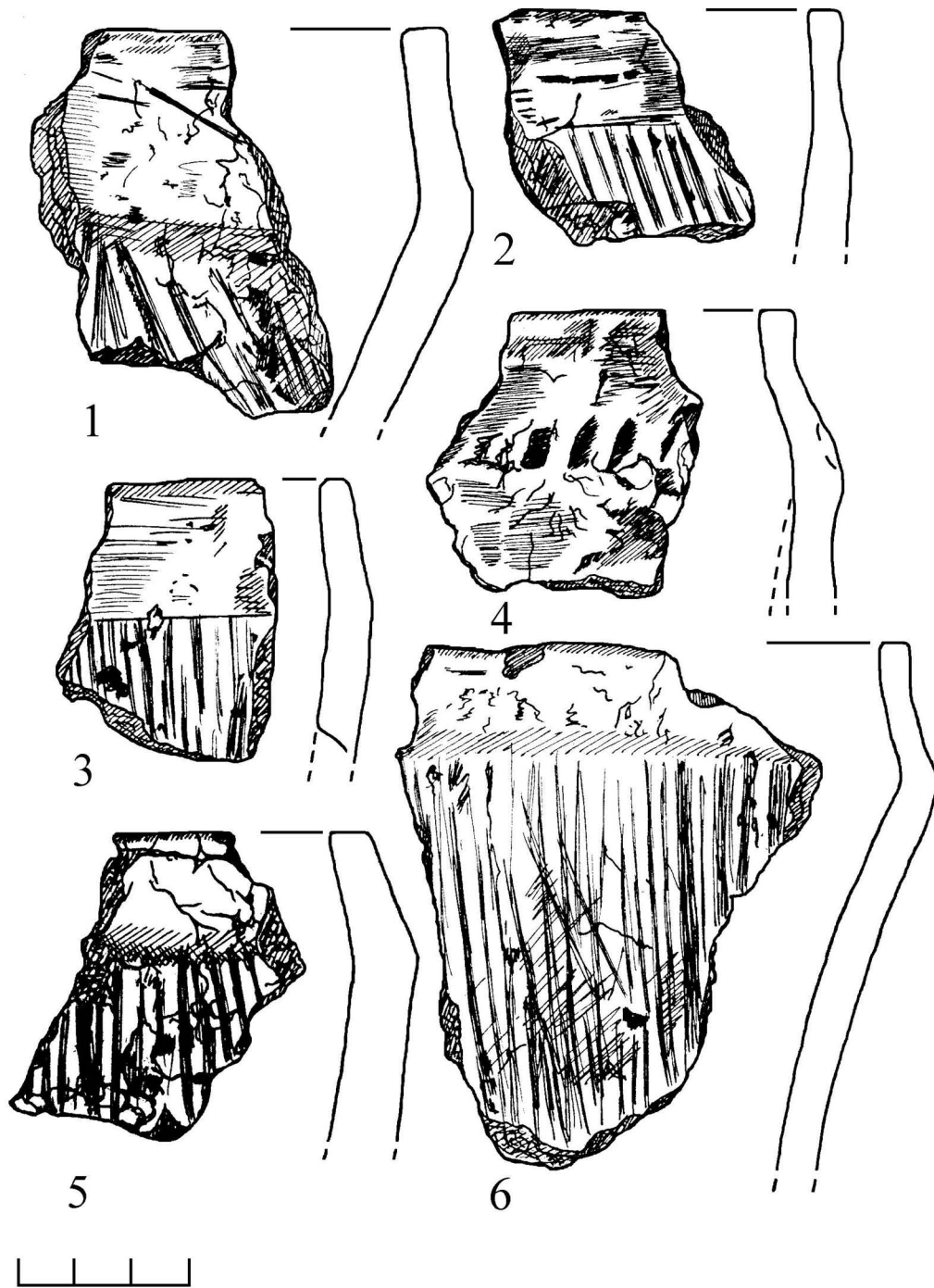


Figure 7: Hill fort Ratjunki. Vessels of Early Hatched Ware Culture.



*Figure 8* : Hill fort Ratjunki. Vessels of Late Hatched Ware Culture.

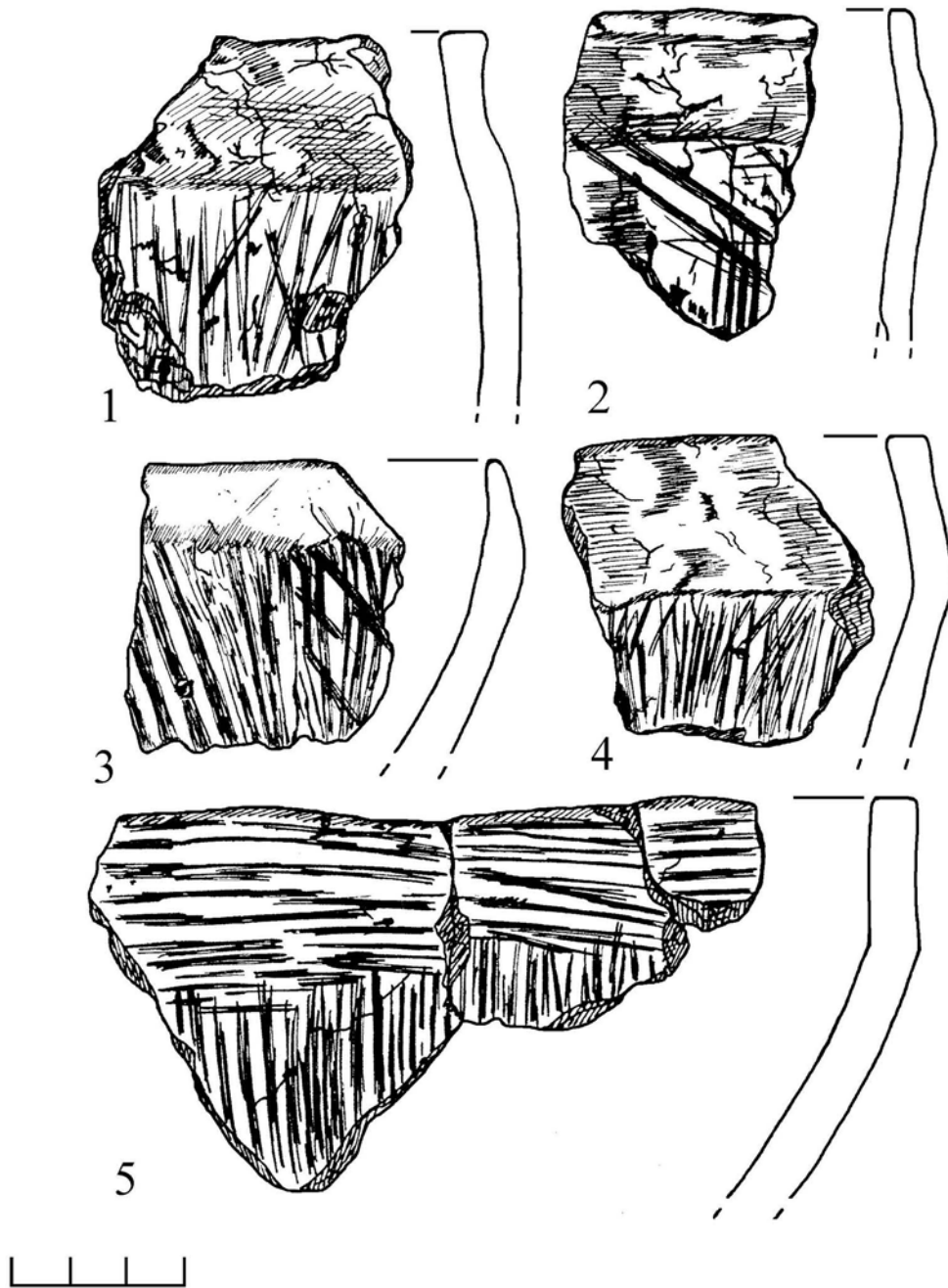


Figure 9 : Hill fort Ratjunki. Vessels of Late Hatched Ware Culture.

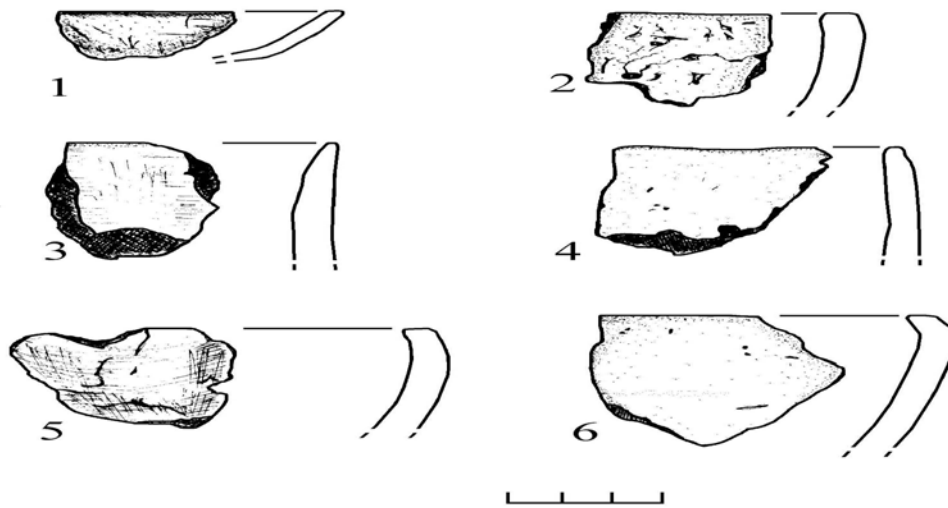


Figure 10 : Settlement Podvarinka. Pottery of Dnieper-Dvina Culture.





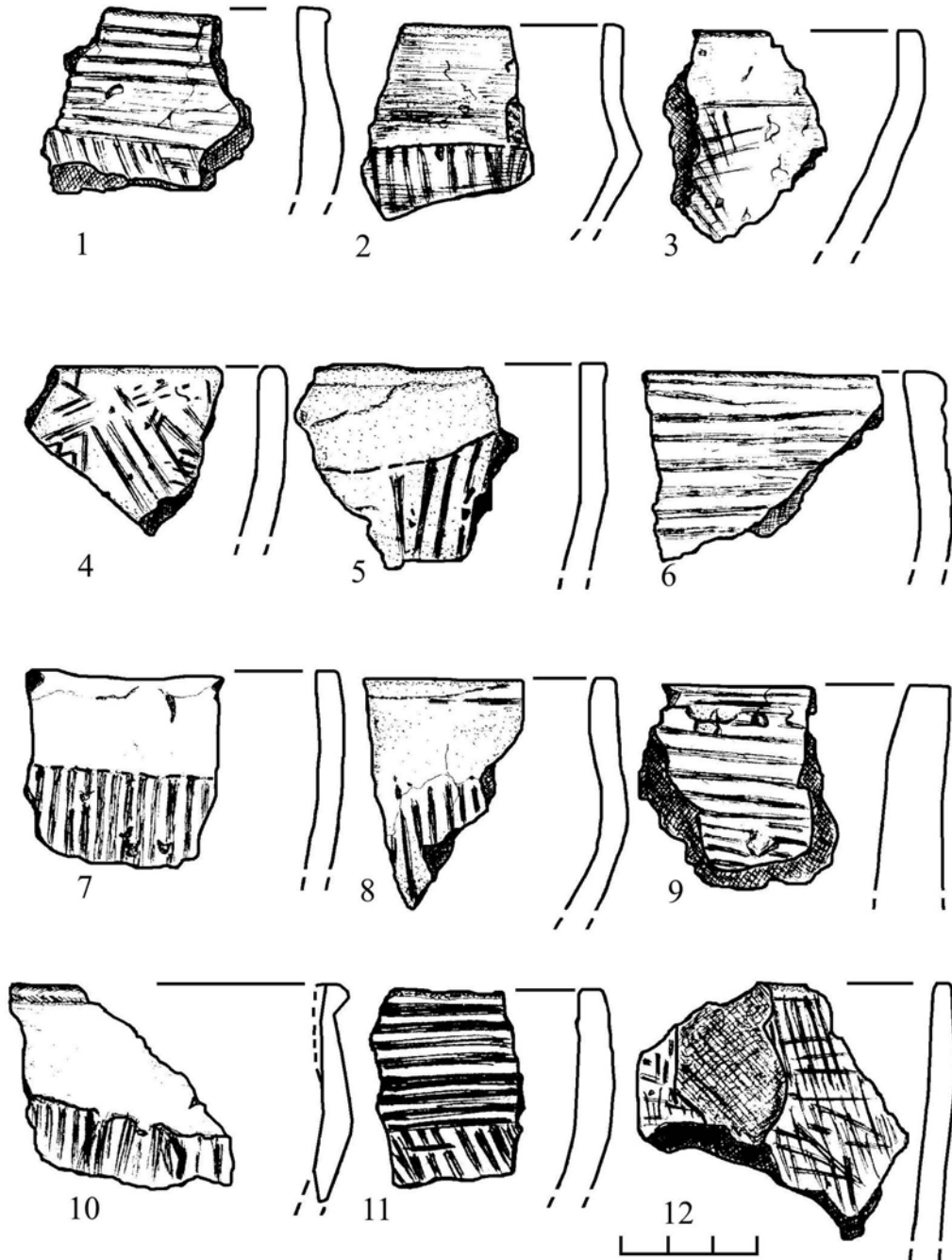


Figure 11 : Settlement Podvarinka. Vessels of Hatched Ware Cultures.

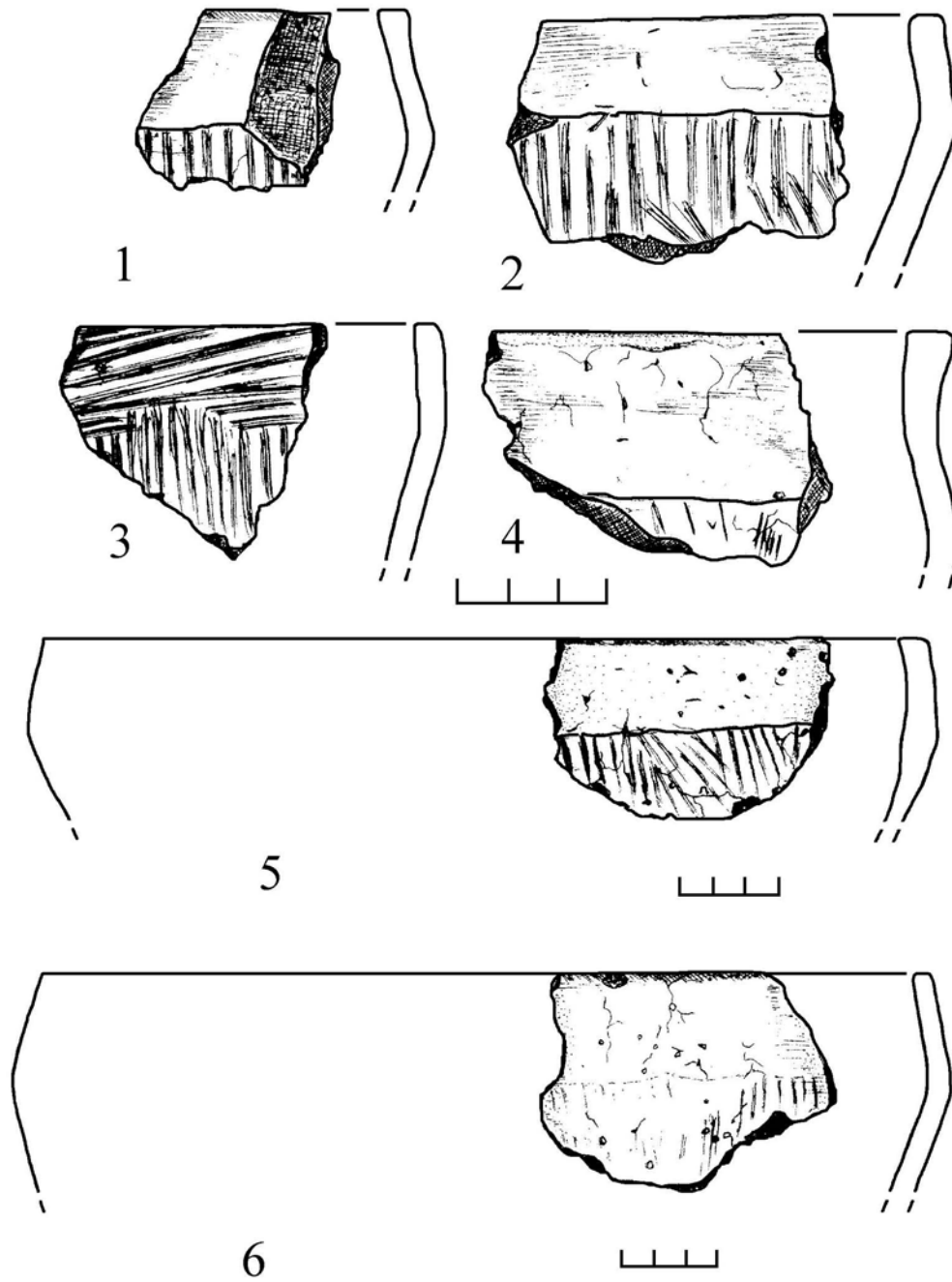


Figure 12: Settlement Podvarinka. Vessels of Late Hatched Ware Culture.



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