

The Development of Slavonic Pottery in the Staré Město Region from the End of the 8th up to the Middle of the 10th Centuries

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A lot of studies have been written on the development of Slavonic pottery in the region of the Central Morava River Basin with the centre of the Staré Město agglomeration.

A comparison of analyses of finds of pottery from four sites in the Uherské Hradiště region, at the distance of 2 to 6 kms from each other, presents the basis of my study. The first site is Staré Město. V. Hrubý (1955, 125-151; 1965a, 264-308; 1965b, 37-62) worked there and wrote about it. The pottery was evaluated by him as a complex, and the chronology was based on a vertical stratigraphy, which was discovered in the Na valách position, in the ditch from the second half of the 8th to the end of the 9th centuries (Hrubý 1965a, 270, 274, 276, 280). A rightfulness of this dating was confirmed through new excavations in the years 1988 to 1989 and 1992. Further, I used settlement pottery from the Great Moravian Period from the U Víta and Na dědině positions (Galuška 1989a, 121-135; 1990a, 121-136) nad pottery from features into the infills of which grave pits at the end of the 9th to the beginning of the 10th centuries were hollowed in the Na valách position. I have taken into consideration also vessels from some grave units of a big burial ground at the Na valách church (Hrubý 1955, 125-151).

The Uherské Hradiště - town presents another site. Such features in the infills of which bronze spurs with hooks were found in addition to the pottery were important (Snášil 1984, 157). Finds of Great Moravian pottery were also very important for the comparison (Snášil, Procházka 1981, 34-35). The Uherské Hradiště - town - a settlement on the former Morava River's island created an organic part of the Staré Město settlement agglomeration.

Uherské Hradiště - Sady presents the third site where an analysis of the pottery production was provided. A settlement in the Dolní Kotvice position and an inhumation burial ground in the Horní Kotvice position which belongs to the mentioned settlement were excavated (Marešová 1985, 57-67; 1983, 56-76). It is situated some 5 kms ESE from Staré Město. The settlement was dated by K. Marešová to the 8th - 9th centuries, and the burial ground to the second half of the 8th up to the second half of the 9th centuries.

Ostrožská Nová Ves is the last site which I used the pottery material from. It is a settlement from the 6th to 12th centuries. The pottery presents a characteristic find component part (Marešová 1967, 75-84; Galuška 1990b, 564-586). The settlement is situated in the lowlands of the Morava River, 6 kms south of Staré Město, on the old Amber track.

While Staré Město and a settlement on St. George's Island, which was situated in the place of the today's heart of Uherské Hradiště, created one of the Great Moravian centres in the 9th century (Galuška, *in print*), Uherské Hradiště - Sady Kotvice and Ostrožská Nová Ves were settlements of country characters. However, members of higher social levels, horsemen lived there, too. It is documented mainly by finds of iron spurs and some women jewelry. The development from the end of the 8th up to the middle of the 10th centuries is proved there in each of the four sites.

V. Hrubý evaluated the pottery from Staré Město as a complex unit. He put the VII - the lowest horizon of the ditch No. II in the Na valách position to the pre-Great Moravian Period. This conclusion was confirmed by our excavations provided in the years 1988 - 1989. The pottery material from layer No. VII can be divided into two groups. The first group is presented by potsherds of a

material which was mixed with rough sand just a little. They were fired badly to brown-black shades, therefore they pulverize. They were produced by sticking of clay rollers. Rims are rounded in majority, sometimes they are bevelled. The convexity is decorated by not very deep wavy lines and grooves, which were multiple as well as simple. Vessels from the first group were produced in a hand (*Hrubý 1965a*, Table 87:1-3). The material of the second pottery group from the VII layer is presented mainly by thin-wall potsherds of a mature appearance. They were made of fine-grain sand material. They are well-fired, to grey shades in majority. Rims are bevelled, sometimes profiled. The decoration is both fine grooved, mainly by multiple waves and grooves, and rough grooved, often grooved with a one-pointed engraving tool (*Hrubý 1965a*, Table. 87:4; 8:1-3). In comparison with the first group the second one presents a more advanced pottery production which was created on a potter's wheel. It is obvious that to the oldest layer of the ditch II the domestic made pottery produced on the basis of older traditions, as well as more advanced pottery made on hand driven potter's wheels that meant the beginning of its mass using were found. The dating of the layer VII to the pre-Great Moravian Period is also supported by a find of an iron three-armed mount decorated by incrustation. The mount was found on the border between the VI and VII layers and is dated to the first half of the 9th century.

Settlement features in the Na valách position which were excavated in the years 1989 to 1991 belong to the first half of the 9th century and probably even to the second half of the 8th century. The pottery which was found in the features is the same as that one from the layer VII of the near ditch. The infills of the features were superimposed by Great Moravian graves from the last third of the 9th century. A similar situation in the pottery can also be found in the burial ground at Staré Město Na valách position. *V. Hrubý (1955, 140)* separated a group of 23 graves in which a vessel presented the only grave furniture and he dated them to the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. For example grave 70/49, superimposed by three younger graves, in which a pot of a very archaic appearance was discovered belongs to the group (*Galuska 1987*, Table 3:1). Also more advanced vessels of a barrel shape decorated only by simple grooves which were found for example in the graves 131/51 or 282/51 belong to the group, too. Those vessels are typical of the so-called Moravian Type, dated mainly to the second half of the 9th century. An advanced vessel which was discovered in the grave 277/49 together with a sword of the H type (*Hrubý 1955, 454 to 455*) belongs to the mentioned type, too. The grave 277/49 is from the first half of the 9th century. I think in agreement with *V. Hrubý* that in the period of the second half of the 8th to the first half of the 9th centuries pottery of two types was produced at Staré Město: on the basis of a domestic production and on the basis of a specialized small-scale production. Except of the appearance the two types were differentiated especially by the application of the decoration. Specialized producers decorated their vessels simply and only on the convexity of the vessels with one-pointed as well as with multi-pointed groovers. Their vessels were mainly egg-shaped but some were also barrel-shaped.

Archeological excavations in the place of the today's Uherské Hradiště city were successful especially in the 1980s. In that period a Great Moravian as well as a pre-Great Moravian settlement horizons were discovered (*Snášil 1984, 152-161*). The pottery material has not been written about in detail so far. However, it is obvious that in the features where spurs with hooks were found (Fig. 1:1-4), two types of pottery were discovered (*Snášil 1984, 157*). The first group is presented by undecorated as well as decorated pottery made by sticking. The second group is presented by an advanced pottery of the Danubian type made on a potter's wheel. Rims are sometimes horizontally bevelled, sometimes faceted (Fig. 1:1,2). The decoration is finely grooved in majority and is presented by low multiple waves and grooves, or low waves situated above each other and made with a one-pointed groover. In the island settlement, too, two technologically differently produced pottery groups can be distinguished: a domestic one and a specialized small-scale production.

Products of local specialists had a slightly different character than that we found in the Staré Město region from the same period. This was probably connected with two independently producing workshops, which were producing vessels in the second half of the 8th up to the first half of the 9th centuries in the places of the later Great Moravian agglomeration.

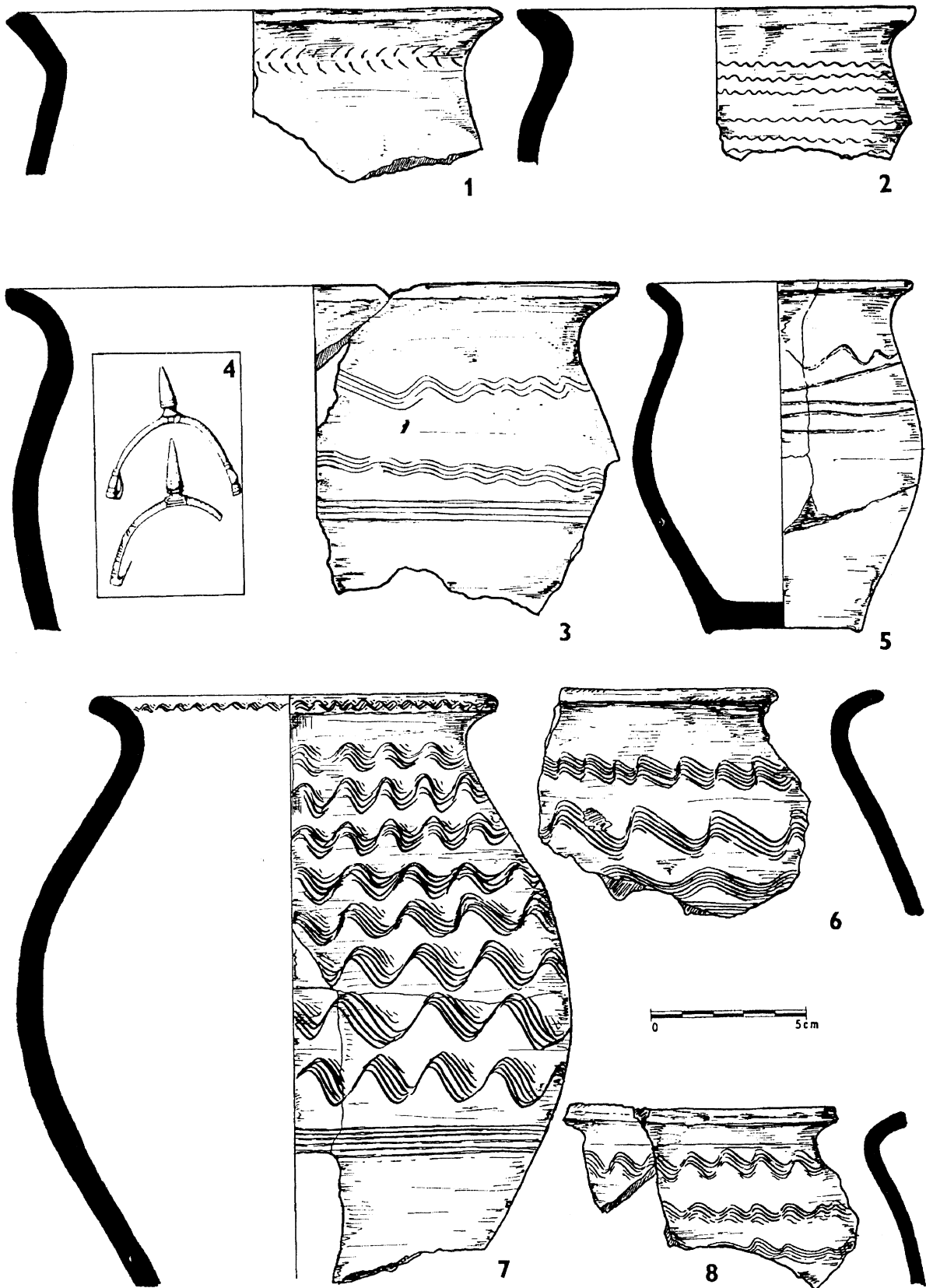


Fig. 1. 1-4 Uherské Hradiště - city feature M; 5 Ostrožská Nová Ves feature No. 4; 6-8 Ostrožská Nová Ves feature No. 2.

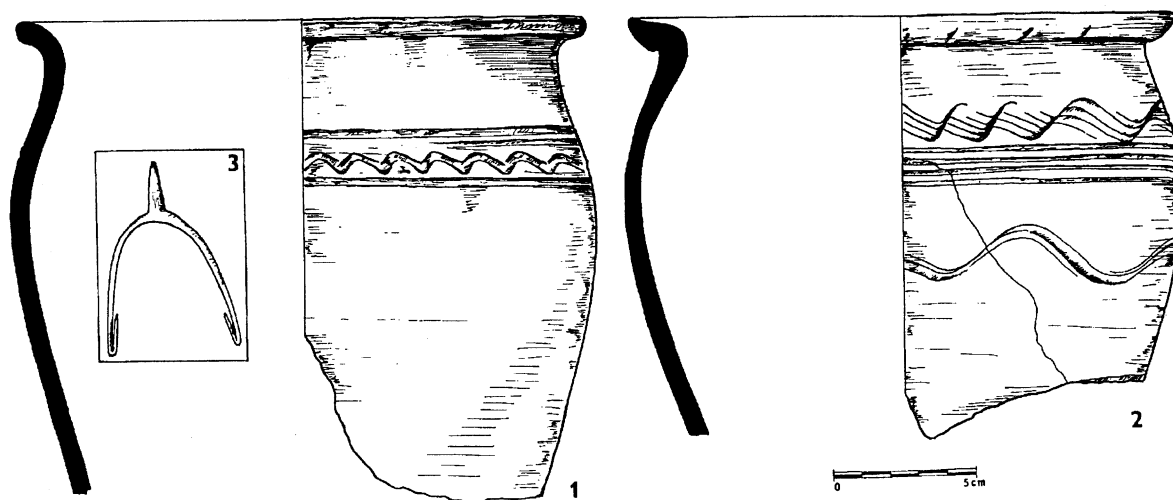


Fig. 2. 1-3 Uherské Hradiště - Sady feature No. 44.

In Uherské Hradiště - Sady, in a country settlement at Dolní Kotvice, a different situation appeared. According to *K. Marešová* (1985, 65-66, Table 49) badly fired rough-grain pottery belongs to the 8th century. Rims are only a little bit everted and rounded in majority, the decoration is presented by multiple waves and grooves, rarely by stroke ornaments. A thinner pottery of better quality is dated to the first half of the 9th century. Rims are longer and rounded, convexities are richly decorated by comb patern waves and grooves. According to *K. Marešová* this is a transition type between the Middle Ringwall Period pottery and the Moravian one.

From the typological point of view this is a right analysis, but, nevertheless, in my opinion, an important role belongs to feature No. 44 (Fig. 2), where besides a great amount of pottery an iron spur with hooks was found (*Marešová* 1985, Table 81:2). The author dated the spur into the second half of the 8th century. However, in feature No. 44 no pottery from the 8th century was found, on the contrary, advanced forms of pottery from a later Great Moravian horizon were discovered there (Fig. 2:1,2). *K. Marešová* (1985, 62) explained this fact by statement that the pieces of the pottery of the features were heretogeneous and they contained pottery from the whole duration of the settlement, it means the second half of the 8th up to the second half of the 9th centuries. I suppose that this predication is not well-founded. In my opinion the spur belongs to the first half of the 9th century, as wel as the pottery from the infills of the feature No. 44. Prints of axles of pottery's wheels on bottoms of vessels support that specialized potters began working probably not before the beginning of the 9th century.

A lot of pottery vessels were found on the burial ground of Sady, too (*Marešová* 1983, 56-76). According to *K. Marešová* they belong mainly to the first half of the 9th century. Forms of pots varied considerably from each other, but it can be said that they were egg shaped in majority. The pots were made by sticking and they were encircled in their top third. Rims were mostly rounded, less bevelled. There were very simple ornaments on the pots, at least half of the vessels were decorated with one-pointed groovers. Mostly wider circumference grooves placed over each other or in plaits can be found on the vessels. Comb paterns were used only with a few vessels and no fine-groove multiple waves can be found. I accept the dating of the pottery from the graves to the first half of the 9th century. However, there are a lot of differences in comparison with finds from the settlement. The grave pottery is decorated just a little and only on its convexity. It is more similar to the group of the so-called Moravian type.

Settlement pottery from Ostrožská Nová Ves which is dated mainly to the first half of the 9th century is presented by the material from feature No. 2 (Fig. 1:5-8). They are thin-walled potsherds made of ceramic material with fine-grain sand temper. They are not fired in the same quality, of shades of brown to light grey colour. Vessels had an egg-form with an S-shaped curved neck and rounded or bevelled rims, in majority. The ornaments were aplied on a great majority of vessels, from

the place under their necks to their convexities, sometimes also under them. The ornaments are presented by a few hands of comb pattern waves, which continue and are changed into grooves on the convexities. This is the most common by used decoration motif which can, sometimes, be also found on the inner side of a neck (Fig. 1:7). Ornaments grooved with a one-pointed tool are not very common (Fig. 1:5). Technical marks on bottoms of vessels as well as thin grooves of the circumferences on the top parts of the vessels support the presumption that the vessels were completed on potter's wheels.

An iron spur with hooks was found with a typologically conforming pottery in the past (Marešová 1967, Table I:3). It seems that rougher pots with irregular decorations made in hands which were discovered in broken features at Ostrožská Nová Ves are older, from the 8th century. Therefore, it is obvious that producers of pottery from the settlement at today's Ostrožská Nová Ves liked making ornaments with a comb groover and they decorated the whole top halves of vessels.

The pottery from Ostrožská Nová Ves from the first half of the 9th century is, as a unit, different from the production from Sady as well as Staré Město and Uherské Hradiště.

I suppose that this reality can be explained by operating of older production traditions, unequal technological levels of potters, as well as by certain influences of local producers by specialized small-scale producers. It seems that a specialized small-scale production at Staré Město Na Valách position and the Uherské Hradiště - city began as early as in the course of the second half of the 8th century. The beginning of it was connected with the using of potter's wheels with stone or wooden bases. Nevertheless, producers kept their own views of pottery, of its form and decoration till the first half of the 9th century. At the Ostrožská Nová Ves and Uherské Hradiště - Sady settlements, potter's wheels began to be used a bit later than in the Staré Město settlement - it means in the course of the first half the 9th century. Therefore both very advanced encircled vessels that fully signalled the growing and the superiority of the specialized production and rough-made mis-shapen vessels that obtained older elements of home-made Old Ringwall Period's production can be found in that period.

A change became after potter's wheels had been fully domesticated. Wiping off former local difference was the result of the change. This change did not take place at all the sites at the same time. First of all it took place in the Staré Město region, probably as early as in the course of the first half of the 9th century. Specialized workshops of producers of pottery came into existence. The workshops were sometimes joined together. This is supported by a potters' production area at the U Víta position in Staré Město. There were two so-called "long features" (Dostál 1986) No. 59 and 63, the length of which was more than 6 ms, with a few furnaces, semi-products by half-fired ceramic materials sometimes in the shapes of rollers, and more than 11 000 pieces of ceramic potsherds of similar quality, found in the area. Another workshop that is supported by a big furnace with a grate was working in the near Za zahradou position. Pottery of antique shapes was produced besides Sady (Hrubý 1965b) also in Staré Město at the Za radnicí position in a big production feature where a number of producers were working. It is obvious that products of these workshops were used in the whole Central Morava River Basin region and they, at the same time, influenced the other producers who lived further from the area. The workshops also influenced the home-made production of pottery, even if sometimes potsherds of an archaic type were found in features from the Late Great Moravian Period (Galuška 1989a, Table. 7:6). However, those potsherds were in the minority in the settlement features of the mentioned sites - it means Staré Město, Uherské Hradiště, Sady, and Ostrožská Nová Ves from the second half of the 9th to the beginning of the 10th centuries. An interesting fact is that the rough pottery can sometimes be found in graves of the Late Great Moravian Period from the beginning of the 10th century. This is supported, for example, by a grave 76/51 from the church burial ground in Uherské Hradiště - Sady (Fig. 3:1). Presumably, the dead person had a certain relation to the vessel, and therefore it became a part of his grave furniture. It cannot be excluded, however, that it could be a special funeral vessel made for the special purpose. In near settlement features no similar vessel was found (Galuška 1993).

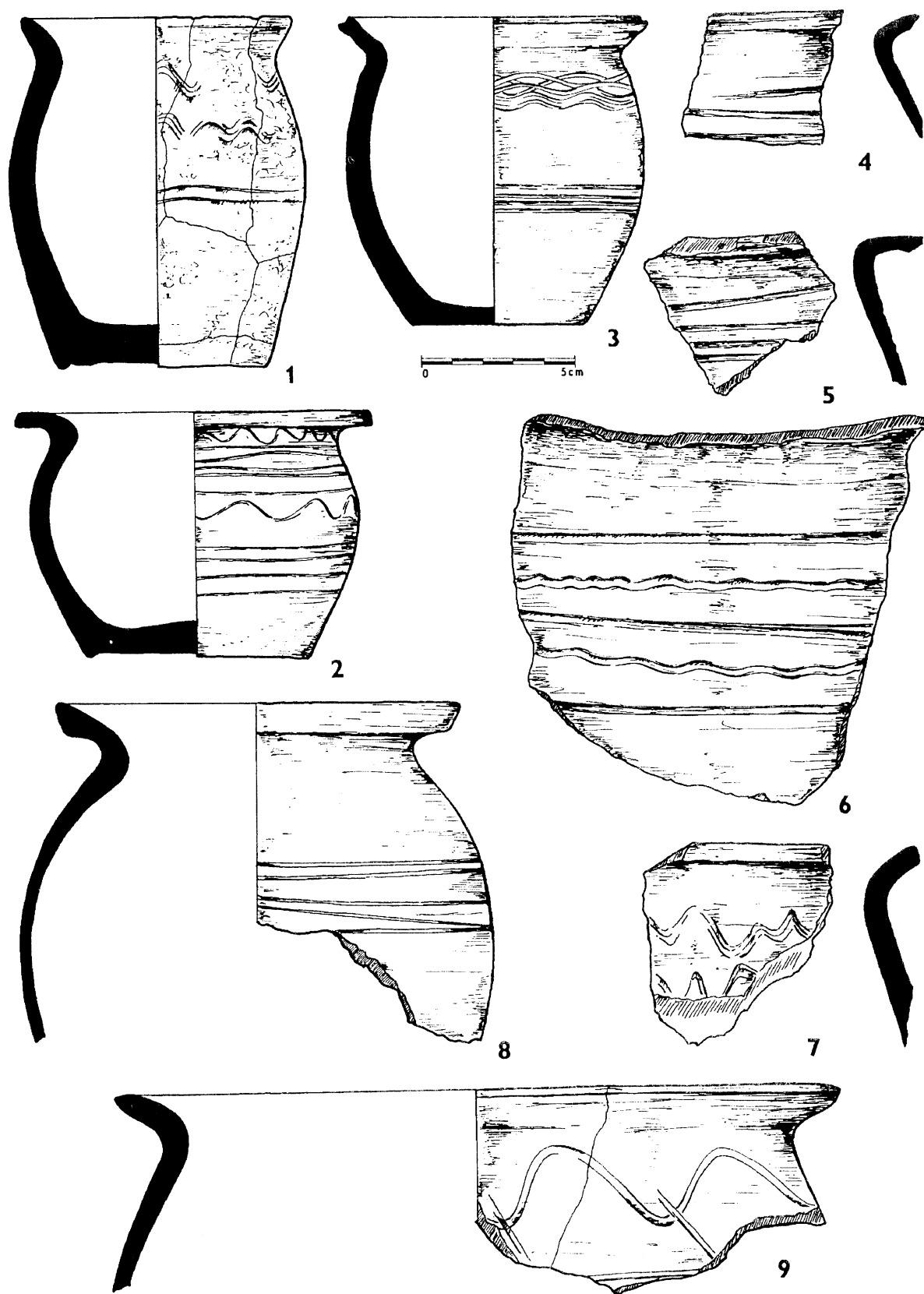


Fig. 3. 1 Uherské Hradiště - Sady grave 76/61; 2 Uherské Hradiště - Sady grave 77/61; 3 Staré Město grave 194/51; 4-7 Ostrožská Nová Ves feature No. 1; 8-9 Staré Město U Víta position, jewelry workshop No. 49.

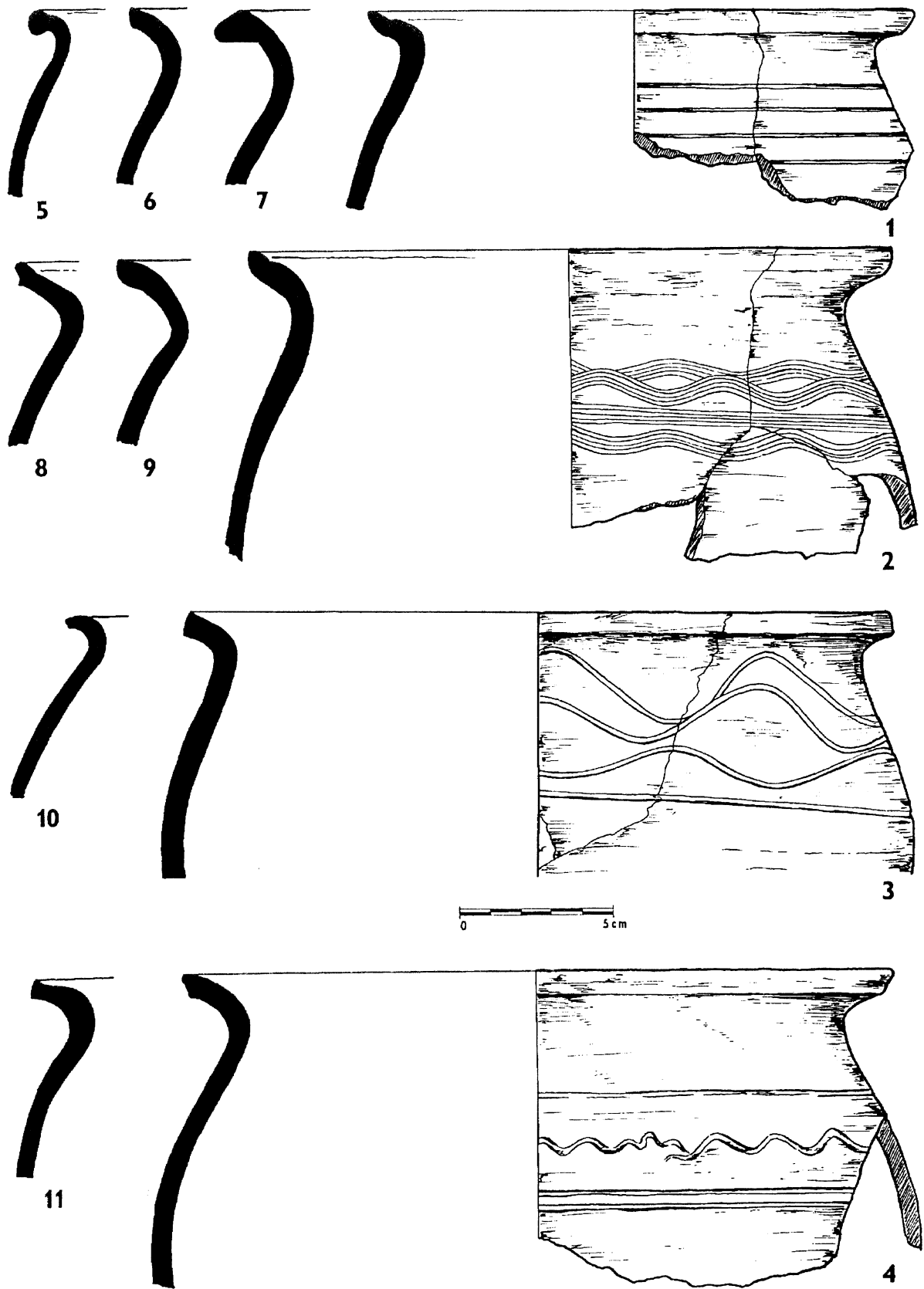


Fig. 4. 1-11 Staré Město U Víta position, pottery workshops No. 55 and 59.

I imposed a limitation on the analysis of pottery from Staré Město because of the fact that for all of the four sites a similar pottery production was given for the second half of the 9th century (*Marešová 1985*, 66; *Snášil, Procházka 1981*, 34-35; *Marešová 1967*, 75-86; *Galůška 1990c*, 116-118; *Hrubý 1965a*, 298-303). I started from older conclusions of V. Hrubý, and I have completed them with my own knowledge, gained especially by studying the settlement material. They have been partly published (*Galůška 1989a*, 130-133, Table. 6-7; *1989b*, Table. 17-18).

I. The greatest part of the settlement pottery of Staré Město was made of clay with dug sorted sand added, which contained iron cement. Bigger vessels, with rim diameters of 15 to 25 cms, were made of the mentioned material by sticking of rollers. The vessels were mostly egg-shaped, or barrel-shaped. They were encircled on potter's wheels. Necks were more or less curved, rims were shaped with knives and were bevelled. Funnel-shaped and cone-shaped bevels as well as oval-shaped rims presented most common forms (Fig. 4). A rim groove, typical of Pohansko near Břeclav (*Dostál 1975*, 150) and Mikulčice (*Klanica 1970*, 104) was found only on a vessel from the grave 194/51 (Fig. 3:3) dated to the supreme Great Moravian horizon. The decoration is characterized by simplicity. It was made mostly with a one-pointed groover, sometimes also with a comb-pattern groover with 3 to 6 points. Motifs were based, in a great majority of cases, on a combination of a simple wave and a groove and were placed on convexities of vessels (Fig. 4:3). A decoration type that presented 2 to 5 simple bands of the circumference, mostly deeply grooved, was quite common. An elongated deep simple wave which began under a rim and created 1 to 3 bands that changed to 1 to 3 lines of the circumference was a new quite common motif (Fig. 4:3). This motif is also well-known from Pohansko near Břeclav and it is dated there to the other phase of the Great Moravian Period (*Dostál 1975*, 155; *1986*, 125). Comb pattern decoration was created mainly of a combination of a wave and a groove (Fig. 4:2). Other motifs, such as prints were not used very often.

Firing of the vessels was mostly of very good quality. They were fired to grey, sometimes even brown-red shadows. The striping of surfaces occurred, too, but it was not very common. It is a document on the firing in ceramic furnaces. The surfaces of vessels were a little bit rough, of gritty structures. Vessels of the so-called Moravian type which were written about by *J. Pouлік (1948*, 81-82) and are known especially from grave units, belong to this group, as well. A barrel-shape can be found more or less exceptionally in settlements. With its special appearance the Moravian type presents just a little part of the Great Moravian pottery, similar to the Prague type according to *I. Borkovský (1940)* which presents only a little part of the Early Slavonic pottery production. Therefore, in my opinion, a question has arisen - if the term: Moravian type should not be used for the whole first group of the pottery from Staré Město.

II. The second group of the pottery from Staré Město was made of very fine material. This group was less numerous. The typical grained sand temper does not occur here. The decoration is limited especially to 2 to 5 simple bands of circumferences, both deeply and thinly grooved (Fig. 4:1). Their production as well as their appearance do not exclude the use of potter's wheels of a better quality with a longer time of wheel-turning. The vessels were products of a specialized Slavonic pottery. At Ostrožská Nová Ves such a type of pottery has not been discovered yet.

III. The third group was made of a clay of dark as well as light grey shadows. Two variants were discovered in this group. The first variant contained a great deal of sand which could be coarse-grained, the second one was without a sand temper. *V. Hrubý (1965a*, 302) wrote about this group the "pottery of the white colour made of kaolin". Sources of this raw material do not occur near Staré Město. Except for the ceramic material, the third group can be characterized in the same way as our first group of pottery from Staré Město. This pottery, too, was a product of an advanced Great Moravian ceramic production (Fig. 3:8-9; 4:3).

Besides vessels that are typical of the Staré Město region also some extraordinary and unique pieces of pottery were found. They are especially big storage vessels, even 60 cms high, with rim diameters of 45 cms, and contents of 37 to 43 ls. They had ceramic claps which connected bodies of vessels together and at the same time served for a better holding of the vessels (*Galůška 1989a*). Parts of the vessels were discovered in the ceramic workshop at the U Víta position. Besides the mentioned vessel with a groover rim, a find of a vessel of the Blučina type from grave 68/AZ from Staré Město

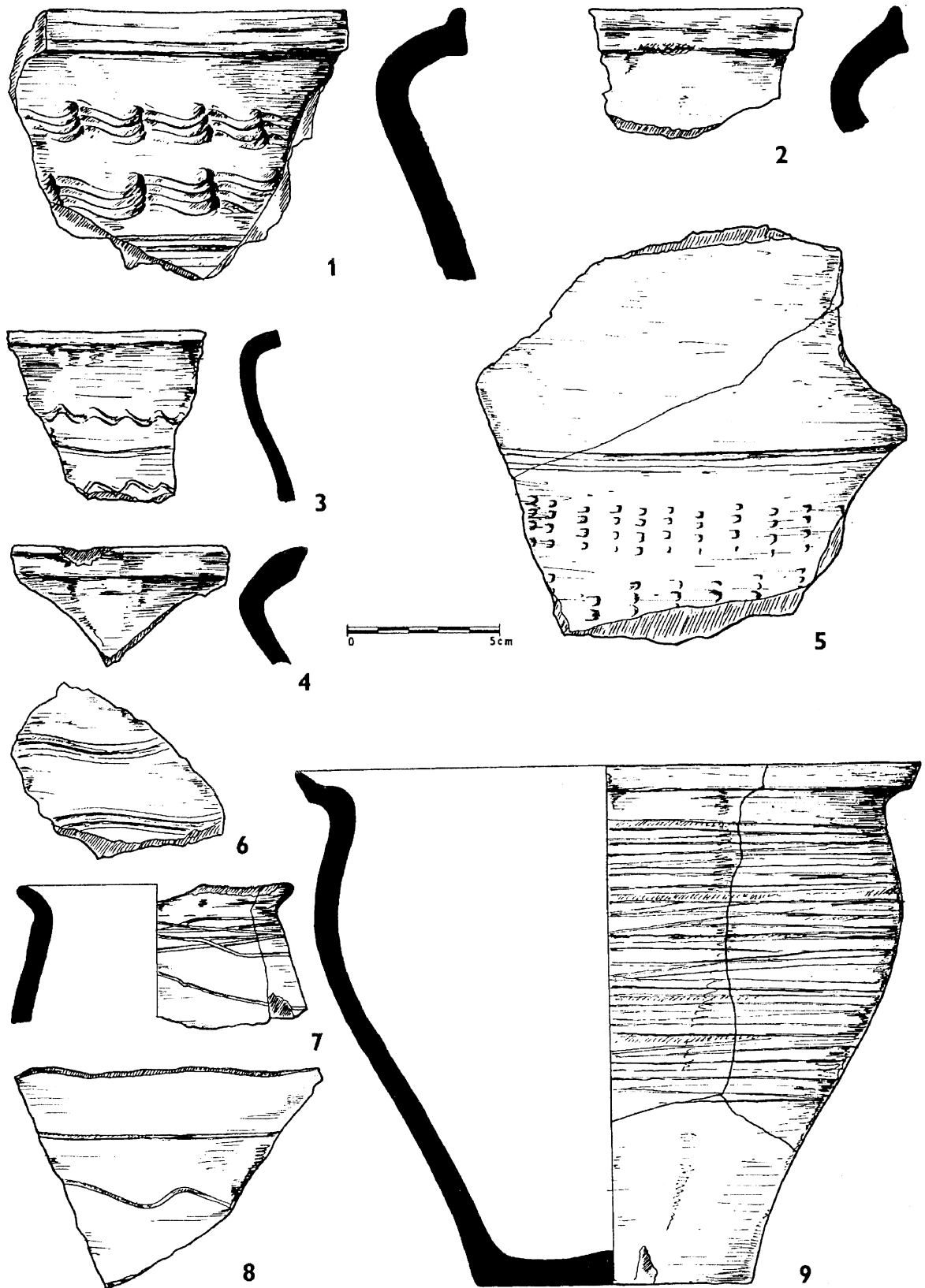


Fig. 5. 1-9 Ostrožská Nová Ves feature No. 5.

(*Hrubý 1955*, Table 26:9), as well as from grave 77/61 from Sady (Fig. 3:2) are unique, too. Special forms that presented signs of the coming Late Ringwall Period's pottery were found at Uherské Hradiště (*Snášil, Procházka 1981*, 34-35).

Pottery from the Late Ringwall Period together with the Great Moravian one were found in the closed assemblage in a settlement at Ostrožská Nová Ves (Fig. 5:1-9). It was the feature No. 5, which can be dated to the period around the middle of the 10th century. This was probably the period when the Great Moravian ceramic production in the Uherské Hradiště region, was coming to an end.

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