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## **TROPAEUM TRAIANI IN THE LATE ROMAN TRADE NETWORK AND ROAD SYSTEM. THE EVIDENCE OF THE LONG-DISTANCE IMPORTS OF FINE POTTERY**

**Abstract:** Fragmentarily preserved vessels of Late Roman red slip wares imported from distant production centres: Pontic, Aegean and North African, selected from the pottery materials collected during the excavations carried out recently near Basilica A in Tropaeum Traiani, were analyzed and discussed in order to obtain important chronological indicators for the studies on the identified contexts, and to show the significance of the location of the investigated settlement at the crossroads of the two principal communication lines in Scythia Minor for the inland distribution of commodities imported from overseas. The highest class red slip pottery finds were divided according to the identified wares originating from different production centres, and to their specific forms. They are presented in typo-chronological sequences within the wares, while the wares are discussed according to their presence in Tropaeum Traiani: from the most numerous to the least frequently encountered finds. Altogether 132 fragments of imported Late Roman red slip ware vessels were identified. The most numerous were the imports from the Aegean workshops: Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip ware (98 fragments) and Late Roman Light Coloured ware (21 fragments). It is important to note that the products from the most distant workshops in Northern Africa — African Red Slip ware (10 fragments) were found more frequently than those from the north-eastern Anatolia, called Pontic Red Slip ware (5 fragments). It clearly indicates that the most significant part of the analyzed pottery was transported together with the strategically important supplies along the western coast of the Black Sea to Scythia Minor from the central part of the empire. The diachronic overview of the discussed finds shows that the first Late Roman red slip vessels began to be brought from the Aegean to Tropaeum Traiani around the late fourth or early fifth century. The significant increase of these imports took place in the second half of the fifth century and the regular overseas supplies lasted until the early seventh century, with their intensification in the first half of the sixth century. The obtained results reflect the settlement activity in and around the excavated part of Tropaeum Traiani and match the general picture of the distribution of the imported red slip vessels along the principal routes of Scythia Minor to its numerous economic and military centres, in the discussed period.

**Keywords:** Tropaeum Traiani, Scythia Minor, Late Antiquity, red slip pottery, road system, long-distance trade

### **Introduction**

The paper presents results of the analysis of fine pottery finds from the regular archaeological excavations conducted near Basilica A in the northern part of Tropaeum Traiani, in

2005–2016.<sup>1</sup> The vessels discussed below are the first part of the studied finds of fine pottery. The analysis is focused on the imports from the overseas distant production centres located near the Black Sea, Aegean and western Mediterranean basins, in order to obtain important chronological indicators for the studies on the identified contexts,<sup>2</sup> as well as to expose the importance of the favorable location of the investigated settlement in the network of the inland distribution of imported goods along the principal roads of the province. The analyzed ceramics are characterized by the highest quality among the fine ware vessels, and they were the subject of the regular long-distance maritime trade in the Late Roman period. As the finds of the identified wares are known from other archaeological sites in the Pontic and Mediterranean regions, and the dating of their specific forms was already established, they were used during the reported joint works as the chronological indicators for analyzing the identified contexts and other finds, as the regionally produced fine pottery, which is still the subject of the ongoing studies and will be presented in a separate publication.

Tropaeum Traiani in Moesia Inferior / Scythia Minor is located in the south-eastern part of today Romania, in the central part of the historical region of Dobrudja, between the Lower Danube and the Black Sea coast [Fig. 1]. The ruins of the Late Roman fortified town can be found near the present village Adamclisi, almost 2 km to the west of the Triumphal Monument built during the reign and at the orders of Trajan (98–117), which gave the name to the ancient town.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 1. Dobrudja, part of the Roman provinces Moesia Inferior and later Scythia Minor, with the main Roman roads (compiled by I. Barnea, A. Panaite)

<sup>1</sup> The reported research was conducted by the authors within the framework of a joint project: *Tropaeum Traiani in Roman trade network and road system — archaeological evidence* (2016–2018) under the agreement on scientific cooperation between the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Romanian Academy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. other important chronological indicators from the excavations in Tropaeum Traiani, coins and imported trade amphorae, published recently: PANAITÉ, VILCU 2019 and GRIGORAŞ, PANAITÉ 2021.

<sup>3</sup> VULPE, BARNEA 1968; SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1991, pp. 32–33; SÂMPETRU 1984. All the dates in the paper are AD.

The settlement took advantage from an outstanding strategic position at the crossroads of the two central roads crossing the province of Scythia Minor: from Noviodunum in the north to Zaldapa and Marcianopolis in the south, as well as from Tomis and Callatis in the east, on the Black Sea coast, to Durostorum on the Danube in the west.<sup>4</sup>

The investigated town was founded as a *municipium* in the place of a previous Getic settlement whose name remains unknown.<sup>5</sup> Like in the case of other fortifications in Dobrudja, its substantial ruins, still visible today, are dated back to the last two or three centuries from the history of the city, namely, to the Late Roman period (fourth – early seventh century). It concerns especially the city walls with four access gates connected with two main streets with porticos (*cardo* and *decumanus*), perpendicular one to another. Other secondary streets and five basilicas were also investigated during the archaeological excavations.<sup>6</sup> One of them is the so-called *basilica forensis* — a monumental civil basilica, while the other four are Christian churches, including an episcopal one with a monumental baptistery. Each Christian basilica has an *atrium* and a martyr crypt or relics under the altar table. Remains of numerous houses, shops, warehouses, etc., were also identified in Tropaeum Traiani. Some of them were excavated and others are known owing to the geo-magnetic investigations.<sup>7</sup>

So-called Basilica A [Fig. 2] was built at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century during the reign of Anastasius, and repaired during the reign of Justinian around the middle of the sixth century. Five annexes on its south side had been investigated previously.<sup>8</sup> The first excavations in Sector A [Fig. 2], dominated by Basilica A and limited by the *cardo* and



Fig. 2. Aerial view of Sector A (drone photo by R. Constantin, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> VULPE, BARNEA 1968; SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1991, pp. 252–256; PANAITTE 2015a, pp. 593–600.

<sup>5</sup> SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1991, p. 54; PANAITTE 2016a, pp. 163–172.

<sup>6</sup> BARNEA *et alii* 1979; SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1991, pp. 199–202.

<sup>7</sup> SCURTU, BARNEA 2004–2005, pp. 453–474; ȘTEFAN *et alii* 2010a, p. 23; ȘTEFAN *et alii* 2010b, pp. 23–24.

<sup>8</sup> BARNEA 1978, pp. 181–187.

*decumanus* streets, as well as the city wall, were carried out by Alexandru Barnea in 1968–1974. They led to uncovering of a part of the Late Roman city’s precinct, represented by five edifices, four of which were investigated completely and the fifth one only partially (A 1–5). They were located along a secondary street (AV1), starting from the *decumanus* and running to the north. The buildings were positioned between the eastern side of the city wall, next to the Eastern Gate, the main gate of the city, and Basilica A. They had various functions — habitation, commercial, and grain storage — and were excavated in order to investigate the latest occupation levels, including repairs and use of the buildings during the Late Roman period,<sup>9</sup> as confirmed by several coins discovered during the excavations.<sup>10</sup>

Fieldworks in the discussed precinct were resumed between 1995 and 1998 by Liana Oța.<sup>11</sup> Later on, two excavation areas were also opened: along the ABV IV street (since 2000), and to the north of Basilica A (since 2005). They verified the results of previous geomagnetic investigations,<sup>12</sup> and extended the research towards the northern side of the city wall. The purpose of the investigations carried out since 2005 in Sector A, north of Basilica A, is to uncover the buildings and the street network in this area of the city, as well as the annexes of Basilica A on its northern side. The general stratigraphy of the area and the urban changes between the fourth and the sixth / early seventh century are in the main scope of the research, leading to the exploration of the whole *insula*, limited by the *decumanus* and *cardo*, and the AV1 and ABV IV secondary streets [Fig. 2].

The recent excavations were carried out by digging parallel trenches of a standard size 5 × 3 m, with the one-meter baulks between them, oriented perpendicular to the northern side of the basilica, starting from the city wall towards the *cardo*. In 2005–2016, 38 trenches were excavated in order to explore the latest, Late Roman, levels. The general stratigraphy of the investigated area is the following: vegetal layer, gravel mixed with grey soil, grey soil, debris with fragments of tiles, bricks and stones, yellow clay with ash, and the occupation layer — clay floor. The archaeological research is still ongoing, and so far it has led to the partial or complete identification of several buildings (A 5 and A 15), as well as two annex rooms attached to the northern wall of the basilica: at its north-eastern and north-western corners [Fig. 3].<sup>13</sup> These buildings are placed in two areas, namely, to the north of the *atrium* and the *narthex*, and next to the north-eastern corner, near the apse. There are no other constructions in this area, indicating that it was probably the space of a courtyard. This empty area was noticed in 2009,<sup>14</sup> when a geo-magnetic survey provided the evidence of its great dimensions. It is situated about the middle of the northern wall of the basilica, between the two aforementioned buildings.

The results of the discussed archaeological research allowed to assume that some additional buildings and a courtyard where the Christians could assemble for various celebrations, were located to the north of Basilica A. The identified structures indicate also the existence of an enclosure on the northern side of the basilica, separating the yard and the annexes from other civil buildings, situated in this part of the Late Roman town [Fig. 3].<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> BARNEA 1979, pp. 79–88.

<sup>10</sup> BARNEA 1979, pp. 80–83.

<sup>11</sup> The research reports prepared by L. Oța for the years 1995, 1997 and 1998 are stored in the archives of the “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

<sup>12</sup> IONESCU, GĂMUREAC, DRĂGHICI 2013; GĂMUREAC, IONESCU, DRĂGHICI 2015–2016. See also: SCURTU, BARNEA 2004–2005.

<sup>13</sup> PANAITE 2006, p. 33; PANAITE 2007, p. 23; PANAITE 2009, pp. 66–67; PANAITE 2010, pp. 13–14; PANAITE 2011, p. 10; PANAITE 2012, pp. 15–16; PANAITE 2013, p. 15; PANAITE

2014, p. 13; PANAITE 2015b, p. 17; PANAITE 2016b, p. 17; PANAITE 2017, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> ȘTEFAN *et alii* 2010a, p. 23; ȘTEFAN *et alii* 2010b, pp. 23–24.

<sup>15</sup> PANAITE 2010, p. 14.

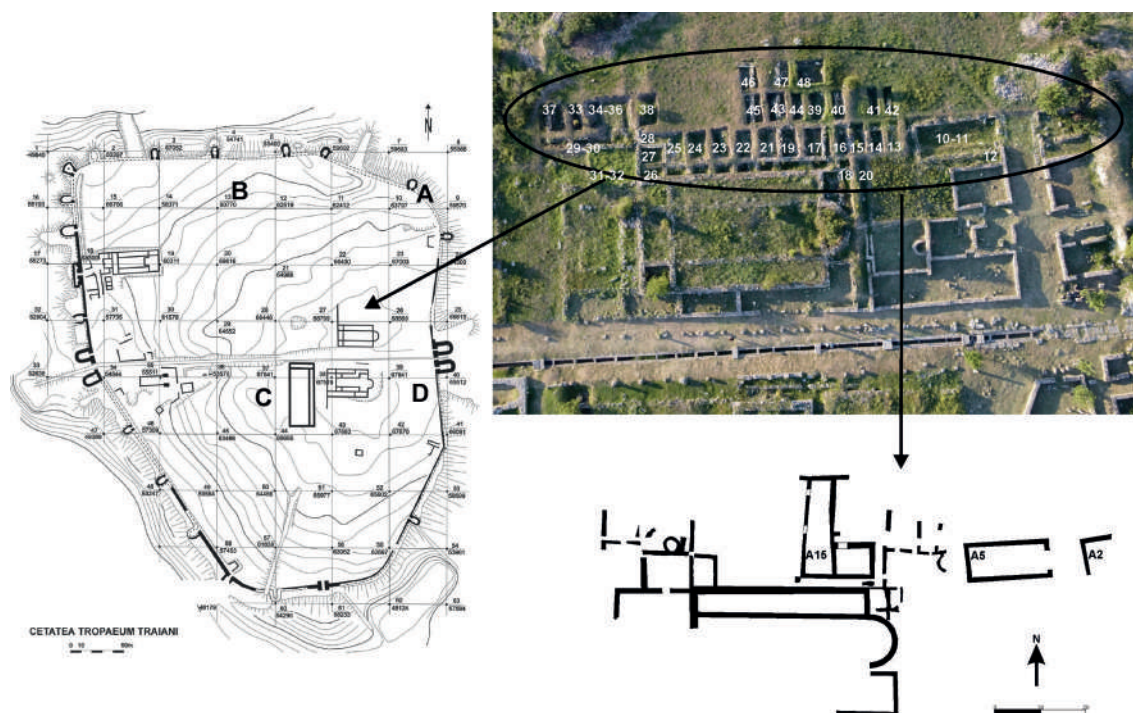


Fig. 3. General plan of the investigated area in Sector A (drone photo by R. Constantin, 2020, compiled by A. Panaite)

### Imported Late Roman red slip wares

Pottery materials collected during the above-mentioned excavations were studied by the authors in 2017 and 2018. During the eleven excavation campaigns carried out between 2005 and 2016, altogether *ca.* 4000 pottery fragments were sorted out for further studies, inventoried and stored. Around 10% of these materials are finds of fine pottery, mostly terra sigillata and red slip wares. Fragments of the imported Late Roman red slip wares selected for the reported analysis constitute *ca.* 30% of all the fine wares. The rest embraced residual sherds of the Early Roman terra sigillata, mostly of Moesian origin, some rare imports of the Eastern Sigillata C / Çandarlı Ware from the Aegean, as well as Late Roman red slip ware fragments of regional origin, and some single finds of other rare groups, such as glazed or engobed wares.

The fragments of the imported Late Roman red slip pottery, found in various contexts connected with the latest building and occupation activities in the investigated part of Tropaeum Traiani represent vessels coming from four production centers: one Pontic, two Aegean and one North African, dated from the late fourth until the early seventh century. Their presence in Tropaeum Traiani has been already noted in several publications of the previous and recent excavations in other parts of the settlement. Some short notes on these vessels, illustrated with selected finds, do not, however, include any discussions or reflections about their production, trade and consumption.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> BOGDAN CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, pp. 180, 186–187, 189, figs. 144/2.13, 158/2.1 and 2.5, 160/2.1–2.8, 161/2.3, 2.11 and 2.18–2.19, 167/2.1–2.2 and 2.6–2.7; GĂMUREAC 2009, pp. 265–267, pls. XI/103–104, XII/105–109,

XIII/112–113; IONESCU, GĂMUREAC, DRĂGHICI 2013, pp. 180–181, 186, 190–193, 197–198, pls. I/5–6, II/29, III/37, IV/45 and 60; GĂMUREAC, IONESCU, DRĂGHICI 2015–2016, p. 222, pls. III/32–33, IV/34.

Finds of the Late Roman red slip wares of regional origin were excluded from the present study, as their insufficient, in many cases, state of preservation made it difficult to identify forms of the vessels, and to distinguish some of their less diagnostic fragments from the finds of the Early Roman terra sigillata. As the studies on the regional red slip wares from Moesia Inferior / Scythia Minor are much less advanced than those concerning products with supra regional distribution, these finds were selected for a further, detailed analysis.

Altogether 132 diagnostic fragments of imported red slip vessels were identified among the fine pottery finds. They were initially divided by wares according to different macroscopic characteristics of the fabrics (clay and slip), indicating their various origins. For the typological analysis the processed materials were subsequently divided in two groups: entirely diagnostic fragments (usually rims) which allow us to identify precisely the form of the vessel, as well as less diagnostic ones, indicating approximately only a range of forms it could have represented (lower parts of vessels). All the wares recorded in Tropaeum Traiani were also found at several archaeological sites in the Danube delta, in other Black Sea coastal areas, and most of them also in the Mediterranean. The Aegean and North African products: Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware, Late Roman Light Coloured ware and African Red Slip ware are relatively well known as their basic vessel forms were distinguished and described by J. W. Hayes and other scholars who established their typo-chronological classifications and presented their supra-regional distributions.<sup>17</sup> More recently identified fine ware vessels of the quality and repertoire of shapes similar to the Aegean and Mediterranean imports but of unknown exact origin, called Pontic Red Slip ware, were distributed exclusively along the Black Sea coasts and into the adjoining hinterlands.<sup>18</sup>

The proportions of the imported Late Roman red slip wares are shown in Fig. 4A. The most numerous finds represent the Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip (LRC/PhRS) ware from the western coast of Asia Minor, mainly from Phocaea, and on a much smaller scale from some other workshops located to the north, towards Pergamum. As the shapes of these vessels are very distinctive even their small fragments could be identified, and the less diagnostic sherds were recognized as belonging to the early middle or late production phase (cf. below). This allowed us to state that the imports of the Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware vessels were rather regular and lasted for more than two centuries: from the late fourth until the early seventh century. Other imports were found in smaller numbers and the datings of these finds are more narrow. This concerns mainly the Late Roman Light Coloured (LRLC) ware from the north-eastern Aegean (possibly from Pergamum or its vicinity) with the finds representing exclusively the early phase of their production

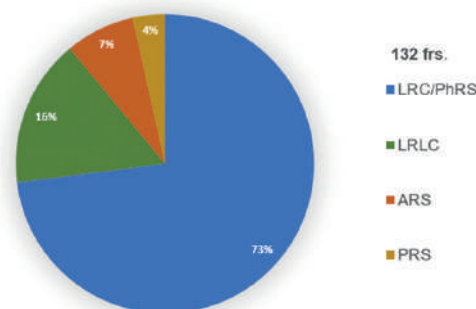


Fig. 4A. Imported Late Roman and Early Byzantine red slip wares found in Tropaeum Traiani (compiled by K. Domzalski)

<sup>17</sup> HAYES 1972, pp. 13–299, 323–370, 408–410; HAYES 1980, pp. 484–523, 525–527; MACKENSEN, SCHNEIDER 2002; BONIFAY 2004, pp. 155–209; MACKENSEN 2009; ERGÜRER 2014.

<sup>18</sup> DOMZALSKI 2000, pp. 163–166; ARSEN'EVA, DOMZALSKI 2002, pp. 422–428; DOMZALSKI forthcoming.

from around the middle of the fifth until around the mid-sixth century. Fragments of the African Red Slip (ARS) ware vessels produced in workshops located in the northern part of present Tunisia were found in much smaller quantities. These finds are dated to the sixth and early seventh centuries. The smallest share of the imports belongs to the Pontic Red Slip (PRS) ware with fragments of vessels manufactured in the fifth and first half of the sixth century. It is important to note that no earlier finds of the last two mentioned wares: African Red Slip vessels from the fourth and fifth centuries, as well as Pontic Red Slip ones from the fourth century, were identified among the studied materials.

The **Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip ware**<sup>19</sup> workshops increased the volume of their production from around the mid-fifth century, during the occupation of North Africa by the Vandals, which resulted in discontinuation of regular supplies from this main source of the highest class red slip pottery in the Mediterranean to the *pars Orientis*. As the Black Sea region was usually the main destination for exporting various valuable goods produced by the Aegean craftsmen, Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip vessels were distributed there from the very beginning, becoming in the late fifth and sixth centuries the most commonly delivered products there, especially to such strategically important regions as the Lower Danube *limes* and its hinterland, Chersonesus in the south-western Crimea, Cimmerian Bosphorus, and the Caucasian coast. The peak of their popularity was reached during the reign of Justinian, but the deliveries continued later on, at a slightly smaller scale until the early seventh century. This picture is reflected in the numerous materials from Scythia Minor,<sup>20</sup> including some selected finds from Tropaeum Traiani published previously.<sup>21</sup>

Altogether 98 fragments of the Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip vessels were identified among the analyzed materials. The earliest vessels were produced in the late fourth / early fifth century and the latest ones in the late sixth / early seventh century. The typo-chronological sequence of the vessel forms and variants, together with their quantitative shares, is presented in Fig. 4B. The chart also includes significant numbers of the so-called less diagnostic fragments, allowing to indicate the production phase only. This analysis shows that the earliest finds, dated

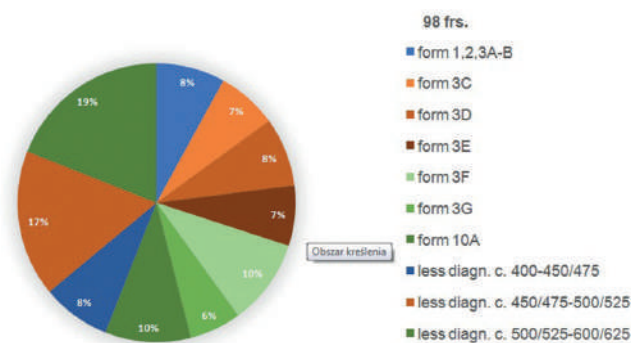


Fig. 4B. Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip ware forms and less diagnostic fragments found in Tropaeum Traiani (compiled by K. Domzalski)

<sup>19</sup> HAYES 1972, pp. 323–370; HAYES 1980, pp. 525–527.

<sup>20</sup> TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 44–68, 82–87, pls. II, III/23–30, IV–VII/62–63, IX/84–87, X–XI, XII/107 and 110–114, XIII/113–122, XIV–XVI; OPRİŞ 2003, pp. 144, 151–153, pls. LIV/354–363, LV/358–371, LVI/355–379; OPAIT 2004, pp. 75–77, pls. 55–57; MOCANU 2011, pp. 230–240, pls. 2/10–12, 3–7; MOCANU 2014, pp. 154–160, 164–166, pls. 3/12 and 14, 4; BĂDESCU, ILIESCU 2016; ILIESCU *et alii* 2017 (several fragments found in Histria, published in the last two works, were identified incorrectly as the early LRC / Phocaeen products; cf. also below, note 36); MOCANU, NUȚU 2017, pp. 130–135, figs. 5a/7–14, 5b/1–2, 7/3–7, 8;

MOCANU 2018, pp. 238–246, figs. 6–10; BĂJENARU 2018, pp. 501–510, figs. 1/4 and 7–8, 2/10–12 and 19–26, 3/36–45 and 49–54, 4/55–68, 5/79–92, 6/97–101 and 104–109, 7/110; MOCANU 2020, pp. 206–209, 211–212, figs. 3/3–10, 4, with further references.

<sup>21</sup> BOGDAN CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, pp. 180, 186–187, 189, figs. 144/2.13, 158/2.1, 160/2.1 and 2.3–2.6, 161/2.3, 2.11 and 2.18–2.19, 167/2.1 and 2.6; GĂMUREAC 2009, pp. 265–266, pls. XI/103–104, XII/105–109; IONESCU, GĂMUREAC, DRĂGHICI 2013, pp. 180–181, 186, 191–192, pls. I/6, III/37; GĂMUREAC, IONESCU, DRĂGHICI 2015–2016, p. 222, pl. IV/34.

until *ca.* 450–475, were rather uncommon (16%). This group consists of rim fragments of the dishes and bowls, forms 1, 2, 3A and 3B (small fragments, not illustrated), as well as of the equal share of fragments of the lower parts of such vessels. Later variants of the dishes form 3: 3C [Fig. 5: 1], 3D and 3E [Fig. 5: 2], dated to the second half of the fifth and the early sixth century, together with the contemporary less diagnostic fragments, are significantly more numerous (39%). The number of the rims of the standard sixth century vessels, known as dishes, forms 3F [Fig. 5: 3–4], 3G and 10A [Fig. 6], as well as their less diagnostic fragments, is again slightly bigger (45%). Looking closer at this latest phase of imports it is worth noting that the finds from the first half of the sixth century (forms 3F and 3G) are somewhat more common than those from its second half and from the early seventh century (form 10A). It is therefore surprising, that only one stamped fragment was revealed among the Late Roman C / Phocaean finds. Hardly legible Cross or Cross-monogram

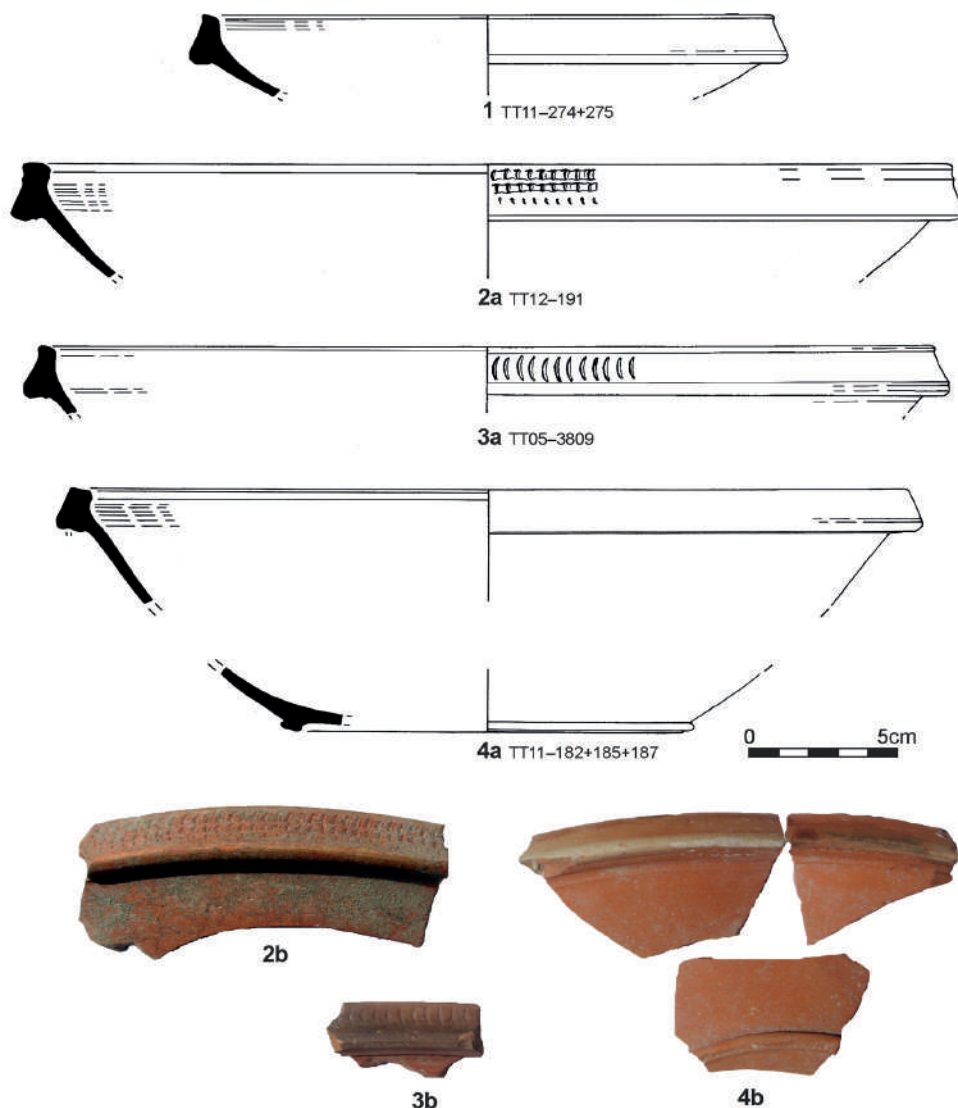


Fig. 5. Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware:  
 1 – form 3C, 2 – form 3E, 3–4 – form 3F  
 (compiled by K. Domżałski, I. Barnea)



with two pendants below arms<sup>22</sup> was identified on one of the latest vessels, form 10A [Fig. 6: 4a–b], which were stamped only occasionally and rather carelessly in comparison with with the products from the mid-fifth–mid-sixth centuries.

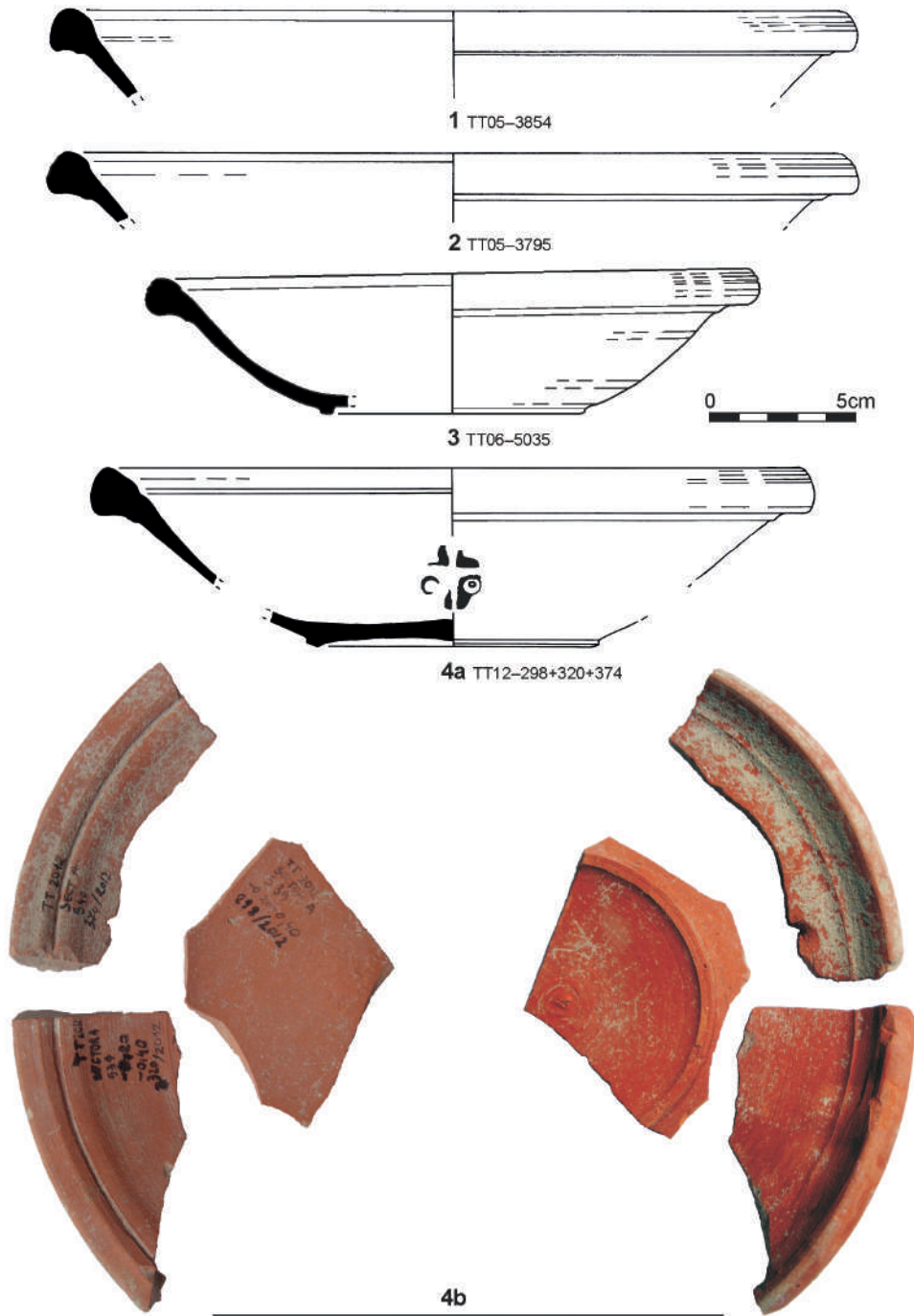


Fig. 6. Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware: form 10A  
(compiled by K. Domzalski, I. Barnea, M. Więch)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. HAYES 1972, pp. 363–368, motifs 67, 80, figs. 78/67, 79/80.

The Aegean vessels are represented also by other very distinctive products of the excellent quality, called **Late Roman Light Coloured ware**, which are less known than the previously discussed Late Roman C / Phocaean ones. These vessels, found at several sites in the Lower Danube area, including Tropaeum Traiani,<sup>23</sup> were misleadingly called Cnidian for a long time,<sup>24</sup> following an initial hypothesis concerning their origin, noted by J. W. Hayes.<sup>25</sup> Recent studies show that the distribution of the Late Roman Light Coloured vessels is especially regular and their finds are numerous in the Northern Aegean and Propontis,<sup>26</sup> possibly indicating the production area, which may be confirmed by the presence of big flakes of golden mica in their fabric, suggesting more precisely the Pergamene region. The broad distribution of the Late Roman Light Coloured vessels began around the mid-fifth century, which is also connected with the above-mentioned occupation of North Africa by the Vandals. They were manufactured until the early or mid-seventh century. The early production, until around the mid-sixth century, is characterized by the presence of multiple rouletting and stamped decorations, while the later vessels were usually not decorated and only some of them were embellished with impressive incised (*champlevé*) figural and other compositions inspired by silverware.

All the 21 fragments of the Late Roman Light Coloured ware found in Tropaeum Traiani represent vessels produced in the early phase, which lasted until around the mid-sixth century. The shapes of some vessels resemble those of the Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware, bearing also some rouletted and stamped decorative motifs. The most common forms are presented in Fig. 7. They include rim fragments of the dishes similar to the Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware forms 3C [Fig. 7: 1] and 6 [Fig. 7: 2–4],<sup>27</sup> as well as one specific shape [Fig. 7: 5]<sup>28</sup> having no analogy in the above mentioned ware. Less diagnostic fragments of the lower parts of the vessels were decorated with multiple rouletting, and one sherd bears fragmentarily preserved stamp of a Greek cross with dotted decoration inside [Fig. 7: 6–7], which is the most popular motif stamped on the discussed vessels.<sup>29</sup> Late Roman Light Coloured ware fragments from Tropaeum Traiani, as well as the other finds from the Lower Danube area,<sup>30</sup> do not include vessels produced later, in the second half of the sixth and early seventh century, which are characterized with different shapes, influenced by the African Red Slip ware plates, forms 104–105, and by the absence of stamped and rouletted decoration, replaced sometimes with the *champlevé* compositions.<sup>31</sup>

Fragments of the remaining two imported red slip wares, African and Pontic, were found in much smaller quantities. In the case of the **African Red Slip ware**, the number of finds reflects the extremely long distance from the production area (present Tunisia). These workshops were the main supplier of the highest quality red slip tableware in the Mediterranean, establishing a fashion for several vessel forms and styles of their decoration.<sup>32</sup> The vessels in question were usually

<sup>23</sup> BOGDAN CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, p. 186, fig. 158/2.5; IONESCU, GĂMUREAC, DRĂGHICI 2013, pp. 190, 193, 197–198, pls. II/29, IV/45 and 60.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. OPAIT 2004, p. 79, pls. 59–60, with further references.

<sup>25</sup> HAYES 1972, p. 408.

<sup>26</sup> ERGÜRER 2014, pp. 176–177.

<sup>27</sup> HAYES 1972, pp. 329–330, fig. 67/7, and pp. 340–341, fig. 70/1 (classified incorrectly as form 7); cf. ERGÜRER 2014, pp. 181–182, form 5, pl. 3, and pp. 183–186, form 11, pl. 5/21–23; for the complete shape of the vessel represented by the fragments in Fig. 7: 2–4, see BĂJENARU 2018, pp. 509–510, fig. 7/111.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ERGÜRER 2014, pp. 181–184, form 6, pl. 4/15–16.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. ERGÜRER 2014, pp. 187–190, pls. 6/33, 8/33.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. above, note 24, as well as: TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 54–57, pls. VII/65–69, VIII/70–72, IX/79–83, XII/68;

MOCANU, NUȚU 2017, p. 130, figs. 5a/4–6, 7/1–2; MOCANU 2018, pp. 237–238, fig. 5; BĂJENARU 2018, pp. 504, 510, figs. 4/73, 7/110, with further references.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. ERGÜRER 2014, pp. 185–190, form 15, pls. 6/27–30, 8/29.

<sup>32</sup> HAYES 1972, pp. 13–299; HAYES 1980, pp. 484–523; MACKENSEN, SCHNEIDER 2002; BONIFAY 2004, pp. 155–209; MACKENSEN 2009.

present in the coastal regions around the Black Sea basin, including the lower Danube area,<sup>33</sup> in rather small quantities, from the second until the first half of the seventh century, but the regular influx embraced especially the fourth – early fifth, and the mid-sixth – early seventh century.

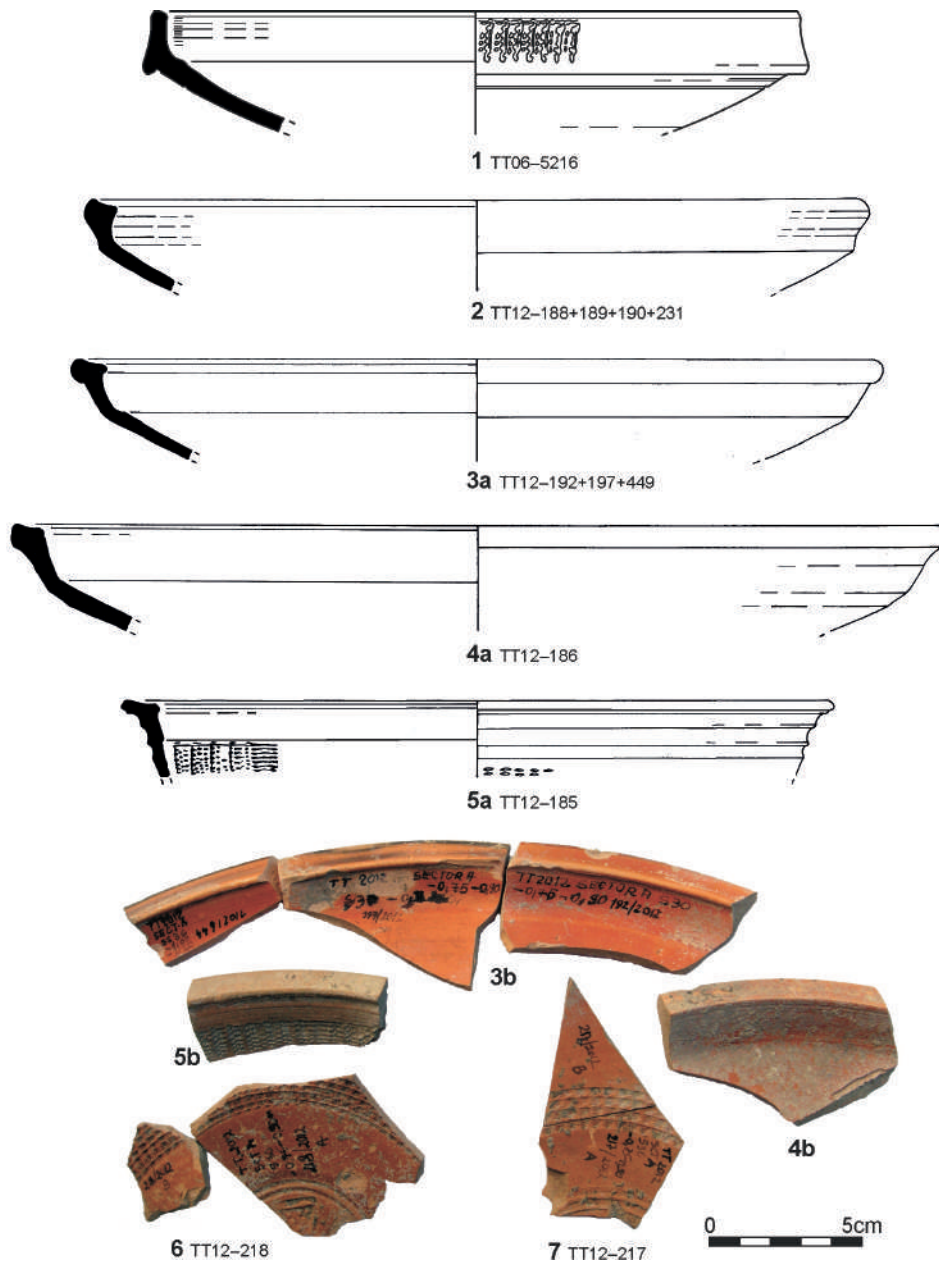


Fig. 7. Late Roman Light Coloured ware: dish fragments and less diagnostic sherds with decorative compositions (compiled by K. Domżański, I. Barnea, M. Więch)

<sup>33</sup> TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 63, 69, 74–78, 85, 87, pls. XII/109, XIII/160, XVIII/152 and 158–159, XIX/161–168; OPRIS 2003, pp. 138–150, pls. L–LIV/340–352, LVI/353; OPAIT 2004, pp. 77–79, pl. 58; MOCANU 2011, pp. 227–229, pl. 2/1–5; MOCANU 2012; MOCANU 2014, pp. 151–152, 163,

pl. 3/13; MOCANU, NUȚU 2017, pp. 125–129, figs. 5a/1–3, 6; MOCANU 2018, pp. 232–235, fig. 3; BAJENARU 2018, pp. 501–510, figs. 1/1–3 and 5–6, 2/9 and 17–18, 3/32–35, 6/96 and 102–103; ILIESCU, BOTTEZ 2018; MOCANU 2020, pp. 206, 210, fig. 3/1–2, with further references.

All the 10 African Red Slip ware fragments found recently in Tropaeum Traiani represent the late production phase of the ware, dated to the sixth and first half of the seventh century.<sup>34</sup> The best preserved fragments are shown in Fig. 8 and embrace the especially popular bowls, form 99B and C [Fig. 8: 1–3], large bowl or dish, form 103B [Fig. 8: 4], dishes or plates, forms 104A and C (small fragments, not illustrated), as well as the most impressive find — a shallow dish, form 109 [Fig. 8: 5]. The majority of the listed forms (99, 103 and 104), dated from the reign of Justinian

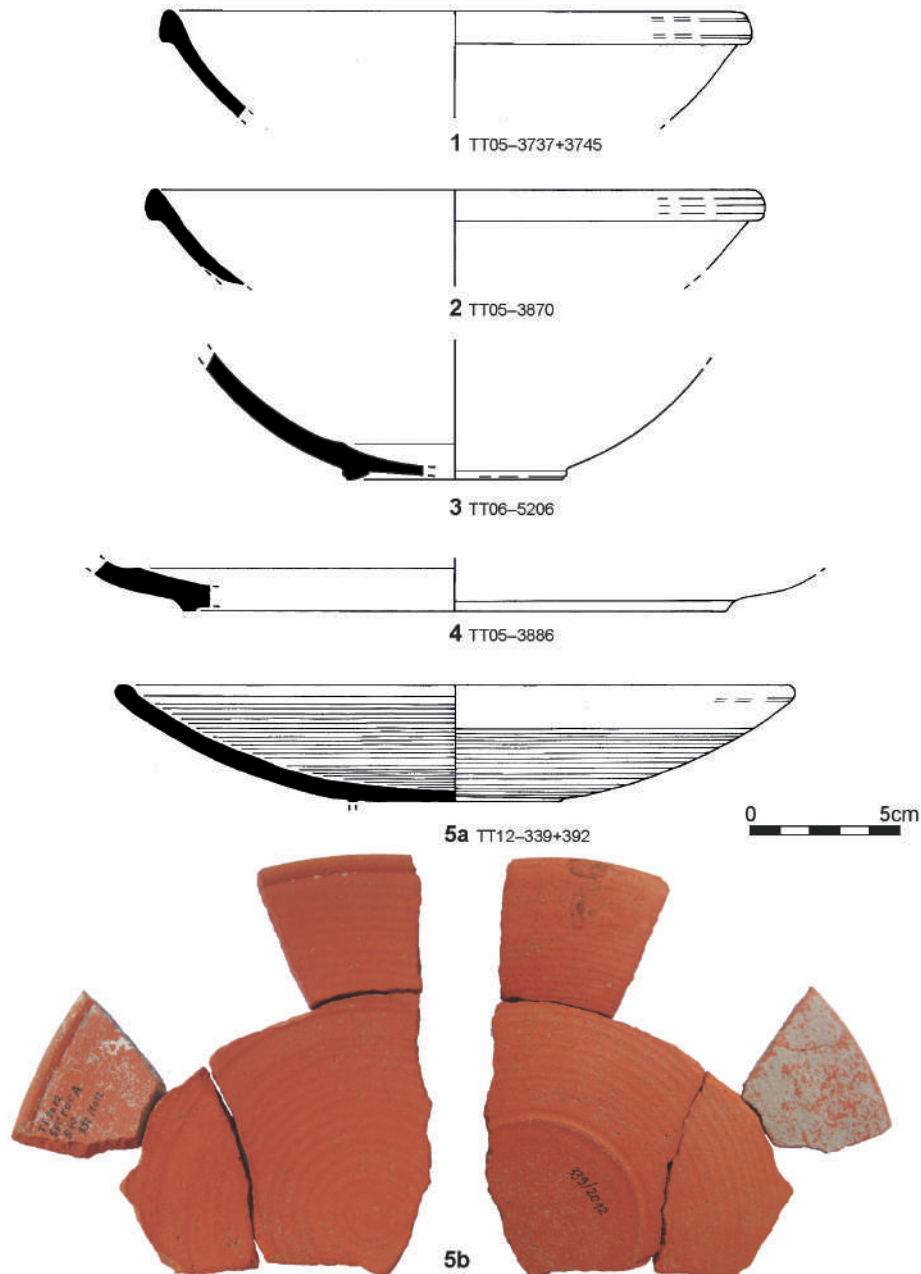


Fig. 8. African Red Slip ware: 1–2 – form 99C, 3 – form 99B, 4 – form 103B, 5 – form 109  
(compiled by K. Domżałski, I. Barnea, M. Więch)

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also some previously published African Red Slip ware finds from the investigated settlement, with the prevailing late vessels: BOGDAN CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979,

pp. 186–187, 189, figs. 160/2.2 and 2.7–2.8, 167/2.2 and 2.7; IONESCU, GĂMUREAC, DRĂGHICI 2013, pp. 180–181, 186, pl. I/5; GĂMUREAC 2009, pp. 266–267, pl. XIII/112–113.

until the early seventh century, became very popular in the supra regional trade and gained broad distribution. The same concerns the latest find, dish form 109, decorated with regular burnishing inside and outside, produced since the end of the sixth and in the first half of the seventh century, which was the last North African vessel distributed supra regionally.

The least represented in Tropaeum Traiani are the **Pontic Red Slip ware** vessels, produced most probably in the north-eastern part of Asia Minor.<sup>35</sup> The distribution of this pottery did not exceed the Pontic basin. The discussed vessels were found at several archaeological sites from the lower Danube area,<sup>36</sup> through the northern and eastern Black Sea littorals, to northern Asia Minor, where Pompeiopolis in Paphlagonia was the westernmost town supplied with these products.<sup>37</sup> Instead, they were identified at some recently investigated sites to the east and south of Pompeiopolis, as Neoclaudiopolis, Comana Pontica and Tavium.<sup>38</sup> In the fourth and fifth centuries Pontic Red Slip ware dominated the long-distance trade within the Black Sea basin, but Scythia Minor was the least important destination in the distribution pattern of these vessels. From the late fifth century they were gradually replaced by the Late Roman C / Phocaeen Red Slip ware products imported from the Aegean, and around the mid-sixth century they finally disappeared from the market.

Only 5 Pontic Red Slip ware sherds were identified recently in Tropaeum Traiani, including rim fragments of the large dishes, form 1B [Fig. 9: 1], form 3 (small fragment, not illustrated), and some less diagnostic ones from the lower parts of possibly the same or similar vessels [Fig. 9: 2]. The dishes, form 3 represent the highly developed production of the ware in question, from the first half of the fifth century, while the dish, form 1B is one of the latest products dated to the late fifth and early sixth century.

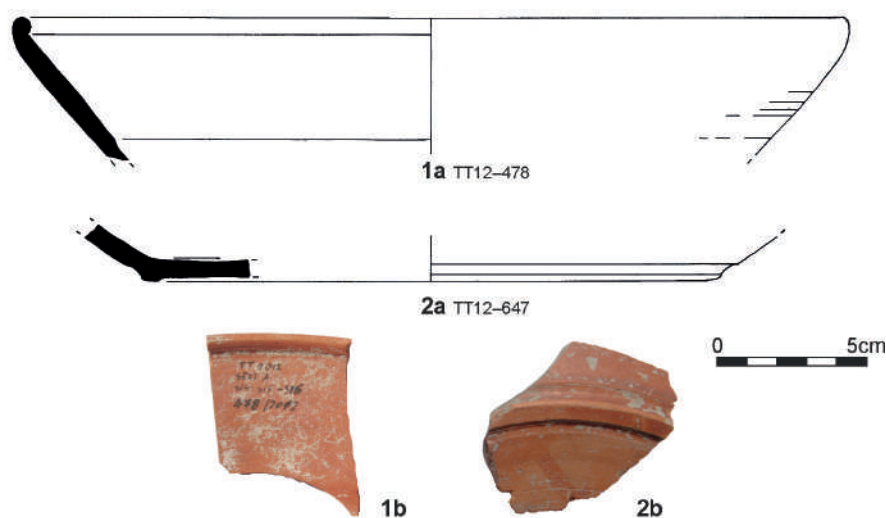


Fig. 9. Pontic Red Slip ware: 1 – form 1B, 2 – less diagnostic fragment of a dish  
(compiled by K. Domžalski, I. Barnea)

<sup>35</sup> DOMŽALSKI 2000, pp. 163–166; ARSEN'EVA, DOMŽALSKI 2002, pp. 422–428; DOMŽALSKI forthcoming.

<sup>36</sup> TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 42, 46, 56–57, 63, 71–72, pls. I/1–2, III/20, VIII/75–78, XII/108, XVII/142–146 (identified incorrectly); MOCANU 2011, pp. 229–230, pl. 2/6–9; MOCANU 2014, pp. 152, 164, pl. 3/11 and 16; MOCANU, NUȚU 2017, pp. 135–138, figs. 5b/3–5, 9/3–5; ILIESCU *et alii* 2017, p. 48, pl. VI/8–9 (identified incorrectly as Late Roman C / Phocaeen ware); MOCANU 2018, pp. 235–237, fig. 4

(illustrated finds do not correspond with the vessels described in the paper); BĂJENARU 2018, pp. 503–506, figs. 2/13–15 and 27–31, 3/46–48 (incorrectly identified as Late Roman C / Phocaeen ware), 4/69–72. For the previously published finds from Tropaeum Traiani, see GĂMUREAC, IONESCU, DRĂGHICI 2015–2016, p. 222, pl. III/32–33.

<sup>37</sup> DOMŽALSKI 2016–2017, pp. 75–77, with further references.

<sup>38</sup> DOMŽALSKI forthcoming.

## Conclusion

The presented analysis can be perceived as a case study in the process of reconstructing the complete picture of import and consumption of the highest class Late Roman red slip pottery in Scythia Minor. The relatively small number of, however, varied finds collected in a large area explored during eleven excavation seasons in an important part of the investigated settlement is the evidence that the red slip vessels produced in the leading, overseas located production centres were imported regularly but in rather small quantities to Tropaeum Traiani in the last two centuries of its existence as a significant urban center. The majority of the finds (*ca.* 62%) reflect the latest settlement activities in the excavated area, dated to the sixth and early seventh centuries, while the remaining share of fragments (*ca.* 38%) represents vessels produced in the fifth century, evidencing also somewhat earlier occupation there.

The study confirms the importance of the Aegean as the most significant region supplying Scythia Minor with the high quality goods, as shown by the most continuous and numerous imports of the Late Roman C / Phocaean Red Slip ware vessels, accompanied sometimes by the Late Roman Light Coloured ones. The most distant, North African products were surely transhipped in Constantinople, which consumed a substantial share of these deliveries, and therefore the products transported to the Black Sea region must have been especially highly appreciated there. The lowest number of the Pontic Red Slip ware finds clearly shows that Scythia Minor was in the margin of the main sea-borne distribution area of these products, embracing mostly the Crimean Peninsula, Cimmerian Bosphorus and Colchis. This picture corresponds with some results of the most recent study of the imported Late Roman trade amphorae found in Sector A in Tropaeum Traiani, especially regarding the relatively low level of imports from the southern Pontic coastal centres as compared with the prevailing ones from the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>39</sup>

The presented case study confirms also the conclusions of some other investigations on the Late Roman fine wares finds in the region,<sup>40</sup> indicating that during the late fourth – late sixth and/or the early seventh centuries, inhabitants of Tropaeum Traiani, as well as of the other economically and military important settlements in Scythia Minor, had regular access to the fine ware vessels of different overseas provenances, offered on the Black Sea coastal market. Their imports show that the investigated town had a considerable position in the regional economy, being well connected with the central part of the empire by the inland roads towards the ports of Tomis and Callatis, and then by the sea along the western coast of the Black Sea.

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<sup>39</sup> GRIGORAȘ, PANAIT 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. above, notes: 20–21, 23–24, 30, 33–34, 36.

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