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LATE ROMAN RED SLIP WARE FROM AEGYSSUS*

Abstract: Red-slipped ceramics of the late Roman period are part of the assemblage recorded during intermittent archaeological research at the archaeological site of Aegyssus/Tulcea in the second half of the twentieth century. A typological review of the pottery coming from this research (roughly in 1971–1998), combined with statistical data, is the main purpose of this paper. Altogether 121 diagnostic ceramic fragments from the fort of Aegyssus have been classified by geographical provenance: North African (12 fragments), Asia Minor (88 fragments) and Pontic (28 fragments), demonstrating the presence of products from all three major areas of production of late Roman Red Slip Ware. The share of each is dependent in equal measure on historical factors and on objective limitations imposed by the chosen research methodology.

Key words: Red Slip Ware, Aegyssus, Scythia, Late Antiquity

Introduction

Ancient Aegyssus is located northeast of the city of Tulcea, encompassing the area of the “Parcul Monumental Independenței” and its vicinity [Figs. 1–2]. The rocky massif with the ancient city is the highest point overlooking the lower run of the Danube. The settlement of the Roman and early Byzantine periods overlaps an earlier indigenous settlement.

Aegyssus was, above all, an important garrison for troops — the *legio V Macedonica* and the Roman fleet of the Danube (*classis Flavia Moesica*) — securing this border region of the Roman Empire. In the second half of the third century AD, it was the seat of an auxiliary unit, the *cohors II Flavia Brittonum*. During the late Roman and early Byzantine periods, the fort rose to a position of importance in the defensive system of Scythia, becoming the seat of some military units from the *legio I Iovia* as well as a cavalry unit (*cuneus equitum armigerorum*). In the sixth century, it became a bishopric, as evidenced by the *Notitiae episcopatum*, and is listed by Procopius of Caesarea among the castles rebuilt by the Emperor Justinian in Scythia.¹

Archaeological excavations have contributed to a better understanding of the development of the city, particularly in late antiquity. The intramural area was investigated repeatedly, but the archaeological results were seldom published [Fig. 3]. The extramural parts have been levelled and destroyed by public works on various occasions ever since the nineteenth century. The process

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¹ For an overview, see LUNGU 1996, p. 47; PÄFFGEN, NUȚU 2017, pp. 277–278; NUȚU 2018, pp. 201–206.

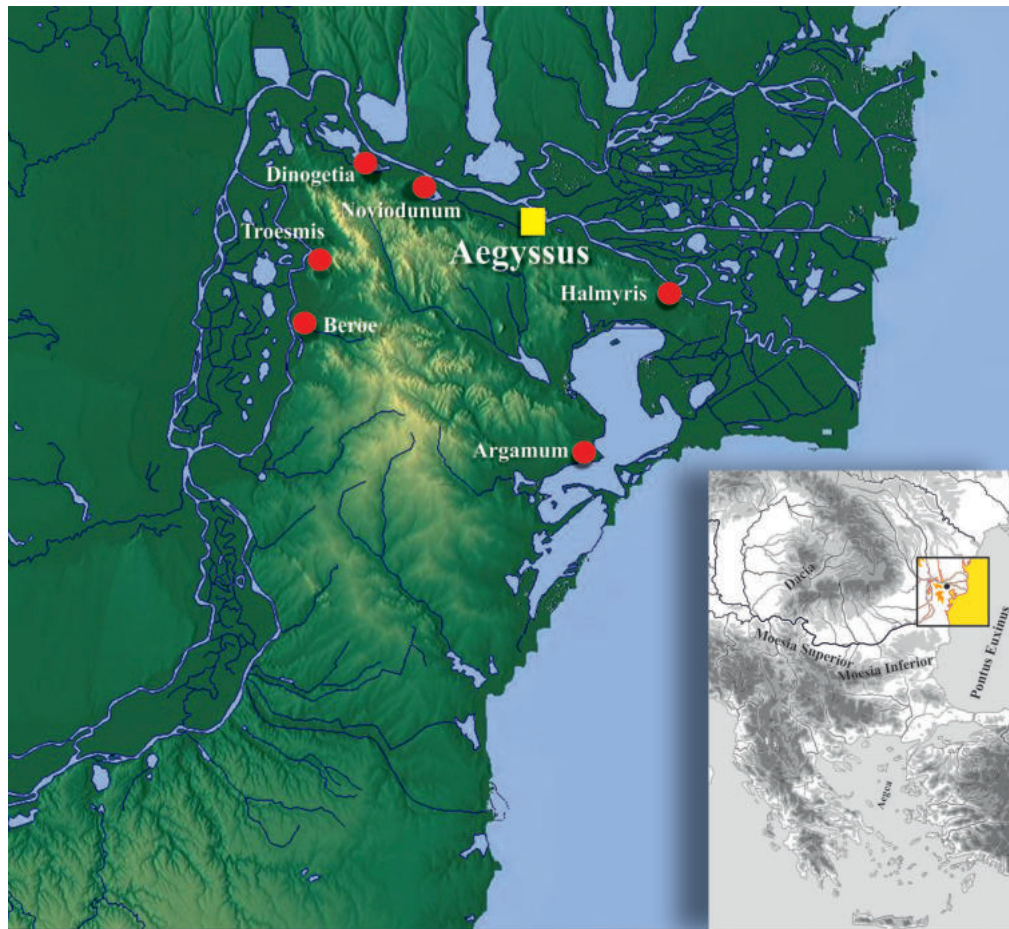


Fig. 1. Main Roman cities in North Dobruja



Fig. 2. Aerial view of Aegyssus: in the foreground, the Roman baths sector with the old and new trenches

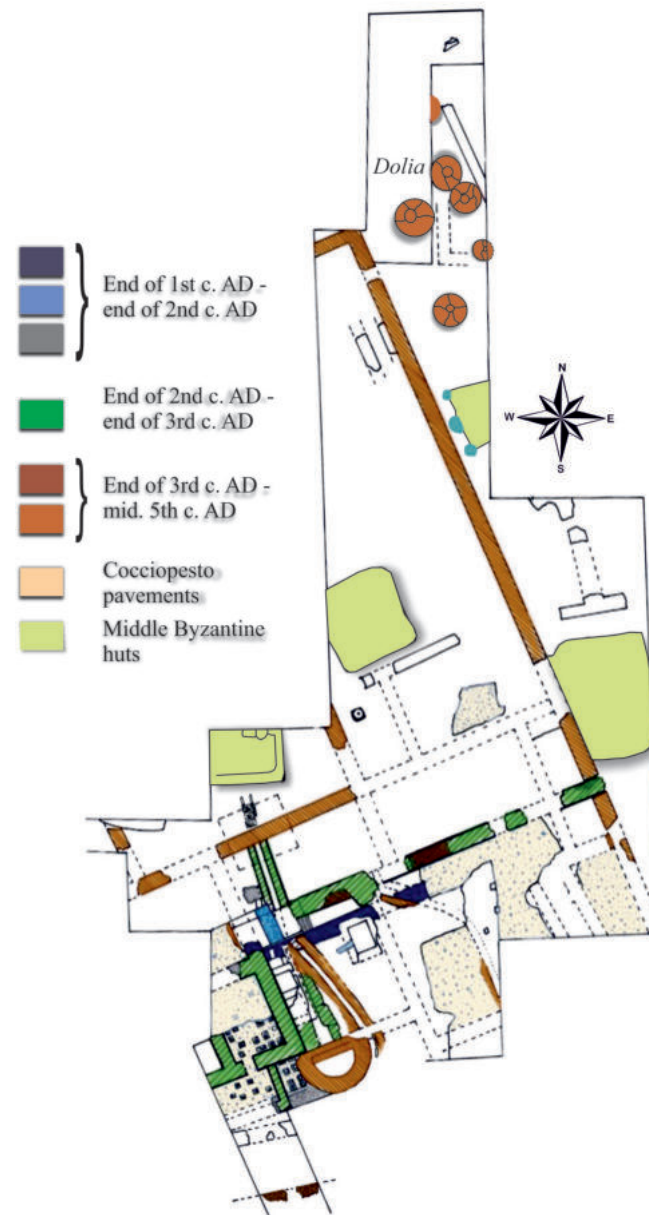


Fig. 3. Layout of the Roman baths sector, main archaeological unit excavated up to the present

of destruction continues today, necessitating salvage archaeology in the *extra muros* parts of the settlement. The presentation of excavation results, even if only from a restricted area, helps to understand the overall habitation patterns on the site.

Salvage fieldwork first took place in the 1910s, but the results were not published and the archaeological material has largely been lost. Test trenches were dug again in 1959 and regular excavations started in 1971, continuing until 1998. The current excavations, which started in 2015, are carried out on an annual basis, financed from a grant of the Tulcea Municipality.²

² PÄFFGEN, NUTU 2017, pp. 277–278.

Pottery

Several articles on the finds from Aegyssus, pottery included, have been published in recent years. The research presented in this article is based on the published results encompassing ceramics from the area of the “Parcul Monumental Independenței”; finds from fieldwork in other parts of the city of Tulcea are referred to only in passing.³

The first to publish pottery from Aegyssus was Andrei Opaț. In 1987, he presented a deposit of amphorae (119 pieces) discovered in 1976, typologically divided into three types, set within a chronological frame starting with the end of the first century BC and ending in the early first century AD.⁴ References to the *vasa escaria* (tableware) from the old excavations are found in a book published by Andrei Opaț in 1996: ceramics produced in the Black Sea littoral, now known as Pontic Red Slip ware,⁵ Asia Minor ware from the Phocaea workshops⁶ and pottery imported from North African workshops.⁷ These findings were later recapitulated in a book published in the *BAR* series.⁸

Hellenistic material from old fieldwork was discussed in an article by Vasilica Lungu.⁹ The main focus was on amphorae with stamped handles, but pottery from the civil settlement next to the fort as well as from the pre-Roman necropolis identified on Nalbelor street was also mentioned. A find of particular merit is a Campanian bowl, originating from a tomb discovered in 1989,¹⁰ the earliest attestation of Italic imports to Aegyssus and to the West Pontic region in general.¹¹

Closing this presentation of published works on the *vasa escaria* are two recent contributions on Roman fine wares from Aegyssus, discovered during salvage archaeological research at 62 Gloriei Street, about 200 m south of the ancient fortifications.¹² They present Western sigillata along with African Red Slip, Pontic sigillata and Pontic Red Slip, and Çandarlı ware.¹³

Methodology

The ceramic evidence in this study originates from regular archaeological fieldwork conducted at Aegyssus between the 1970s and the mid-1990s. The pottery itself is in the stores of the Museum of History and Archaeology in Tulcea. A representative sample consisted of 121 ceramic fragments. They were classified by production workshop (Pontic, Asia Minor, North African), then by type and date as indicated by parallels, identical or merely similar, known from other archaeological sites in the West Pontic and other regions of the Roman Empire. This classification enabled a statistical analysis of the late Roman tableware from Aegyssus [Fig. 4].

The limitations on this methodology are obvious and objective in nature (see the conclusions below), hence new research on material from resumed excavations at the site (which started in 2015), following the same methodology, may yet revise the present findings.

³ BAUMANN 1973–1975, pp. 213–231.

⁴ OPAȚ 1987, pp. 145–155.

⁵ OPAȚ 1996, p. 135.

⁶ OPAȚ 1996, p. 137.

⁷ OPAȚ 1996, p. 139.

⁸ OPAȚ 2004.

⁹ LUNGU 1996, pp. 47–102.

¹⁰ LUNGU 1996, p. 58, no. 16.

¹¹ MOCANU 2016, p. 121. See also BAUMANN 2011, p. 205.

¹² NUȚU, COSTEA 2010, pp. 147–162; NUȚU, MIHAILESCU-BIRLIBA, COSTEA 2014, pp. 133–138.

¹³ NUȚU, COSTEA 2010, p. 156.

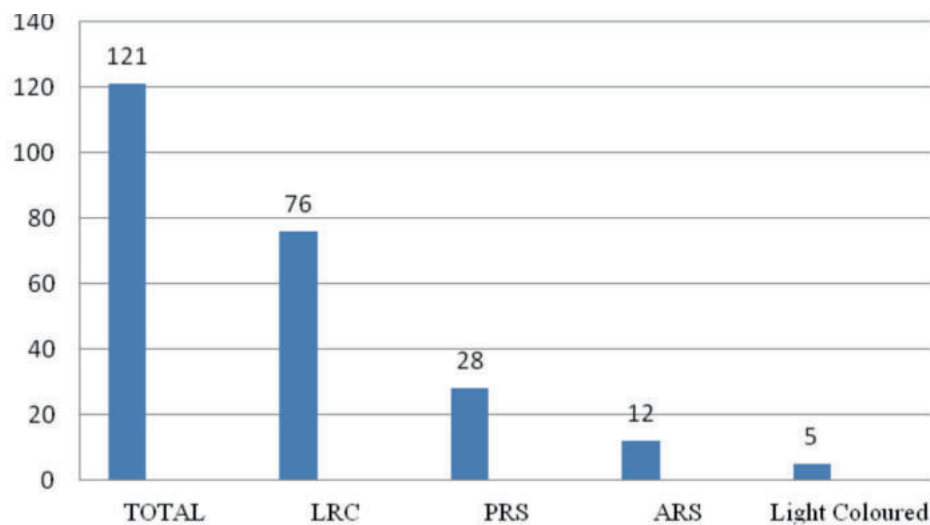


Fig. 4. Workshops identified as the place of production of the *vasa escaria* from Aegyssus

North-African ware

African red slip wares have been attested at a significant number of archaeological sites from the late Roman period in the West Pontic region and shares of tableware of this kind in the 5–10% range are generally accepted today¹⁴ [Fig. 5a/1–3]. In 2012, 19 specific North African forms were inventoried, most of them dating to the fifth–sixth centuries AD.¹⁵ At Aegyssus, in the old excavations, 12 of the 121 ceramic fragments studied for this paper were from North Africa. Surprisingly for sites in the West Pontic area, Hayes Form 76 turned out to be the most common (5 fragments), followed by Hayes Form 87 (3 fragments). Late forms of vessels from the African workshops were represented by three fragments belonging to Hayes Forms 103 and 104, which are both unusual for the late Roman sites in this geographic region. To be noted is the complete absence of Hayes Form 99, which is the most widely used bowl from the North African workshops to be produced in the province of Scythia. A single sherd belonged to a Hayes Form 91 bowl.

Hayes Form 76 [Fig. 6/1]

A large bowl relatively similar in shape to Hayes Form 67, which is the much better known bowl from this region. It has a flat base, rounded body in the lower part and a wide rim extending at an oblique angle, much wider than in Hayes Form 67. The wall inside is nearly vertical, heavily thickened, but low. Some specimens have incisions made on the outer surface of the rim. Diameters are between 25 and 35 cm. This type of dish was distributed mainly in the Mediterranean basin, being quite rare in the Black Sea littoral. A base presumed to represent Hayes Form 76 is reported from the Bosporean Kingdom.¹⁶ Opaït knew of another five finds of this type, the only ones from the Pontic area, found at Aegyssus. The suggested date for this form is AD 425–475,¹⁷ coinciding with J. W. Hayes's chronology.¹⁸

¹⁴ MOCANU 2012.

¹⁵ MOCANU 2012, pp. 327–328.

¹⁶ SMOKOTINA 2014, p. 73, fig. 3/12.

¹⁷ OPAÏT 1985, p. 158, fig. 4/11.

¹⁸ HAYES 1972, p. 124.

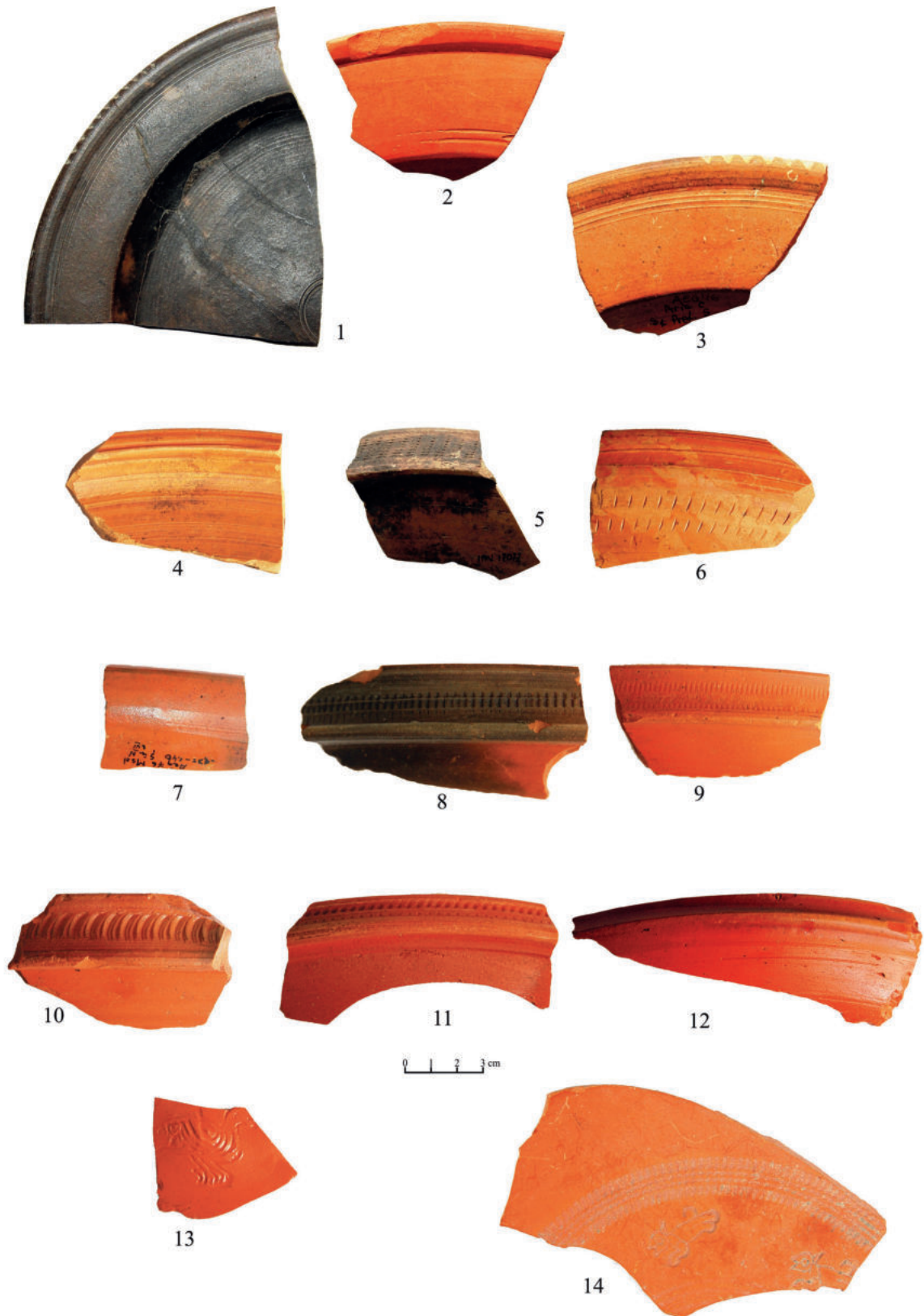


Fig. 5a. 1-3 — African Red Slip; 4-6 — Light Coloured; 7-14 — LRC

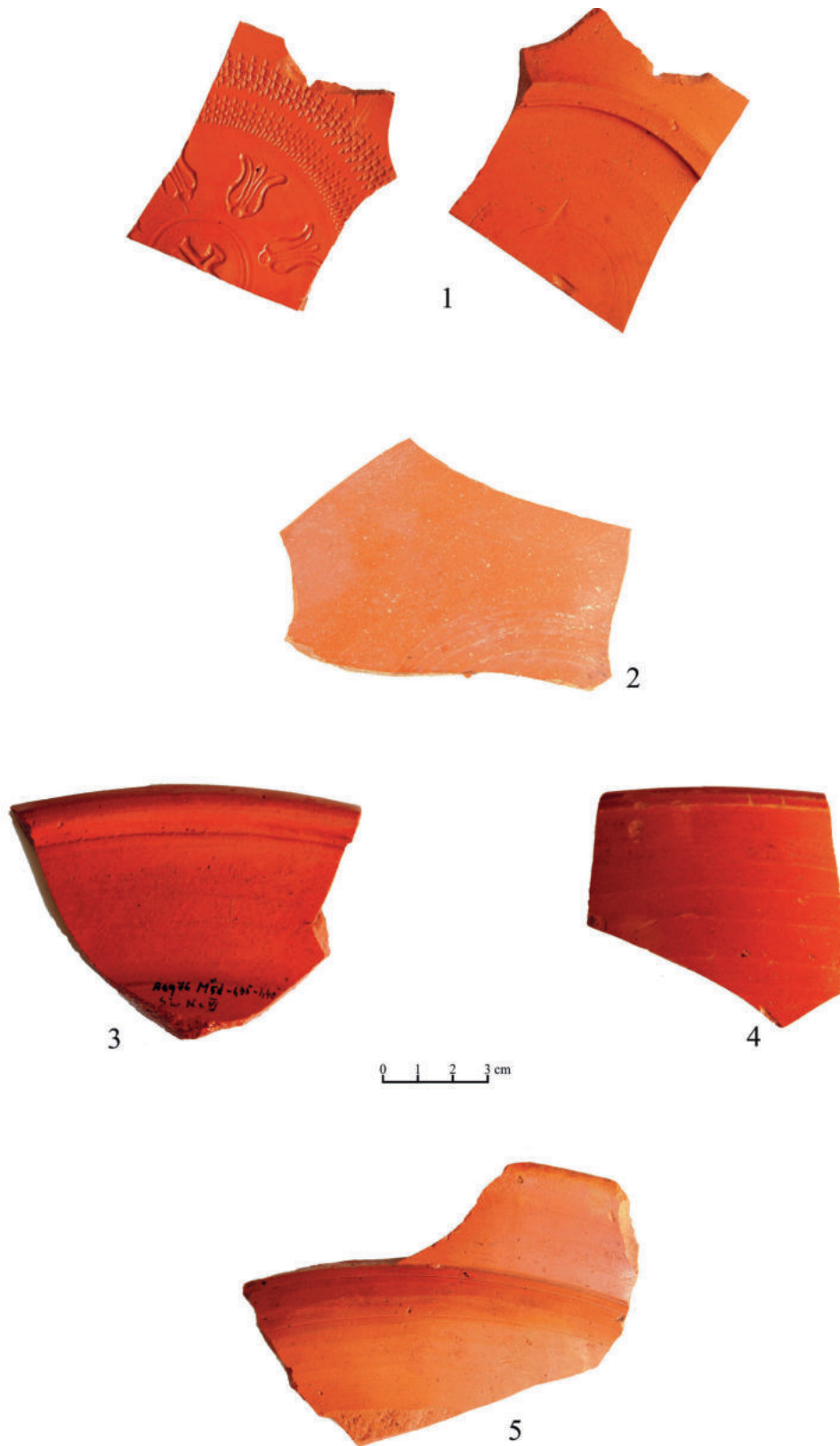


Fig. 5b. 1-2 — LRC; 3-5 — Pontic Red Slip

Hayes Form 87 [Fig. 6/2–3]

Middle-sized or large dish/bowl with a slightly rounded bottom on a short circular foot, curved bottom edges, vertical or oblique rim, triangular in cross-section. The diameters of these vessels are between 25 and 40 cm. The fabric and the slip of the wares meet the specific characteristic of North African workshops. There are three variants: A – nearly vertical rim, undercut by an external groove; B – rim similar to that of variant A, but angled instead of vertical, a groove on the inside marking the junction with the vessel body; C – rim flaring out at the top. The three

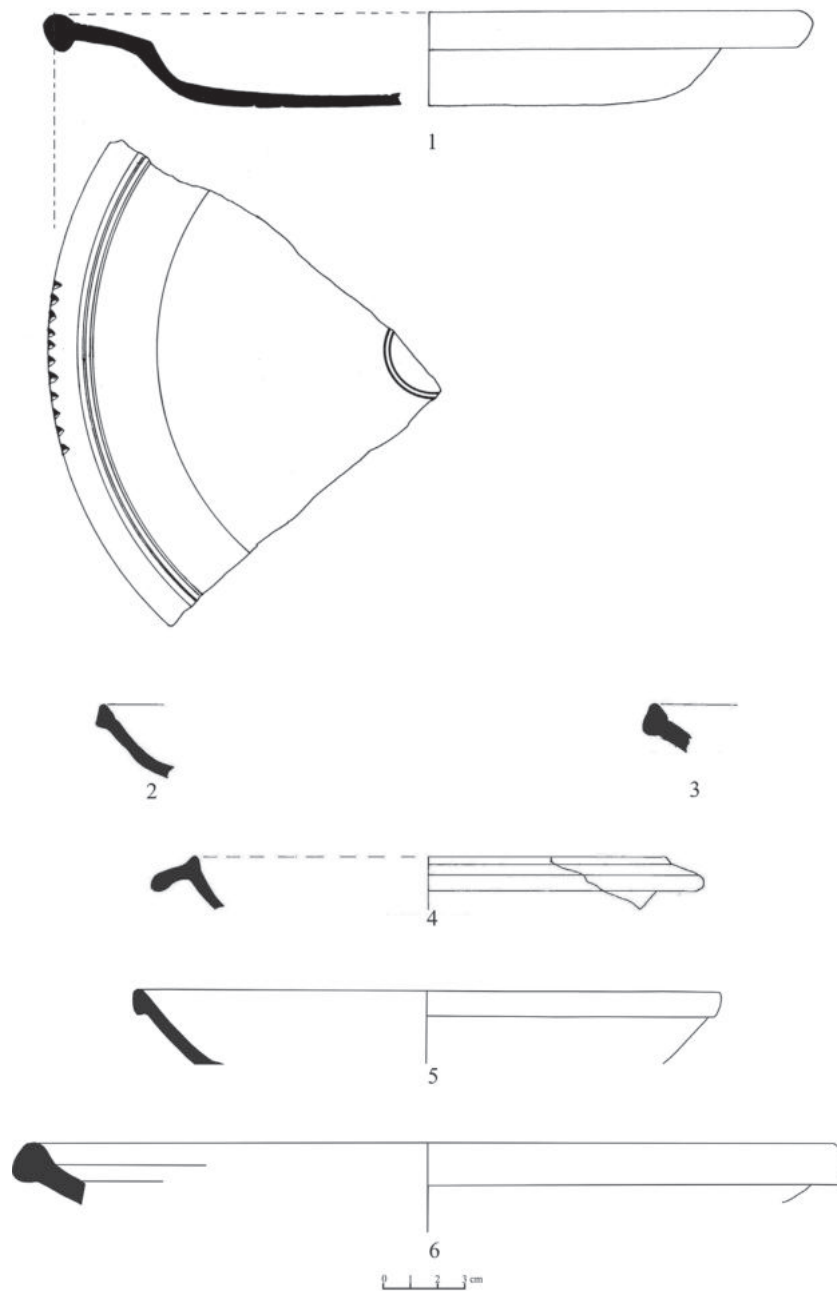


Fig. 6. African Red Slip

1 — H76; 2–3 — H87; 4 — H91; 5 — H103; 6 — H104

ceramic fragments discovered at Aegyssus belong to variant B. In Dobruja, this form was attested at Topraichioi,¹⁹ in levels 9 and 11 at Halmyris (variants A and B),²⁰ at Capidava (variant B)²¹ and (L)Ibida (all three variants).²² The chronological range of this form is from the second half of the fifth century to the beginning of the sixth century, with the amendment that the find from habitation level 11 at Halmyris dates to the second half of the sixth century AD.

Hayes Form 91 [Fig. 6/4]

A single tiny sherd, possibly variant A/B of the form, was discovered in the old excavations at Aegyssus. Hayes form 91 is a small or middle-sized bowl with flat base and very short circular foot, strongly rounded walls in the lower third, vertical rim extending the body, and a more or less horizontal handle. The diameter of these bowls does not exceed 20 cm. The fabric is of good quality, with limestone inclusions and red-brown colour. The slip is of exceptional quality, often glossy, especially on the outer surface of the bowl, its colour close to that of the fabric. Until now, Hayes Form 91 was considered exotic in the late Roman settlements of the West Pontic area, the major area of diffusion being the western basin of the Mediterranean. Hayes Form 91 variant C has been recorded so far at Histria in the *Basilica episcopalis* (three finds)²³ and at (L)Ibida.²⁴ Some other unpublished finds belonging to Hayes Form 91 were also discovered at Halmyris. Variant A can thus be reported from the northern Black Sea littoral.²⁵ The chronological range specific to Hayes Form 91 variant A is between the middle and the end of the fifth century.²⁶

Hayes Form 103 [Fig. 6/5]

Two ceramic fragments are attributed to Hayes Form 103 variant B. These are large bowls with slightly rounded bottom and circular foot, steep walls imparting an almost vertical form on the upper body starting halfway up. At the top, the wall thickens into a hanging rim. Rim diameters are between 25 cm and 35 cm. The presence of this type of bowl in West Pontic is sporadic. In Dobruja, the form was identified in occupational level 10 at Halmyris (variant B),²⁷ at Capidava²⁸ and the Tropaeum Traiani (variant A).²⁹ This kind of bowl is specific to the sixth century.³⁰

Hayes Form 104 [Fig. 6/6]

A single ceramic fragment discovered at Aegyssus is identified as Hayes Form 104, variant A. It is a large dish/plate with circular foot, gently sloping walls and thickened rim of oval section. The diameter varies between 25 cm and 50 cm. Characteristics of variant A include a vertical rim and a base that is larger compared to successive variants. The form has been attested in West Pontic at a relatively large number of late Roman sites: in a seventh century habitation level VI/A at the Tropaeum Traiani (variant C),³¹ in habitational levels 9, 10 and 11 at Halmyris (all three variants),³² at Capidava (variants B and C)³³ and (L)Ibida (all three variants).³⁴ The dating is in the sixth and the first two decades of the seventh century.

¹⁹ OPAIȚ 1985, p. 158, fig. 4/9.

²⁰ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 73–74, pl. 18/151–152.

²¹ OPRİȘ 2003, pp. 145–146, pls. 50/339 & 54/340.

²² MOCANU 2011, p. 228, pl. 2/1–3.

²³ MUȘEȚEANU, BĂLTĂC 2007, pp. 208–209, pl. 75/29–31.

²⁴ MOCANU 2011, p. 228, pl. 2/4.

²⁵ SMOKOTINA 2014, p. 71, fig. 3/10.

²⁶ HAYES 1972, p. 144.

²⁷ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 76–77, pl. 19/163.

²⁸ OPRİȘ 2003, pp. 140–150, pl. 53/348–349.

²⁹ GĂMUREAC 2009, p. 267, pl. 13/113.

³⁰ HAYES 1972, pp. 159–160.

³¹ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, p. 189, fig. 167/2.2.

³² TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 77–78, pl. 19/164–170.

³³ OPRİȘ 2003, p. 149, pls. 53/345 & 54/346; COVACEF 1999, pp. 154, 157, pl. 11/4.

³⁴ MOCANU 2011, pp. 228–229, pl. 2/5.

Asia Minor Light Coloured Ware

Light Coloured Ware from Asia Minor has been known for the better part of two decades but almost nothing on the subject has been published in Romania [Fig. 5a/4–6]. Both Opaït and Florin Topoleanu considered this kind of tableware discovered at Halmyris as being of Knidian origin.³⁵ It is extremely rare in the West Pontic region, being distributed mainly in the Aegean. At least five ceramic fragments have now been classified in the assemblage from Halmyris: three of Form 1 and two of Form 2 (see below).

Form 1 [Fig. 7/1]

Bowl/platter with horizontal rim, somewhat thickened at the edges, and steep walls. Low base. The upper rim surface bears either roulette decoration or incised concentric circles. Some wares feature a stamped pattern in the centre, sometimes combined with concentric rouletted circles arranged around it. Stylistic similarities can be observed with Hayes Forms 2 and 5 produced in Phocaean workshops. In the Athenian Agora, the form is dated to the end of the fifth century.³⁶ In Dobruja, three pieces came from the 5th century occupational levels 8 and 9 at Halmyris.³⁷

Form 2 [Fig. 7/2]

Plate/bowl with straight, nearly vertical rim, the outside surface sometimes decorated with two or three bands of rouletted decoration. Steep walls above a low base. This ware exhibits similarities with Hayes Form 3 plates, variants B and C, produced in the Phocaean workshops. Three similar fragments discovered in the Athenian Agora were dated to the second part of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth century.³⁸ In Dobruja, two fragments were discovered at Halmyris, but without specifying the context and chronological frame,³⁹ another two fragments were found in the fortification of Topraichioi, dated to the last quarter of the fifth century.⁴⁰ A fragment comes from a similar chronological context in Aegyssus.⁴¹

Phocaean Red Slip (LRC)

The Pontic area was one of the main diffusion regions for ceramics produced in the Phocaean workshops, especially from the mid-fifth century and throughout the sixth century. From a quantitative point of view, this type of ware held a monopoly on the local market, exceeding 80% of the total fine pottery assemblage in almost all the settlements. At Aegyssus, of the 121 ceramic fragments studied, 76 finds were produced in West Asia Minor workshops. Of the ten known forms, six are present in the studied sample. Hayes Form 1 is represented by eight specimens of the first three specific variants, Hayes Form 2 is attested by six ceramic fragments assigned to variants A and C. As expected, the ware is represented overwhelmingly by Hayes Form 3. All variants except for A and H were recorded at Aegyssus. Hayes Forms 4, 5 and 8 are attested by one find each [Figs. 5a/7–14 and 5b/1–2].

Hayes Form 1 [Fig. 7/3]

A bowl that can vary in size with a concave base provided with a ring foot and rounded walls. The rim is not offset from the body. Hayes saw it as an evolution of the late form 4 from the Çandarli

³⁵ OPAÏT 1991a, p. 166, fig. 45/308, 311; TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 55, pl. 12/68.

³⁶ HAYES 2008, p. 250, fig. 43/1434.

³⁷ OPAÏT 1991a, p. 166.

³⁸ HAYES 2008, p. 250, fig. 43/1430–1432.

³⁹ OPAÏT 1991a, p. 166, fig. 45/312–313.

⁴⁰ OPAÏT 1991b, p. 230, fig. 41/4, 5.

⁴¹ OPAÏT 1985, p. 155, fig. 2/10.

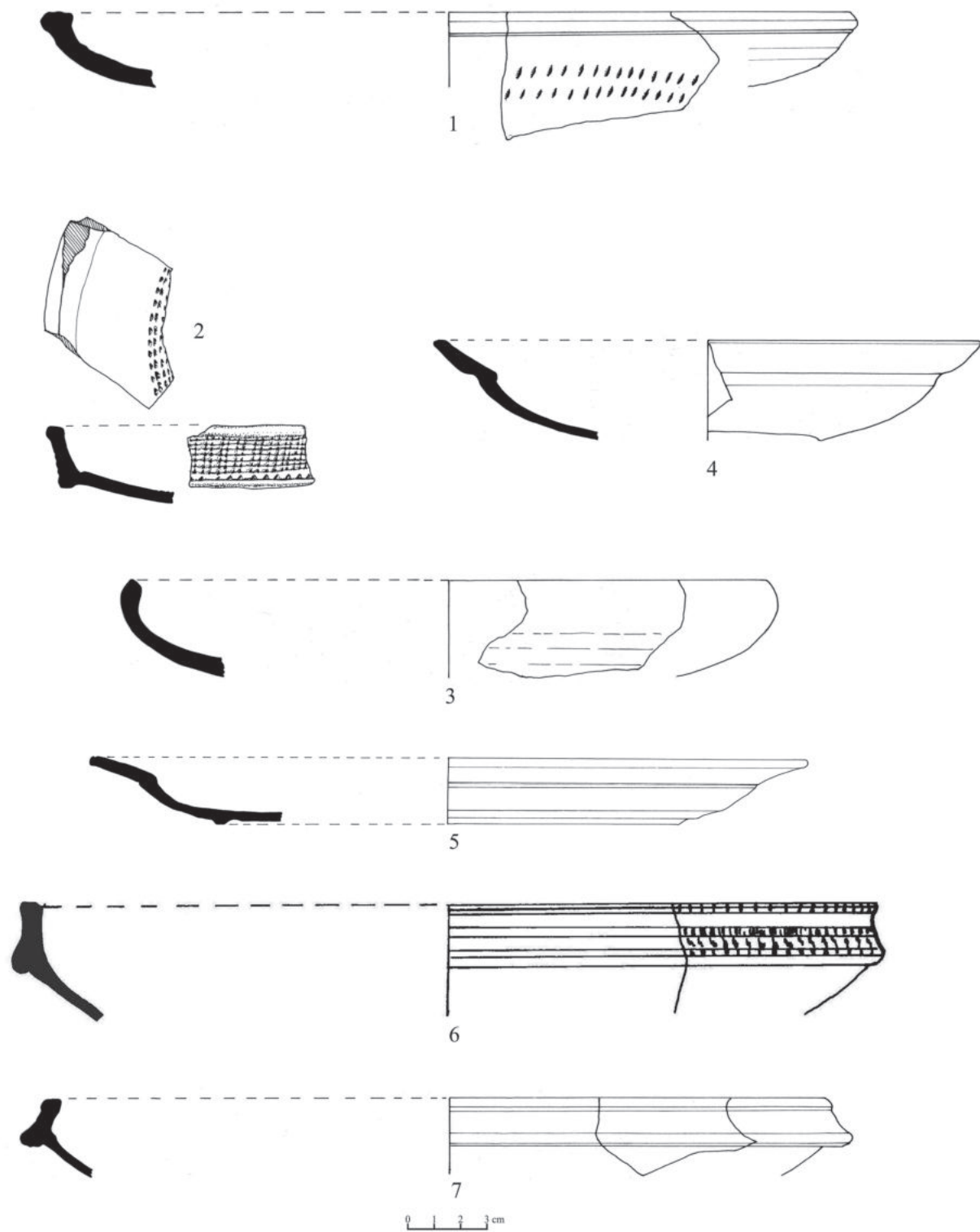


Fig. 7. Light Coloured / LRC
Light Coloured: 1 — Form 1; 2 — Form 2
LRC: 3 — H1; 4-5 — H2; 6-7 — H3

workshops.⁴² No less than four variants of this form have been identified, differing mainly in how oblique the rim is and the size of the foot. Variant A is identical in shape to Hayes Form 4 bowls from Çandarlı, having a high ring base and a strongly incurving rim. In variant B, the foot becomes massive, but sensibly shorter, and the rim is not so strongly incurving. Variant C has features similar to those of variant B, except for the rim that is almost straight and thickened toward the top so that it becomes oval in section. Bowls of this variant can have decoration on the outer surface of the rim, either rouletted or painted, as is the case of some of the Dobruja finds (especially painted black). At Aegyssus, of the eight fragments of bowls discovered in the old excavations, two represented variant A, two others variant B, and four variant C.

Bowls of Hayes Form 1 are found at numerous sites in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, in coastal North African and in the Pontic region. In Roman Dobruja, this type of bowl has been found in contexts between the end of the fourth and the fifth centuries at Topraichioi⁴³ and in similar archaeological contexts at Halmyris.⁴⁴ Two ceramic fragments belonging to form variants B and D were discovered at (L)Ibida, in contexts dated to the first part of the fifth century.⁴⁵

Hayes Form 2 [Fig. 7/4–5]

Plate/bowl with flat bottom on a short and thick ring base, heavily rounded walls and an outward-flaring rim offset from the body with a top-side groove. If Form 1 shows an undeniable influence of the Çandarlı workshops, Form 2 has no correspondence with products of workshops in the Pergamon area. Of the three variants proposed by Hayes in 1972 and dated between the end of the fourth century and the first part of the fifth century,⁴⁶ two have been identified at Aegyssus: variant A (two finds) and C (four finds). Variant A has a distinctive, outward-oriented, wide and oblique rim, set off from the body by a deep groove. The groove is missing from variant C with its oblique rim. The ring base of this variant is short and it is not as thick as the two previous variants. These bowls were very common in the late Roman settlements of Dobruja: variant B was discovered in the fifth habitation level at the Tropaeum Traiani⁴⁷ and variant A in the seventh habitation level at Halmyris.⁴⁸ The form was also recorded at Capidava.⁴⁹

Hayes Form 3 [Figs. 7/6–7 and 8/1–4]

Plate/bowl with approximately flat bottom on a more or less prominent ring base, oblique or rounded body walls and vertical rim, rectangular or triangular in section, furnished with an outside ledge of varying width depending on the variant. The rim can have rouletted decorated on the outer surface, the ornament disposed in one or more bands. In some variants, the rim was painted, the color being either white or black as a rule. The vessels also had stamped decoration (*in solea*). Six of the eight variants specific to this form were identified at Aegyssus:

Variant B (6 finds). Generally large-sized bowls with a high vertical rim, rectangular in section, oblique walls, flat bottom on a base of large diameter ensuring stability. Incised lines decorate the outside of the rim in some cases. Attested in the Tropaeum Traiani,⁵⁰ Halmyris,⁵¹ Capidava⁵² and (L) Ibida.⁵³ This variant was dated to the second half of the fifth century.

Variant C (15 fragments). Large plate/bowl with a high vertical rim, but slimmer than the previous variant and slightly bulging on the outside: the walls are curved and the base is flat on a low foot. Some fragments feature roulette decoration on the outside of the rim, disposed in one or

⁴² HAYES 1972, p. 325.

⁴³ ОРАИТ 1996, p. 137, pl. 56/11, 13.

⁴⁴ TOPOLEANU, p. 45, pl. 2/14–18.

⁴⁵ MOCANU 2011, p. 232, pl. 2/10.

⁴⁶ HAYES 1972, pp. 327–328, fig. 66.

⁴⁷ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, p. 187, fig. 160/2.

⁴⁸ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 46, pl. 2/19.

⁴⁹ ОПРИШ 2003, p. 150, pl. 54/354.

⁵⁰ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, p. 187, fig. 160/2.

⁵¹ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 48–49, pl. 3/23–26.

⁵² ОПРИШ 2003, p. 151, no. 355 (not illustrated).

⁵³ MOCANU 2011, pp. 232–233, pl. 3/13–15.

more bands. Some fragments bear traces of black paint on the upper and outer rim. This variant is very common in late Roman settlements in Dobruja, in contexts dated to the second half of the fifth century. The most important sites yielding this ware are Halmyris,⁵⁴ Histria⁵⁵ and (L)Ibida.⁵⁶ The variant was also attested at archaeological sites in the Balkans and the Aegean, in contexts from the second half of the fifth century.⁵⁷

Variant D (10 fragments). Bowls/plates relatively similar to those of the previous variant, but with considerably smaller diameters, fitted with a shorter rim, the lower part of which is more pronounced and more strongly profiled outwards. Rouletted decoration appears in one or two bands on the rim of some specimens. In Dobruja, this variant is less widespread than the previous one, being attested only in Halmyris⁵⁸ and (L)Ibida.⁵⁹ It is dated to the second half of the fifth century.

Variant E (13 fragments). Plates/bowls (diameter generally 20–30 cm), vertical rim, sometimes decorated either with roulette or painted black or white decoration. The walls are rounded, the bottom flat on a small ring base. Along with variant C, it is the most widespread variant of Hayes Form 3, present at virtually all of the late Roman settlements from the territory of Dobruja. The chronological range is between the end of the fifth century and the first decades of the sixth century.

Variant F (10 fragments). Generally, like variant E in shape, the main difference being a shorter rim, sometimes decorated with roulette decoration. After the top variants C and E, this is the commonest one at late Roman sites in Dobruja, including Halmyris⁶⁰ and (L)Ibida,⁶¹ as well as Tropaeum Traiani,⁶² Capidava⁶³ and Histria.⁶⁴ The plates and bowls in question are found in archaeological contexts from the first half of the sixth century.

Variant G (five fragments). Variant with a short and fairly thick vertical rim, separated from the body with a groove. Less attested in the region than variants C, E and F, they appear in contexts dated to the first half of the sixth century at Halmyris,⁶⁵ Histria⁶⁶ and (L)Ibida.⁶⁷

Hayes Form 4 [Fig. 8/5]

Plates with rounded walls, ring base and rim similar to Hayes Form 3, variant A, but of much smaller size. Considered a predecessor of Hayes Form 3, variant A, dating from the first half of the fourth century. At Aegyssus, the form was represented by a single ceramic fragment. Parallels from Dobruja are known only from Halmyris⁶⁸ and (L)Ibida.⁶⁹

Hayes Form 5 [Fig. 8/6]

Middle-sized or large plate/bowl, with a horizontal rim, concave in the upper part, curved walls, and flat base on a short circular foot. Fragments from the old excavations at Aegyssus belong to variant A of this form. It is present in the “*Extra muros North I*” sector at (L)Ibida⁷⁰ and at Halmyris, where the eight fragments from occupational levels 9–11⁷¹ represent variant B. The dating range coincides with that proposed by Hayes.⁷²

⁵⁴ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 49–50, pl. 4/27–34.

⁵⁵ MUȘETEANU, BĂLTĂC 2007, p. 204, pl. 74/2–3.

⁵⁶ MOCANU 2011, pp. 233–235, pls. 3–4/18–29.

⁵⁷ BÖTTGER 1991, p. 164, pl. 50/710; ABADIE-REYNAL, SODINI 1992, pp. 19–20, fig. 4/68–76.

⁵⁸ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 50, pl. 4/35–38.

⁵⁹ MOCANU 2011, pp. 235–236, pl. 4/40–43.

⁶⁰ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 51–52, pl. 5/47–52.

⁶¹ MOCANU 2011, pp. 238–239, pls. 6–7/67–74.

⁶² BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, p. 189, fig. 167/2.

⁶³ OPRÎȘ 2003, p. 151, no. 363, pl. 54/163.

⁶⁴ MUȘETEANU, BĂLTĂC 2007, pp. 205–206, pl. 74/4–13.

⁶⁵ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 53, pl. 6/57–61.

⁶⁶ MUȘETEANU, BĂLTĂC 2007, p. 206, pl. 74/15–16.

⁶⁷ MOCANU 2011, pp. 239–240, pl. 7/81–84.

⁶⁸ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 56, nos. 73–74, pl. 8/73–74.

⁶⁹ MOCANU 2014, p. 157, fig. 4/31.

⁷⁰ MOCANU 2014, p. 158, fig. 4/32.

⁷¹ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 58, pls. 9/84–87 & 10/88–89.

⁷² See HAYES 1972, p. 339, fig. 70, form 5.

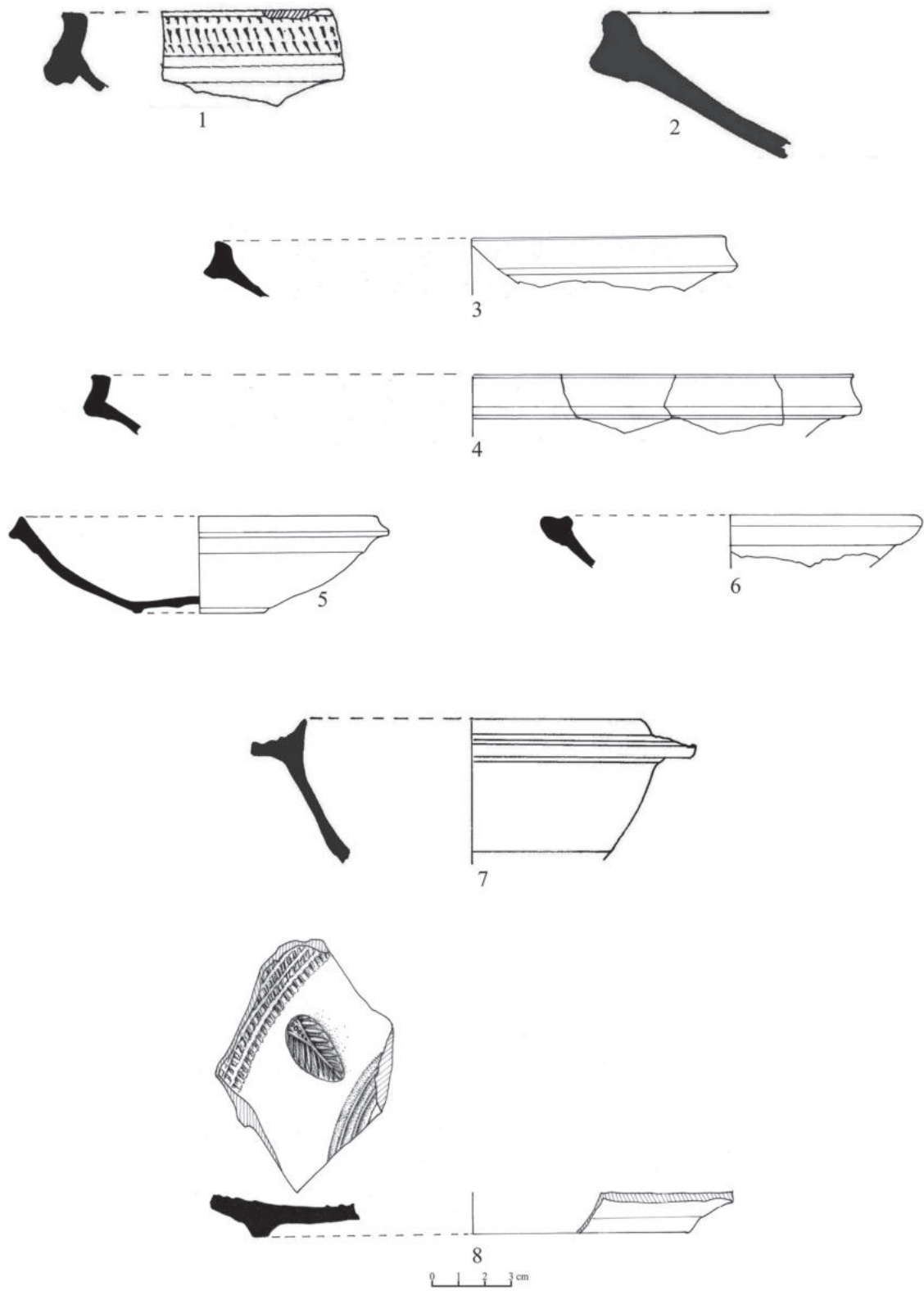


Fig. 8. LRC
 1-4 — H3; 5 — H4; 6 — H5; 7 — H8; 8 — stamped decoration

Hayes Form 8 [Fig. 8/7]

Middle-sized bowl with a horizontal and strongly rounded rim. The walls are oblique or rounded, and the bottom is flat. The base is annular and high. The diameter of these bowls does not exceed 20 cm. The upper surface of the rim is decorated with some concentric incised grooves, but there is no stamped decoration. At Aegyssus, a single fragment of extremely small size can be attributed to this form. In Dobruja, fragments of Hayes Form 8 were identified at (L)Ibida⁷³ and Halmyris, in contexts falling in the second half of the fifth century and first half of the sixth century.⁷⁴

Pontic Ware

The tradition of workshops producing tableware was continued in the Pontic region into the late Roman period. Unlike Asia Minor or North African pottery, Pontic pottery was identified relatively late as a stand-alone group, perhaps because not a single workshop has yet been recognized in this region.⁷⁵ Suffice it to say that the West Pontic area is a marginal space for the diffusion of this type of tableware.

The assemblage identified from Aegyssus, 28 fragments, remains one of the most numerous groups of late Pontic wares in the West Pontic region. The vessels represented two distinct forms: six finds belonged to Form 1 and no less than 22 fragments to Form 3 [Fig. 5b/3–5].

Form 1 [Fig. 9/3]

The form comprises middle- and large-sized bowls with a flat base, steep walls and small rim. In the Black Sea littoral, it is found in the North Pontic region, e.g., at Tanais, where it is dated between the mid-fourth and mid-fifth century. Examples of this form are also present in settlements in the eastern and southern parts of the Black Sea, where they are dated to the same chronological period.⁷⁶ In Dobruja, bowls of this form were discovered at Halmyris, in occupational levels 7–9, dated to the end of the fourth and the first half of the fifth century.⁷⁷ A similar vessel was discovered at Histria in habitation level III/A,⁷⁸ thus being of the same chronology as the finds from Halmyris. Two more finds were discovered in the fortified *horreum* in Topraichioi.⁷⁹

Form 3 [Fig. 9/4]

Large plates with rounded walls, wide, oblique or straight rim, sometimes with incised decoration on the upper surface. The diameters of these vessels are about 30 cm. Three fragments are known from (L)Ibida⁸⁰ and one from Halmyris, dated to the second half of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century.⁸¹ In the North Pontic region, numerous fragments were discovered at Tanais, in contexts dating to the mid-fifth century.⁸² These plates were also widespread in the East and South Pontic region.⁸³ An important feature of this form is the incised pre-firing decoration of the upper surface of the rim and the two concentric circles stamped centrally on the floor of the bowl.

⁷³ MOCANU 2011, p. 240, pl. 8/90–92.

⁷⁴ TOPOLEANU 2000, pp. 59–60, pl. 10/94–97.

⁷⁵ OPAIT 1985; DOMŻALSKI 2000; ARSEN'EVA, DOMŻALSKI 2002; SMOKOTINA 2015.

⁷⁶ DOMŻALSKI 2012, p. 6, fig. 3/1–6.

⁷⁷ OPAIT 1991a, p. 165, nos. 301–303, fig. 44/301–303.

⁷⁸ SUCEVEANU 1982, p. 85, no. 3, fig. 7/3.

⁷⁹ OPAIT 1991b, p. 230, pl. 42/2–3.

⁸⁰ MOCANU 2011, pp. 229–230, nos. 6–8, pl. 2/6.

⁸¹ OPAIT 1991a, p. 165, no. 300, pl. 44.

⁸² ARSEN'EVA, DOMŻALSKI 2002, p. 426, fig. 8/270–443.

⁸³ DOMŻALSKI 2012, p. 7, fig. 6.

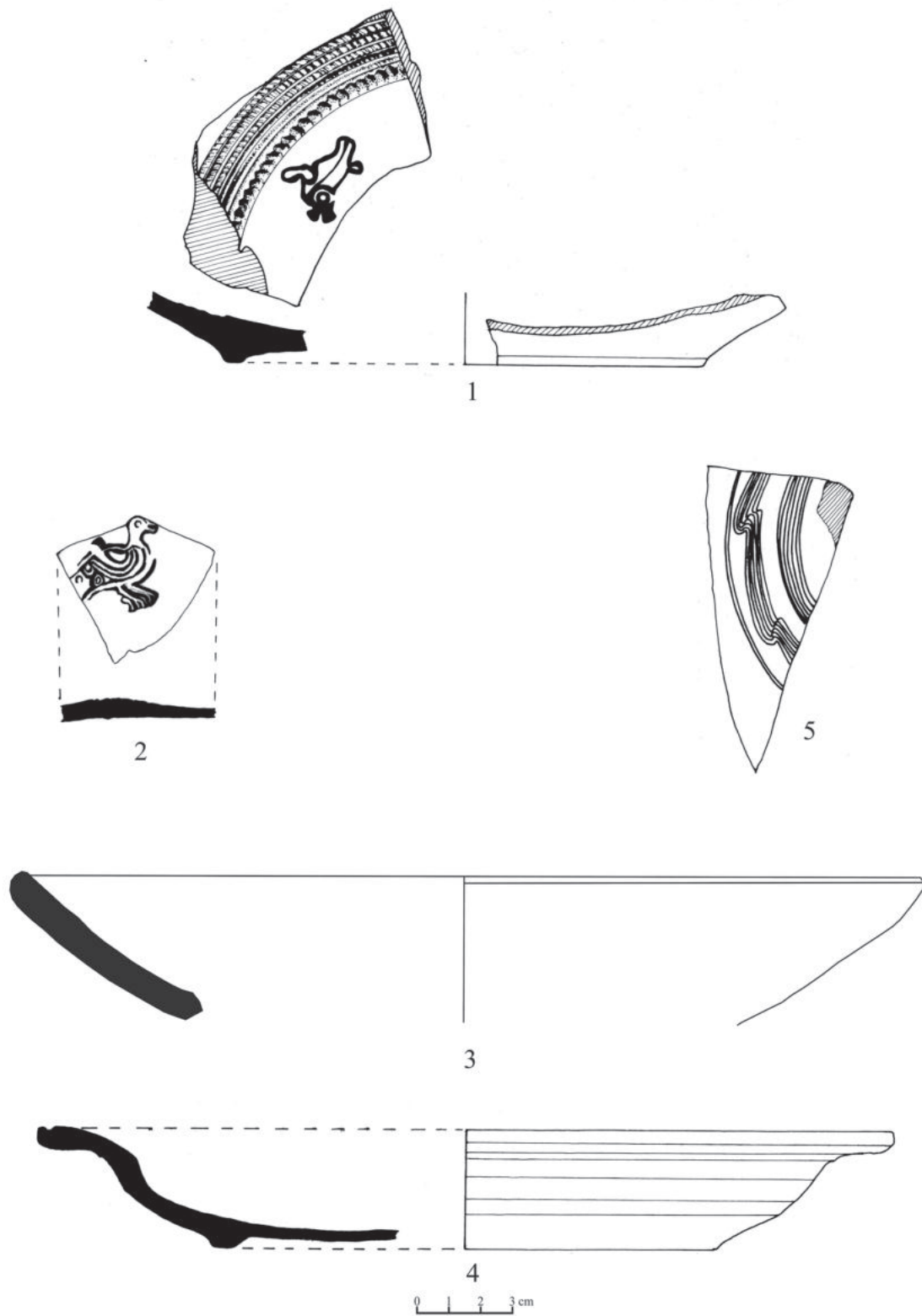


Fig. 9. LRC / Pontic Red Slip
 LRC: 1-2 — stamped decoration
 Pontic Red Slip: 3 — Form 1; 4 — Form 3; 5 — stamped decoration

Concluding remarks

The 121 late Roman ceramic diagnostic fragments discovered at Aegyssus between 1971 and 1998 can be provenanced to the following main geographical regions of the Roman Empire [Fig. 10]:

- North Africa: 12 pieces identified from this region, the most common form being Hayes 76, a new fact for the late Roman sites in the West Pontic region.
- Asia Minor, represented by the vast majority of the pottery used at Aegyssus in the second half of the fifth century and during the first half of the sixth century. Of the 76 ceramic fragments, 59 represent six of the eight variants of Hayes Form 3, the rest of the attested forms being Hayes 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8. At this stage of research, the absence of Hayes form 10 is notable. It could indicate that the fortification was abandoned by the end of the sixth century. A similar situation was observed at (L)Ibida, where this form is extremely rare,⁸⁴ but at Halmyris it is well documented; based on this evidence, Topoleanu concluded that this fortification survived until the mid-seventh century.⁸⁵
- Black Sea region, the last geographical area identified in the assemblage found at Aegyssus. No fewer than 28 fragments represented Pontic workshops, making Aegyssus the site with the largest percentage of Pontic tableware from the late Roman period in the West Pontic region.

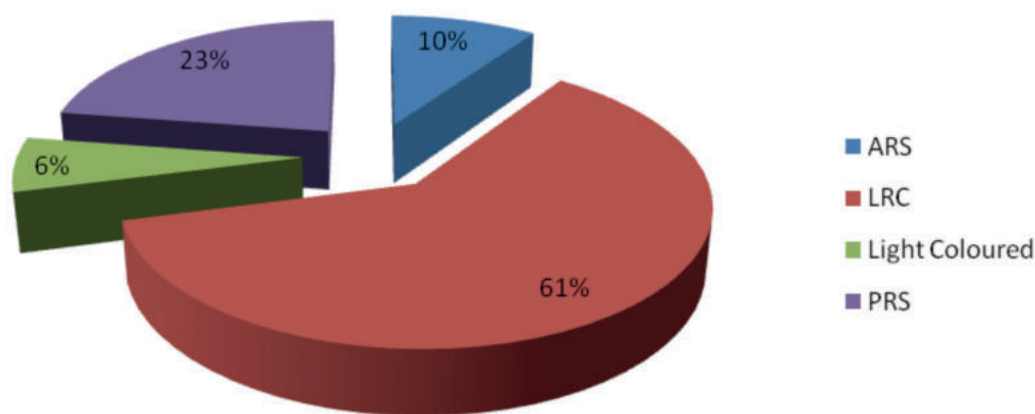


Fig. 10. The share of different pottery workshops in the assemblage of tableware from Aegyssus

Compared to other late Roman sites in Dobruja, the pottery assemblage from Aegyssus shows certain peculiarities. Phocaean production is known to exceed 80% of the share of tablewares from the period between the mid-fourth and the mid-seventh century in this geographical region, but in Aegyssus it represents only 61% of all of the pottery. The share of Light Coloured Ware and North-African pottery is within the limits known for this region, respectively 6% for pottery produced in the Aegean and 10% for ARS.

Another flagrant discrepancy concerns the Pontic Red Slip category. The diffusion of the type is believed to be the greatest in the northern Black Sea littoral starting from the Danube Delta in the north, in the Crimean Peninsula, and the eastern and southern areas of the Black Sea. In the case of the late Roman settlements from Dobruja, the percentage of this pottery type is between

⁸⁴ MOCANU 2011.

⁸⁵ TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 60.

5% and 10%, whereas in our assemblage Pontic Red Slip reaches 23%. However, it is hard to assume that these anomalies are somehow historically determined at Aegyssus. More likely, the studied sample was not complete, part of the material from the old excavations at Aegyssus having been lost over the years.

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Streszczenie

Późnorzymska ceramika typu Red Slip Ware z Aegyssus

Późnorzymska ceramika typu Red Slip Ware jest kategorią szeroko reprezentowaną w zespołach znalezisk pochodzących z badań wykopaliskowych prowadzonych z przerwami w drugiej połowie XX w. na stanowisku Aegyssus/Tulcea. Głównym celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie tej kategorii ceramiki w ujęciu typologicznym, z uwzględnieniem danych statystycznych.

Do badań wykorzystano jedynie znaleziska z dawnych badań (w latach 1971–1998). W sumie opracowano 121 diagnostycznych fragmentów pochodzących z fortu Aegyssus, określając ich pochodzenie z trzech regionów geograficznych: północnej Afryki (12 fragmentów), Azji Mniejszej (88 fragmentów) oraz Pontu (28 fragmentów). Wskazuje to na obecność ceramiki z trzech głównych ośrodków produkcji późnorzymskiej Red Slip Ware. Proporcje poszczególnych rodzajów odzwierciedlają w równym stopniu uwarunkowania historyczne, jak i obiektywne ograniczenia narzucone przez wybraną metodologię badań.

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