

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AND FIELD SURVEY OF ISPANARU AND THE SURROUNDING AREA (CONSTANȚA COUNTY)

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Cuvinte cheie: *apeduct, canalis structilis, ceramică, periegheză.*

Abstract: *The archaeological surveys and excavations from Ispanaru (2004 - 2010) have brought new original information, contributing to the knowledge of Getic, Hellenistic, Roman and medieval settlements from the area which was the subject of the research. The archaeological excavation proved that a Roman aqueduct was constructed here, probably in order to supply with additional volume of water the Roman city Tropaeum Traiani. A Turkish aqueduct has been also found in the area.*

Rezumat: *Perieghezele arheologice și săpăturile de la Ispanaru (2004-2010) au adus noi informații, contribuind la cunoașterea așezărilor getice, elenistice, romane și medievale din zona supusă cercetării. Săpăturile arheologice au dovedit că apeductul roman a fost construit aici probabil pentru a aproviziona cu un volum suplimentar de apă orașul roman Tropaeum Traiani. Un apeduct turcesc a fost de asemenea găsit în zonă.*

I. The field survey and archaeological excavation

The abandoned village Ispanaru is situated at 5,5 km North - West¹ from Adamclisi, near the National Road 3 from Constanța to Ostov (**Fig. 1a**). Some of the first information about this village came from the Austrian geographer and geologist Karl Ferdinand Peters who mentioned in his work *Grundlinien zur Geographie und Geologie der Dobroutscha*, printed in Vienna in 1867, that the mausoleum from that area was situated on the road from Adam-klissi to the

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¹ The geographic location of the site is 44°07'32.71" North and 27°55'56.84" East.

village Jüspunlar². Other important information can be found in the work of captain Marin Ionescu-Dobrogiu, *Dobrogiu în pragul veacului al XX-lea*, printed in 1904. It states that "...the village *Ius-Fanar*, *Iusuf-Fanar* or better, I believe, *Iusuf-Punar* (the well of Iusuf), is on Urluia valley, at 8 km from Enige village;..."³

The first archaeological research began in the autumn of 2004, when, based on the information gathered from the locals, a surface survey⁴ was made at the archaeological site and in other areas such as the abandoned village Talașman. The remains of an old cemetery, which have been abandoned since 1920 (as the locals say) have been discovered at Ispanaru. There the traces of a Turkish aqueduct⁵ have also been identified. In the next year another survey⁶ was made in the area of the old village Ispanaru⁷ and to the North and South. Getic, Roman and medieval pottery fragments have been discovered on the plateau that dominates the spring valley (on the South-West area). Also, near to the Turkish aqueduct, a Roman aqueduct was found, built in *canalis structilis* technique, which was oriented North West - South East⁸. On the basis of this information, some archaeological excavations and other surface surveys⁹ were inaugurated in 2006. Then both the Roman *canalis structilis* aqueduct and the Turkish aqueduct were cleaned, analyzed and photographed, the last one being made of pipes. The Roman aqueduct is intact and is overlapped by a concrete wall which protects the spring valley from torrents. The Turkish aqueduct, West North West - East South East oriented, is preserved on a 6 meters length. Though it was not possible to make any excavations (because the Turkish aqueduct is still in operation, used for animals watering) it is likely that it was linked to the Roman aqueduct from which the water was taken. The substruction of the Roman *canalis structilis* type aqueduct was also found in some points on the valley which followed an East-West trail to 450 m away from the road that connected Urluia and National Road 3 to Aliman and Danube. From this point on, the valley makes a right angle toward Roman city Tropaeum Traiani. The aqueduct dimensions and the altitude, which is higher than the Roman city Tropaeum Traiani, indicate that this aqueduct might have been one of the water sources for the city (**Fig. 1b** and **c**, **Fig. 2a** and **b**). The survey revealed other pottery fragments. Although conditioned by the short time, an archaeological excavation has been made, named S1, East-West oriented, with the dimensions of 4 x 2 m, on the plateau which dominates the spring valley, with no conclusive results¹⁰. The next two years, the research of the area was confined to surface surveys¹¹ and the aerial photos of the area analyses. As a result, in 2009 some test pits were supposed to be realised, in order to verify

² PETERS 1867, p. 143 and fig. 18.

³ IONESCU - DOBROGIU 1904, p. 452 and the map no. 3.

⁴ The survey was made by Cristian Olariu and Mihai Severus Ionescu.

⁵ OLARIU, IONESCU 2005, p. 20-21.

⁶ The survey was made by Cristian Olariu, Mihai Severus Ionescu and Filica Drăghici.

⁷ Here there are two springs of the old village.

⁸ OLARIU, IONESCU 2006, p. 41.

⁹ The survey was made with the help of students of Faculty of History, The University of Bucharest.

¹⁰ OLARIU, IONESCU 2007, p. 31.

¹¹ OLARIU, IONESCU 2008, p. 23.

some Google Earth information such as a rectangular structure with the dimensions of 84 x 84 m. (Fig. 2c) Unfortunately, the lack of time restricted the archaeological interventions to one test pit excavation, with the dimensions of 4 x 1 m, followed by another one with the dimensions of 1 x 1 m. An alignment of various stones was found - 0,64 m deep, near the eastern side of the trench, probably a part of a substructure. (Fig. 2d and e) From this level and up, some early medieval pottery fragments were found, one of them on the lineout. Also, during the surface survey in the area,¹² another segment from the *canalis structilis* aqueduct¹³ was identified. The last researches were made in 2010, when the area near Urluia village, specifically rich in archaeological sites, (some of them already identified by Mihai Irimia¹⁴) was surveyed. Some Getic and Roman pottery fragments were found on the Polucci valley, as a part of the larger valleys complex connecting the Danube with the coast side. The field data, corroborated with the information from the aerial pictures lead to the assumption of an important Roman settlement existence here. This settlement has a rectangular shape with the dimensions of 380 x 140 m, and the aqueduct may be linked to this one. Only new archaeological researches may provide additional data about the site of Ispanaru, the existence of which extends to more eras.

II. The pottery

All the pottery fragments in the present study derive from a few points in the area of the archaeological site Ispanaru. The discoveries were made during the years 2005-2008, in the following research areas: the hill near the point Cișmea 2005 - *passim*, 2005-2008 *passim*, S2 - 0.32 m 2008 and S3 - 0.94 m 2008. It is important to mention that the main part of the pottery fragments were discovered *passim*, during a few trips and a small part of the material was found during the archaeological excavations.

The aim of the pottery analysis was to identify the cultural attribution of the sherds to a material culture, the nature of the archaeological site and the main features of the ceramics. The pottery was sorted according to the burning method, the quality of the fabric and the manufacture method (hand made or wheel made). According to these analyses, the pottery was grouped in a few main categories in order to identify their attribution to a specific culture. The analysis has been done macroscopically and I have visually recorded a few characteristics: the dimensions of the sherds, the fabric color, texture and the decoration, the main macroscopically visible clasts, the surface treatment and, in some cases, other post manufacture events such as secondary burning.

The pottery was found in an extremely fragmented condition and no vessel was entirely recovered or even partially reconstructed. In fact, only a small percentage of the sherds was included into the catalogue, as typical, since the majority of the fragments are simply too small or are just elements from the median parts of the vessels.

¹² The survey was made by Cristian Olariu, Mihai Severus Ionescu and Claudiu Tănase.

¹³ OLARIU, TĂNASE, BABA 2010, p. 327.

¹⁴ OLARIU 2011, p. 249-250; IRIMIA 2004-2005, p. 319-384.

The description of color nuances has been made through visual free observation and by comparison with Munsel code (Munsell soil color charts 1994, revised edition).

Regarding the manufacture method, only one sherd is certainly hand made – a characteristic of the local Getic culture (nr. catalogue 9), the rest of the sherds being included in the category of wheel made pottery.

I have been able to distinguish two major methods of firing: reduced and oxidized. 42% of the total number of sherds have been fired by the reduced technique resulting in diverse nuances of gray color vessel, from pale to dark gray. It is remarkable that an important part of the reduced fired vessels are classified in the same culture, Greek / Hellenistic culture (4th – 3rd century BC), and the rest is typical for the early Middle Age. The oxidized burned vessels are mostly classified as Greek amphora imports, a few might be early Roman and some combine the colors (red nuances on the surface of the vessel, and gray core, as a result of an insufficient firing). The oxidized burnt vessels are represented by a percentage of 58 % of the sherds.

The fabric is diverse, two main categories having been identified: fine or semi fine and coarse fabrics. The first is often gray color reduced fired, with small micro particles of limestone. The silver mica is present inside the matrix or in the composition of the surface treatment (slip). The fabric is dense but not always uniformly fired, and the surface is polished or simply coated with a solid light or dark gray slip (IRIMIA 2004-2005, pp. 354-355). A small number of the fine sherds are oxidized fired (Munsell color 2.5Y 7/6 yellow), but from the same categories as the gray reduced fired. These exceptions are reddish fine fabric with fine silver mica and are covered with a gloss polished beige slip on the outside. This type is in fact identical with the previous one, the only difference being that this type is oxidized fired, changing its color from gray to reddish nuances¹⁵. Occasionally, some of the oxidized red nuances fired sherds are fine or semi fine, but the majority of the amphorae sherds are coarse, with a granulated and dense aspect.

The coarse pottery is divided in many variants, but the roughest are the early medieval gray sherds, followed by some amphora fragments. The main characteristic of the early medieval fabrics is the abundance of sand and other lithic impurities and sparkles of silver mica. Some of the coarse medieval sherds are secondarily burned, which is not the case of the fine gray reduced fired pottery.

Analyzing the cultural attribution of the pottery, a great part of it (44 %) can be identified as Getic or Greek vessels imitations¹⁶. There are a few identified forms such as bowls or deep plateaus. Some of the sherds are elements from Greek amphorae (14%). A few fragments can be assigned to early Roman or Hellenistic, as amphora handle and other imported vessel, possibly related to the Roman aqueduct (14%).

A significant percentage of the pottery fragments (28 %) is early medieval, represented by some rim fragments of pots or bases of jars. The last category is represented by a few fragments of modern, vessels, oxidized fired, with traces of

¹⁵ IRIMIA, 2004-2005, p. 356.

¹⁶ CONOVICI 1978, p. 35-42.

red and brown glaze.

CATALOGUE

Greek amphorae

1. Rim fragment of an amphora; 2007, *passim*; preserved height 3 cm, rim diameter 13 cm, fine brick color fabric with small particles of limestone and silver mica, Munsell 10YR 7/8 yellow. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004/2005, p. 323, fig. 2/1, Greek amphora from Chios, 5th century B.C.; BUZOIANU 1991, p. 75-76, pl. 6/E - (5th century BC); MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008, Pl. XIII/129.

2. Rim fragment of an amphora; 2005, *passim*; the hill near the point Cișmea; preserved height 3.8 cm, rim diameter 9 cm, brick color fabric with small particles of limestone, silver mica and other black micro particles, Munsell 2.5Y 7/6 yellow, and angobe 2.5Y 8/3 pale yellow.

3. Rim fragment of an amphora; 2008 *passim*; preserved height 4.2 cm, rim diameter approximately 9 cm (the fragment is too small); brick color fabric with silver mica and limestone particles, Munsell 2.5Y7/8 yellow.

4. Bottom fragment of an amphora; *passim*; preserved height 11 cm, maximum diameter 10 cm, minimum diameter 5 cm; the fragment is massive, the fabric is reddish, with micro particles of limestone and silver mica, Munsell 5YR 6/8 reddish yellow. MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008, Pl. XVII/176-178. Possibly Greek amphora from Lesbos.

Getic culture or imitations

5. Rim fragment of a pot; 2008 *passim*; inside diameter 30 cm; outside diameter 35 cm, fine reddish fabric with small red particles and silver mica, the core is gray, the surface treatment is gray color, polished, Munsell 5Y4/2 olive gray. Analogies: CRIȘAN 1969, Pl. XXXIV/8 (4th - 3rd century BC); MOSCALU 1983, pl. LXX/6, LXXXIII/4 (4th - 3rd century BC).

6. Rim fragment of a deep bowl; 2008 *passim*; preserved height 3.2 cm, rim diameter over 30 cm; gray fine fabric with silver mica and small limestone particles, the surface is polished, 5Y 4/2 light olive gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, p. 343, fig. 9/10 (4th - 3rd century BC); GEORGIEVA, BACVAROV 1994, pl. XLI/1; MOSCALU 1983, Pl. LI/6, LVI/7.

7. Rim fragment of a cup; *passim*; preserved height 2,3 cm, rim diameter 12 cm; fine gray polished fabric with silver mica, Munsell 10YR 3/2 very dark grayish brown. Analogies: CRIȘAN 1969, CLXXXVIII/5; IRIMIA 1986, R 101/6.

8. Rim fragment of a pedestal bowl (?); *passim*; rim diameter 30 cm; fine polished gray fabric with silver mica and rare limestone particles, Munsell 10YR 3/1 very dark gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, p. 321, fig. 6/1 (4th - 3rd century

BC); GEORGIEVA, BAČVAROV 1994, pl. XV/4; IRIMIA 1986 R97/7 (second half of the 5th century BC).

9. Fragmentary median part of a hand made jar; *passim*; preserved height 2.5 cm; coarse reddish fabric with rare sand particles, decorated with a button, Munsell 2.5YR 5/8 red. Analogies: ȘOVAN, IGNAT, 2012, p. 44, fig 13-14 (5th -3rd century BC); IRIMIA 1991, p. 113, fig 7/8 (6th century BC), p. 117, pl. 7/6 (4th - 3rd century BC).

10. Lower part of a deep bowl; *passim*; bottom diameter 12 cm, preserved height 6 cm; semi fine gray fabric with small limestone fragments and silver mica, the color is reddish, core is gray, and the slip is gray only on the outside, Munsell 10 YR 4/1 dark gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, p 322, fig. 5/3 (4th - 3rd century BC).

11. Fragmentary base of a bowl; 2008, *passim*; preserved height 1.9 cm, base diameter 8 cm, fine light gray fabric with black particles and silver mica, ring base, Munsell 1 for grey, 6/1 greenish gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, fig. 6/7 (4th - 3rd century BC); SIMION 1971, p. 56, fig. 3/4.

12. Fragmentary base of a deep bowl; 2008, *passim*; preserved height 4,5 cm, base diameter 10 cm, fine gray fabric with silver mica, polished on the inside and outside, Munsell 10YR 6/1 gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, fig. 9/3 (4th - 3rd century BC); SIMION 1971, p. 56, fig. 3/4.

13. Fragmentary base of a deep bowl; 2008, *passim*; preserved height 2.5 cm, base diameter 12 cm; fine gray-yellowish fabric with silver mica, gray slip, polished on the inside, Munsell 10YR 5/1 gray. Analogies: IRIMIA 2004-2005, fig. 9/3 (4th - 3rd century BC); SIMION 1971, p. 56, fig. 3/4.

14. Fragmentary base of a bowl; *passim*; preserved height 2.5 cm, base diameter 10 cm; fine gray granulated fabric with silver mica, polished on the outside, dark gray slip, Munsell 1 for grey 4/1 dark greenish gray. Analogies: SIMION 1971, p. 56, fig. 3/4.

15. Fragmentary base of a bowl; *passim*; preserved height 3.5 cm, base diameter 8.5 cm, fine pale gray fabric with silver mica sparkles, micro fractures, light gray slip, polished on the outside, Munsell 10R 4/1 dark reddish gray. Analogies: Greek / Hellenistic culture (4th - 3rd century BC).

16. Fragmentary base of a bowl; 2007, *passim*; preserved height 2 cm, base diameter 12 cm, the fabric is pale reddish, fine, with sparkles of silver mica, the slip is dense, light gray, Munsell 2.5Y 6/1 gray. Analogies: Greek / Hellenistic culture (4th - 3rd century BC).

17. Fragmentary spindle whorl; 2008, S3, - 0.94 m; diameter 7 cm, half fragment, rough manufacture and cylindrical shape, made of yellow clay, Munsell

5Y7/6 yellow. Analogies: SÎRBU, CONSTANTIN 2012, p. 88-89, pl. VI/6.

Hellenistic / Roman

18. Fragment of amphora handle; *passim*; preserved length 11 cm, maximum diameter 5 cm; coarse reddish fabric with sand, iron oxide and limestone particles, decorated with grooves, Munsell 5YR 6/8 reddish yellow. Possible Roman Pontic amphora.

19. Bottom fragment of an amphora; *passim*; preserved height 8.5 cm; coarse brick color fabric with limestone, red and black particles and iron oxide, Munsell 5Y8/3 pale yellow. Possibly Roman bottom.

20. Fragmentary bottom of a vessel, 2008, S3, - 0.94 m; base diameter 8 cm, preserved height 2.5 cm; brick color fine fabric with black and silver mica, the slip is yellowish brick color, Munsell 10 YR 7/6 yellow. Possibly early Roman vessel.

21. Rim fragment of a small bowl or cup; *passim*; preserved height 2 cm, rim diameter 12 cm; fine granulated red fabric with very rare black and white inclusions (micro particles) self slip, Munsell 2.5YR 4/8 red. Analogies for earlier times: JOHNSON 2008, p. 13 no. 27 – Eastern Sigillata B, form 48, first century AD (variant); GALLIMORE 2011, p. 205, fig. 5.9/69-70 bowls - context of mid-second to mid-first century BC (in phase). Other parallels for the Roman period: OPAIȚ 1977-1978, p.358, pl. XIV/1 (deep plate/bowl, 2nd century AD); KÜHNELT 2008, p. 125, pl. kat. no. 242-243 (2nd – 3rd century AD). Possibly 2nd century AD.

Early medieval

22. Rim fragment of a pot; *passim*; preserved height 4 cm, rim diameter 14 cm; coarse reddish fabric with sand and other lithic fragments, the core is gray because of the insufficient burning, secondarily burned on the outside; decorated with parallel striations and lines, Munsell 2.5YR 5/6 red. Analogies: early medieval PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, TALMAȚCHI, ȘOVA, BARDAC 2012, Pl. XI/9, 10th -11th century AD.

23. Rim fragment of a pot; *passim*; preserved height 3.2 cm, rim diameter 13 cm; coarse beige harsh fabric with sand particles, rough, the core is pale gray due to the insufficient burning, secondarily burned on the outside, Munsell 5 YR 5/6 yellowish red. Analogies: PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, STĂNICĂ 2007, p. 326, pl. II; JERVIS, LOCKYEAR, POPESCU, SLY 2011 fig. 1/C - early medieval.

24. Fragmentary base of a jar; 2007, *passim*; preserved height 4 cm, base diameter 12 cm; coarse gray - reddish fabric with fragments of limestone, drastic secondarily burned only on the inside, Munsell 10YR 7/4 very pale brown. Early medieval.

25. Bottom fragment of jar; 2008 *passim*; preserved height 3.8 cm, bottom diameter 8 cm; dark gray coarse fabric with fragments of rock and limestone, Munsell 10YR 5/4 yellowish brown and the surface treatment, 10R 2/5.1 reddish

black. Analogies: DAMIAN, VASILE, STĂNICĂ, BĂNĂSEANU, SAMSON 2007, fig. 19, 21 early medieval.

26. Medium part fragment of a pot; 2008 *passim*; 8.5 x 4 cm, brown coarse fabric with lithic fragments, limestone and silver mica, the core is insufficiently burned; the fragment is decorated with horizontal grooves, Munsell (surface) 5Y7/6 yellow and the core 2.5Y/1 black. Analogies: early medieval PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, STĂNICĂ 2007, p. 326, pl. II; PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, TALMAȚCHI, ȘOVA, BARDAC 2012, pl. XII/2.

27. Medium part of a pot; 2008 *passim*; 3 x 3 cm, gray coarse fabric with small lithic and limestone fragments and silver mica; decorated with grooves; Munsell 2.5Y4/3 olive brown. Early medieval.

28. Fragmentary median part of a pot; *passim*; 4 x 4.5 cm; reddish coarse fabric with small red stone fragments and silver mica in composition, Munsell 10YR 7/6 yellow. Analogies: early medieval PARASCHIV-TALMAȚCHI, TALMAȚCHI, ȘOVA, BARDAC 2012, pl. IX/1, pl. XI/4 (10th -11th century AD); SIMION 1971, fig. 4/8.

29. Fragmentary bottom of a jar; 2008, *passim*; preserved height 2.3 cm, bottom diameter 7 cm; rough execution, gray coarse fabric with small stones and limestone in composition, gray color and beige slip on the outside, Munsell 5Y 7/6 yellow (slip color).

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a



b



c

Fig. 1

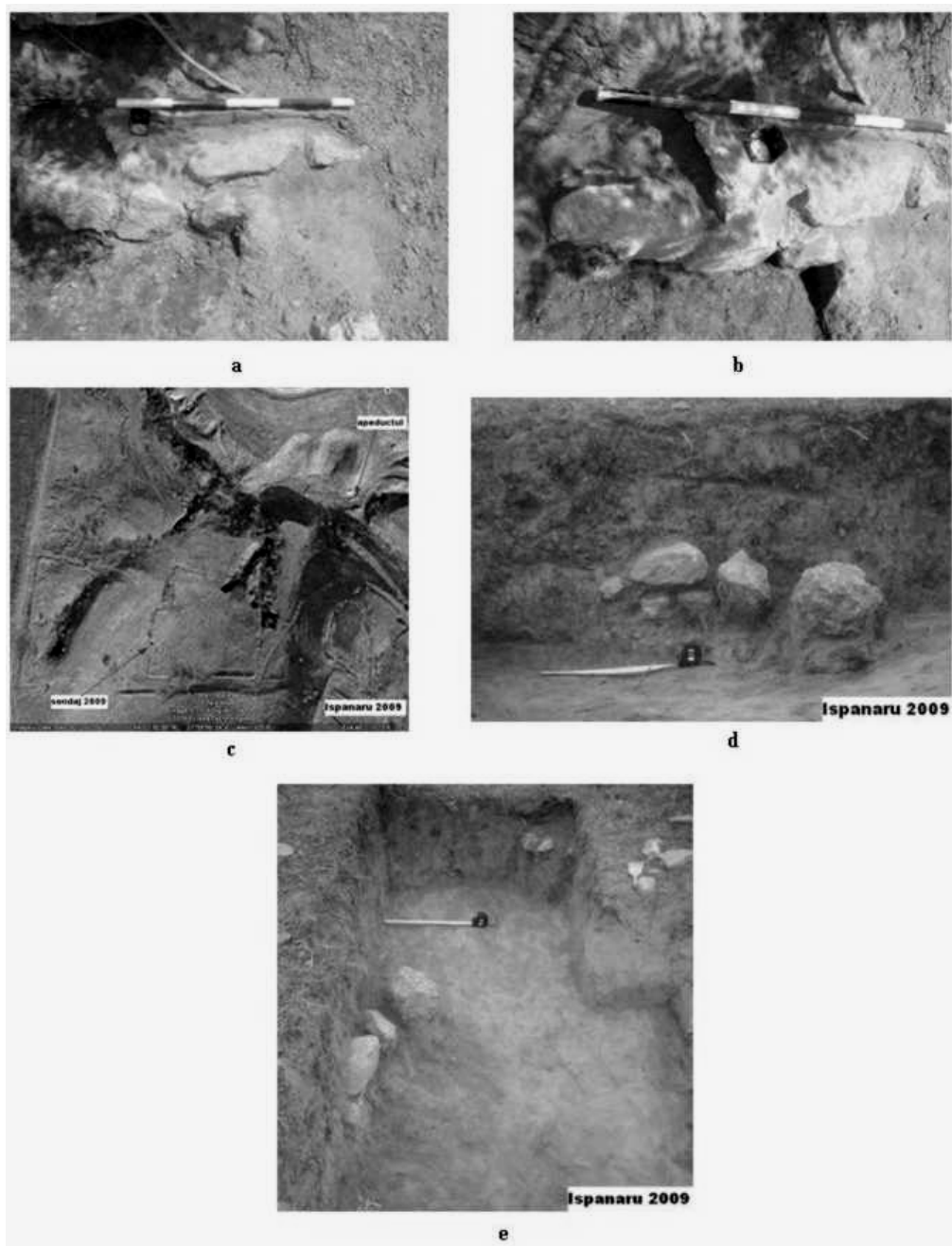
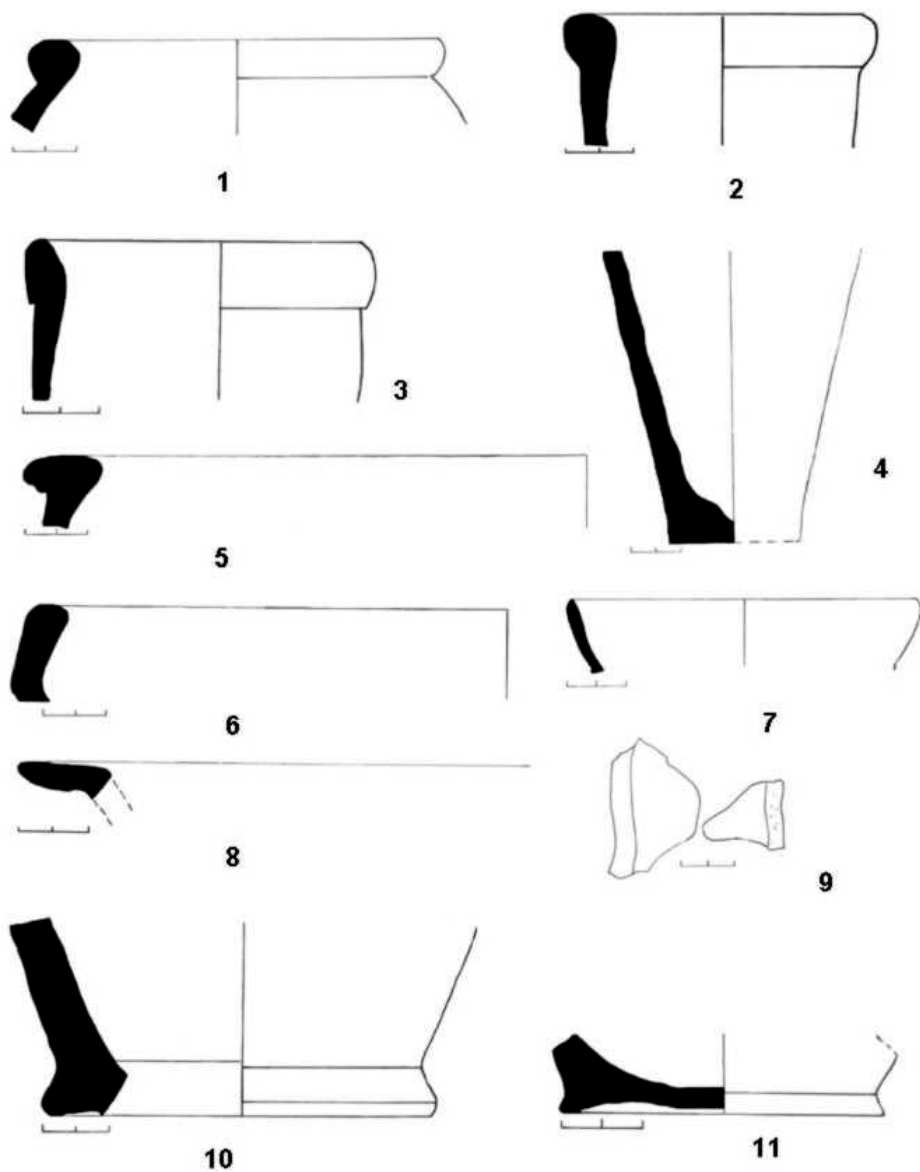
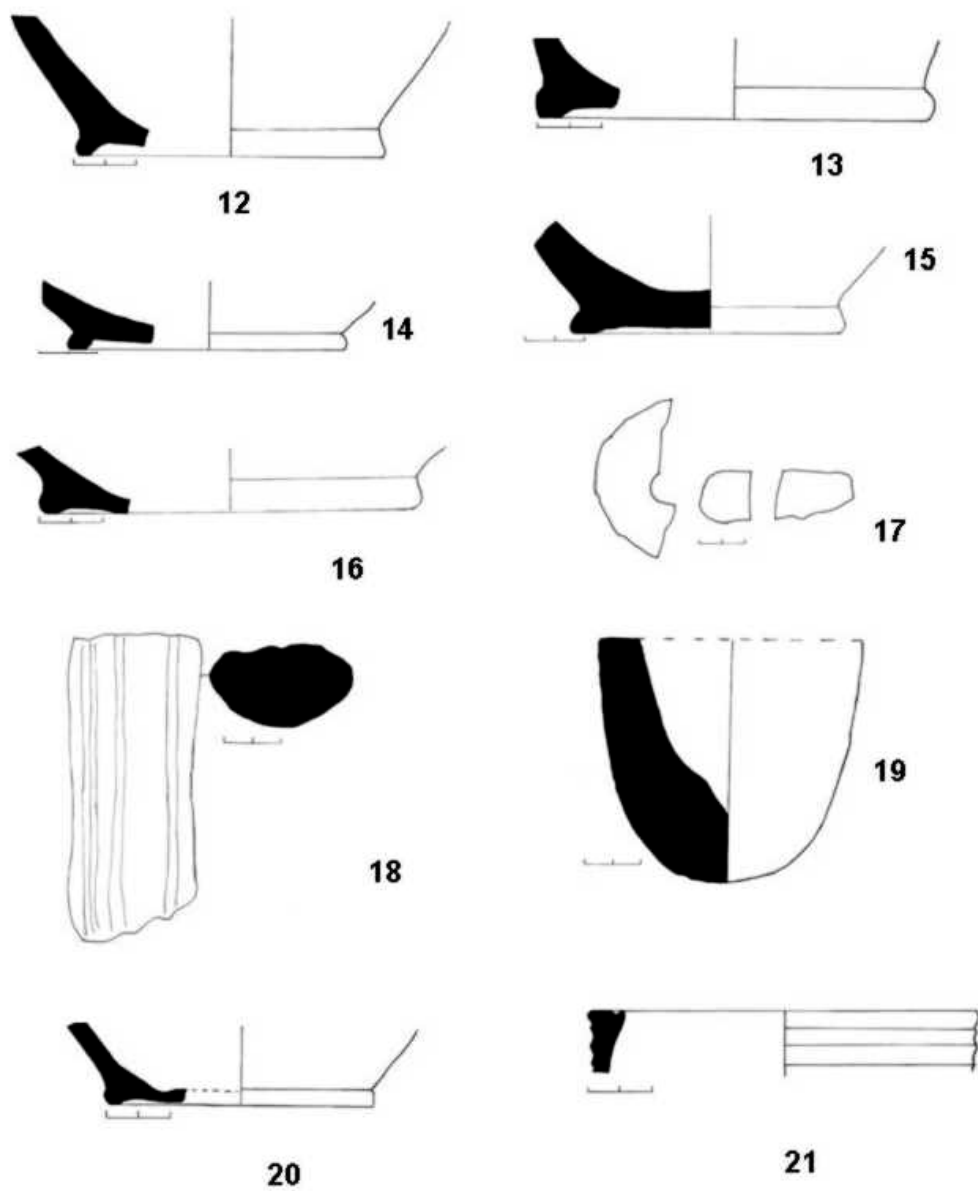


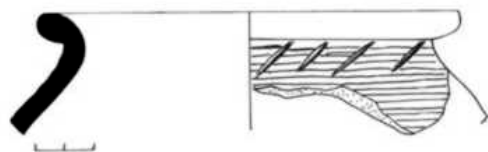
Fig. 2



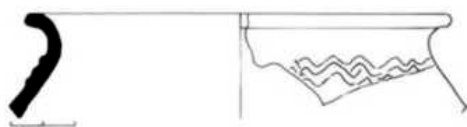
Pl. I



PL. II



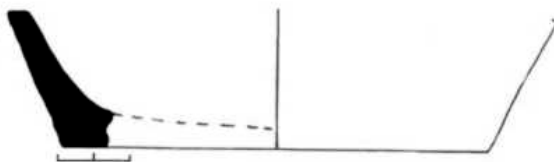
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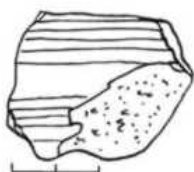
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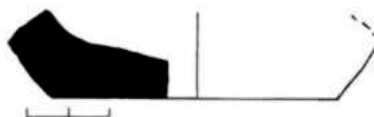
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27

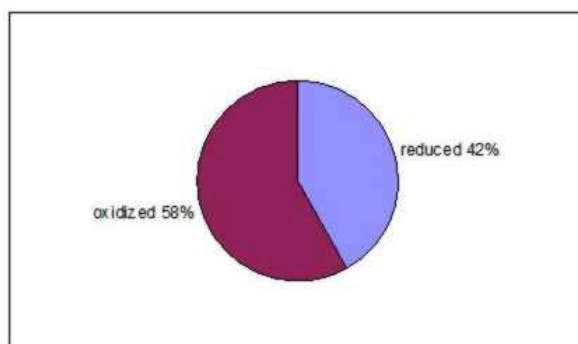


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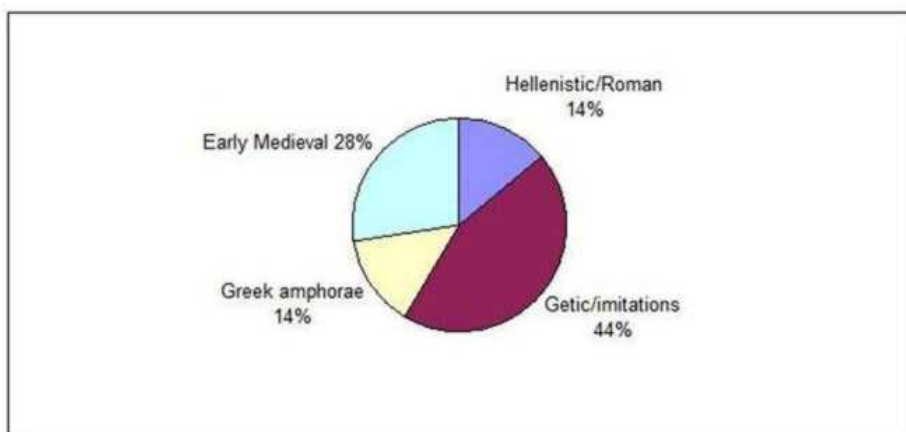


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Pl. III



Graphic 1. Percentage repartition of the pottery according to the firing method



Graphic 2. Percentage repartition of the identified pottery

Pl. IV