

10th-11th CENTURIES AMPHORAE FROM CAPIDAVA

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Rezumat: *Articolul se dorește o continuare a demersului început în anuarul Pontica 45 (2012)¹ de prezentare a subcategoriilor ceramice de factură superioară de la Capidava (sec. X-XI). Subcategoria ce urmează a fi abordată în acest studiu este cea a amforelor, forma cea mai bogat reprezentată din categoria ceramicii de factură superioară. De altfel, amforele sunt cele mai numeroase după vasele de uz comun din categoria ceramicii nisipoase. Din păcate însă există foarte puține exemplare întregi sau întregibile. După studierea acestora și a unui număr considerabil de fragmente putem aproxima existența la Capidava, în secolele X-XI, a unui număr de cca. 50-70 de amfore repartizate în două tipuri, diferite în ceea ce privește forma.*

Abstract: *The article endeavours to continue previous research published in Pontica 45 (2012), which presented subcategories of pottery of superior manufacture existent at Capidava (X to XI centuries). This study presents the amphorae subcategory, the biggest entry of this sort. Furthermore, in what concerns the sandy incised pottery the amphorae are, after ordinary use pots, the most common findings. Unfortunately, the number of whole or intelligible items is very scarce. Studying these and the remaining fragments reveals that an approximate 57 to 70 items of this type and form (two types) were in use at Capidava between the 10th - 11th. centuries.*

Amphorae are the most richly represented in the category of high quality pottery from Capidava (51%); they are in fact the most numerous after common vessels ranging from sandy pottery². Of our knowledge, three amphorae were found whole or nearly whole which have been restored (**cat. 1, 14, 15**), one amphora which can be completed and will be restored (**cat. 16**) and 1159 amphorae fragments representing parts of the bottom/body, neck/mouth,

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¹ CURSARU-HERLEA 2012, p. 329-343.

² CURSARU-HERLEA 2012, p. 343, grafic 1, 3.

shoulder, shoulder/neck/mouth, shoulder/handle, handles; most of them are body fragments. The fact that the amphorae are mostly fragmentary does not allow us to make a reliable assessment about their number. After studying the fragments we can approximate a total of 50-70 amphorae. They seem to have their origins in Greek and Roman amphorae, used generally in the preservation and transport of liquids (oil, wine).

This ceramic subcategory has been given very little attention. In archaeological monograph are mentioned, with a very brief description, fragments of four amphorae with raised handles³ and in an excavation report of 1959 is mentioned the discovery of two whole amphorae and various amphorae fragments⁴. For this reason, the aim of this approach is to achieve a typology of early medieval amphorae from Capidava, with a detailed description of each type, even though it was necessary to include in our analysis also the two published amphorae.

Early medieval amphorae from Capidava are of two types, different in terms of form. We refer to amphorae belonging to Dinogetia-Garvăn type 1 and subtype 2a⁵.

Type 1. Spheroid amphorae are small and medium sized, they have cambered body (maximum diameter is slightly smaller than the height), very short neck, narrow mouth (diameter of 8-10 cm) and rounded bottom. They have a capacity of 4 to 6 liters. The handles are small, arched and nearly circular in section. They are attached to the top of the neck amphora and to the bottom of its shoulder; most of them do not exceed the height of the mouth (**cat. 1, 2, 4**). The ones that slightly exceed the height of the mouth seem to be from a later period⁶. They are made of clean clay (sometimes with quartz), of good quality and as a result of oxidizing homogeneous combustion they obtained colors ranging from light brick-red to brown-brick. Except for one whole piece there were preserved only fragments, larger or smaller, easily recognized by their appearance.

Spheroid amphorae décor consists of fine grooves, sharp or blurred, usually placed on the shoulder and below to the level of maximum diameter (**cat. 1**). On the shoulder and handles of most amphorae, various graffiti are incised on the burnt pasta of the vessel; they consist of signs, letters and sometimes even short inscriptions (**cat. 4-13**). The letters and inscriptions are Greek, old Slave and Runic⁷. They can be attributed both to merchants who produced and then transported them and to consumers and they refer to either the vessel's capacity or the name of the owner or merchant⁸. As far as we know, there were not found at Capidava amphorae or fragments of spheroid amphorae with stamps on the shoulder or handles (applied on the paste still raw) as they appear on amphorae discovered at Dinogetia-Garvăn⁹ and Păcuiul

³ FLORESCU, FLORESCU, DIACONU 1958, p. 209.

⁴ FLORESCU, FLORESCU *et alii* 1959, p. 625, PL. V, fig. 7, 8, p. 626.

⁵ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 249-259.

⁶ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 251; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 262; BARNEA 1989, p. 132.

⁷ Regarding Runic writing v. CORBU 2006, p. 118-121.

⁸ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 254; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 262; BARNEA 1989, p. 132.

⁹ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 251- 252, fig. 154/2-14.

lui Soare¹⁰. In Dobrudja, spheroid amphorae are considered the oldest, dating from 10th-11th centuries¹¹. This type of whole amphora from Capidava (**cat. 1**) was discovered in a cottage (B. 3) which belongs to the stratigraphic sequence No. 4¹², so the time between early 10th century and second half of the 10th century¹³ or, to be more precise, between 940-971¹⁴. Similar pieces were discovered at Dinogetia-Garvăn¹⁵, Noviodunum-Isaccea¹⁶, Păcuiul lui Soare¹⁷, Constanța and Mangalia¹⁸, Aegyssus-Tulcea¹⁹ and Babadag²⁰. Outside Dobrudja, similar spheroid amphorae were discovered at Constantinople and Thessaloniki²¹, in Bulgaria (at Varna, Sozopol, Silistra, Popina, Svištov, Pliska, Preslav)²² and in other Byzantine centers in northern Black Sea (Chersones²³, Kertch, Saarkel, Tmutarakan²⁴).

Therefore it seems that some of the spheroid amphorae from Dobrudja came from Constantinople²⁵, others from other centers of the Byzantine Empire. Some researchers assumed that there was also a local production, in Thema Paristrion²⁶, a production confirmed to some extent by the discovery of some negative-stamps used to mark the amphorae, at Păcuiul lui Soare²⁷ and Isaccea²⁸ dated in the 11th century.

Type 2²⁹. Pear-shaped or ovoid amphorae with funnel-shaped mouth and rolled rim as a collar (**cat. 14-24**). The bottom is rounded and often has in its center a slightly indented circle formed as a result of its fixing on the potter's wheel. Two wide handles are attached to the top of the amphora's neck, rising obliquely and sticking to the collar-shaped rim, which they exceed a few

¹⁰ DIACONU 1961, p. 604, fig. 5/1, 2.

¹¹ BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 261; BARNEA 1989, p. 131; FLORESCU, FLORESCU *et alii* 1959, p. 626.

¹² FLORESCU, COVACEF 1988-1989, p. 221.

¹³ FLORESCU, COVACEF 1988-1989, p. 244.

¹⁴ FLORESCU 2004, <http://www.capidava.ro>, 06. 08. 2009.

¹⁵ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 249-257, fig. 154, /1, 155, 156, 157.

¹⁶ BARNEA 1954a, p. 181, fig. 18.

¹⁷ DIACONU 1959, p. 659, p. 660, fig. 6/ 1, 3; DIACONU 1961, p. 604, fig. 5/1, 2.

¹⁸ BARNEA 1954b, p. 516; BARNEA 1959, p. 905-906.

¹⁹ VASILIU, MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 1984, p. 143-148, PL. III, fig. 5, p. 554, PL. XIII, fig. 3.

²⁰ VASILIU 1996, p. 173-174.

²¹ DEMANGEL, MAMBOURY 1939, p. 46, 148- 149, apud ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 254; BARNEA 1989, p. 133.

²² ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 254; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 265, nota 136; BARNEA 1989, p. 133.

²³ ROMANČUK 2005, fig. 83/1, 2.

²⁴ BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 265, n. 137; BARNEA 1989, p. 133, n. 6.

²⁵ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 254; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 265; BARNEA 1989, p. 133.

²⁶ CEANGOVA 1959, p. 254; ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 257; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 265; Barnea takes into consideration only the pieces made in a less good technical execution and combustion and, in any case, without stamp.

²⁷ BARASCHI 1973, p. 541-543.

²⁸ STĂNICĂ 2007, p. 515-520.

²⁹ It corresponds to subtype 2a from Dinogetia, v. ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 257, 259.

centimeters in height and after a strong arching fall vertically on the shoulder on which they are attached at the bottom. These amphorae are attested in Dobrudja starting with late 10th century and are seen more frequently in the first half of the 11th century³⁰. The pieces whose wide handles are attached to the top, about the middle of the neck, rising very little, not reaching the collar-shaped rim which they do not exceed in height (**cat. 14**), by body shape and handles' route (similar to spheroid amphorae from type 1) they seem to indicate a form of transition to amphorae with handles that reach the rim and exceed a few centimeters in height. Therefore, this type is supposed to be earlier, from late 10th century. But, since the piece presented by us was discovered in a cottage (B. 198) which belongs to the stratigraphic sequence No. 7³¹, therefore time between 1040-1064³², we are considering the fact that it could be a local imitation of imported pear-shaped amphorae with handles that reach the rim and slightly exceed in height.

Generally, amphorae belonging to this type are larger than the spheroid ones; they are about 48-55 cm height, 30-35 cm maximum diameter and a capacity of 7-10 liters. They are generally molded in a good quality paste, but sometimes from a paste with sand and chaff³³ and from an oxidant combustion they obtained a light brick-red color. Some pieces show a heterogeneous oxidant combustion with a darker core. Except two pieces discovered fragmentary but restored (**cat. 14, 15**) and one fragmentary piece with missing parts but possible to restore (**cat. 16**) only fragments were preserved; we refer to 683 larger and smaller fragments which indicate that these amphorae were more numerous than the spheroid ones.

The body of the amphorae belonging to type 2 is mostly smooth except for the shoulder area at some vessels and a part below the middle at some other vessels, each decorated with a band of horizontal grooves. On the shoulder, handles or neck of some amphorae appear signs and letters incised in the burnt paste (**cat. 14, 18**).

Whole amphorae of this type were discovered in other settlements from Dobrudja as well, like Mangalia³⁴ and Aegyssus-Tulcea³⁵. At Dinogetia-Garvăn³⁶, Păciul lui Soare³⁷ and Nufaru³⁸ only fragments were discovered. Outside Dobrudja, similar amphorae were discovered at Constantinople and Thessaloniki³⁹, in isolation in Bulgaria (at Silistra and Pliska), in Byzantine centers

³⁰ BARNEA 1989, p. 133; FLORESCU, FLORESCU *et alii* 1959, p. 626.

³¹ FLORESCU, COVACEF 1988-1989, p. 220.

³² FLORESCU 2004, <http://www.capidava.ro>, 06. 08. 2009.

³³ Ceramics with sand and chaff begin to appear at Dinogetia-Garvăn in complexes dating from 1034-1041, becoming more frequent towards the middle of the 11th century. Its presence here is related to the Pechenegs, cf. ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 227.

³⁴ BARNEA 1959, p. 906-907, fig. 3/1.

³⁵ VASILIU, MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 1984, p. 148, PL. III, fig. 6, PL V, fig. 1, p. 554, PL. XIII, fig. 1, 2.

³⁶ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 257, 259.

³⁷ DIACONU 1959, p. 659.

³⁸ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU, MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 1986, p. 212.

³⁹ DEMANGEL, MAMBOURY 1939, p. 147, 149, apud ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 259; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 266; BARNEA 1989, p. 134.

of the Northern Black Sea (Chersones⁴⁰, Sarkel, Tmutarakan) and Lower Dnieper region⁴¹; generally, they are dated in the 10th-11th centuries⁴².

Certain issues such as heterogeneous burning, some shapes (**cat. 14**) -, allow us to assume that parallel with imported pear-shaped or ovoid amphorae with collar there was also a local production of such amphorae. Perhaps this production was made by some Byzantine itinerant potters.

In conclusion, we may say that early medieval amphorae from Capidava originated from Greek-Roman and Roman-Byzantine amphorae and appear mostly as a result of trade relations that this settlement and Dobrudja in general, have had with different centers of the Byzantine Empire or with centers influenced by Byzantine culture.

CATALOGUE

Type 1.

1. Amphora, CAP. 1957, sector VII, Cottage 3. Published with a very brief description, with no details about paste and scales. Pl. I, 1.

2. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, inv. nr. 7123. Fine, homogeneous paste with quartz, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 13 cm height (of the fragment); general diameter (graphic reconstitution) 10 cm. The fragment represents part of the mouth, neck and shoulder of a spheroid amphora. It shows calcareous deposits. Pl. I, 2.

3. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1975, square 163, Cottage 179-177, 1 m, inv. nr. 8365. Fine, homogeneous paste with quartz, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 8 cm height (of the fragment). It represents part of the mouth, neck and shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 3.

4. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1956, sector VI, Cottage 15, inv. nr. 7124. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 8 cm height (of the fragment). It represents part of the mouth, neck and handle of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 4.

5. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1958, sector I, square 5, 0, 20 m, inv. nr. 6738. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 8,2 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 5.

6. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1956, sector VI, Cottage 11, inv. nr. 6726. Fine, homogeneous paste with quartz, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 11,8 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 6.

7. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1950, sector I, inv. nr. 6558. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 9.5 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Calcareous deposits inside and outside. Pl. I, 7.

⁴⁰ ROMANČUK 2005, fig. 81/5.

⁴¹ ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 259; BARNEA, ȘTEFĂNESCU 1971, p. 266; BARNEA 1989, p. 134, n. 15, 16.

⁴² ȘTEFAN, BARNEA, COMȘA, COMȘA 1967, p. 259, n. 96.

8. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1956, sector VI, square 13, Cottage, inv. nr. 7074. Fine, homogeneous paste with quartz, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 6,9 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 8.

9. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1956, sector I, inv. nr. 6749. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 8,5 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 9.

10. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1958, sector VII, Cottage 26, inv. nr. 6742. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 10 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 10.

11. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1999, sector VII, Cottage 5, no inv. nr. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 9.7 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 11.

12. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1975, sector I, square 188, Cottage, 0,15 m, inv. nr. 6491. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 10,8 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 12.

13. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, square 48, new cottage, inv. nr. 8345. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 9,2 cm height (of the fragment). Fragment from the shoulder of a spheroid amphora. Pl. I, 13.

Type 2.

14. Amphora, CAP. 1976, sector I, square U61, Cottage 198, MINAC. Fine, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, degreaser: fine sand, its own slip. Sizes: 48 cm height, 30 cm diameter, 10 cm DG. Pear-shaped amphora with funnel-shaped mouth and a rolled rim as a collar. The bottom is rounded and often has in its center a slightly indented circle formed as a result of its fixing on the potter's wheel. The wide handles are attached to the top of the amphora's neck, rising very little and not reaching the collar rim which they do not exceed in height. It does not have grooves. It has a sign on one of the handles which is incised in the burnt paste, shaped as an X with four little circles framed in a box with two lines above. Restored. Pl. II, 14.

15. Amphora, CAP. 1957, sector VII, Cottage 3. The piece was published with a very brief description with no details about paste and sizes. It does not seem to be decorated. The mouth is missing. Pl. II, 15.

16. Amphora fragment, CAP. 2002, sector VIII, *extra muros*, square S3, no inv. nr. Semi-fine paste, relatively homogeneous, color: light brick-red, degreaser: sand, its own slip. Sizes: 38 cm height (fragments glued), 13 cm DG. Glued fragment of a pear-shaped amphora with a rolled rim as a collar. The fragments are: mouth, neck, a handle and part of the shoulder and belly. It shows calcareous deposits. Pl. II, 16.

17. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1956, sector VI, Cottage 16, inv. nr. 6354. Semi-fine, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, degreaser: sand and chaff, its own slip. Sizes: 12,5 cm height (of the fragment), 10 cm DG. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora (with rolled rim as a collar) which represents the neck,

mouth and a small part of a handle. Pl. II, 17.

18. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1957, sector VII, Cottage 23, inv. nr. 5585. Semi-fine, homogeneous paste, light brick-red color; degreaser: sand and chaff, its own slip. Sizes: 14,5 cm height (of the fragment); 6 cm width of the handle. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora (with rolled rim as a collar) which represents part of the neck and handle. Pl. II, 18.

19. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1958, sector I, Cottage 18, inv. nr. 5584. Fine, homogeneous paste, color: brown-red, degreaser: fine sand, its own slip. Sizes: 13,2 cm height (of the fragment); 5,5 cm width of the handle. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora (with rolled rim as a collar) which represents part of the neck and handle. The handle shows two large grooves. Pl. II, 19.

20. Amphora fragment, CAP., *passim*, no inv. nr. Fine, homogeneous paste, dark brick-red; degreaser: fine sand, its own slip. Sizes: 3,8 cm height (of the fragment); 10 cm DG (graphic reconstitution); 2,5 cm collar's width. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora representing part of the mouth with rolled rim as a collar. Pl. II, 20.

21. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, inv. nr. 6375. Semi-fine, homogeneous paste, color: brown-red, degreaser: sand and chaff, its own slip. Sizes: 7,5 cm height (of the fragment); 12 cm DG (graphic reconstitution), 3 cm collar's width. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora representing part of the neck and mouth with rolled rim as a collar. Pl. II, 21.

22. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, square 27, 1m, inv. nr. 5529. Fine, homogeneous paste, color: light brown-red, degreaser; fine sand, its own slip. Sizes: 6 cm height (of the fragment); 10 cm DG. (graphic reconstitution), 2,3-3 cm collar's width. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora representing part of the neck and mouth with rolled rim as a collar. The collar does not have a uniform width. Pl. II, 22.

23. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, square 27-50, 0,60 m, inv. nr. 5530. Fine, homogeneous paste, color: dark brick-red, degreaser: fine sand, its own slip. Sizes: 4 cm height (of the fragment); 3,2 cm collar's width. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora representing part of the mouth with rolled rim as a collar. Pl. II, 23.

24. Amphora fragment, CAP. 1959, sector I, inv. nr. 6630. Fine, clean, homogeneous paste, color: light brick-red, its own slip. Sizes: 4,3 cm height (of the fragment); 2,5 cm collar's width. Fragment of a pear-shaped amphora representing part of the mouth with rolled rim as a collar. Pl. II, 24.

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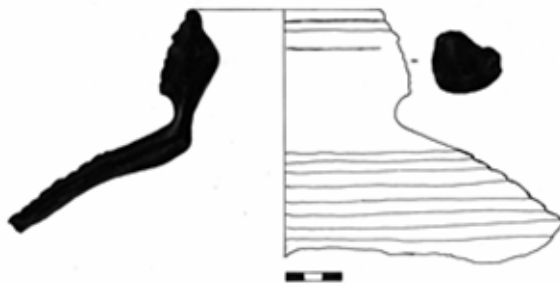
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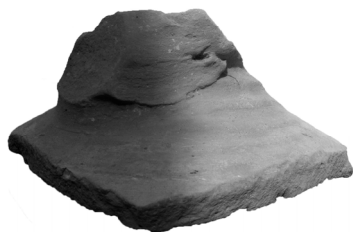
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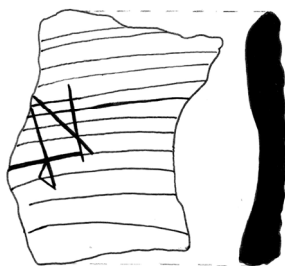
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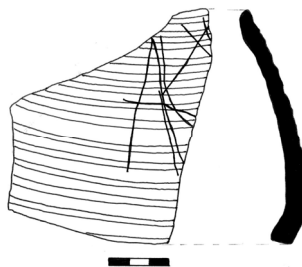
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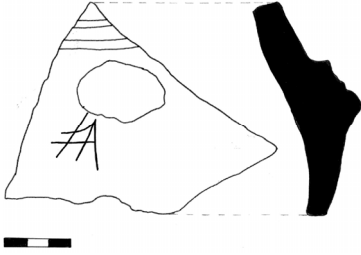


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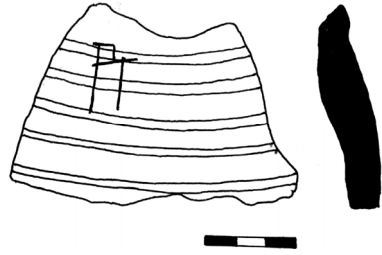


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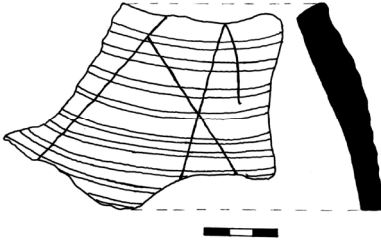
PL. I. Amphorae – complete item (cat. 1- *apud* FLORESCU, FLORESCU *et alii* 1959, p. 625, PL. V, fig. 7) and amphora shards (cat. 2-6).



7.



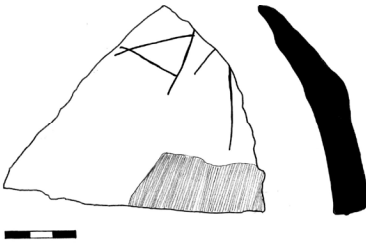
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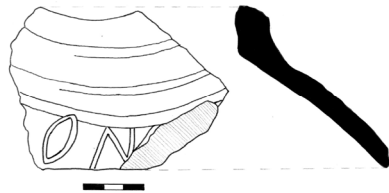
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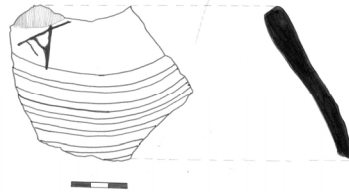
10.



11.



12.

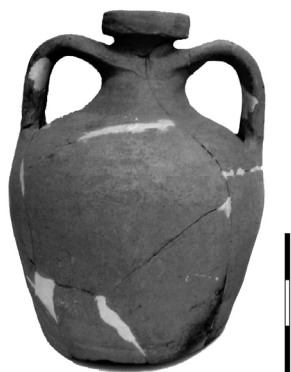


13.

PL. II. Amphora shards (cat. 7-13).



14.



15.

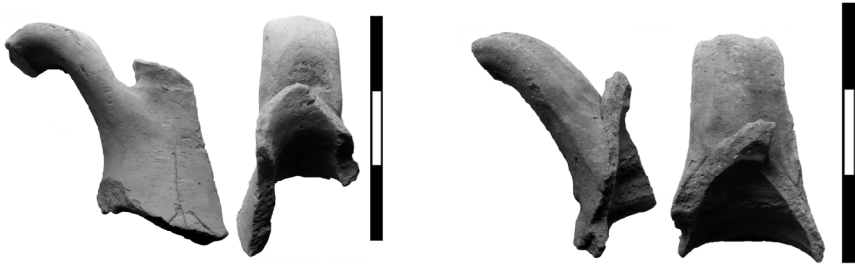


16.



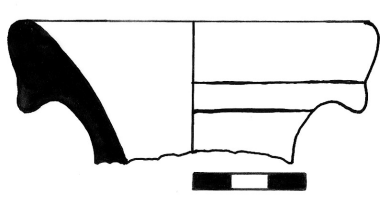
17.

PL. III. Amphorae (cat. 14-17)
(cat. 15 *apud* FLORESCU, FLORESCU *et alii* 1959, p. 625, PL. V, fig. 8).

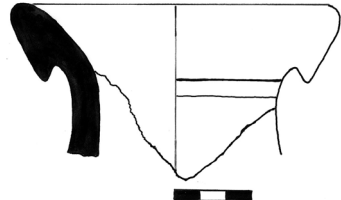


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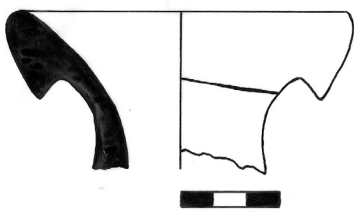
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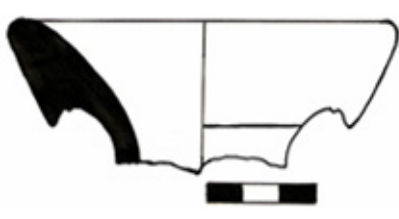
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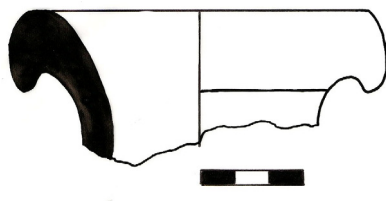
21.



22.



23.



24.

PL. IV. Amphora shards (cat. 18-24).