

STUDY OF THE COLCHIAN AMPHORA OF EARLY BYZANTINE PERIOD

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Among the amphorae found on the Late Roman and Early Byzantine sites of the Eastern Black Sea littoral, brown clay amphorae with concave body prevail. They are considered as Colchian products. In the 4th -7th c. AD such amphorae were excavated in large numbers on the Northern and Western Black Sea sites. They are also to be found in the Southern Black Sea area.

In spite of the long history of the artifact excavations and study, up to now there are different opinions on the appellations, origins, production centres, distribution areas, chronological and typological variants of the amphorae and their contents.

The purpose of the paper is the statistical, topological and typological study of such amphorae found on the Eastern Black Sea sites, as well as the analysis of their contexts; it will be the base for developing joint approaches on the genesis of the type, the typological and chronological evolution of the variants, the production centres, and additionally, the topo-archaeological distribution areas and their contents.

BYZANTINE PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION AT THE LOWER DANUBE (THE AMPHORA EVIDENCE FROM SILISTRA)

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As a result of the excavations in 2007 in Silistra (NE Bulgaria) a large quantity of late antique and medieval amphorae came up to light. On the basis of these amphorae and similar ones coming from sites at the Lower Danube, it is possible to track out the main trends and changes in the Byzantine patterns of communication in this region. With the foundation of Constantinople, the Balkan area became the immediate hinterland of the new capital. To prevent the barbarian attacks, a system of military strongholds has been built along the Danubian border. A well organized economic structure was supplying these military establishments with food. In the 6th and the 7th centuries as containers for the transport of the *annona militaris* of olive oil and wine from the Levant and the Aegean area, LR1 and LR2 amphorae were used, which explains their prevalent presence in Silistra and on other sites on the limes.

The lack of amphora material in the considered region from the third quarter of the 7th century onward should be explained with the establishment of the

medieval Bulgarian state and its control over the Danube and its debouchments. Although trade contacts between the newcomers and Byzantium are attested, no amphora material from this period has been found until now.

Amphorae on the Lower Danube reappear at the end of the 10th century when the Empire could recover the Northern Balkans and establish its border on the river. Preslav and Silistra were the administrative centers of the new theme. The late antiquity strongholds on the Danube River were repaired. They were used both as military outposts and marketplaces through which the Byzantines tried to control and restrain the attacks of the Petchenegs southwards. A considerable quantity of Günseini I and II amphorae which have been dated from the end of the 10th and the 11th century was found in all the above mentioned fortresses. They were used for the transportation of food supplies for the soldiers and the commercial contacts with the barbarians. Very few sherds of Günseini III and IV amphorae (12th-14th centuries) came out from the excavated area in Silistra. Perhaps it is due to the orientation of Byzantine commercial interests toward Eastern Crimea and Russia. The Venetians and the Genoese merchants, who had the wheat trade in the Byzantine markets in their hands and were controlling the Danube mouths, are also another reason for the scarcity of the amphorae. They have introduced the wooden barrels as a means of maritime transport, which appear to be more advantageous.

The amphora material from Silistra and the Lower Danube sites should be regarded mainly as a proof for the military and administrative presence of Byzantine power in the region and then as containers for bulk goods destined for international trade.

AMPHORAE FROM A ROMAN-BYZANTINE EDIFICE IN CAPIDAVA

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Among the ceramic discoveries in Capidava, amphorae (complete or fragmentary) are prevailing. They were used for different purposes, having different shapes and measurements. A series of these containers were described in excavation reports, others are included in the volume dedicated to Late Roman ceramics in Capidava (by Ioan C. Oprea, *Late Roman and Early Byzantine Pottery at Capidava in the Context of Lower Danube Discoveries (4th-6th cent. AD)* București, 2003, in Romanian). One can observe that amphorae brought to the fortress in the Roman-Byzantine period can be found in almost all Dobrujan centers; there are Pontic amphorae as well as Oriental ones. The group of 16 described amphorae was entirely discovered in the same room of a large edifice; one must stress that only the ones which could be completed are dealt with. They are consisting of provincial Pontic amphorae (Opaït B/ Bjelalac XXIV/ Kuzmanov XVI, variant I/ Oprea XI and Antonova V/ Kuzmanov XVI/ Opaït B I D/ Oprea X); Oriental