

THE POTSDHERDS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT: THE  
COMMON POTTERY FROM LATE ROMAN FORT OF ULMETUM  
(4<sup>TH</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AD). REPORT ON THE 2010-2011  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN AT THE NORTH-WEST GATE  
(II)

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**Cuvinte-cheie:** *ceramică, stratigrafie, poartă, cercetări arheologice.*

**Keywords:** *pottery, stratigraphy, gate, archaeological excavations.*

**Rezumat:** Scopul acestui articol este acela de completa publicarea descoperirilor arheologice din campania de cercetări arheologice 2010-2011 de la cetatea romană târzie Ulmetum din provincia Scythia Minor – actualmente Pantelimonul de Sus, județul Constanța, România. Fragmentele ceramice identificate și stratigrafia pot contribui la determinarea fazelor generale ale funcționării fortificației romane târzii, a evenimentelor și contextelor în zona porții de Nord-Vest.

**Abstract:** *The aim of this paper is to complete the publishing of the archaeological findings of 2010-2011 excavations at the north-west gate of the Late Roman fort of Ulmetum, from Scythia Minor province – at present Pantelimonul de Sus, Constanța County, Romania. The pottery and the recorded stratigraphy may contribute to determination of the general phases when the Late Roman fortification was in use, events and the contexts in the area of the North – West gate.*

The Ulmetum Late Roman fort was partially excavated by the famous Romanian archaeologist Vasile Pârvan during the 1912-1913 archaeological campaigns, establishing the main coordinate about the existence of an ancient *vicus Ulmetum* from the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD (mainly by analyzing the grave stones inscriptions incorporated into the Late Roman walls), and the reconstruction of the fort during emperor Justinian. A century later, the archaeologists from the National History and Archaeology Museum of Constanța establish that the Late Roman fort was built at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD and after a period of abandoning

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it was reconstructed during Justinian's reign.

Additional to our observations, it will be important to present in brief the archaeological discoveries from 2010-2012 on the other sectors of the Late Roman fort of *Ulmetum*, in order to facilitate the incorporation of the present information. Thereby, on the Western Sector, the excavations revealed two layers of construction of the fort, a similar situation with the observations at the North-West gate<sup>1</sup>. Inside the quadrilateral tower no. 8, in the south-east, the remains of a sunken featured building (pit-house) was found, (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> century AD according to the pottery dating) asymmetric oriented comparing with the tower, being anterior of the tower construction moment. Also in this area another sunken featured building and two other ovens from the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD were identified suggesting that in this area the incidence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD dwelling was higher than in the other areas<sup>2</sup>.

At the Late Roman basilica, the excavations revealed the moment of construction at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The basilica was also used after the reconstruction of the fort during Justinian and later<sup>3</sup>, when it seems that the *narthex* was added<sup>4</sup>. Later, during the 2015 campaign, the discovery of a dwelling complex inside the *narthex* changed the opinion about the moment of construction, which may be earlier<sup>5</sup>. On the North-East side of the fort, some military barracks were excavated, revealing an initial barrack from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, burned in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, then a new barrack was built in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, also destroyed by fire. After a period of abandoning, in the middle – second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century a new barrack was built in the area, reduced in size, reusing some of the anterior walls. The frequency of the sunken featured buildings in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, it was noted where typical Sântana de Mureș – Černjachov pottery was discovered, from the same period when *Ulmetum* fort was made. Also some of the sunken featured buildings were certainly reused as burial places, being added some lateral niches, blocked with bricks, where the deceased were deposited. One of the deceased was found in a strange position, being probably tied before burial. The archaeological excavations carried out in the area of the *Praetorium* revealed some important stratigraphic observations, as the possible anteriority of this edifice (built during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, until the end of the Valens era) comparing to the moment of the construction of the fort (end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century), the use of the *Praetorium* during the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the fact that the building was probably out of use in the moment of 6<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction<sup>6</sup>. During the 2006 excavation campaign, for the first time some preliminary conclusions about the stratigraphical sequences at *Ulmetum* were drawn. The report of the 2006 excavation mentions that the Sântana de Mureș – Černjachov pottery (from the necropolis) may be dated in the last decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Thus, in the

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<sup>1</sup> COVACEF & POTĂRNICHE, 2013, p. 98, no. 47.

<sup>2</sup> TALMAȚCHI, IONESCU & VASILESCU 2013, p. 99

<sup>3</sup> BĂJENARU, NOPCEA, VASILESCU & PETCU 2011, 45.

<sup>4</sup> BĂJENARU & NOPCEA 2011, 53.

<sup>5</sup> BĂJENARU, NOPCEA & VASILESCU 2016, p. 65-66.

<sup>6</sup> BĂJENARU & VASILESCU 2013, p. 47.

Eastern sector of the site, the preliminary chronological conclusions suggest the existence of the necropolis before the construction of the Ulmetum fort walls. The conclusion of the archaeological team from 2006 was that the military presence of the Late Roman troops (interrupted by some possible destruction) ceased at the beginning of the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The period of abandon lasted until the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century when the emperor Justinian I decided to reconstruct the Ulmetum fort. It seems that the occupation lasted until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, when the fort was definitely abandoned, like other centers on the Danube *limes*<sup>7</sup>.

The archaeological excavation has started in the North – West gate area of Ulmetum fort in 2010 and it was continued in 2011, under the coordination of PhD. Ghiorghe Papuc and PhD. Liviu Lungu, having the following objectives:

- The protection and valorization of the fortification gate area by clearing the area of inside and outside the walls.
- The primary conservation of the archaeological complexes during the excavations and research.
- The clarification of the stratigraphy and the completing of the information concerning the discoveries and structures.
- The clarification of the precise moment when the gate was blocked.
- The gathering of maximum information as a necessary step for a future project for gate and towers restoration.
- When elements of the archaeological heritage have been found during development work, to assure the basis for their conservation *in situ* when feasible<sup>8</sup>.

In the area inside the fortification, the archaeological excavation begun with a C1/2010 trial trench/stratigraphical unit of 10 x 10 m, in the area of the gate, due to the following circumstances:

- The area was partially excavated before, during the 1912 and 1913 excavation project of the famous archaeologist Vasile Pârvan, and the results of the excavations were published by him in the paper *Analele Academiei Române, tome XXXVI*.
- The landscape inside the fortification was defined as a gentle slope descending toward the South – East gate area, which was blocked in antiquity. The slope is nothing but the result of the early excavations, clogged by time.
- The trial trench C1/2010 was projected only for checking the stratigraphy in the area, for the small unexcavated parts, especially to the East and partially South sides.
- On the North and West sides, which practically are flanking the gate and the tower no. 3, already excavated in 1912 and 1913, the descending slope has prevented any archaeological excavation.

Considering these aspects, the archaeological intervention was done especially on the South and East limit of the trench. One of the goals of the

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<sup>7</sup> BĂJENARU & NOPCEA 2007, p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> Article 5, (IV), European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised), Valetta, 1992.

C1/2010 intended the correlation of the stratigraphy with the data records from the previous excavations conducted by PhD. Ghiorghe Papuc in the immediate vicinity (a magistral trench along almost the entire fort), but this point has not been reached yet, even if the excavations are situated at 2 m South of the trench.

According with to the old excavation plans, inside the C1/2010 some segments of Late Roman walls should be rediscovered (other than the main fortification) which were previously identified and excavated during the 1912-1913 excavations. Thus, the walls enclosing the inside of the North - West gate, transforming this space into a Late Roman edifice are preserved<sup>9</sup>, but we have also encountered difficulties in identification of the walls starting from the area of tower 3 to the South - East that should be preserved<sup>10</sup>.

Between the causes of the actual poor state of preservation, we mention the dismantling of the walls due to locals (in 1913, in the moment of excavations, the gate towers were measuring about 3 m height, but today are only half preserved) but also the method of excavation, conducted at the technique and methodology of the years 1912-1913.

It seems that some parts of the „barbarian walls” were lost, and in that sense the profile of the southern part of the trench C1/2010 is relevant. The stratigraphic profile from the 10 m Southern part of the C1/2010 proves that a heap of roughly shaped stones, are probably the vestige of wall discovered during the old excavations, that has not been preserved. Also the old trenches of excavations from 1912-1913 were naturally clogged during the last 100 years.

Not all the sides of the C1/2010 have been disturbed by the old archaeological excavations. The Eastern side and half of the Southern side of the trench C1/2010 may be excavated in good conditions, of -1,50 m deep until now. The stratigraphic status provides information about few filling layers of the Vasile Parvan archaeological excavation: in these layers (VII) few potsherds from different periods, were identified from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Also in the area unexcavated by Vasile Pârvan, there are few layers of deposits and occupational debris, as follows: in the upper part of the section, the first layer (VIII) corresponds to the soil deposited here by the archaeologists few years before, coming from the magistral trench in the immediate neighborhood (2 meters to the south). The next layer (VII) is represented by the natural grayish vegetal soil (mixed with particles of mortar, stones, brick fragments and potsherds) existing in 1912-1913, some of which went away back in the archaeological trench after the abandonment of the excavations, after 1913. The layer VI identified at - 1 m - 0,50 m deep, (the terrain is a slope) is a consistent occupational debris from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century AD (Justinian and later) consisting of yellowish gray clay with ashes, Late Roman pottery shards and an almost

<sup>9</sup> PÂRVAN 1913, p. 274 and Pl. XII, no. 2 and XIII, no. 1, fig. 27

<sup>10</sup> PÂRVAN 1913, p. 293 : „The North-West gate being plugged from the late Byzantine times, the entrance was used later as a room, being closed from the side of the stronghold with a barbarian wall (drawn by me in a complete way in the general plan of the stronghold) and at the right and the left sides other rooms and small rooms were made in the same primitive way, by walls traced perpendicular to the stronghold, regardless of any higher architectural considerations” (...)

complete Pontic Antonova 5 type small amphora. At this layer the archaeological excavations stopped in 2011, providing a source of dating of the pottery from Justinian and post Justinian times. At resumption of the archaeological excavations in 2012, in this layer the traces of a ruined, 80-90 cm thick wall was discovered, made from stones linked with clay, part of a probably unidentified structure, oriented North – South. On the South profile, the thickness of this layer is of 30-50 cm. Under this 6<sup>th</sup> century layer, a consistent (40 cm thick) occupational layer (**layer V**) was identified, which cannot be dated with certitude (possibly from the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD). Underneath there are two layers (**layer II and IV**) of construction consisting of yellow clay (walking/construction levels) separated by a thin layer of black ashes of 1-2 cm (**layer III**), resulting from a strong fire or a conflagration. The first layer (that was conventionally nominated as **layer I**) was not yet fully excavated.

Unfortunately, no coins were found, so the layers may be dated exclusively in relation with archaeological artifacts discovered. It is possible to date the **layer V** to be dated in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD (on this layer a shard of Pontic amphora type Zeest 1960 type 100/Paraschiv 2006, tip. VIII var. A-B, from Sinope) has been discovered and the two yellow constructive layers (**layer II and IV**) to be dated at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Also there was no archaeological identification of any layer of abandoning, from a period before Justinian's reconstruction.

Another excavation in the area may also provide useful information by comparing similar situations. The stratigraphical situation is strikingly similar to the stratigraphy of a trench excavated in the vicinity (S1), previously published<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the deepest two layers are similar with the situation found few meters to the North, corresponding with the founding moment of the Ulmetum fortification, possibly during Teodosius I reign or shortly before.

On the Eastern limit of the C1/2010, - 1, 30 m deep, it few fragments of an oven (probably a „domestic“ one) were discovered and the preserved fragments of this structure did prove that the oven was rectangular in shape at least at its upper part.

The presence of the oven may be related to the wall discovered in the area, and both are positioned alongside the gate. At least theoretically, the area in the vicinity of the gate should be free of constructions, allowing the circulation by a presumed street inside and outside of the fort. The dating of these structures occupying the street, may be related with the walls that enclose the inside of the North - West gate and ultimately, with the moment in time when the gate was blocked in antiquity. The fact that the oven was discovered in layer **V**, older than the last occupational period of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, proves that the gate was blocked in earlier times, before the reoccupation of the fort by Justinian's army<sup>12</sup>.

A pilot research program of the architecture and the construction technique of the North – West gate of Ulmetum has been developed by lect. Ph.D. arh. Dan

<sup>11</sup> GAMUREAC 2017, pl. II.

<sup>12</sup> According to Procopius, *De aedificiis* IV, 7, 17, the stronghold of Ulmetum, abandoned by the romans due to the ambushes of the barbarian Sclaveni, had been built it all up from the foundations by the Justinian army.

Kisilewicz and conf. PhD. arh. Ileana Kisilewicz with a group of students from Spiru Haret University. Their measurements revealed that the tower 2 of the gate was asymmetrically built. Their research results are also integrated in the illustrations of the present paper.

Before the presentation of the discoveries, we may formulate a few preliminary conclusions:

- The goals of the excavations were not entirely met due to the insufficient assigned resources of time and logistics. The C1/2010 section research was not finished, and we do not have a complete stratigraphical profile, not even in the South area, were the excavations where more profound.

- The excavation in progress is suspended for now, being necessary to extend the excavation area in order to identify the limits of the buildings or the trails of the walls that survived the time and other intrusions<sup>13</sup>.

- Only after the completion of excavations it will be possible to start a program for preservation/restoration of the discoveries.

**Pottery discovered during 2010 archaeological excavations, corresponding to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (layer VI) and debris from 1912-1913 old excavations.**

1. Pontic amphora Antonova 1971 type 5/Kuzmanov 1985 type 16, C1/2010, h-0,80 m, rim diameter 8,5 cm, preserved height 31,5 cm, homogenous fabric, dark brick color, limestone and small stones as ingredients, the rim is funnel-shaped, red *dipinti* in the median part, a handle is missing, the capacity is 5 *sextarii* (about 2,5 l), Munsell 5YR 6/8 reddish yellow. Analogies: the occurrence of this amphora type is attested almost everywhere at the Lower Danube in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Analogies: Capidava (OPRIȘ & RAȚIU 2016, p. 28, Fig. 4); Murighiol (OPAIȚ 1991 B, p. 141-142, pl. 11-12/72-74, second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD).

2. Fragmentary rim and handle of a pot, C1/2010, h-0,80 m, rim diameter 14 cm, preserved height 3 cm, semi-coarse gray fabric with rare limestone particles, slip at the same color, secondarily fired on the outside, the rim is faceted, having a groove for the lid, the oval handle is starting under the rim, Munsell 7.5 YR 4/2 brown. Analogies: Murighiol (OPAIȚ 1991 B, p. 154-155, pl. 30/175, second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD).

3. Fragmentary rim and handle of a (probably) table amphora, C1/2010, h-1 m, rim diameter 8 cm, homogenous, pale brick color fabric with limestone particles, slip of the same color, the handle is oval in section, Munsell 5YR 5/8

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<sup>13</sup> All the archaeological discoveries were preserved during the early excavations by the archaeologist's care. PÂRVAN 1913, p. 288: „Indeed with a pickax blow you may overthrow all these barbarian structures made without plan and in the matter of fact only hardly I was able to prevent the workers [to destroy] these barbarian „walls“ which indignated them by their lack of interest (...) With all the inconvenience that I have in the research, because they are covering the older layers of culture and often prevent me to go into the primitive layer of the stronghold, I decided to spare them everywhere (...)”

yellowish red. Analogies: Telița-Valea Morilor (BAUMANN 1995, p. 419, pl. VIII/1-2, 5-7 amphora type I, 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Murighiol (OPAIȚ 1991 B, p. 151, pl. 23/139); (OPAIȚ 2004, pl. 3/2-3, 5, table amphora); Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, Tafel 24/293-294).

4. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2010, h-1,20 m, rim diameter 11 cm, preserved height 2 cm, brick color, semi coarse fabric with limestone particles in composition, secondarily fired on the outside, the shape of the rim is concave at the inside, with a groove for fixing the lid, Munsell 5YR 3/2 dark reddish brown. Analogies: Murighiol (OPAIȚ 1991 B, p. 153, pl. 26/154, 4<sup>th</sup> century AD).

5. Fragmentary base of a pitcher or a jug, C1/2010, h-1,20 m, base diameter 6 cm, preserved height 3 cm, homogenous brick color, semi coarse fabric, silver mica sparkles in composition, ring shaped foot, the base is concave, Munsell 2.5YR 3/6 dark red.

6. Fragmentary rim and handle of an oriental amphora type Berenice/Carthage Late Roman 1, C1/2010, h-0,80 m, rim diameter 8 cm, preserved height 6 cm, homogenous brick color fabric with rare limestone particles in composition, the handle is oval in profile, decorated with grooves, Munsell 2.5YR 4/6 red. Analogies: Tomis (RĂDULESCU 1976, p. 109, pl. XII/1-1a).

7. Fragmentary rim of a pitcher, C1/2010, h-1 m, rim diameter 4,5 cm, preserved height 3,6 cm, brick color, semi coarse fabric with limestone particles, brown paint on the outside, oval handle in section, Munsell 10R 3/6 dark red. The fragment was found in the old excavation area and is not in the original context. Analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 2000, p. 144, type XLV, pl. 68-69, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD).

8. Fragmentary base of a pitcher, C1/2010, h-1,25 m, base diameter 3,5 cm, preserved height 2,5 cm, brick color fabric with brown paint at the outside and inside, secondarily fired, limestone deposits on the surface of the fabric, the shape of the base is flat, Munsell 2.5YR 3/6 dark red.

9. Fragmentary rim of a pitcher, C1/2010, h-1 m, rim diameter 3 cm, preserved height 1,5 cm, fine, light brick color fabric, orange color slip on the inside and outside, Munsell 10R 4/8 red. Analogies: Histria (BĂDESCU & CLIANTE 2015, p. 215, no. cat. 26, fig. 3/1, second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, tafel 29/364-365).

10. Fragmentary handle of an amphora, C1/2010, *passim*, preserved height 16 cm, 5 cm in width, homogenous dark brick color fabric with limestone particles in composition, the handle is oval in section, massive, grooves at a preserved extremity, Munsell 10R 4/8 red. Possibly ZEEST 1960, type 80.

11. Fragmentary rim of an oriental Berenice/Carthage Late Roman 2 amphora, C1/2010, h-1,20 m, rim diameter 8 cm, preserved height 4 cm, homogenous light brick color fabric with silver mica sparkles and rare limestone

particles in composition, beige paint, the rim is funnel-shaped, Munsell 7.5YR 4/6 strong brown.

12. Loom weight, flat, C1/2010, h - 1 m, maximum diameter 4,8 cm, perforated in the middle, made from an amphora fragment, the fabric is semi-fine, light brick color, rare limestone particles in composition.

13. Almost complete lamp, a small part of the disk is missing, length 8,8 cm, 6,3 cm in width, the handle is simple, the edging is decorated in a pastilles model, semi-fine dark gray fabric, Munsell 5YR 4/2 dark reddish gray. Analogies: Halmyris (TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 210 – 213, pl. LXVIII-LXX/542-557, 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**Pottery discovered during 2011 archaeological excavations, corresponding to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> century (layers II-VI) and debris from 1912-1913 old excavations.**

14. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 13 cm, preserved height 2 cm, coarse, beige color fabric, with small stones and silver mica sparkles in composition, secondarily burned on the outside, the rim is flat at the upper side and flared to the outside, globular body, Munsell 7.5YR 7/4 pink. Analogies: Valea Teliței (BAUMANN 1991, p. 113, pl. XI/15); BRUKNER 1981, T 124, nr. 160, 162, 163; Durostorum (MUȘEȚEANU 2003, pl. 35); Argamum (HONCU 2016, p. 295, pl. I/4 pots type II, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Histria (SUCEVEANU 2000, Type XXXIX, pl. 56, nr. 2, 4, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD); Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, Tafel 50/97).

15. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 18 cm, preserved height 2 cm, semi-fine dark brick color fabric, with limestone micro-particles in composition, triangular shaped rim in profile, with groove for fixing the lid, oval handle in profile. Analogies: Babadag - Topraichioi (OPAIȚ 1991 C, pots type III pl. 40/4, 6, 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD; pots type II<sup>1</sup>, pl. 46/5, 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, Fig. 9/18, first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Tropaeum Traiani (CĂTĂNICIU & BARNEA 1979, Fig. 168/5.4 NVIA).

16. Fragmentary rim and handle of a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 14 cm, preserved height 2,5 cm, semi-fine gray color fabric with limestone particles in composition, faceted rim with a groove for fixing the lid, round shaped handle in section. Analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, Fig. 9/26 first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Ibida (OPAIȚ 2004, type 4 p. 46, pl. 35/7, second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Sadovec (UENZE 1992, type 1, Tafel 75/10); KUZMANOV 1985, p. 47-49 tip I var. 3, pl. 29/25; Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, Tafel 48/599).

17. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 17 cm, preserved height 4 cm, semi-fine gray color fabric with small stones in composition, dark gray color slip, the rim is triangular in section, flat on the superior side, globular body, Munsell 2 for grey 4/1 dark bluish grey. Analogies:

Ibida (HONCU 2014, fig. 3/4, 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Histria (SUCEVEANU 2000, p. 129-130, type XL, pl. 60/3, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Telița (BAUMANN 1991, pl. X/14); OPAIȚ 1991 A, p. 129, pots type G, pl. III/3-4 (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Sadovec (UENZE 1992, type 4, Tafel 96/14).

**18.** Fragmentary rim and handle of a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, semi-coarse brick color fabric with limestone particles and silver mica in composition, dark gray paint on the inside and outside, rim diameter 16 cm, the grooved handle starting from the rim level, the rim is faceted presenting a groove for fixing a rim, slightly concave on the inside and convex on the outside, Munsell 7.5YR 5/6 strong brown. Analogies: Halmyris (TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 107, pl. XXVII/236-237, type II); Tropaeum Traiani (CĂTĂNICIU & BARNEA 1979, p. 188, fig. 162, 5.13 NV).

**19.** Fragmentary rim of Zeest 100 amphora type, layer V, rim diameter 11 cm, preserved height 3 cm, brick color fabric with black particles in composition, slip at the same color, the rim is flared to the inside and present a groove on the outside, Munsell 2.5YR 7/8 light red. Analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, Fig. 8/9, second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); PARASCHIV 2006, pl. 6-7, type VIII var. A-B (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); OPAIȚ 1991 C, E. Conical amphorae, type I-a (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, Tafel 21/15); ZEEST 1960, pl. XXXIX, type 100; OPAIȚ 2010, Fig. 1.3-4, Fig. 2.1-2.2 (4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**20.** Fragmentary rim of an amphora, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 4 cm, semi fine, brick color fabric, preserved height 3,8 cm, the rim is vertical, cylindrical in shape, red slip, Munsell 5YR 7/8 reddish yellow. Analogies: Capidava (OPRIȘ 2003, type VIII, p. 70-71, pl. XXIV/113-119); Halmyris (TOPOLEANU 2000, type XIX, p. 144 pl. XLVI, nr. 369-370) 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD.; ZEEST 1960 pl. XXXIX, type 99; SAZANOV 2014, fig. 2/2; PARASCHIV 2006, p. 102-103.

**21.** Fragmentary base from a pitcher, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, base diameter 9 cm, preserved height 3 cm, the base is flat, the body is globular, red slip secondarily burned on the outside, semi-fine fabric with silver mica in composition, Munsell 10R 6/4 pale red. Analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, Fig. 7/14, last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD - first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Histria (SCORPAN 1977, fig. 30/6, 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**22.** Fragmentary rim of an oriental amphora LR1 type, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, brick color fabric, rim diameter 9 cm, preserved height 9 cm, Munsell 2.5YR 6/8 light red. Analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, Fig. 13/77-80, second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**23.** Fragmentary rim and handle from an amphora, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 9 cm, dark brick color fabric, preserved height 7,5 cm, Munsell 2.5YR 5/6 red. Some analogies with the amphora Opaîț E-III type (OPAIȚ 2004, p. 16, pl. 14/4-7), Opaîț D-III (OPAIȚ 2004, p. 31, Pl. 20/1-2, 5-6) also amphora LR1 type.

24. Fragmentary rim and handle from a pot, C1/2011, h-1,50 m, rim diameter 15 cm, preserved height 4 cm, dark brick color fabric with sand in composition, slip at the same color, secondarily burned on the outside. The upper side of the rim is flat, and slightly concave to the outside, the handle is oval in section, presenting a groove, Munsell 5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow. Analogies: Porolissum (GUDEA 1996, pl. XIX/5, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD); BRUKNER 1981, T 124/153 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. AD; Thasos (ABADIE-REYNAL & SODINI 1992, p. 41, Fig. 17/CC44 - 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**Ulmetum C1/2011 Eastern side, h-90 cm (layer VI).**

25. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2011, h-90 cm, preserved height 2 cm, rim diameter 16 cm, semi-fine brick color fabric with silver mica in composition, homogenous, the rim is reverted to the outside, presenting a groove for fixing the lid, Munsell 7.5YR 7/8 reddish yellow. Analogies: Tropaeum Traiani (CĂTĂNICIU & BARNEA 1979, NV, fig. 162, 5.6); Babadag-Topraichioi (OPAIȚ 1991 C, p. 233, pl. 40/13 – pots type VI – first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD); Sadovec (UENZE 1992, tip 4 Tafel 97/13).

26. Fragmentary rim of a pot, C1/2011, h-90 cm, semi-fine dark brick color fabric with quartz and silver mica sparkles, the rim is flat at the upper side, globular body, preserved height 2 cm, rim diameter 15 cm, Munsell 5YR 6/8 reddish yellow. Analogies: Valea Teliței (BAUMANN 1991, p. 113, pl. XI/15); Telița Amza (BAUMANN 1991, p. 164, pl. LXIIIa/9); Durostorum (MUȘEȚEANU 2003, pl. 35); Histria (SUCEVEANU 2000, Type XXXIX, pl. 56, nr. 2, 4, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD); BRUKNER 1981, T 124, nr. 163; Iatrus (BÖTTGER 1982, Tafel 47/499).

27. Fragmentary rim and handle of a pot, C1/2011, h-90 cm, preserved height 6,3 cm, rim diameter 14 cm, coarse dark gray color fabric with small stones and silver mica in composition, the rim is flat at the top, the handle is oval in section, Munsell 1 for gley 4/1 dark greenish gray. Analogies: Halmyris (TOPOLEANU 2000, p. 112, pots type VII, pl. XXXI/267, 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

28. Fragmentary rim of an oriental amphora LR2 type, C1/2011, h-90 cm, preserved height 5 cm, rim diameter 9 cm, beige color fabric with silver mica in composition, Munsell 10YR 7/4 very pale brown.

29. Fragmentary rim of an oriental amphora LR1 type, C1/2011, h-90 cm, rim diameter 12 cm, brick color fabric with silver mica and fine sand in composition, light beige color, coarse, Munsell 7.5YR 6/6 reddish yellow.

30. Fragmentary rim of an oriental amphora LR1 type, C1/2011, h-90 cm, rim diameter 10,8 cm, preserved height 6 cm, brick color, homogenous fabric with small particles of limestone in composition, light brick surface color, Munsell 7.5YR 4/6 strong brown.

31. Fragmentary rim of an amphora, C1/2011, h-90 cm, rim diameter 13 cm, preserved height 6,5 cm, beige color fabric, homogenous, with sand and rare limestone particles, beige surface color, cylindrical neck, the rim is thickened and slightly reverted to the outside, presenting 5-6 fine groves under the rim, Munsell 10YR 6/8 brownish yellow.

**Ulmetum area of C1/2011, *passim* / Eastern side, h-90-1,30 m.**

Supplementary to the pottery from C1 section, some potsherds were found during the excavations, scattered across the investigated area. Without context and a proper description, these shards may count only as statistical data concerning their types, but they should be presented in the catalogues even in these conditions.

32. Fragmentary rim of an amphora LRA 2 type, rim diameter 13 cm, preserved height 7 cm.

33. Fragmentary rim of an unidentified vessel, rim diameter 9 cm, preserved height 3 cm.

34. Fragmentary rim of a pot, rim diameter 10,5 cm, preserved height 4,2 cm. Analogies: Tomis, Murighiol, (OPAIȚ 2004, p. 50 pots type XVI); Histria (SUCEVEANU 1982, fig. 8/6 – second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

35. Fragmentary rim of a pot, rim diameter 7 cm, preserved height 5 cm. Analogies: OPAIȚ 2004, p. 52.

36. Fragmentary rim of an amphora LRA 2 type, rim diameter 11 cm, preserved height 4,3 cm.

37. Fragmentary rim of an amphora, rim diameter 8 cm, preserved height 5 cm. Analogies: Histria (BĂJENARU 2014, pl. 2/11-12, Pontic imitations of LRA 1, context of the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century); also possibly KUZMANOV 1985 type XV (PARASCHIV 2006, p. 35, pl. 61/60-64).

38. Fragmentary rim of an amphora, rim diameter 11,5 cm, preserved height 4,7 cm. analogies: Histria (SUCEVEANU 1980, fig 8/10 – second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

39. Spindle whorl, *passim*, h-50 m, diameter 2,5 cm, height 0,8 cm, made from lead, decorated with vegetal motifs and small circles. Relative analogy: early medieval Dinogetia (BARNEA 1967, p. 80, fig. 41/4), Nuștar – Dvorac (RAPAN - PAPEȘA 2014, p. 171, T1/4 - Avar period).

40. Late medieval/Ottoman or modern pottery fragments. Analogies: STĂNICĂ 2008; DINU 2016; BIKIĆ 2017.

### Discussion.

The general aspect of the pottery discovered has indubitable Late Roman characteristics. No matter if the garrison was formed by Roman soldiers or federates, the majority of the pottery was thrown in the Roman tradition by the potters. A small percentage of the potsherds, discovered especially in the layers linked the moment of the fort foundation, belong to Sântana de Mureș – Černjachov culture. Also few fragments of late medieval – early modern pottery, glazed with green and white enamel were discovered in the layer VII consisting of natural vegetal soil from medieval, Ottoman or modern periods.

Anyone who has experienced digging in the areas of the early archaeological excavations should be aware of the supplementary difficulties of identifying the correct succession of the layers. The intrusion from the early excavations makes the correct gathering of the artifacts harder, but the exception came to confirm the method of excavation. The archaeological excavations from 2010 and 2011 were in fact the extension of the area of old excavations from 1912-1913, and only some portions of the South and East sides of the C 1 stratigraphic unit were relatively untouched by the modern intrusions. Even if the archaeological material from different chronological layers was from the very beginning mixed for the reason explained above, we choose to present it accordingly. Also in the areas not affected by the early archaeological excavations, many of the potsherds are not perfectly matched with the proposed dating of the layers, some of them being dated to an earlier period of time. This is the case of the layer VI, identified as belonging to Justinian and post Justinian times, where some potsherds may be dated in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD. The lack of some categories as *vasa escaria* coming from the Oriental, North African or local workshops or any monetary discoveries did not help for establishing a proper chronological dating of the layers, and the main clues for dating the layers were some amphorae forms and cooking wares.

There are only 4 functional categories of Late Roman pottery identified in the archaeological excavation: amphorae (17), *vasa coquina(to)ria* – pots (13), *vasa pota(to)ria* – pitchers/jugs (5) and lamps (1). Considering the small area excavated (some portions on the south and east sides of the C1 – the rest of the stratigraphic unit was in fact excavated in 1912-1913) this situation may be normal, reflecting (excepting *vasa escaria*) the main categories of the utilitarian pottery in the late antiquity from this area.

The amphorae category includes Pontic types (Antonova V, Zeest 100, table amphora, and possibly other unidentified fragments), also oriental types (LRA 1, LRA 2, Zeest 99). The evidence of amphora types suggests that there was no decline of the long - distance trade, at least in the 4<sup>th</sup> and during the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD, providing clues of the regional basis integration into the economy, administration and trade with the rest of the eastern provinces.

The *vasa coquina(to)ria* category includes a variety of types, but we were not able to differentiate the local ones from any possibly imported types. Some of the potsherds types have origins in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD (i.e. no. 14, 17, 26) or earlier (no. 24), while others are typical for the 5<sup>th</sup> century (no. 25) and 6<sup>th</sup> century AD (i.e. no. 2). Also some of the 4<sup>th</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD types were discovered in clear context of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.

AD (layer VI), that may be explained by activities of construction, restoration and intervention in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD, by intrusion and using materials from older layers.

The 5 fragments of pitchers/jugs bases and rims belongs to *vasa pota(to)ria* category but because of the level of fragmentation, only 2 may be classified with certitude: no. 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD) and no. 9 (Late Roman) both being discovered in the layer VI (6<sup>th</sup> c. AD and debris from the early excavations).

Additionally, the two spindle whorls discovered in the area of excavation emphasizes the economic character of the occupational activities in the fort and probably in the existent “civilian” settlement situated nearby<sup>14</sup>.

The North-West gate was probably blocked before the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. The presence of the wall discovered in C1 and the oven (situated stratigraphically before the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD) in a place which was initially reserved for a street reaching the gate, prove that the gate was probably already blocked at the arriving moment of Justinian's garrison in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The reason of blocking the gate is obviously military: the fort is protected from 3 sides by a natural slope and especially the North-West gate was exposed, despite the *fossa* that can be still identified in the field and the artillery installed on the towers. Considering the size of the fort and the limited number of the soldiers in the garrison, a direct attack by breaking the gate was probably more successful coming from the North side. That adds to the stratigraphical observation of the ashes (layer 3) identified between the layer 2 and layer 4 (possibly of the 4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

The general aspect of the material is unexpectedly modest, unnatural for a great opportunity of wealth due to the terrestrial traffic from the crossroads in the *μεσόγεια* of Scythia Minor province. As the written sources mention, the main road in the province passed through Ulmetum, which was enough important to be mentioned by Procopius<sup>15</sup>.

There is evidence of expensive merchandise in other excavated sectors of the Roman fort, as imported pottery, precious metals or coins, due to the payments to the garrison, but in the small excavated sector from the North-West gate there is no indication of an expected wealth.

The present paper emphasizes that in the absence of the predictive models of the compressive methodological approach, the simply superficial presentation of the currently research results, as coins and goods, may generate only an obscure argument unsustained by the scholars. Also the analysis methods of the discoveries may conduct to a step foreword, including the review of the previous work and old arguments, providing a new ground for the knowledge of the exact time when Ulmetum fort was built and used. In this respect, any supplementary information that is brought into the public circuit, may contribute to a better understanding of the archaeological record.

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<sup>14</sup> GAMUREAC 2011, p. 367-377.

<sup>15</sup> ARICESCU 1972, p. 329-347.

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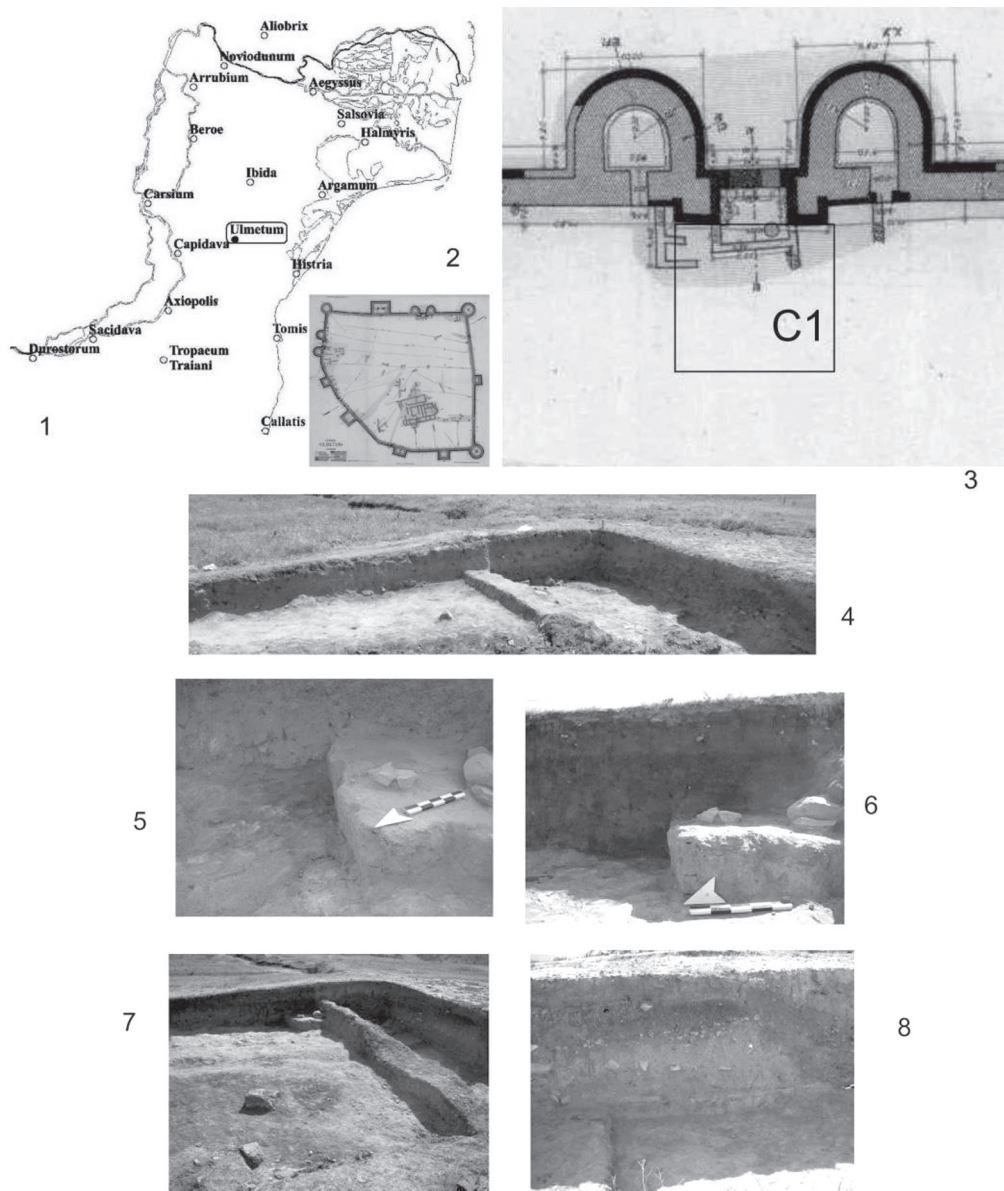
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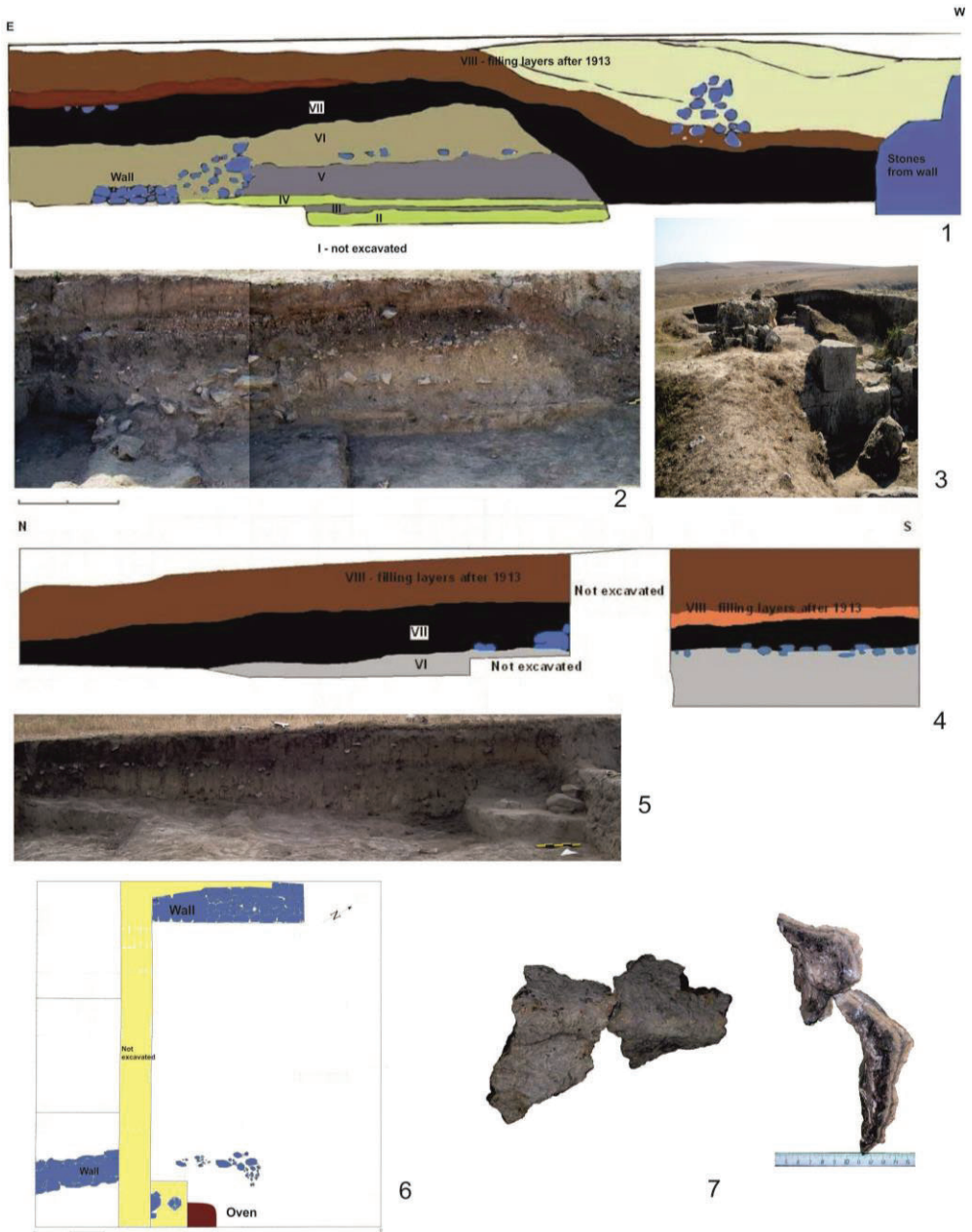
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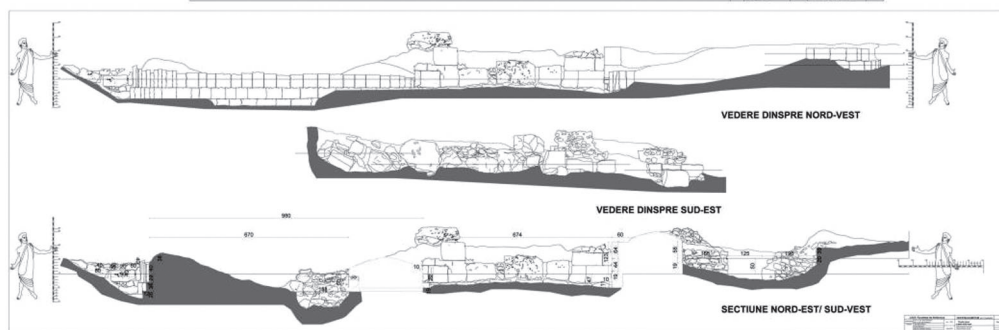
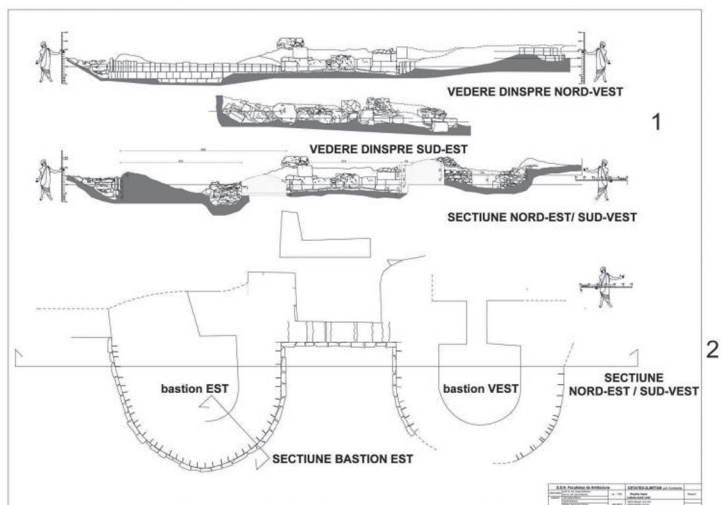
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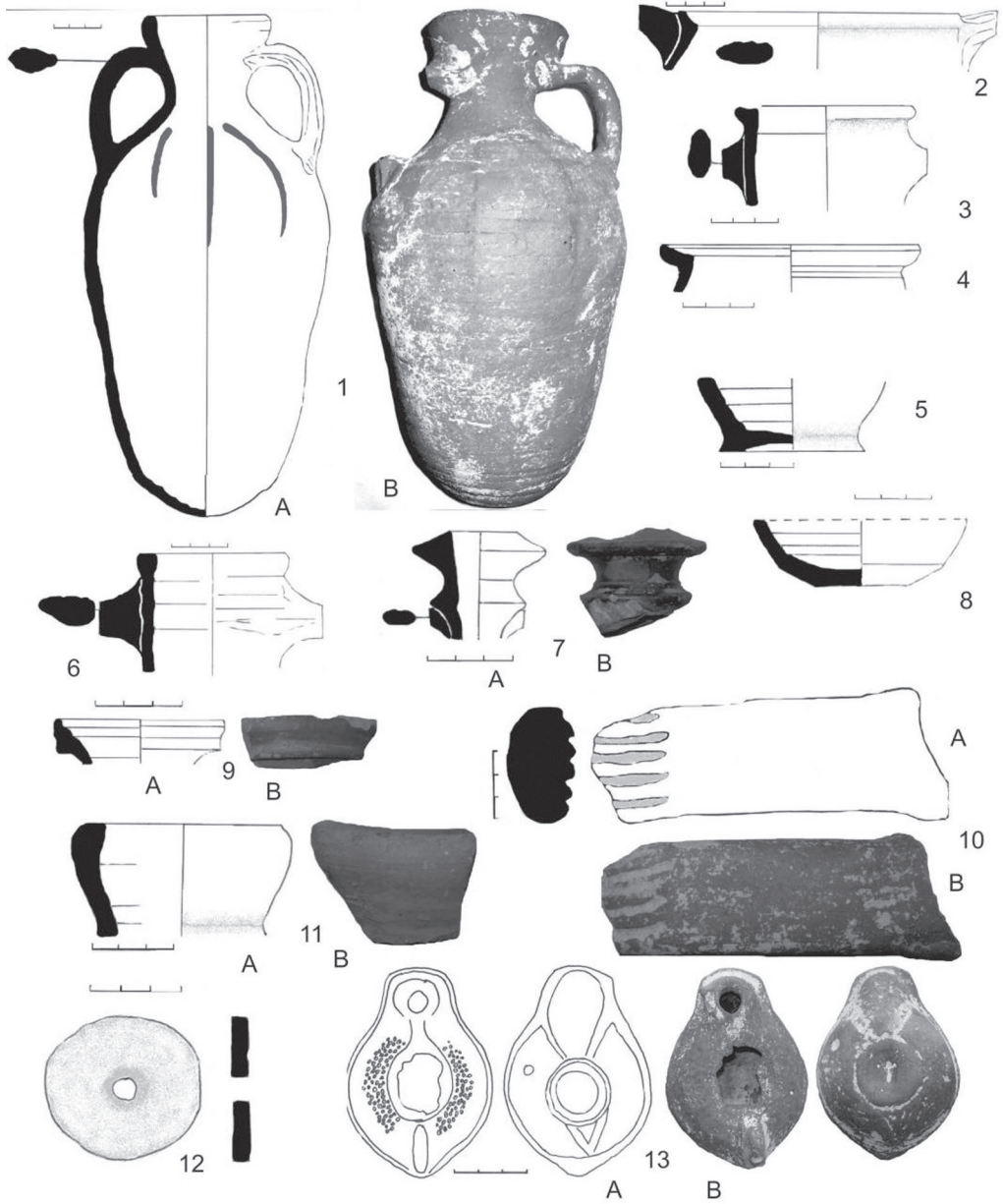
Pl. I. 1 - Map of Scythia Minor; 2 - Map of Ulmetum *apud* Vasile Pârvan; 3 - The position of C1 trench at the North-West gate; 4-8 - Images of the excavation.



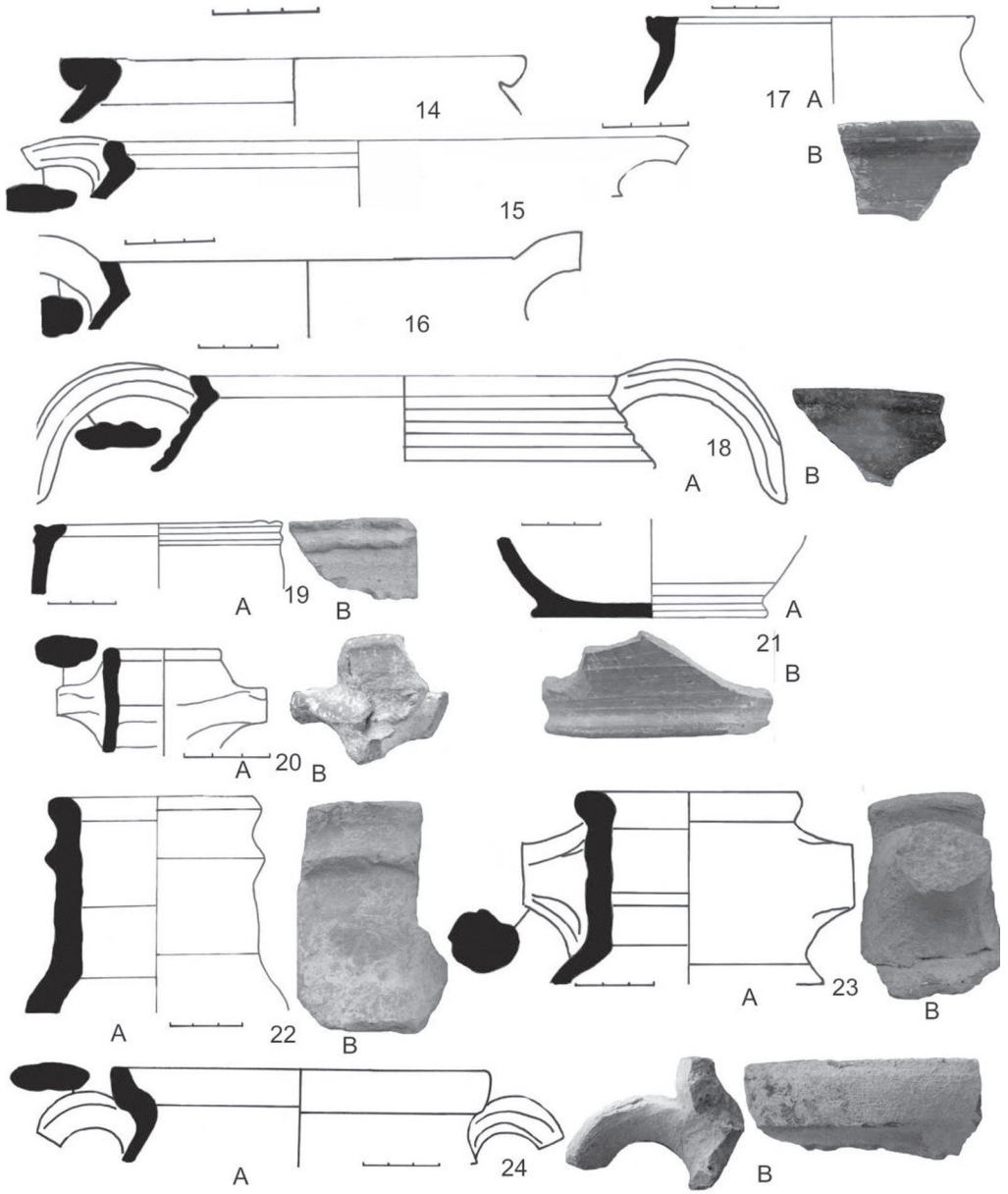
Pl. II. 1 - Profile of the South side of C1; 2 - Partial image of the South profile; 3 - General view from West; 4 - Profile of the East side; 5 - Partial image of the East profile; 6 - Plan of the excavation; 7 - Fragments of the oven.



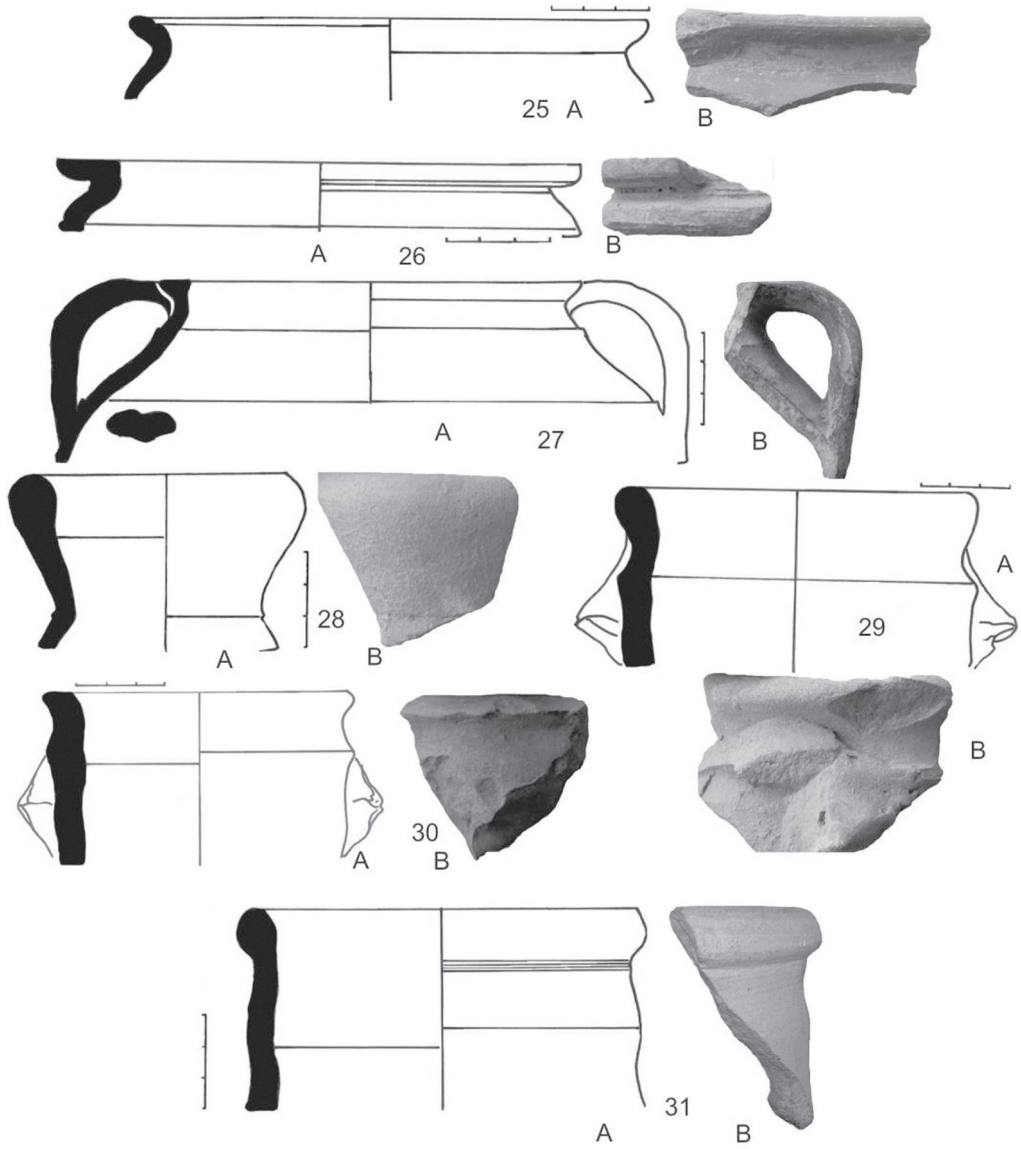
Pl. III. 1-3 - Sections. Authors: Lect. Ph.D. arh. Dan Kisilewicz and conf. Ph.D. arh. Ileana Kisilewicz; 4-5 - Images of the North-West gate.



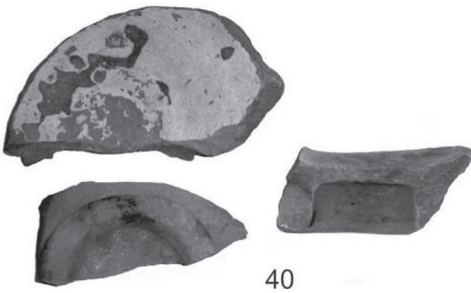
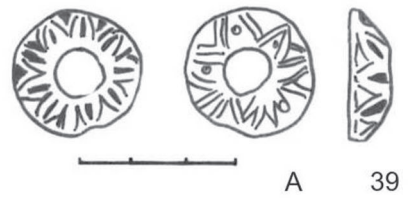
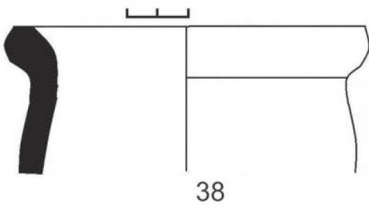
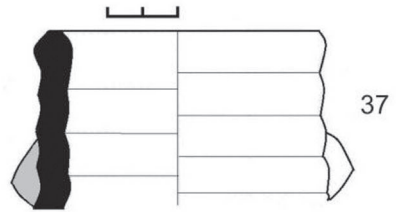
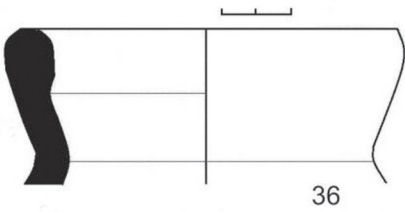
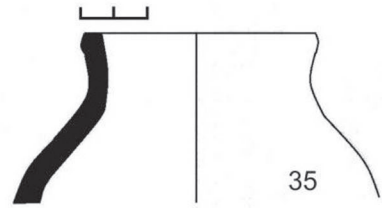
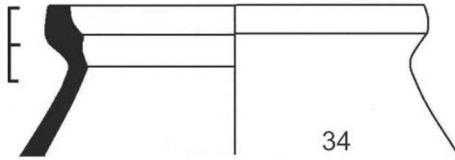
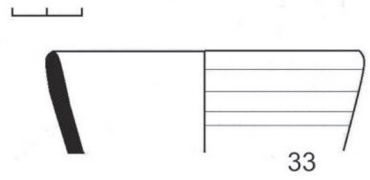
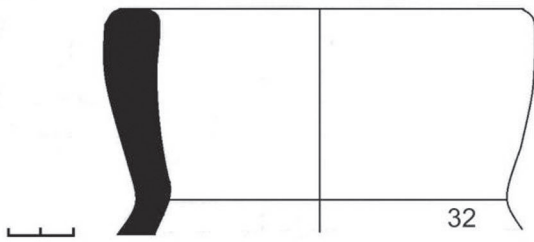
Pl. IV.



Pl. V.



Pl. VI.



Pl. VII.