

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University
The Doctoral School of the Faculty of History

PhD. THESIS
THE ROMAN KITCHENWARE FROM
DOBRUDJA (1st-3rd CENTURY AD.)

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IAȘI, 2015

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Abstract

Starting with the systematic archaeological research in the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea it was found out that the ceramic material prevailed in the discoveries from archaeological sites, a situation that is present in all historical periods. Therefore, this led to the need to study this category of archaeological material in order to know in detail the ways in which ceramic artefacts were produced and then distributed in a certain territory.

By the subject matter we proposed for research we tried to point out the ceramic kitchen finds starting from published pieces deriving from sites, such as Histria, Troesmis, Tomis, Niculițel and Durostorum, to which we added unpublished discoveries from: Argamum, Baia-Caraburun, Ibida and Noviodunum.

This study represents a holistic approach to the issue of the kitchen ceramic discovered in Roman Dobrudja, dating from the early centuries of the Christian era, and to the way in which these findings may be correlated to similar vessels, found in other geographic areas of the Roman Empire.

The necessity of our approach lies in the fact that, until now, kitchen ceramic was not treated separately, but only in studies or articles dedicated to the Roman ceramics in general and providing incomplete information. Therefore, in the present state of our knowledge, there isn't any overview of the kitchen ceramic from Roman Dobrudja, not only in terms of the types of ceramic and its production, but also of its possible imports. From this point of view, by the present study, we try to offer some answers to the many problems posed, currently, by the study of the kitchen ceramic discovered in Dobrudja, in the time of the Principality.

For a more efficient approach to the topic in question, our study has been structured into four chapters, followed by conclusions, bibliography and annexes.

The paper begins with a brief introduction followed by methodological considerations and the state of research on Roman ceramic, focusing on the major scientific contributions in the last century, regarding both the Roman Empire, in general, and Dobrudja area, in particular.

The first part, entitled *Centres of production of the kitchen ceramic from Roman Dobrudja*, focuses on discussions on the local production of kitchen ceramic and the possibility of its manufacture within each site taken into consideration. Another problem we have in mind is the distinction between the provincial and imported ceramics. In general, most researchers

attribute the kitchen ceramic to local workshops. Some of the factors, such as the heat shock, which causes a low use period, but also some features, such as the simple shape, the lack of decoration or the coarse composition of paste, indicate the existence of a plentiful production, easy to do it in the local workshops. We believe the ceramic produced in the administrative territory of the province as locally, while the imported ceramic to be the category of containers that was produced in other centres than those within the province.

Chapter II, called *The main types of kitchen vessels discovered in Roman Dobrudja*, maintains the format and structure of the second part of the thesis, to ensure the unity of the entire study. It contains the typological Catalogue of kitchen vessels, which comprises, in its turn, chronological observations on the types of containers. We believe this is the most important part of our work, in which we aimed to present the kitchen dishes in Roman Dobrudja in the first centuries of the Christian era. Thus, here we described, in terms of style, the shapes of vessels and their variants (where applicable). Also, we commented on the characteristics of the paste out of which the dishes were produced. Each piece is presented in the Catalogue taking into account the following criteria: conservation status (complete or fragmented vessel), place of discovery (archaeological site), inventory number (where applicable), archaeological context (section, square, depth, level, etc.), vessel size (height, length, diameter, etc.), description of paste and ornament (where applicable).

Chapter III, entitled *The kitchen ceramic findings and the Romanization of Dobrudja*, is based on the results of analyses carried out in the two previous parts. This information was used to integrate the kitchen ceramic discovered in Roman Dobrudja in the much broader context of Romanization of Moesia Inferior province. With the realization of this chapter we tried to surprise to what extent the Roman factor influenced the making of kitchen ceramic forms belonging to the local population, concluding that this process of assimilation occurred in both directions.

Chapter IV, *The diet of the Roman population in Dobrudja in the light of the archaeozoological and archaeological discoveries*, proposes an interpretation of the kitchen ceramic findings in close relationship with the information provided by the archaeozoological studies. Besides the archaeological and archaeozoological arguments raised, our research is also based on the stories of ancient writers.

Next, we presented the *Final considerations* and an *Annex* containing petrographic analyses made for the type I of dishes discovered at Durostorum, Troesmis and Noviodunum. At the end of the thesis one may find the *Abbreviations*, *Bibliography* and *Illustrations* of the ceramic types presented in the Catalogue. Taking into consideration the information presented here, as well as along the study, we hope to have brought an addition to the knowledge of kitchen ceramics discovered in Roman Dobrudja.

We cannot end this without the proper thanks to all those who contributed to our development as a human being and, not least, as a specialist in Roman ceramics and archaeology. Therefore, a thought of gratitude goes to the coordinator of this thesis, Prof. Dr. Lucrețiu Bîrliba, who made this topic possible to exploit in the project sustained by the Doctoral School of the Faculty of History of „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași. We wish to bring our sincere gratitude to the members of the guidance commission from the Doctoral School: Prof. Dr. Octavian Bounegru ("Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași), Researcher I grade, Dr. Costel Chiriac (the Institute of Archaeology of Iași) and Researcher II grade, Dr. Dorel Paraschiv (The Eco-Museum Research Institute "Simion Gabriel", Tulcea). Their advice had an important role in eliminating many mistakes, while their critical approach and excellent knowledge of Dobrudja's history and archaeology have allowed us to complete our information.

A warm thought of gratitude goes to the professors who formed me from the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași. A special mention for the support awarded, on numerous occasions, is dedicated to the Academician Victor Spinei, who contributed to our formation as a future researcher within the Institute of Archaeology of Iași.

The same good thoughts are sent to our colleagues and friends from Iași, who have supported us in one way or another, along the drawing up of our PhD. thesis. Therefore, our gratitude goes to: Ana Odochiciuc, Dr. Alexander Rubel, Dr. Lucian Munteanu, Dr. Sever-Petru Botan, Dr. Ionut Acrudoae, Dr. Dan Aparaschivei, Dr. Dănuț Prisecaru, Mr . Romeo Ionescu, PhD. George Mironescu.

Over the years we have received the unconditional support of several specialists in the country: Dr. Mihaela Iacob, Dr. George Nuțu, Dr. Florin Topoleanu, Dr. Aurel Stănică and Adina Ailincăi (Tulcea). We are grateful for the kindness and patience with which they led us to study classical archaeology, Roman ceramic and facilitated our access to ceramic materials from

their own excavations. The processing and use of some of these in the present study is a further reason for the gratitude towards them. A kind thought is also addressed to Dr. Marian Mocanu, with whom we have conducted our first excavations from Slava Rusă. The support provided by Dr. Constantin Băjenaru (Constanța) allowed us to better understand the ceramic production from Tomis.

We thank in particular to Dr. Andrei Opaîț for the recent bibliographic information as well as for his guidance towards the study of kitchen ceramics.

For the ceramic discoveries made in the workshops of Durostorum we have received the support of Mr. Dan Elefterescu (Călărași), an excellent knower of the local antiquities, who provided us with both novel ceramic material and a wide bibliography. For all these and not only we send our regards to him.

We end our kind thoughts towards our family, with sincere thanks to our parents and brothers.