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TABLEWARE FROM ROMAN DOBRUDJA
(1st – 6th CENTURIES)
ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to present the tableware pottery found in Roman Dobrudja following archaeological discoveries from the past century and presenting the conclusions available not just for one archaeological site, but for all the geographic area in western Black Sea. Thesis is structured in four chapters:

Chapter I – ***Introduction in studying Roman Dobrudja tableware pottery***, presents the motivation for choosing the theme, the main reason being that Dobrudja area doesn't have a complete work about the tableware pottery, except the contributions for *Histria*, *Tropaeum Traiani*, *Capidava* or *Halmyris*. Also are presented the main methodological criteria applied to this research theme. Current state of research is presented in detail, from three perspectives: evolution of studying pottery universally, beginning with late XIXth century, major contributions to the knowledge of tableware pottery in the Black Sea area, and presentation of monographs for this type of pottery in Dobrudja.

Chapter II – ***Terra sigillata in Roman Dobrudja during the principality*** presents a repertoire of pottery forms found in this area, grouped according to their area of origin. The first group is for italics sigillatae, far being inventoried four workshops belonging italic forms found in the settlements on the Danube, a situation similar to that found in Bulgaria. The four forms (Goudineau 26, 38b, 39c and 42) are specific for the first century AD being produced in so-called Tardo-padane workshops.

Western sigillatae (especially those produced in Gallia) are generally certified in the fortifications on Danube. For this we mention the consistent samples found at *Durostorum* and *Noviodunum*. In terms of forms we find that, for the terra sigillata lisa, the most common is the cup / bowl Dragendorff 35/36, while the bowl Dragendorff 37 is specific for dishes decorated in relief. These two forms are approximately 90 percent of all vessels of this type.

„Eastern Sigillata A” pottery is concentrated in the Greek settlements on the Black Sea. In this context the most consistent sample comes from Histria, where they were published 12 sherds with a chronological range, from I BC. - I AD. Certainly pottery belonging to the group „Eastern Sigillata A” is present at *Callatis* and *Tomis*. Remarkable is the existence of two pottery fragments inside Dobrogea (from Slava Rusă and Niculițel) and this entitles us to believe that the ESA pottery existed in some indigenous settlements from I century BC. - I AD. more so as at Slava Rusă and Niculițel have been documented archaeologically the existence of pre-Roman settlements where imported materials (ceramics, glass, coins) are found in association with native pottery.

The „Eastern Sigillata B” pottery, like ESA, is found mainly in coastal cities. Most ceramic fragments were found at Histria. Unlike ceramic ESA whose presence in the Black Sea basin is rather random, ESB pottery goes deep into this region, forms as ESB 2 generally being certified in the northern Black Sea. In the Dobrudja territory we inventoried no less than 12 specific forms of BSE, most of which are dated to the first century AD.

Ceramics produced in workshops in Pergamum in early Roman times is quite well represented in settlements from Dobrudja, especially in the second phase forms, but especially the third phase datable from the second half of the century-II century to the beginning of the fourth century. However, the earliest pottery fragment discovered in Roman Dobrudja produced by workshops of Çandarlı was dated to the time of Augustus, and was found to *Halmyris*.

A detailed typology of forms and especially for Pontic sigillatae variants was recently made by the Russian specialist D. Zhuravlev, which looked fine pottery discovered in the necropolis Belbek IV. As diffusion in Roman Dobrudja of the Pontic dishes, it is found in all Roman settlements in the region. In addition to the discoveries of settlements we should note the presence of Pontic dishes in funerary contexts. Most funerary inventory consisting of tableware is made of Pontic pottery.

The category Early Pontic Red Slip Ware includes a substantial number of vessels with red slip, present in all early Roman archaeological sites in Dobrogea. This type of pottery generally occurs archaeological contexts dating from the IInd century and during the next century AD. Typology of the Red Slip Wares Pontic Early forms was conducted in the study of two novel ceramic batches, first discovered in a villa rustica type settlement in Niculițel, the second in an early Roman habitation located about a km southeast of late Roman fortification *Ibida*.

We have grouped under the category Early Roman Wares Thin-Walled Crockery the tableware pottery with thin walls, in general pots / bowls with multiple functionality used in addition to serving meals and liquids. Regarding the Romanian Dobrogea territory, first serious approach to this ceramic group belonged to O. Bounegru, who presented in an summary article findings vessels from urban centres such as *Tomis*, *Histria* or *Carsium*. We can add more recent contribution of V.H. Baumann's fine pottery discoveries from *Noviodunum*. From the findings we can say that the Early Roman pottery with "thin walls" is present in almost all archaeological sites across Dobrudja during principality.

In Early Brown Slip Ware category we included ceramic fragments that have as main characteristic the brown slip applied on the tableware pottery during the principality. Ten sherds belong to this category. Analyzing the texture and consistency of paste, slip properties and vessel forms we concluded that we are dealing with two different production centers.

Chapter III – ***Tableware pottery from Roman Dobrudja during the late antiquity***, was written in the same way as the previous ones. Ceramics imported from North Africa in late antiquity was found in all late Roman settlements from Dobrudja, being inventoried 22 forms so far. An important feature of North African pottery decorated stamped, pottery with such decoration were found at *Histria*, *Tomis* or *Capidava*.

In late Roman settlements on the territory of Dobrudja, phocean tableware pottery is the most common product of this type, whether the settlements on the Black Sea coast such as *Histria*, or from within the province, as *Tropaeum Traiani* and *Ibida* where the phocean tableware pottery appears more than 80 percent for archaeological contexts dating from the fifth century and VI. The situation remains unchanged for the settlements from the *limes*, the percentages were similar in *Halmyris*. From the perspective of phocean dishes forms, the most common is as Hayes 3, with eight of its variants, which is undoubtedly present in all sites in Dobrudja Roman late antiquity. Apart from 3, Hayes form 10 vessels are quite common, especially in the context of the second half of the sixth century and even the onset of the next century. Vessels belonging to the other forms are rare, their amount is quite low.

In Dobrudja, Red Slip Ware Pontic pottery is quite rare at that time the market in this region is dominated by Late Roman C Ware dishes. In the literature devoted to the Dobrogea area, apart from A. Opaïț only undersigned longer refers to the existence of this group identified a lot coming from Slava Rusă. Chronologically speaking Pontic Red Slip Ware

dishes circulated in the Black Sea particularly in the fifth century and VI, although some prototypes can be employed even in the second half of the fourth century.

Chapter IV – *Tableware pottery seen in the context of commercial and economic system of Roman Dobruja* represents the conclusions of this study. The following conclusions can be drawn after the process of gathering and classifying the types of pottery found in the area of research: The pottery was imported mostly from three geographical areas in the time of the Roman Principate: Mediterranean region, Black Sea region and Western Europe (Gaul and Italian peninsula). These products were brought on the West shore of Black Sea either on maritime commercial routes in the case of *terra sigillata* produced in Eastern Mediterranean or in the Black Sea region or by land along the Danubian *limes* in the case of imports from Western Europe. In the Romano-Byzantine Empire tableware pottery from Roman Dobrudja was imported from three major geographical areas: North Africa, Western Asia Minor and the Black Sea region. The most important place in the commerce of Asian Minor and North African pottery was Constantinople.

The conclusions that can be drawn from a historical point of view are as following: Dobrudja territory is absorbed into Roman Empire during the first century AD. In this context are found imports of tableware pottery produced in Italy at the mouths of Danube, found exclusively in the settlements on the new created *limes*. Around this time is when the Greek cities on the Dobrudja shore are connected to the Levantin trade route (as proof there are about 20 wares uncovered at *Histria*, imported from Syria-Palaestina area). Between the second and third century Dobruja is part of the Moesia Inferior province and is integrated in the Roman world. Now the greatest diversity of tableware pottery can be found in this region (imports from Western Europe, North Africa, Asia Minor, Black Sea region and products made inland territory). By the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth there is a fundamental change in the Roman economic system and in other areas of life. In this time imports from Western Europe disappear completely from Roman Dobruja. The fifth and sixth century represents the integration of this territory in the Roman-Byzantine Empire economic system, imports are mainly from Asia Minor and rarely from North Africa or some distant areas of the Black Sea region.