

Ștefan Honcu, *Ceramica romană de bucătărie din Dobrogea (secolele I-III p. Chr.)*

[*Roman ceramic kitchenware in Dobrudja - 1st-3rd centuries AD*],

Editura Dobrogea, Constanța 2017, 225 p., XXXI pl.

Ștefan Honcu, a researcher of the Archaeological Institute in Iași, published his doctoral thesis titled *Ceramica romană de bucătărie din Dobrogea (secolele I-III p. Chr.)*. The work is divided into five chapters and it comprises an annex with petrographic analyses conducted by Florica Mățău, abbreviations, bibliography and illustrations.

In the introduction of the thesis (pp. 11–19), the author highlights the reason and relevance of the topic. He underscores that thus far for the Dobrudjan territory, the ceramic kitchenware was treated along with the other ceramic categories and thus, the information is incomplete. At the same time, methodological information is provided and the stage of research at international level and for the studied territory was taken into account.

The first chapter (pp. 23–42), dedicated to the ceramic kitchenware production centres, proposes to clarify several issues. The purpose is to determine the extent to which some local workshops covered the need for ceramic products in the province of Moesia Inferior and the identification of products in military *officinae*, in the Greek cities and in the rural environment. At the same time, he focused on imports and on the extent to which they influenced and replaced their local manufacturing.

Before identifying of the local workshops within the aforementioned environments, the author also notes a series of prerequisite conditions to be met before founding such a production centre, such as demographic conditions, access to raw material sources, vicinity of important roadways or littoral areas and their constitution in areas protected from invasions. Possible areas where pottery workshops existed in the military environment are the following Durostorum, Troesmis and Noviodunum. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that these centres were researched, even though they were not also published. However, the author has the merit of having accessed directly to the pottery discovered in this environment, and this aspect completed his overall view. Other smaller military centres such as Dinogetia may have had their own pottery workshops, but their findings have not been published yet. In the Greek environment—in the period of the 1st–3rd centuries—workshops may have existed at Tomis, Argamum and Callatis. These identifications have been considered possible due to the different composition of the ceramic paste within each centre. There are production centres for the rural environment and it is impossible for production to have existed in the Greek cities, too.

The rural workshops are represented by finds of *officinae* that functioned from the 2nd century. Such workshops were identified at: Valea Morilor, the settlements of Frecăței, Telița Amza, Sarichioi-Sărătură and possibly of Gura Canliei. This production was destined to *villa rustica* or to the villages nearby. The author also provides political history details in accordance with the proposed topic and he posits that the ceramic production within the centres of Scythia Minor most probably ceased activity after the Adrianople disaster of 378.

The second chapter (pp. 43-134) is the most comprehensive and it comprises the main types of kitchenware in the Istro-Pontic space. For each type, the author described the vessel; analogies from Moesia Inferior, Dacia and/or the western part of the Empire were provided. As for fragments, the author outlined the discovery place, the dimensions, the description, the bibliography, when applicable, and the dating. The importance of this chapter results from the fact that most of the material taken into account has not been published. In total, 17 types of Roman provincial vessels (*Aula* and *Olla*) – a type of La Tene traditional, handmade vessels; four types of imported vessels and three types of containers/*dolia*. This category of kitchenware also includes three types of baking dishes or casseroles; seven types of Roman provincial pans and two types of imported pans. Another category included is the one of bowls/*patera* and 16 types of such vessels were identified; three types of *mortaria*, water containers, colanders and Roman provincial and imported lids.

I believe that for this chapter a brief methodology part would have been necessary. I noted, for instance, that the Roman provincial vessels were not divided by types depending on their dating and probably the typology was elaborated depending on the number of fragments included within each type. At the same time, the most accurate terminology for the storage vessels /*dolia* (p. 79) would be household vessel. This change would be necessary, because the vessels taken into account by the author were used in order to preserve a small and average amount of products, while the term *dolia* is generally used for very large vessels; their capacity exceeds 200 litres.

The third chapter (pp. 135-161) is dedicated to kitchenware and to the Romanization of the Istro-Pontic space. Within it, the introduction of Roman products to the local market is discussed. This introduction of the products is considered the trigger factor leading to the acquisition of the material and spiritual values of the Roman world by the Getians. The Roman influence on local civilization was manifested by the adoption of new pottery-making techniques, namely using the potter's wheel, but this did not entail the disappearance of the old technique until late 3rd century or even early 4th century. From a morphological standpoint, the old ceramic forms were also preserved until early 4th century, but they were executed using the new technique. Also gradually, new Roman provincial ceramic forms were accepted. At the same time, the author references the other parameters included in this Romanization phenomenon and the "improvements" brought by the Roman Empire to this territory, such as infrastructure, city founding, border organization, etc.

This chapter is of a more general nature and the Romanization issue is very complex; significant amounts of work have been dedicated to this topic. Concerning pottery, A. Opaîț (Opaîț 1980, p. 348) highlighted even since 1980 that at Troesmis, the local ceramic forms were preserved, but they were made of higher quality clay and wheel-thrown.

In the fourth chapter, (pp. 163–171) the author discusses the diet of the Roman population in the Istro-Pontic space from the perspective of archaeozoological and archaeological discoveries. The chapter begins with a presentation of underground resources, climacteric and landform conditions to explain the grain types encountered in the Lower Danube area. Hence, the economic resources of the area were also highlighted through the archaeological discoveries in the area. The author mentions the agricultural tool treasure of Moșneni, the tools of Fântânele, Telița-Amza and Tropaeum Traiani. At the same time, the seed finds confirming the practice of agriculture are also mentioned. Such carbonized seeds were found at Moșneni (wheat and rice seeds), Murighiol (lentil). The existence of Thracian-Dacian words (peas, pod, etc) and the Latin words (lentil, beans, etc) of our vocabulary confirm their existence from that period. Animal breeding is also closely connected the landform within the area studied. The archaeozoological studies confirmed the breeding and sacrificing of domestic animals such as sheep or goats, traction animals, birds and the practice of fishing at the *Peuce* mouth. All these resources only confirm the role played by the kitchenware. The vessels were used to boil porridge or soups, the pans to bake bread, the casseroles to reheat food.

The last chapter is dedicated to final considerations, which reprise the ceramic types and a brief description; charts are featured comprising the percentage distribution of kitchenware in the Istro-Pontic space at macro level, but such charts also concern various settlements, such as *Noviodunum*, *Troesmis*, *Durostorum*, *Argamum*, *Baia-Caraburun*, *Ibida* and *Niculițel*.

The annex at the end of the thesis is represented by the petrographic analysis conducted by Florica Mățău on three ceramic fragments of *Durostorum*, *Troesmis* and *Noviodunum*. Analyses have concluded that three fragments have a homogeneous and compact aspect; they feature granoclast and lithoclast inclusions, but they are differentiated in terms of quantity.

The thesis ends with a well-established bibliography and with a catalogue where each drawing has its own scale and each fragment is provided with the type, origin and bibliography, when applicable.

This thesis does not wish to be strictly typological, because it has managed to explain issues related to economics, society and diet. The dominant chapter of the thesis—dedicated to the typology—is very well elaborated; each type benefits from the same details, which provides consistency to the entire work. The unpublished material featured in this thesis will be a great help for all persons who study pottery. I believe that the author's initiative of

elaborating a thesis dedicated completely to a ceramic category has long been overdue, because it enables us to find out detailed information about the changes within the society, diet and lifestyle.

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