

ESB in Western Black Sea

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Abstract. *The commercial and cultural links between the West-Pontic region and the Aegean basin date well before the appearance of ESB tableware. In this article is analysed the presence of this type of pottery in the Western Black Sea. In the period between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, in this region was recorded 14 forms specific of workshops from Western Asia Minor. In archaeological sites from the Black Sea coast this type of ceramics is encountered in a larger proportion than in the inland settlements. Troesmis on the Danube line is a settlement where a significant amount of ESB has been discovered.*

Rezumat. *Legăturile comerciale și culturale dintre spațiul vest-pontic și bazinul egeean datează cu mult înainte de apariția ceramicii de masă ESB. În acest articol este analizată prezența acestui tip de veselă în bazinul occidental al Mării Negre. În intervalul cuprins între secolele I–III p.Chr., în această regiune a fost înregistrată prezența a 14 forme specifice atelierelor din vestul Asiei Mici. Siturile arheologice în care acest tip de ceramică este întâlnit într-o proporție mai mare sunt cele de pe litoralul Mării Negre. Pe linia Dunării o așezare în care a fost descoperită o cantitate semnificativă de ESB este Troesmis.*

Keywords: ESB, Red Slip Ware, Early Roman Empire, Aegean, Western Black Sea.

By definition, ESB is a group of red-slip tableware produced in western Anatolia (Meander Valley) between the end of the 1st century BC and the first half of the 3rd century AD. The ESB concept appears for the first time after the Second World War following the classification proposed by K. Kenyon, based on the ceramics discovered in Samaria², without indicating the geographical area where this type of pottery was produced. The specialists have focused their attention on tableware produced in western Asia Minor since the beginning of the 20th century. Zahn described and classified for the first time this kind of pottery, following the research conducted at Priene in the last decade of the nineteenth century³. He considers the ESB workshops appeared as branches of the Italic *officinae* from Aretium. This hypothesis, which is still standing nowadays, is due to the presence of common stamps and some common forms for both Italian and ESB ceramics⁴. A last aspect of the paper published in 1904

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² KENYON 1957, 282.

³ ZAHN 1904, 440-449.

⁴ For a recent discussion regarding the origin and history of research on ESB pottery, see BESS 2015, 16-17.

refers to the geographical area where this type of tableware was produced. Zahn says the ceramics, which will later be known as ESB, were produced in the island of Samos. The basis of this hypothesis is ancient text of Plinius⁵, but also the rather small distance between Priene and the island of Samos. In the volume about pottery discovered in the Athenian Agora, H.S Robinson accepts Zahn's theory that this type of tableware comes from the island of Samos⁶, so for the coming decades it will appear in the literature called Samian Wares. Robinson establishes two categories of ESB differentiated by the quality and texture of the fabrics and slip, calling them Samian A and B. This classification is taken over by Hellström, who renames the two groups ESB 1 and ESB 2, which is still used today⁷. In the mid-1980s, J.W. Hayes proposed for ESB workshops the location in Meander Valley of western Anatolia⁸ and this hypothesis is still valid today. This article will present the ESB ceramics discovered in the archaeological sites from the territory corresponding to the nowadays Romanian Dobrogea. In the chronological period when ESB was in circulation (1st-3rd century AD), this geographic region was part of Moesia Inferior Province.

For the area previously defined, the concept of ESB appears in the literature, late in the 20th century in various specialized papers. Until then, ESB tableware was generally considered as imports from Asia Minor, such as the ceramic fragments discovered at Troesmis⁹. In his work regarding the roman pottery discovered at Histria, A. Suceveanu makes the confusion between Samian Wares and ESB¹⁰. So far no repertoire of ESB forms has been carried out for the region covered by this article. Thus we do not know how many forms of ESB tableware are present in the Western Black Sea and what the quantitative ratio between them is.

To classify ESB forms from west-pontic area I used the typology published in 1985 by JW Hayes in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica*¹¹. In order to achieve a data base for the present study, I have used exclusively the ceramic material published in previous decades. Because of this, important archaeological sites in Dobrogea, such as Callatis, do not appear in the present article, as the ceramics discovered here are largely unpublished. Thus, from the outset, it is important to highlight the preliminary charter of the conclusions of this article, which may change in the future.

For the territory of Dobrogea, we identified 13 ESB-specific forms plus a non-classified form in the 1985 Hayes typology.

⁵ PLINIUS, XXXV, 46.

⁶ ROBINSON 1959, 12.

⁷ HELLSTRÖM 1965, 32-33.

⁸ HAYES 1985, 49; HAYES 2008, 31.

⁹ OPAIȚ 1980.

¹⁰ SUCEVEANU 2000.

¹¹ HAYES 1985, 49-70.

Atlante Form 8 (Figure 5/1). Small or medium sized plate with vertical rim, nearly horizontal and slightly curved walls, short circular foot. The diameters of these plates do not generally exceed 15 cm. The fabric is of good quality with shades of red to orange (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/4, 5/3, 5/4), red slip with a matt or gloss appearance especially on the outer surface of the vessel. Atlante Form 8 is encountered mainly in the Aegean and is attested in centres like Corinth or Ephesus¹². On the North African shore, Atlante 8 is present at Berenice¹³. In all the cases mentioned above the dishes belonging to this form were dated in the middle of the 1st century AD. In Roman Dobrogea we know a single copy of Atlante 8, discovered at Histria during the archaeological excavations of the interwar period. The editor of this specimen carries out a large chronological frame, dating back to the first and second centuries AD¹⁴.

Atlante Form 13 (Figure 5/2). Medium and large size bowl. The bowl rim is oblique, slightly flared to the outside, the walls are heavily arched, flat floor. These bowls have diameters generally ranging from 15 to 20 cm. High quality fabric, well-burned, no impurities in the composition. The hue is red-brown to brown (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/3, 4/6, 4/8), and the slip closes to orange (2.5 YR 6/6, 6/8, 7 / 6, 7/8). The distribution area of this form generally coincides with the Aegean basin. Some of this specimens have manufacturer's stamp with Greek letters. The Form Atlante 13 is dated in mid first century AD¹⁵. In the west-pontic region, a ceramic fragment was discovered at Histria in the Temple sector and was dated in the first half of the 1st century AD. The Histria fragment does not keep track of the manufacturer's stamp¹⁶.

Atlante Form 38 (Figure 5/3-4). Bucket/crater of variable sizes. Small size, vertically disposed rim, linked with the walls through a discrete, triangular section, verge. The vessel walls are almost vertical, strongly curved in the upper third. A high circular foot ensures vessel stability. The outer surface of the vessel can be decorated with a toothed wheel incision. The decor can be present on the rim or in the upper third of the bowl. The cups diameter is between 15 and 20 cm. The morphological characteristics of the fabric coincide with the specific features for the western region of the Asia Minor, the hue is red-brick (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/3, 4/6, 4/8), while the slip has red shades towards orange (5 YR 6/4, 7/4, 6/6, 7/6). The distribution area for this form is in the Aegean settlements in the first part of the 1st century AD. Some pots have a rectangular shape stamp with Latin characters. So far, four different stamps are known¹⁷. In Western Black Sea two ceramic fragments, and a full copy, belong to the Atlante 38 form. The two fragments were discovered at Histria in the Temple

¹² HAYES 1985, 55, fig.11/19

¹³ KENRICK 1985, fig.45/345.

¹⁴ SUCEVEANU 2000, 72, fig.26/15.

¹⁵ HAEYS 1985, 55-56, fig. 12/3-4.

¹⁶ SUCEVEANU 2000, 53, fig. 18/5.

¹⁷ HAYES 1985. 60-61.

sector and dated in broad chronological limits between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD¹⁸. A full copy of an Atlante 38 cup is a random discovery from Tomis¹⁹. A fourth vessel similar to the aforementioned random discovery, also comes from Tomis, from a funerary context (tomb 33). C. Băjenaru and L. Nedelea advanced the hypothesis that the krater belongs to the Cypriot workshops²⁰ (ESD), this specimen having all the features of the X39 shape²¹. Since I saw this last cup only in the photograph, I am limiting myself to recording the presence of a fourth similar vessel both in shape and dimensions as those of the Atlantean form 38.

Atlante Form 40 (Figure 5/5). Thin-shaped miniature cup, vertical rim, no distinctive elements between it and the walls, thin slightly oblique walls, flat floor. According to Hayes's description on the outer surface of the vessel are two horizontal lines made by incision, approximately equally spaced between the upper limit and the floor. This fact is valid for the copy of Dobrogea. The fabric from which this type of dish is made is of good quality, with shades of red (2.5 YR 4/8) and from a chromatic perspective the slip is similar. The circulation of this form is attested in the sites of the Aegean (Corinth, Athens, Priene, Ephesus), but also in the eastern Mediterranean (Antioch). The chronological range in which it circulates coincides with the first century AD²². Only one entire specimen is known in west-pontic region, discovered at Tomis²³.

Atlante Form 53 (Figure 5/6–8). Medium-sized dish with strongly arched walls, slightly creased rim to the inside of the bowl, flat floor, short leg. This type of bowl represents one of the most common form made in many of the great ceramic workshops in the Roman Empire. In fact, J.W. Hayes believes that the product of the Eastern Sigillata B workshops is in fact an imitation of the Goudineau 43 form produced by the Aretine workshops. According to the same author, the form in question does not have a very wide distribution²⁴. In Roman Dobrogea was discovered gest one copy at Histria in contexts dating back to the 1st century AD²⁵.

Atlante Form 58 (Figure 5/9–11). Medium or large plate/bowl with vertical rim, very slightly arched inwards. On the outer surface, the rim is separated from the body by a discrete threshold, triangular in the section. The walls slightly curved, the base is flat with a very short foot. The fabric for these dishes is of high quality, porous appearance, sometimes with impurities in composition, red, with yellowish tints (2.5 YR 5/8), glossy slip on both surfaces

¹⁸ SUCEVEANU 2000, 11-12/6-7, pl.1/1/6-7.

¹⁹ BĂJENARU, VLAD 2018, 196, no.533; BOUNEGRU 1993.

²⁰ BĂJENARU, NEDELEA 2018, 199, no.542; BOUNEGRU 1993.

²¹ HAYES 1985, 88, fig.21/3.

²² HAYES 1985, 61, fig.13/2.

²³ BOCAN 2018, 197, no.536.

²⁴ HAYES 1985, 62, fig.13/15-16.

²⁵ SUCEVEANU 2000, 23, fig.22-23.

of the vessels, with red-light shades (2.5 YR 6/8). Some plates are provided with relief decoration on the outer surface of the rim or made by incision with the toothed wheel. In Roman Dobrogea this form was attested in Histria²⁶ and Aegyssus²⁷. One ceramic fragment was discovered at Niculițel-Teicom²⁸. The form in question is widespread in the Pontic basin, being also found in the Crimea, in funerary contexts dated at the end of the 1st century BC and at the beginning of the next century²⁹. This form, as well as others belonging to the second phase of ESB workshops, have a distribution area in the Eastern Mediterranean³⁰. On the territory of Roman Dobrogea this form is present in archaeological contexts dating from the 1st century AD and in the first half of the next century.

Atlante Form 60 (Figures 5/12; 6/13–18). Medium or large sized bowls with a vertical, sharp rim, obliquely disposed towards the inside of the vessel. The rim outer surface, is bounded by the walls with a sharp verge, triangular in the section. The walls are arched while the floor is flat. The fabric has a porous appearance, sometimes with impurities in the composition, red, sometimes with yellowish shades (2.5 YR 5/8), glossy slip on both surfaces of the vessels, with red-light shades (2.5 YR 6/8). Atlante Form 60 bowls were discovered at Troesmis, dating in the chronological range between the last quarter of the 1st century BC and the first quarter of the 3rd century AD³¹, and Histria, dated between the 2nd century and the 4th century³². A similar ceramic fragment originates from Tropaeum Traiani, being dated by its publishers in the 3rd century AD³³. A considerable number of pots were discovered at Durostorum, in the waste pits of the ceramic workshop area. Publishers of these vessels consider the dishes in question to be local imitations of a form originating from the micro-Asiatic area³⁴. For this reasons we will not taking in consideration the eight vessels discovered in the pit no. 18 from Durostorum. At Tomis we know the existence of at least two such full copy, discovered in graves and dated between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD³⁵. In the north-pontic area, plates of this form were discovered in funerary contexts that were dated in the second half of the 2nd century and the first part of the following one³⁶. This form had a fairly wide spread area, including the Mediterranean basin of southern Italy, northern Africa to the Levantine area. It is also found in the Aegean and Pontic basins. JW Hayes dates the Atlante

²⁶ SUCEVEANU 2000, 70, fig.26/1.

²⁷ NUȚU, COSTEA 2010, 153, fig.3/10.

²⁸ MOCANU 2014, 67, fig.16/118.

²⁹ ZHURAVLEV 2010, 24–25, fig.5.

³⁰ HAYES 1985, 63/58, fig.14/58; KENRIK 1985, 249/B351, fig. 45/351.1–352.2.

³¹ OPAIȚ 1980, 359, fig.19/1–3.

³² SUCEVEANU 2000, 82, fig.31/1–4.

³³ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, BARNEA 1979, fig.149/2.2.

³⁴ MUȘEȚEANU, ELEFTERESCU 1988–1989, 106, fig. 6/32, 36–39 și fig.8/33–35, 40.

³⁵ BĂJENARU, VLAD 2018, 197, no.534–535.

³⁶ ZHURAVLEV 2010, 26, fig. 6–7.

Form 60 between the mid-1st century AD and the middle of the 2nd century AD, believing it to be one of the most widespread forms of ESB³⁷.

Atlante Form 61 (Figure 6/19–20). Medium-sized bowl, with horizontal rim, oblique walls and flat floor. The diameters of these bowls are ranging between 14 and 18 cm. The fabric has shades of orange (5 YR 6/8) and the slip is bright red-brown (2.5 YR 5/6, 6/8), sometimes with lime particle inserts. Outside the Aegean, specimens of Form 61 are known in the eastern Mediterranean, but also in the Italy. The specific chronological range is the first half of the second century³⁸. In the West-Pontic area we know about the existence of two specimens discovered at Troesmis, following the archaeological excavations carried out in 1977³⁹.

Atlante Form 62B (Figure 7/21). The rim is made up of two parts, the upper vertical limit makes a right angle with the lower limit, which is horizontal and provides the connection with the body of the vessel. The walls are oblique and the floor is flat. Generally, the diameter of these bowls does not exceed 16–18 cm. The fabric has red-orange shades (2.5 YR 7/8), similar to the slip. Atlante Form 62 is found in the Mediterranean basin in the last quarter of the 1st century AD and in the first part of the 2nd century⁴⁰. The only specimen of the West-Pontic region known to date was discovered at Tomis. In the case of this copy, the small size of the vessel is remarkable, with a maximum diameter of 7 cm⁴¹.

Atlante Form 63 (Figure 7/22–23). Medium sized bowl, with oblique rim, oriented towards the exterior, the walls are oblique, straight, flat floor. Some pots in the Aegean area have decoration made by stamping in the centre of the floor. The diameter of these bowls is about 20 cm. The fabric is generally of superior quality, orange hue (5 YR 7/6), no impurities in composition, granular appearance. The slip is of good quality, orange, but a shade more pronounced than the fabric (2.5 YR 6/8). The chronological range specific to this form is comprised between the end of the 1st century AD and the first half of the next century⁴². In the Black Sea region, until now, the Atlante Form 63 is less well known. Evidence of its presence are found in the Crimea, a specimens being discovered in a funerary context and dated in the last quarter of the first century and in the first quarter of the second century⁴³. In Western Black Sea a specimen was discovered in a rural settlement in the territory of Argamum⁴⁴. Also for the Dobrogea's territory we find examples of similar bowls at Histria⁴⁵, or Troesmis⁴⁶. In the case of these findings, the publishers of those vessels do not

³⁷ HAYES 1985, 64, fig.14/7-8.

³⁸ HAYES 1985, 64-65, fig.14/9.

³⁹ OPAIȚ 1980, 359, fig.19/4.

⁴⁰ HAYES 1985, 65, fig.14/11.

⁴¹ BĂJENARU, NEDELEA 2018, 198, no.537.

⁴² HAYES 1985, 65, fig.14/12-13

⁴³ ZHURAVLEV 2010, 28, fig.7/28.

⁴⁴ BAUMANN 1995, fig.15/32.

⁴⁵ SUCEVEANU 2000, 91-92, fig.36/1.

specify the workshop, so we can't say whether they are ESB products or from the Çandarli workshops.

Form Atlante 70 (Figure 7/24–30). Cups with small or medium diameters, with a vertical rim, slightly bent towards the interior of the bowl. On the outer surface, the boundary between the rim and the body of the vessel is marked by a prominent, well-pointed verge, triangular in the section, while on the inner surface this limit is marked by an incision. The walls of the vessel are oblique, small annular floor. The fabric of these dishes has a porous appearance, with reddish brown hue (2.5 YR 6/8, 5 YR 6/8), orange red slip with a shiny brown shade (5 YR 5/4, 6/4). According to the typology made by JW Hayes, these vessels have a decoration similar to that of Atlante Form 58⁴⁷, but the ceramic fragments of Roman Dobrogea are undecorated. These come from the archaeological researches carried out at Aegyssus, being discovered in archaeological context dated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, and from a typological point of view, the two vessels are considered to be pontic sigillata⁴⁸. This form was also produced by the Pontic workshops as an imitation of italic cups⁴⁹. At Histria there are presented not less than 51 specimens, which the author groups in Form 18, but most of these vessels are products of pontic workshops. A. Suceveanu realizes the typology taking in consideration only the shape of the vessels, and their area of origin is ignored. Thus, out of the 51 vessels, only five are products of the ESB workshops, and their publisher, influenced by the classification of H. Robinson, considers them to be Samian Ware. From a chronological point of view, at Histria these vessels are dated in the second half of the first century and especially in the early part of the 2nd century⁵⁰. We also note the presence of a specimen of this type in Noviodunum⁵¹. This form is well documented also in the North-Pontic area, being encountered in the Crimean graves in Belbek's necropolis, dating from the second half of the first century and the first half of the next one⁵².

Form Atlante 72 (Figure 7/31). Medium sized bowl with wide, horizontally rim, curved walls, flat floor. The upper rim surface can be decorated with concentric circles made by incision in the raw fabric. Unlike the ceramic fragment discussed below, the diameters specific to the shape in question do not exceed 12-15 cm. In our case either we are dealing with a particular example of Atlante Form 72 (a variant), or rather, as suggested by the drawing published by the editor of this bowl, it was made an error in calculating the diameter of the vessel. Even if the diameter of the Histria's copy does not match the diameters of the Mediterranean exemplars, the characteristics of the fabric - some impurities in the

⁴⁶ OPAIȚ 1980, 359, fig.19/4.

⁴⁷ HAYES 1985, 66-67, fig.14/19.

⁴⁸ NUȚU, COSTEA 2010, 151-152, fig.2/6-7.

⁴⁹ ZHURAVLEV 2008, 90-93, fig.1.

⁵⁰ SUCEVEANU 2000, 69-77/23,28,30,36,39, fig.27/23,28,30, fig.28/36,39.

⁵¹ TOPOLEANU 1984, 192, fig.4/1.

⁵² ZHURAVLEV 2010, 29-30, fig.8.

composition and shades of reddish brown (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/4, 5/3), and reddish orange slip (2.5 YR 6/6, 6/8), justify us to consider the fragment of Histria as belonging to the Eastern Sigillata B 2 ceramic group. The Atlante 72 Form is found in the Aegean and in the settlements of Greece, but also in more distant parts of the Mediterranean, such as Ostia in Italy or Samaria-Sebaste in the Near East⁵³. Concerning the Pontic region, the Atlante Form 72 was attested in Olbia⁵⁴, and at Histria a ceramic fragment belonging to the Atlante 72 was certified and dated in the 1st century AD⁵⁵.

Form Atlante 75 (Figure 7/32). Small bowl, similar in shape to the Atlante Form 72, the differences being given by the reduced size and lack of decoration on the upper rim surface. The diameters of these bowls are about 15 cm. Good quality fabric, burnt uniformly, with some small impurities in the composition. The fabric colour is shiny red to red orange (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/3, 5/3, 5/4). The slip has a glossy look with orange to yellow shades (7.5 YR 7/8, 8/8). Some pots have been discovered with a Greek manufacturer's stamp. The form circulated in the eastern part of the Mediterranean⁵⁶ but it also penetrated into the Pontic region, being discovered at Olbia⁵⁷ and Histria, in the Therme I sector, in an archaeological context dated to the 2nd – 3rd centuries AD⁵⁸.

Form Atlante 80 (Figure 7/33–34). Small/medium bowl, hemispherical shape with vertical rim undiluted by the vessel body, strongly curved walls, short, circular foot. The diameters of these bowls generally range from 10 to even 20 cm. Good quality fabric, with uniform combustion and with some small impurities in the composition, with reddish brown hue (2.5 YR 4/3, 4/3, 5/3, 5/4). The slip has a glossy appearance, especially on the outer surface and orange shades (5 YR 6/6, 6/8, 7/6, 7/8). According to Hayes, we are dealing with a rather widespread form in the Mediterranean, these form circulating at the end of the 1st century AD and in the first half of the next century⁵⁹. The form in question is attested in Histria, in the Temple sector, in a context of the first century AD⁶⁰, but also at Durostorum, in a waste pit in the ceramic workshop area. The pit in question dates between first and third centuries AD⁶¹.

Unclassified form (Figure 7/35). Small/medium bowl with vertical rim, bounded by the vessel body through a triangular verge, curved walls, annular floor. We do not know decorative elements. The fabric from which the dishes are made is orange (5 YR 7/8) with

⁵³ HAYES 1985, 67–68/72, fig.15/3; HAYES 2008, 38, 153/Shape IV, fig.12/323–326.

⁵⁴ KNIPOVICI 1929, 16, fig.1.5/IV.3.

⁵⁵ SUCEVEANU 2000, 94, pl.37/1.

⁵⁶ HAYES 1985, 68, fig.15/8–9.

⁵⁷ KNIPOVICI 1929, 16, fig.1/6.

⁵⁸ SUCEVEANU 1982, 97/I B–C/4, fig.3/4.

⁵⁹ HAYES 1985, 69–70, fig.15/15.

⁶⁰ SUCEVEANU 2000, 14/3, pl.2/III/3.

⁶¹ MUȘEȚEANU, ELEFTERESCU 1985, 70, fig.1/7.

limestone particles insert in the composition, the slip is light brown (2.5 YR 5/8). The only known copy so far has been discovered in the civil settlement of Troesmis and can be dated in the 2nd century. This type of bowl was produced in significant quantities in both Asia Minor workshops, such as those at Çandarlı, but also in workshops from the Western Roman Empire.

In his 1985 classification, J.W. Hayes established 80 forms for ESB tableware. From these 80 forms, 14 are recorded in West-Pontic area. For this region, we counting a total of 46 specimens discovered in eight distinct sites. Six of the 46 specimens belong to the ESB 1 category, while the remaining 37 are in the ESB 2 category. The tendency from the Aegean basin, according to which ESB 2 ceramics in more widespread than ESB 1, also remains in the Western Black Sea. In West-Pontic area the most common form is Atlante 60, with 35% of all ESB tableware, followed by Atlante 70, with 18 percent. In its turn form Atlante 63 has a share of 9%, followed by Atlante 38 and 58 with 7 percent. The remaining forms do not exceed 5 percent.

From the quantitative perspective, for the chronological interval between 1st and 3rd centuries AD, in the West-Pontic Basin, the ESB tableware ranks third, after the Pontic and the Pergamene (ESC) fine wares (Figure 1). For comparison, in the northern Aegean area in the first two centuries of Christian era, ESB pottery is the second most widespread category, after ESC, with 15.3%. From a chronological point of view, the peak of ESB diffusion occurs at the beginning of the 2nd century⁶², the ESB 2 forms being more widespread than ESB 1, a valid observation for both the Aegean and the Pontic region. If we refer to the most widespread ESB forms, we note the following: in the northern Black Sea are inventoried until now 13 forms of ESB (Atlante 29, 32, 58, 60, 62B, 63, 65, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75 to which it is added an unclassified form by Hayes)⁶³. In north-eastern Greece, at least 11 forms have been recorded (Atlante 8, 15, 60, 63, 70, 71, 76, 80, plus at least three unclassified forms in the EAA)⁶⁴. Thus, a common pattern of ESB diffusion is observed both for the Aegean basin and for the Black Sea area.

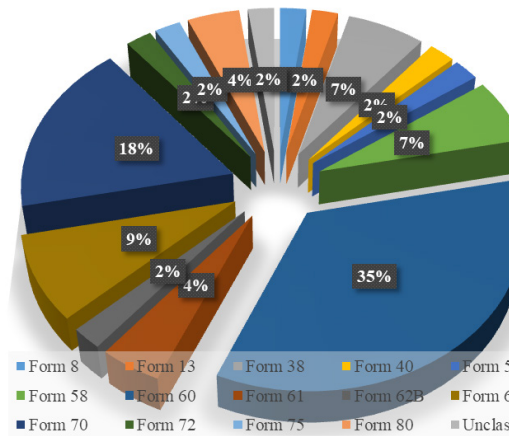


Figure 1. ESB percentage in Western Black Sea

⁶² BESS 2015, 36-38, fig.19, 20 and 21.

⁶³ ZHURAVLEV 2010, 23-32; KNIPOVICI 1929.

⁶⁴ MALAMIDOU 2005, 29-32.

Returning to the West-Pontic area, when we look at the territorial distribution of ESB tableware, the situation is as follows: Histria is the site with the largest number of discoveries, with 43% of the total, followed by Troesmis with 30% and Tomis with 12 percent (Figure 2). The remaining archaeological sites mentioned in the text have a share of less than 10 percent. However, this situation needs to be carefully considered, the percentages recorded being significantly influenced by the current state of research and especially the publication of ceramics. In my opinion, Tomis should record a percentage at least similar to Histria, if not higher. The fact that ESB tableware is predominantly certified in cities from the Black Sea shore is no surprise, since the commercial links between the ancient Greek centres in the West Pontic area and the micro-Asiatic region date back centuries before the ESB ceramics and continue after its disappearance. In this context, the seaside towns played a link between the micro-Asiatic economic centres and the settlements inside the province, such as those on the Danube line and even beyond the limes of the Roman Empire.

It is interesting to have a substantial amount of ESB tableware at Troesmis. Besides discoveries from the old excavations, the Austrian team that carried out field survey between 2010 and 2014 recorded two ESB fragments, one framed by Atlantean forms 77 or 78, the second atypical⁶⁵. From a chronological point of view (the form Atlante 60 with 9 specimens) overlaps with the period when the legion V Macedonica was stationed there, and its links with the eastern parts of Roman Empire are well known in the Romanian literature⁶⁶.

The presence of ESB tableware in the West-Pontic area must have had a certain cultural influence on the population of this region. Traditionally, the appearance of pontic sigillata is attributed to the imitation of forms produced in the italic workshops. We can't overlook the common repertoire of ESB forms and pontic tableware (ex. Atlante 70), and if we take into account the fact that, from a quantitative point of view, as well as territorial distribution, ESB exceeds the presence of italic sigillata, the influence of this tableware category on West-Pontic workshops must not be minimized.

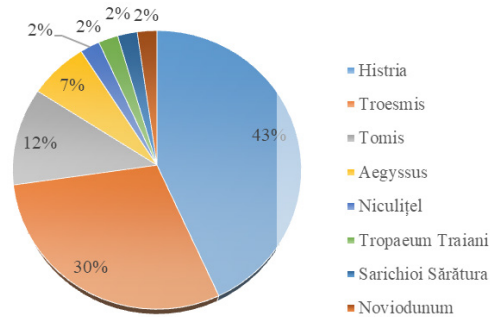


Figure 2. ESB distribution in Western Black Sea

⁶⁵ WALDNER 2016, 203, fig. 1/K14.

⁶⁶ MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 281-283.

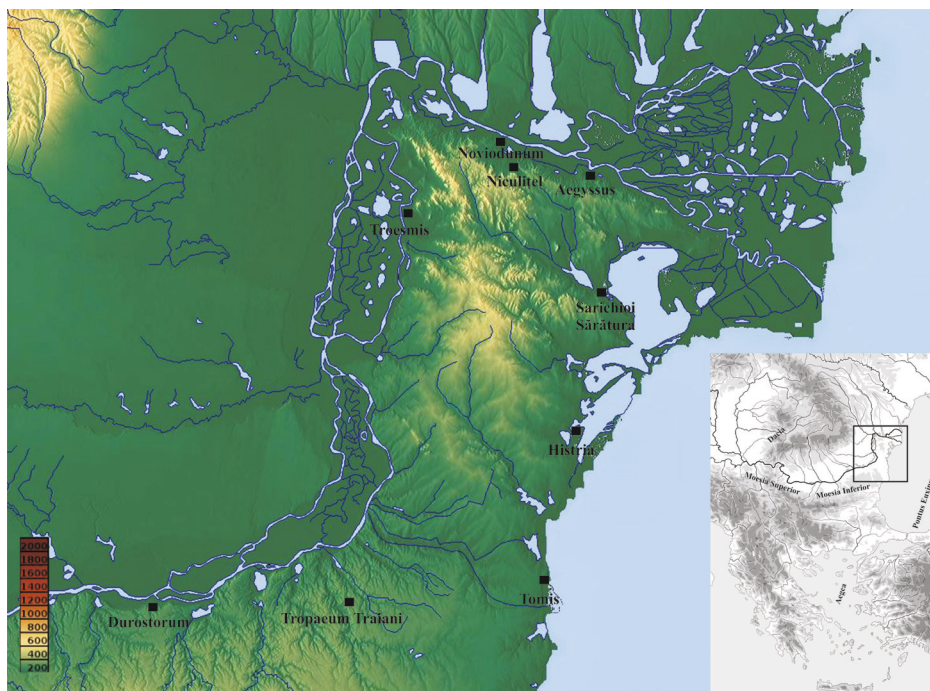


Figure 3. Map of Roman Dacia



Figure 4. 1 – ESB Form 38 (BĂJENARU & VLAD 2018); 2 – ESB Form 40 (BOCAN 2018); 3 – ESB Form 62B (BĂJENARU & NEDELEA 2018); 4-5 – ESB Form 60 (BĂJENARU & VLAD 2018)

ESB in Western Black Sea

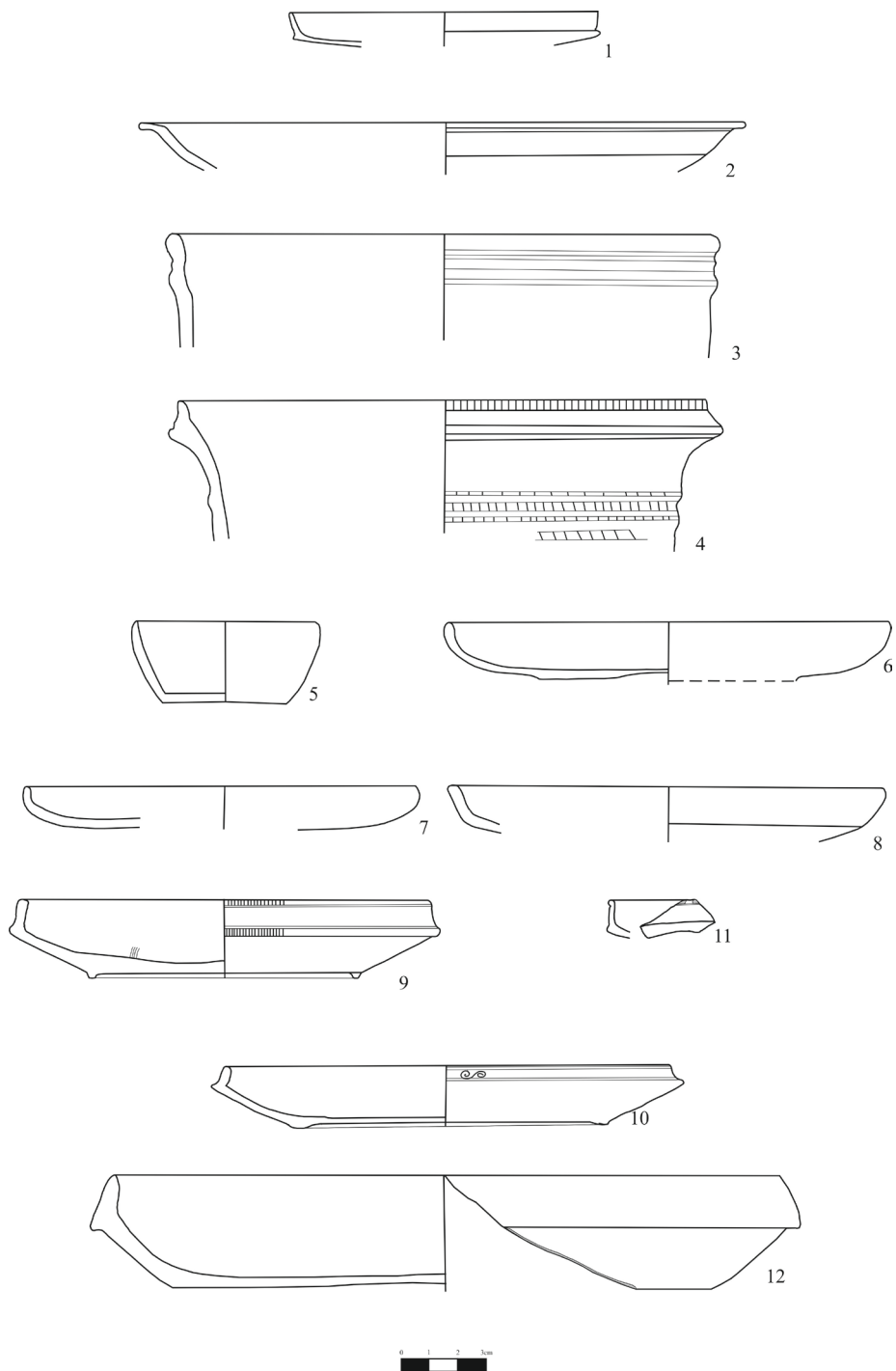


Figure 5. 1 – ESB Form 8; 2 – ESB Form 13; 3–4: ESB Form 38; 5 – ESB Form 40;
6–8 – 68 ESB Form 53; 9–11 – ESB Form 58; 12 – ESB Form 60

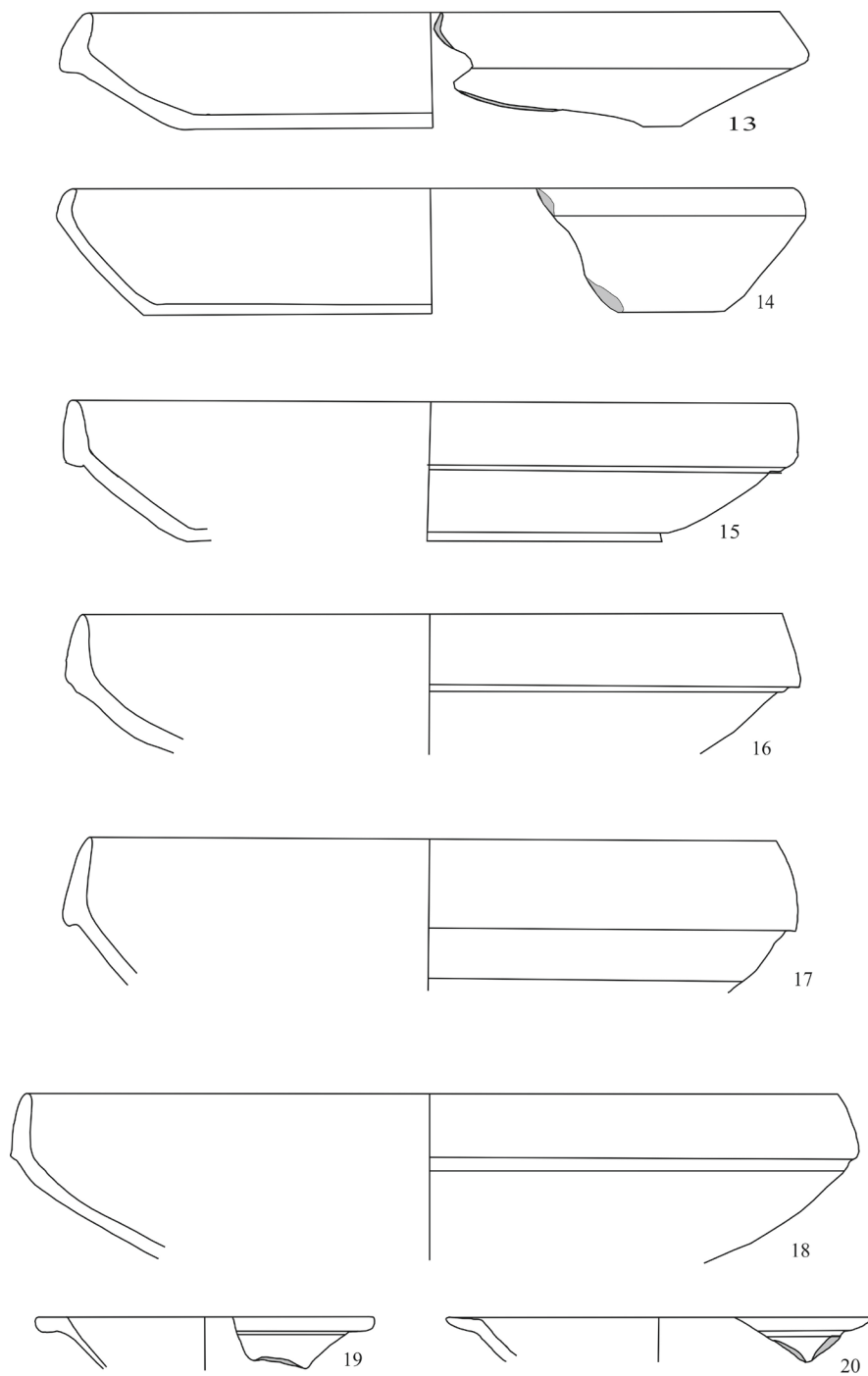


Figure 6. 13-18 – ESB Form 60; 19-20 – ESB Form 61

ESB in Western Black Sea

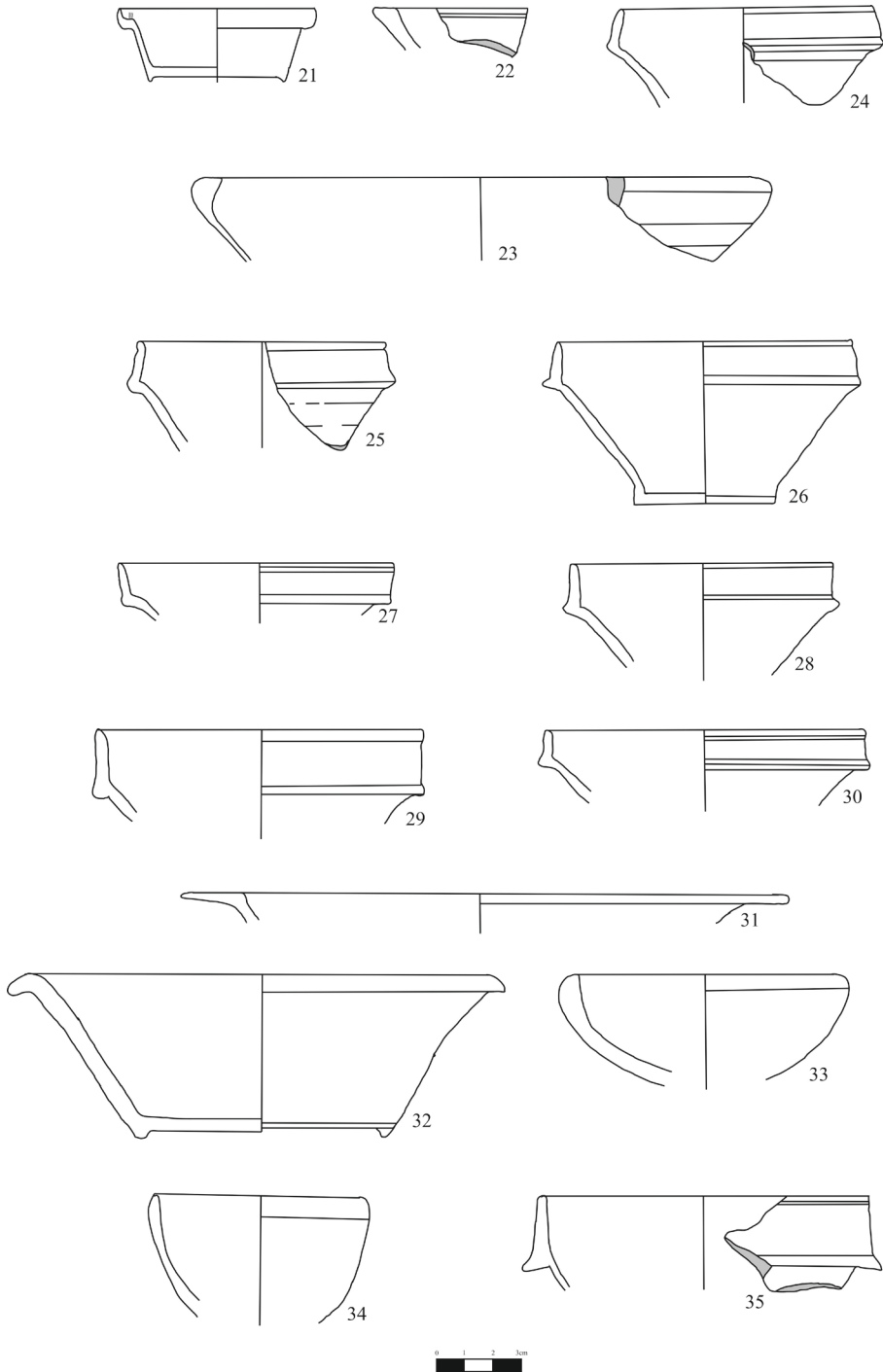


Figure 7. 21 – ESB Form 62B; 22–23 – ESB Form 63; 24–30 – ESB Form 70; 31 – ESB Form 72;
32 – ESB Form 75; 33–35 – ESB Form 80; 35 – Unclassified Form

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