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Roman Pottery in Ancient Thrace and Moesia Inferior.
Selected assemblages from the Yambol District

Římská keramika na území antické Thrákie a Moesie
Inferior. Vybrané soubory z Jambolského regionu

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Pottery assemblages from the Yambol District – A brief introduction

The thesis named *Roman and Late Antique Pottery from Ancient Thrace, Selected Assemblages from the Yambol District*, presents pottery assemblages from three different archaeological sites, which all have the place of origin in common – the Yambol District. The district lies in south-eastern Bulgaria, along the middle stream of the Tundzha River. It is mostly made up of a vast arable lowland, with the foothills of the Straldzha Mountains rising at the southern-most part, directly neighbouring the Turkish border. The area under discussion was ruled by Thracian tribes/*ethne*, which especially flourished during the Late Iron Age; in AD 45/46 it was incorporated into the Roman province of Thrace; and, after the Diocletian – Constantine the Great reforms at the turn of the 3rd and 4th c. AD, it was incorporated into the Diocese of Thracia.

The choice of the Yambol District for the study is based on my long-term cooperation with the Regional Historical Museum in Yambol (RIM)¹ and the Tundzha Regional Archaeological Project (TRAP),² active in the area since 2009. First, as a member of TRAP, I became acquainted with the area, and, besides other material, also with the Roman period – Late Antique pottery from the field survey, which was one of the project's main objectives. Later on, as a permanent member of TRAP, I further cooperated with RIM, which led to the creation of a joint initiative – the Yurta-Stroyno Archaeological Project (SAP) –, carried out with the joint collaboration between RIM and the Institute of Classical Archaeology in Prague. Within the three-year project (2014–2016), part of the Roman *vicus* in Yurta-Stroyno, located near Elhovo town, was excavated and its immediate area surveyed.

As a consequence of the cooperation, the pottery material incorporated into the thesis is related to the above-mentioned institutions and projects, as I had the possibility to work with the material directly, either as a part of the excavation / survey team, or, during the material post-processing. All the work had to be carried out abroad, consequently, the material processing took place seasonally, for several years in a row (2013–2017).

The majority of the thesis is devoted to the pottery finds from the Roman *vicus* at **Yurta-Stroyno (Chapter 2)**. The site is heavily disturbed by looting and as such, without clear stratigraphic contexts, all the finds had to be classed and dated based on parallels, represented mostly by published material from other archaeological sites from Thrace / Moesia Inferior / or

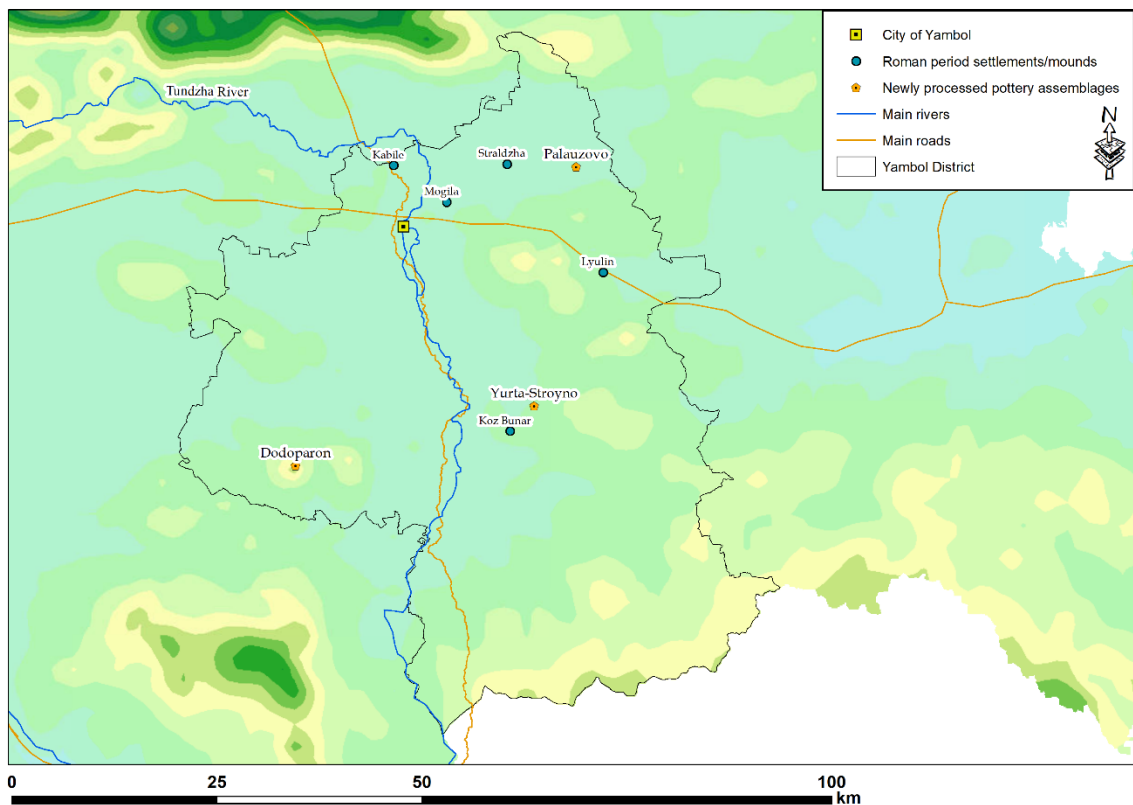
¹ Currently lead by Stefan Bakardzhiev, succeeding the previous director, Ilija Iliev.

² Directed by Adéla Sobotková (Aarhus University) and Shawn Ross (Macquarie University, Sydney): <http://www.tundzha.org/>. TRAP is a multi-disciplinary project focused on landscape archaeology; its main areas of interest are the Kazanlak Valley, and selected parts of the Yambol District.

even more remote areas.³ The material retrieved from the *vicus* is a multiperiod mixture, mostly containing Roman period sherds, with a much lower amount of Late Antique fragments.

A considerably smaller number of finds, but with a quite precise chronology (2nd–3rd c. AD) and fully reconstructible profiles, are represented by 19 vessels from the two burial mounds excavated near **Palauzovo** village in the north-eastern part of the Yambol District (**Chapter 3**). These mounds were investigated by RIM in 2007, the finds reconstructed, and, without further documentation or publication, exhibited in the Historical Museum in Straldzha.

The last set of finds are vessels from the hillfort of **Dodoparon**, placed on one of the few elevated hills of the Yambol District – Manastirski Vazvishenie, near the village of Golyam Manastri (**Chapter 4**). The site was excavated for 5 weeks in 2010 in cooperation between RIM and TRAP. All the vessels presented here (overall 57 pieces) were found in one house destroyed and burned down at the end of the 6th c. AD. The majority of the vessels were more or less reconstructible into the complete profiles, although some remained in fragments.



The pottery material from the three sites varies, covering a period from the Late Hellenistic to the Late Antiquity; including finds from the multiperiod settlement with mixed stratigraphy (Yurta-Stroyno); burial mounds from the 2nd–3rd c. AD (Palauzovo); and the closed context of a house from the Late Antique hillfort destroyed at the end of the 6th c. AD

³ It was possible to find some other parallels in regional museums, either directly exhibited or placed in depositories.

(Dodoparon). Consequently, the character of the pottery finds represented at each site differs, ranging from quite uniform red-slipped table ware with occasional grey or black glaze ware (Palauzovo); to abundant types of different pottery classes, wares and forms (Yurta-Stroyno); to less variable house-hold equipment of a sandy fabric without any surface cover consisting mostly of pots and jugs (Dodoparon). These individual features of each assemblage combined with the state of pottery preservation and varying quality of the prime documentation resulted in moderately different approaches to each assemblage and its description. Nevertheless, a great effort was made to collect and present as much coherent data as possible.

Pottery description and presentation methodology

For the material from Palauzovo and Dodoparon, where whole vessels could be reconstructed, similar documentation processes were used as each vessel was described individually. This included a description of its fabric / surface / slip colour; percentage, amount and type of inclusions (always evaluated in hand specimen)⁴; but also the main vessel proportions – maximal or preserved height and width, diameters of the rim and base,⁵ percentage of whole vessel preservation, section of a handle, weight,⁶ and, in the case of Dodoparon, also the vessel capacity.⁷ Besides the catalogue-like entry and the overview table with the main data of each vessel, a narrative description was given in the text to discuss the specifics and characteristics of individual vessels and to refer to their parallels published elsewhere.

The abundant pottery material from Yurta-Stroyno was much more fragmented and diverse. The assemblage was thus divided into wares (Red-slipped ware, Grey ware, Coarse ware, Handmade pottery and Amphorae), and each ware was then further divided into smaller groups according to the fabric characteristics and form similarities. Parallels were then searched for, either for the whole groups or for the individual forms.⁸ The transport amphorae from Yurta-Stroyno were, however, processed in the same way as the material from Palauzovo and Dodoparon – each fragment individually. This approach seemed necessary to give a proper description of the individual characteristics and types of fabric of each piece, as the set of finds proved to be quite variable. As a result, it was possible to assign the majority of the transport amphorae to the area of their origin, most of them also to known typologies and classifications,

⁴ Using a simple hand lens.

⁵ The number of all proportions given in the text are in millimetres.

⁶ Always given in grams.

⁷ The vessel capacity was measured only in the case of Dodoparon, as this is the only assemblage from them all, which represents a coherent closed context – household equipment – which might be evaluated as a whole.

⁸ This approach was inspired by the publication of the pottery material from Nicopolis ad Istrum, which avoided strict classification (FALKNER 1999).

and in some cases, the given information could be enriched by their place of production, content and/or capacity of the specific type.

Yambol District during the Roman period and the Late Antiquity

The Yambol District is located in the lowlands of the eastern edge of the Upper Thracian Plain. The main axis of the district is the Tundzha River, which divides it into two halves. The river was navigable in antiquity, and a Roman road was built along its banks during the reign of Trajan (MADZHAROV 2009, 237). First, during the Roman period, the whole area of the Yambol District belonged to the province of Thrace, while, after the reforms at the end of the 3rd/mid-4th c. AD, when the Diocese of Thracia was created, the part to the east of the Tundzha River was assigned as the Haemimontus province (with its capital in Hadrianopolis) and the part to the west of the river as the province of Thracia (with its capital in Philippopolis) (TIR 2012, 144; TIR map Roman province borders). Putting the three sites contained in this thesis into perspective, Yurta-Stroyno was founded during a peaceful period in the Roman province of Thrace, after the reforms, it was located in Haemimontus; the burial mounds from Palauzovo, dated to the 2nd–3rd c. AD, were piled up in the Roman province of Thrace; and the Dodoparon hillfort, founded after the reforms, was located in the province Thracia, the Diocese of Thracia.

The main Roman period installation in the district is the military camp of auxiliary unit cohort II Lucensium (equitata) at Kabile, founded in AD 135/136, during the reign of Hadrian. Besides the camp in Kabile, only one more permanent military installation was existent in the Province of Thrace, the camp Germania (Germaneia),⁹ in the upper Struma River Valley. Kabile was located on the spot of an older Thracian settlement, and, during the Roman period, on the junction of two roads – one running from Anchialus to Augusta Trajana, and another one, going from north to south in the direction to Hadrianopolis (TIR 2012, 68–69). As the major military installation in the area, the establishment of the camp attracted newcomers as well as encouraging the return of the Roman veterans of a local origin after their military service and gave rise to the creation of a *vici* in its hinterland (BOYANOV 2007, 73).¹⁰

No other major Roman-period installation is known from the Yambol District,¹¹ and it seems likely that the Roman presence in the area was represented mainly by the rural settlements of the newcomers attracted by the camp in Kabile, and/or by the Roman army veterans, who settled strategically along the middle stream of the Tundzha River. One such

⁹ Modern-day Sapareva Banya.

¹⁰ As confirmed by finds of bronze military diploma fragments (BOYANOV 2007) and inscriptions mentioning Roman army veterans found in the Yambol District (HEŘMÁNKOVÁ in preparation).

¹¹ It is, however, expected, that near the village of Karavelovo, there might be located the ancient settlement of Orudisza ad Burgum, a road-station in the section running from Kabile to Hadrianopolis (TIR 2012, 274).

example is the *vicus* in Yurta-Stroyno, where a bronze diploma of Classis Misensis veteran dated to AD 152–158 was found (BOYANOV 2007).

In contrast to the (lack of) major cities, the rural areas of the Yambol District seem to be densely inhabited. Within a perimeter with a radius of 3.5 km from Yurta-Stroyno, several other Roman period settlements are located. Two are situated to the north, near the villages of Karavelovo and Robovo. A site near Karavelovo is spread over a vast area of 28 hectares, while one in Robovo is much smaller in size, covering just 1 hectare. However, the field survey conducted on both settlements in 2019¹² uncovered the same pottery types, glass fragments and agricultural tools (quern stones, whetstones) as the ones known from Yurta-Stroyno. Consequently, we may expect the same chronology and likely also character of all these three sites. Another such settlement is situated 1.5 km south of Yurta-Stroyno in the area called St. Ilija. It was excavated by Daniela Agre, Deyan Dichev and Hristo Hristov in 2014 (and published in 2015) and the finds again have the character of the above-mentioned ones.¹³ Additionally, a geomagnetic prospection conducted there in 2019 revealed a villa-like ground plan.¹⁴

During the turbulent period of the Late Antiquity the settlements moved from the flat lowlands to elevated positions, their dimensions decreased, and they were heavily fortified. Since the Yambol District is mostly flat, the concentration of Late Antique settlements in the area is scarce.¹⁵ A great example is, however, the Dodoparon hillfort, the only elevated Late Antique settlement (or *refuge*) excavated and published from the district (SOBOTKOVA – LONGFORD – BAKARDZHIEV 2018).

Current state of the Roman pottery studies in the Yambol District

The history of the studies of each pottery class included within the thesis (Red-slipped ware, Grey ware, Coarse ware, Handmade pottery and Amphorae) in the area of the south-eastern Balkan peninsula, is discussed at the beginning of each ware class in the **Chapter 2** on Yurta-Stroyno. A list of relevant publications regarding the specific finds from various settlements, necropolises and production / kiln sites are also presented there, as it seemed to be the most relevant place for it to be, giving the context to the following studies focused on individual

¹² In cooperation between RIM (Todor Vulchev, Stefan Bakardzhiev) and the Institute of Classical Archaeology, Prague (Petra Tušlová, Viktoria Čisťáková). The report of the field season has not yet been published.

¹³ The report did not show any of these, but since the excavations were running in parallel with the ones in Yurta-Stroyno, I had the chance to observe and to compare the material.

¹⁴ Information given to me by Stefan Bakardzhiev in autumn 2019.

¹⁵ There are, in total, ten known Late Antique settlements in the Yambol District, they might be found in the catalogue of DIMITROVA – POPOV 1978 under the following numbers: 5, 12, 23, 41, 59, 65, 82, 83, 114 and 166.

pottery classes. For the same reason, in the **Chapter 3** on the burial mounds from Palauzovo, the maximum number of finds from funeral contexts relevant to the investigated area were gathered.

In this introduction, I do not wish to repeat all the information again, but I would like to focus more narrowly on the specific publications of the Roman – Late Antique pottery assemblages which were found directly in the Yambol District, and to outline the current state of their studies.

The most important Roman period settlement in the area of the Yambol District is the military camp at Kabile, whose excavation started in 1972 as a joint effort of the Archaeological Institute with Museum, Institute of Thracology (both under the Bulgarian Academy of Science), Archaeological Institute of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and the Regional Historical Museum in Yambol (VELKOV 1982, 5). Two collective monographs were published to present the results of the excavation of the Hellenistic and Roman settlements, one in 1982 (IVANOV ed.), the other in 1991 (VELKOV ed.). In each of these publications we may find one article on relevant pottery material. The first one, a report on the excavation of Basilica I, presents black and white pictures of the Roman and Late Antique pottery (DIMITROVA 1982, 118–131); the second one, a report on the excavation of a western fortification wall, publishes drawings of mixed Hellenistic and Roman period pottery, with two sherds dated, based on the parallels, to the 2nd–4th c. AD (DOMARADSKI 1991, обр. 33, 39–40).

The excavations at Kabile continue to this day, they are currently carried out by two teams, the first one from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and the second one from the Regional Historical Museum in Yambol. Reports of the excavations are annually published in *AOP*, in which, on occasion, several pottery fragments might also be given for illustration (i.e. LOZANOV – BAKARDZHIEV 2008, 421, обр. 1 with four drawn sherds; LOZANOV – RAYCHEVA 2012, 362, обр. 3 with 25 drawings of Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique sherds).

Despite there being other known settlements from the Roman and Late Antique periods in the Yambol District (DIMITROVA – POPOV 1978), none of them has been systematically excavated. Consequently, knowledge of the relevant pottery from the settlement contexts is limited to surface finds connected with the preparation of a rescue excavation, such as from the field survey of the Nabucco gas pipeline near the village of Bolyarovo (BOYADZHIEV 2013, обр. 3).

Regarding the Roman period necropolises, several of them were excavated within a ca. 1.5 km radius around Kabile, creating clusters in different cardinal directions from the camp. The first one excavated was the southern necropolis. The finds were presented in the form of

black and white photos of complete vessels and several terracotta lamps (GETOV 1982, таб. XIX–XXI). Furthermore, from the southern area, one burial mound was investigated within a rescue excavation caused by the construction of the Thracian highway; the excavation report includes photos in colour of two complete vessels and of two terracotta lamps (LOZANOV – CHRISTOV 2010, обр. 2). Another five colour photos of complete pottery vessels were published from a mound of 25 graves also located south of Kabile (BAKARDZHIEV – MIKOV – DZHANFEZOVA 2014, обр. 3).

Another necropolis of Kabile, the eastern necropolis, yielded over 62 graves. Their excavation was covered by two reports, which included altogether one plate with 11 pottery drawings (CHANDZHIJSKA – RABADZHIEV 2009, обр. 2:1–11; CHANDZHIJSKA – YANKULOV 2010). The last known necropolis of Kabile is located in the north-west of the city. From the two graves found there, one jug and one terracotta lamp were published in drawings (BAKARDZHIEV 2012, обр. 2).

The pottery finds from the necropolises have not yet been published in any other form than these short reports. Nevertheless, at least a selection of finds from several of the mounds / graves is currently exhibited at the Museum of archaeological park of Thracian and Ancient city of Kabile.¹⁶

The best processed Roman pottery material from the Yambol District is represented by finds from the five burial mounds excavated between the Straldzha and Charda villages (hereafter in the text called Straldzha¹⁷ necropolis). Complete pottery finds – both from the graves and the embankments – are presented in the publication, including fabric and colour description of each vessel (ALEXANDROVA 2013; 2016).

Further finds from the necropolises of the Yambol District are captured on seven drawings of vessels found in the Mound 5, north-west of the village of Mogila (ALEXANDROV *et al.* 2019, обр. 3); by twelve drawings of vessels, this time also with the fabric description and dimensions, from the mound at Lyulin village (VELKOV 1996, 126–127; таб. I); and by the four drawings of vessels, one also with a black and white photo, from Koz Bunar mound, located near the *vicus* of Yurta-Stroyno (AGRE 2013, 354). The material from the latter mound is exhibited in the Ethnographic-archaeological Museum Elhovo.

¹⁶ up to date as of: autumn 2019.

¹⁷ Based on the name of the excavation book: *Могилен некропол от римската епоха край град Стралджа, Ямболско* [Burial mound necropolis of the Roman period near Straldzha, Yambol District], see CHOLAKOV *et al.* 2016.

Main aims of the thesis

The current state of the Roman – Late Antique pottery research in the Yambol District is far from ideal. The potential of the area is however great, as the region is placed along the middle stream of the Tundzha River, which represents a strategic position within inner Thrace, as the river was navigable in antiquity and came with one of the main roads running along its stream. The flat relief with arable land and the vicinity of the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea also shaped its character, as well as the presence of the camp in Kabile, one of only two military installations in the Roman province of Thrace.

Consequently, the main aim of this thesis is to process and make available several pottery assemblages from the district to enlarge our knowledge about the different pottery classes, types and wares which might be found in the area, both in the settlements and necropolises. Each of the pottery assemblages is different and as such also treated separately as an individual entity, as they have their own potential and research questions. Despite this, and thanks to the wide time range covered by the material, spanning from the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman period until the Late Antiquity, it also offers a great possibility to study the pottery development and its changes throughout the periods, as well as its modification for specific purposes, such as the placement of items into graves during the Roman times.

Roman and Late Antique pottery in the Yambol District

The Roman pottery in Ancient Thrace, as well as in the Yambol District, has a strong link to the territory of the pre-Roman period. This phenomenon is especially reflected in the persistence of the handmade pottery, characteristic for the Thracian tribes/*ethne*, which was produced in unchanged forms until the end of the 4th / mid-5th c. AD. It might be found both in the settlement contexts as well as being deposited in the burial mounds. In spite of not uncovering any such vessel from the burial mounds of Palauzovo, we may find handmade pots in the graves of the nearby Straldzha necropolis dated to the same period of the 2nd–3rd c. AD (ALEXANDROVA 2013, 103–105).

Another dominant aspect of the pottery making during the Roman period is the strong Hellenistic influence, which is reflected in several pottery classes. We may notice it most in the Coarse ware pottery from Yurta-Stroyno, especially in its open forms such as the casseroles and frying pans but also in some of the closed forms, such as the stewing pots. These forms of coarse ware changed very little since the Late Hellenistic period and their production persisted to the Late Antique period, making it a difficult pottery class for processing without having well dated contexts. Some of the other pottery classes might include individual vessels

reflecting forms of Hellenistic products, such as the Grey ware krater from Palauzovo, which seems to be imitating the black glazed West Slope table amphorae of the Black Sea – Asia Minor provenance.

The connection between inner Thrace (the middle stream of the Tundzha River) and the Aegean area is well confirmed by many finds of Greek transport amphorae in Kabile, attesting to vivid trade by means of the river already during the 4th–2nd c. BC (GETOV 1995). The economic ties were not only limited to the major settlement, which was Kabile, but we may also find fragments of Greek transport amphorae in every bigger Greek-Hellenistic pottery scatter along the Tundzha River Valley (TUŠLOVÁ – WEISSOVÁ 2018¹⁸). Consequently, it is not surprising to discover that the earliest transport amphorae documented at Yurta-Stroyno are Late Hellenistic, produced in the Rhodian and Coan traditions. The black glazed *lekythos*, found in one of the graves from Palauzovo and dated approximately to the 2nd c. BC, might also well confirm the strong persistence of the Hellenistic culture into the Roman period.

The first Roman period table and coarse ware seems to come to the area during the mid-1st c. AD. As to whether the pottery was already produced locally during this period remains an open question, as the production of known kiln sites in south-eastern Thrace is attested only for the 2nd–3rd c. AD, also possibly for the beginning of the 4th c. AD (KALCHEV 1991; BORISOV 2013; HARIZANOV 2016).

The local production of the red-slipped table ware might have found inspiration in the pottery brought to the area by the Roman army and/or by the military veterans as suggested by Cvjetićanin. She assumes this to be the case especially for the Marbled ware, produced at the beginning of the 2nd c. AD (CVJETIĆANIN 2003, 59; CVJETIĆANIN 2004, 121). Indeed, the Marbled ware found in Yurta-Stroyno reflects the forms of the locally produced Common red-slipped ware of the 2nd–4th / mid-5th c. AD. Similarly, this might have been the case for Colour coated ware, presumably imported from Italy / Pannonia (at least for the area of Moesia Superior) during the 1st c. and at the beginning of the 2nd c. AD (CVJETIĆANIN 2004, 123–126). This ware is highly recognizable in the Yurta-Stroyno assemblage thanks to its unique forms and high-quality slip which support the assumption of its foreign origin.

The locally produced fine ware experienced its peak during the 2nd–3rd c. AD, although most of the forms continued to be produced until the 4th or mid-5th c. AD. Within the thesis, it is called the Common red-slipped ware and represents the biggest amount of all the pottery finds. It is also the dominant table ware which seems to cover all the necessary forms of crockery, including different sizes of dishes, bowls, deep bowls, cups, table amphorae, jugs,

¹⁸ And the field survey of 2019.

kraters, pots, trays, basins / krateriskoi, but also lids and strainers. Perhaps the variability and availability of the ware is the reason for its popularity and for the low demand for other types of table ware, since a very small amount of other red-slipped ware and the grey ware was uncovered.

Among the lesser represented table ware from Yurta-Stroyno we may find the Thin-walled ware, Thracian thin-walled ware, Çandarli ware and the Grey ware. The first two thin-walled wares are inspired by the Italian (western Mediterranean) products, which started to be exported to the eastern provinces by the 1st c. AD, where they initiated local production. The forms of Thin-walled ware from Yurta-Stroyno include only cups and bowls. The fabric is similar to the Common red-slipped ware, which might suggest their local production, although they were not discovered in any of the known production centres. On the other hand, the production centre of the Thracian thin-walled ware, of a dark red fabric and specific (vitrified) surface, was identified at Ainos, at the Marica River estuary in southern Thrace. This ware is traditionally represented by cups, but recently, also jugs of the same fabric might be attributed to it. Both thin-walled wares might be dated to the mid-1st–3rd c. AD.

The Çandarli ware, produced in the Pergamon region, represents the only definite table ware import from the eastern Mediterranean. The pottery is characteristic for its fabric including golden mica and smooth high-quality slip. Only two forms were recognized in the assemblage, Hayes Form 3 and Form 4; both types together might be dated from the mid-2nd till the 3rd c. AD.

It might be interesting to point out at this juncture, that the import of the fine ware (the Thracian thin-walled ware and the Çandarli ware) ceases at the end of the 3rd c. AD. Later imports, which, for the area of the eastern Mediterranean, are mostly represented by the African red-slipped ware and the Phocaeian red-slip ware, is attested only by one plate of the latter ware found at Dodoparon.

The last identified type of the table ware is the Grey ware, which is an especially peculiar pottery class, as the majority of its forms reflect the shapes of the Common red-slipped ware. It seems probable that several vessel forms, produced presumably at one (or more) production centre(s), were fired in different atmospheres, either oxidised or reduced. The red colour of the final products was preferred, as the Grey ware is much less represented. We may also see a similarity with the Macedonian grey ware, produced during the Late Antiquity. However, the amount of comparative material dated to the 2nd–4th c. AD from western Thrace confirms that these are two different products. It was previously suggested that the Roman period Grey ware was produced along the Struma River Valley, as there were no finds from eastern Bulgaria.

However, we may add some now, and in addition, we may propose its production also in our area. Of note are also the three Grey ware lamps of a single form, which are for now without direct parallels.

Leaving aside the locally produced and, especially, the imported fine wares, we may focus on the transport amphorae, which help us to reconstruct the main economic ties. For the 2nd–3rd c. AD there is an obvious connection with the eastern Aegean, which is the major supplier of goods shipped in the transport amphorae. The area of the amphorae provenance seems to be located mainly on a strip running from Chios to Rhodes (including Erythrea, Ephesus, Kos and Knidos) and on Cyprus. This location ties in nicely with the Çandarlı ware production area, and the ware might have been imported together with the amphorae. A much lower quantity of imports during this time are from the southern Black Sea coast with only a symbolic one from northern Africa. The transport amphorae might also be found in necropolises, although in such a small number that no distribution / deposition patterns might be studied.

For the Late Antiquity (5th–6th c. AD), we have much less data. On the flat unfortified settlement of Yurta-Stroyno an equally small number of amphorae from the Aegean area, Black Sea and northern Africa might be found, originating in the same areas as the earlier ones. Together with the amphorae, several table ware and cooking ware pots dated to the same period were found there. The hillfort of Dodoparon preserved several of the most typical Late Antique amphorae – LRA 2 – presumably of an eastern Aegean provenance, traditionally connected with the military *annona*. Furthermore, two small size amphorae likely of local – the province of Scythia – provenance were also found there.

The pottery of the Late Antiquity, substituted mainly by the finds from Dodoparon dated to the end of the 6th c. AD, becomes coarser and sandier (with only a few ‘finer’ exceptions), the variability of the forms becomes limited, and the table ware loses its red slip. From the forms, dishes and bowls are completely missing; cups and smaller vessels are rare. The majority of the vessels are represented by pots of different sizes either for storage or cooking, and by jars and carafes, for water and/or other liquids. The excavated house in Dodoparon also has quite a potential for the storing of bulk food and liquids in dolia and transport amphorae, reflecting the turbulent and unstable time at the end of the 6th c. AD.

Regarding the pottery vessels used as burial goods in the Yambol District and its hinterland, we may evaluate the data only for the Roman period, based on the finds from Palauzovo and from other necropolises in the area. The most frequently deposited ware in graves and mound embankments is the Common red-slipped ware, with a lower percentage of

the Grey ware and the Handmade pottery. Occasionally, earlier dated vessels, such as the Late Hellenistic *lekythos* (a family heirloom?) might be found in grave contexts as well. Many of the vessels from Palauzovo have irregular forms and the quality of their execution is quite low. Some vessels are missing the slip (even though slipped versions of the same vessels are to be found in settlement contexts), or, they are somehow modified. Two vessels from Palauzovo are missing handles which seem to be deliberately removed, another one has a broken and smoothed rim. Some of these features, especially the (very) irregular form of some of the vessels, are also known from other necropolises in the Yambol District, such as from Straldzha, or from the eastern necropolis of Kabile. The frequency of their deposition does not seem to be accidental, and we may suppose lower quality products might have been intentionally used as grave goods, since they played a rather symbolic role which would not be affected by small imperfections. Another explanation could be, of course, the poor character of the graves equipped with low budget items, although the Straldzha necropolis seems to be much richer than the one in Palauzovo, and even so, we may find these vessels there as well.

Another characteristic modification of the vessels for burial purposes is the drilled hole in the middle of some of the forms, most frequently of kantharos-like cups. The hole is commonly placed in the middle of the lower part, between the handles, made secondarily (after the firing of the vessel). Yet another characteristic feature is the placing of this kantharos-like cup (with and without the hole as well) into a larger krater-like vessel. The combination of these two features, especially resembles the Thracian custom of wine drinking including *rhyton* (= a ~~cup~~ with two handles) and the krater. The real purpose or function of these two phenomena is however not yet explained.

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