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A POTTERY KILN DISCOVERED IN THE ROMAN PERIOD SITE FROM REȘCA-ROMULA

Mircea Negru*

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Introduction

The archaeological site from Reșca-Romula is located on the high terrace of the Lower Olt River (Fig. 1: 1), on the territory of the villages of Reșca (Dobrosloveni Commune, Olt County), respectively Hotărani (Fărcașele commune, Olt County).

The resources of plastic clay for ceramic materials, the presence of springs from the terrace of the Teslui brook, of the gravel from the geological layer and, probably, of the forests, favoured the positioning in this place of the largest Roman urban settlements between the Carpathians and the Lower Danube. The territory of the archaeological site of Reșca-Romula is 306 hectares wide, including necropolises, and it is assumed that the Roman city of Romula was inhabited by about 6000 people.

The first information on archaeological structures in this site was made by the Austrian captain Fernando de Marsigli, who made a sketch with three rectangular fortifications (Marsigli 1726: Pl. XL).

In the middle and in the second half of the 19th century, the interest in the antiquities of Reșca-Romula determined A. T. Laurian and Dimitrie A. Sturdza to visit this archaeological site, and Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu, Vladimir Blaremburg, Alexandru Odobescu mentioned this site as well, in their writings (Tătulea 1994: 8).

The first excavations in this site were practiced by the amateur archaeologist Caesar Bolliac. In 1869, he dug at the point called Dâmbul Morii, as well as in the southern tumular necropolis. Amongst the discoveries, he mentions the coins, ceramic pots and other Roman objects (Bolliac 1869: 32-39).

Archaeological digs were also carried out by Pamfil Polonic, in 1900, when he discovered a building with *thermae*, in the south-western part of the so-called Central Fortification. In 1911, A. T. Dumitrescu conducted research in the central area of the archaeological site, the south of the Teslui river. Here, he discovered a building with shaped limestone walls, which is supposed to have been the city's *curia* (Tudor 1978: 10).

Systematic archaeological researches were resumed in 1965 under the coordination of professor Dumitru Tudor.

In the central area of the city, in the so-called Central Fortification, they continued until 1992 under the leadership of Cristian Vlădescu (Vlădescu 1986). After an almost two-decade pause, the research was resumed in 2009, and with a more consistent funding since 2013 (Negru, Schuster 2016; Negru et al. 2020; Negru 2022).

In the Northern Sector of the archaeological site, the research targeted the Wall of Philip the Arab, the Ceramic Production District and the flat Northern Necropolis.

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During the researches in the ceramic production district, between 1968 and 2018, a number of 8 ceramic workshops with 25 kilns were discovered (Popilian 1997; Negru, Schuster 2016: 11; Negru 2022: 41-47). Of these, 20 kilns were for firing pots and other clay objects (lamps and ceramic figurines), respectively 5 kilns for firing building materials (bricks, tiles, tubes of different sizes).

Potter kiln no. 25/2018

In this article we will present the potter kiln no. 25 (Fig. 1: 2), discovered in 2018, within the Ceramic Workshop no. VIII. The kiln and the supply and outlet pit were identified within trenches S3 and S4, between grids -1 and 2.

The potter kiln was identified in 2013, at the depth of 0.24 m, where it was outlined an arc of burnt clay circle, with a width of 3-4 cm. It closed outside trench S3, which is why, in 2018, the trench S4 was opened.

The kiln is two-chambered, with central pillar. It consisted of fragments of rectangular bricks, glued with clay, which had the dimensions of 0.19-0.20 m, and its total preserved height was 0.87 m.

The lower chamber, in which the fire burned, was dug into the archaeological sterile layer of brown-coloured dirt. Its diameter at the base was of 0.70 m, and its height was of 0.38 m. The walls showed strong traces of firing of light brick-red shade, with a thickness of 4-5 cm. On the outside they had a whitish crust.

The upper chamber was partially preserved. It was identified at the depth of 0.24 m, from the current level of the ground and had a preserved height of 0.40 m. Also, the walls showed strong traces of firing of light brick-red, with a thickness of 3-4 cm.

The two chambers were separated by a grid made of burnt clay. Unfortunately, it was disassembled and probably thrown into the flue, where large amounts of burnt clay walls were found. On the walls of the kiln, the diameter of the grid was 1.18 m, and the thickness of 9 cm.

The flue for wood stock and the evacuation of the ashes was located in the south-western part of the kiln. It had an oval profile, with a height of 0.38/0.40 m. The walls were strongly fired, a layer of burnt clay of light brick-red with a thickness of 4-5 cm was observed. The fact that the grid misses, indicates a controlled disassembly, the kiln being abandoned, for reasons that we cannot identify.

Pit of the kiln for firing clay vessels

To the southwest of the body of the potter kiln, in the continuation of the mouth of the kiln, there was the pit through which it was fed and the ashes was evacuated. It had an irregular shape, with a total length of 2.05 m, a width of 1.50 m and a maximum depth of 1.58 m, from the current ground level (Fig. 1: 2).

The pit had three steps. The first descended from the mouth of the oven, the second was semicircular towards the southeast wall, and the third oval-shaped, the deepest, was in the south-western part.

Archaeological material

The archaeological material was discovered exclusively inside the supply and evacuation pit, an annex of the kiln. Inside, there were found many fragments of ceramic vessels and even whole ceramic vessels, large fragments of burnt clay coming from the oven, respectively ash.

Tableware (*vasa escaria*)

Fineware

Terra sigillata

Cups

Dragendorff 33/Popilian 1976 local imitations, cups, type 1, Pl. LVIII: 697-700, LIX: 701-704

Conical body cups, imitating the shape of Dragendorff 33. They have an arched rim on the outside with a rounded edge. The base has a short support ring. These outer cups have a brick-red varnish that imitates *terra sigillata* (Fig. 4: 1), sometimes it is replaced by paint (Fig. 2: 1) or the varnish is missing.

One of the cups is made of fine fabric of light-brick-red, completely fired (2: 1). On the outside, it has on the entire inner side, respectively on the outside on the upper and middle sides, a brick-red paint. It was applied horizontally with a brush, the traces of these applications being visible through the circular areas, more or less intense in colour.

The vessel is identical to one discovered in Romula in the previous period, which, however, is grey in colour and has a trace of black varnish that imitates *terra nigra* (Popilian 1976: 109, 205, Pl. LVIII: 699).

A second cup is characterized by the concave base with a very short support ring (Fig. 2: 2; 4: 2). It is identical to another item, previously discovered at Romula (Popilian 1976: 109, 205, Pl. LIX: 703).

A third cup has a slender conical body, and the rim has a groove on the inside of the vessel (Fig. 4: 1). An identical vessel was discovered at Stolniceni-*Buridava*, with its walls covered with a red paint (Popilian 1976: 109, 205, Pl. LIX: 704).

With regard to the presented vessels, a number of observations can be made on the technology, and their chronological framing.

These types of vessels represent local imitations of the Dragendorff 33 form, which can be supported both by the inferior fabric of the imported cups and by the varnish, of poor quality, which imitates the *terra sigillata* type. In one of the cases (Fig. 2: 2), this varnish is missing, which confirms the local production of these vessels.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis), at Romula, Drobeta and Stolniceni-*Buridava*, 2nd century AD (Popilian 1976: 109).

Common use pottery

Platters

Popilian 1976, type 7, Pl. LXVI: 803/Mușețeanu 2003, type 2, Pl. 17: 95, 18: 97/Suceveanu 2000, type XI, 45, Pl. 13: 3

Platters with short conical body, shoulder marked by pronounced arching, short rim, slightly tilted inwards, and the base with support ring (Fig. 4: 3-5).

The dishes are made of semi-fine fabric of brick-red, which contains fine sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis) at Romula, 2nd-3rd centuries AD. (Popilian 1976: 122, type 7, 211, Pl. LXVI: 803), second half of the 2nd century AD – the last decade of the 2nd century AD (Negru 2022: 77, Pl. 51: 268), the first half of the 3rd century AD (Negru, Streinu 2016: 42, Pl. 43: 2352,

2367, 2286, 3542, 3544, 2542, 3543); Moesia Inferior at Durostorum, the second half of the 2nd century AD (Mușețeanu 2003: 54, Pl. 17: 95, 18: 97), Histria, 1st century AD (Suceveanu 2000: 45, type XI, Pl. 13: 3).

Popilian 1976, type 1 platters, Pl. LXVII: 808, 810. Dating: centuries 2nd-3rd AD

Platters with a short conical body, shoulder marked by pronounced arching, the very short rim is in continuation of the walls of the vessel (Fig. 4: 6-7). The vessels were made of brick-red fabric, which contains sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Drobeta and Orlea, 2nd century AD. (Popilian 1976: type 1 platters, 122, 212, Pl. LXVII: 808, 810).

Pots with one handle

Popilian 1976 type, pots with one handle, Pl. XXXVIII: 370, 376

Pot with a heavily bulging short body. The outplayed mouth has a channel on the inside, for the lid. Decorated with grooves on the outside, except for some areas of the upper and lower parts. The base is flat, the handle is attached from the limit between the rim and the body of the vessel, respectively, by its shoulder. The vessel was made from kaolin paste, whitish in colour (Fig. 4: 8)

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula and Orlea, at Romula with coins from Hadrian to Severus Alexander (Popilian 1976: pots with a handle, 90, 182 Pl. XXXVIII:370, 376).

Pots with two handles

Popilian 1976 Type, pots with two handles, type 1, Pl. XXXVIII: 383-392/Brukner 1981, type 7, Pl. 101: 16-20

Pots with a bulging body, high vertical rim or slightly splayed on the outside, decorated with a groove on the outside. The small handles with a trench in the strip are attached from the rim base and the shoulder of the vessel. The base has a support ring. The maximum diameter is in the middle of the vessel (Fig. 4: 9) or in the lower part (Pl. 2: 10). During the archaeological research some pots with two handles (Fig. 2: 3-4).

The vessels were made of semi-fine brick-red fabric, containing fine sand and mica (Fig. 2: 9-10). Some of them were covered with a thin layer of brick-red paint.

The vessels are moulded from semi-fine brick-red fabric, containing sand and mica. One pot of this category was covered with a thin paint of brick-red colour (Fig. 2: 3). Another vessel, one with reduction firing, of a grey colour, being covered with inconsistent paint of blackish colour (Fig. 2: 4).

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, 2nd century AD (Popilian 1976: 91, 183, Pl. XXXVIII: 382-393), the second half of the 2nd century – the first third of the 3rd century AD (Negru 2022, 88-89, Pl. 14: 236-237, 15: 238). In Pannonia inferior, at Rittium (18), Sirmium (19), Teutoburgium (20), dating in the 2nd century AD (Brukner 1981, 182-183, type 7, Pl. 101: 18-20).

Jugs

Popilian 1976, type 2a, Pl. XLII: 442-447/Brukner 1981, type 41, Pl. 144: 129/Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, type 13 G, Pl. C: 614

Jugs with globular body, wide mouth, with a vertical rim with an embossed stripe at its base and slightly oblique neck walls. The handle was attached to the neck and shoulder of the vessel. The base was with a support ring (Fig. 5: 1-3). The vessels are made of semi-fine brick-red fabric, which contains sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the middle and the second half of the 2nd century AD (Popilian 1976: 96-97, 188, tip 2, Pl. XLII: 444, 447); the first third of the 3rd century AD (Negru, Streinu 2016: 46-47, Pl. 42: 3431), the second half of the 3rd century – the middle of the 3rd century AD (Negru 2022: 90, 275-276, Pl. 59: 242-243), Dacia Superior (Apulensis): Napoca, the first half of the 3rd century AD (Rusu-Bolindeț 2007: 424, type 13 G, Pl. C: 614); Pannonia Inferior: Mursa, 4th century AD (Brukner 1981: 184, type 41, 144: 129).

Popilian 1976, type 2a, Pl. XLII: 454

Jug with a globular body, narrow mouth, with a vertical rim with an embossed stripe at its base and the walls of the neck slightly oblique. The handle was attached to the neck and shoulder of the vessel. The base had a support ring (Fig. 4: 11-12). The vessels are made of semi-fine brick-red fabric, which contains sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Drobeta, the middle and the second half of the 2nd century AD (Popilian 1976: 188, Pl. XLIII: 454).

Beakers

Popilian 1976, type 2, Pl. LIV: 611-612

Beaker with a vertical handle and rim, slightly facing outwards (Fig. 2: 5). The vessel is modelled from grey fabric, which contains sand and mica, and, on the outside, it has a layer of blackish paint, partially fallen.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the first half of the 3rd century AD (Negru, Streinu 2016: 51, Pl. 48: 2373), the second half of the 2nd century AD - the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD. (Negru 2022: 91, 146, Pl. 15: 250). Sucidava, 2nd century AD (Popilian 1976: 105, 198-199, Pl. LIV: 611-612).

Cult vessels

Turibulla

Popilian 1976, turibulla type 1, Pl. LXI: 748/Brukner 1981, type 1, Pl. 62: 1, 2, 7

In the pit of the kiln, it was discovered a fragment of a *turribulum*, with the deep conical cup, the rim splayed horizontally with the vertical edge, decorated with notches on the outside (Fig. 5: 4). The vessel was made of semi-fine fabric of brick-red colour, which contains sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula (Popilian 1976: censers type 1, 116, 208, Pl. LXI: 748), the beginning of the 2nd century AD - the first half of the 3rd century AD. (Negru, Streinu 2016: 58, Pl. 61: 2742, 3583, 2681, 3175, 3920, 3392), the second half of the 2nd century AD - the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD (Negru 2022: 92, 278, Pl. 60: 258); Pannonia Inferior: Mursa and Sirmium, the second half of the first century AD – 2nd century AD (Brukner 1981: 181, type 1, Pl. 62: 1, 2, 7).

Popilian 1976, turibulla type 4, Pl. LXII: 757

Another fragment comes from the lower part of a turribulum. It has a very short leg, delimited by the cup by a sill. The basis is flat (Fig. 5: 5). The vessel was made of semi-fine fabric of brick-red colour, which contains sand and mica.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Romula, the second half of the second century and the first half of the 3rd century AD (Popilian 1976: type 4, 117-118).

Cooking ware (*vasa conquinaria*)

Saucepans

Popilian 1976, bowl type 4, Pl. LXIV:781, 783, 784-786/Mușeteanu 2003, type I, Pl. 38:50-52/Brukner 1981, type 77a, Pl. 89:113/Honcu 2018, type 2, Pl. XV:142/Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, type CC 8 B, Pl. XCCII: 550

Saucepan with bi-conical body, the upper part is wider. The maximum diameter is in the upper part, at the shoulder of the vessel. The rim is long and splayed towards the outside (Fig. 5: 6). The vessels were made of coarse brick-red fabric, which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the second half of the 2nd century – the first decades of the 3rd century AD (Popilian 1976: 120, 210, type 5, LXIV:780-782, 785-786, LXV:788-789); the first half of the 2nd century AD (Negru, Streinu 2016: 53, Pl. 53:3781, 2660, 2370), Sucidava (Popilian 1976: 120, 210, type 5, LXIV:783), Stolniceni (Popilian 1976: 120, 210, type 5, LXIV:784), Slăveni (Popilian 1976: 120, 210, type 5, LXIV:787), the second half of the 2nd century – the first decades of the 3rd century AD; Dacia Superior (Apulensis) Dacia Superior (Apulensis): Napoca, Traian period (Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 405, type CC 8 B, Pl. XCCII/550); Moesia Inferior: Durostorum, the second half of the second century AD. (Mușeteanu 2003: 104-105, type I, Pl. 38:50-52); Pannonia Inferior: Vojka, 3rd century – the first half of the 4th century AD (Brukner 1981: 181, type 77a, Pl. 89:113), Ibida, the first half of the 2nd century AD. (Honcu 2018: type 2, 86-87, Pl. XV:142).

Popilian 1976, type 5 saucepans, Pl. LXV:789

Saucepan with bi-conical body, with a very narrow bottom at the base. The diameter is in the upper part. The long rim is arched on the outside horizontally, and the base is flat (Fig. 5: 7). The dish was made of coarse fabric, coloured or grey, which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the first decades of the 3rd century AD (Popilian 1976: 121, 210, Pl. LXV:789).

Pots

Popilian 1976, type 3 pots, Pl. XXXIV: 340.

Pots with a bulging body, the maximum diameter is in the middle of the height of the vessel, the rim is splayed horizontally. On the shoulder, it has horizontal grooves (Fig. 5: 8-9). The vessels were made of coarse fabric, of brick-red colour (Fig. 5: 8) or grey (Fig. 5: 9), which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Stolniceni-*Buridava*, the first half of the 3rd century AD (Popilian 1976: type 3 pots, 87, 180, Pl. XXXIV: 340).

Popilian 1976, type 2 pots, Pl. XXXIV: 330-331

Pots with a bulging body, the maximum diameter is in the upper part. The rim is splayed with the oblique edge on the outside, and, on the inside, it has a channel for the lid (Fig. 6: 1-3). The vessels were made of coarse fabric, of grey colour, which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the beginning of the 3rd century AD. (Popilian 1976: 87, 179, Pl. XXXIV: 330-331).

Popilian 1976, type 3 pots, Pl. XXXIV: 339/Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, type CC 10 D, Pl. XCVI: 573

Pots with a bulging body, the maximum diameter is in the upper part. The thickened rim is splayed, horizontally and the edge, it is rounded on the outside (Fig. 6: 4-5). The vessels were made of coarse fabric, of brick-red colour (Fig. 6: 5) or grey (Fig. 6: 4), which contains a lot of sand and pebbles,

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Stolniceni-*Buridava*, 3rd century AD (Popilian 1976: 87, 180, Pl. XXXIV: 339), Romula, the last decade of the 2nd century AD - the first third of the 3rd century AD. (Negru 2022: 104, 290-291, Pl. 88: 316); Dacia Superior (Apulensis): Napoca, Traian period (Rusu-Bolindeț 2007: 411, 420, Pl. XCVI: 573, CC 10 D).

Lids

Popilian 1976, type 3 lid, Pl. LXXI:913/Sultov 1985, Pl. XLIV, 2/Jevremovici 1987, type V: 11

High conical body with a rim in the continuation of the walls, slightly splayed. Footed knob (Fig. 6: 6). The pot was made of coarse fabric, of brick-red colour, which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Cioroiu Nou, 2nd-3rd centuries AD (Popilian 1976: 128, 218, Pl. LXXI: 913), Moesia Inferior: *territorium* Nikopolis ad Istrum (Sultov 1985: 87, Pl. XLIV, 2); Moesia Superior: *Diana*-Karatas, 1st-2nd centuries AD (Jevremovici 1987: 55, type V:11).

Popilian 1976, type 4 lid, Pl. LXXIII: 927-930

Short conical body with rim in the continuation of the walls, slightly splayed. Footed knob (Fig. 3: 1-2; 3: 4-5; 6: 8).

The vessels were made of coarse fabric of grey colour (Fig. 3: 2-3) or light brick-red (Fig. 3: 4-5), what contains sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Romula, the first half of the third century AD (Popilian 1976, p. 128, 219, Pl. LXXIII: 929).

Popilian 1976, type 3 lid, Pl. LXXII: 906, 908

Short conical body, slightly splayed rim. Footed knob (Fig. 6: 9). The vessels were made of coarse brick-red fabric, which contains a lot of sand and pebbles.

Bibliographic analogies and chronology. Dacia Inferior (Malvensis): Drobeta, where they were dated in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD (Popilian 1976: 128, 218, Pl. LXXII: 906, 908).

Other ceramic materials

During the research of the annex pit of the potter kiln, several ceramic tubes of a less common shape were also discovered. They have an ovoid body with cylindrical ends (Fig. 3: 6-7). We can assume their usefulness for transporting water, but they do not have identical analogues in form.

Conclusions

Ceramic production workshop no. VIII is the northernmost, according to archaeological research so far, within the northern ceramic production district of Romula.

The oven is of the oven-floor type, with two chambers. The central pillar was made of fragments of Roman bricks. The kiln grate has been dismantled, which indicates its operation before the final phase of the ceramic production district.

Based on the stratigraphy and archaeological materials discovered, it can be dated to the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century AD.

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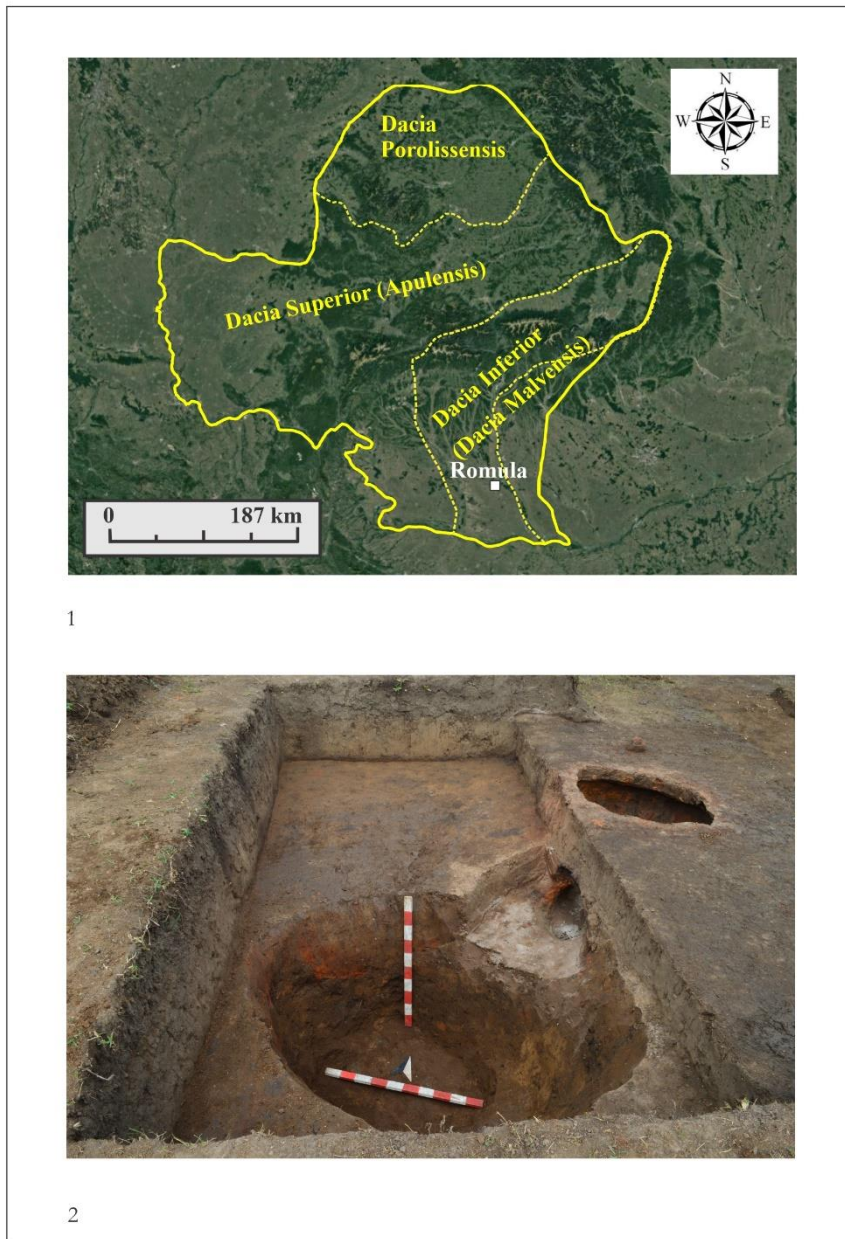


Figure 1. 1. Map of Roman Dacia provinces. 2. Pottery kiln no. 25

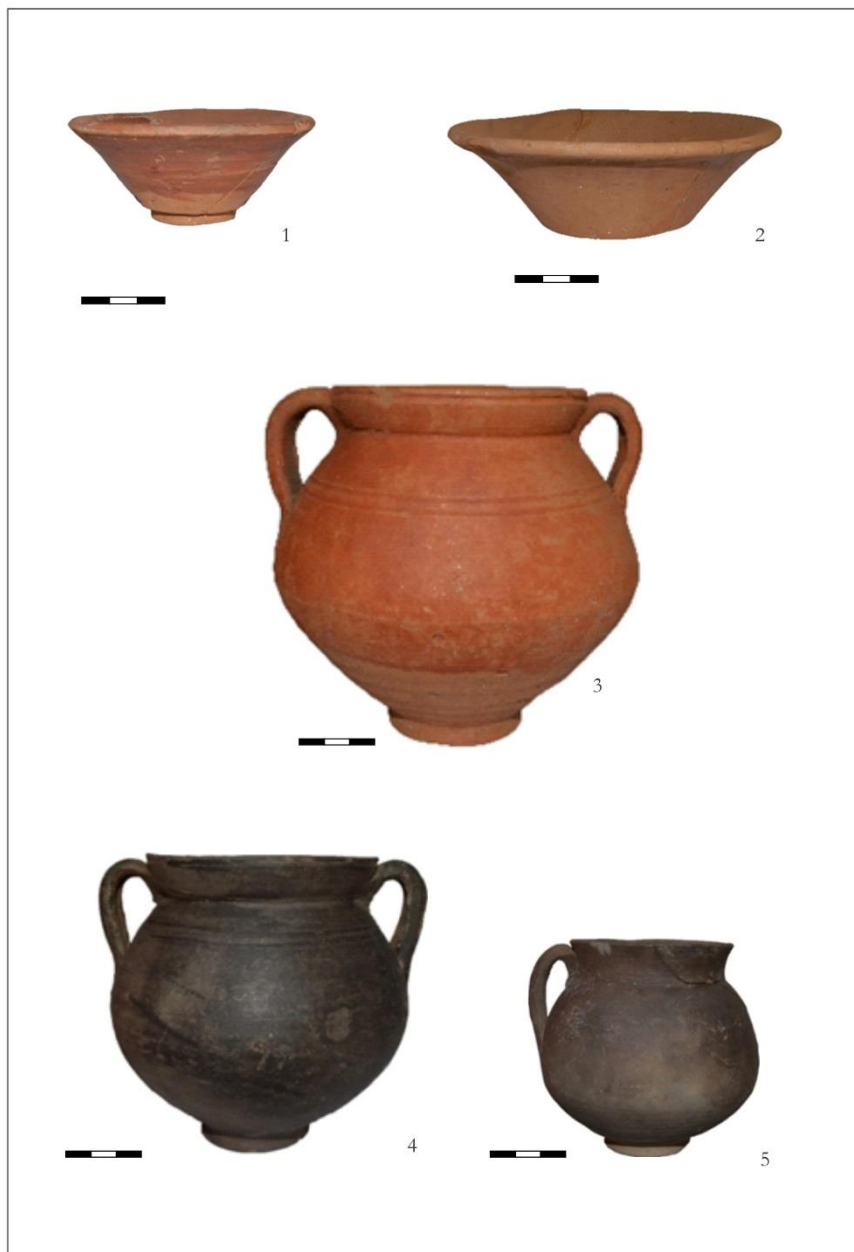


Figure 2. 1-6. Roman pottery



Figure 3. 1-7. Roman pottery

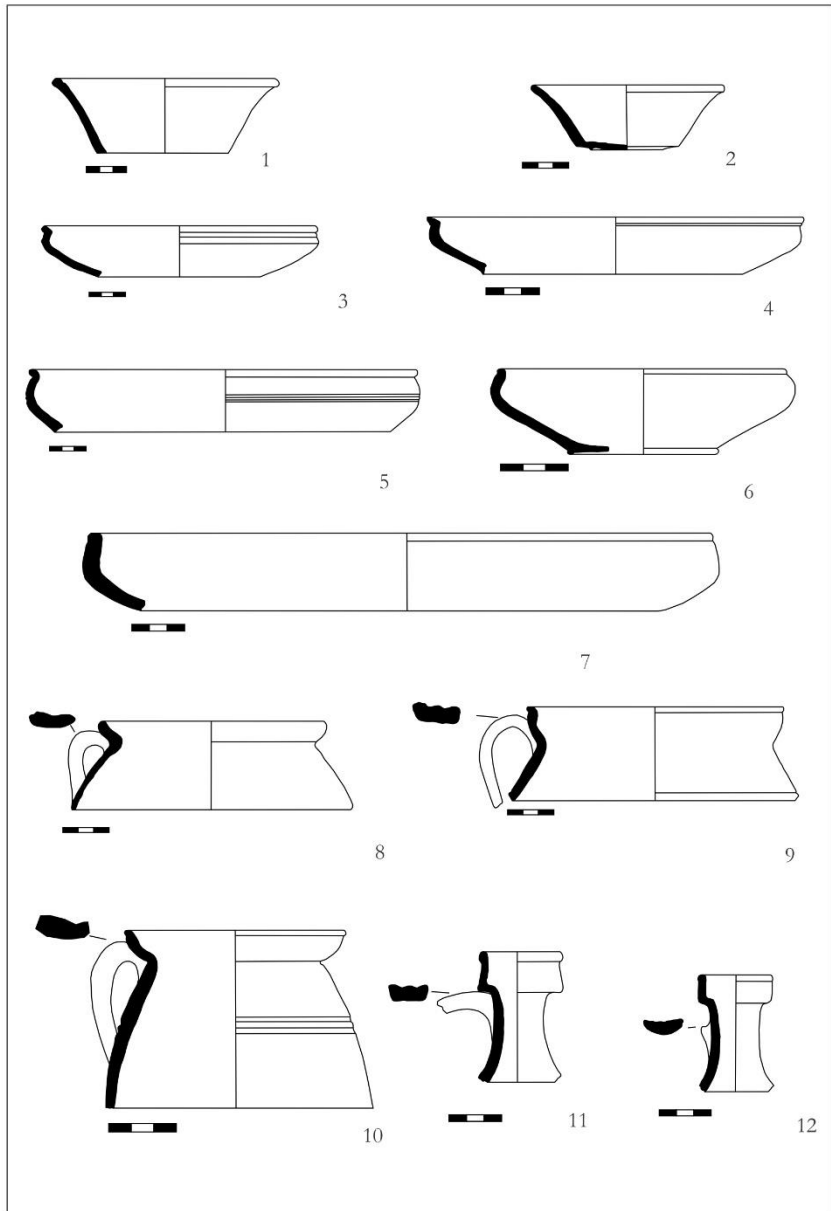


Figure 4. 1-12. Roman pottery

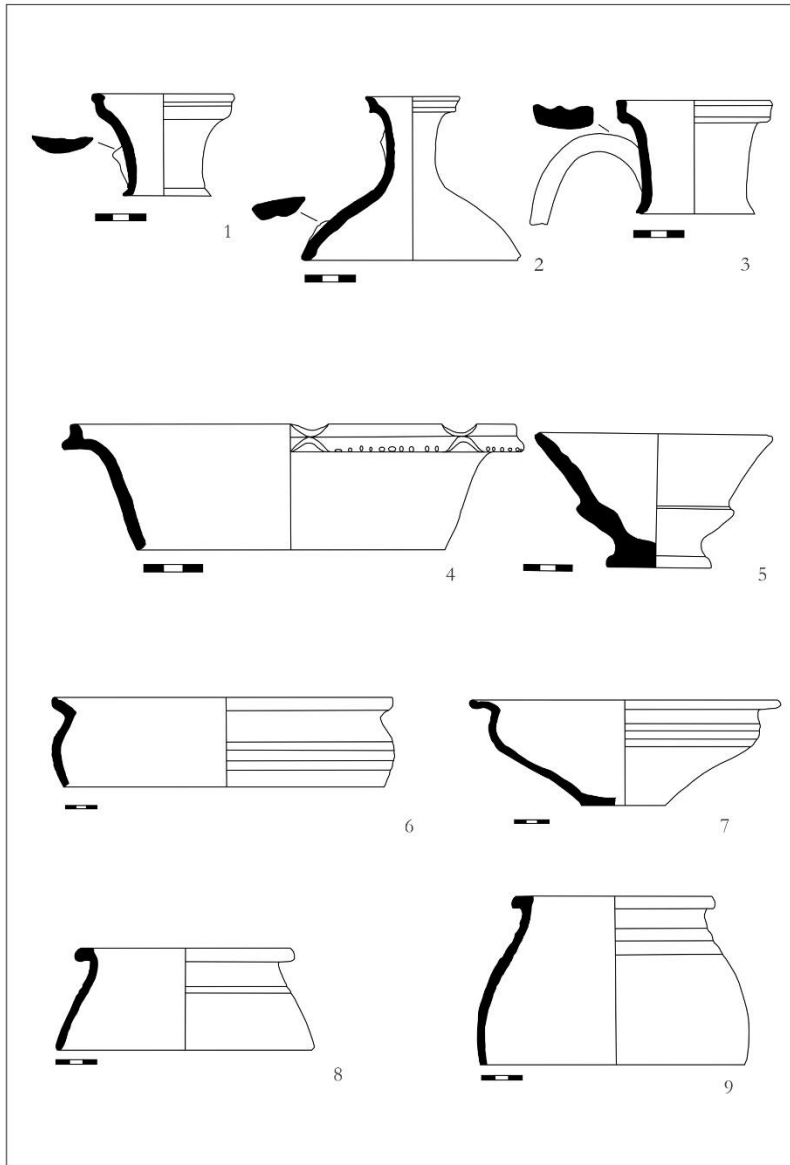


Figure 5. 1-8. Roman pottery

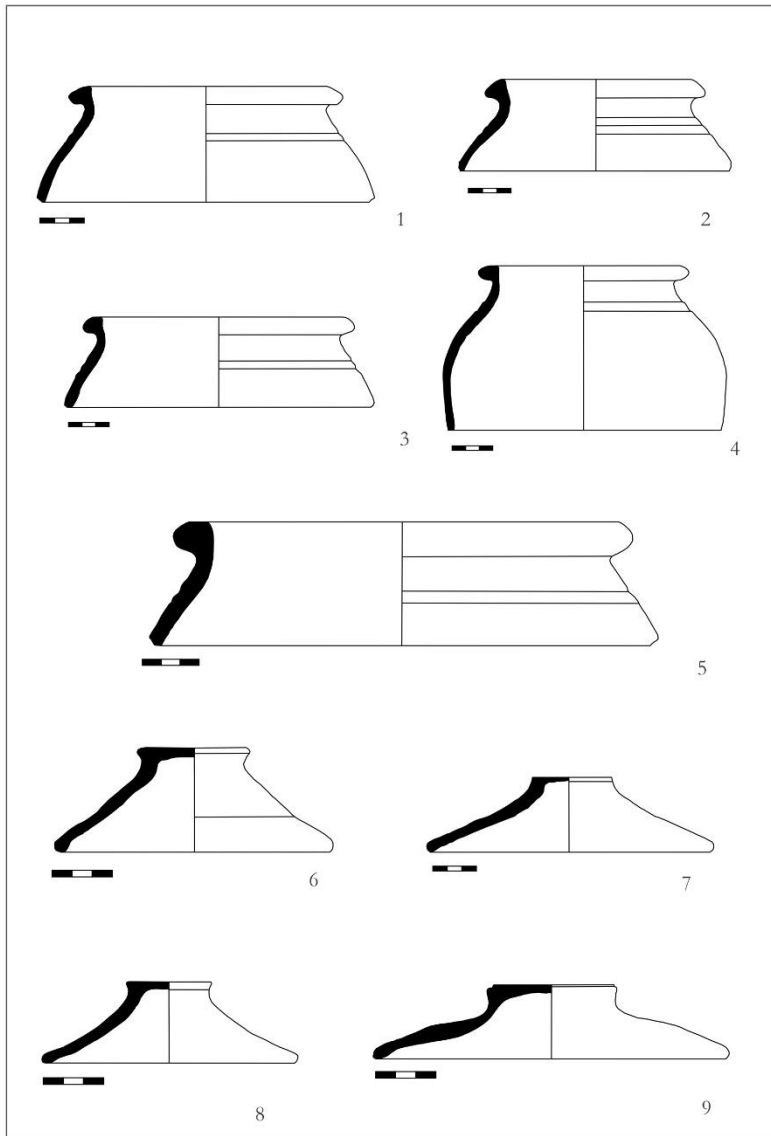


Figure 6. 1-9. Roman pottery