

THE LATE ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM TROPAEUM TRAIANI, SECTOR A (NORTH OF THE BASILICA A), 2005–2016

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Abstract: This paper reports the characterization of 82 amphorae fragments discovered in archaeological contexts at Tropaeum Traiani (Adamclisi, Constanța County, Romania), in Sector A (north of the Basilica A), from 2005 to 2016, dated between the 4th–6th centuries AD, in an attempt to understand the consumption and circulation of different commodities, as well as the trade connections of this settlement from the Lower Danube with the rest of the Roman world during the Late Antiquity period. The 82 fragments of Late Roman amphorae presented in this study belong to an assemblage including a total number of 283 amphorae fragments. The ceramic material is divided into 15 types, subtypes and variants of amphorae. The statistics based on the entire amphorae assemblage show the predominance of LRA 2 (38%) and LRA 1 (33%), while LRA 3 is less represented. The imports of olive oil represent 76% of the total imports, while wine only 24%.

Cuvinte-cheie: Tropaeum Traiani, perioada romană târzie, amfore, comerț, economie

Rezumat: În încercarea de a înțelege consumul și circulația diferitelor mărfuri, precum și legăturile comerciale ale așezării de la Tropaeum Traiani (Adamclisi, județul Constanța, România), de la Dunărea de Jos cu restul lumii romane în perioada antică târzie, un lot de 82 de fragmente de amfore descoperite în diverse contexte arheologice în această așezare, în sectorul A (la nord de Basilica A), între anii 2005–2016, datate între secolele IV–VI d.Hr. este analizat în articolul de față. Cele 82 de fragmente de amfore romane târzii prezentate în acest studiu aparțin unui ansamblu care include un număr total de 283 de fragmente de amfore. Materialul ceramic este împărțit în 15 tipuri, subtipuri și variante de amfore. Statisticile bazate pe întregul ansamblu de amfore arată predominanța tipurilor LRA 2 (38%) și LRA 1 (33%), în timp ce LRA 3 este mai puțin reprezentat. Importurile de ulei de măsline reprezintă 76% din totalul importurilor, iar cele de vin doar 24%.

INTRODUCTION

This study reports the characterization of an assemblage of Roman amphorae finds (82 fragments) excavated in well-defined archaeological contexts at Tropaeum Traiani, Constanța County, Romania, on the so-called Sector A – North of the Basilica A.

Recently, archaeological research has been resumed north of Basilica A, in order to identify the annexes, the relations between them and to the nearby monuments. The ultimate goal of the archaeological research is to reveal the entire insula to which the basilica belonged. The archaeological research is carried out by digging parallel trenches, oriented perpendicular to the northern side of the basilica, starting from the city wall and reaching the cardo, numbered in the continuation of the old trenches. From 2005 to 2016, 38 trenches with a standard size of 5 × 3 m, disposed in a grid system, with one-meter baulks between them were excavated. Depending on the requirements of the research, local topography and the

already existing monuments, baulks were dismantled and more trenches of varying sizes were drawn (Pl. I).

The general stratigraphy of the investigated area is the following: vegetal layer; gravel mixed with grey soil; grey soil; debris with fragments of tiles, bricks and stones; yellow ash coat clay and occupation layer – clay floor. Although based on drawing parallel sections, this research also meets the requirements of an investigation over a large area, more precisely, from the city walls to cardo street, which allows a better observation and understanding of late Roman urbanism. To accomplish this goal, archaeological excavation was limited only to the investigation of the last, late Roman levels of functioning of the city¹.

Archaeological research is still ongoing, but so far it has led to the partial or complete identification of several buildings in the immediate vicinity (A 5 and A 15) or attached to the northern wall of the basilica (two annex rooms: on the north-eastern and north-western corners). It was noticed that they focus on two points, one in the north of the atrium and narthex of the basilica and

¹ The last archaeological excavation season took place in 2016. From the following year until now, the Tropaeum Traiani archaeological site has not received any funding from the Ministry of Culture and National

Identity. Panait 2006; 2007; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; Panait, Vâlcu 2019, p. 157–158.