

# ORIENTAL AMPHORAE DISCOVERED AT HISTRIA IN THE ACROPOLIS CENTRE-SOUTH SECTOR (2014)

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**Keywords:** Late Antiquity, Roman period, Scythia, Histria, pottery, amphorae.

**Abstract:** The 75 amphora fragments presented in this paper are part of a lot made up of 315 fragments discovered in 2014 at Histria, in the sector conventionally named Acropolis Centre-South (Acropolă Centru-Sud). The ceramic material is divided in 11 types of amphora and three types of amphora lids. The total pottery lot numbers 12,044 fragments divided as follows: amphorae (72.791%), kitchen ware (22.038%), pottery that could not be ascribed to a certain category (4.018%), lamps (0.232%), different other categories (construction material, Greek pottery, chips; 0.921%). The statistics based on the entire ceramic lot demonstrate that amphorae remain the most important category of pottery, followed by kitchen ware, pottery that could not be ascribed to a certain category and different other categories (construction material, Greek pottery, chips). The lot we have processed can be divided as follows: amphorae (39.142%), kitchen ware (48.857%), lamps (7.428%) and others (4.573%).

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Antichitatea târzie, epocă romană, Scythia, Histria, ceramica, amfore.

**Rezumat:** Cele 75 de fragmente de amfore, prezentate în studiul de față, fac parte dintr-un lot format din 315 fragmente descoperite în campania 2014, la Histria, în sectorul Acropolă Centru-Sud. Materialul ceramic poate fi împărțit în unsprezece tipuri amforice și trei tipuri de capace de amforă. Lotul ceramic descoperit numără 12.044 fragmente împărțite astfel: amfore (72,791%), ceramica de bucătărie (22,038%), ceramica neîncadrată într-o categorie (4,018%), opaițe (0,232%), diverse (materiale de construcție, ceramica de perioadă greacă, jetoane; 0,921%). Statistica realizată pe întreg lotul ceramic descoperit demonstrează că amforele rămân cea mai importantă categorie ceramică, urmată de ceramica de bucătărie, ceramica neîncadrabilă și diverse (materiale de construcție, ceramica de perioadă greacă, jetoane). Lotul triat pentru prelucrare se împarte astfel: amfore (39,142%), ceramica de bucătărie (48,857%), opaițe (7,428%) și diverse (4,573%).

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For the description of the archaeological context of the pottery analyzed in this contribution see Bottez *et alii* 2015 (present volume).

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## AMPHORAE

As it happens in the case of important civilisations, such as the Roman one “the function

can be deduced from the shape, because important civilizations produce specializations – of words, of jobs, of buildings, of weapons and soldiers”<sup>1</sup>. Even for the Roman world, there are often doubts on the specific use of an amphora – for storage, transport or as tableware.

Amphorae represent a special, very important category of pottery, as they best reflect trade relations with other provinces of the Roman Empire. The information they provide, doubled or not by written sources, allow us to obtain well delimited regional and chronological “X-rays” that can be related to historical events. Another advantage provided by the study of amphorae is the “survival” of certain shapes from the Greek down to the Roman or even Roman-Byzantine periods.

The disadvantages for the Roman-Byzantine amphorae are represented by the “dilution” of the merchandize – shape relation, which for the Greek-Roman period was a quasi-permanent reality. As the pots could be used for several transports, in many cases a type of amphora was used for transporting different products. The analysis of organic matter on the walls of Late Roman amphorae confirmed this fact<sup>2</sup>. In this situation it is clear that one of the criteria used in classifying the transport amphorae, namely according to the transported product, must be used considering this fact.

Another criterion for classifying the amphorae is the production centre, used especially for the Greek amphorae. Typological and chronological analyses become more difficult in the case of Roman and Roman-Byzantine amphorae that have highly varied variants. And, to make matters more complicated, very often the same type of amphora was produced in several centres.

## I. ORIENTAL AMPHORAE

### I.1. Berenice LRA 1; Carthage LRA 1; British B II; Rădulescu 1976, type 10; Scorpan 1976, type

<sup>1</sup> Teodor 2001, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Steckner 1989, p. 65.

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