

EARLY ROMAN POTTERY GROUPS FROM THE CENTRAL SECTOR OF THE LATE ROMAN CITY AT HISTRIA

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Abstract: The paper presents four Early Roman pottery groups from the excavations of Basilica C (preceding the episcopal basilica of the 6th century), situated in the central sector of the Late Roman fortress at Histria. These contexts display at least two chronological moments: group 1, dating to the late 1st century BC – first half of the 1st century AD, offers a reliable *terminus post quem* for groups 2–4, belonging to habitation structures dating to the second half of the 1st – first half of the 2nd century AD. These ceramic assemblages can contribute in the future to the chronological refinement of the first two centuries of the Roman period at Histria (phases I A and I B).

Cuvinte-cheie: Histria, ceramică romană, sec. I–II p.Chr.

Rezumat: Articolul prezintă patru contexte ceramice de epocă romană timpurie provenind din sondajele efectuate în sectorul central al cetății romane târzii pentru identificarea Bazilicii C, anterioare bazilicii episcopale din sec. VI. Acestea surprind cel puțin două momente cronologice: contextul 1 datează de la sfârșitul sec. I a.Chr. și prima jumătate a sec. I p.Chr.; acest prim context oferă un bun *terminus post quem* pentru contextele 2–4, care aparțin unor structuri de locuire databile în a doua jumătate a sec. I și în prima jumătate a sec. II p.Chr. Loturile ceramice analizate pot contribui pe viitor la nuanțarea cronologiei primelor secole ale epocii romane de la Histria (fazele I A și I B).

Excavations carried out in 2002–2003 in the central sector of the Late Roman fortress had intended to establish the plan of the earlier Christian building preceding the Episcopal basilica built in the 6th century. Surveys have led to a number of stratigraphic observations and to a preliminary chronological setting¹. The study of ceramic assemblages now allows to refine the chronology

of the recorded layers. In the preliminary report the chronology of the investigated layers is too schematic, influenced by the traditional sequence of habitation layers established by A. Suceveanu² and without processing the pottery.

The most important aspect to be underlined here is that the location of the two basilicas seriously affected the stratigraphic units from the second half of the 3rd century to the first three decades of the 6th century (corresponding to phases II A, II B, III A, III B of the stratigraphy established by A. Suceveanu). In the current state of research one can argue that in the central sector there are a lot of buildings enclosed in an *insula* of the city's hippodamic plan that appear to have been used in the 1st–3rd centuries (and probably also in the first half of the 4th century). It must be stressed that at least two destruction layers were recorded for this period, with the most important one from the middle of the 3rd century. The processing of pottery assemblages enabled some corrections to the interpretation of recorded plans and profiles (see below).

I considered important to publish these ceramic contexts because it can contribute in the future to the improvement of the chronology of the first two centuries of the Roman period at Histria. Of course this will be possible after the publication of materials from recent excavations, especially those from the “Basilica Extra-Muros” and “Poarta Mare – Turnul Mare” sectors.

¹ Băjenaru 2003–2005.

² Suceveanu 1982, p. 75–92.

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