Roman Pottery in the South-Eastern Balkans
From Production to Distribution

22–23/10/2026

British School at Athens, Upper House
52 Souedias Street, Athens, Greece



Programme

Book of abstracts

BRITISH SCHOOL at ATHENS
AN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

DEUTSCHES
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ATHEN

FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University

Programme

Day 1 (22/10/2026)

Macedonia* and *Thracia

8:30– Registration (Upper House, 52 Souedias Street)
09:00–09:20 Welcome and opening remarks

Session 1: Production and Circulation – *Macedonia and Thracia*
Chair: Evangelia Kiriatzi

09:20–09:40 On the Flowers, Animals and Dancers: Relief Mouldmade Bowls from the Collection of the National Museum in Veles
Anita Vasilkova Midoska

09:40–10:00 Roman Period Pottery Workshops (for Tablewares) in the Central Part of the Province Macedonia
Apostolos Garyfallopoulos

10:00–10:20 Pottery Manufacture in Roman Amphipolis: Preliminary Evidence from Products, Wasters and the Kiln of the Gymnasium
Vaggelis Papaioannou

10:20–10:40 Locating Production: Accessibility and Potential Distribution Zones of Roman Kilns in the Xanthi Plain (Aegean Thrace): A GIS-Based Approach
Vassilis Evangelidis, Maria Chrysafi, Melpomeni Karta, Konstantina Kallintzi

10:40–11:00 Titus Flavius Dinis and (Titus) Flavius Gemell – Two Landowners and Possible Ceramic Producers in Early Roman Thrace
Alexander K. Harizanov

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

Session 2: Production and Circulation – *Thracia*
Chair: Petra Tušlová

11:30–11:50 New Data on a Pottery Workshop South of the Curtain Wall of Philippopolis
Nadezhda Georgieva Borislavova, Sophia Angelova Hristeva

11:50–12:00 A New Canter for Ceramic Production in Thrace: The Case of the Sanctuary of the Nymphs and Aphrodite near Kasnakovo
Veselka Katsarova, Kalina Petkova

Session 3: Special Assemblages
Chair: Petra Tušlová

12:00–12:20 Pottery Production and Utilization in Roman Inland Thrace: Indicative Ceramic Groups from Tumuli A and B at Spilaio, Evros
Andreas Leventis

12:20–12:40 Ceramics from the Ritual Platforms of the Burial Complex in the Eastern Mound near Karanovo Village
Veselin Ignatov, Teodora Nedyalkova

12:40–13:00 Ceramic Krater-Shaped Vessel from the Village of Staro Selo, Sliven Region
Georgi Kovachev, Nikolay Sirakov

13:00–14:30 Lunch break

Session 4: Local and Regional Trends
Chair: Dimitris Grigoropoulos

14:30–14:50 Die Überzugkeramik in der Provinz Thrakien während der römischen Zeit
Gergana Kabakchieva

14:50–15:10 *Molyvoti Revelata*: Inferences on the Late Hellenistic and Roman Pottery of a Thracian City
Nicholas Hudson, Alexandros Laftsidis

15:10–15:30 Second half of the 3rd – 4th Century AD Contexts from Dion, Macedonia: Perspectives on the Study of Late Roman Pottery from Northern Greece
Kyriakos Fragkoulis

15:30–15:40 Roman Grey Ware from the Territory of Serdica: Evidence from a Newly Discovered Settlement near the Village of Aldomirovtsi (Sofia Region)
Kalina Petkova, Elena Nikolova, Ruslan Stoychev

15:40–16:00 Late Roman Pottery from a *villa rustica* at Agios Georgios (pre-recorded)
Irene Liesk, Simona Perna, Sonia Dimaki

16:00–16:30 Coffee break

16:30–17:30 Keynote Lecture
Roman Pottery Production between the Danube and the Stara Planina in the Light of Recent Archaeometric Analyses
Lina Diers, Kalin Chakarov

19:00 Dinner (Salero restaurant, Valtetsiou 51, Exarchia)

Day 2 (23/10/2026)
Moesia Inferior*, Dobruja and *Dacia

Session 5: Production and Circulation – *Moesia Inferior*
Chair: Diana Dobreva

09:30–09:50 Pottery Production and Military Supply on the Lower Danube: Evidence from Novae
Elena Klenina

09:50–10:10 The Ceramic Workshops at Ostrov/Ferma 4 (Durostorum), Constanța County, Romania: Organization, Categories of Products, and Distribution Network
Adela Bâltâc, Eugen Paraschiv-Grigore

10:10–10:30 The Ceramic Repertoire of Kardam – Buzalak: A Newly Discovered Production Complex in the Roman Province of Moesia Inferior
Stiliyan Dimitrov Ivanov, Simeon Georgiev Stanchev

10:30–10:50 A Roman Pottery Production Center in the Vicinity of Makariopolsko Village, Northeastern Bulgaria
Tsvetelina Slavkova, Svetlana Todorova

10:50–11:10 Learning from the Best: The Role of Imported *firmalampen* in the Development of Workshops from Moesia Inferior (1st–3rd centuries AD)
Vlad Ciur

11:10–11:30 Coffee break

Session 6: Pottery studies I
Chair: Elena Klenina

11:30–11:40 Remarks on a Curious Series of Oil Lamps from Northeastern Moesia Inferior
Vlad Ciur

11:40–12:00 Shapes and Fabrics: Investigating Roman Pottery Production at Nicopolis ad Istrum
Diana Dobreva, Anna Nicolussi, Sabrina Zago, Kalin Chakarov

12:00–12:20 Roman Pottery from the Hinterland of Novae: Recent Archaeological Evidence and New Analytical Perspectives
Petya Andreeva, Lina Diers, Anton Atanasov, Dragan Iliev

12:20–12:40 Life, Shelter and Death. An Overview of Ceramic Finds from the Beidaud Archaeological Microzone (Moesia Inferior)
Radu O. Stănescu, Iulia Iliescu

12:40–14:00 Lunch

Session 7: Pottery studies II
Chair: Alexander Harizanov

14:00–14:20 A Matter of Taste – Eating, Drinking and Trading Ceramic Goods in the Rural Areas of Scythia Minor (streaming)
Alina Streinu

14:20–14:40 Roman Tableware in the Countryside of Dobruja (2nd to 4th centuries AD)
Marian Mocanu

14:40–15:00 Norico-Pannonian and Moesian Influences and Local Particularities in the Roman Ceramic Material from Călugăreni/Mikháza (Mureș County, Romania)
Katalin Sidó

15:00–15:20 Pottery, Supply, and Regional Connectivity at Optatiana/Sutor: A Preliminary Typological, Technological, and Quantitative Study in Northern Roman Dacia
Vlad-Andrei Lăzărescu, Katalin Vágó

15:20–15:50 General discussion, publication plans

15:50–16:10 Coffee break

Closing lecture and follow-up event

16:10–17:30 Transfer of Technology. Exploring Pottery Manufacture and Trade in Roman Thrace using the Yurta-Stroyno Case Study. Introduction to the MSCA-CZ Project and Its Preliminary Results, Followed by a Tour of the Fitch Laboratory
Petra Tušlová, Silvia Amicone, Noémi S. Müller, Evangelia Kiriatzi
The Fitch lab tour + Zoe Zgouleta, Artemios Oikonomou

Abstracts

Day 1 (22/10/2026)
Macedonia and *Thracia*

Session 1: Production and Circulation – *Macedonia*

On the Flowers, Animals and Dancers: Relief Mouldmade Bowls from the Collection of the National Museum in Veles

Anita Vasilkova Midoska

LI National Museum Veles, Department of Archaeology, Ancient and Medieval collections, MK anitavasilkova@gmail.com

In the ancient collection of the National Museum of Veles, there exists a set of mouldmade relief bowls, primarily discovered at two archaeological sites: Kale – Zgropolci and Kale – Stari Grad. This collection was formed as a result of archaeological excavations conducted by the Museum over the past decade at these two sites. It comprises 18 items, including 4 fully preserved bowls, 12 fragments and 2 matrices; and few hemispherical bowls without decoration which was the cheapest variant of this type. The purpose of this title is to showcase these archaeological artefacts as evidence of interactions between inland settlements and significant urban centres. While most of the items are produced by local artisans, there is substantial evidence of artistic influence from the principal centres of the Mediterranean region, particularly from those along the Vardar River and Northern Greece. In addition to this primary influence, many bowls from the adjacent ancient settlements exhibit similarities that reflect shared routes of influence and a common artistic and consumer taste among the populace. The first group of bowls unearthed at the archaeological site Kale – Gradishte Zgropolci is associated with funerary practices, as all were discovered as part of grave offerings. The second group consists of bowls found within the settlement at the archaeological site Kale – Stari Grad. Based on their decorative motifs, these bowls can be categorized into two groups: Floral decorative elements and Figural representations, which can be further divided into two subcategories: Motifs from the repertoire of Dionysian themes (notably prevalent in the minor arts of Macedonia); and Mythical creatures. All mouldmade relief bowls in this collection date back to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and based on other grave offerings and the architectural characteristics of the graves, they were part of the funerary rites of the more affluent citizens of the archaeological site Kale – Zgropolci (ancient Gurbita).

Roman Period Pottery Workshops (for Tablewares) in the Central Part of the Province Macedonia

Apostolos Garyfallopoulos

Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City, GR garyfallopoulos@uoc.gr

During the Roman period pottery workshops operated in the central and coastal part of the province Macedonia, producing tablewares (among other vessels?), following types of international wares, imported in the region. These workshops were located in the provincial

capital, Thessaloniki, as well as in smaller towns within its region, such as Edessa, and the ancient city at present-day Palatiano. Their activity is documented by the following data, both published and unpublished, which were collected as part of a doctoral dissertation and will be presented in this paper: a) evidence associated with workshops at specific sites/excavations, b) vessels found in excavations of the area under examination that clearly reflect imported wares, c) other failed/discarded or poorly fired vessels, d) kilns for pottery production found scattered throughout the area. Through the presentation of the above data, I intend to highlight, among other things, aspects of the organization and technology of local workshops in central Macedonia, the models these workshops follow in their production – namely specific pottery types primarily from Italy but also from other major production centres in Asia Minor, as well as any economic, social, and cultural implications of the production and distribution of local pottery in Macedonia during the Roman period.

Pottery Manufacture in Roman Amphipolis: Preliminary Evidence from Products, Wasters and the Kiln of the Gymnasium

Vaggelis Papaioannou

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, GR; University College Dublin, IE
vaggelispapaioannou@yahoo.com

The paper examines direct and indirect evidence for pottery production in Amphipolis, a *civitas libera* in the Roman province of Macedonia (Northern Greece), located on the *Via Egnatia* and at the mouth of the Strymon River. A preliminary study of pottery assemblages from the Acropolis of the city and two Roman-period cemeteries indicates the local production of imitations of *terra sigillata* wares, particularly Italian Sigillata Conspectus 18 and various forms of Eastern Sigillata C, along with versions of Loeschcke VIII lamps. Descendants of traditional vessel types, such as the Macedonian amphora, are also represented within the local ceramic repertoire. This evidence will be discussed within both regional and supra-regional frameworks, allowing for observations on regionality as well as the application of the glocalization approach.
Furthermore, direct evidence from kiln wasters discovered on the Acropolis and the Gymnasium complements our knowledge on the local range of forms (thin-walled wares, basins). The most compelling evidence is a rectangular kiln discovered on the relics of the city's Gymnasium in 1986 and excavated and systematically studied in 2026. The pottery collected offers a date for its operation from the 1st century BC until the 3rd century AD. Both wasters and the kiln contribute to and challenge the understanding of the placement of industrial facilities within the urban plan of Amphipolis.

Pots for Heroes or Heroic Pottery? Pottery from the Sanctuary of the Hero Avlonites in the Region of Pangaion (cancelled presentation)

Stavros Zachariadis[1], Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki[2]

[1] Ministry of Culture, Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinth, GR stzachariadis@gmail.com
[2] Emeritus Director of Antiquities in Ministry of Culture, GR ckoukouli@gmail.com

The sanctuary of Hero Avlonites is located in the region of Mount Pangaion in eastern Macedonia, Greece. Despite only partial excavation, it has yielded an interesting pottery assemblage dating from the Hellenistic period to the 4th century AD. The majority of the pottery material has been found in a Roman building complex destroyed in the 4th century AD. It consists of coarse utilitarian wares that share broadly consistent morphological and technological characteristics. Two main forms of large vessels, along with a smaller number of minor shapes, dominate the assemblage, frequently bearing stamped inscriptions with a name of the Hero. This relatively low-quality but homogeneous ceramic group is likely of local production.

This paper examines the function, production, and circulation of this pottery assemblage in relation to the sanctuary and its associated cult of Hero Avlonites. More especially, it focuses on the use of a ware that is produced for specific purpose to meet the needs of the sanctuary and its worshippers and is consumed in a specified context. It asks whether these vessels were produced specifically restricted to ritual contexts, or whether they also served a broader local market. Furthermore, it considers where production may have taken place – within the sanctuary precinct itself, through outsourcing to local potters, or as part of a wider regional production and distribution network.

By addressing these questions, the paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of pottery production and consumption in Eastern Macedonia during the transition from the Late Antiquity to the Early Christian Period, an area and context that remain comparatively understudied.

Session 2: Production and Circulation – *Thracia*

Locating Production: Accessibility and Potential Distribution Zones of Roman Kilns in the Xanthi Plain (Aegean Thrace): A GIS-Based Approach

Vassilis Evangelidis[1], Maria Chrysafi[2], Melpomeni Karta[1], Konstantina Kallintzi[2]

[1] Athena Research Center/ILSP Xanthi vevangelidis@athenarc.gr; melpomek@athenarc.gr
[2] Ephorate of Antiquities Xanthi, GR mchrysafi@culture.gr; ckallintzi@gmail.com

Despite the increasing evidence for rural and peri-urban manufacturing activities of Roman ceramic production in Aegean Thrace, the spatial organization and association with other elements of such spaces remains under investigated, This paper aims to examine three Roman-period kiln sites identified in the Xanthi plain – located close to Sounio village and two additional production sites (Sites Vafeika and Peteinos) – through a GIS-based analysis designed to investigate their landscape positioning, accessibility, and potential zones of influence.

Rather than considering the production site placement solely in relation to the availability of raw materials, this study approaches ceramic workshops as nodes embedded within a wider distribution landscapes. Using high-resolution digital elevation models (DEMs), cost-surface analysis and cost-distance modelling, the research attempts to reconstruct accessibility patterns surrounding each kiln under different movement scenarios. Isochrone-based catchments are employed to estimate the potential spatial extent of resource procurement, including access to fuel, water, and clay sources, while also modelling the possible distribution radius of ceramic products. Least-cost analyses will further explore the relationship between

kiln locations, settlements, communication routes, and lowland corridors across the Xanthi plain.
Comparison between the three kiln sites aims to highlight similarities and differences in accessibility profiles and potential service areas, raising questions concerning workshop specialization, production scale, and the degree to which individual kilns may have operated within localized consumption networks or wider regional systems of exchange. The study additionally evaluates whether kiln placement reflects optimization for resource access, transport efficiency, proximity to consumers, or combinations of these factors.
Beyond the regional case study, the paper proposes a replicable GIS methodology for investigating Roman ceramic production landscapes, offering a comparative framework for researching accessibility and potential economic reach of kiln sites in other parts of the Roman world.

Local Ceramic Production in the 2nd–4th Century AD: Evidence from a Roman Settlement near Prohorovo, Nova Zagora Municipality (cancelled presentation)

Boris Donev Borisov, Gencho Yanev Dimitrov

Historical Museum – Nova Zagora, BG
profbdborisov@gmail.com, mediator.dimitrov@abv.bg

As a result of the archaeological field surveys conducted in 2017 in the territory of the village of Prohorovo new data were obtained concerning the settlement network in a microregion associated with the ancient copper and gold mining areas. The subject of this paper is the large quantity of locally produced ceramic material discovered during the field surveys in a Roman settlement dated to the 2nd–4th century AD.
The settlement extends over a considerable area along the valleys of the Bogoshinska and Lozova rivers. The largest concentration of archaeological materials – including domestic and construction ceramics, as well as roughly worked stone – was identified 2.4 km east of the centre of the present-day village of Prohorovo, in the area between the two rivers at their confluence. Similar concentrations of ceramic material dating from the 2nd–4th century AD have also been observed to the west, towards the area known as “Balevi Mogili”, as well as to the east along both banks of the Bogoshinska and Lozova rivers.
Among the fragmented ceramic material collected during the surveys, various vessel forms have been identified, including plates, bowls, cups, cooking pots, amphora-shaped vessels, and others. The majority of the vessels were produced on a potter’s wheel, although hand-made pottery has also been documented.
A detailed analysis of the ceramic material from the settlement, together with its comparison with the ceramic assemblages from the burial mound necropolises investigated in the region, will contribute to a more complete understanding of the characteristics of local ceramic production and its development during the 2nd–4th century AD.

Titus Flavius Dinis and (Titus) Flavius Gemell – Two Landowners and Possible Ceramic Producers in Early Roman Thrace

Alexander K. Harizanov

Department of Classical Archaeology, National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG harizanov.alex@gmail.com

The province of Thrace was established in ca. AD 46-48 on the territory of the last Thracian kingdom. The borders of the province and the one with Moesia Inferior in particular underwent several changes during the Principate when it gradually shifted closer to the Balkan Mountain range. During the reign of Aurelian, the North-western part of Thrace was relocated within the newly established province of Dacia, later Dacia Mediterranea, while under the Tetrarchy the rest of its territory was further split into smaller provinces and eventually included into the newly established Diocese of Thrace.
In the course of more than two hundred years, between the second half of the 1st and the late 3rd century AD, ceramic production was developed in an unprecedented scale in this territory, in both rural and urban contexts. A number of rural settlements in Thrace, including agricultural estates (*villae*), agrarian and artisan's villages (*vici*), accommodated pottery and tile workshops since the second half of the 1st century AD. From the late 1st – early 2nd century onwards potteries were established also in towns and cities.
This presentation is going to focus on the ceramic production in villa estates and the ones in the localities of Varbovski Livadi (near modern-day Pavlikeni) and Chatalka (close to Stara Zagora) in particular. The latter was supposedly owned by the family of *Titus Flavius Dinis* – an *archiereus* of the Thracian koinon during the late 1st or the early 2nd century, while a recent hypothesis states that one of the possible landlords of the Varbovski Livadi villa could be (*Titus*) *Flavius Gemell* – a proprietor known from an inscription found in the nearby region. In doing so it would explore the theory that ceramic production in Early Roman Thrace was developed at least partially under the patronage of local landlords, who were the first to perceive and advertise the material side of the Roman way of life.

New Data on a Pottery Workshop South of the Curtain Wall of Philippopolis

Nadezhda Georgieva Borislavova[1], Sophia Angelova Hristeva[2]

[1] National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG n.g.borislavova@gmail.com
[2] Regional Archaeological Museum – Plovdiv, BG sophiahristeva@gmail.com

Intensive rescue archaeological excavations in recent decades in Plovdiv (ancient Philippopolis) have led to the discovery of several ceramic workshops that functioned during the Roman period. Their production was intended to supply the local market. This study examines a ceramic workshop discovered near the southern curtain wall of the ancient city, excavated in 2013 by E. Bozhinova (RAM Plovdiv) and in 2025 by S. Hristeva (RAM Plovdiv). New data from the latest rescue excavations complement our view of the production process, characteristics and diversity of the ceramic repertoire. The analysis of the material poses numerous questions regarding local traditions, the influence of imported wares, and the regional significance of the urban workshops. It also sheds light on the distribution network within a primary administrative centre of the Roman province of Thrace and its rural hinterland. Furthermore, it examines the pottery function and whether the workshops specialized in the production of specific ceramic groups.

A New Center for Ceramic Production in Thrace: The Case of the Sanctuary of the Nymphs and Aphrodite near Kasnakovo

Veselka Katsarova, Kalina Petkova

National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG
veselka_kazarova@naim.bg, kalina.petkova@naim.bg

In recent years, investigations at the archaeological site near the village of Kasnakovo, known as the "Sanctuary of the Nymphs and Aphrodite," have focused on uncovering and documenting the largest building within the architectural complex, located north of the nymphaeum. Over 20 rooms with residential and bathing functions, equipped with hypocausts and decorated with floor mosaics and frescoes, have been examined. It has been established that the building was partially destroyed during the 320s. In the course of investigating some rooms and the courtyard spaces around the building, areas with a high concentration of archaeological finds and materials have been noted – large quantities of fragmented domestic pottery, including scrapped production, animal bones, small metal objects, coins, etc. To date, five structures with similar characteristics have been documented and identified as the remains of dwellings built of perishable, organic materials, used during the period from the mid-4th to the early 5th century.
During the excavations in 2024, a pottery kiln for domestic ceramics and its pre-furnace were uncovered and investigated, located in the portico in front of the southern facade of the Roman building. The kiln chamber has a circular shape, with a single central pillar supporting. Its diameter is 1.40 m. The grate is constructed from tile fragments and thick clay plaster layers. It features circular and elliptical openings for hot air circulation. The pre-furnace has low retaining walls formed with dry stone masonry and measures 2.70 x 2.20 m. Stratigraphic observations and archaeological finds show that the construction and operation of the kiln chronologically coincide with the period of occupation of the dwellings from the second half of the 4th century AD.

Session 3: Special Assemblages

Pottery Production and Utilization in Roman Inland Thrace: Indicative Ceramic Groups from Tumuli A and B at Spilaio, Evros

Andreas Leventis

Institute of Classical Archaeology, Freie Universität, Berlin, DE andreas.leventis@fu-berlin.de

While large-scale imports often dominate the discussion on Roman ceramics, rural and funerary contexts across inland Thrace tell a different story – one where regional workshops met the majority of domestic and ritual demands. Despite this pattern, detailed typological and functional studies on these ceramic industries remain surprisingly scarce. This presentation brings fresh data to the table by analysing the diverse ceramic assemblage recovered from Tumuli A and B at Spilaio, located in the Evros region of northeastern Greece. These two burial mounds offer an exceptional window into ceramic consumption, though each presents a distinct chronological profile. Tumulus A dates to the late 1st to early 2nd

century AD. In contrast, Tumulus B exhibits a remarkable diachrony, with a use-life stretching from the 1st century AD all the way to the 9th century AD. Due to the chronological parameters set by this conference, this paper specifically isolates and focuses on the Roman-period phases of Tumulus B, spanning from the 1st to the 4th century AD.
The pottery selected for study covers several functional categories. Utilitarian vessels are well-represented by cooking ware pots and coarse household wares, alongside storage containers like small amphorae and one-handle jars. The assemblage also features plates, globular jugs, small kraters, and ceramic lamps.
Crucially, most of the recovered vessels exhibit varying degrees of distinct burning traces and soot marks. Whether interpreted as evidence of prior domestic use, or as remnants of localized ritual practices and funerary pyres, these alterations offer invaluable clues. By evaluating these macroscopically visible traces alongside formal traits and fabric profiles, we can better define the technological identity, function, and utilization of these ceramic groups.

Ceramics from the Ritual Platforms of the Burial Complex in the Eastern Mound near Karanovo Village

Veselin Ignatov[1], Teodora Nedyalkova[2]

[1] Independent Researcher, BG ignatov_v@abv.bg
[2] Regional Historical Museum – Sliven, BG theonedyalkova@gmail.com

Ritual platforms associated with graves represent one of the least studied aspects of Thracian funerary practices. Their function and relationship to the burial rite remain insufficiently understood. Archaeologically, such features are characterised by one or more deliberately prepared surfaces located adjacent to, or in close proximity to, graves. They frequently contain traces of hearths, ash deposits, charcoal fragments, and animal remains, ranging from isolated bones to complete skeletons, carbonised plant remains, and fragments of ceramic and glass vessels.
The present study examines the ceramic assemblage recovered from the ritual platforms of the burial complex in the Eastern Mound, situated north of Karanovo village (Nova Zagora Municipality, southeastern Bulgaria). The associated grave is securely dated to the 1st century AD, a period that remains inadequately documented with regard to ceramic production and consumption in Thrace. This era witnessed the introduction and increasing distribution of red-slip pottery, while many vessel forms continued traditions inherited from earlier periods.
The substantial quantity of ceramic material from the site provides an important opportunity to investigate pottery development during the Early Roman period. To date, 62 vessels have been reconstructed, although the original number was considerably higher; restoration work on both the ceramic and glass finds has remained suspended since 2016. The majority of the vessels, predominantly bowls, were produced from well-levigated clay containing fine inclusions of quartz, organic matter, and grog, and were fired to reddish or brownish colours. Red-slip pottery is comparatively scarce and displays distinctive morphological characteristics. Analysis of the reconstructed assemblage allows the identification of vessel types, assessment of the proportion of imported wares, and evaluation of the development of ceramic forms throughout the 1st century AD. The tableware may be divided into three principal groups: local coarse ware, local red-slip pottery imitating *terra sigillata*, and imported *terra sigillata*. The

assemblage contributes significantly to our understanding of ceramic production, exchange, and consumption in Roman-period Thrace.

Ceramic Krater-Shaped Vessel from the Village of Staro Selo, Sliven Region

Georgi Kovachev, Nikolay Sirakov

Regional Historical Museum – Sliven, BG
george.kovatchev66@gmail.com; niki_sirakov@abv.bg

The text presents a ceramic vessel in the shape of a krater, discovered in Yankova Mogila near the village of Staro Selo, in the Sliven region, in a grave dating to the second half of the 2nd century AD. The vessel was found next to an urn containing cremated remains and other funerary offerings. It was made of fine yellow-orange clay and features a tall pedestal base, five wavy handles, and decoration consisting of incised lines. Its shape resembles ancient kraters associated with rituals and symposia. The authors examine various hypotheses regarding its purpose, including use in libation rituals, ritual washing, or as a vessel intended for the afterlife. Comparisons are made with similar finds from other necropolises in the area of Southeastern Bulgaria. According to the authors, the vessel played an important role in funerary rites, while future discoveries and chemical analyses may help clarify the origin and use of similar ceramic vessels.

Session 4: Local and Regional Trends

Die Überzugkeramik in der Provinz Thrakien während der römischen Zeit

Gergana Kabakchieva

National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG
gkabakchieva@abv.bg

Der Zeitraum vom 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zum 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr. war eine Zeit des Wandels für die Keramik und die Keramikherstellung in den thrakischen Gebieten. Damals hielt der Import aus dem östlichen Sigillata zunehmend Einzug. Diese Keramik übte während des Prinzipats einen wesentlichen Einfluss auf die Entwicklung der lokalen Produktion in der Provinz Thrakien aus. Dies zeigt sich sowohl in technologischer Hinsicht als auch in den Formen der feinen Überzugkeramik sowie der einfachen und grauen Keramik.
In dem Vortrag werden die wichtigsten Tendenzen in der Entwicklung der Überzugkeramik in Thrakien während der römischen Epoche beleuchtet. Der Import östlicher Sigillata taucht frühestens in den Städten an der Westküste des Schwarzen Meeres und in den innenseiten Städten sowie in einigen der größeren antiken Villen aus dem 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr. auf. Und das ist kein Zufall, da die thrakischen Gebiete im östlichen Balkan bereits seit der Zeit vor der römischen Herrschaft traditionelle Handels-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbeziehungen zu Kleinasien unterhielten. Und die Verbreitung der für die damalige Zeit neuen Keramiktechnologie führte auch zur Etablierung neuer Keramikformen in Thrakien. Die Typologie und Chronologie dieser Keramik liefern die Belege für diesen Prozess. Eine kurze vergleichende Analyse der Keramik in den Provinzen Thrakien und Moesia Inferior wird die

wesentlichen Prozesse aufzeigen, die die Entwicklung der Keramik in den Gebieten der Provinz Thrakien während der römischen Epoche zwischen dem Osten und dem Westen des Römischen Reiches.

Molyvoti Revelata: Inferences on the Late Hellenistic and Roman Pottery of a Thracian City

Nicholas Hudson[1], Alexandros Laftsidis[2]

[1] University of North Carolina Wilmington, US hudsonn@uncw.edu
[2] Université Libre de Bruxelles, BE alexandros.laftsidis@ulb.be

The archaeological site of Molyvoti, corresponding to an important ancient city on the Aegean Thracian coast, offers a fortunate occasion for researchers to examine aspects of the local society and economy, as well as its positioning in the wider (both land and maritime) trade/economic networks. While excavations at the site conducted by the Molyvoti, Thrace, Archaeological Project (MTAP) have produced ceramic assemblages from the 4th century BC and the 4th through 5th centuries AD, there are notable lacunae of the Hellenistic assemblage (3rd–2nd century BC) and Early and Middle Roman assemblages (1st century BC through 3rd century AD).
The present paper aspires to address these ceramic gaps by presenting preliminary analyses of Hellenistic and Roman assemblages from recent excavations carried out by the Molyvoti team at an *extra muros* sanctuary. The assemblages consist of a large array of shapes covering all major functional categories. The chronological horizon of the pottery from the sanctuary stretches from the mid-4th century BC through the 3rd century AD, with the majority dating from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC and the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.
Macroscopic analysis of the pottery indicates local production for much of the plain and cooking wares, but by the Late Hellenistic period a large percentage of the finewares were imported from Pergamon. By the 1st century BC, Eastern Sigillata A was a viable competitor to Pergamene productions, only to be replaced by Çandarlı Ware from the 1st through the 3rd centuries AD. The on-going examination of the ceramic corpus from the sanctuary provides more data points for MTAP's ambition to better understand coastal Thrace's economic network from the Classical through the Byzantine periods, and sheds new light especially on the Hellenistic and earlier Roman periods.

Second half of the 3rd – 4th Century Contexts from Dion, Macedonia: Perspectives on the Study of Late Roman Pottery from Northern Greece

Kyriakos Fragkoulis

Hellenic Ministry of Culture, GR; University of Birmingham, Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, UK k.fragoulis@hotmail.com

Although Late Roman pottery scholarship has advanced significantly across southern Greece and the Aegean islands, the northern continental part of the country remains rather underrepresented in modern discourse despite an abundance of excavated material. The present paper aims to address this disparity by evaluating second half of the 3rd and 4th century AD ceramic contexts from Dion in Macedonia. Situated at a strategic crossroads, Dion provides

a rich, quantified corpus of varied regional and archaeometric origins. Consequently, the site may serve as a vital reference point for elucidating the mechanisms of economic transition and socio-cultural shifts prior to, during, and after the Tetrarchy.
Utilising systematic quantitative data extracted from representative assemblages across the city, this presentation subjects several ceramic morphologies to a fresh typo-chronological discussion. With respect to regional wares and production, the analysis delineates a certain degree of localised autonomy. Namely, it demonstrates that local or regional fabric groups – including Macedonian Grey Ware and imitations of Eastern Sigillata C – comprise up to 50% of the fine table wares, operating alongside standardised local table amphorae associated with regional agricultural distribution.
Furthermore, the typo-chronological analysis of the abundant long-distance imports illuminates shifting macro-economic networks. This paper charts the dominance of Aegean amphorae, like Kapitän II and Dressel 24 similis late, with the latter demonstrating a clear fabric evolution into the Late Roman Amphora 2 type. Additionally, the prominence of trade amphorae of a likely Pontic origin – chiefly represented by Zeest 80 – is examined, whereas of similar interest is the stable inflow at Dion of North African trade, represented by both transport amphorae and fine wares. Ultimately, these consumption patterns demonstrate that Dion's ceramic profile closely mirrors the complex supply dynamics of major maritime centres, like neighbouring Thessaloniki, reflecting a prosperous community deeply integrated into the long-distance trade networks of Late Antiquity.

Roman Grey Ware from the Territory of Serdica: Evidence from a Newly Discovered Settlement near the Village of Aldomirovtsi (Sofia Region)

Kalina Petkova[1], Elena Nikolova[2], Ruslan Stoychev[3]

[1] National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG kalina.petkova@naim.bg
[2] Regional Historical Museum – Sofia, BG elli.nikolova@gmail.com
[3] Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG ruslan.stoychev@gmail.com

Between 2022 and 2024, rescue archaeological excavations were carried out near the village of Aldomirovtsi in the Sofia region. The investigations revealed nine houses, five buildings with economic functions, eight lime kilns, a section of an ancient road, and more than 180 pits. The establishment of the settlement and the associated production canter appear to be closely connected with the excavated road network within the territory of ancient *Serdica*.
The present study focuses on a group of Roman grey table wares recovered from the site. The assemblage is dated to the 4th century AD and represents a coherent chronological group, offering an opportunity to examine ceramic consumption in the rural hinterland of *Serdica* during Late Antiquity.
The material consists exclusively of table wares and includes a variety of vessel forms that find close parallels in *Serdica* and other contemporary sites in the region. Particular attention is paid to their typological characteristics, chronology, and distribution. The analysis seeks to place the assemblage within the broader context of grey ware production and circulation in the *Serdica* region and to assess the relationship between urban and rural patterns of ceramic consumption during the 4th century AD.

Late Roman Pottery from a *Villa Rustica* at Agios Georgios

Irene Liesk[1], Simona Perna[2], Sonia Dimaki[3]

[1] Birkbeck College, University of London, UK iliesk01@mail.bbk.ac.uk
[2] Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, ES Simona.Perna@uab.cat
[3] Ephoria of Antiquities of Grevena, GR efagre@culture.gr

I will talk about the range of Roman and local ceramics from a Late Roman *villa rustica* at Arsalia, 2 km from the nearby village of Agios Georgios and north-west of Grevena. Excavated between 2023 and 2025, the ceramic assemblage from the villa's domestic and storage-related structures contributes another site to the ceramic typology and chronology of Late Roman Northern Greece. It is the fragments of Phocean Red Slip that have contributed (with coins) to dating the site to the later 4th or early 5th centuries AD. These Late Roman fragments occur alongside a regional table ware tradition, that I will discuss, represented by fragments of Macedonian grey ware, colour-coated (or slipped) ware, and a base of possible Tan Micaceous ware (with a lustrous metallic sheen).
These regional table wares are accompanied by many fragments of local plain wares for cooking, transfer and small-scale storage. These are difficult to date and are often considered less useful for chronological typologies, but indicate the strength of continuing local ceramic traditions. The local cooking and non-cooking fabrics are yet to be fully described, but a range of shapes are identified. Many have the distinct rilling or grooved decoration that becomes familiar from the early fifth century. The dominant cook pot shapes are a globular cook pot (chytra-type) and more open casseroles (lopas-type), similar in profile to Late Classical *chytrai* and *lopades* in Northern Greece. Other non-cooking plain wares include fragments of jugs and small-scale storage (jars). Several sunken *pithoi* (or *dolia*) were found within a structure, providing examples of these often-overlooked shapes. The few fragments of transport amphora identified attest to trade or long-distance transport, but have been too small to identify types.

Keynote lecture

Roman Pottery Production between the Danube and the Stara Planina in the Light of Recent Archaeometric Analyses

Lina Diers[1], Kalin Chakarov[2]

[1] Austrian Archaeological Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, AT lina.diers@oeaw.ac.at
[2] Regional Museum of History – Veliko Tarnovo, BG chakarovkalin@gmail.com

The Roman pottery production sites of Varbovski Livadi, Butovo, Pavlikeni, and Hotnitsa, located in the Central Danubian Plain between the Danube and the Stara Planina in the provinces of Thracia/Moesia Inferior, have long been recognised as key components of regional pottery supply in the Lower Danube region. Despite their significance, these workshops and their commodities have never been comprehensively published, and reliable typo-chronological frameworks have not been integrated with systematic archaeometric studies encompassing the wider production and distribution systems.

This talk now presents the results of an Austrian Science Fund (FWF) project conducted in 2022–2025 at the Austrian Archaeological Institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in cooperation with, i.a., the Regional Museum of History in Veliko Tarnovo. Combining archaeological and archaeometric approaches, the project investigated previously understudied red slip ware and cooking ware from all four production sites, together with production waste and raw material samples and random sampling-based ceramic material from six potential consumer sites in the region.
The application of neutron activation analysis and petrographic thin-section analysis has enabled the identification of raw material sources and the establishment of geochemical and petrographic reference groups for the production sites. Combined, these reference datasets provide the basis for provenance studies at surrounding consumer sites and offer new insights into production organisation, distribution networks, and economic interaction within this enclosed yet dynamic area of the Roman Empire.
Acknowledging this potential, the talk introduces the production sites in their specific historical and geographical setting, also incorporating evidence from recent and ongoing excavations that offer new insights into the data accumulated over decades of local research. Following this, it zooms in on the details of the ceramic material and provenance results. Drawing on the newly generated archaeometric datasets, methodological challenges of provenance determination in an area characterised by closely related geological resources are explored, highlighting the potential of the pottery production sites between the Danube and the Stara Planina in the territories of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Novae to contribute to broader debates on provenance and pottery supply in the Roman Empire.

Day 2 (23/10/2026)
Moesia Inferior, Dobruja and *Dacia*

Session 5: Production and Circulation – *Moesia Inferior*

Pottery Production and Military Supply on the Lower Danube: Evidence from Novae

Elena Klenina

Faculty of History, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, PL
elena.klenina@amu.edu.pl, olekle@amu.edu.pl

This paper examines pottery production and supply systems at the Roman military camp of Novae in the province of Moesia Inferior, focusing on the relationship between ceramic manufacture and distribution and the logistical needs of the frontier army. In its early phase, the I Italian Legion depended on the centralized imperial supply. There were no pottery workshops on the Lower Danube capable of manufacturing high-quality vessels and satisfying the legionaries' demand. The Mediterranean centres distributed both the ceramic goods and food products on the Lower Danube. After the Dacian wars, the region's political and economic situation began to stabilize and improve. In the 2nd century, the produce centres established around Nicopolis ad Istrum in Thrace, near the border of Moesia Inferior, mainly supplied the Roman military camp. Although the crisis and the wars of late Antiquity involved

trade and economic relations in the region, Nicopolis ad Istrum continued to function as a major canter of trade and industry, supplying the Roman troops in Novae. Estates in the vicinity of the city cultivated wheat, barley, rye, and broad beans, and produced wine from their own grapes, as evidenced by containers dating to the 3rd – 4th centuries AD. By the last quarter of the 4th century, as many as 67% of the amphorae fragments discovered at Novae were produced in regional workshops. The extant workshops were destroyed during the war with the Goths in 376–382 AD.

The Ceramic Workshops at Ostrov/Ferma 4 (Durostorum), Constanța County, Romania: Organization, Categories of Products, and Distribution Network

Adela Bâltâc, Eugen Paraschiv-Grigore

Archaeology Department, National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, RO
adela.baltac@gmail.com; para_eugen@yahoo.com

Regardless of its legal or administrative status, the settlement at Ostrov/Ferma 4 was closely connected to the fortress of the Legio XI Claudia and to ancient Durostorum. The accidental discovery, beginning in the mid-twentieth century, of several kilns for firing clay products, together with numerous pits, led to the initiation of systematic archaeological investigations, conducted continuously from 1990 to the present.
These excavations have documented twenty-one kilns for firing clay products, more than eighty pits – initially used for clay extraction and subsequently repurposed as waste pits – as well as five buildings developed around the settlement's thermae. The considerable number of kilns, pits, and excavated complexes, together with the associated archaeological assemblage, demonstrates that the settlement functioned as a major craft-production centre for glassware, bronze artefacts, building materials, and, above all, ceramic and coroplastic production. In addition to the manufacture of utilitarian kitchen wares, there is clear evidence for the production of luxury ceramics, including glazed wares, casseroles, paterae, and terra sigillata. Many of these products display close analogies with material known from the production centres around Nicopolis ad Istrum. Nevertheless, the presence of kilns, moulds, and unfinished vessels provides unequivocal evidence for local manufacture. Under these circumstances, several issues merit further discussion, particularly the origin and transmission of these decorative traditions between the two production centres—despite the considerable distance separating them—the preference for certain categories of products within the workshops at Ostrov, and, above all, the possible distribution networks through which these goods circulated, given the substantial quantity of artefacts produced at the site.

The Ceramic Repertoire of Kardam – Buzalak: A Newly Discovered Production Complex in the Roman Province of Moesia Inferior

Stiliyan Dimitrov Ivanov[1], Simeon Georgiev Stanchev[2]

[1] National Archaeological Institute with Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Veliko Tarnovo Branch, BG stiliyan.ivanov@naim.bg
[2] Historical Museum – Popovo, BG simeon.stanchev94@gmail.com

The geophysical and archaeological investigations conducted in 2023–2024 introduced to science a significant complex for the manufacture of household pottery with a province-wide distribution range, which operated in the Buzalak locality near the village of Kardam, Popovo region (Northern Bulgaria). The primary activity of the ceramic canter focused on the production of red-slip ware.
To date, only a few sites with documented red-slip pottery production have been comprehensively investigated in Moesia Inferior. Until recently, the provincial territory between Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis could be described as a 'blank spot' on the map of Roman ceramic production. However, the geophysical mapping of the site near Kardam revealed a high concentration of geomagnetic anomalies, delineating an entire prospective artisan complex where the inhabitants of the nearby settlement manufactured their ceramic products.

A Roman Pottery Production Centre in the Vicinity of Makariopolsko Village, Northeastern Bulgaria

Tsvetelina Slavkova[1], Svetlana Todorova[2]

[1] Archaeological museum "Prof. Mieczyslaw Domaradzki" – Septemvri, BG
tsvetelina.i.slavkova@gmail.com
[2] Historical Museum – Lom, BG svetla.p.todorova@gmail.com

This paper examines the results of the archaeological excavations at a newly discovered pottery production canter in the territory of the province of Moesia Inferior. The site is located 1.9 km of the Makariopolsko village, in the Targovishte district, NE Bulgaria. A double-chambered kiln designed specifically for firing household pottery, two large size dug-in features with high concentration of ceramic material and several pits were excavated. All of the features are situated close to a water source. The canter's activity is related to the production of the red slip table ware during the 2nd century till the first half of the 3rd century AD. Its production aimed to satisfy the needs of the local population of fine table were, replacing the expensive imported *terra sigillata*. The conducted geological assessments and chemical and thermal analyses of raw clay samples and baked pottery confirmed this conclusion providing valuable information about the source of the raw material and the production technology. The field research and subsequent analyses contribute to a more comprehensive view of the production canter relationships in the region during the Roman times.

Learning from the Best: The Role of Imported *Firmalampen* in the Development of Workshops from Moesia Inferior (1st–3rd Centuries AD)

Vlad Ciur

"Gavrilă Simion" Eco-Museum Research Institute, Tulcea; PhD student, University of Bucharest, RO ciurvlad@gmail.com

As the territory between the Danube River and the Black Sea (nowadays known as Dobruja) was integrated into the Roman state during the 1st century AD, the formidable aspects of the

Roman culture could thrive in the area under the auspices of the political and military might of the Empire. As part of Moesia Inferior starting from 86 AD, the region gradually underwent the process of Romanization. One key part of this process was the influx of material culture through various goods, imported from already established Western markets, both for supplying the Roman army and civilians, but also as an opportunity for trading with the local population.
One such example are the oil lamps, an instrument which became, alongside their utilitarian role, an expression of creativity for the Roman craftsmen. One specific category of lamps, the so-called *Firmalampen* type, represents a relevant case study for the circulation of imported goods into a newly conquered area, and also for the emerging of a local industry and market. The first imported lamps of this type supplied especially the military centres located along the Danube River.
As the demand for lighting equipment grew, various types of lamps, including *Firmalampen*, were also produced by local artisans who, at first, copied the ''original'' ones, including the names of the producers. This phenomenon of copying the imported lamps played a significant role in the development of the regional lamp-making industry and soon, local marks started to appear and spread throughout Moesia Inferior. Thus, based on the lamps of *Firmalampen* type produced in the area known from the current the archaeological record, we are able to trace the evolution of provincial workshops, from imported products to the locally crafted ones, as well as identifying relevant particularities of the local market.

Session 6: Pottery studies

Remarks on a Curious Series of Oil Lamps from Northeastern Moesia Inferior

Vlad Ciur

"Gavrilă Simion" Eco-Museum Research Institute, Tulcea; PhD student, University of Bucharest, RO ciurvlad@gmail.com

The activity of the local lamp producers attested in the former province of Moesia Inferior represents a subject of interest regarding the development of workshops, the distribution of the products, as well as the economic and cultural particularities that characterize the regional markets throughout the centuries. Out of the several marks currently known from this region, a particular one constitutes a relevant topic of discussion.
The mark itself resembles a bunch of grapes, and it only appears on specific lamps of Loeschcke Type VIII, adorned with a distinctive depiction of a rosette. Lamps with these characteristics, either marked or not, are found mainly in the northeastern part of the province, roughly equivalent to the modern-day region of Dobruja. They have circulated between the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century AD, and numerous such examples were discovered in several archaeological sites from the mentioned area.
These particular lamps constitute evidence for the development and the organization of the regional manufacture, as well as an indicator of the trading of goods within the province. However, the rather ''enigmatic'' nature of this mark still raises a series of question in regard to various aspects related to the activity of this producer. Is it really a mark of production? Does it bear some symbolic meaning? Were these lamps the product of one or more workshops? Although the current state of the field limits the discussion to only some

preliminary remarks, these lamps offer us a valuable perspective on the particularities of the local market.

Shapes and Fabrics: Investigating Roman Pottery Production at Nicopolis ad Istrum

Diana Dobreva[1], Anna Nicolussi[1], Sabrina Zago[1], Kalin Chakarov[2]

[1] Department of Cultures and Civilizations, University of Verona, IT
dianasergeeva.dobreva@univr.it; anna.nicolussi@univr.it; sabrina.zago@univr.it
[2] Regional Museum of History – Veliko Tarnovo, BG chakarovkalin@gmail.com

Since 2024, the University of Verona, in collaboration with the Regional History Museum of Veliko Tarnovo, has been involved in the international archaeological mission, the *NiCE Project*, at the ancient city of Nicopolis ad Istrum, in the present-day village of Nikyup in the Veliko Tarnovo region. Founded by Emperor Trajan in the early 2nd c. AD after his victory over the Dacians, the city offers a key perspective on the economic and productive dynamics of the south-eastern Balkans. Its territory included several ceramic production centres, situated close to the city and in its suburbs, near the today's villages of Hotnitsa, Butovo, and Pavlikeni, active between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Owing to their proximity and according to published evidence, these workshops likely supplied the urban market, although their role in provisioning the city remains unclear.
The research focuses on an *insula* south-west of the *forum* complex, near the city centre; here, the first excavation campaigns uncovered the remains of a monumental public building. The ceramic assemblage recovered so far consists of 1,215 fragments. This paper presents the preliminary analysis of the three most represented pottery classes: Local Red-Slipped Ware, Grey Coarse Ware, and Common Coarse Ware. The study adopts an integrated form-and-fabric approach, combining typological analysis with macroscopic examination of ceramic fabrics. This methodology aims to identify production groups associated with individual vessel forms and to compare them with published data from regional workshops. The results reveal both continuity with previously recognised production patterns and new evidence that contributes to a better understanding of fine and coarse ware consumption at Nicopolis ad Istrum during the Roman period.
This paper aims: first, to highlight the complexity and variety of ceramic consumption in the city during the Roman period; second, to assess the role of local production centres in supplying the city, contributing to a better understanding of production dynamics in this part of Moesia Inferior.

Roman Pottery from the Hinterland of Novae: Recent Archaeological Evidence and New Analytical Perspectives

Petya Andreeva[1], Lina Diers[2], Anton Atanasov[3], Dragan Iliev[4]

[1] National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG
andreeva@naim.bg
[2] Austrian Archaeological Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, AT lina.diers@oeaw.ac.at

[3] National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, BG anton_atanasov@gbg.bg
[4] Regional History Museum – Vratsa, BG dragan_iliev@abv.bg

Recent archaeological investigations at Irima, located approximately 20 km south of the Roman fortress of Novae, have provided new evidence for settlement patterns in its hinterland. Following a field-walking survey conducted in 2017, rescue excavations carried out in 2018–2019 confirmed and fully investigated six buildings previously identified through geophysical survey. Archaeological finds, including pottery, coins, roof tiles, and animal bones, indicate occupation primarily during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, with the highest intensity of activity occurring during the Severan period.
The material evidence suggests a predominantly agricultural settlement. Cooking wares constitute the largest ceramic group, accompanied by bowls, jugs, pots, and strainers associated with food processing and dairy production. Small iron tools and faunal remains dominated by domestic animals further support this interpretation. The findings contribute to a better understanding of rural communities and their economic role in supporting the Roman frontier zone of the Lower Danube and the fortress of Novae.
Archaeometric analyses have been conducted on some of the material from the site and, combined with the survey and excavation data, the results provide new insights into the economic and logistical mechanisms operating in the hinterland of the Danube Limes in Moesia Inferior.

Life, Shelter and Death. An Overview of Ceramic Finds from the Beidaud Archaeological Microzone (Moesia Inferior)

Radu O. Stănescu[1], Iulia A. Iliescu[2]

[1] "Gavrilă Simion" Eco-Museum Research Institute, Tulcea, RO radu.o.stanescu@gmail.com
[2] Department of Ancient History, Archaeology and Art History – Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, RO iulia-alexandra.iliescu@istorie.unibuc.ro

Our paper focuses on the *Beidaud Archaeological Microzone*, located in central Roman Dobruja, on the Hamangia river valley (nowadays in Tulcea County, Romania). We propose a comparative analysis using datasets of Roman ceramic artefacts discovered in three areas that share the same chronological period but have distinct characteristics: a fortified settlement (which includes various complexes dating from the Early Iron Age to the Late Roman period), a rural settlement (dating from the Early Roman period), and a tumular funerary space (also from the Early Roman period). This approach aims to highlight the typological diversity across the region, considering aspects such as function, origin (whether imported, provincial, or locally produced pottery), and distribution. We also seek to determine if the ceramic repertoire differs based on the archaeological context, especially in distinguishing between domestic and funerary pottery. Finally, by comparing this area to other contemporary sites nearby, we aim to assess the distribution pattern of pottery forms, as well as to better understand how the settlements at Beidaud fit into the broader economic network of Moesia Inferior.

A Matter of Taste – Eating, Drinking and Trading Ceramic Goods in the Rural Areas of Scythia Minor

Alina Streinu

Bucharest Municipality Museum, RO musatalina@yahoo.com

Roman Dobruja (northern Moesia Inferior, later Scythia Minor) had a tradition of rich urban centres on the Black Sea shore and the Danube, as well as a complex network of rural settlements orbiting them during the 2nd–4th c. AD. Recent research in the Moesia Inferior/Scythia Minor has revealed active trade between the cities and the *vici* with fine products (e.g. fine table wares as well as imported wine and oil) imported from other major centres in the Black Sea (e.g. Heraclea, Sinope, northern Black Sea), the Aegean – Asia Minor and even Western workshops. Luxury tableware arrived not only in the urban centres, but also in the rural settlements, highlighting a high standard of living both in urban and rural households. This new Roman lifestyle gradually replaces the local traditions as less and less traces are found of the material culture of the native *Getae* population, prompting debates about their status within the new structures, as well as the extent and purpose of their ceramic production. The very rich ceramic material paints a picture of economic prosperity and complexity spanning beyond large urban centres and based on established routes of trade within the province. The presentation will discuss the main groups of imported ceramics, the local productions and the known trading routes, attempting to highlight provincial particularities within the larger framework of the Black Sea during the early Roman period.

Roman Tableware in the Countryside of Dobruja (2nd to 4th centuries AD)

Marian Mocanu

“Gavrilă Simion” Eco-Museum Research Institute, Tulcea, RO mocanum1984@gmail.com

In recent decades, numerous articles have been published on tableware discovered in military fortifications along the Danube limes or in civilian settlements in their immediate vicinity; however, very little is known about tableware from rural settlements in the countryside.
In the last three decades large-scale rescue archaeological research has been undertaken in Dobruja due to major infrastructure projects. Some of these archaeological excavations have investigated a series of settlements (villages) that functioned between the 2nd and 4th centuries. In this article, we propose an overview of the tableware discovered in some of these settlements. The relationship between tableware acquired as a result of long-distance trade and regional or local production will be taken into account. Elements related to the local pre-Roman tradition and new elements, brought with the arrival of colonists from the Roman Empire, will also be explored.
Tableware acquired through long-distance trade is mainly represented by Aegean products, such as ESC, and regional ceramics are represented by the products crafted in workshops within Moesia Inferior, Thrace and the Pontic basin (including here the Pontic Sigillata category). Local ceramics are represented by hand-made and wheel-made vessels, but with grey fabric and slip. Over time, some of these come to imitate Roman forms of tableware.

Norico-Pannonian and Moesian Influences and Local Particularities in the Roman Ceramic Material from Călugăreni/Mikháza (Mureș County, Romania)

Katalin Sidó

Mureș County Museum, Roman Limes Research Centre, RO benjikatka@yahoo.com

Excavations at the Roman auxiliary fort and *vicus* in Călugăreni have revealed a complex ceramic assemblage that reflects the diverse origins of the settlers and the military unit stationed there.
The Norico-Pannonian influences can be noted by the presence of ovoid jars, Dreifußschale and also by the roulette decorated coarse beakers. The little ceramic roulette discovered in the civilian settlement sustains the idea, that the latter can be local production, showing the preferences of Norico-Pannonian settlers. The most striking evidence of Moesian influence comes from the discovery of the two *kernoi*, found in the *principia,* near the *aedes,* these being considered personal belongings, brought by someone. Among the stamped pottery stamped trays are present, which connect also to Moesian forms. As local particularities can be pointed different storage vessel types, which at the moment do not have any analogies.
The ceramic assemblage from Călugăreni can be characterized by a blend of imported forms, traditions from other provinces, local adaptations and specific local productions.

Pottery, Supply, and Regional Connectivity at Optatiana/Sutor: A Preliminary Typological, Technological, and Quantitative Study in Northern Roman Dacia

Vlad-Andrei Lăzărescu[1], Katalin Vágó[2]

[1] Institute of Archaeology and History of Art, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy, RO
vlad.lazarescu@acad-cj.ro, lazarescu_vlad@yahoo.com
[2] School for Advanced Studies, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy katalinvago10@gmail.com

The Roman site at Optatiana/Sutor (Sălaj County, Romania) held a vital position within the internal organization of Dacia Porolissensis. Situated along the province's secondary defence line, it served as a regional hub. Its strategic location at the junction between the imperial road connecting Napoca to Porolissum and the route linking Optatiana with Bologa made the auxiliary fort and its adjacent military *vicus* an integrated military-civil complex, where military presence, road infrastructure, civilian habitation, production, consumption, and redistribution converged.
This paper presents the preliminary results of an ongoing research project devoted to the pottery assemblage from Optatiana. Documented through more than three hectares of rescue excavations in 2021–2022, the site represents the most extensively investigated military *vicus* in Dacia Porolissensis. The scale of the evidence is exceptional: more than 100,000 pottery fragments have been recovered, alongside 24 documented pottery kilns. Despite its remarkable potential, this assemblage has not yet been subjected to a systematic analysis, making Optatiana a particularly valuable case study for examining ceramic production, supply, and consumption in northern Roman Dacia.
The study combines typological classification, technological observation, contextual analysis, and quantitative assessment. The use of statistical methods is essential, since only a

quantitative approach can provide a meaningful overview of such a large assemblage. Rather than treating pottery as a simple inventory of forms, the paper approaches it as evidence for productive choices, technological traditions, household consumption, local demand, and possible micro-regional supply mechanisms.
Through this integrated perspective, the pottery from Optatiana can be approached as a key source for examining the relationship between military communities, civilian households, and productive structures. More broadly, the assemblage provides a methodological basis for exploring how a military *vicus* may have operated within the wider supply-and-demand system of Dacia Porolissensis, linking ceramic production, patterns of consumption, regional connectivity, and economic organization.

Transfer of Technology: Exploring Pottery Manufacture and Trade in Roman Thrace through the Yurta-Stroyno Case Study. **Introduction to the Project and its Preliminary Results**

Petra Tušlová[1, 2], Silvia Amicone[3,4], Noémi S. Müller[2,5], Evangelia Kiriatzi[2]

[1] Institute of Classical Archaeology, Charles University, Prague CZ petra.tuslova@ff.cuni.cz
[2] British School at Athens, Fitch Laboratory, GR e.kiriatzi@bsa.ac.uk
[3] Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Archaeometry Research Group, DE silvia.amicone@uni-tuebingen.de
[4] University of Santiago de Compostela, Department of History, ES
[5] Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie, Laboratory for Archaeometry, DE noemi.mueller@leiza.de

Transfer of Technology is a project investigating ceramic production, technological practices, and pottery distribution across the rural landscape of Roman Thrace, in present-day Yambol District, south-eastern Bulgaria. The project is being conducted at the Fitch Laboratory of the British School at Athens and the University of Tübingen, Germany, between February 2025 and 2027. The study focuses on ceramic assemblages from several rural settlements dating mainly to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, with the largest assemblage deriving from the *vicus* at Yurta-Stroyno.
The ceramic material was initially classified into functional groups and ware types based on macroscopic examination. These include different fine table wares and coarse cooking wares, both wheel-made and handmade, as well as less frequently represented categories such as storage vessels (dolia), loom weights, and architectural ceramics. Selected samples were subsequently analysed using a combination of ceramic petrography, X-ray diffraction (XRD), and wavelength-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (WD-XRF) to characterise their mineralogical, petrographic, and chemical composition and to establish the principal fabric groups represented in the assemblage. Selected handmade vessels were also subjected to organic residue analysis to investigate their contents, while micro-CT analysis was employed to examine their forming techniques.
In parallel, clay samples were systematically collected from the surrounding region based on geological maps and compared with the identified ceramic fabrics. These data were used to assess the provenance of pottery belonging to different fabric groups and to investigate the processing and modification of raw materials prior to ceramic production.
The presentation will introduce the project and its methodological approach, followed by a its preliminary results. It will conclude with a guided tour of the Fitch Laboratory, including a showcase of selected ceramic material.

The conference was supported by the European Regional Development Fund

“MSCA Fellowships CZ – Charles University 3”

(reg. no.: CZ.02.01.01/00/22_010/0008820)



Co-funded by
the European Union

