

DATA ON THE LEAD-GLAZED POTTERY DISCOVERED ON THE DACIAN SITES BRAD (BACĂU CO.) AND POIANA (GALAȚI CO.)*

Mariana-Cristina Popescu**

Keywords: lead-glazed pottery, Asia Minor, Mytilene, pre-Roman Dacia, Romania.

Abstract: The article presents the lead-glazed pottery discovered on the Dacian sites Brad (Bacău Co.) and Poiana (Galați Co.). The identified items were either mould-made or wheel-made, and their relief decoration was moulded or applied in barbotine. The identified decorative motifs form three categories that are typical for this ceramic group: figurative decoration, vegetal decoration, and ornamental decoration. The identified shapes and auxiliary elements – Ringhenkelskyphos Ia, cups, Daumenplatte 1 – and also the decorative motifs – Ionian kyma, stylized hearts, myrtle wreaths with berries, stylized vegetal decoration – have good analogies in Asia Minor; two of the items under discussion (no. 4-5) might have been produced in the center of Mytilene. In the absence of clear details on the contexts in which these items were discovered in the Dacian settlements, they can be dated to a wide interval between the end of the 1st century B.C. and early 2nd century A.D.

Rezumat: Articolul prezintă ceramica glazurată descoperită în siturile dacice de la Brad (jud. Bacău) și Poiana (jud. Galați). Piesele identificate sunt modelate în tipar și la roată, iar decorul în relief este realizat în tipar și în tehnica barbotinei. Motivele ornamentale identificate se regăsesc în cele trei grupe decorative caracteristice pentru această clasă ceramică: decor figurat, decor vegetal și decor ornamental. Formele identificate și elementele auxiliare – Ringhenkelskyphos Ia, cupe, plăcuța Daumenplatte 1 – și, de asemenea, motivele decorative – ionian kyma, inimi stilizate, ramuri de mirt cu boboci, decor vegetal stilizat – au bune analogii în zona micro-asiatică. Două dintre piese (no. 4-5) ar putea proveni din centrul de la Mytilene. În lipsa unor detalii certe despre contextul în care piesele au fost descoperite în mediul dacic, ele pot fi datate în intervalul cronologic cuprins între sfârșitul secolului I a Chr. și începutul secolului II p. Chr.

I. Introduction

Lead-glazed pottery appeared during the first half of the 1st century B.C. in Asia Minor. Since the end of that century it was produced in Italy and the Western provinces of the Roman Empire as well.¹ Vessels were covered, on both inside and outside, or just on the outside, with glaze containing a variable proportion of lead oxide;² the technique allowed the production of new colors on pottery – various shades of green, yellow, brown, and rarer blue – and made vessels completely water-proof and rendering them a shine that brought them much closer to their metal prototypes. The repertory of shapes in Asia Minor was restricted to drinking vessels – skyphoi, kantharoi, chalices, cups, etc – and for pouring liquids – jugs, oenochoe – and only occasionally did it extend to other shapes such as askoi, atramentaria, etc.³ In the Western provinces the typological repertory is heterogeneous, including items produced in Asia Minor, imitations differing in quality and style from the imported items, and local shapes and decorative motifs.⁴ The decoration of these items was made according to different techniques: molding, appliqué, and barbotine, while the repertory of decorative motifs is typical for contemporary vessels made of clay, glass, or metal: figurative decoration, vegetal decoration, and stylized ornamental decoration. Despite the fact that the quantity of recorded items, indifferent of their origin, is rather small as compared to other contemporary pottery groups, lead-glazed pottery has been recorded throughout the Mediterranean, the Pontus, and the European provinces of the Empire.⁵

* This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-RU-PD-2011-3-0122.

** The National Museum for the History of Transilvania, Cluj-Napoca.

¹ Hochuli-Gysel 1977; Hochuli-Gysel 2002, pp. 303-305; Maccabruni 1987, pp. 169, 170-173; Desbat 1986, p. 37; Casas i Genover et al. 1993, pp. 142-143; Desbat 1995, pp. 39-48; Martin 1995, pp. 63-64.

² Hatcher et al. 1994, pp. 431-456; Lopez-Molinero et al. 2000, pp. 586-589; Benedetto et al. 2004, pp. 615-624; Walton, Tite 2010, pp. 733-759.

³ Hochuli-Gysel 2002, pp. 307-308.

⁴ Maccabruni 1987, pp. 170-173; Jigan 1988, pp. 189-203; Casas i Genover et al. 1993, pp. 137-140; Maccabruni 1995, pp. 49-55.

⁵ Hochuli-Gysel 1977, p. 121, Abb. 31, p. 129, Abb. 33, p. 137, Abb. 35, p. 142, Abb. 37; Maccabruni 1987, p. 168-169; Desbat 1986, p. 33-37; Desbat 1986a, p. 105, 108; Symonds 1989, p. 85; Bolindel, 1995, p. 147-149; Istenić 1995, p. 23; Martin 1995, p. 63-64; Hayes 2008, p. 57.