

## DACIAN CERAMICS FROM BOLJETIN SITE

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Roman fortress Boljetin was excavated in the period from the year 1965 to 1969.<sup>1</sup> The exact name of the camp is not known but it is usually assumed that it was Smorna.<sup>2</sup> The materials from excavations haven't been published up to now, except in the little part of it.<sup>3</sup> The archaeological researching occurred Roman fortress as well as roman necropolis next to it. Roman fortress has three phases of living: 1. I and the beginning of II century; 2. phase of reconstruction, the most probably from the time of the second half of III until the beginning of V century, and 3. phase of rebuilding, the most probably in the period of Justinianus in VI century. Roman necropolis belong to the first, the earliest phase of living of the fortress.

Nine examples of the so-called Dacian ceramics were identified in Boljetin site. Ceramics were made by hand, of rough fabric, with thicker walls, in the shades of red, brown-red and gray firing colour. Two out of the identified nine examples are cups, and the remaining seven (catalogue numbers 3–9) are fragments of pots. Some of them were identified only as fragments of the shoulder or belly of the dish, so it is based on the fabric and ornament that they may be determined as belonging to the so-called Dacian ceramics. Thus, catalogue no 7 has analogies in the pot identified at Tekija,<sup>4</sup> but also elsewhere, in the wider region of Dacia and Pannonia.<sup>5</sup> Examples no 4 and 5 also have analogies in Dacia and Pannonia,<sup>6</sup> and partly, judging by the ornament of “eyelets” and wavy lines, at Tekija.<sup>7</sup> Analogous examples were dated into the period of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries at Tekija. The moulding of the vessel cat. no 6 also has analogies in Dacian hand made ceramics.<sup>8</sup> One of particularly interesting examples is catalogue no 3, a fragment of ceramics with ornament of semi-circles and twigs. The closest analogy is found in the representation on the jug from Rtkovo, dated into 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Such symbolism indicates the representations of the cosmos, or rather cosmic principle of fertility. In this sense representations appear as early as the period of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium before our era<sup>10</sup> and the semi-circles represent the rain on which the life on Earth depends, and the twigs signify greenery and growth.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zotović/Petrović 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968; Зотовић, 1984

<sup>2</sup> Кондић 1971, p. 51–58

<sup>3</sup> Dušanić 1974, p. 275, no. 1, fig. 1, 276, no. 4, fig. 4; Gudea 1974, p. 142; Крунић 1994, p. 81–85; Zotović 2006, p. 549–558; Zotović 2007, p. 95–103; Zotović 2007a; Zotović 2016, p. 473–479.

<sup>4</sup> Cermanović-Kuzmanović / Jovanović 2004, p. 187, 189, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Benea 1997, fig. 24, n. 1; Brukner 1981, T. III, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., T. III, n. 6; Benea 1997, fig. 18, n. 1, 2; fig. 25, n. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Cermanović-Kuzmanović/Jovanović 2004, p. 188, 190, n. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Popilian 1997, T. XXXIV, n. 5; T. XXXVII, n. 1–6.

<sup>9</sup> Марјановић – Вујовић 1987, p. 147–151.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>11</sup> For further analogies of ceramics from the territory of modern day Romania, see Beldiman / Szöncs 1992, p. 260, Pl. V; Varbanov / Dragoev 2006, p. 192, Fig. 5.

We believe that examples from Boljetin may also be dated into the period of 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. Such dating is confirmed as well by the finds of Dacian ceramics at the necropolis, where it is obvious that specific ceramic forms were used in the rites of post-funeral feast. At the necropolis, Dacian ceramics were identified at the sacrificial area together with fragments of Roman luxurious red-coloured ceramics, as well as in the sacrificial pit.<sup>12</sup> Mentioned among the finds from the sacrificial pit are the finds of broken vessels, the so-called Dacian cups with no handles, with one handle, or with handles featuring wart decorations, along with the finds of *terra sigillata* vessels and red and black coloured and burnished bowls. In a certain manner, bearing in mind the period when they appeared, the ceramics already belonged to Roman provincial ceramics, made in the Romanisation period, under the strong influence of native production where an extended influence of prehistoric cultural tradition was reflected.

The examples found at Boljetin either belonged to their owners, members of the legion that was accommodated in the fort, or they arrived there through trade.<sup>13</sup>

### CATALOGUE:

1. A cup made by hand. Rough fabric, red firing colour with intense burning marks. Field inv. no 513/67; square I12; depth 1.24 m.
2. Lower part of a cup made by hand, rough fabric, grey firing colour. Field inv. no 553/3.
3. A fragment of the rim and neck or flat belly of a hand made vessel of unrefined earth, of grey firing colour. The inscribed ornament of half-circles and twigs, beneath it a wavy strip. Field inv. no 67; square G9; depth 1.46 m.  
Field inv. no 806/68; square K9; depth 2.67 m.
4. A fragment of the rim and belly of the vessel, hand made, of unrefined earth, dark grey firing colour. At the rim there is a wart-like ornament, and at the shoulder a wavy plastic line. Field inventory no 987/68.; square I4; depth 1.20 m.
5. A fragment of the rim and belly of the vessel of unrefined earth, brown-red firing colour. An ornament embossed into the neck. Traces of burning. Study material 1968; probe B, block III; depth 1.20 m.
6. A fragment of the rim and shoulder of the vessel of unrefined earth, brown-red firing colour. The rim massive, almost horizontally everted, and an ornament embossed into the neck. Traces of burning. Study material 1968.; probe B, block III; depth 1,20 m.
7. A fragment of the shoulder of a vessel of rough fabric, dark grey firing colour. An ornament with inscribed wavy lines visible. Field inventory no 17/65; square B3; depth 0.80 m.
8. A fragment of the rim, neck and belly of the pot, hand made from unrefined earth with chaff in the fabric. A plastic rib on the belly decorated by embossing, and above it wart decoration. Field inv. no 120/a/69; necropolis, probe D, block III – IV, pit.
9. A whole pot, hand made, of grey firing colour, rough fabric. The rim everted at an angle, belly biconical, and the bottom flat. On the belly a plastic strip decorated by embossing. Field inv. no 126/a/69; necropolis, probe D, block III – IV, pit.

<sup>12</sup> Zotović 1969, p. 115, 116.

<sup>13</sup> The same conclusion as well – Jeremić 2009, p. 124.

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(Abstract)

Nine examples of the so-called Dacian ceramics were identified at Boljetin site; two of them are cups, and the remaining seven of pots. The locations of these Dacian ceramics finds were the site of the fort and the necropolis are fragments where the vessels were used in the rite of post-funeral feast. The ceramics belong to Roman provincial ceramics and may be dated into the period of 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries.



