

AEGYSSUS. A TRADING POST ON THE LOWER DANUBE FROM THE LATE HELLENISTIC TO EARLY BYZANTINE ERA¹

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Abstract: Located on the Lower Danube, not far from the Black Sea shoreline, Aegyssus played a substantial role in the trading network of this region from the late 1st millennium BC, when the entire Pontic area was under Hellenistic control. Over the centuries, the settlement's role has evolved being integrated into a much more complex trading system created by the Roman rule, beginning in the late 1st century AD. The archaeological evidence highlights intense commercial activity, goods imported from all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea being discovered during various archaeological excavations. Due to the historical context, in Late Antiquity, Aegyssus is transformed more or less into a warehouse for the Roman troops defending the Empire's border from the increasing pressure of the barbarian tribes. In the following lines, I aim to present some examples of archaeological discoveries which highlight the role of Aegyssus in the trading system of the Lower Danube region starting in the Late Hellenistic and continuing until the Early Byzantine era.

Keywords: Aegyssus, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Lower Danube, Antiquity, Economic history, trade.

Located on the edge of the "Mediterranean world", Aegyssus is at the crossroads between classical Greco-Roman civilisation and the nomadic tribes of the Ponto-Caspian steppe. Its geographical location determined the historical evolution of the settlement since its foundation in the second half of the 1st millennium BC. Our sources of knowledge about the past of this settlement can be divided into two main types: ancient texts and archaeological finds.



Fig. 1. Geographical location of Aegyssus.

¹ This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2021-0544, within PNCDI III.

The oldest text mentioning the fortress of Aegyssus dates from AD 12 and was written by Ovid, the Roman poet who was banished to Tomis by Emperor Augustus. At that time, Ovid describes the settlement of Aegyssus as - *vetus urbs* - an ancient city.² Other ancient texts that mention the fortress of Aegyssus are: *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* from the second half of the 3rd century AD; *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis* from the late 4th century; the text of Hierocles - *Synecdemus* and the text of Procopius - *De aedificiis*, both from the 6th century and the *Notitia Episcopatum* from the first half of the 7th century.³ Outside the ancient texts, the toponym Aegyssus appears in a stone inscription discovered immediately after World War II. We will discuss it in the further course of the article.

The first archaeological excavations in the citadel of Aegyssus took place shortly before the First World War. Unfortunately, the results of these excavations are unknown. Some ancient coins presented by C. Moisil come from this period.⁴ In 1959, G. Simion dug two trenches inside the fortress, in the area of Tower A, no information about this excavation was recorded. Between 1971 and 1995, systematic archaeological excavations were carried out inside the late Roman fortress and on the eastern side of the enclosure wall. Several excavation reports were published during this period.⁵ From 2015 onwards, the systematic excavations inside the fortress were resumed.

AEGYSSUS AND THE GREEKS

Archaeological evidence for the settlement of Aegyssus in the second half of the 1st millennium BC is particularly scarce. Most of the objects from this period were discovered in graves affected to a greater or lesser extent by the expansion of the present city or in deposits from the Roman era that have destroyed the older archaeological layers. From the stamps on the Greek amphorae, we can see that products such as wine and olive oil from the eastern Mediterranean and the southern Black Sea were valued on the local market. In addition, there is wine from the north of the Black Sea and ceramic tableware from Athens or Italy. Among the important trading centres attested by amphora stamps are Thasos, Rhodes, Knidos, Heraclea Pontica, and Chersonesos.⁶

Besides the products transported in amphorae, some other artefacts imported from the Mediterranean were discovered in Aegyssus. Among them, a small bowl stands out, recovered from the inventory of an inhumation grave in Nalbelor Street, southeast of the fortress on 'Monument Hill'. The bowl is covered with black slip on both sides and decorated on the inside, with a rosette made by stamping. This Campana A type bowl, dated to the middle of the 2nd century BC, is the earliest import of Italic pottery into the area of the Lower Danube and the Western Pontic basin.⁷ A Corinthian-type lamp from the middle of the 2nd century BC was recovered from another inhumation grave in the same cemetery.⁸

An interesting aspect to be highlighted is how these products reached an indigenous fortress from the Lower Danube such as Aegyssus in the second half of the 1st millennium BC. A first, less likely explanation is that the imported products came by trade directly from the production centres in the Mediterranean. This fact can be accepted to a certain extent, especially in the case of products that were transported in amphorae, such as wine or olive oil. The second, much more plausible explanation is that these products and artefacts reached the Lower Danube via the Greek colonies on the west coast of the Black Sea. It cannot be ruled out that both explanations are correct to some extent, although the role of the Greek colonies in the local trading system is obvious.

² Ovid, I, 8, 11-20; IV, 7, 21-28.

³ *Tabula Imperii Romani*, L 35, s.v. *Aegyssus*, 21-22.

⁴ Moisil 1910, 95.

⁵ Opaïț 1977; Opaïț, Sion, Vasiliu 1980.

⁶ All pre-Roman archaeological discoveries were analyzed in a detailed article signed by Vasilica Lungu. For amphora stamps see Lungu 1996, 51-53, pl. 3.

⁷ Lungu 1996, 58, no. 16, fig. 3.

⁸ Lungu 1996, 58, no. 19, pl. 7/19.



Fig. 2. 1. Stamped amphorae; 2. Bowl Campana A type; Corinthian lamp (after Lungu 1996).

AEGYSSUS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE ROMAN RULE IN THE BLACK SEA AND AT THE LOWER DANUBE

The 1st century BC brought Roman expansion into the Black Sea. In connection with the wars between the Roman Republic and the Kingdom of Pontus, the areas around the Black Sea and those north of the Balkan Mountains gradually came under Roman influence until they were integrated into the Roman Empire at the end of the 1st century AD. In this context, there was an increase in trade along the Lower Danube due to the influx of colonists and soldiers who settled here in the second half of the 1st century AD.

An important first archaeological discovery, dated to between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, is the deposit of *Pseudo-Cos* amphorae. It was discovered in 1976 and published a decade later by Andrei Opaïț.⁹ The deposit consists of 119 whole and fragmented amphorae, which A. Opaïț divided into seven types. Even though the amphorae were discovered in a votive context,¹⁰ their number indicates sustained commercial activity. As for the origin of the amphorae and the contents transported, A. Opaïț believes that they originated in the south-Pontic area and were probably used to transport wine or olive oil.¹¹

From the 2nd century AD onwards Aegyssus is increasingly integrated in the trading system of the Roman Empire. The proliferation of amphorae in this period is an eloquent testimony. With the resumption of systematic archaeological excavations in 2015, archaeological material from old excavations began to be studied and published. The most important types of amphorae found in Aegyssus up to the second half of the 3rd century are Dressel 43, Dressel 2-5, Dressel 24 / Similis and the Shelov types B and C. All these amphorae come from the Aegean and Pontic areas, and the products transported are wine and olive oil. In a recent study, R. Stănescu calculates the ratio between the amount of wine and olive oil imported to Aegyssus. According to these calculations, imported wine and olive oil quantities were equal.¹² Some of the amphora types mentioned above are vessels with a large capacity (the Dressel 24 type amphora can reach a volume of 100 litres), which proves that the imported goods were redistributed to the settlements around the fortress through the local market.

⁹ Opaïț 1987.

¹⁰ Opaïț 1987, 145.

¹¹ Opaïț 1987, 155.

¹² Stănescu 2018, 223, graphic 4.

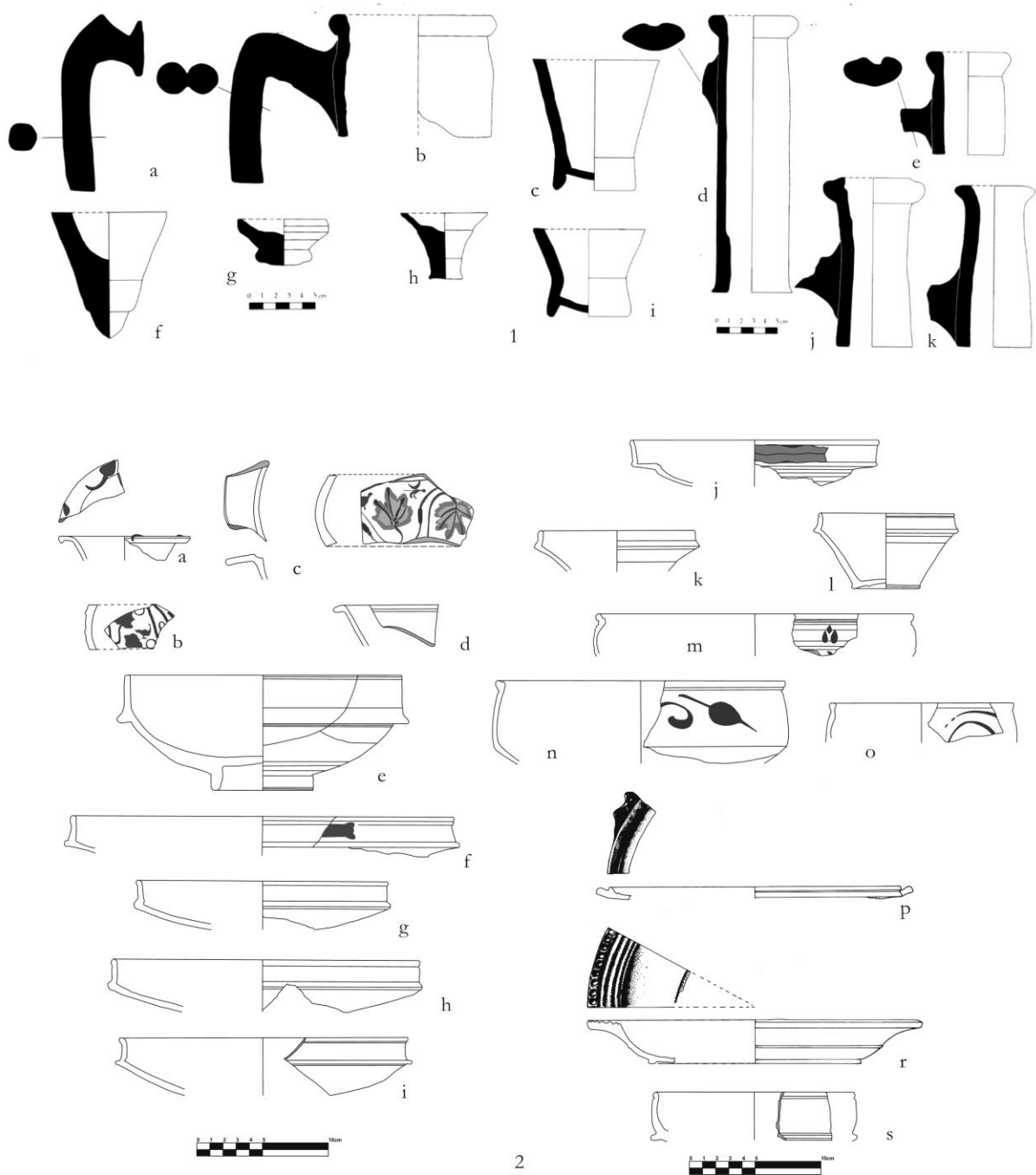


Fig. 3. 1. Early Roman Amphorae (after Stănescu 2018, fig. 4-5); 2. Early Roman Tableware.

Another category of pottery that provides information about trading activity is tableware. Towards the end of the 1st century AD and at the beginning of the following century, there was a substantial influx of soldiers to the Lower Danube in connection with the wars of the Roman Empire against the Dacians. They were followed by numerous civilians who settled in this region after stabilising the military situation and the organisation of the Limes on the Danube. The appearance of tableware from distant areas of the Mediterranean should also be seen in this context. At Aegyssus, most of the early Roman tableware was discovered outside the fortification located on Monument Hill, in what is considered to be the extramural settlement. The study of the samples uncovered during the preventive archaeological excavations made it possible to identify the main geographical areas from which this type of ware was imported. Regarding long-distance trade, three regions of the Roman Empire from which this category of goods was brought in can be identified for the period mentioned. The first region is the Levant, from which the Eastern Sigillata A came. It occurs in small quantities and has recently been identified in a group of as-yet-unpublished

tableware discovered during a preventive archaeological survey about 200 metres southwest of the late Roman fortification from Monument Hill. The ESA forms found at Aegyssus date to the second half of the 1st century AD and the beginning of the next century. It seems that in this chronological frame, there were trade relations between the Lower Danube region and the Syro-Palestinian area, favoured by the historical context through which military units of the Roman army stationed on the Lower Danube took part in military campaigns in the Middle East. Most of the tableware imported from distant areas came from the Aegean and Asia Minor. The main categories of tableware imported from Asia Minor are Eastern Sigillata B and C. ESB has been identified in Aegyssus in the same group as ESA, with the respective forms dating to the end of the 1st century AD and the beginning of the 2nd century AD. In contrast, ESC has been found in significant quantities in both older excavations and some more recent research. The most important forms are dated to the 2nd century AD and the first half of the 3rd century.¹³ A special category of tableware in the Lower Danube region is that imported from the western part of the Roman Empire. A first sub-category would be the Italic terra sigillata, specific to the second half of the first century AD. These are mainly the bowls appertaining to Conspectus Form 34, dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. The only shards identified so far in Aegyssus belong to the same group as the ESA and ESB pottery. In the 2nd century, tableware from the workshops of Gaul and the bank of the Rhine penetrates the Lower Danube and thus also in Aegyssus. These are mainly bowls with relief decoration, the Dragendorff Form 37 and the bowls specific to the Dragendorff Form 35/36. This type of tableware was discovered at Aegyssus both during the older excavations and after 2015. Unfortunately, only a few fragments have been published so far.¹⁴ Although we have examples of tableware from distant regions of the Roman Empire, most of this category of goods in Aegyssus was procured through regional trade. The evidence for this is the very large quantity of Pontic Sigillata produced both south and north of the Black Sea and in the province of Moesia Inferior. We can thus conclude that, at least for a certain category of goods, a regional trade prevails, facilitated by a large and high-quality local production in the Western Pontic area. This economic reality in Aegyssus is suggestively illustrated by the graph below and applies to all fortifications / urban settlements along the Lower Danube Limes, from the mid-1st century AD to the second half of the 3rd century AD.

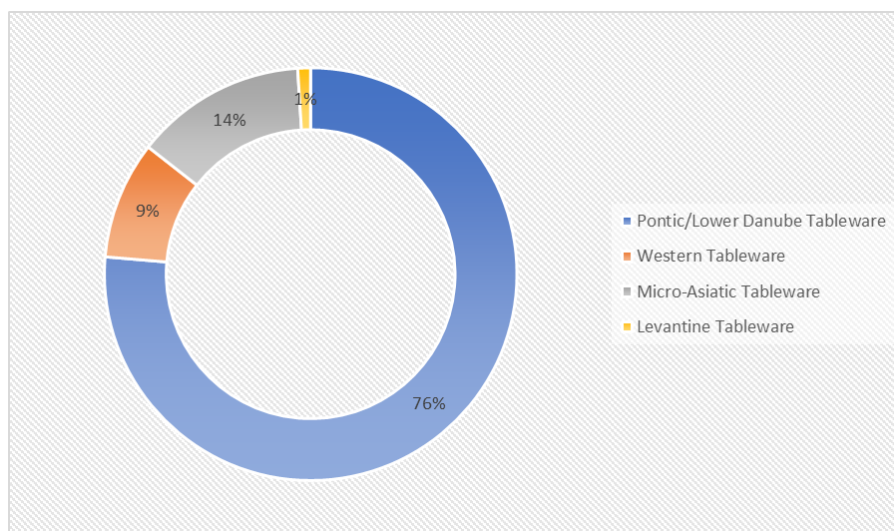


Fig. 4. The percentage breakdown of a tableware group discovered in Berzei Street, no. 3

Trade, whether long-distance or regional, may have other motivations besides economic ones. Some imports may be associated with certain aspects of spiritual life or certain artistic and religious preferences of the Aegyssus inhabitants at the time. For example, various types of lamps may point to this less-discussed aspect of trade activity. In the following, we will limit ourselves to pointing out the presence of a head-vase in Aegyssus, discovered probably in the necropolis area. According to the publisher of this

¹³ Nuțu, Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, Costea 2014, 135, fig. 1/14-17; Nuțu, Costea 2010, 154, pl. 3/14-16, pl. 4/17.

¹⁴ Nuțu, Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, Costea 2014, 137, fig. 2/19-25; Nuțu, Costea 2010, 155-156, pl. 4/19-23.

artefact, the jug was made in Athens in the middle of the 3rd century.¹⁵ The presence of such a vessel produced in the Hellenic cultural area, as well as the predominant import of tableware from Asia Minor, testify not only to intensive trade relations with this region but also to some cultural affinities. However, the Aegyssensis society was not exclusively of Oriental origin, as evidenced by the import of terra sigillata from Gaul and a statuette of the god Mars crafted in a workshop from Gaul in the mid-2nd century AD.¹⁶ Another important argument for cultural influences from the Western Roman Empire are the inscriptions in Latin. For example, the *Corpus Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris V*, of the four inscriptions from Aegyssus, three are in Latin and one in Greek.¹⁷



Fig. 5. 1. Head-vase (after Nuțu 2021); 2. Bronze statuette of Mars (after Nuțu 2008).

AEGYSSUS AND THE BARBARIANS. THE TRANSITION TO LATE ANTIQUITY

The barbarian invasions of the Lower Danube from the second half of the 3rd century will lead to a long period of political instability and economic crises. These events will radically change the role of the fortifications on the banks of the Lower Danube, both from a military and an economic point of view. The Roman state tried to adapt to this new historical situation through a series of military and economic reforms, the most famous of which date back to the time of Emperor Diocletian.

In Aegyssus, the dating of the first construction phase of the fortification wall on Monument Hill falls exactly towards the end of the 3rd century AD¹⁸ and must be understood in the historical framework described in the previous lines. The epigraphic evidence of a Roman military unit - *Cobors II Flavia Brittonum* - also falls within this chronological interval.¹⁹ In a funerary inscription discovered in the middle of the 20th century and dated to the beginning of the 4th century AD, a military formation is mentioned - *vexilatio egisensis*.²⁰ The *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis* mentions the presence of a cavalry unit - *cuneus equitum armigerorum* - in Aegyssus and the fortress on the Monument Hill was the seat of a - *praefectus ripae legionis*

¹⁵ Nuțu 2021, 261-263.

¹⁶ Nuțu 2008, 212.

¹⁷ *ISM V*, 294-297.

¹⁸ Opați 1977, 310.

¹⁹ Opați 1981.

²⁰ Barnea 1950.

primae Ioviae cohortis quintae pedaturae inferioris.²¹ A strong military presence is attested by the discovery of an ivory sword hilt and a shield boss. Both objects were discovered during the old excavations in the southern part of the fortress, in the large building that may have been the garrison headquarters starting in the late 3rd century. Both items were published in a recent article signed by G. Nuțu.²² In addition to the military presence attested by epigraphic finds and archaeological evidences, the fortress of Aegyssus was severely destroyed at least twice between the second half of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 5th century. These violent events left clear traces, which were documented during archaeological excavations. The first continuous fire layer was dated by A. Opaïț to the end of the 3rd century, around AD 295.²³ The second destruction of the fortress by fire took place in the first decades of the 5th century.²⁴



Fig. 6. 1. The sword hilt and shield boss from Aegyssus (after Nuțu 2018); 2. The stone inscription with *vexillatio aegyssensis*; 3. The stamped brick with *CHIIIFBR* (after Opaïț 1981).

²¹ *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis*, XXXIX, 17, 34.

²² Nuțu 2018, 206-212, pls. 1,3.

²³ Opaïț, Sion, Vasiliu 1980, 269.

²⁴ Opaïț, Sion, Vasiliu 1980, 270.

Both political instability and the established military presence have left their mark on the economy and trade. While there was still long-distance trade in the previous century, from the second half of the 3rd century onwards the circulation of goods in Aegyssus is almost exclusively regional. The exception to this rule is amphorae, as products such as olive oil could not be procured on the local market. The amphorae that circulated in Aegyssus between the second half of the 3rd century and the first half of the 5th century came almost exclusively from the Pontic region and the Aegean area. The most important forms discovered in Aegyssus are Zeest 72, Berenice MRA 5/Zeest 80 and Berenice MRA 7/Kapitan II.²⁵

Limiting trade on a regional level is very well illustrated by the tableware. From the second half of the 3rd century onwards, no specific forms of workshops from the Western Roman Empire are found in Aegyssus, whether we are talking about more distant regions such as Gaul, Italy or the Rhenish Limes, or closer regions such as the provinces on the Middle Danube (Pannonia, Upper Moesia or Dacia). This archaeological reality confirms the fact that the Danubian trade route, which connected Central Europe and from here Western Europe on the one hand and the Lower Danube with the Western Pontic region on the other, was permanently interrupted. The most likely historical event that led to this interruption of trade is the Gothic invasion during the reign of Emperor Gallienus. The wares in circulation at the end of the 3rd century and throughout the 4th century are the local red slip pottery produced on a large scale in the western Pontic basin.²⁶ Most of the imported wares came from the Pergamenian workshops, with Aegean tableware arriving in Aegyssus along with amphorae from the same region. Pottery from the last phase of the Çandarlı workshops was discovered during an archaeological excavation in 2007 about 150 m south of the fortress from Monument Hill.²⁷

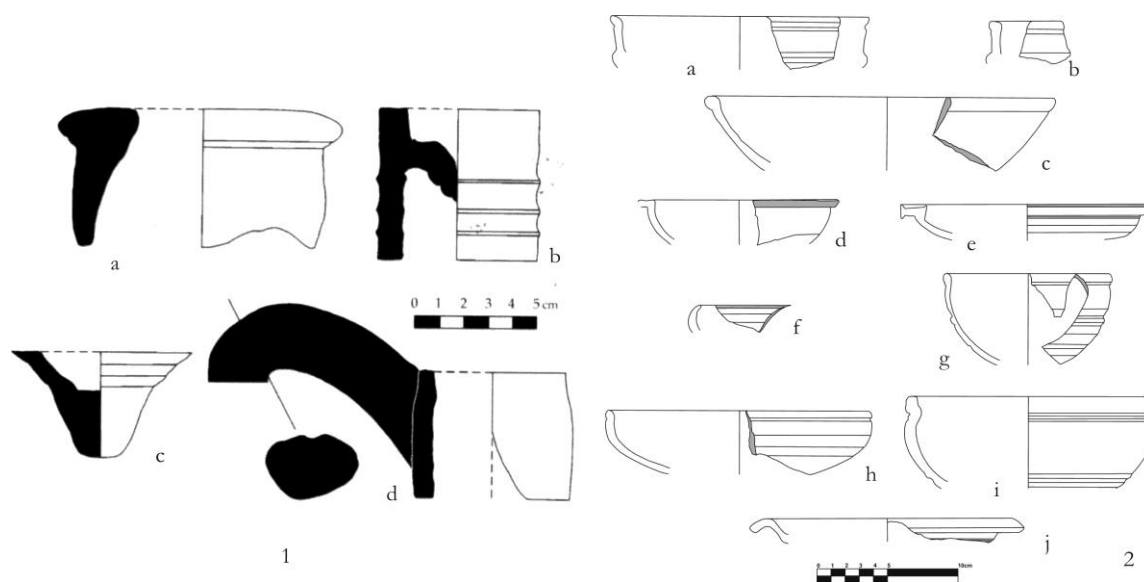


Fig. 7. 1. Late 3rd to mid-5th century amphorae (after Stănescu 2018, fig. 6); 2. Early Pontic Red Slip tableware

An interesting aspect recorded in Aegyssus from the second half of the 3rd century to the first decades of the 5th century AD is the very large number of bronze coins. Unfortunately, there has been no in-depth study of the numismatic finds to date. Based on our observations following the archaeological excavations in Area C that began in 2016, we can state that the vast majority of the coins discovered fall within the chronological range mentioned above, with a peak in the middle of the 4th century, during the reign of Emperor Constantius II. The large quantity of coins is not necessarily due to extremely intensive trading activity but rather reflects the chronic inflationary problems faced by the Roman state from the late 3rd century onwards.

²⁵ Stănescu 2018, 212-213.

²⁶ This category of ware was named *Early Pontic Red Slip* to distinguish it from Pontic pottery, which was produced mainly in the 5th and 6th centuries and is called *Pontic Red Slip Ware* by K. Domžalski (Mocanu 2021, 121-136). It can also be found in the literature under the name *Local Red Slip* (Waldner 2016, 216-217).

²⁷ Nuțu, Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, Costea 2014, 135, fig. 1/14-17; Nuțu, Costea 2010, 154, pl. 3/14-16, pl. 4/17.

The political and military changes that took place from the second half of the 3rd century onwards altered the economic and commercial role of Aegyssus on the Lower Danube. Unlike in the previous period, there is a tendency to centralise trade to ensure a constant and sufficient supply for the soldiers stationed at the Limes. For this reason, the function of the settlement from Monument Hill also changes. After extensive fortification work, it takes on the role of a garrison for the military units mentioned in the ancient literary texts on the one hand, and on the other hand, it becomes a huge warehouse for agricultural products and more. The large storage containers - *dolia* - discovered during archaeological investigations in the 1970s bear witness to this.²⁸ After 2016, the exploration of the space with the function of a warehouse was resumed. An important observation is that these storage vessels were buried in the consistent fire layer from the end of the 3rd century AD; therefore, these vessels can be dated from the 4th century onwards. Unfortunately, the total number of storage containers cannot be precisely determined, as a large part of them were destroyed by the later residential buildings of the Middle Ages. The situation established after the excavations in the 20th century cannot be reconstructed either, as the information in the archives of the Tulcea Museum is incomplete. The presence of these *dolia* suggests that Aegyssus was used by the Roman authorities as a warehouse and played an essential role in the redistribution of food resources in the area of the Limes under their control.²⁹ Certainly, Aegyssus is not an isolated case at the Danube limes, as such storage facilities have also been discovered in other fortifications.³⁰



Fig. 8. Large storage containers – *dolia*.

AEGYSSUS AND THE EARLY BYZANTINE RECONSTRUCTION FROM THE 6TH CENTURY

After a long period of instability, the Lower Danube region experienced a period of relative calm from the end of the 5th century. This respite allowed the imperial authorities to begin a comprehensive process of restoring and reinforcing the fortifications along the Limes. It also enabled the introduction of a trading system that ensured the logistical support of the border provinces and was realised through the creation of an administrative entity called *quaestura exercitus* in AD 536.³¹

²⁸ Opaîţ, Sion, Vasiliu 1980, 271.

²⁹ Mocanu 2020, 256-257.

³⁰ On the logistical system of the Roman army and on similar warehouses in Late Antiquity in the Balkans, see Sarantis 2019, 345-346.

³¹ On the role of this administrative entity see: Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 243-244; Curta 2017, 439-454; Gândilă 2021, 304, and footnote 19.

Regarding the archaeological finds from Aegyssus, which are dated to the 6th century, it should be said that they do not come from a clear archaeological context. The 6th-century settlement layer has been largely destroyed by successive medieval dwellings and modern interventions. There is some information about archaeological contexts from this century found during excavations in the 1970s.³²

In the second half of the 5th century, a revival of trade activity can be observed. First of all, the resumption of long-distance trade can be noted, which is underlined by the appearance of some products from the North African area. However, the main trading partner of the Limes from the Lower Danube remains Asia Minor and especially the Aegean region. A fundamental aspect driving trade in this region is the assertion of Constantinople as the main metropolis of Late Antiquity. In an article I wrote a decade ago, I emphasised the role Constantinople would have played as an intermediate market for the penetration of North African goods into the western Black Sea region and the Lower Danube.³³

The main 6th-century amphora types discovered at Aegyssus are LRA 1, LRA 2, LRA 3, LRA 4, Kuzmanov XV / XVI or Spatheion.³⁴ As already mentioned, the vast majority are imported from Asia Minor and the Aegean region. The most important products transported are still wine and olive oil, but there are also exotic products such as garum, which is produced in Egypt and transported in LRA 3 amphorae, or white wine and fish products, which are imported from the Eastern Mediterranean and transported in LRA 4 amphorae.³⁵ The amphorae of the Spatheion type imported from North Africa can also be considered exotic imports, the contents of which are difficult to guess due to the very small dimensions of the container.

Another useful indicator for the representation of trade activities in Aegyssus in the second half of the 5th century and into the 6th century AD is tableware. In contrast to the previous period, when most of the tableware was procured through regional trade without going beyond the borders of the old province of Lower Moesia, now almost all the tableware is procured through long-distance trade. The most important source of supply during this period is the workshops in Phocaea. However, Phocaea is not the only area in Asia Minor where tableware was procured. In addition to the "Phocaean Red Slip Ware", ceramic fragments of the category "Light Coloured Ware", imported from the Aegean region, and "Pontic Red Slip Ware", probably imported from the South Pontic region during this period, were discovered in Aegyssus. In addition, there are imports of African tableware – "African Red Slip Ware". The late Roman tableware discovered in the old excavations at Aegyssus was analysed in an article published relative recently, in which the percentage ratio between the different production centres was presented.³⁶ This can be seen as a quite realistic picture of the trade relations between the inhabitants of Aegyssus and various economic centres of the Empire.

As for the role of the fortification from Monument Hill in the distribution of goods in the local market in the second half of the 5th century and the following period, it probably remains the same as in the previous epoch. In other words, Aegyssus continues to be a warehouse in the Lower Danube limes system, providing logistical support to both the imperial army and the surrounding population. To what extent this was done according to free market principles or to what extent this was organized, controlled and regulated by the state through the *annona militaris* it is difficult to say, although A. Gândilă proposes a new approach to the subject in a recent article.³⁷ What is certain is that the strategic and economic role of the Aegyssus, like that of all fortifications on the Lower Danube, increases significantly during this period. This was triggered by the transformation of Constantinople into the capital and most important metropolis of Late Antiquity. If the Lower Danube area was considered the periphery of the Roman world in the early Roman period, in Late Antiquity its military importance and subsequently its defensive system increases exponentially due to its location in relation to the imperial capital.

³² Opaîţ, Sion, Vasiliu 1980, 270-271.

³³ Mocanu 2012, 326.

³⁴ Stănescu 2018, 216-221.

³⁵ Stănescu 2018, 214 and 221.

³⁶ Mocanu, Nuţu 2017, 137-138, fig. 10.

³⁷ Gândilă 2021, 316.

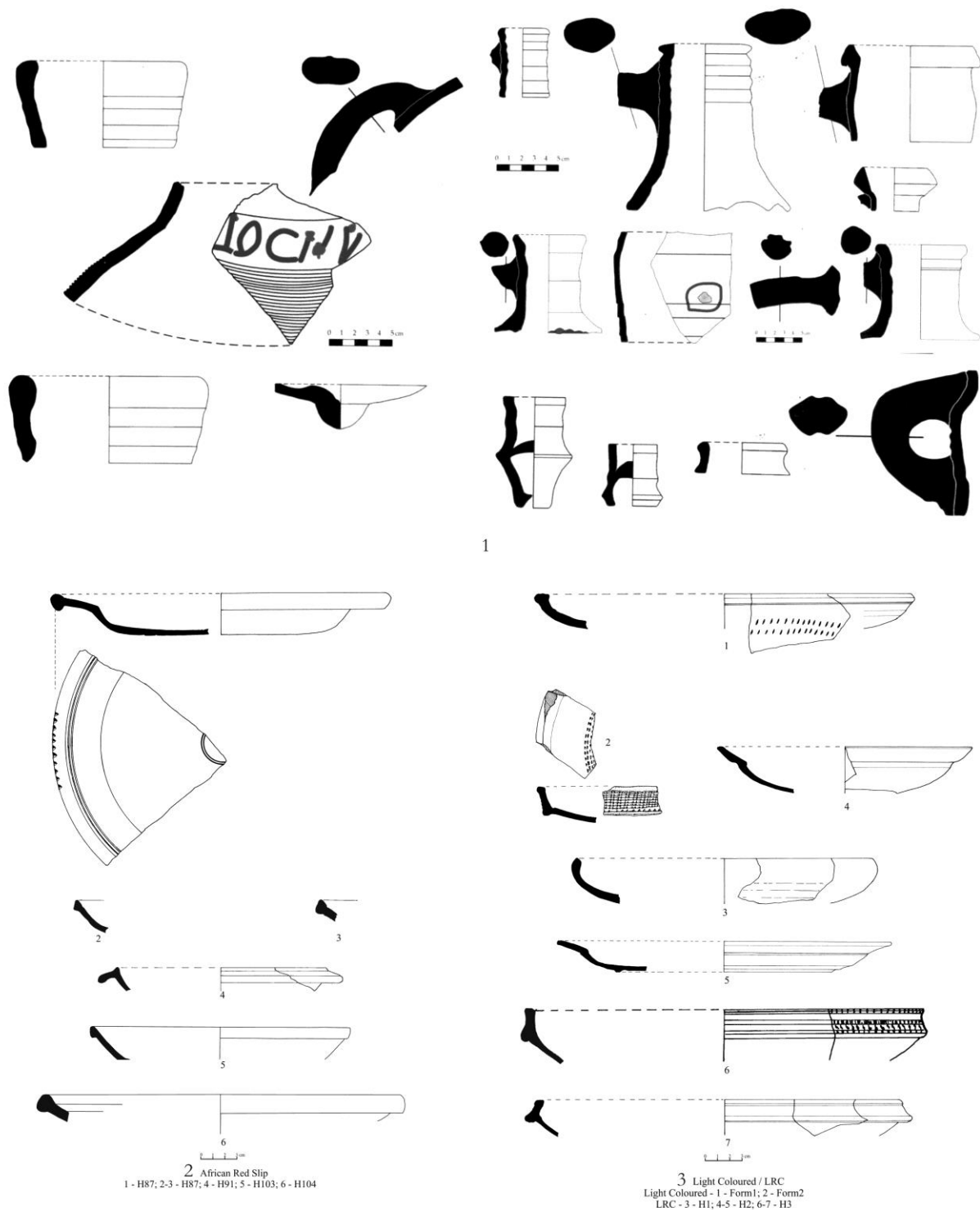


Fig. 9. 1. Early Byzantine amphorae (after Stănescu 2018, fig. 7-10); 2. African Red Slip Ware (after Mocanu, Nuțu 2017, fig. 4); Late 5th to 6th century Micro-Asiatic tableware (after Mocanu, Nuțu 2017, fig. 5).

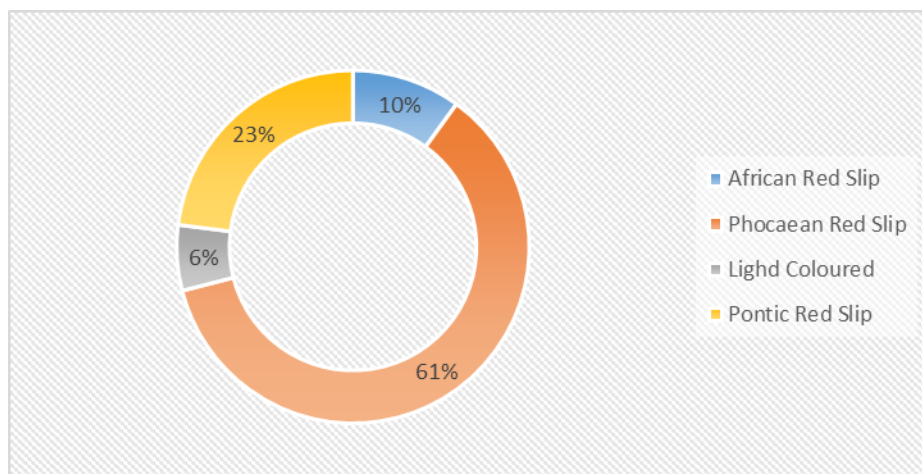


Fig. 10. The percentage breakdown of the Late Roman tableware group discovered in old excavations.

CONCLUSIONS

Given what has been mentioned in the previous lines, we can conclude that the commercial activity carried out in Aegyssus in classical antiquity is influenced by two main factors. The first is the geographical location in relation to the main trade arteries of antiquity, be it the north-south axis, to which Aegyssus was connected due to its proximity to the Black Sea, or the west-east axis represented by the Danube. These defining geographical elements have remained constant throughout history and are still valid today. The second important factor is the historical context in which trade takes place. Certain events influence long-distance trade connections or create new opportunities and trade routes, as we have shown in the previous lines.

In addition to the geographical and historical context, it should not be overlooked that commercial activity is carried out by people in order to satisfy the needs of their respective communities. Thus, several subjective elements related to a particular ethnic or religious group appear, leading to the emergence of close trade relations with certain regions, and trade relations based on cultural affinities. From this point of view, in Aegyssus in classical antiquity we are dealing with a community that maintained close relations with the Greek population in the Aegean region and Asia Minor, a fact that precedes the establishment of Roman rule on the Lower Danube. However, especially in the 1st to 3rd century AD trade relations and cultural influences from the western part of the Roman Empire can be observed. These connections lend a multicultural aspect to the inhabitants of Aegyssus of that time.

A final characteristic worth mentioning is the role that Aegyssus played in local trade and the redistribution of goods acquired in long-distance commerce to nearby settlements. Although the redistribution of these products in the local market is easy to understand, it must be underlined that Aegyssus was a fortress on the border of the Roman Empire for six centuries. In this sense, there should have been trade relations with the barbarian people north of the Danube. Unfortunately, with the current state of research, it is not possible to specify the nature and intensity of these trade relations, this being a topic for future research.

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