
THE "GOLDEN HORDE" CERAMICS IN DOBRUDJA (13th-14th CENTURIES)

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Abstract: *The extensive process of first gaining a foothold and then controlling the region at the mouth of the Danube by the Golden Horde is a topic that has not been dealt with in accordance with its importance. Archaeological researches provide important data and represent the starting point for understanding the vast complex of the political events and the socio-economic evolution of the area at the mouth of the Danube in the 13th and 14th centuries.*

The study of the ceramics attributed to the Golden Horde is at the beginning, and the present approach is based on the observations made on the archaeological material in northern Dobruja and with a single discovery in the south of the province. The archaeological researches from Tulcea, Tichilești, Enisala-Cetate, Enisala-Palanca, Nufăru, Isaccea, Isaccea-Noviodunum and Păcuiul lui Soare, the random discoveries from Jurilovca, Slava Rusă and Babadag revealed red-yellowish or grey ceramic fragments, roulette decorated, ceramics produced in moulds or enamelled, typical of the material culture of the Golden Horde in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Rezumat: *Amplul proces privind instalarea și controlul Hoardei de Aur a regiunii de la gurile Dunării reprezintă un subiect ce nu a fost tratat la nivelul importanței sale. Cercetările arheologice oferă date importante și sunt punctul de plecare în a înțelege vastul complex de evenimente politice și evoluția socio-economică a zonei de la gurile Dunării în sec. XIII-XIV.*

Studiul ceramicii atribuită Hoardei de Aur se află la început de drum, iar acest demers se fundamentează pe observațiile asupra materialului arheologic din nordul Dobrogei și cu o singură descoperire în sudul provinciei. Cercetările arheologice de la Tulcea, Tichilești, Enisala-Cetate, Enisala-Palanca, Nufăru, Isaccea, Isaccea-Noviodunum și Păcuiul lui Soare, descoperirile întâmplătoare de la Jurilovca, Slava Rusă și Babadag au scos la iveală fragmente ceramice de culoare roșietic-gălbuie sau cenușie, decorate cu roțița, ceramică lucrată în tipare sau smălțuită, tipice culturii materiale a Hoardei de Aur din sec. XIII-XIV.

Keywords: Dobruja, Middle Ages, Golden Hoard, Tatars, pottery

Cuvinte cheie: Dobrogea, evul mediu, Hoarda de Aur, tătari, ceramică

INTRODUCTION. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Mongolian invasion between 1241 and 1242 was one of the "greatest warfare enterprises known in time", with devastating repercussions on Europe, strongly marking the history and evolution of the eastern half of the continent, including the Danube and the Black Sea¹.

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¹ Spinei 1996, 211.

The emergence of the Mongols in Dobrudja was not a random matter. In the middle of the 13th century they managed to consolidate their position in the region by creating an autonomous political centre. In the last decades of the 13th century, Nogai, very likely an Ulus Beg of the Golden Horde, separates himself from the authority of the Sarai Hans and imposes his authority in that territory. Conducting from his capital, Saqci (Isaccea), a policy independent of the rest of the Hanat, both Nogai and his descendants controlled a vast territory that included the western regions of the Golden Horde, located between the Don, the Carpathians, the Iron Gates, the Balkans, and the Black Sea².

Between 1299 and 1300, Tokta, the Sarai Han, defeated Nogai and Çaka, his son. In the 14th century, the space between the Danube and the Sea was controlled from the centre by Tokta and his descendants³.

The installation of the Golden Horde, the control and transformation of the region at the mouths of the Danube into an active centre of international economic exchanges, actively influenced the local society and by extension had its imprint on the evolution of the state entities in South Eastern Europe.

Regarding this ample process, the literary sources are rare and incomplete, being exploited to the maximum, the subject being far from being clarified in its importance, due to the numerous missing pieces in the reconstruction of this huge puzzle⁴.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT. REDDISH-YELLOW CERAMICS

The archaeological investigations offer important data and can be a starting point for understanding the vast complex of political events and the socio-economic evolution of the area at the mouths of the Danube in the 13th-14th centuries.

In the giant space controlled by the Mongolian Hans, a new ceramic species known in the literature as "reddish-yellow ceramics" (*красно-желтой керамики*) is emerging⁵.

In turn, the ceramic material presents a great documentary value, bearing witness, along with the numismatic one, for the control of the Golden Horde over the region at the mouths of the Danube⁶.

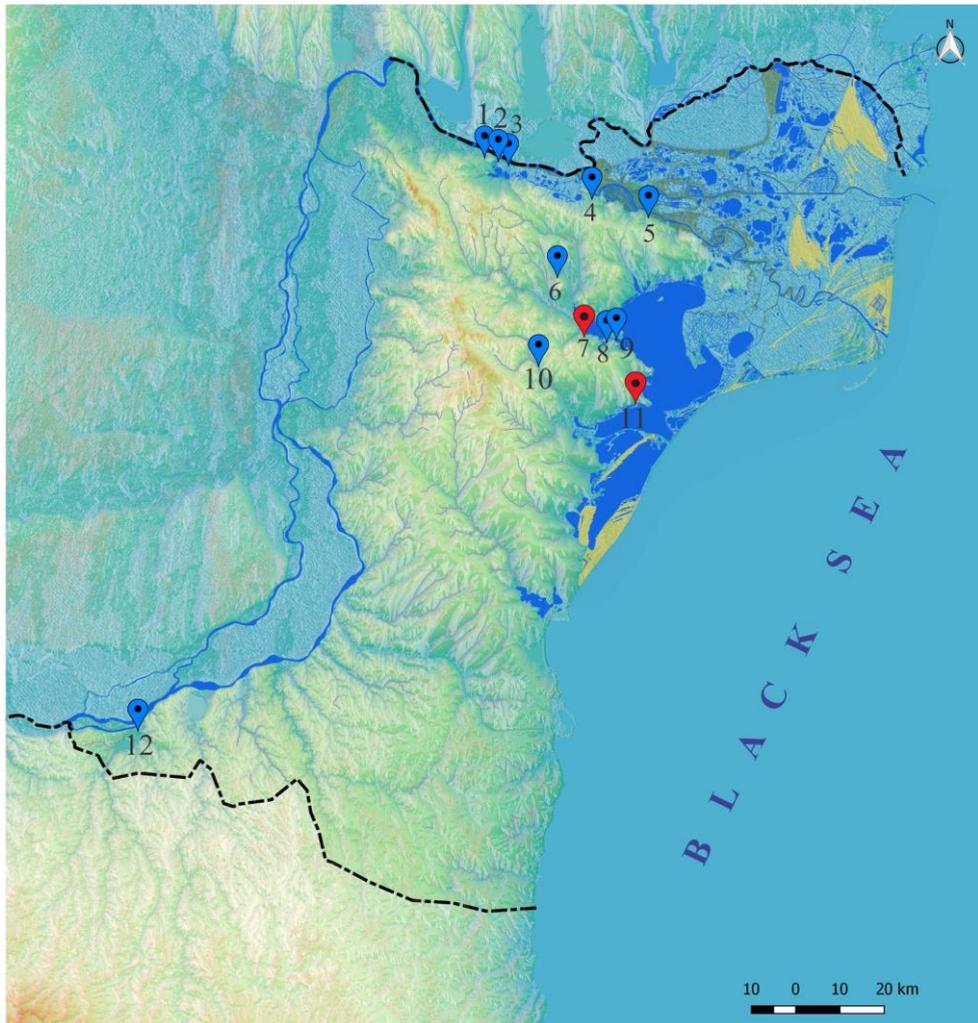
² Spinei 1994, 208-212; Ciocâltan 1997, 236; Ciocâltan 2012, 254.

³ Spinei 1994, 210-211.

⁴ Brătianu 1935, 53-78; Brătianu 1999, 296-310; Spinei 1970, 607-610; Spinei 1975-1976, 34-37; Spinei 1982, 168-177; Spinei 1994, 253-255; Spinei 2006, 319-366; Papacostea 1993, 90-125; Ciocâltan 1998, 13-16; 129-259.

⁵ Polevoj 1969, 108-113; Polevoj, Byrnea 1974; Spinei 1970, 607-609; Spinei 1994, 238, 254; Batariuc 2010, 243.

⁶ The coins are currently the main documentary source for understanding the socio-economic events and the evolution of the area at the mouths of the Danube during the Tatar domination (Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1985, 585-590; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1987,



Pl. 1. The diffusion of the Golden Horde ceramics discovered in Dobruđja: 1. Revărsarea–Dealul Tichilești; 2. Isaccea; 3. Isaccea–Noviodunum; 4. Tulcea; 5. Nufăru; 6. Uzum Baiir; 7. Babadag; 8. Enisala–Palanca; 9. Enisala–Cetatea; 10. Slava Rusă; 11. Jurilovca; 12. Păciul lui Soare.

The reddish-yellowish ceramics were produced in the Mongolian centres in north-eastern Moldavia, according to the prototypes existing in the lower basin of the Volga,

245-258; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1989, 121-129; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1993, 291-304; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2003, 69-102; Oberländer-Târnoveanu, Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1981, 89-109; Stănică 2015, 291-292); For the reassigning of the workshop from Saqcy–Isaccea see: Nicolae, Costin 2003, 175-187.

in Crimea, the northern Caucasus, or other regions of the vast space under the control of the Sarai Hans. Due to the qualities that made it superior to local ceramics, in the 14th century its area of distribution extended westwards to the Bârlad Basin, which marks the western limit of the possessions under the control of the Mongols⁷. The presence of the Tatars at the mouths of the Danube is a subject that captured the interest of the Romanian historians, but it is far from being clarified concerning its importance⁸. The first aspect is the limited number of historical sources that provide data and information on this subject.⁹ A second aspect is illustrated by the archaeological investigations which, apart from some discoveries that have been reconsidered and attributed to the Golden Horde, are still at an early stage.

The area at the mouth of the Danube entered the orbit of the Golden Horde in the 13th century, benefiting from the use of a ceramic category with no history in the typology of local vessels. The study of the ceramics attributed to the Golden Horde is at the beginning, and this approach is based on the observations of the archaeological material in northern Dobruja and with a single discovery in the south of the province. Archaeological researches in Tulcea¹⁰, Tichilești¹¹, Enisala-Cetate¹², Enisala-Palanca¹³, Nufăru¹⁴, Isaccea¹⁵, Isaccea-Noviodunum¹⁶ and Păcuiul lui Soare¹⁷, accidental discoveries from Jurilovca, Slava Rusă and Babadag¹⁸ have revealed fragments of reddish-yellow or grey pottery with rouletted decoration, ceramics produced in

⁷ For details on terminology: Spinei 1999, 321.

⁸ For this aspect see: Bratianu 1935, 53-78; Bratianu 1999, 296-310; Spinei 1970, 595-618; Spinei 1975-1976, 34-37; Spinei 1982, 168-177; Spinei 1994, 253-255; Spinei 2006, 319-366; Papacostea 1993, 90-125; Ciocâltan 1998, 13-16; 129-259.

⁹ Spinei 1994, 210-211.

¹⁰ Mănucu-Adameșteanu 1983, 453, fig. 10/6.

¹¹ Simion 1998, 231-238.

¹² Entirely new material, from the collection of the "Paul Păltânea" Museum of History at Galați; entirely new material, from the excavations of Silvia Baraschi and information given by Oana Damian (Damian 2013, 424, 426; Iosipescu, Iosipescu 2004, 315).

¹³ Entirely new materials, preventive archaeological researches, 2013.

¹⁴ Baraschi 1991, 145. Entirely new materials, researches from 2009 and 2016, information given by Oana Damian.

¹⁵ Entirely new materials, preventive archaeological researches from 2013 and 2016

¹⁶ In the case of the discoveries from Noviodunum, it refers to enamelled ceramics.

¹⁷ Diaconu, Baraschi 1977, 65-66, fig. 46/1-7.

¹⁸ Oberländer-Târnoaveanu 2003, 67-68, n. 2. In the collection of the Museum of Archaeology and History within "Gavrilă Simion" Eco-Museum Researches Institute at Tulcea, the materials discovered at Tulcea (nr. inv. 4558) and Slava Rusă (nr. inv. 2915), were identified.

moulds or enamelled pottery, typical to the material culture of the Golden Horde in the 13th and 14th centuries¹⁹.

The progress in the pottery field in the 13th and 14th centuries is clearly higher than in previous years, generating a standardization of the technologies used and the types of vessels produced. A good quality fabric with fine sand and limestone concretions is introduced, with medium speed wheel modelling, evenly fired, the dishes getting a reddish-yellowish colour.

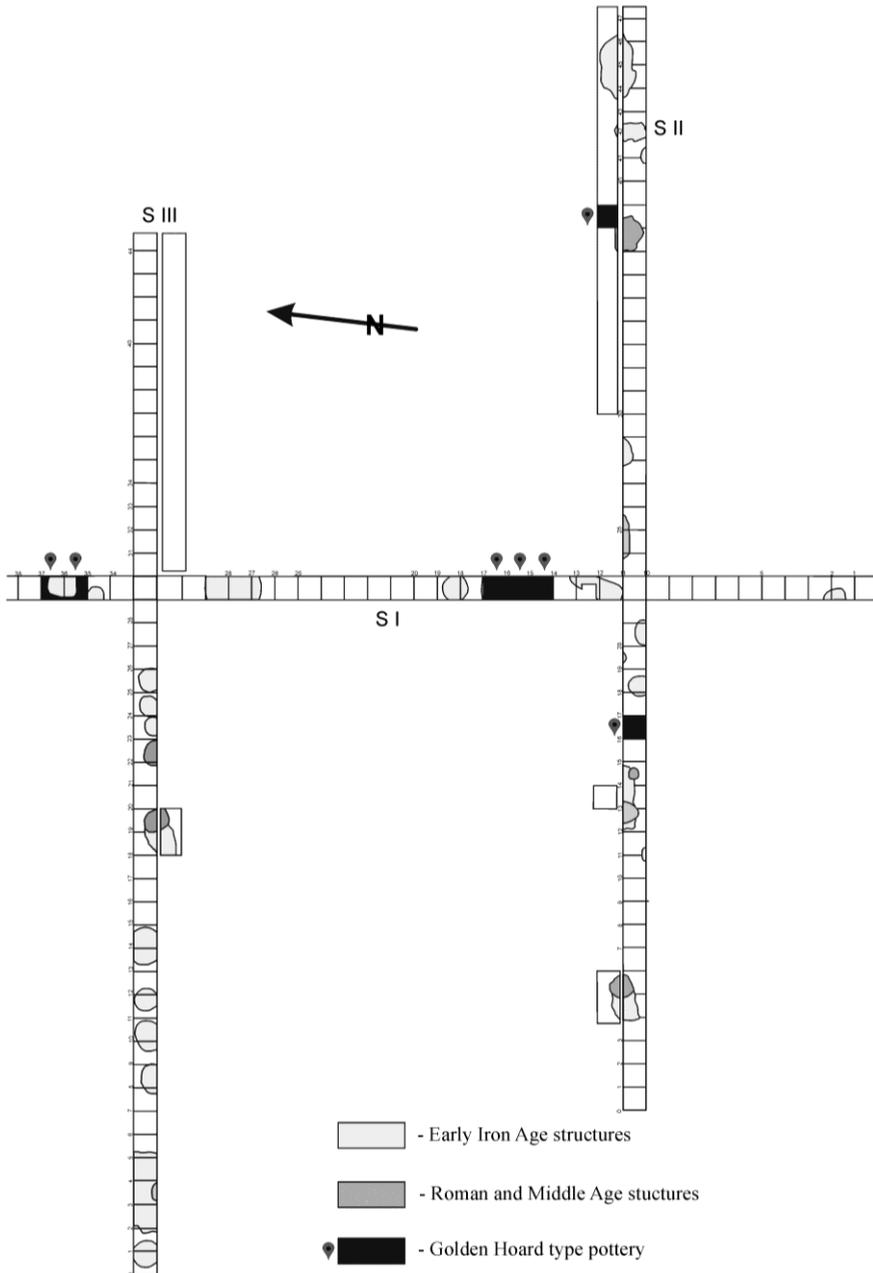
As for forms, there is also a change, with the amphoroidal jug with long neck, slender outline, which can be framed easily in the category of amphorae, with two handles symmetrically placed on the shoulder of the vessel, three-lobed jugs, pots with one or two handles, mugs, spherical bowls, oil lamps, bowls and bowls with annular shape foot, plates. Ornamental motifs are placed in the upper part, rarely in the lower part, or on the whole vessel, falling into a varied decorative repertoire, belonging to the geometric register: striated or wavy lines, simple or in strips, incised garlands, impressions made obliquely with a tool similar to a comb, vertical, oblique, and networked enamelled lines.

The proposed dating is built on elements of absolute chronology, based primarily on coins, and it lies within the range of the first quarter of the 14th century to the end of the 7th decade of the same century. During this period, the reddish-yellowish pottery with analogies in the Republic of Moldova, Crimea, Horezm and the Lower Volga Region finds its rapid diffusion in the urban and rural centres at the mouths of the Danube. This observation based on the discoveries in Moldova can be reconsidered in the case of Dobrudja, here we can speak of an earlier presence – from the second half of the 13th century – of the ceramic material specific to the Horde²⁰.

The works for installing a methane gas pipeline on the Isaccea-Jijila route determined in 1990 a series of preventive archaeological excavations in the western area of Isaccea, between the localities of Revărsarea and Rachelu. In this context, two sites were investigated on the southern shore of Ghiolul Pietrei, in the vicinity of E 87 / DN 22, Tulcea-Galați, on both sides of the access road to the Tichilești sanatorium.

¹⁹ The correct assignment of the origin of this ceramic category belongs to V. Spinei (Spinei 1970, 607-609, fig. 8-9; Spinei 1982, 196-197, 44-48). Some materials have been published in: Spinei 2006, 348-349, fig. 8-9; 686, fig. 2; Spinei 1994, 216, 238, 253-255, fig. 36, 38-39, 47; Spinei 1993, 57, fig. 8-10.

²⁰ In 1999, at Isaccea–*Noviodunum* a burned dwelling was researched; in the inner ash layer, "an amphoroidal jug was found broken on the spot". Based on the numismatic and ceramic material, it can be estimated that the house was destroyed on the occasion of the Tatar attack between 1241 and 1242. CCA 1999, no. 72. The vessel falls within the category of flat bottom amphorae or amphoroidal jugs, decorated externally with vertical, oblique and networked enamelled lines.



Pl. 2. Settlement from the Revărsarea-Dealul Tichilești. The plan of archaeological researches in 1990. Distribution of the ceramic material specific to the "Golden Horde" on the site's surface.

Archaeological investigations conducted between July 20th and September 10th, 1990, on the Tichilești Hill site, led by Gavrilă Simion, brought to light important vestiges from the first Iron Age, Roman and even medieval times, these being partly published²¹.

For the medieval age, a housing complex was investigated, in which a large number of ceramic fragments were discovered, proving a rare category found in the space at the mouth of the Danube²².

The archaeological researches were carried out exclusively in the northern, non-forested part of the promontory and consisted of three trenches (SI, II and III), on the surface of which habitation complexes were discovered, attributed to the Babadag culture, but also a dwelling with characteristic for the Golden Horde²³.

The study of the medieval material from Revărsarea–Cotul Tichilești, found in the collections of the Museum of History and Archaeology in Tulcea, revealed a larger number of ceramic fragments attributed to these categories, which led to a new analysis and a new set of observations regarding the fabric, technique, decoration and forms.

The distribution of the archaeological material in the researched area leads us to have a different image from the author of the research. The presence of reddish-yellowish ceramics at several points on the site's surface indicates a not so intense habitation from the 14th century, affected by the anthropogenic interventions²⁴.

In total, 3 whole pots and 163 ceramic fragments, fired in an oxidizing environment, were discovered. The ceramics were made of a fine, compact, good-quality fabric with sifted sand and limestone concretions, well-kneaded, evenly fired in an oxidizing environment. In addition to this inventory, there are 10 enamelled ceramic fragments and an amphora fragment²⁵.

The identified forms are of pots, pots with handles, pitchers and bowls, medium-speed wheel thrown, and the walls of the vessels have smooth and slightly flowing surfaces when touched. The colour is a uniform, reddish-yellow (*krasno-zheltoy keramiki*), from which it took its name. The pots are small, globular, with flat bottom, arched neck, slightly elongated beak. They have a height of 15-16 cm and the maximum diameter is 20 cm. Some of the pots are provided with a flat, slightly raised flange, caught between

²¹ Baumann 1995, 227-268; Simion 1998, 231-238; Simion 2003, 99-114; Ailincăi 2010; Ailincăi 2013.

²² Simion 1998, 231-238.

²³ Simion 1998, 231-232.

²⁴ The mark on the archaeological material, if it is a correct one, leads us to make this assumption. Thus, ceramic fragments were discovered in the following tabs and sections: S1, c. 35-36; S2a, c. 38; S2a, c. 16; S3, c. 14; S3, c. 16-17.

²⁵ In the case of the amphorae, we assume this is type 4. For the amphorae of this type see: Stănică 2015, 248-252.

the rim and shoulders of the bowl. The pitcher has a flattened handle, a flat bottom, a slightly conical neck and a mouth with a beak. The vessel has a maximum diameter of 18.2 cm, a bottom diameter of 13.4 cm and its height is 25 cm. The decorative repertoire is represented by three elements, made with a comb. The decoration created with this tool is found on all vessels, except bowls and it consist of lines incised horizontally and in waves, impressions arranged obliquely and grooves. The decorative motifs are executed on the middle and upper half of the vessels. The thickness of the walls varies depending on the size of the containers and their possible uses.

Among the ceramic material found at *Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești*, we noticed 10 fragments of enamelled ceramics. The identified forms are represented by a bowl, a fragmentary beaker or, most likely, a fragment of albarello²⁶. The bowl falls into the category of sgraffito ceramics, green enamel, red fabric, good quality, well-kneaded. For the second fragmentary bowl, we lean toward the identification with an albarello. The body of the container is cylindrical, with a short and narrow leg and straight bottom. The studies dedicated to this ceramic species divide albarello into two categories. The vessel from *Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești* is part of the second category, with colour-coating and green enamel on the outside²⁷, possibly produced in the centre of Saray al-Jedid or in the Crimean centres. The albarello bottles were designed to keep medicines, perfumes and other equally valuable products (oils, tinctures, etc.)²⁸.

In 2006, 7 pieces of ceramic moulds, an ellipsoidal bowl, a hemispherical bottom (jug), a bowl (prepared for enamelling), and nine tripods were purchased from Isaccea²⁹.

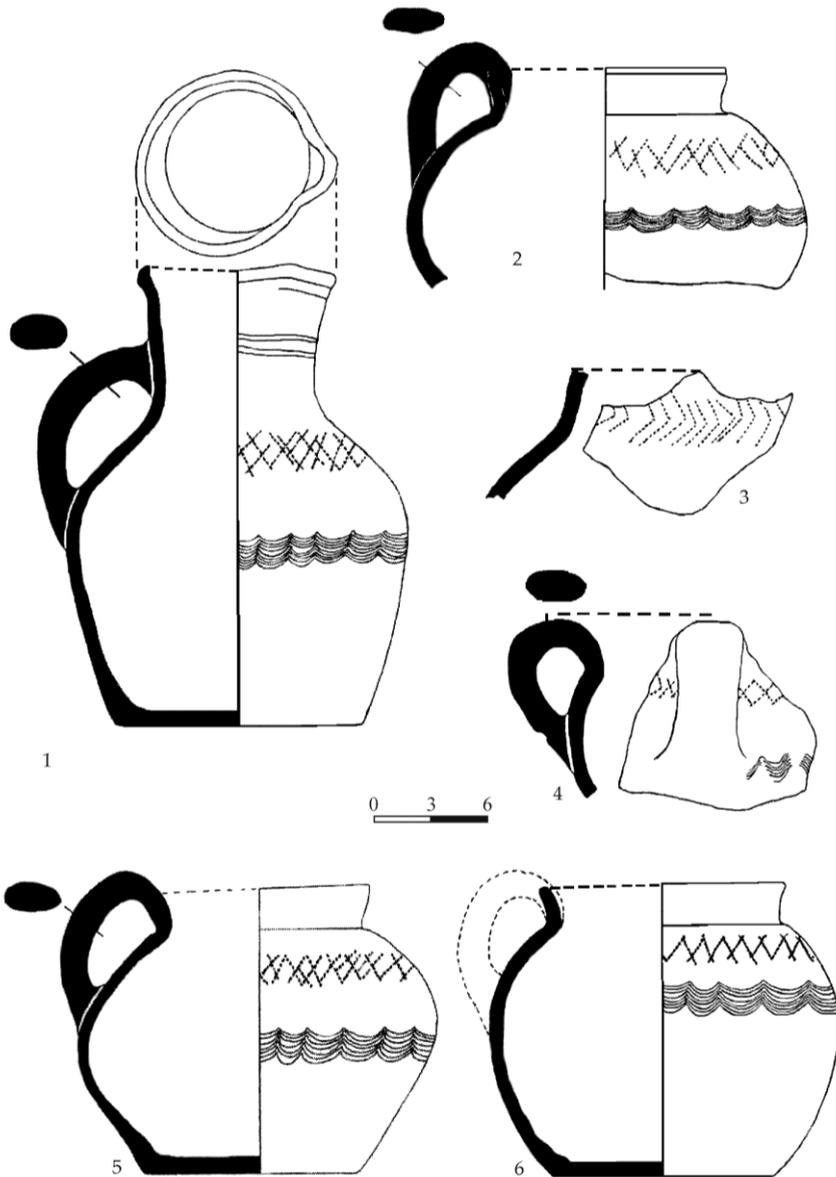
The jug is made of a good quality fabric, garnished from the outside, it has a discoidal shape, a hemispherical bottom, it's broken in its central area and the neck, the handle and the annular bottom is missing. The decoration is stylized herbal-floral, represented by circular arcs, which make the leaves of a flower, framed by small rosettes. The enamel is a monochrome one, white, with nacreous appearance and it covers the outer surface. The ceramic moulds have the same decoration as on the pot, but in the negative.

²⁶ The ceramic material is very fragmented and didn't allow the identification of other forms.

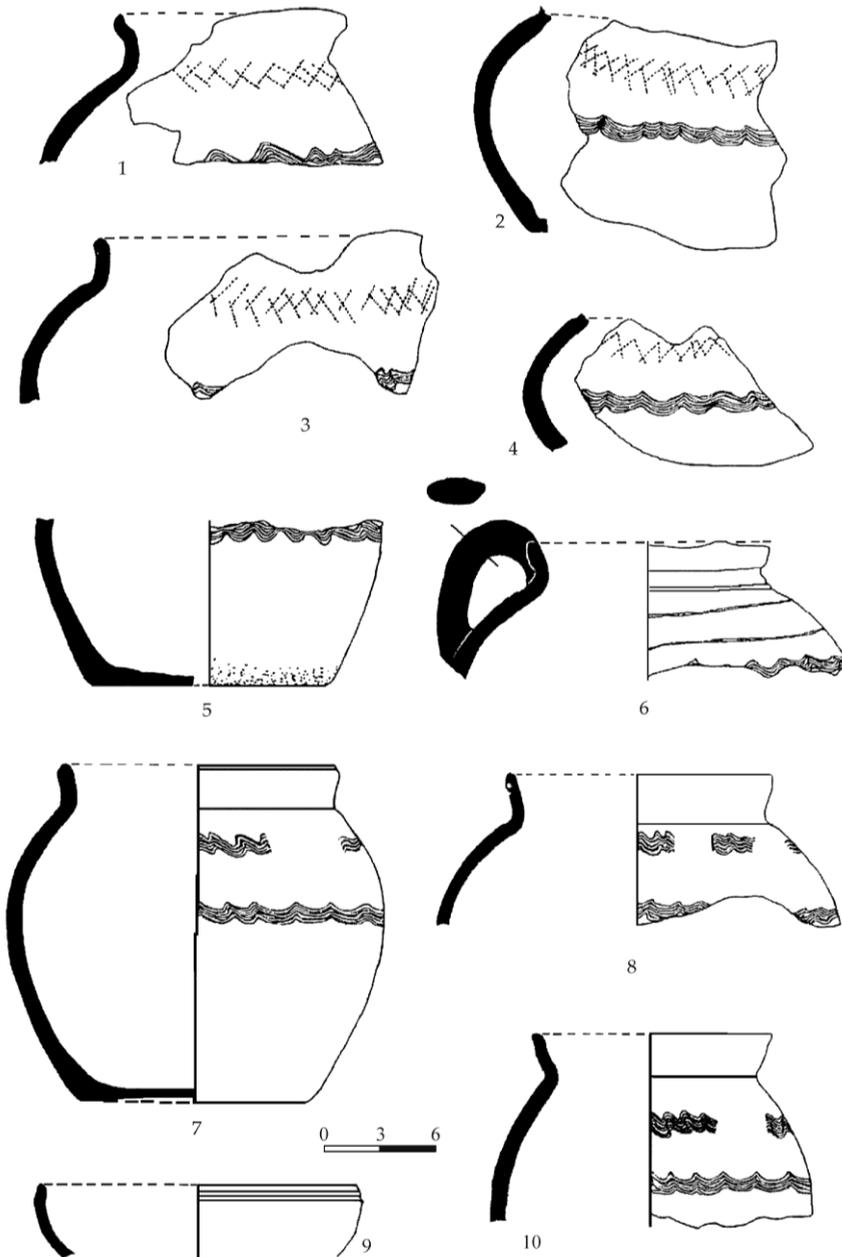
²⁷ Bulatov 1976, 83-89; Fjodorov-Davidov 1984, 73.

²⁸ Koval 2010, 262.

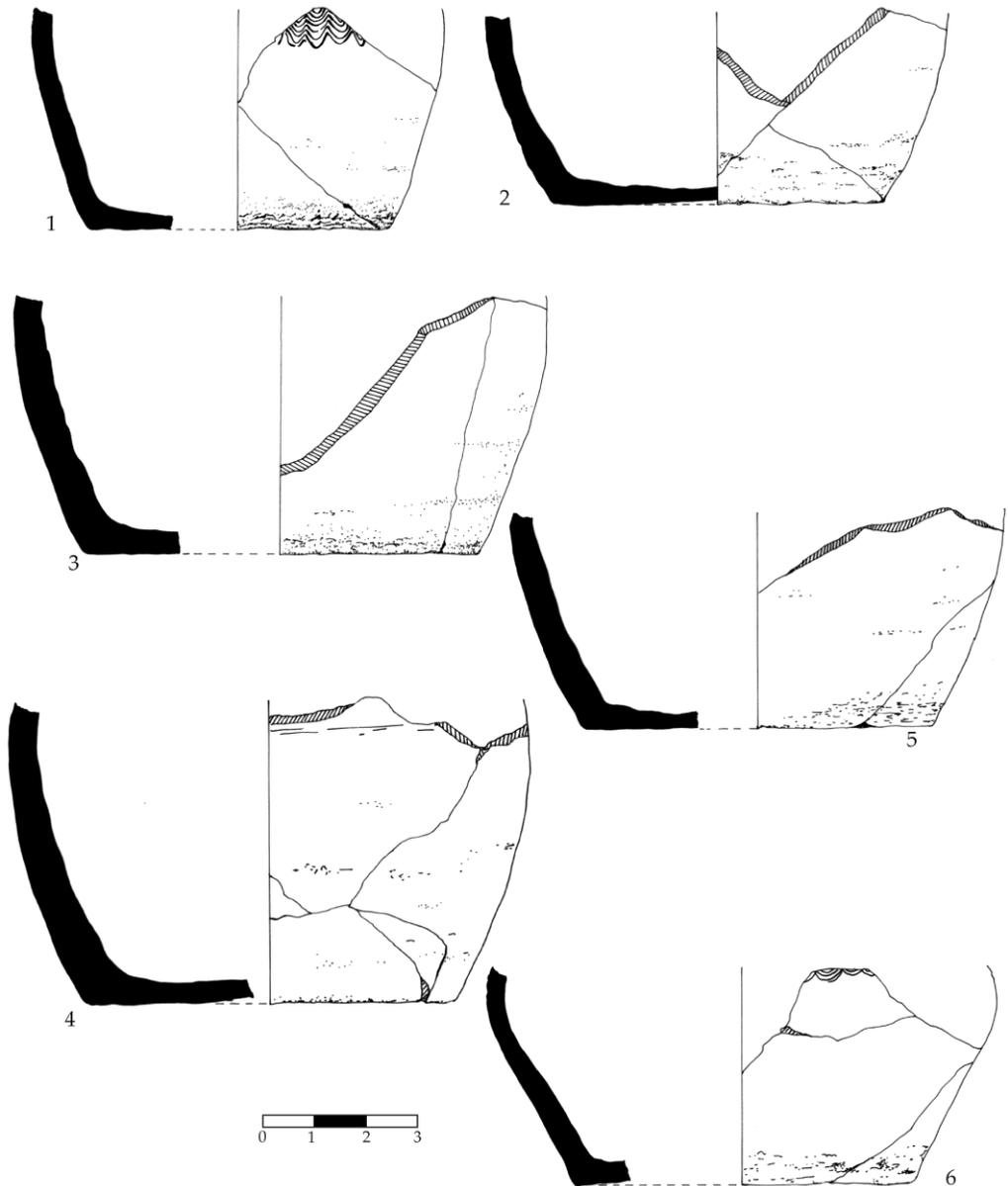
²⁹ The objects were offered for purchase to the Museum of History and Archaeology within the Institute for Eco-Museum Researches Tulcea, by Manea Mihai, residing in Isaccea, No. 8, 24 Ianuarie Street. Stănică 2009, 411-420.



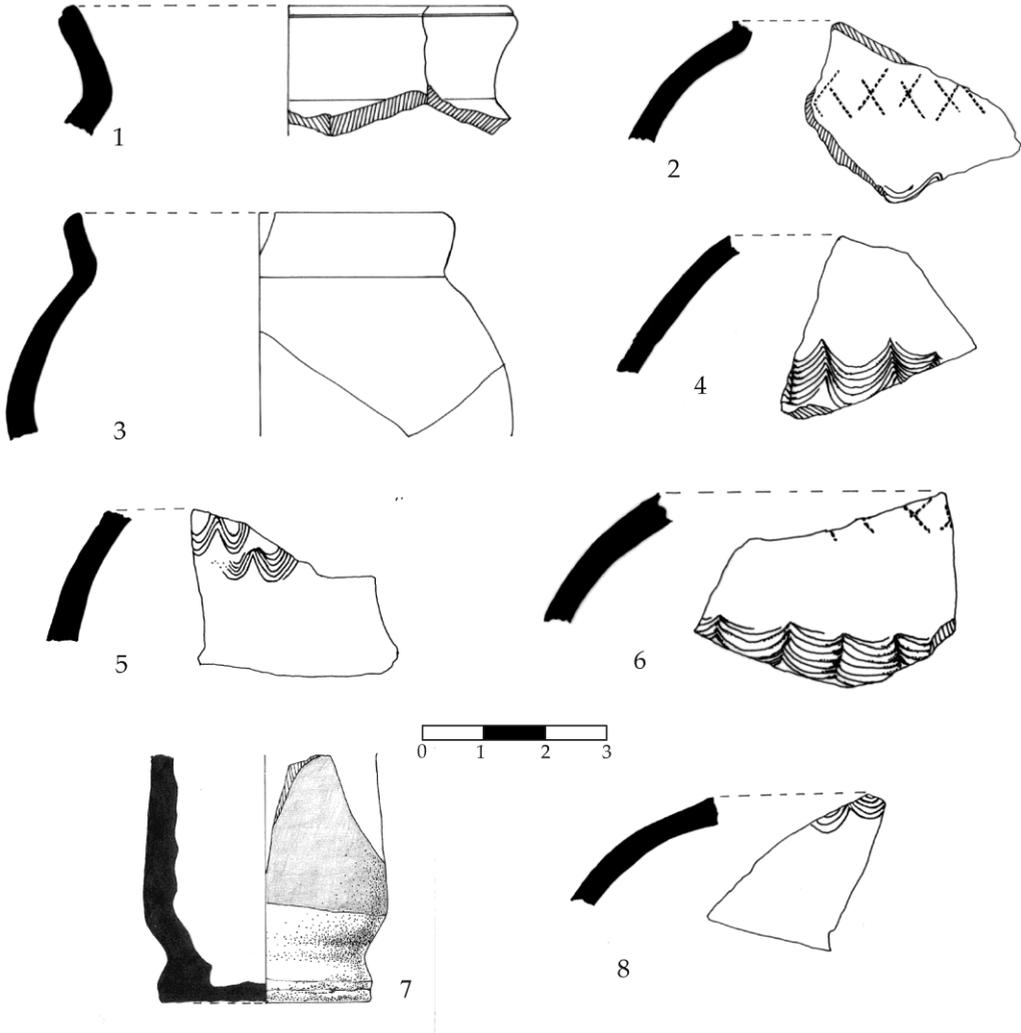
Pl. 3. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești (according to Simion 1998, 234, pl. II).



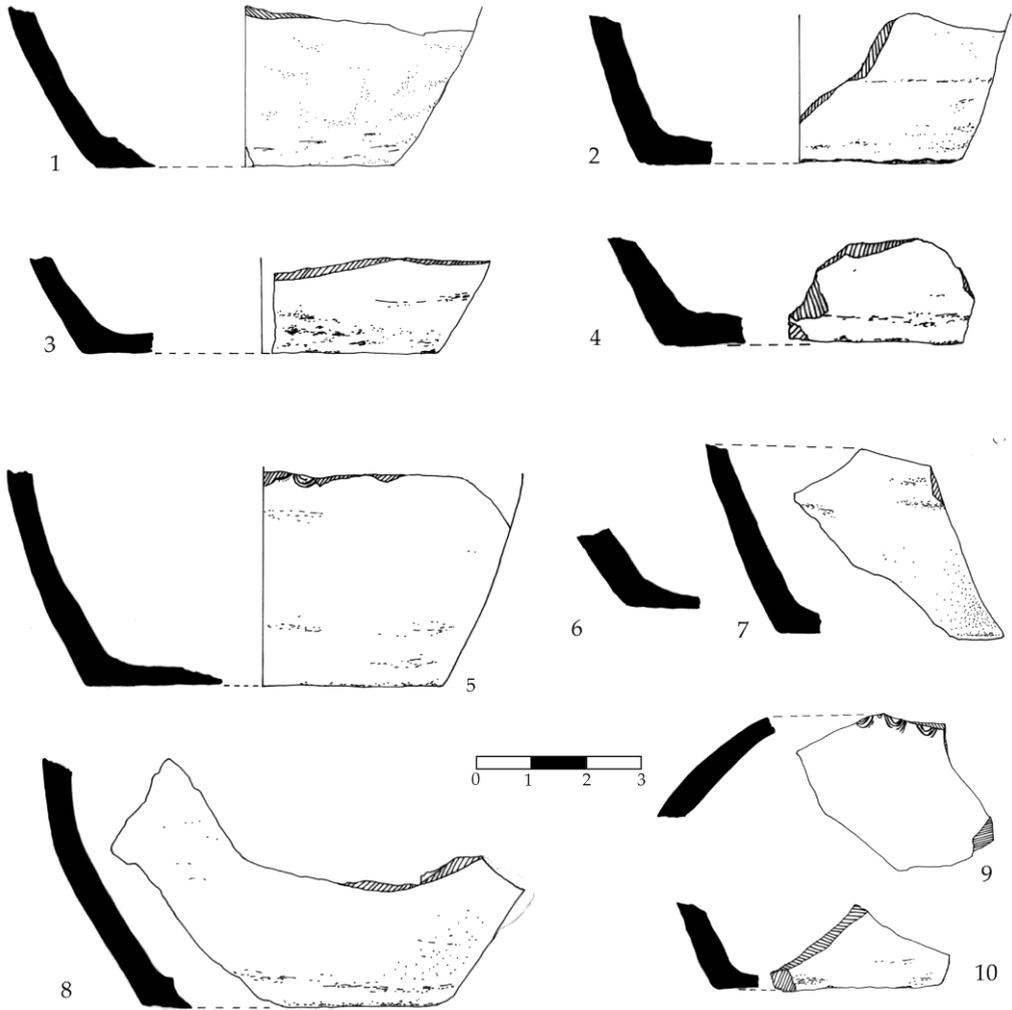
Pl. 4. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea-Cotul *Tichilești* (according to Simion 1998, 235, pl. III).



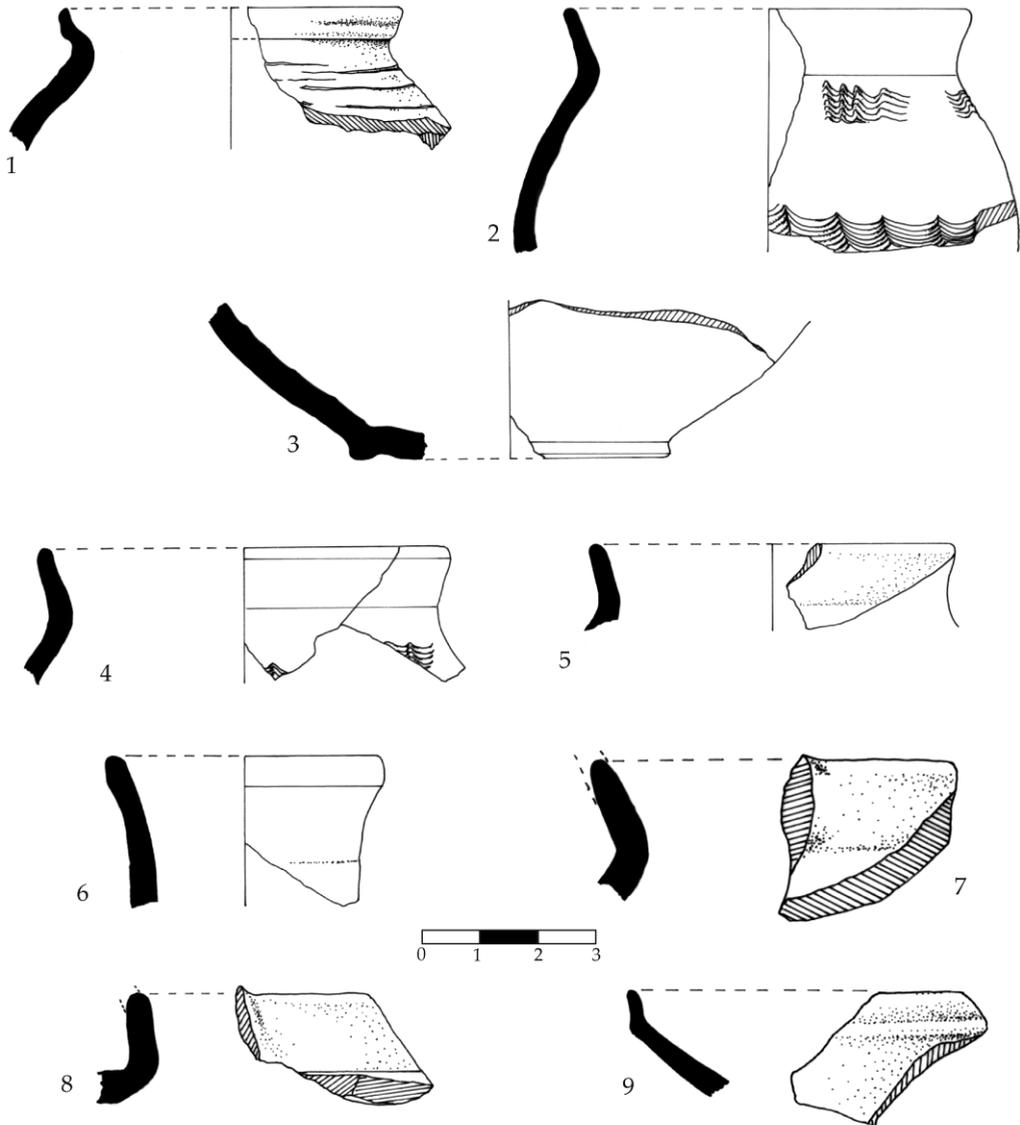
Pl. 5. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea–Cotul Tichilești.



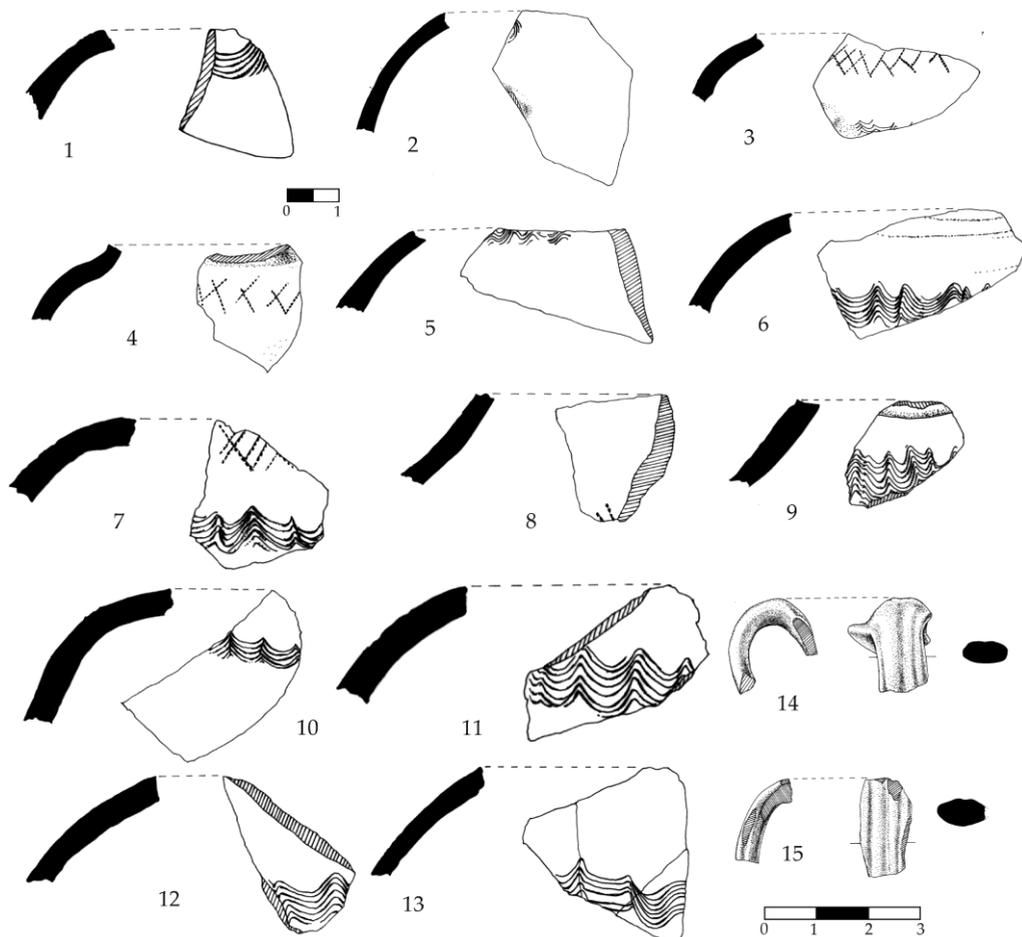
Pl. 6. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea–Cotul Tichilești.



Pl. 7. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești.



Pl. 8. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești.



Pl. 9. Reddish-yellow ceramics discovered at the Revărsarea-Cotul Tichilești.

Both the moulds and the vessels are similar in terms of decoration, with the spherico-conical vessels dated in the 13th-14th centuries, discovered within the territory of Tulcea County. The rosette decoration is a similar one, also made with the help of moulds³⁰.

For analogies, we are currently familiar with the similar discoveries in Crimea, where several moulds and vessels have been found³¹ at Orheiul Vechi³², Costești³³, Cetatea Albă³⁴ and Kuchugury Hillfort³⁵.

³⁰ Mănucu-Adameșteanu 1984, 364, 719, pl. 4/1-3, 723, pl. 8/4-7; Stănică, Szmoniewski 2016, fig. 7/2; 9-13.

³¹ Džanov 1998, 84.

³² Spinei 2017, 419, fig. 11.

In the literature, especially in the Russian one, this category is considered to be done by stamping, which is why it is generally referred to as stamped ceramics³⁶. On the territory of Romania there are several discoveries considered to be made by “stamping”³⁷. Thus, at Coconi³⁸, Baia³⁹, Curtea de Argeș⁴⁰ and Enisala⁴¹ fragments of vessels made in moulds were documented, dated to the 14th century.

The presence of the vessels prepared for enamelling indicates the potters’ craftsmanship of the masters of the workshop in Isaccea who mastered this technique. The production of enamelled ceramics in the centre of Isaccea attests to a specialized workshop, particularly characteristic of the urban environment. Based on analogies, the vessels and moulds can be dated back to the 14th century.

Similar discoveries in the Crimean settlements of Sogdaia, Chersones and Azak confirm that in the 14th century there was a large Tatar community in the area at the Danube mouths. Certainly, this community had its own craftsmen, who dealt with pottery production according to their own traditional recipes and methods.

From the point of view of its geographical position, in order to understand the presence of products specific to the material culture of the Golden Horde, the medieval settlement at Isaccea⁴² is located on a promontory, northwest of the current town, very close to the well-known Danube River.

The discovery of the bowl, jug and moulds confirms our hypothesis that in the territory of the town there was a settlement known as Saqci, contemporary with the one at Isaccea–*Noviodunum* where the enigmatic Vicina town can be located⁴³.

³³ Bârnea, Scerbakova 1973, 203-204; Spinei 2006, 734, 764, fig. 13.

³⁴ Information given by L. Bacumenco.

³⁵ Elnikov, Tikhomolova 2017, 354-359.

³⁶ Naumenko *et alii* 2017, 203-210; Elnikov, Tikhomolova 2017, 353-361.

³⁷ The species of non-enamelled vessels with stamped motifs is likely to have its place of origin in Central Asia, where it was widespread. Spinei 2006, 722.

³⁸ Constantinescu 1972, 124-128, fig. 56, 57. It is possible that the copy from Coconi comes from a workshop at the mouths of the Danube.

³⁹ Neamțu, Neamțu, Cheptea 1984, 207, 210, fig. 88/6.

⁴⁰ Constantinescu 1984, 124.

⁴¹ Entirely new material, in the collection of the Museum of History “Paul Păltânea” Galați.

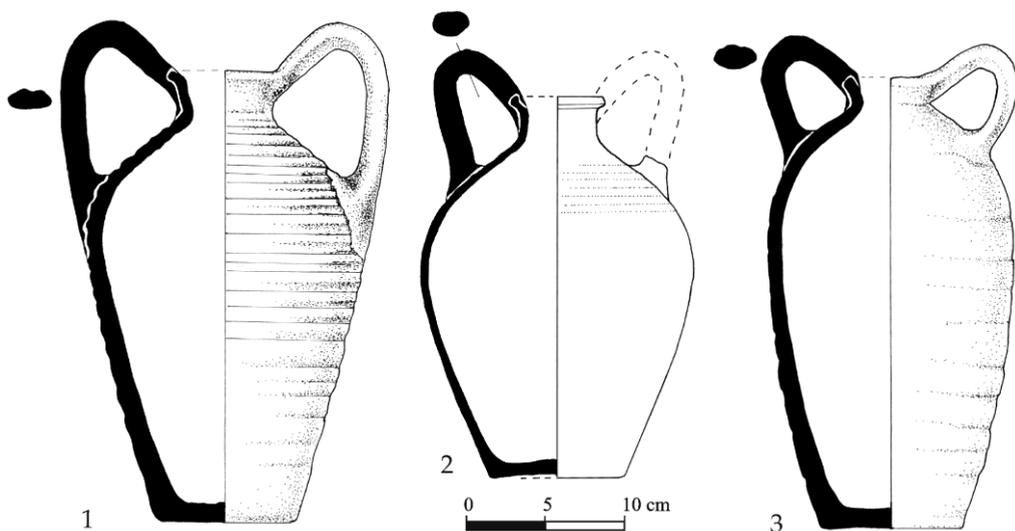
⁴² The Isaccea area, represented by the present-day territory of the town and the adjacent area that comprises its administrative territory, is known for traces of inhabitation attributed to different historical periods, and also for the fact that the area was a point of transit used over time by the various populations that have passed by here.

⁴³ The discovery of a liturgical vessel with Catholic iconography as well as an episcopal cross, plus a large number of coins, are just some of the archaeological arguments that support this hypothesis.

Preventive archaeological investigations carried out in the town's interior, in the years 2012, 2014 and 2016, confirm an intense inhabitation from the 13th to the 14th centuries. The settlement of the current town of Isaccea, can be identified with the centre where Nogai and its descendants exercised their authority in the region⁴⁴.

AMPHORAE AND AMPHOROIDAL JUG

At the time of the Uzum Baiır treasure discovery, two small amphorae were also found, which were used to conceal the coins⁴⁵. The amphorae have an oval body, a cylindrical neck, over-raised handles, a narrow and straight bottom. The decoration is represented by grooves, which start at the neck and end at the bottom, near the bottom, for one of the vessels. The second one is not decorated. There are also differences concerning the fabrics. Thus, the amphora which has grooves on the outside is made of a very high-quality red fabric, similar to the red enamelled ceramics. In the case of the second vessel, the fabric has a reddish-yellowish colour, with a lot of sand in composition and limestone concretions.



Pl. 10. Amphora's type 5 discovered at Uzun Baiır (1) and Isaccea-Noviodunum (2-3) (according to Stănică 2015, 458, pl. 59)

⁴⁴ The archaeological material, especially the ceramics and the coins, indicate an intense inhabitation in the 13th and 14th centuries. Stănică, Szmoniewski 2016, 327-344; Stănică 2015, 257-259.

⁴⁵ Iliescu, Simion 1964, 219-221.

In 2003, the preventive archaeological researches in the Isaccea – *Noviodunum* civilian settlement have documented, in a 13th century residential complex⁴⁶, three vessels resembling those of Uzum Baiır. The archaeological investigations at Nufăru, at several points in the fortress, especially in the 2006 and 2009 campaigns, also attest here the presence of this amphoric type⁴⁷.

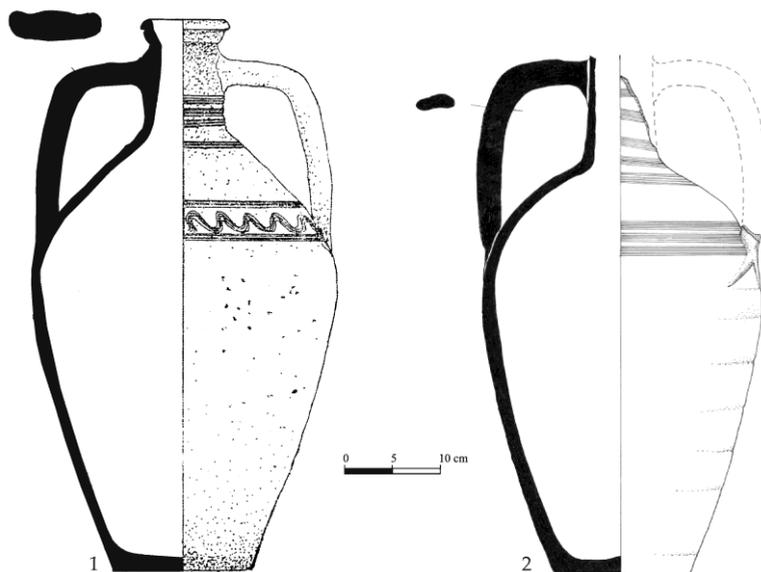


Fig. 11. Amphora's type 6 discovered at Tulcea (1) and Slava Rusă (2) (according to Stănică 2015, 460, pl. 61).

Also, preventive archaeological research in the town of Isaccea or Enisala–*Palanca* has led to the discovery of ceramic fragments and handles from such containers⁴⁸.

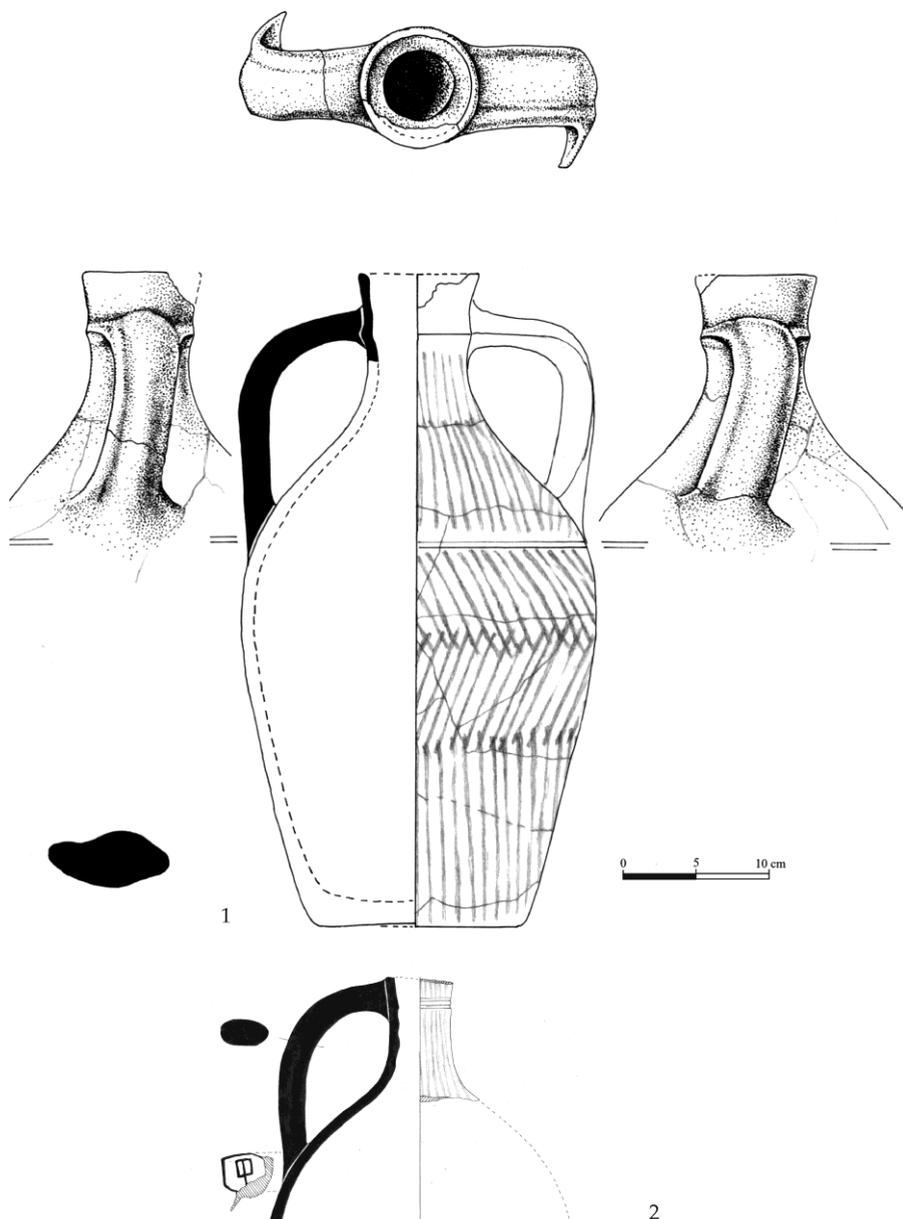
Type 5 amphorae, according to our typology for the discoveries in northern Dobrudja, are derived from types 3 and 4 and come from a centre in the north of the Black Sea, most probably Crimea⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ Fragments and handles of amphorae were discovered in Area 1, where the NAP project team excavated, but also on the site where the future headquarters of the Isaccea Border Police are to be built. See preventive archaeological excavations report, 2014, ICEM Tulcea Archive.

⁴⁷ Entirely new material, researches done by Oana Damian.

⁴⁸ The material comes from the excavations carried out in 2012. The fragments of amphorae and handles were discovered in household or residential complexes on the Crinului, I.L. Caragiale, Păcii, 24 Ianuarie și Constantin D. Gherea Streets.

⁴⁹ Maslovski *et alii* 2015, 229-230, 232/fig. 4/15-16.



Pl. 12. Red ceramic, ornamented with polished vertical lines discovered in Isaccea–Noviodunum (1-2).

The amphorae discovered at Isaccea–*Noviodunum* have an ovoid body, a flat or rounded bottom, a short, cylindrical neck and raised handles. The containers were made of a good quality fabric, well-kneaded, sifted sand, mica and micro-pebbles.

The vessels belonging to this type are dated in the 13th century and, based on the recent discoveries from Enisala–*Palanca* and Isaccea, we mention that some copies circulated in the 14th century too.

Another type of ceramic, somewhat larger in size, exceeding the capacity of the jugs, although imitating their shape, and closer to the shape of the ancient amphorae, is type 6, known in our literature as the “Coconi type jugs”. The amphorae have an ovoid elongated body, flat bottom, low neck, and maximum diameter on the shoulder area. They are made from a high-quality, very compact and evenly fired, reddish-yellowish fabric. The handles are massive, oval in section or rounded. The decoration consists of registers of incised strips on the neck and the shoulders of the vessel or incised strips in waves.

In Dobrudja, type 6 is documented through the discoveries from Tulcea⁵⁰, Slava Rusă⁵¹, which are dated in the second half of the 14th century. This type of amphorae has been discovered at Coconi, Tecuci, Cetatea Albă⁵².

In 1999, at Isaccea–*Noviodunum*, during the researches carried out in the city, in a dwelling⁵³, an amphoroidal vessel was discovered, medium speed wheel thrown, with a very fine fabric, with reddish-yellowish surfaces, decorated externally with glazed vertical, oblique and networked lines. The vessel has an ovoid and elongated body, with flat bottom, low neck and a maximum diameter in the shoulder area, handles oval in section, slightly asymmetrical in the direction of the potter’s wheel rotation. The handles are attached to the neck and the shoulders of the vessel. The slightly asymmetrical shape of the handles, with a little groove, seems a practical one

⁵⁰ Mănucu-Adameşteanu 1993, 453, fig. 10/6; Stănică 2015, 254, 460, Pl. 61/1.

⁵¹ Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2003, 67-68, note 2; Stănică 2015, 254, 460, Pl. 61/2.

⁵² Spinei 1994, 470, fig. 36/15.

⁵³ In the published report, the following clarifications were made: in “... the dwelling in square 13, with its floor of beaten clay, was identified at -0.89 m compared to the current level of walking; on the S side, in a thick layer of ash of 0.20-0.30 m, an amphoroidal jug was found, broken on the spot during the fire that destroyed the dwelling. For the unveiling of this complex was created a box (box 2) with the dimensions of 3.00×4.00 m. From the depth of -0.50 m its filler was determined with a lot of ash, coal and pieces of adobe; the dwelling, with the sides of 2.00×3.50 m, was researched almost entirely, except for the SE corner; no fire installation has been identified. In the eastern half, on a platform – as two burnt boards seem to indicate – four lying vessels were found: two amphorae and two amphoroidal jugs. Based on the numismatic and ceramic material it can be estimated that the house was destroyed on the occasion of the Tatar attack between 1241 and 1242”. CCA 1999, no. 72.

to facilitate the handling of the vessel. A fragment of a vessel, which belongs to this category and shows the decoration with enamelled vertical lines, was discovered in 1995 in the excavations from the Isaccea–*Noviodunum* Civil Settlement.

The red ceramic, ornamented with *glazed vertical lines* arranged at uneven intervals, finds analogies in Suceava⁵⁴, Baia⁵⁵, Costești⁵⁶, Orhei⁵⁷ and dates to the 14th century.

ORIENTAL STYLE CERAMICS

In the great category of enamelled ceramics, we notice the so-called kasha species, whose name comes from the renowned Kashan Ceramic Centre in Iran⁵⁸, hence the generic name of ceramic of Kashan. At *Noviodunum*, this category can be found in the filling of some domestic complexes and in contexts broadly dated in the 13th and 14th centuries. This discovery can be related to the activity of the merchants, who under the protection offered by Pax Tartarica, along the Silk Road, linked the Orient with Eastern Europe and have circulated various oriental products, including ceramics produced in the centre of Kashan.

RED GLAZED CERAMICS

By far the most widespread category of evidences found in archaeological excavations is that of enamelled ceramics. In the Romanian historiography, the considerations regarding the origin and spread of this category converge to the provenance and origin in the Byzantine world. Observations made on the ceramic material found in Isaccea, Isaccea–*Noviodunum*, Enisala Fortress and the rural settlement at Enisala–*Palanca* revealed several features that distinguish a series of discoveries of products considered to be of Byzantine style. Analogies with similar discoveries in Crimea and the northern area of the Black Sea, from Orhei, Costești and Cetatea Albă, led to the re-allocation to the 13th and 14th centuries of certain ceramic categories discovered in the settlements at the mouths of the Danube. Under the Golden Horde impulse, the production of enamelled ceramics undergoes a series of transformations concerning the execution techniques, shapes, decoration, applied enamel, which generated certain characteristics for the Black Sea area, which led some specialists to speak of the medieval pottery of "Pontic style"⁵⁹.

Based on the decoration, the following categories were identified: plain enamelled ceramics, ceramics with enamel and sgraffito decoration, sgraffitated

⁵⁴ Matei 1978, 547.

⁵⁵ Neamțu *et alii* 1984, 162, fig. 59/9-13, 16-18, 20; 163

⁵⁶ Information V. Vornic.

⁵⁷ Information Gh. Postică.

⁵⁸ Abyzova *et alii* 1982, 70-72; Kravčenko 1986, 93-94; Spinei 1993, 57.

⁵⁹ Slatineanu 1958, 55-56; Ciobanu 1971, 27; Damian 2013, 395-396, 407.

ceramics with painting under the enamel, ceramics with painting under the enamel and ceramics decorated in the *champ-levé* technique. Prior to firing, the vessels were colour-coated and then decorated with the techniques mentioned.

Among the forms of the enamelled ceramics worthy of consideration, we mention bowls, bowls with annular-shape foot, plates, high necked single handled jugs or those that have a spout. The vessels' fabric is distinguished by a superior quality, while the composition differs from vessel to vessel, which is explained by their different provenance, suggesting imports from some workshops in neighbouring regions.

There are predominantly open pots, bowls and beakers with annular base or plates, but not in large numbers. The applied enamel is a monochrome one, the different shades of yellow, brown, green, orange with a yellowish tinge, yellow-greenish, brick-red shade are dominant and cover the inner surface of the vessels and partially the outside. The decorative motifs are applied in the raw paste and consist of incised (*sgraffito*) or excised (*camp-levé*), geometric, vegetal, floral motifs, with analogies in the North Pontic space, the territory between the Prut and the Dniester. In general, the decoration is applied in the central area of the vessel, placed in concentric circles, either radially, in network or medallions. The constitutive elements of the decoration are represented by simple or concentric circles, made from lines of different thickness, rosettes, spirals, lines and parallel strips in zigzag or network, woven for geometric ones. The plant representations consist of leaves, stems, palms, while the zoomorphic representations are not found in the studied ceramic lot.

The enamelled ceramic from Isaccea-*Noviodunum* consists of a batch of 500 fragments, most of which belong to the group of Byzantine ceramics. Several fragments find their correspondent in the Crimean Mongolian ceramics. The good-quality matte, transparent or glassy enamel also shows a good knowledge of the craftsmanship, it covers the inner surface and the outer edge of the open vessels; the closed ones, are enamelled inside and out. For decoration specific to the Crimean vessels, we have embossed rosettes and medallions reproducing vegetal and floral motifs. As far as Mongolian ceramics are concerned, the embossed decoration is more evident compared to the products of the Byzantine centres. The stylistic and technical particularities differentiate it from the pottery of Byzantine tradition present in the rural and urban centres of Dobrudja, bringing it closer to the Pontic pottery specific to the Black Sea Basin, an area at the confluence of the Byzantine civilization with the Oriental world, with its Persian, Selgiukide, Armenian influences.

In the case of Isaccea, we can speak of a local production, and for the centres located in the neighbourhood, *Noviodunum* or Enisala, it can be assumed that at least part of the pottery was brought through exchange. In 2014, the preventive archaeological researches at Isaccea-*Noviodunum* documented six pottery kilns,

attesting workshops specialized in the production of common, non-enamelled ceramics. In terms of shapes, the products of the Isaccea–*Noviodunum* workshop are similar to the Danubian pottery specific to the contemporary Dobrudja centres.

The inclusion of the region in the "Great Circle of International Trade", the integration into the area under the control of the Golden Horde, the presence of the Genoese settlers, offer in some respects similarities with the fortresses of the Dniester and Crimea.

The archaeological argument is essential in demonstrating the control of the Golden Horde over the region at the Danube mouths. The review of some categories of material, in the present case – ceramic – reveals several common features with the Mongolian pottery, circulating within an extended space. The particularities of the decoration, the techniques used, the enamel, the fabric, the features that shaped some of the specific characteristics for the so-called Pontic products, outline the image of the Mongolian pottery (Golden Horde) from the 13th and 14th centuries. The common features, the inheritance of the Byzantine forms, the refined enamel technique, the enrichment with new shapes and new motifs added to the decorative register taken from the Islamic art, offer a specific mark to the ceramic objects produced in the Golden Horde.

The diffusion of reddish-yellowish and enamelled ceramics in the areas under the control of the Golden Horde highlights the standardization of new forms as well as the remarkable progress in the production of ceramics. The inclusion of the territory from the mouths of the Danube under the command of Mongolian Hans facilitated a free movement of craftsmen, merchants and obviously goods. The findings from Isaccea clearly show a local production, aligned with the standards of the time, which implies the existence of local craftsmen or a population of Noyans coming from the regions under their control. In the port settlements at the mouths of the Danube (*Isaccea-Noviodunum*, Nufăru and Enisala), together with the Byzantine ceramics, the ceramic categories produced in the Golden Horde centres were also widely spread, generating a characteristic feature of the Pontic area, which led some specialists who have noticed this aspect, to speak of medieval ceramics of "Pontic style"⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Older studies speak of "enamel pottery coloured in green, yellow, blue, decorated with animal motifs, typically feudal, dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, provincial Byzantine." Slatineanu 1958, 55-56; Ciobanu 1971, 27; "Numerous ceramic fragments, many of them small in size, coming from vessels of various shapes and sizes, wheel thrown, in most cases enamelled, with phytomorphic, zoomorphic and geometric decoration, most often made in the sgraffito technique, in Byzantine and local style, and a few of Oriental origins, dating from the 13th to the 14th centuries". "The enamelled ceramic with painted, incised or excised decoration was found in quite a large amount at Enisala. On the bottom of some plates at Enisala, on the inside are incised Byzantine monograms abbreviating different names: Dimitrie, Mihail, which probably point to the craftsman". Dragomir 1972-1973, 34; Barnea 1971, 389-390. Based on the ceramic material, a series of observations were made at the end of the 70's of the last century. Baraschi, Cantacuzino

The vessels made of yellowish-red fabric or a part of the red-enamelled ceramics came into the territory at the mouth of the Danube carried by merchants, used as containers for storing or transporting products, but also as household items of a very good quality. The presence in Isaccea of the enamelled ceramics attests to a workshop specialized in producing this category, a characteristic of the urban environment. These discoveries place on the archaeological map of Dobrudja a new, little known site, which based on the ceramic material presents some particularities that distinguish it from the known settlements.

In this approach we could not use several methods employed in the study of ceramics: chemical, microscopic, spectral, thermal or irradiation. In the future, it is necessary to approach the new technologies, which can come up with important additional information about the preparation of the fabric, the areas / regions where the clay comes from, and based on the synoptic tables with chemical compounds, we could refer to the ceramic's particularities for each site, region or the circulation of certain vessels.

1980, 468. "The medieval pottery is dated between the 13th and the 16th centuries, it comprises both known categories: common and enamelled. The common ceramics are documented particularly by fragments of pots and jugs, in most cases enamelled on the inner face of the rim, with two observations, namely the presence of many pieces of pots enamelled with colourless enamel over their entire inner surface, while regarding the decorative element, in addition to the enamel stretched only on the rim, white humas appears in the oblique or vertical shades. The enamelled ceramics include plates, bowls, jugs, but the latter form is rarely seen. Along with local materials made from red fabric, decorated in sgraffito technique or painted, there are also Oriental fragments, generally limited in number, represented by fragments of faience pots, decorated with motifs painted in blue and others, made of kaolin fabric, geometrically or florally ornamented with blue, red or green". Making a parallel between the forms unearthed in the researches carried out in the rural settlement near Palanca and those resulting from random discoveries in the fortress, the materials in the collections of the museum in Tulcea, Gh. Mănuclu-Adameşteanu remarks that in the fortress the ceramics of superior style – bowls, plates, dishes – worked in sgraffito and champ-levé techniques, predominate; among them, the monogrammed vessels or oriental ceramics can be noted, all proving a net differentiation from the pottery found in the rural settlement in the valley (Mănuclu-Adameşteanu 1991, 397, note 26). The preventive archaeological researches carried out in 2014 on the Enisala–Palanca site do not confirm these considerations. See also the discovery of enamelled ceramics with monograms and Crimean Mongolian ceramics from Enisala (Iosipescu, Iosipescu 2004, 314-315). The Ceramic Lot of the Enisala Fortress, recently published by Oana Damian, contains material of "Byzantine style" and "presents stylistic particularities that distinguish them from the products of other contemporary Dobrogean centres ..., generally bringing them closer to the ceramics of the Black Sea basin". Damian 2013, 395-396, 407.

Archaeological investigations provide a rich "documentation" that can be used to examine the economic behaviours of the local community in the 13th and 14th centuries. More than a study of "potsherds" or a history full of precise details, the archaeology offers the window through which you can discern some moments from the life of those living in urban or rural settlements, by examining the types of goods that they consumed as well as their use. At the same time, the relations between the local communities and the economic exchanges in which they were involved at a regional or global level can be re-evaluated. The local and regional ceramics trade provides an insight into the economic behaviour of the region's population. The archaeological research offers the image of a very intense trade, where we can find together the ceramics produced in local centres and products of the workshop located on the Prut and Dniester or in the Crimean centres. The presence of the ceramics specific to the Golden Horde at the mouths of the Danube offers an argument that cannot be disputed regarding the control exercised by the Mongols. The subject raises many questions, our approach, being a first step in making observations on the ceramic discoveries in Dobrudja belonging to the Golden Horde.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The presence of the Golden Horde at the mouths of the Danube made a deep impression on the local society, engaging the region in intense international economic exchanges, putting its mark on material culture. Further arguments are brought by the archaeological excavations, by providing new data, especially due to the discovered ceramic material. As we mentioned at the beginning, except for some discoveries in the north of Dobrudja that have been reconsidered and attributed to the Golden Horde, the archaeological investigations are still at an early stage.

For the 13th and 14th centuries, the ceramics discovered in the North-Dobrudjan settlements have various ornamental forms and motifs. The existence of a local production is confirmed by the ceramics production workshop in Isaccea, by a series of compounds added to the fabric of the vessels, some decoration elements, some forms of the vessels, etc. The establishment of nomadic or semi-nomadic populations in the northern area of Dobrudja, which entered the local communities, interacting with them, resulted in an ethnic synthesis, which was also reflected in the economy, in the diverse production by categories of materials, including ceramics.

Between the local production and the tendencies imposed by those who controlled the region, there were contamination and mutual influences between the different types of vessels and decorative motifs. Thus, in the evolution of the ceramics produced in the settlements in northern Dobrudja between the 13th and 14th centuries,

in addition to the forms of vessels and the traditional methods, some heterogeneous influences specific to the Golden Horde pottery entered.

In this paper, we tried to present the ceramic types attested through archaeological research in northern Dobrudja for the 13th and 14th centuries, which is an important argument regarding the control exercised by the Golden Horde on the area at the mouths of the Danube.

Also, by thoroughly studying different categories of artefacts, new data on the presence and control of the Golden Horde at the mouths of the Danube can be provided.

We hope that in the future the archaeological research will provide new information on the presence and material culture of the Golden Horde at the mouths of the Danube River.

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