

**TECHNOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POTTERY FROM
EARLY ROMAN MILITARY DWELLING AND LATE ROMAN
LEVELS IN CONBUSTICA (COMBUSTICA) NEAR THE VILLAGE OF
KLADORUB, DIMOVO MUNICIPALITY**

KRASSIMIRA LUKA

The excavations in *Conbustica* were carried out between 2008 and 2011 and revealed a stone fortification wall with dimensions 110 x 140 m (Tabl. I/1) and three periods: an Early Roman military camp - Level 1 (third - fourth quarter of 1st c. AD), a level dated back to the second half of the 4th c. AD connected to the building of the stone fortification (Level 2) and a period when the wall was destroyed in the middle of the 5th c. AD (Level 3). The paper discusses the pottery found in Trench No 3 - the only place at the site which remains unaffected by treasure-hunters' invasion (Fig. 1, Tabl. II). The pottery from Trench 3 is divided in several technological groups (TG) as follow:

TG I: Thin-walled red-slip pottery - registered only in Level 1 (the Early Roman level).

TG II: Thin-walled black-slip pottery (*terra nigra*).

TG III: Red-slip pottery (Fig. 8) with 3 subgroups (TSG) divided on the basis of firing and color of the shards. Generally, the amount of red-slip pottery found in Trench 3 is not great (Fig. 5-7). The shards found in the Early Roman level are of better quality (TSG III/1). In the later periods the amount of red-slip fragments increases and is registered an extensive use of vessels made of kaolin clay.

TG IV: Plain Roman pottery (not slipped pottery) (Fig. 9) with 4 subgroups. This kind of pottery was in most intensive use in the three registered levels. Once again, the better quality shards are found in the earlier level. Typical for the Late Roman levels (4th-5th c.) are poorly fired shards (TSG IV/2) and the presence of vessels made of kaolin clay.

TG V: Pottery made by sandy clay with two subgroups. This kind of pottery is registered only in the Late Roman levels.

TG VI: Gray pottery (Fig. 10). This refers to the so called „burnished pottery“ but not all vessels of this group were decorated. That's why the group is divided on the basis of the quality of the shards, respectively light gray poorly fired pottery (TSG VI/1) and dark gray to black well fired pottery (TSG VI/2). Most shards of the first subgroup are not burnished. This group was in use in all periods registered at the site.

TG VII: Glazed pottery. The group is registered in level 1 and 3 in small quantity (only two shards).

TG VIII: Coarse pottery (Fig. 11). This group is typical again for all periods but in the Early Roman level it is with greatest thickness of the walls and 33 % of the shards were probably made by using pottery wheel.

TG IX: Tare (imported amphorae).

On the basis of the statistical analysis of the pottery the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The technological diversity of red slip and plain red pottery (TG III and IV) in the earlier period shows that these vessels were produced in some big pottery center, i.e. they can be interpreted rather as imported than as local production.

2. There is no clear evidence for use of „local pottery“ by the Roman military troops in *Moesia* in the 1st century AD. The so called „local pottery made on potter’s wheel“ (Кабакчиева, Г. 1994-1995: 75, 83-84, Кат. №№ 38-41) and „burnished pottery“ (Кабакчиева, Г. 2005: 96-105; Вагалински, Л. 2002: 76) that belong to the Early Roman period, in fact represent two variants of a single technological group which was used, according to the stratigraphic data, during the 1st c. AD. At the only place where this group is dated to the Late Iron Age - *Castra Martis* (30 km away from *Conbustica*, the modern town of Kula), the stratigraphic evidence shows that such period does not exist.

3. After the beginning of the 4th century, a local deposit of kaolin clay was used extensively. The vessels made of kaolin clay are obviously local production and the definitions „fine light-clay pottery“ and „Late Roman light sandy pottery“ used by Geragana Kabakchiva for the same group in *Castra Martis* are not correct.

4. There is great discrepancy between the information coming from *Conbustica* and that from *Castra Martis* concerning the quantity of the glazed pottery. The use of this technological group in *Conbustica* is only 0,3 % for the entire site. According to Georgi Kuzmanov, the glazed pottery predominates in the latest layers in *Castra Martis* (Кузманов, Г. 2005: 152). This mismatch can be explained with the methodology used for the pottery from *Castra Martis*, i.e. with tendentious selection of the glazed shards. Not very precise approach to the pottery material in *Castra Martis* can be seen also in the presence of lots of shards dated in the 4th and 5th century in the chapter „Roman and burnished pottery“, pretending to represent the material dated to the 2nd and 3rd century AD (Кабакчиева, Г. 2005: 85, Кат. № 6-14; 87, Кат. № 19-20; 88, Кат. № 21-22; 89, Кат. № 24, 25-26; 90, Кат. № 29; 93, Кат. № 34-35; 94, Кат. № 37-38; 95, Кат. № 39-40, 42; 96, Кат. № 44; 102, Кат. № 64; 103, Кат. № 68-71; 104, Кат. № 73-80, 82). That brings us to the conclusion that the pottery from *Castra Martis* was artificially divided into two periods and that, compared to the materials from *Conbustica*, the published pottery from *Castra Martis* in fact belongs to one single period - the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century AD.