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## THE IMPORTATION OF LATE ROMAN RED SLIP WARES INTO BOSPORUS (KERCH)

*Recent excavations in Kerch (ancient Pantikapaion, Bosphorus) revealed new archaeological complexes of the Late Roman period. There are four manufacturing groups of the red slip ware in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD: Pontic Red Slip, African Red Slip, Late Roman C/Phocian Red Slip and Late Roman Light-Colored. In the late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 6<sup>th</sup> century the Black Sea regional trade played the main role and Bosphorus had the closest relations with the South Pontic centers. PRS ware prevailed in Bosporan complexes and only isolated fragments of other red slip ware groups reached the city during this period. The import from the Mediterranean centers sharply increased from the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. LRC/PhRS vessels in Bosporan complex reached on average approximately 70 %. However after the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the Phocian import drastically curtailed. Currently Bosporan complexes of the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century have not yet been discovered. Nevertheless rare imported finds in Bosphorus indicate a continuation of some traditional trade relations and some red slip ware supplies to the city from the Mediterranean centers at least until the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.*

6<sup>th</sup>-century Bosphorus (ancient *Pantikapaion*, modern Kerch) was the main center on the Cimmerian Bosphorus Strait (**fig. 1**). For centuries the city had been the capital of Bosporan Kingdom and in the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century it came under the control of the Byzantine Empire<sup>1</sup>. As a result of recent archaeological research in Bosphorus a lot of new Late Roman red slip wares have been revealed. The main part of our collection consists of more than 2356 fragments of the late 4<sup>th</sup>–the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane (**fig. 2,1**)<sup>2</sup>. A further 50 sherds and intact vessels, including unpublished earlier, were found in other districts of the city and are also studied here (**fig. 2,2–8**)<sup>3</sup>.

The red slip ware of four Pontic and Mediterranean production centers was shipped to the site between the late 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (**fig. 1; diagram 1**): Pontic Red Slip ware (PRS) (**figs. 3; 4,1–4**), African Red Slip ware (ARS) (**figs. 4,5–16**), Late Roman C/Phocian Red Slip ware (LRC/PhRS) (**figs. 5–7**) and Late Roman Light-Colored ware (LRL-C) (**fig. 8**). The analysis of the material from Bosporan excavations has made it possible to ascertain chronological and quantitative changes in the delivery of pottery from different regions.

The Pontic Red Slip ware, which was presumably produced in the north-eastern part of *Asia Minor*, had mainly regional distribution within the Black Sea area<sup>4</sup>. In Bosphorus Lane 1013 Pontic Red Slip fragments were found; they make up approximately 43 % of all the Late Roman ware (**diagram 1**). Pontic vessels predominated in Bosporan layers of the late 4<sup>th</sup>–the mid-5<sup>th</sup> centuries where they reached around 90 % on average<sup>5</sup>. As a whole in Bosphorus we have recognized eight main forms of Pontic Red Slip ware, some uncommon vessels and several jug sherds, which were produced from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> up to the early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (**fig. 3; 4,1–4; diagram 2**). More than three-quarters of the most popular dishes of the form 1 belong to early versions with pointed or plain rim (**fig. 3,2–5**), while the dishes with rounded rim (**fig. 3,6**) first appear closer to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> AIBABIN 1999, 94–95.

<sup>2</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 312–339. I would like to express my gratitude to A. I. Aibabin (Research Center of History and Archaeology of Crimea, Crimean Federal University, Simferopol) for the possibility to publish pottery from his excavations in Kerch.

<sup>3</sup> **Cooperative Lane (fig. 2,2)**: excavations of A. I. Aibabin in 1990–1992 (AIBABIN 1999, 135–137 figs. 54–56) and in 2006 (SMOKOTINA 2014, 78 fig. 5; SMOKOTINA 2015, 321 figs. 5,15; 8,5,6). – **Lenin Street 10, 12 (fig. 2,3)**: unpublished sherd of form 3F LRC/PhRS ware from A. I. Aibabin excavation in 2002 (A. I. AIBABIN/I. V. AČKINAZI/L. A. GOLOFAST, *Raskopki zol'nika rimskogo vremeni u podnožija gory Mitridat v Kerči. Bospor Kimmerijskij i varvskij mir v period antičnosti i srednevekov'ja. Bosporskije čtenija IV* [Kerč' 2003] 7–11). – **On the plateau of Mount Mithridates (fig. 2,4)**: excavations of V. P. Tolstikov (D. V. ŽURAVLEV, *Novye dannye o Pantikapee v pozdneantičnuju epochu. Bosporskij gorod Nimfej. Materialy meždunarodnoj naučnoj konferencii* [Sankt-Peterburg 1999] 28–32 figs. 1–8). – **Near the church of St. John the Forerunner (fig. 2,5)**: PRS ware forms 1B and 3 (T. I. MAKAROVA, *Otčet o raskopkach v Kerči na byvszej rynočnoj ploščadi v 1964 g. Archiv Inst. Arch. RAN 1964, № 3582,24 and her unpublished personal files*). – **Teatral'naja Street, 12 (fig. 2,6)**: FEDOSEEV/DOMŽALSKI/OPAI/KULIKOV 2010, 63–94. – **Tomb № 180 (fig. 2,7)**: ARS ware form 109 (ŠKORPIL 1907, 57; I. P. ZASECKAJA, *Bosporskij nekropol' kak etalonnij pamjatnik drevnostej IV – načala VII vv. Archeologija. Krym, Severo-Vostočnoe Pričernomor'e i Zakavkaz'e v epochu srednevekov'ja*

[Moskva 2003] 39 tab. 17,12). – **Tomb № 19/1904 (fig. 2,8)**: LRC/PhRS ware form 3F with motif 79 (ŠKORPIL 1907, 1; 7–8; AIBABIN 1999, 104–105 fig. 37,7).

<sup>4</sup> ARSEN'EVA/DOMŽALSKI 2002, 422–428 figs. 5–13; K. DOMŽAL'SKI/D. V. ŽURAVLEV, *Fragmenty pontijskoj pozdnerimskoj loščenoj keramiki s christianskoj simvolikoj iz Chersonesa. Rossijskaja Arch. 2, 2013, 109–110.*

<sup>5</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 316 diagram 7.

<sup>6</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 316; 318.

Generally, dishes and bowls produced from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> up to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries absolutely prevailed among all Pontic Red Slip ware which was found in Bosphorus (forms 0/4, 1A, 1A/B, 2–6) (**diagram 2**). Only isolated fragments of African Red Slip ware and Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip vessels reached the city during this period.

The African Red Slip ware from modern Tunisia was delivered to the Black Sea region in small quantities<sup>7</sup>. For instance, in the complexes of Bosphorus Lane only 32 sherds of probably 25 vessels were found, which make up about 1.3 % of all Late Roman fragments from that site (**fig. 4,5–10.13.14; diagram 1**). It could be noted also that in Bosphorus we don't know African finds earlier than of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, although such fragments are occasionally found in some other Black Sea centers<sup>8</sup>.

Most of the African Red Slip ware shipped to Bosphorus arrived in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup>–the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly from northern Tunisia where they were manufactured in D1 fabric (El-Mahrine area)<sup>9</sup>. At the same time rare sherds of Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip ware were delivered to the city in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (forms 1, 2, 3A) (**fig. 5,1–9; diagrams 3–4**). Some early forms of Phocean vessels were noted in the Bosporan complexes for the first time (form 3A, for example).

After the middle or third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century the share of the Phocean Red Slip ware gradually increased and reached approximately 20–25 %<sup>10</sup>. Some vessels bore stamped decoration with floral, geometric and animal motifs<sup>11</sup>.

Pontic Red Slip ware continued to dominate in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, although the quantity slowly decreased to about 70 %. Some new dishes of later Pontic production appeared in Bosporan complexes around the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (forms 1B and 7) (**fig. 3,6.12**). By this time the amount of African Red Slip ware in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea regions had been dramatically reduced; only one plate fragment of the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century has been found in Bosphorus (**fig. 4,12**)<sup>12</sup>. Rare vessels of Late Roman Light-Colored ware from the north-eastern Aegean also appear in Bosphorus at this time or soon afterwards<sup>13</sup>. Bosphorus Lane yielded only 11 fragments, which on the ground of their morphology and decoration could be dated from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (**fig. 8**). They make up approximately half a percent of the Late Roman fine pottery in this area of the city (**diagram 1**). In the Bosphorus Lane excavations all recovered fragments were found in complexes of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

By the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the production of Pontic Red Slip ware had most likely come to an end or been reduced dramatically. In their stead from the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century Phocean Red Slip ware imports, mainly of the most popular bowls 3F (**fig. 6,4–6**) and 3G (**fig. 6,7**) forms, sharply increased. In this period they make up more than 60 % of all the Phocean Red Slip ware forms excavated in Bosphorus lane (**diagram 4**). LRC/PhRS ware as a whole reached approximately 70 % of all red slip ceramics in Bosporan complexes of the second-third quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> But after the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century importation of Phocean Red Slip ware was also drastically curtailed<sup>15</sup>. Bowls of the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century constitute just about 5.6 % of all Phocean finds from excavations in Bosphorus Lane (forms 3G/10, 10A) (**fig. 7,1; diagram 3**). Also only two probably contemporaneous fragments of the African Red Slip vessels were found there (forms 99B and 104A) (**fig. 4,14**). In 576 Bosphorus was attacked and partly destroyed by the Turkic invasion; even the territory of the city was reduced. By the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the site investigated in Bosphorus Lane was abandoned, and this area was being used for burials.<sup>16</sup>

Complexes dating only within the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century have not yet been discovered in Bosphorus. Finds of red slip ware of the late 6<sup>th</sup>–the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century are very rare. Nevertheless, among the materials from medieval city layers and from Bosporan cemeteries we were able to identify some fragments and intact vessels of North African (**fig. 4,15–16**) and Phocean bowls (**fig. 7,3–4**), which were produced in the first half – the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. On this ground we can suppose the continuation of some red slip ware supplies to the city at least until the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>17</sup>.

Thus the analysis of the Late Roman red slip ware from Bosporan excavations allows us to figure out chronological and quantitative changes in the delivery of pottery from different Pontic and Mediterranean centers. During the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> – early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries the Black Sea regional trade played the main role and Bosphorus had the closest relations with the South Pontic centers. Pontic Red Slip ware prevailed in Bosporan complexes, whereas Mediterranean imports gradually increased from the 5<sup>th</sup> into the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. About 527–528 Bosphorus came under the control of the Byzantine Empire. Most probably this political change has contributed to some reorientation of traditional trade relations. By this time the production of the Pontic Red Slip ware most likely had come to an end. Instead, supplies of Mediterranean red slip wares, mainly Phocean vessels, sharply increased, together with other goods from the Eastern Mediterranean that arrived in transport amphorae.

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<sup>7</sup> HAYES 1972, 13–299; M. BONIFAY, *Études sur la céramique romaine tardive d'Afrique*. BAR Internat. Ser. 1301 (Oxford 2004) 45–65 fig. 22; ARSEN'EVA/DOMZALSKI 2002, 434.

<sup>8</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 316–317.

<sup>9</sup> M. MACKENSEN, *Die spätantiken Sigillata- und Lampentöpfereien von El Mahrine (Nordtunesien)*. Studien zur nordafrikanischen Feinkeramik des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts. Münchner Beitr. Vor- u. Frühgesch. 50 (München 1993); SMOKOTINA 2014, 73.

<sup>10</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, diagram 8; 9.

<sup>11</sup> A. V. SMOKOTINA, *Štampy na rannevizantijskoj krasnolakovoj keramike iz raskopok g. Bospora*. Mat. Arch. Istor. i Étnografii Tavrii 15, 2009, 132–173.

<sup>12</sup> M. BONIFAY, *Observations sur la diffusion des céramiques africaines en Méditerranée orientale durant l'antiquité tardive*. Mélanges Jean Pierre Sodini. Travaux et Mém. 15 (Paris 2005) 568–569.

<sup>13</sup> HAYES 1972, 408–410.

<sup>14</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 318–320.

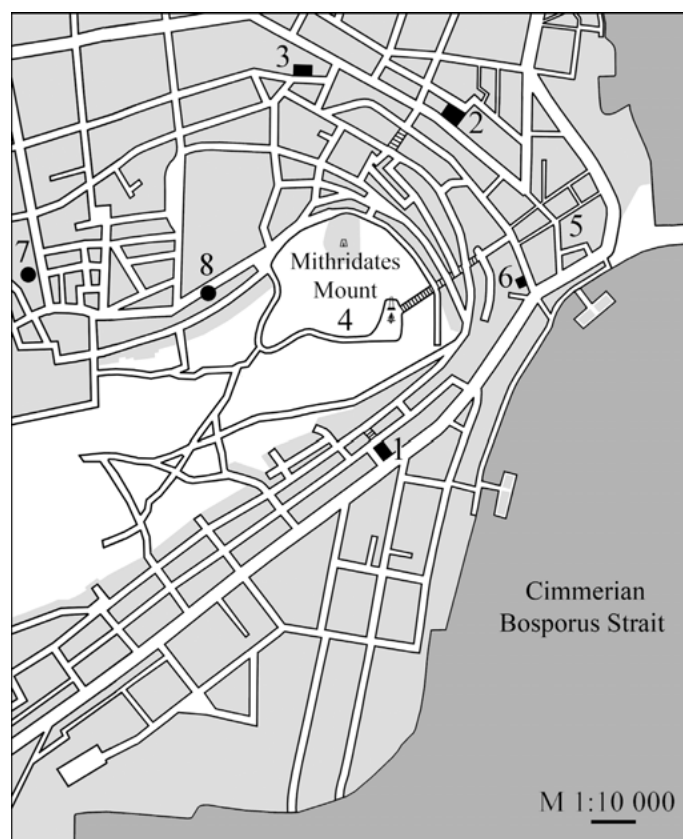
<sup>15</sup> J. W. HAYES, *The Pottery. Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul 2* (Princeton 1992) 7; SMOKOTINA 2015, 320.

<sup>16</sup> AİBABIN 1999, 134–141; SMOKOTINA 2015, 321.

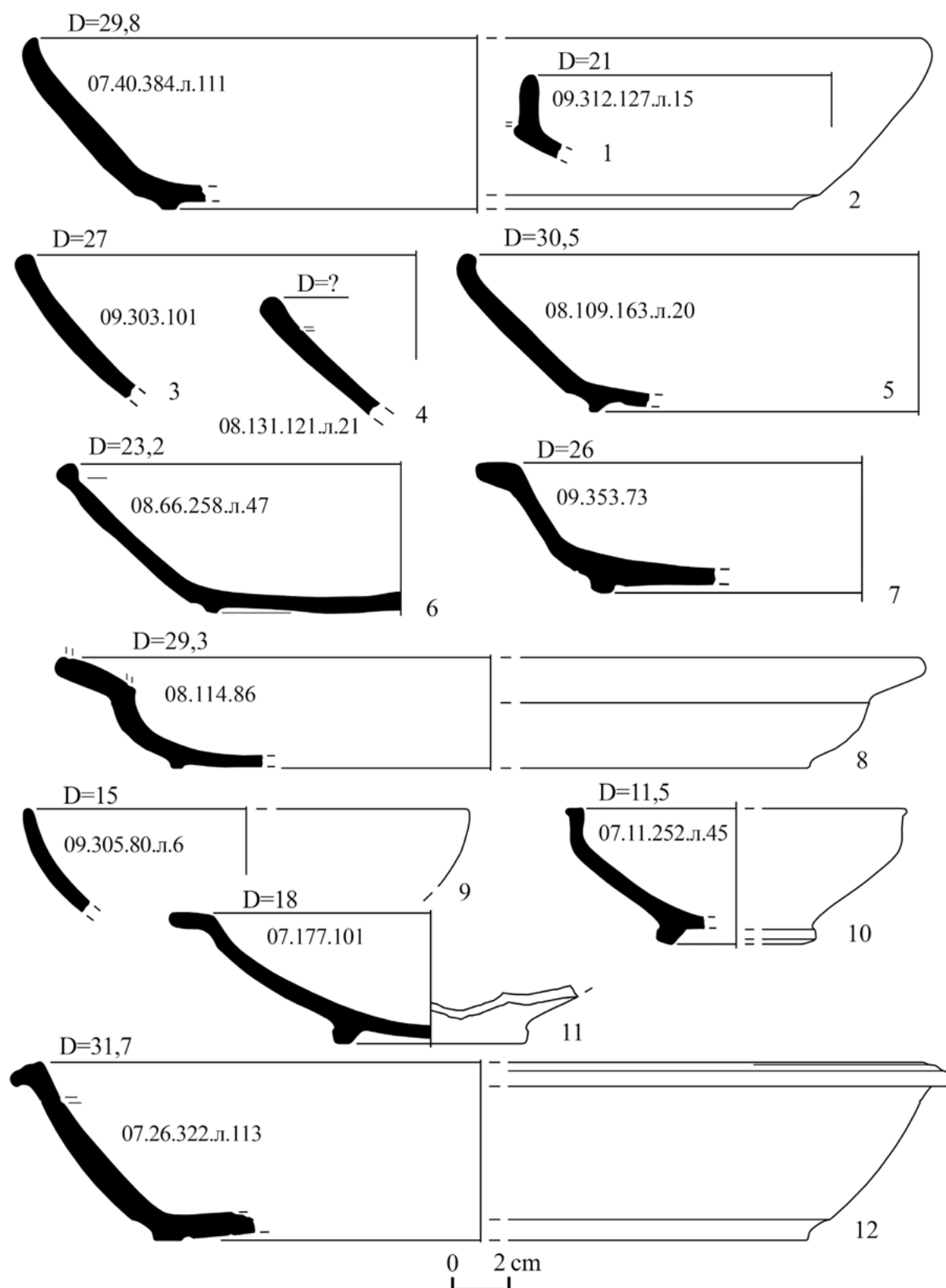
<sup>17</sup> SMOKOTINA 2015, 321.



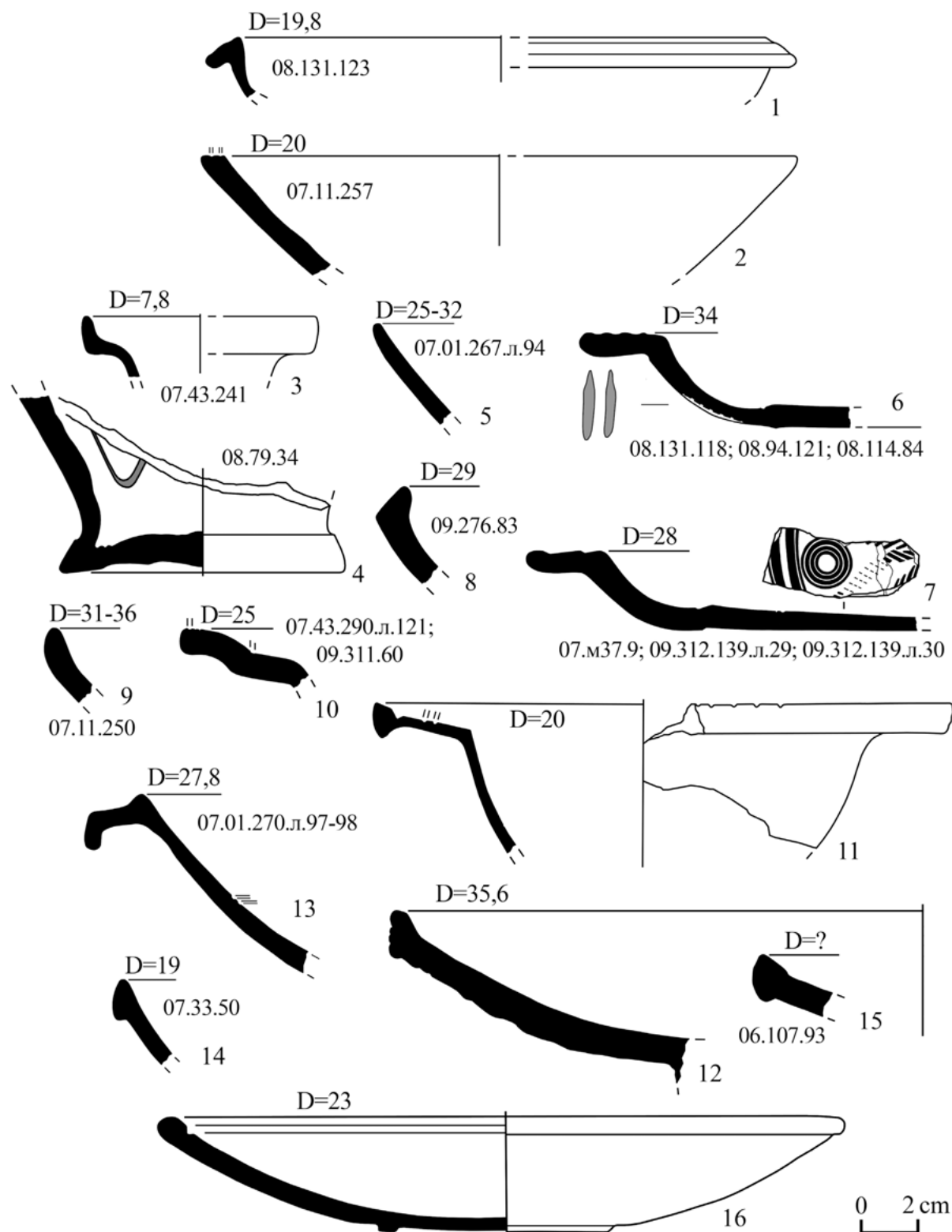
**Fig. 1.** Bosporus and regions of production of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Late Roman red slip ware mentioned in text.



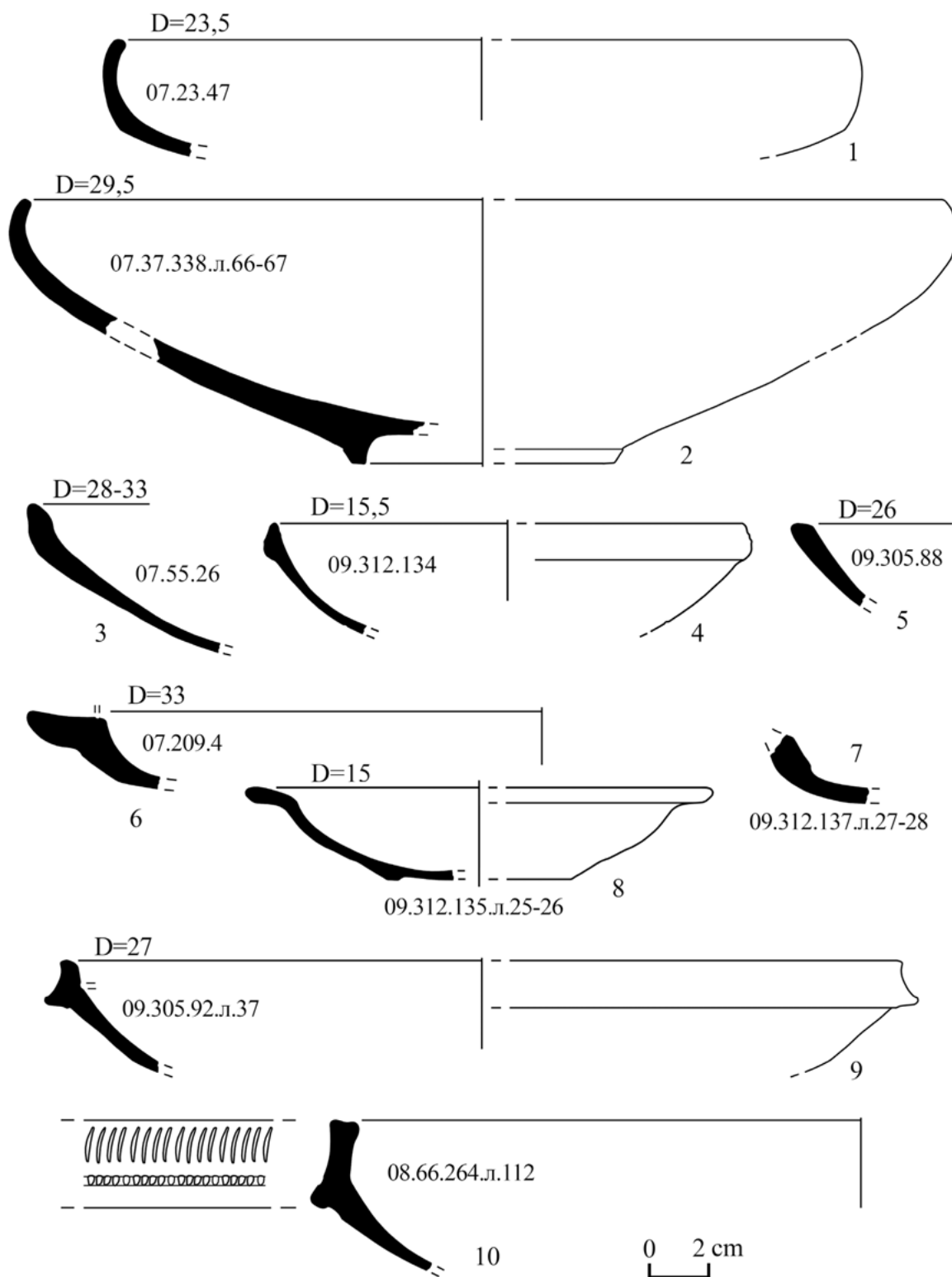
**Fig. 2.** Investigated areas in Bosporus (Kerch): **1** Bosporus Lane; **2** Cooperative Lane; **3** Lenin Street 10, 12; **4** on the plateau of Mount Mithridates; **5** near the church of St. John the Forerunner; **6** Teatral'naja Street 12; **7** tomb № 180; **8** tomb № 19/1904.



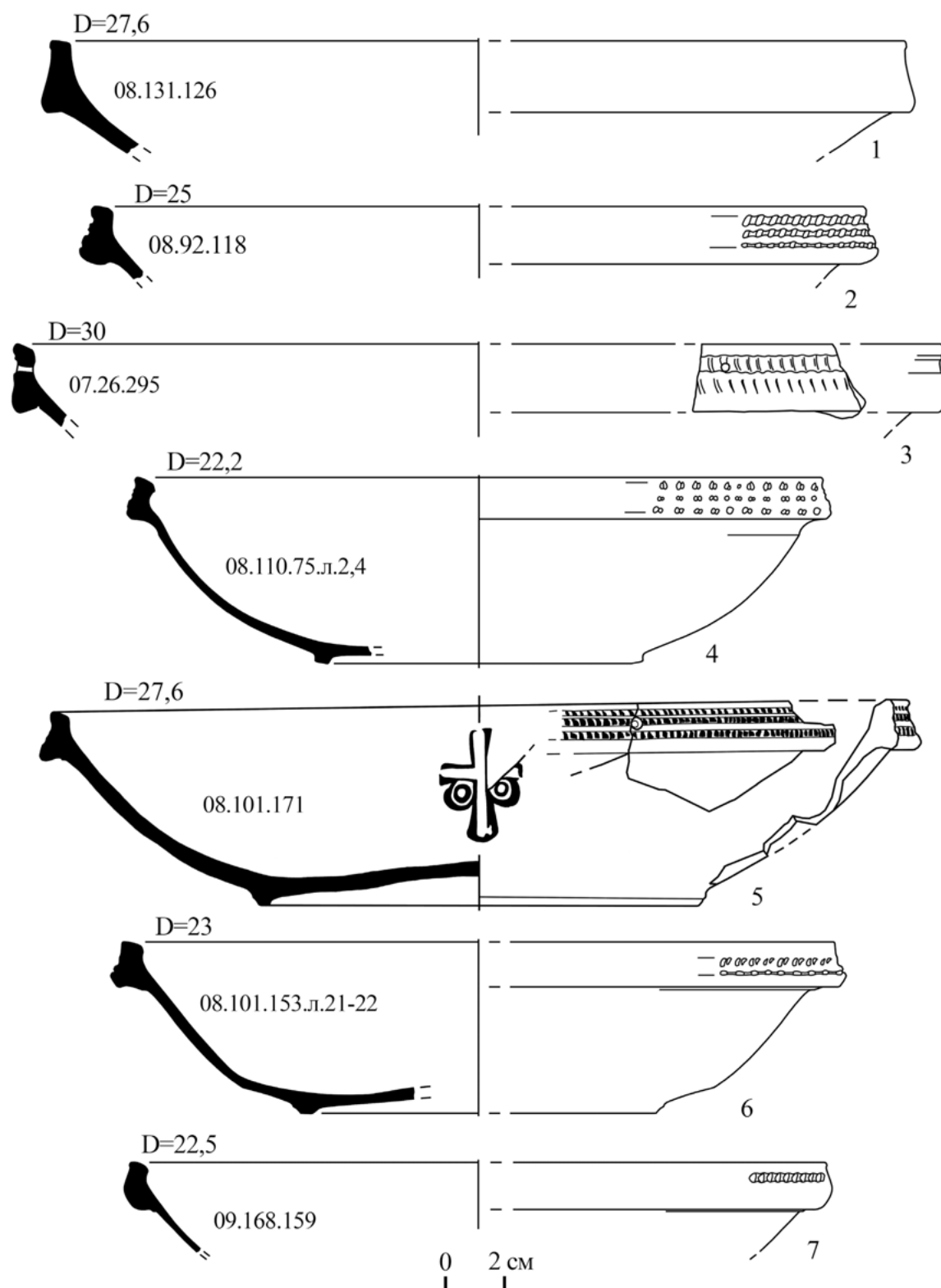
**Fig. 3.** Pontic Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane: forms 0/4 (1), 1A (2), 1A/B (3–5), 1B (6), 2 (7), 3 (8), 4 (9), 5 (10), 6 (11), 7 (12) by K. Domżański 2002.



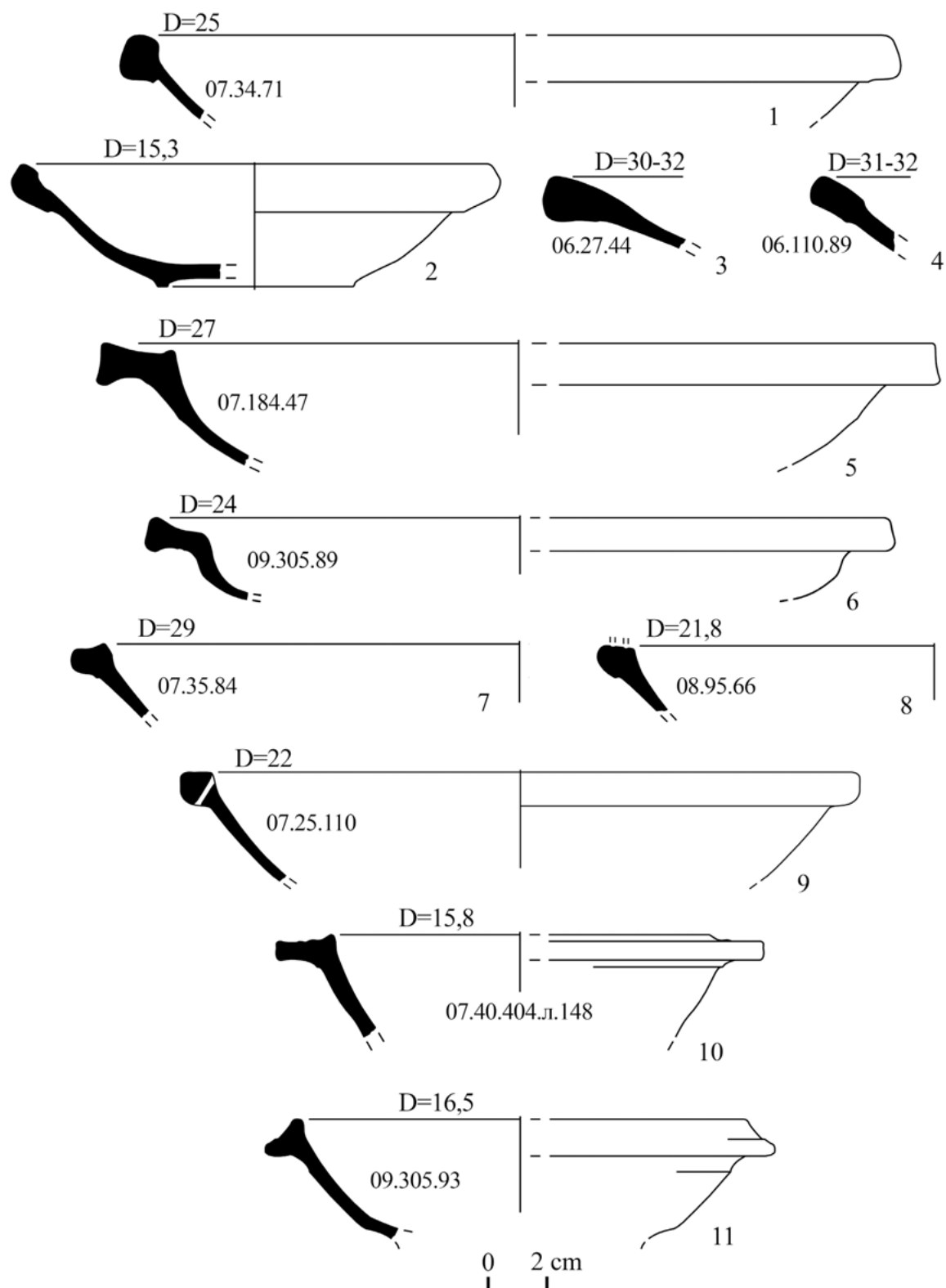
**Fig. 4.** Pontic Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane: unknown forms (1–2) and jugs (3–4). – African Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane (5–10; 13–14), in Cooperative Lane (11; 12; 15) and tomb № 180 (16): forms 50B (5), 59A (6), 59B (7), 61A (8), 64 (9), 67 (10), 73 (11) (AIBABIN 1999 fig. 55,5), 82 (12) (AIBABIN 1999 fig. 56,5), 91A (13), 99B (14), 105B/C (15), 109 (16) by J. W. Hayes 1972.



**Fig. 5.** Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane: forms 1A (1), 1B (2) 1C/D (3), 1D (4), 1 var. (5), 2A (6), 2C (7), 2D (8), 3A (9), 3B (10) by J. W. Hayes 1972.

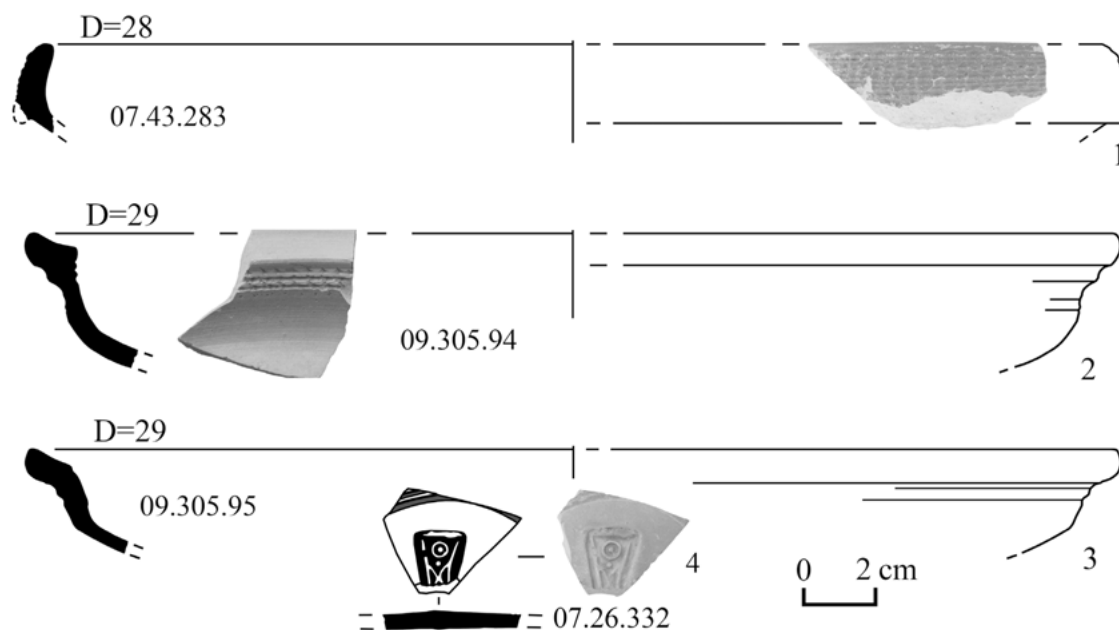


**Fig. 6.** Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosporus Lane: forms 3C (1), 3D (2), 3E (3), 3F (4-6), 3G (7) by J. W. Hayes 1972.

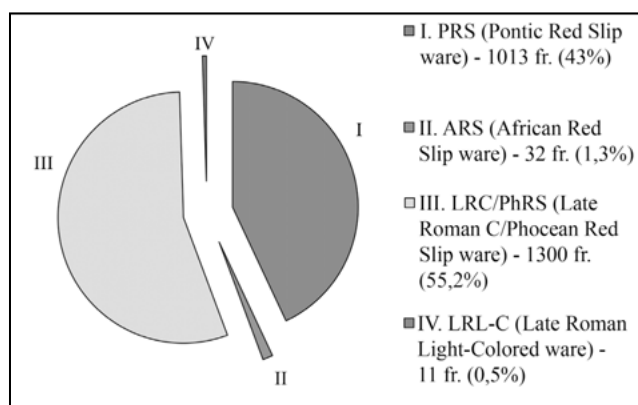


**Fig. 7.** Late Roman C/Phocian Red Slip ware from the excavations in Bosphorus Lane (**1; 5–11**), Teatral'naja Street, 12 (FEDOSEEV/DOMŽALSKI/ОРАТІ/КУЛИКОВ 2010 fig. 7) (**2**) and Cooperative Lane (**3–4**): forms 10A (**1**), 10A/C (**2**), 10C (**3–4**), 5 (**5–6**), 6 (**7**), 6 var. (**8–9**), 8 (**10–11**) by J. W. Hayes 1972.

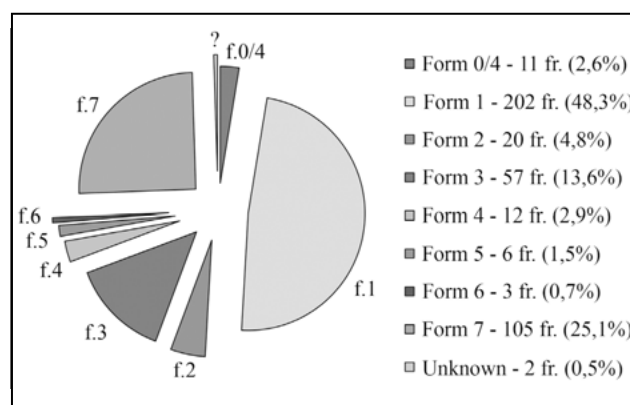




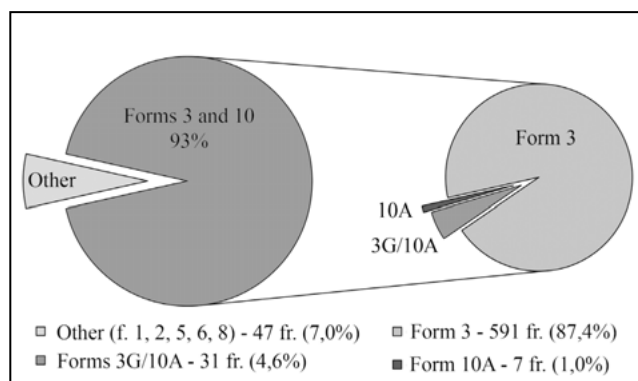
**Fig. 8.** Late Roman Light-Colored ware from the excavations in Bosporus Lane.



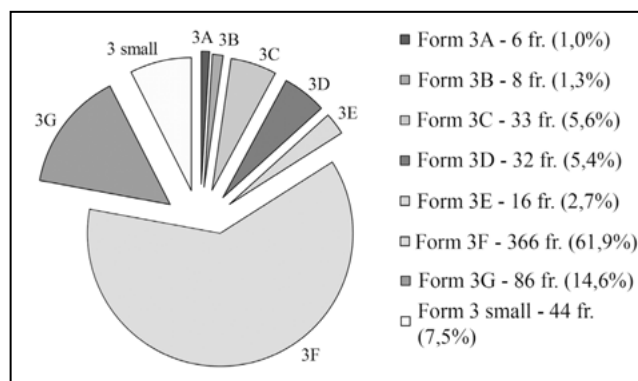
**Diagram 1.** The correlation of the Pontic and Mediterranean Late Roman red slip ware groups from the excavations in Bosporus Lane in the late 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries.



**Diagram 2.** Forms of the Pontic Red Slip ware by K. Domžalski 2002 from the excavations in Bosporus Lane.



**Diagram 3.** The correlation of the Late Roman C/Phocian Red Slip ware forms by J. W. Hayes 1972 from the excavations in Bosporus Lane.



**Diagram 4.** Form 3 variants of the Late Roman C/Phocian Red Slip ware by J. W. Hayes 1972 from the excavations in Bosporus Lane.

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