

Ivana Ožanić Roguljić & Valentina Mantovani

**SARIUS CUPS FROM ŽUTA LOKVA (ROMAN DALMATIA – CROATIA).
PRELIMINARY REPORT**

Žuta lokva is a site on the road Senia - Siscia (the road is mentioned in Itinerarium Antonini, Tabula Peutingeriana) in the hinterland of Roman Dalmatia (Lika county, Croatia). During rescue excavations that ended in 2002 a building (dim. 10 x 25 m) was revealed. The remains are badly preserved and they probably belonged to a caupona, diversorium or hospitium on a road. The site is dated from the beginning of the 1st century to the first half of the 2nd century AD. Analysis of the pottery showed that most of the vessels belonged to tableware – specially drinking vessels like Sarius cups, thin walled pottery of different origin and lead glazed vessels.

Roman Dalmatia – Senia – Žuta lokva – Sarius cup

1. Introduction: the site

In Roman period the site Žuta lokva was situated in the hinterland of the province of *Dalmatia*, in its northern part. It is located few meters from a crossroad Senj-Otočac-Brinje. The existence of the site was known from the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (Brunšmid 1898: 188, 189). It was 're-found' during the building of the road in 1996, and from those rescue excavations (Vekić 1996: 38), was excavated for several times until 2003, and the results were published only as preliminary report (Vekić 1996; Kolak 2012). Recently the site was presented at the *1st International Archaeological Conference New Discoveries between the Alps and the Black Sea* in Ptuj, Slovenia (Ožanić Roguljić and Kolak 2019), at the round table *Adriamphorae. Amphorae as a resource for the reconstruction of economic development in the Adriatic region in Antiquity: local production in Zagreb (Croatia)* and in conference *Chronologie und vergleichende Chronologien zum Ausgang der Römischen Republik und zur Frühen Kaiserzeit*, in Klagenfurt am Wörthersee (Ožanić Roguljić 2017; Ožanić Roguljić 2019).¹

In Roman times this site was situated by a road mentioned in the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti Ad Aquileia per Liburniam Sisciam (Senia – Avendon – Arrupio – Bibium – Romula – Quadrata – Siscia*. The section of the road from *Senia* (Senj) to Žuta lokva went over the Vratnik pass, which is the shortest natural path from the sea to the interior of the continent (Glavaš 2010). *Senia* was the most important port in this part of Adriatic coast in Roman times what is confirmed with the fact that in the second half of the 2nd century there

is *publicum portorium Illyrici*. The imperial customs office passed the goods that entered the *Senia* that were distributed to the hinterland (Glavičić 1994: 54; Glavaš 2010). Today the distance from Žuta Lokva to Senj is about 15 km (**fig. 1**).

By the beginning of the 20th century, allegedly a Roman road near Žuta lokva was still visible, but today archaeologists weren't able to find any trace of it (Patsch 1990: 86-87; Glavaš 2010: 12). In prehistoric times this part of land was occupied by the Illyrian tribe of the Iapodians.

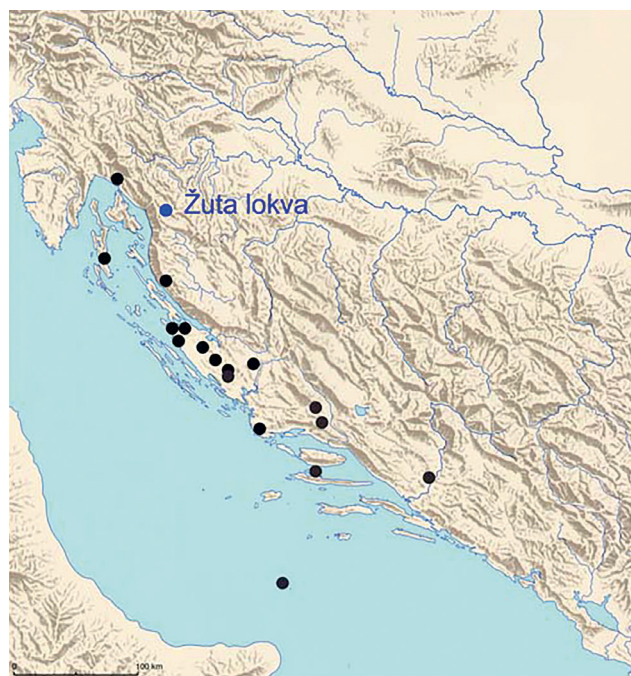


Fig. 1. Posititon of Žuta Lokva; Distribution of *Sarius* cups in Roman *Dalmatia*.

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Fig. 2. Plan of the site: black - 1st phase; grey - 2nd phase (drawing K. Turkalj).

The site revealed a building that had two phases (**fig. 2**). The walls of the building are preserved in their foundation, and the soil above it was very thin. The site is situated on a slope and a landslide so the stratigraphy of the site is disturbed. Most of the material found during the archaeological excavations was recovered on the western part of the excavated area in mixed stratigraphic units. But even with this archaeologically unfortunate situation of the site interesting finds are revealed. Two phases of the excavated building are difficult to date since the layers are filled with finds from the beginning of the 1st century AD to the middle of the 2nd century AD. We can assume that the building of the first phase (dimensions 23 x 16 m) was built around the beginning of the 1st century AD and probably lasted until third quarter of the 1st century AD. The building in the second phase was bigger (dimensions 30 x 20 m), and according to the finds it was in function until the middle of the 2nd century AD.

By the position and the amount of tableware found during the excavation the building was used in Roman times as a *caupona*, *diversorium* or *hospitium*.

2. Pottery

Tableware pottery from Žuta Lokva gave us the most data for the chronology of the site. In the first phase of the site import of *terra sigillata* and thin walled pottery from Italian

workshops is present, and by its end pottery from Dalmatian workshop appears. Lead glazed jug and skyphos could be of Asia Minor or more likely Italian origin (concerning the jug: <http://www.antike-tischkultur.de/keramikglasurtarsos.html>).

From the middle of the 2nd century material from eastern Adriatic pottery workshops appear, like thin walled pottery from workshop of *Sextus Metilius Maximus* in Crikvenica and thin walled cups of probable eastern Adriatic origin (unknown workshop).

In the second phase that probably starts at the end of the 1st century AD, beside products of Italian origin, the arrival pottery from different regions is present (African *Sigillata* A, Pannonian slipped ware) dated to the first half of 2nd century AD.

2.1. Sarius cups

In this paper we will focus on finds of the popular North Italian relief *sigillata* called *Sarius* cups. *Sarius* cups were a part of fine Roman tableware, used to consume wine. So their presence in the typical Roman *caupona* or *popina* of Augustan to Tiberian period should not be a surprise. But in this case those finds give us a new insight to this period.

In the pottery assemblage from Žuta Lokva 233 sherds can be attributed to *Sarius* cups. Most of the samples are parts of the cups that are plain, without decoration. We managed to

reconstruct one vessel completely (fig. 3). Thirty handles can be attributed to different cups (fig 4-5), there are twenty two bottoms (with diameters from 6-8 cm) and thirty seven fragments of rim (with diameters from 16,5 cm - 7 cm) (about the different sizes and capacities of the cups see Mantovani 2015: 72; Lavizzari Pedrazzini 2010: 77; Buora 1981: 12). By these we can estimate the presence of 25 to 30 vessels. Potter stamps were found and they belong to *Clemens* (10 BC-15 AD) and L.S[ARIVS L. L. S] VRVS (10 BC-15 AD) (fig. 6-7). The presence of the master *Clemens* stamp fits into the overall image of *Dalmatia* as the most well represented name (Brusić 1999: 24, 26; Šimić Kanaet 2003; Borzić 2011: 281). *L. Sarivs Srvs* is present only on three sites (Brusić 1999: 24-25; Pešić 2015: 28).

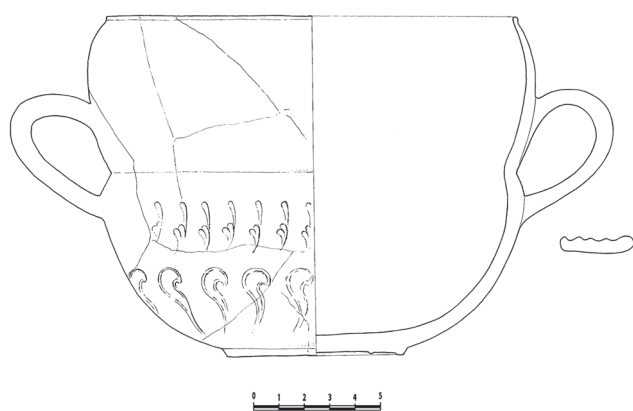


Fig. 3. Reconstructed *Sarius* cup first half 1st CE. Low quality group (drawing M. Galić).

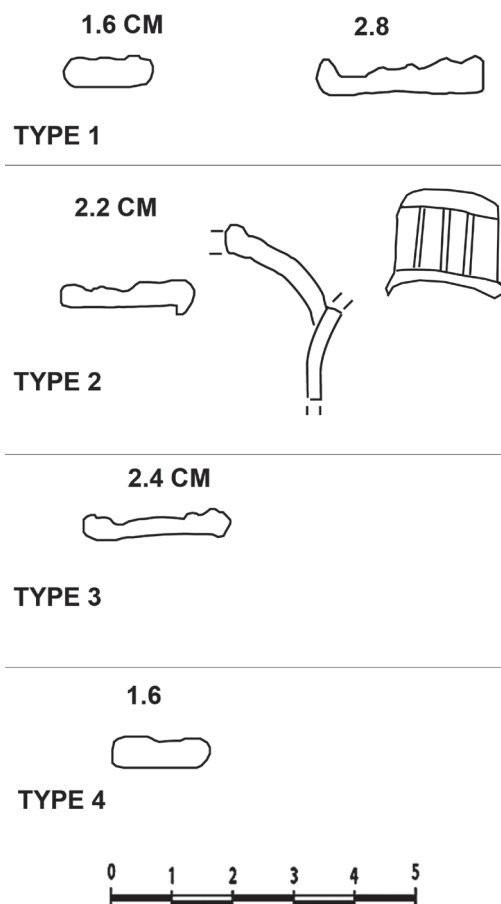


Fig. 4. Types of handles (drawing I. Ožanić Roguljić).

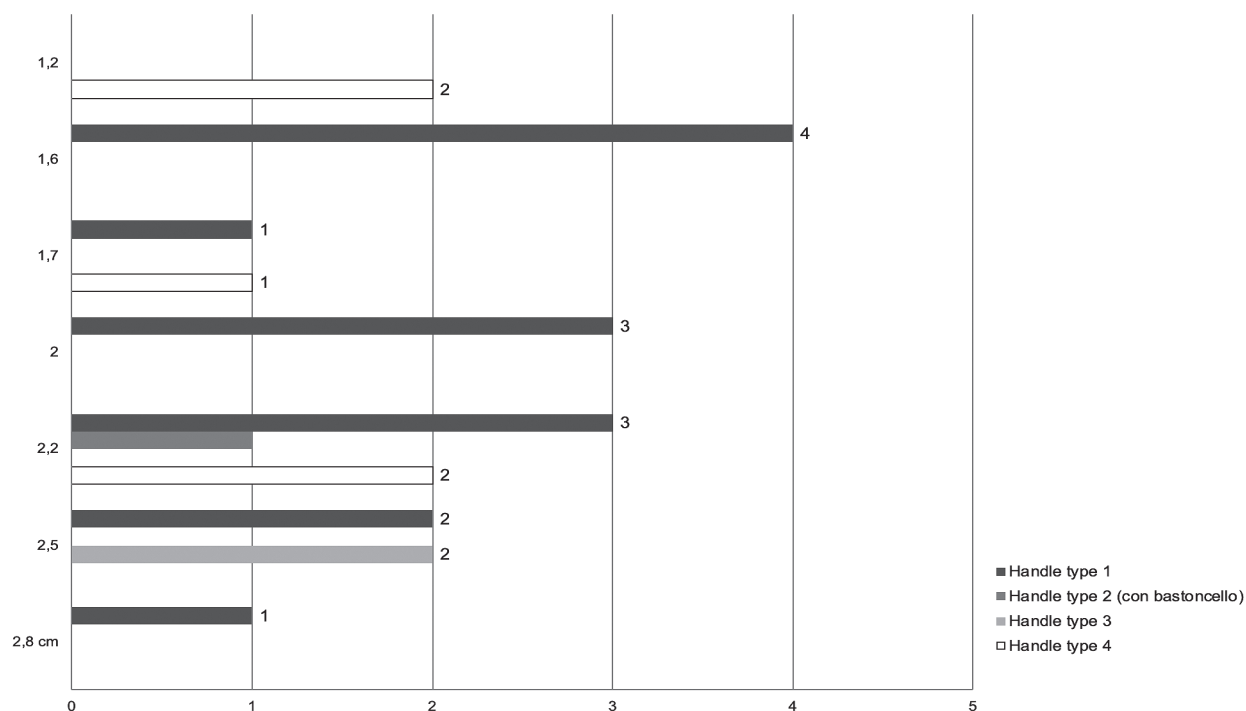


Fig. 5. Chart with types and dimensions of handles.

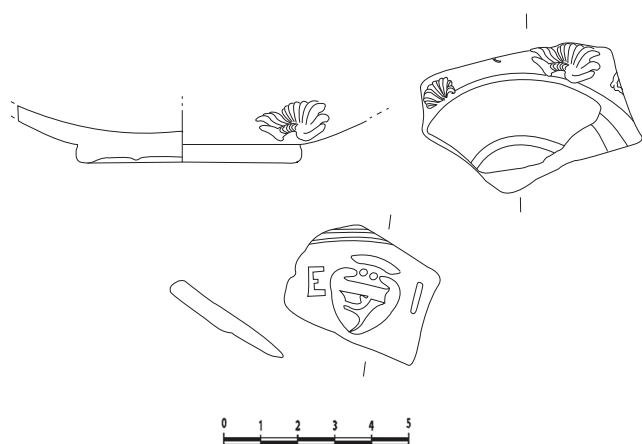


Fig. 6. Bottom and shard with *CL(EMENS)* stamp (drawing K. Posednik Bukal).



Fig. 7. Bottom with *L.S[ARIVS L. L. S] VRVS* stamp (photo T. Kolak).

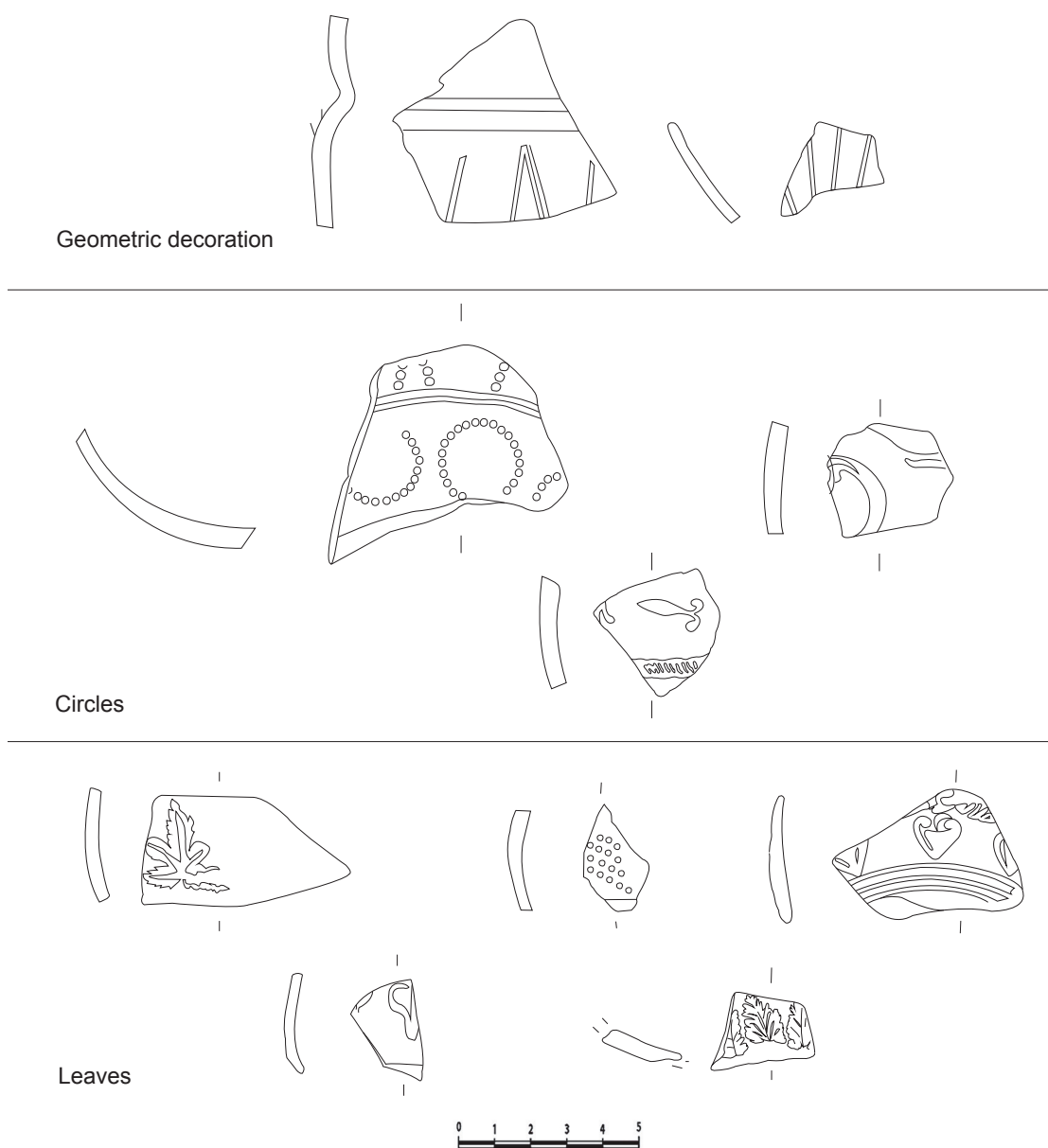


Fig. 8. Middle quality group. Decoration group 1 (drawing K. Posednik Bukal).

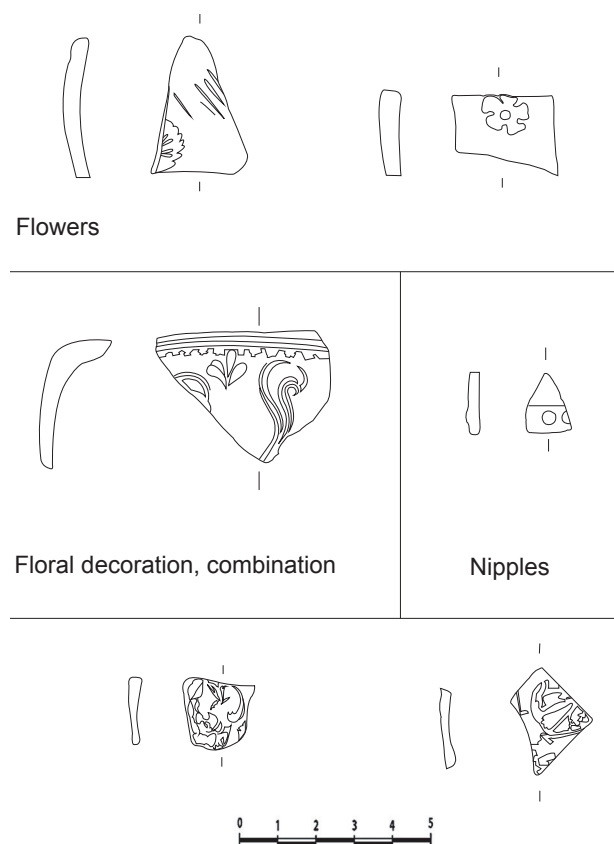


Fig. 9. Middle quality group. Decoration Group 2 (drawing K. Posednik Bukal).

We can recognize twelve different relief decorations in cups that can be divided in two groups by the quality of their fabric and slip: a) Middle² quality fabric: Clay of this group is soft, porous, slip peels off on some places (fig. 8-9). Thickness of walls is 4-7 mm. This group of Sarius cups is dated from 10 BC- AD 15; b) Bad quality fabric: Clay of this group is soft, porous, powdery, slip is visible but mostly peeled off (fig. 10). Thickness of walls is like in the previous group, from 4 to 7 mm. Decoration is often worn out and difficult to spot. A whole vessel was reconstructed (fig. 3) with frieze of hanging leafs and floral decoration. The cups with badly preserved slip can be dated almost to the whole 1st century CE.

Until now Sarius cups in *Dalmatia* were found in large number in military camps (*Burnum*, *Tilurium*), as grave offering in necropolis (e.g. Velika Mrdakovca) and sporadically in settlements (fig. 1). Most numerous finds are from the sites of (ex) Liburnian territory. On (ex) Iapodian territory of *Dalmatia* Sarius cups from Žuta Lokva represent the first find of the group. Sarius cups are present in province Pannonia (*Siscia*) but in much smaller amount which can also be a state of research rather than the real picture (Makjanić 1981: 50-53; Brusić 1999; Borzić 2011: 279-290; Bloier 2014: 51-52).

² Following tripartite classification good, middle, bad often used in describing fabric of Sarius cups.

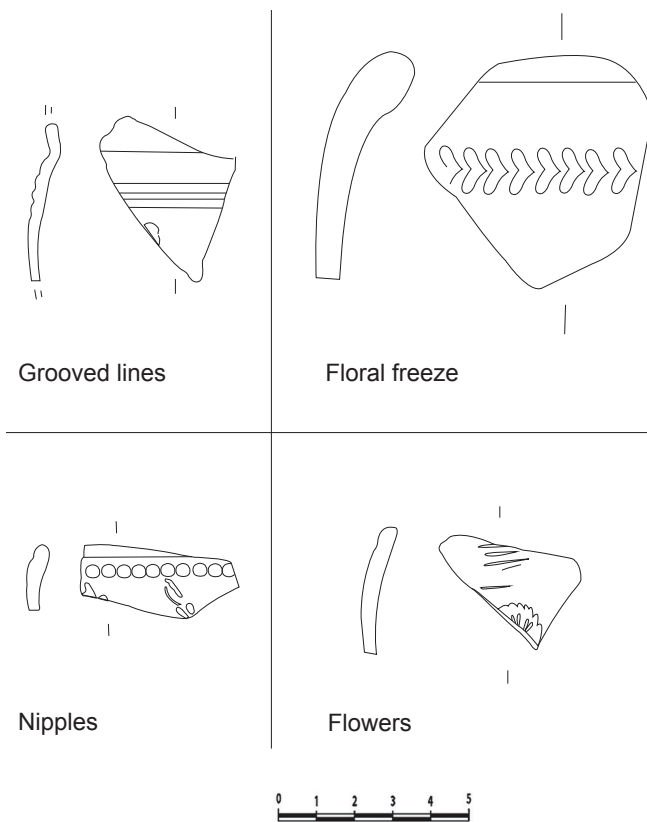


Fig. 10. Low quality group (drawing K. Posednik Bukal).

3. Conclusion

Presence of material from the beginning of the 1st century AD in the Iapodian territory shows a picture of the first phase of establishing Roman rule. We must stress out that Iapodes did not accept Roman domination easily. Octavian encountered strong resistance when attacking the Transalpine Iapodes during his military campaign in 35-34 BC (*App. Ill. 20*). He defeated them relatively quickly, after attacking and destroying their key settlement *Metulum*. During *Bellum Batonianum* (AD 6-9) Iapodians were not united against Romans and the last Iapodian settlements (*Splonum*, *Retinum* i *Seretion*) were conquered by *Germanicus* (AD 9) (*Cass. Dio* LV, 11-12, 1). During that time a road from *Senia* to *Siscia* was important for movement of armies, officials, and civilians, supply and trade of goods. Žuta Lokva was probably a first stop from *Senia*.

Most of the types of cups and beakers from the site are traditionally connected with wine drinking, but the local inhabitants of the area Iapodians are traditionally considered as beer drinking community. In addition of that Strabo (VII, 5,4) said “*Their lands are poor, the people living for the most part on spelt and millet*”. *Cassius Dio* (VII, 5, 10) described their lands as cold, mountainous with abundant snow, and very little grapes. In historical sources it is often mentioned that Illyrians and Pannonians drink beer, which can also be made out of spelt and millet. We cannot state that beer was the only alcoholic beverage Iapodians would consume; they

had trade connections with Adriatic and Mediterranean long before Roman occupation, but the alcohol they would produce themselves was beer. Evidence of import of wine to the Žuta Lokva is documented by amphora finds like a rim that could be a variant of late Republican Greco-Italic amphora and Dressel 2-4 type, and in the second half of the 1st century CE flat bottom amphoras (St Arcangelo; Crikvenica type 1) (Ožanić Roguljić 2017).

Pottery evidence from Žuta Lokva shows a place that was equipped with numerous elaborate drinking vessels, which fit to serve travelers on the road rather than for the local population. Given the dimensions of the facility and lack of other infrastructure typical for road stations we can assume it was not meant for accommodation. By the pottery record we can state that it was built soon after the Roman pacification and that it brought new typical Roman habits in serving and drinking.

Ivana Ožanić Roguljić
Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb
iozanic@iarh.hr

Valentina Mantovani
Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali, Università degli Studi di Padova
mantovanivalentina1@gmail.com

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