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ROMAN AMPHORAS FROM ANCHIALUS (PRELIMINARY REPORT)

The aim of this paper is first to try to describe the Roman amphorae from Anchialus. The defined amphorae are from the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Pontic area. The earliest artifact are pieces of Camulodunum type 184 and Peacock/ Williams Class 9 dated to the 1st century AD-first half of the 2nd century AD. During the 2nd century, there is a gradual increase in the number of vessels. The most intensive period of importation is the second half of the 2nd-3rd century AD. After this period, the identified types are Zeest 80 type and Kapitän II which show trade and contacts of Anchialus after the middle of the 3rd century and the early part of the Late Roman period. A small group of the so called 'table amphora' was also recorded.

The amphorae are from well-researched complexes and they are a clear source for the economy of the one of the most important ancient cities in the territory of modern Bulgarian territory.

The vessels found on the site of Anchialus show that the highest proportion of imported goods had their origin in the Black Sea region, followed by imports from western Asia Minor and North Aegean region. The imported products were olive oil, fish sauce and wine with a predominance of wine and olive oil amphorae.

Roman amphorae – Roman Thrace – olive oil – wine – fish products

1. Historical information

The ancient town of *Anchialus* was part of the province of Thrace during the Roman period (**fig. 1**). It is one of the most important ports in the region which makes it a significant center for the economy.

The remains of the antique city are located under the modern town of Pomorie – southeastern Bulgaria. The main site is the 'Paleokastro' area, near the road to Nessebar in the northwestern part of Pomorie.

In point of fact, the settlement developed as a Roman town in the beginning of the 2nd century AD (during the time of Trajan). The greatest prosperity of the city was in the period after the middle of the 2nd century AD. *Anchialus* was burned down in the middle of the 3rd century AD. In Late Roman period the town was especially important for its harbor. The place was a major center throughout the Middle Ages and the latest archaeological remains are dated from the 14th century.

2. Excavations and Studies

In 1886 K. Irechek first located this area as the ancient city of *Anchialus*. In the second half of the 20th century excavations were carried out by I. Boneva. Since 2007 the city is studied by Prof. S. Torbatov from Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Torbatov and Mihaylov 2008: 427-428).

In connection with the replacement of the sewerage system of the modern town a number of sites were researched with considerable archaeological remains. These excavated sites include buildings (Aleksandrov 2015: 327-330), parts of streets and mosaics, etc. (Aleksandrov 2015a: 330-333; Ivanov 2016: 355-359). During these excavations a considerable amount

of amphora fragments were collected which contribute to the study of the economy of the city during the Roman period.

3. Wine amphorae

These amphorae are represented by several types with small to medium capacities.

3.1. Dressel 2-4

This amphora type is represented only by a few fragments with the typical bifid handles (Dyczek 2001: 57). We do not have evidence to identify capacities or any chronological evolution. The fragments belong to contexts of the early 2nd century AD.

3.2. Camulodunum 184

These amphorae are well preserved in the 'Paleokastro' area and other rescue excavations. These vessels were made of red-brown fine-grained clay covered with a thin pale slip (Dyczek 2001: 132). These examples were found in a building adjacent to the street and can be dated to the first quarter of the 2nd century AD. Other examples with the same date are from rescue excavations (**fig. 2, 1**).

3.3. Mau XXVII-XXVIII

In the Historical Museum stores in Pomorie several bases of this type are preserved. The clay is thick and red in color. The

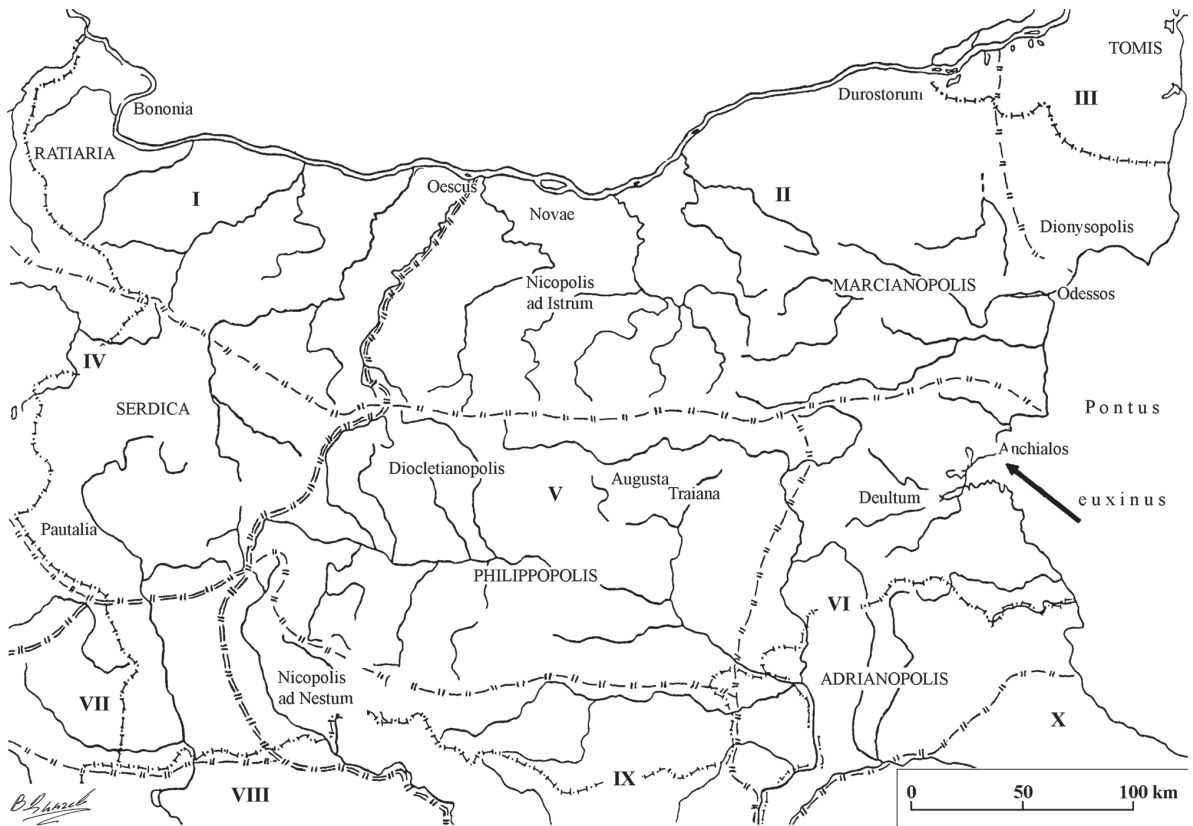


Fig. 1. Location of ancient *Anchialus* in the Roman province of Thrace (after V. Dintchev 2002).

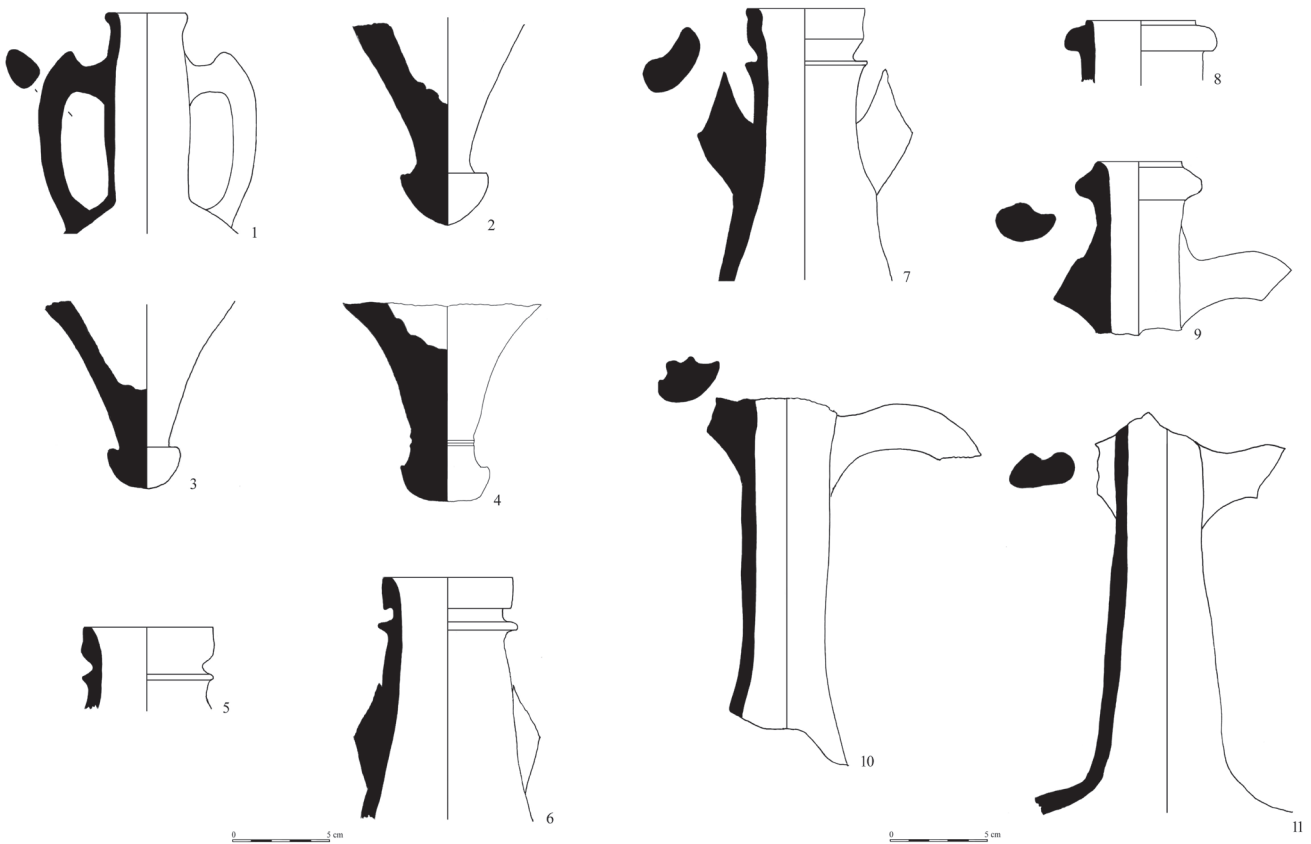


Fig. 2. 1. Type Camulodunum 184; 2-4. Type Mau XXVII-XXVIII; 5-6. Type Kapitän II.

Fig. 3. 7. Type Kapitän II; 8-11. Amphoras from Heraclea Pontica.

distinctive feature of these examples is a solid foot like an inverted ‘mushroom’ (Dyczek 2001: 160). Most of the pieces can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD (fig. 2, 2-3). One bottom of the type is from a deposit of the end of the 4th century AD (fig. 2, 4). This fragment is covered with a cream coating and the type was widely exported. This late date surely indicates that the amphora was re-used or redeposited.

3.4. *Kapitän II*

This wine amphora type is frequent in the different places excavated in the city. Documented vessels were made of a distinctive hard red-orange or red-brick color fabric. The earliest evidences of the type in *Anchialus* were recovered in levels of the end of the 2nd to early 3rd century AD (fig. 2, 5-6). A significant part of this group is dated from the end of the 3rd-early 4th century AD (fig. 3, 7). In this period the neck becomes more elongated and not so profiled.

3.5. *Zeest 64-66, 91-94*

The amphora of this center is one of the most widespread at *Anchialus*. Most of these ‘light clay’ vessels belong to subtype Shelov C. Some of them are light brown in color (5YR 7/3), or beige (7.5YR 8/4). The type can be dated from the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century AD. The earliest evidences are from middle of the 2nd century AD. All the amphoras preserved in the collection of the History Museum of Pomorie are from the first half of the 3rd century AD when the stamps are also present (fig. 3, 8-11).

3.6. *Table-pitchers*

These vessels were especially used for wine during the early Roman period (Opaiț and Paraschiv 2013: 320). Discovered vessels are very fragmentary – mainly bottoms and wall fragments with traces of resin. The clay of the first subtype is grey with quartz inclusions and covered with a light beige slip. The second subtype was made of red-brown sandy clay and covered with a red-brown slip. These vessels can be dated to the 2nd-3rd century (Opaiț 2003: 215) (fig. 4, 12-13).

3.7. *Table amphoras*

Several examples discovered in the territory of *Anchialus* have been classified as table amphoras. There is a significant number, but most of them are of later date – in the Late Roman period. The vessels from *Anchialus* were made of brown sandy clay with mica inclusions. A second subtype was made of red-brick sandy clay. These amphoras are dated to the 2nd-3rd century AD. We have no evidence for their capacities (fig. 4, 14-15).

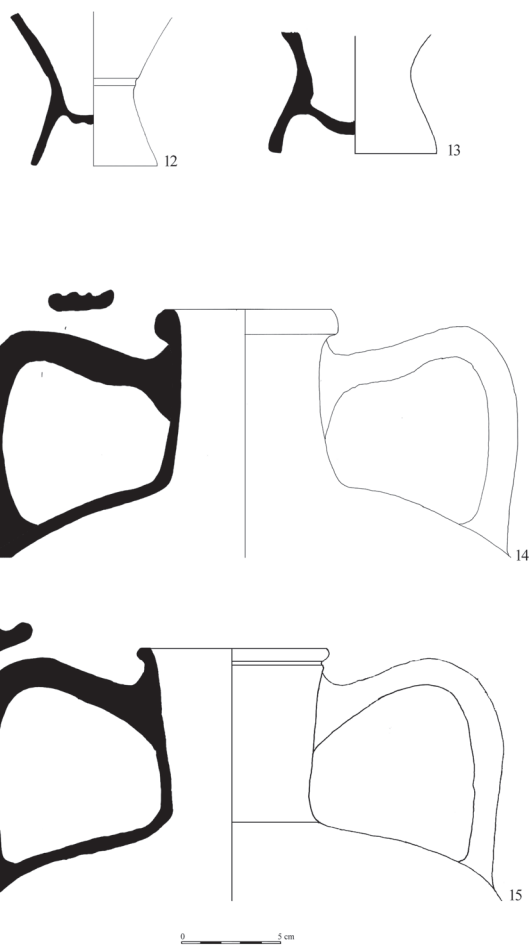


Fig. 4. 12-13. ‘Table-pitchers’; 14-15. Table amphoras.

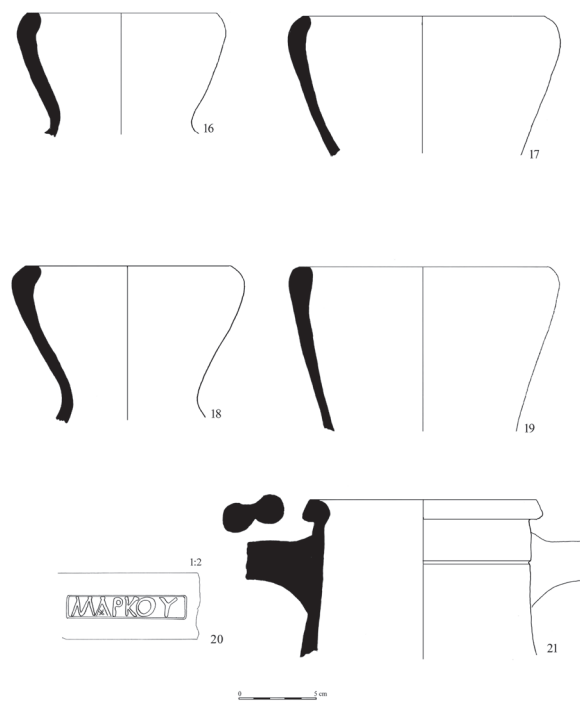


Fig. 5. 16-20. Type Dressel 24 and 24 *similis*; 21. Type Zeest 75.

4. Olive oil amphoras

4.1. Dressel 24 and 24 similis

This is the most numerous imported type in *Anchialus*. In different excavated sites, this type represents more than 50% of the total number of amphora, with Dressel 24 and 24 *similis* dating from the first quarter of the 2nd century AD. The largest distribution is the period from the end of the 2nd to the first half of the 3rd century AD. During I. Boneva's excavations in 20th century, a stamp reading MAPKOY was registered (fig. 5, 16-20).

4.2. Zeest 80

The large amphora type Zeest 80 is only represented by fragments (mostly belonging to massive handles with 5-6 fine grooves). This type is not registered before the first half of the 3rd century AD. It is important to know that the late version of this type is widespread in *Anchialus* in the Late Roman period.

5. Fish amphoras

5.1. Zeest 75

Only a few fragments of these large vessels have been found at *Anchialus*. But one of the main activities of the population was fishing, so the fact that such a small number of fish

amphoras has been found in the city for the moment seems surprising. Most probably just the function of the studied sites does not favour the presence of fish amphoras. In ongoing archaeological excavations the quantity will certainly increase (fig. 5, 21).

5.2. Other amphora types

There were other amphora types recorded mainly for wine. Documented pieces were Agora M 126, Sub-Rhodian and Dressel 23 types.

6. Conclusions

The ancient port of the *Anchialus* played a significant role in the distribution of large quantity of amphoras during the early Roman or Late Roman period. The earliest amphoras can be dated from the time of Trajan. During the 2nd century AD amphora imports got gradually stronger. The peak of the supply was the end of the 2nd-first half of the 3rd century AD.

During the 2nd century AD wine amphoras are predominant – mainly from the Aegean centers and Heraclea Pontica. In the 3rd century AD olive oil types dominated – mostly Dressel 24, which is the most widespread type in *Anchialus*. Small fish amphoras have been documented, as well.

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