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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN COOKING WARE IN *LUSITANIA*: THE CASE OF TRÓIA (PORTUGAL)

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to document the presence of African Cooking Ware (ACW) at Tróia and add this archaeological site to the diffusion map of this type of ceramics. The collection in this study has never been published and complements the ceramics studies previously made.

Although general research has only recognized the presence of these ceramics in far southern Lusitanian sites,² it will be shown that the geographical distribution in Lusitania is more widespread. The lack of publication with a systematic approach and statistical data complicates this analysis and the understanding of the wide spread of ACW in the western part of the Roman Empire, but the scarcity of specific studies of this category does not justify the absence of Lusitanian sites in the distribution maps published up to now.

The research conducted so far allows one to pinpoint several sites which received these African productions. Yet it merely represents the state of knowledge and is not an exact mirror of the reality at the time. Nevertheless comparisons among the published sites of Lusitania will give a more accurate perception of the widespread distribution of this African type of ceramics in Lusitania and add more information to the reconstitution of commercial trade along the Atlantic coast.

The Roman Ruins of Tróia

Located on the south-western coast of Portugal, the Roman Ruins of Tróia are the remains of a large complex of fish-salting factories, with 25 workshops identified and 182 visible vats with a production capacity over 1400 m³.

The archaeological remains visible at the site, a significant port in Roman times, include a residential quarter, a bath complex, a mausoleum, several necropolises and a Paleochristian basilica with wall paintings (fig. 1).

According to the data recovered so far the first fish-salting workshops were built in the beginning of the 1st century AD to prepare salted fish products. The archaeological data suggests an interruption of production in the 2nd half of the 2nd century. In the 3rd century, after an extensive remodeling that

subdivided the large workshops into smaller ones, production restarted and continued until Late Antiquity, at least the early 5th century. Then the factories were abandoned and the area was used for different purposes, mainly as necropolis areas. The latest finds from the site confirm that these funerary areas were still in use in the 6th century.

African Cooking Ware: Tróia's assemblage

Apart from three sherds of the form Hayes 181 published previously³, the collection of African Cooking Ware from Tróia has never been studied.

The collection of ACW recovered at the site includes materials both from ancient excavations, stored at the National Museum of Archaeology (Lisbon) and from recent works carried out at the site from 2007 until 2011.

This assemblage is composed of 224 fragments that represent 149 minimum number of vessels (MNV⁴) of eleven forms (fig. 2) of the available typologies for this category of ceramics.⁵ While most sites in Lusitania present a small variety of forms, Tróia's assemblage shows a significant number of fragments and a variability of types, providing a good case study to exemplify the pattern of imports of this type of ceramics to the Lusitanian sites.

This pottery shares the usual characteristics defined for this type of African productions⁶, but it was sometimes hard to distinguish the different fabrics due to the poor preservation conditions of the sample.

The A fabric is represented by the form Hayes 23, the most common in this assemblage (fig. 3,1–10) with a majority of variant B (fig. 3,2–10), mainly dated from the 2nd to the 4th

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² C. AGUAROD OTAL, *Cerámica romana importada de cocina en la Tarraconense* (Zaragoza 1991) 239 map 46; LEITCH 2010, 17 fig. 7.

³ ÉTIENNE/MAKAROUN/MAYET 1994, 37; 53 fig. 14,22; J. ALMEIDA, *A necrópole romana da Caldeira, Tróia de Setúbal: escavações de Manuel Heleno nas décadas de 40–60 do século XX* (Master thesis, Univ. Lisboa 2009) 106; C. VERDASCA, *As termas de Tróia: documentação escrita e materiais do Museu Nacional de Arqueologia* (Master thesis, Univ. Lisboa 2010) 55.

⁴ P. ARCELLI/M. TUFFREAU-LIBRE (éds.), *La quantification des céramiques, Conditions et protocole. Bibracte 2* (Glux-en-Glenne 1998).

⁵ J. W. HAYES, *Late Roman Pottery. The British School at Rome* (London 1972); TORTORELLA 1981; BONIFAY 2004.

⁶ C. CAPELLI/M. BONIFAY, *Archéométrie et archéologie des céramiques africaines: une approche pluridisciplinaire*. In: M. Bonifay/J.-Chr. Trégliá (eds.), *LRCW 2. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry 2*. BAR Internat. Ser. 1662 (Oxford 2007) 551–567.



Fig. 1. Aerial view of the archaeological site.

Fabrics	Forms	MNV	% MNV
A	Hayes 23	40	27
	Hayes 181*	8	5
	Hayes 193	3	2
B	Hayes 181	10	7
	Hayes 182	23	16
	Hayes 185	17	11
C	Hayes 195	1	1
	Hayes 196 (C/A)	10	7
	Hayes 197 (C/A)	33	22
	Black Top Lid D	1	1
	Kettle	1	1
	Similar to Bonifay 33/34	1	1
?	Sidi Jdidi 8	1	1
Total		149	100

Fig. 2. Distribution of forms of Tróia's assemblage.

*To this number should be added the Hayes 181 published by R. Étienne, Y. Makaroun and F. Mayet as African Red Slip Ware type A.

century, as could be the case of a few larger pieces⁷. Some sherds of the dish Hayes 181 were identified in this group (fig. 3,11–12), one in variant A (fig. 3,11), two B (fig. 3,12), one C, and one B or C, too small to be classified more precisely. The small dish Hayes 181, n° 1 (fig. 3,13), seems to appear in this fabric. These pieces have a long period of production, between the 2nd and the 5th centuries.⁸ The small casserole Hayes 193 (fig. 3,14–15) is also included in this fabric.

From fabric B, we could classify a number of rims of the dish Hayes 181 (fig. 3,16–19), six from variant B (fig. 3,16–17), one in C and other two of the D variant (fig. 3,18–19). Two lid/dish forms were identified in this fabric, corresponding to form Hayes 182 and Hayes 185. A number of 23 MNV of the lid/dish Hayes 182 (fig. 4,20–28) were identified, three of variant A (fig. 4,20–21) and three others of B, eleven of C (fig. 4,22–24), some of these of large size (fig. 4, 23), and six of D (fig. 4,25–28), while there are 17 pieces of Hayes 185 (fig. 4,29–35), one of variant A (fig. 4,29), 13 of variant C (fig. 4,30–33) and one of variant D (or Hayes 185.1) (fig. 4,34). In this group of forms there were two pieces of Hayes 185, variant B (fig. 4,35), that had a distinct fabric, showing characteristics of the Algerian fabrics⁹. These forms were produced from the 2nd to the 4th or early 5th century, but the majority of pieces were imported during the 3rd century.

The C fabric was identified in one rim of the lid Hayes 195 (fig. 4,36), and in the productions from Northern Tunisia (C/A), the lid Hayes 196 (fig. 4,37–38), most of them of variant A (fig. 4,37), with only one example from the late variant similar to the one defined by M. Bonifay¹⁰ (fig. 4,38), and the casserole Hayes 197 (fig. 5,39–43), the second most common form in the collection of Tróia. Although form Hayes 196 could have been produced earlier, these forms are more common from the end of the 2nd century onward, and according to the chronologies pointed out for the last two types they could circulate in the markets until the beginning or the first half of the 5th century.

Four pieces caught our attention because they show unusual or rare profiles. The first one comes from one of the abandonment levels in the ancient excavations of the fish-salting workshop 1, dated from the end of the 4th and the first third of the 5th century, and resembles the Black Top Lid D or the Fulford 12.2¹¹ (fig. 5,44), identified in contexts of this date¹², as in the assemblage of Chãos Salgados, a more inland site but not so far away from Tróia.¹³ Another piece, with a glossy slip and a blackened rim (fig. 5,45), gives the impression to be related to small casseroles like Sidi Jdidi 8, variant B, but it is also similar to the Sperlonga, fig. 141 or Ostia I, fig. 272.¹⁴ In the first case, which seems more

⁷ BONIFAY 2004, 211.

⁸ Ibid. 213.

⁹ We thank M. Bonifay for this information.

¹⁰ BONIFAY 2004, 226 fig. 121.

¹¹ M. G. FULFORD/D. P. S. PEACOCK, The avenue du President Habib Bourguiba, Salamambo: the pottery and other ceramic objects from the site. Excavations at Carthage: the British mission 1,2 (Sheffield 1984) 190–191.

¹² BONIFAY 2004, 227.

¹³ QUARESMA 2010, 158–160 n° 6.

¹⁴ L. SAGÜI, Ceramica africana dalla «Villa di Tiberio» a Sperlonga. *Mél. École Française Rome* 92, 1980, 524; TORTORELLA 1981 tav. 108,7.

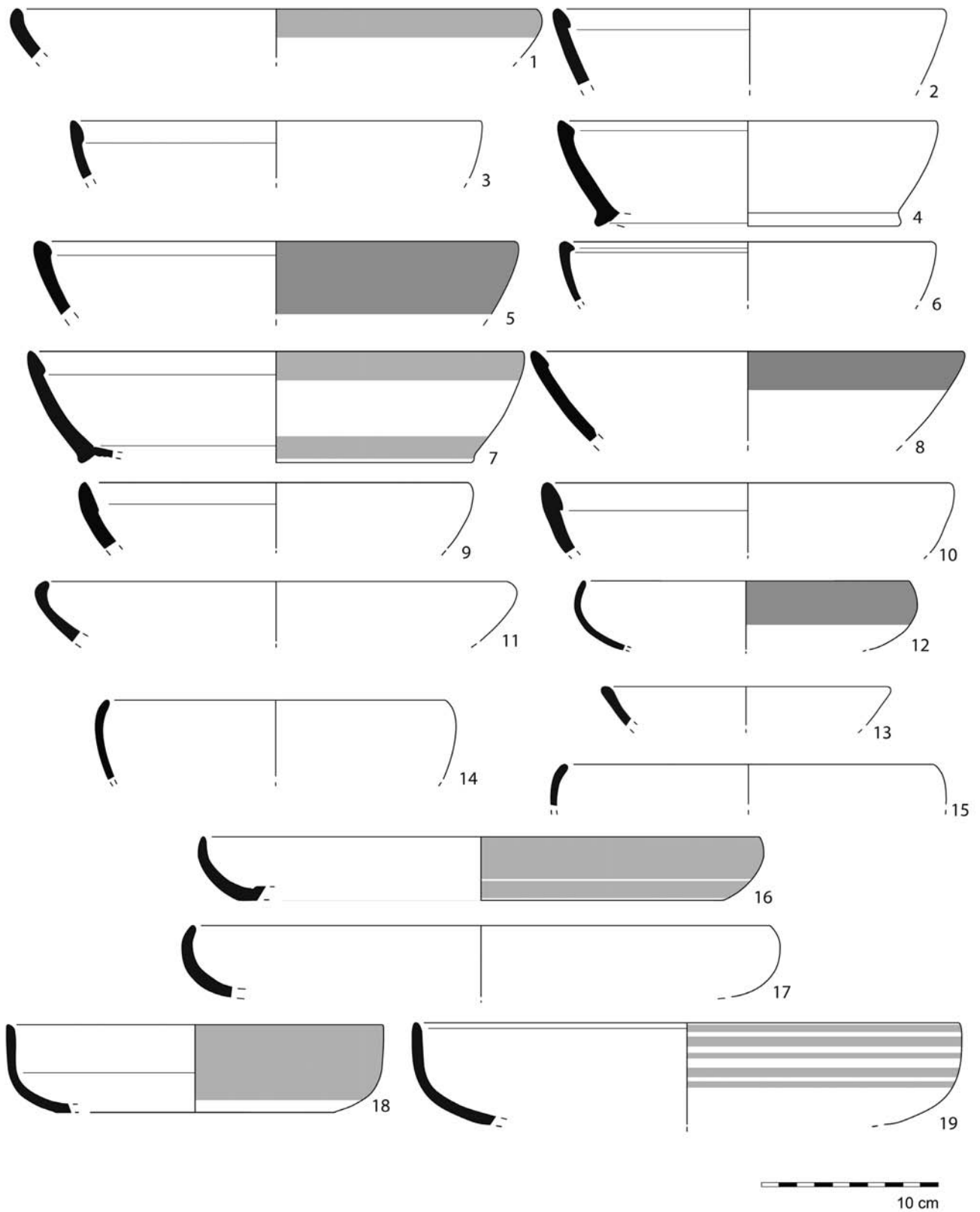


Fig. 3. African Cooking Ware from Tróia: 1–10 Hayes 23; 14–15 Hayes 193; 11–13.16–19 Hayes 181.

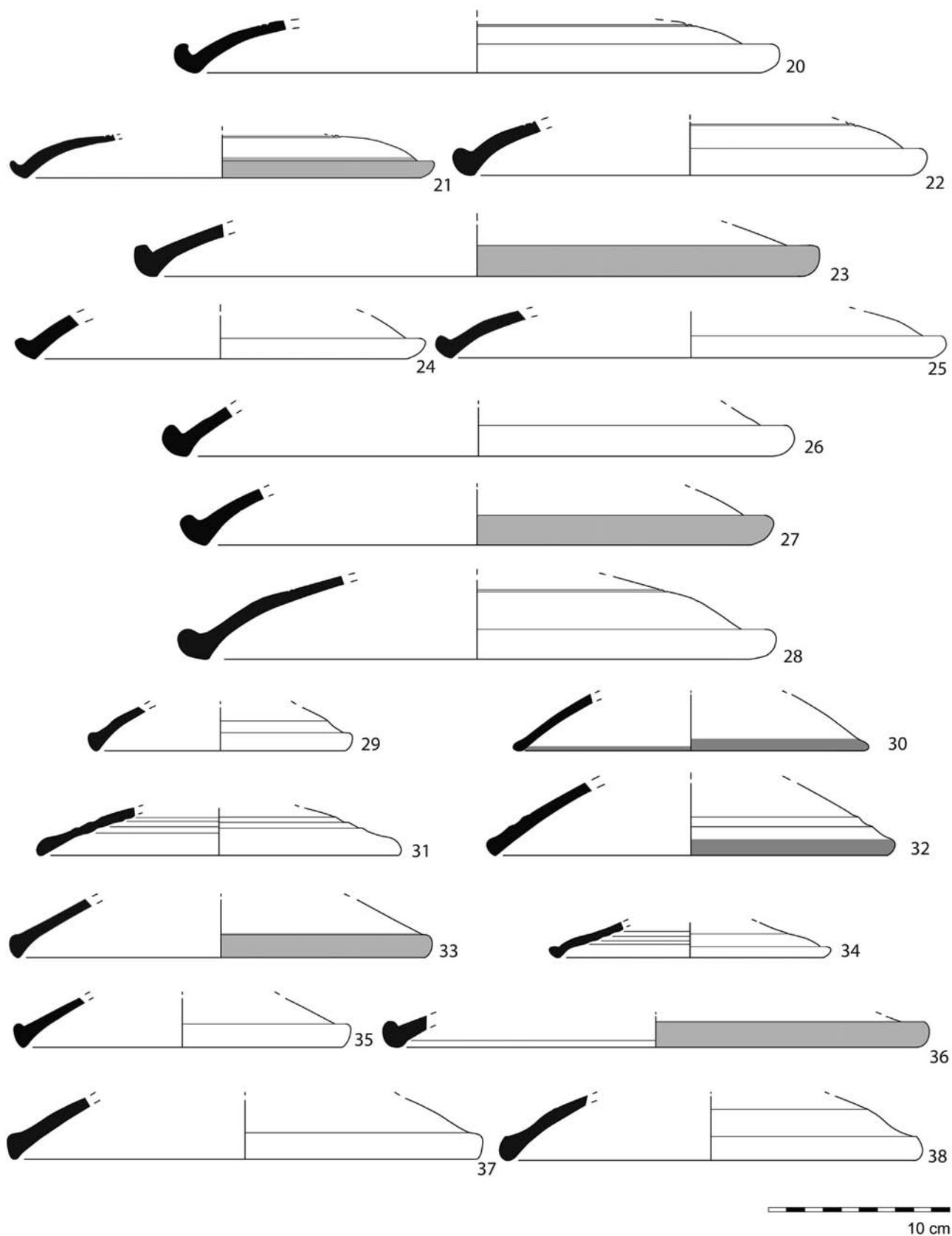


Fig. 4. African Cooking Ware from Tróia: 20–28 Hayes 182; 29–35 Hayes 185; 36 Hayes 195; 37–38 Hayes 196.

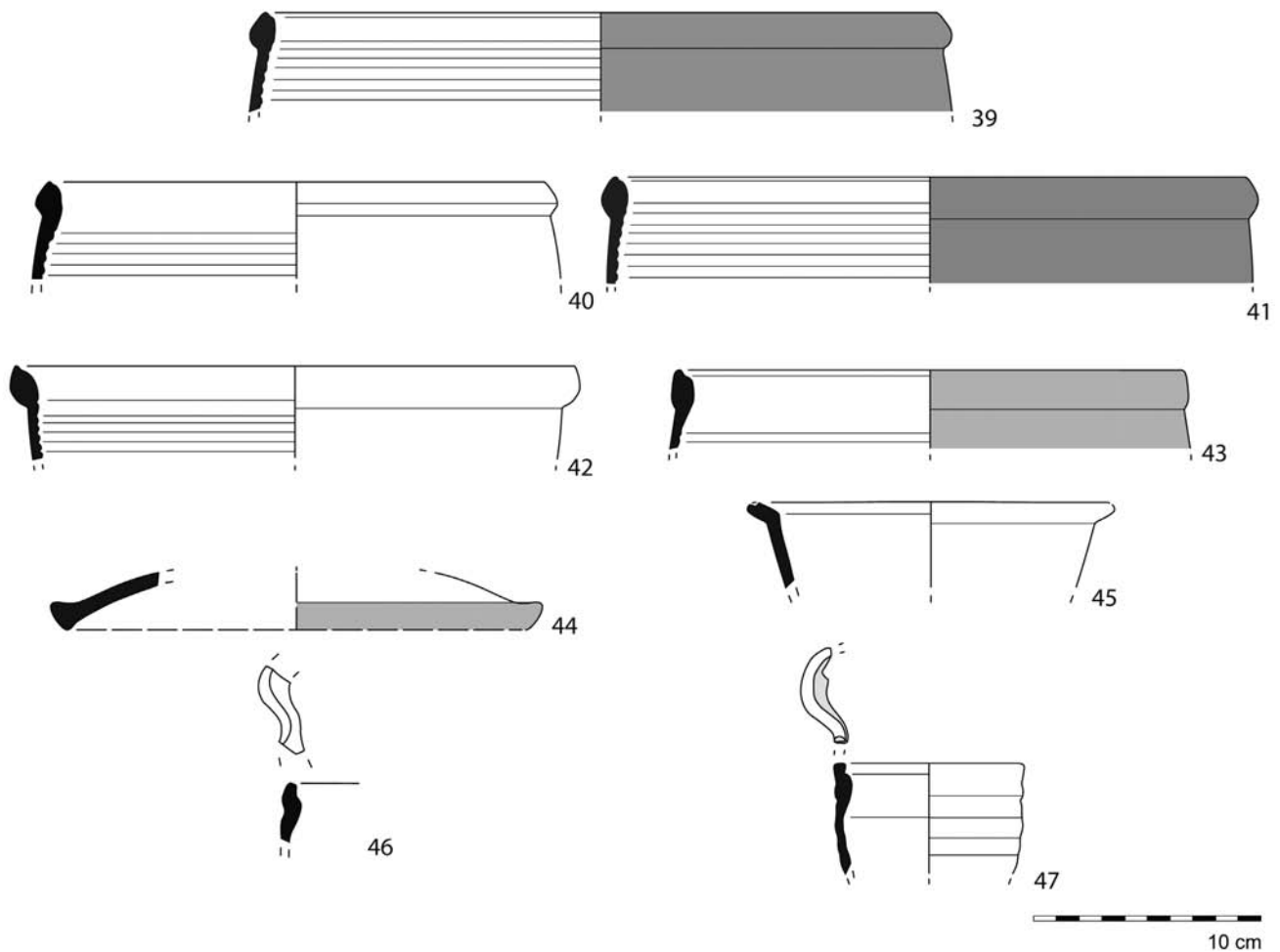


Fig. 5. African Cooking Ware from Tróia: 39–43 Hayes 197; 44 Black Top Lid D; 45 Sidi Jdidi 8; 46–47 Kettles.

probable, it is dated to the 5th century¹⁵ and in the second case to the first half of the 3rd century.¹⁶ The last two pieces are certainly kettles (fig. 5,46–47), probably of fabric C, but we are not sure about their type, although one could be related to type 33 or 34 of Bonifay (fig. 5,47), later forms from northern Tunisia, associated with deposits of the 5th and 6th centuries.¹⁷

The period of importation of this category of ceramics is very wide. The first forms to be imported were definitely Hayes 23, variant A, Hayes 181 variant A and Hayes 185 variant A, in the first half of the 2nd century, but the most represented period occurs from the 3rd century onward, the most common imports being the form Hayes 23 variant B and the form Hayes 197, with scarce continuity into the 5th century. The last pieces to be imported to the site are the Hayes 181 variant C (from fabric A), Hayes 181 variant D (from fabric B), the late Hayes 196, the Black Top Lid and the kettles.

The most recent works at Tróia shed some light in terms of chronology. The casserole Hayes 197 is present in every excavated area, mostly in the 3rd/4th century deposits, yet it was

still in use in the first third of the 5th century according to the chronology proposed for some garbage dump layers that covered a fish-salting workshop after its abandonment.¹⁸ In those abandonment deposits Hayes 182 C and D and Hayes 185 B and C were also found. The form Hayes 23 is abundant in the 3rd century layers, being identified in one floor of workshop 1, in a good context of the first half or probably second quarter of the 3rd century.¹⁹

African Cooking Ware in Lusitania

The distribution-map in figure 6 and the chart in figure 7 show the Lusitanian sites where ACW has been identified and express the significance of each sample. The sites where the finds of this category of ceramics are not quantified, such as Sines²⁰, Ilha do

¹⁵ BONIFAY 2004, 237.

¹⁶ TORTORELLA 1981, 221.

¹⁷ BONIFAY 2004, 241–242.

¹⁸ I. V. PINTO/A. P. MAGALHÃES/P. BRUM, Ceramic assemblages from a fish-salting factory in Tróia (Portugal). RCRF Acta 41, 2010, 375–384.

¹⁹ Id., Sondagem junto ao poço da oficina de salga 1 de Tróia. Conimbriga 49 (Coimbra 2010) 133–159.

²⁰ C. T. DA SILVA/A. COELHO-SOARES, Produção de preparados piscícolas na Sines romana. In: Actas do Simpósio Internacional «Produção e Comércio de Preparados Piscícolas Durante a Proto-história e a Época Romana no Ocidente da Península Ibérica». Homenagem a Françoise Mayet. Setúbal Arqu. 13. 2006, 101–122.

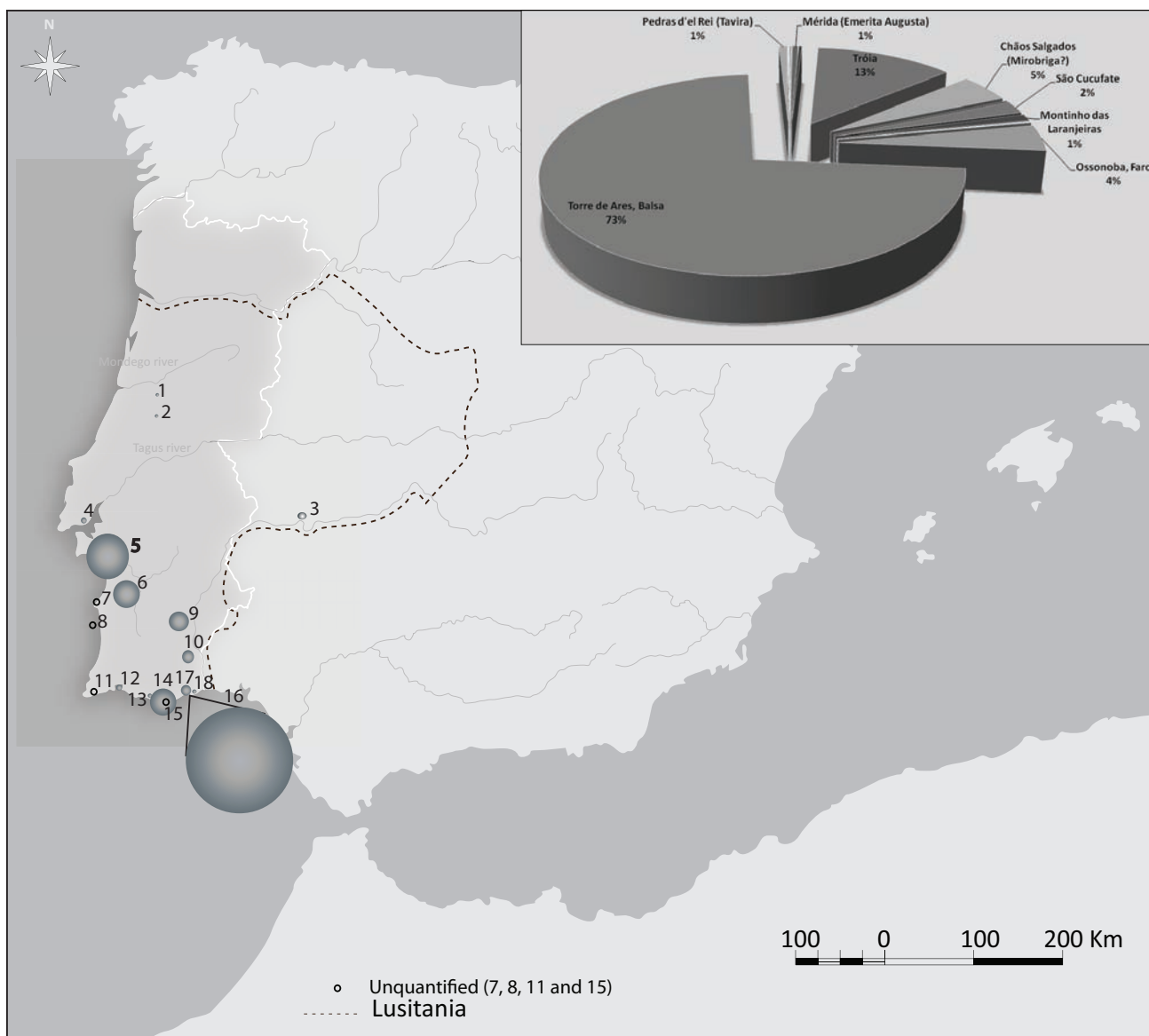


Fig. 6. Distribution map of African Cooking Ware in *Lusitania*: 1 *Conimbriga*; 2 Rabaçal (Penela); 3 Mérida (*Emerita Augusta*); 4 Lisboa (*Olisipo*); 5 Tróia; 6 Santiago do Cacém (Mirobriga?); 7 Sines; 8 Ilha do Pessegueiro; 9 São Cucufate; 10 Montinho das Laranjeiras; 11 Lagos (Rua Silva Lopes and Monte Molião); 12 Foz do Arade; 13 Cerro da Vila (Loulé); 14 Faro (*Ossonoba*); 15 Quinta do Marim (Loulé); 16 Torre de Ares (Balsa); 17 Pedras d’El Rei (Tavira); 18 Manta Rota (Cacela).

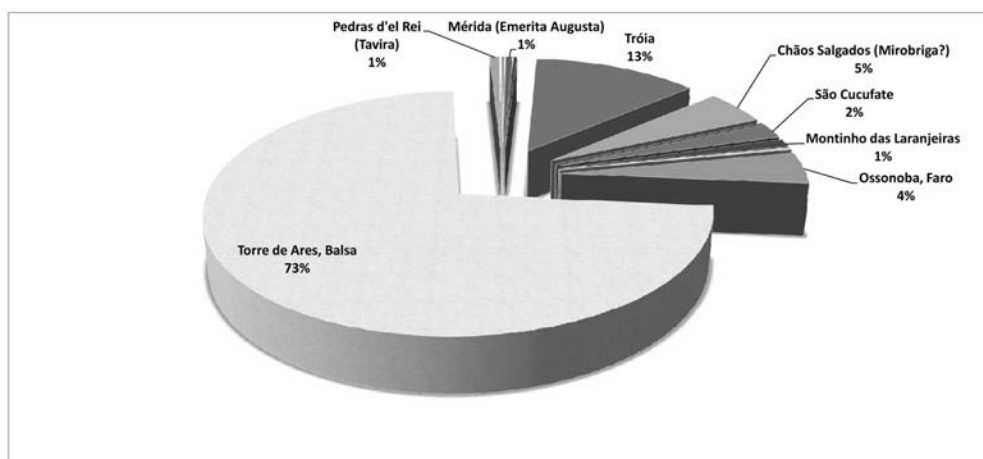


Fig. 7. Distribution chart of African Cooking Ware in *Lusitania* (sites shown in the map **fig. 6**).

Pessegueiro²¹, Lagos²² and Quinta do Marim²³, are indicated in the map with a small open circle.

As this distribution map shows, ACW is mostly present in sites supplied by maritime routes, along the Atlantic coast, although it is not well represented north of the Tagus river. Yet the presence of this type of ceramics in Rabaçal (Penela)²⁴ and in the city of *Conimbriga*²⁵ demonstrates that the gap between the Tagus and the Mondego river might simply reflect the state of knowledge of these regions. However the presence of the most common forms of this category in inland sites, such as the *villae* of S. Cucufate (0.2% of the common ware at S. Cucufate²⁶) and in Montinho das Laranjeiras²⁷, near a river, is noteworthy, even if with a scarce representation. Important cities like Lisbon (*Olisipo*)²⁸ should have a more significant presence of this type of vessel but what is published so far does not allow the recognition of its real values. Surprisingly, Mérida (*Emerita Augusta*), with a number of ceramics studies already published, doesn't receive as much African Cooking Ware as would be expected in the capital of the province.

It seems likely that some types of vessels were appropriate to sea-borne transportation²⁹ and this would facilitate its wide distribution. Forms as Hayes 23, Hayes 181, Hayes 182 and Hayes 197, are predominant in the assemblages published, especially the first one.

The research made until now indicates an early distribution of ACW at the end of the 1st century/beginning of the 2nd to the southern coast of *Lusitania*³⁰, similar to the diffusion of its counterpart African Red Slip Ware A. As is clear from the map (fig. 6) the South has received more attention by the investigators, namely through the extensive comparative work of C. Viegas³¹, and by the occasional publication of some

pieces from Foz do Arade³², Cerro da Vila (Loulé)³³, Pedras d'El Rey³⁴ and Manta Rota (Cacela)³⁵.

On the Atlantic coast this type of material could have arrived a little later. The study of the archaeological sites of Chãos Salgados (Miróbriga?) and Ilha do Pessegueiro led J. C. Quaresma to conclude that the imports of ACW only took place from the first half of the 2nd century and the study of Tróia's assemblage confirms this thesis. However, unlike what is pointed out in that study, in Tróia, we don't recognize an accentuated diminution of imports in the 4th century. According to that study, in the 4th century there was a considerable diminution of ACW imports and at the end of that century these were already decreasing to their end.³⁶ The study of the ACW from Tróia shows the continuity of this trade to Lusitania in the 4th century, until the first quarter of the 5th, at least. The site of Chãos Salgados (Miróbriga?), not on the coast, but only 17 km from it³⁷, shows a different tendency, with more difficulties to acquire this type of pottery in that late period.

After the comparison to other collections, it is clear that the 149 MNV recovered at Tróia are a rather significant sample. However this number seems little when compared to the assemblage from the city of *Balsa*, in Torre de Ares, which does not reflect the common pattern of consumption in Lusitania since there this category represents 26.9% of the common ware of the site. Surprisingly in that site the ACW, with 850 MNV, is more significant than African Red Slip Ware with only 334 MNV³⁸.

At Tróia, ACW is a minority compared to African Red Slip Ware, showing a radically different pattern of imports and consumption. While *Balsa* shows the Mediterranean pattern of importing quality cooking vessels³⁹, Tróia shows the tendency of sites located in dynamic ceramic production areas that buy the pottery made in the region, probably very inexpensively.⁴⁰

²¹ C. T. DA SILVA/A. COELHO-SOARES, *Ilha do Pessegueiro*. Porto Romano da Costa Alentejana (Lisboa 1993) 109.

²² A. RAMOS/R. ALMEIDA/T. LAÇO, O Complexo Industrial da Rua Silva Lopes (Lagos). Uma Primeira Leitura e Análise das suas Principais Problemáticas no Quadro da Indústria Conserveira da Lusitania Meridional. In: *Actas do Simpósio Internacional «Produção e Comércio de Preparados Piscícolas Durante a Proto-história e a Época Romana no Ocidente da Península Ibérica»*. Homenagem a Françoise Mayet. Setúbal Arq. 13, 2006, 83–100; A. M. ARRUDA ET AL., Monte Molião (Lagos): resultados de um projecto em curso. In: *Actas do 5º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve*. Xelb 8, 2008, 161–192; P. BARGÃO, Monte Molião ceterariae (Lagos, Portugal). RCRF Acta 41, 2010, 345–351.

²³ C. T. DA SILVA/J. SOARES/A. COELHO-SOARES, Estabelecimento de produção de salga da época romana na Quinta do Marim (Olhão). Resultados preliminares das escavações de 1988-89. Setúbal Arq. 9–10, 1992, 335–374.

²⁴ J. C. QUARESMA, Les importations de sigillée et de céramique culinaire africaine dans la villa du Rabaçal (Lusitania): IV^eme siècle – début de VI^eme siècle. SFECAG Congrès Arles 2008 (Marseille 2011) 98–99; 101.

²⁵ M. DELGADO, Les sigillées claires. In: M. Delgado/F. Mayet/A. Alarcão, *Fouilles de Conimbriga 4* (Paris 1975) 252 n° 5 pl. 63.

²⁶ PINTO, 2003, 580 fig. 679.

²⁷ H. COUTINHO, *Terra sigillata clara do Montinho das Laranjeiras* (Alcoutim) 1990 e 1991 (Alcoutim 1997).

²⁸ A. M. D. DIOGO/L. TRINDADE, Vestígios de uma unidade de transformação do pescado descobertos na Rua dos Fanqueiros, em Lisboa. *Rev. Portuguesa Arq.* 3, 2000, 181–196; J. BUGALHÃO, *Mandarim Chinês, Lisboa – Contextos Romanos*. In: *Actas do IV Encontro Nacional de Arqueologia Urbana* (Amadora, 10 a 12 de Novembro de 2000). Câmara Municipal da Amadora/Museu Municipal de Arqueologia e Associação de Arqueologia e Protecção do Património da Amadora (ARQA) (Amadora 2003) 127–146.

²⁹ IKÁHEIMO 2005.

³⁰ C. VIEGAS, Imports and local production: common ware from urban sites in Southern Lusitania (Algarve). RCRF Acta 42, 2012, 416.

³¹ VIEGAS 2007.

³² C. T. DA SILVA/A. COELHO-SOARES/J. SOARES, Nota sobre material anfórico da foz do Arade (Portimão). Setúbal Arq. 8, 1987, 203–219.

³³ F. TEICHNER, Cerro da Vila: paleo-estuário, aglomeração secundária e centro de transformação de recursos marítimos. In: *Actas do Simpósio Internacional «Produção e Comércio de Preparados Piscícolas Durante a Proto-história e a Época Romana no Ocidente da Península Ibérica»*. Homenagem a Françoise Mayet. Setúbal Arq. 13, 2006, 69–82; A. M. D. DIOGO, Escavação de uma unidade de processamento de berbigão, na estação romana do Cerro da Vila Loulé. *Rev. Portuguesa Arq.* 4, 2001, 109–115.

³⁴ C. VIEGAS/T. DINIS, Pedras d'el Rei (Tavira): villa suburbana de Balsa. In: *Actas do 7º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve*, Silves 2009. Xelb 10, 2010, 235–251.

³⁵ C. VIEGAS, O Forno romano da Manta Rota (Algarve). In: *Actas do Simpósio Internacional «Produção e Comércio de Preparados Piscícolas Durante a Proto-história e a Época Romana no Ocidente da Península Ibérica»*. Homenagem a Françoise Mayet. Setúbal Arq. 13, 2006, 177–196.

³⁶ QUARESMA 2010, 159.

³⁷ J. QUARESMA, Economia antiga a partir de um centro de consumo lusitano. *Terra sigillata e cerâmica africana de cozinha em Chãos Salgados* (Miróbriga?) (Lisboa 2009) 4.

³⁸ VIEGAS 2007, 83.

³⁹ M. PICON/G. OLCESE, Per una classificazione in laboratorio delle ceramiche comuni. In: G. Olcese (ed.), *Ceramica Romana e Archeometria: lo stato degli studi*. *Atti delle Giornate Internazionali di Studio Castello Montegufoni*, Firenze 26–27 aprile 1993 (Firenze 1994) 105–114.

⁴⁰ PINTO 2003, 582–583.

Can African amphorae be considered to share the same distribution routes as ACW? Tróia could follow this trend since the African amphorae⁴¹ represent 285 MNV (7.9% of the amphorae recovered at the site and 29.4% of amphorae imports) while ACW represents 149 MNV. Balsa, on the other hand, appears with only 21 African amphorae MNV compared to 850 ACW MNV⁴² showing that this ware did not always follow the amphorae shipments.

Although many assumptions have been made connecting ACW trade to other types of ceramics it is still not clear how this pottery travelled. The different distribution maps⁴³ of African ceramics and the example of Balsa indicate that ACW could “be more than a product used to fill the empty spaces in the ship’s hold”⁴⁴ but in general it certainly travelled to *Lusitania* as secondary cargo, which does not question its commercial value due to its high quality.⁴⁵ The inventory of the production centers will enrich the knowledge of its success⁴⁶ but the recognition of the consumption sites may also help defining its real value, tracing the wide distribution of this important pottery category that continued to reach *Lusitania* until the 5th century.

Concluding remarks

As mentioned above, the study of the ACW from Tróia was lacking to the overall knowledge of African imports to *Lusitania* and it enriches or develops the knowledge of the Atlantic coast distribution of this type of ceramics.⁴⁷

As in other sites of *Lusitania*⁴⁸ Tróia first received African cooking productions in the first half of the 2nd century, probably even at the beginning of that century, and those imports increased especially during the 3rd century. This commerce is still flowing in the 4th century and seems to have lasted until the first half of the 5th, with a clear supremacy of northern Tunisian products but with other regions also well represented.

As was demonstrated with the distribution map of this category, the ACW travelled to *Lusitania*, but it is scarcer in the inland sites. This shows that it was never a direct competitor against other African types of ceramics such as *terra sigillata*, following the established maritime commercial routes of African products to *Lusitania*.

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⁴¹ R. ALMEIDA/I. V. PINTO/A. P. MAGALHÃES/P. BRUM, Which amphorae carried the fish products from Tróia (Portugal)? (in this volume).

⁴² C. VIEGAS, A ocupação romana do Algarve – estudo do povoamento e economia do Algarve central e oriental no período romano. *Estudos & Memórias* 3, UNIARQ (Lisboa 2011) 369 and 381; VIEGAS 2007, 76.

⁴³ BONIFAY 2004; LEITCH 2010, 21.

⁴⁴ IKÄHEIMO 2005, 514.

⁴⁵ LEITCH 2010, 11; J. M. SCHURING, Terra Sigillata Africana from the San Sisto Vecchio in Rome, *Bull. Ant. Beschaving* 63, 1988, 43–45.

⁴⁶ BONIFAY 2004, 71.

⁴⁷ QUARESMA 2010, 158.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 159; VIEGAS 2007.

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