

Verena Vidrih Perko and Beatrice Žbona Trkman

CERAMIC FINDS FROM AJDOVŠČINA-FLUVIO FRIGIDO, AN EARLY ROMAN ROAD STATION AND LATE ROMAN FORTRESS CASTRA

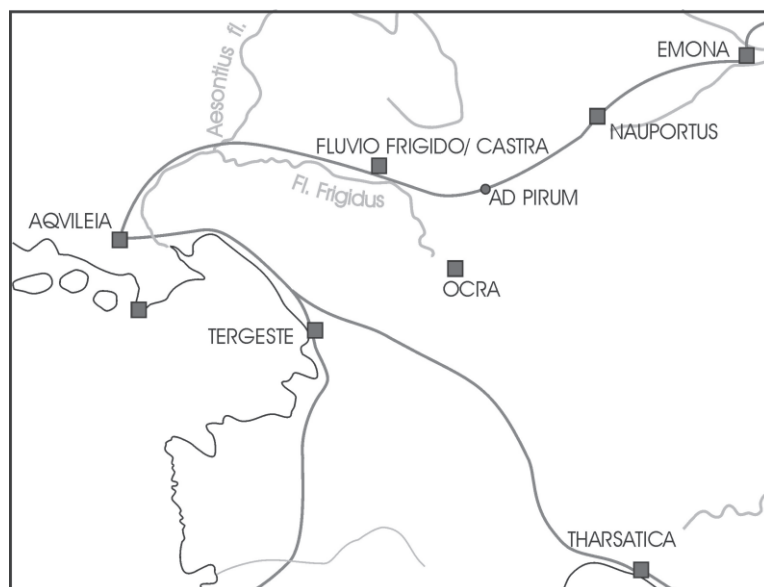


Fig. 1: Map of the territory between *Aquileia* and *Emona* with Vipava valley.



Fig. 2: View of the modern town of Ajdovščina inside the Late Roman fortress of *Castra*.

The small modern town of Ajdovščina lies in the archeologically abundant area of the Vipava valley, by the confluence of the Hubelj and Lokavšček torrents, and at the foot of the high plateaus of Čaven, Hrušica and Nanos.

The Vipava valley is the fertile flat land surrounding the river Vipava, ancient *fluvius Frigidus*, a tributary of the river Soča, ancient *Aesontius*. On the west the valley opens towards the north-eastern Adriatic and the wide Furlanian lowlands (fig. 1).

The northern part of the ancient Amber Route used to lead through the valley, and later also the Roman main road to the East, connecting *Aquileia* with *Pannonia*¹.

The oldest passage led through the Razdrto pass, *Ocra*, and the Postojna gateway to *Nauportus*, where goods were loaded from heavy wagons onto the river vessels². In the Augustan period the road gained a new, shorter stretch over the high and unsettled Hrušica, *Ad Pirum*, which shortened the ride from *Aquileia* to *Emona* by a day³.

Just before the demanding ascent that led out of the valley, there was the last road station in the valley, the *mansio Fluvio Frigido*⁴. The station is mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana* and in the Antonine Itinerary, meanwhile the Jerusalem Itinerary reports a new name *mutatio Castra*.

The remnants of the early imperial *mansio Fluvio Frigido* were, until recently, identified with the site of Mirce, a suburb of the present day town of Ajdovščina, while the nucleus of the town developed in the Middle Ages, inside the walls of the late Roman fortress *Castra*, situated by the confluence of the rivers (fig. 2).

The decisive factor for selecting the location of the Early Roman road station was undoubtedly its position by the steep

climb, in addition to the economical aspects of the larger area, and the Aquileian needs for raw materials⁵. The roadside station was located by the crossroads of the oldest forest paths from the nearby plateaus, which still exist today⁶. The road stations were the smallest administrative units authorized to collect taxes. Therefore, selecting the site of the *Fluvio Frigido* road station by the affluent Vipava river (the shortest and most direct connection through the Soča river to *Aquileia*) seemed optimal from an economical viewpoint as well as that of the traffic.

A new name *Castra*, as it is written in the Jerusalem Itinerary, is the result of political events in the Roman state, above all of the decision to create and build a military zone *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* on the north-eastern borders of Italy⁷. The fortress *Castra* was, along with the fortification

¹ R. F. ROSSI, La via dell'ambra e il Caput Adriae nell'età della romanizzazione. In: *Lungo la via dell'Ambra* (Udine 1996) 131–138. — F. PRENC, Viabilità e centuriazioni nella pianura Aquileiese. In: *BLASON SCAREL* 2000, 43–58. — D. SVOLJŠAK, Dalla via dell'ambra alla strata Hungarorum. La rete stradale in Slovenia dalla preistoria fino al primo medioevo. In: *BLASON SCAREL* 2000, 102–104.

² HORVAT 1990. — A. GASPARI, *Pontonium* iz Lip na Ljubljanskem barju. *Arh. vestnik* 49, 1998, 187–224.

³ HORVAT 1999, 219.

⁴ OSMUK/SVOLJŠAK/ŽBONA TRKMAN 1994. — HORVAT 1999, 252.

⁵ Considering the recent discovery of the boundary stone between *Aquileia* and *Emona* in the vicinity of Ljubljana it could be concluded that the area of the public road from *Aquileia* to *Nauportus*, where the cargo traffic was redirected to the river, belonged to *ager Aquileianus*. M. ŠAŠEL KOS, The Boundary Stone between *Aquileia* and *Emona*. *Arh. vestnik* 53, 2002, 373–382.

⁶ VIDRIH-PERKO/ŽBONA TRKMAN 2005.

⁷ J. ŠAŠEL/P. PETRU, *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum I*, Fontes (Ljubljana 1971). — J. ŠAŠEL, *RE Suppl.* XII, 1970, 138. — J. ŠAŠEL, *Alpes*

Ad Pirum, the backbone of the defensive system between *Aquileia* and *Emona*⁸. The initial construction stage of the *Castra* fortress is dated on the basis of coins minted during the reign of Gallienus and found in the mortar of the walls of the defensive towers⁹. This time also coincides with the construction of the *Ad Pirum* fortress. However, the architectural remains inside the fortress display several building phases, which together with the attested historic sources explain the improvements of the *Claustra* defence system in the period of Constantine and his successors¹⁰.

The fortress is mentioned by numerous ancient sources and is even depicted in the manual of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It is most often mentioned in connection with the crucial battle between Theodosius and Eugenius in the year 394 AD¹¹. The prevailing opinion is that at the time of the battle (or shortly afterwards) the *Ad Pirum* fortress was destroyed, while the *Castra* is believed to have existed as late as the early 5th century AD.

Examination of the foundations of the *Castra* defensive towers has proved that, for the purpose of building the Late Roman fortress, waters from both torrents, Hubelj and Lokavšček (together with the river Vipava named *fluvius Frigidus*), were regulated and transformed into a unified riverbed. For the strategic purposes, the town was protected on the northeast side of the fort¹². The immediate vicinity of the river was also of great economic importance for the fortress. Alongside its civil role, the fortress also took on a responsible military role.

The *Castra* was the headquarters for three legions and an administrative centre, equipped with army staff. In addition it was an extensive warehouse for goods and equipment, which was delivered to the base fortress through the Aquileian ports and the rivers in order to supply the necessities of the military units¹³.

Considering the role given by *Aquileia* to the Vipava valley as a significant economic hinterland which provided *Aquileia* with many raw materials, the river must have been used for cargo transportation already at the time of the Early Roman *mansio Fluvio Frigido*, demonstrating again the question of its specific ubiquity¹⁴.

The results of the latest researches in the area of the Late Roman *Castra* provided also some much earlier finds. These included bricks with stamps from the *Aquileia* workshops, Early Roman ceramics, bronze objects, glass and especially the foundations of Early Roman structures, that could belong to the *forum*. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the remnants of the early road station *Fluvio Frigido* is most probably located underneath the Late Roman fortress *Castra*.

In the area inside of the fortress the layers have been severely damaged by later construction works. Almost all the investigations have been limited to rescue excavations. Therefore, the analysis of the ceramics from Ajdovščina could be interesting in its various aspects. First of all, we have tried to provide an answer to the question regarding the beginnings and continuity of settlements inside the area of the Late Roman fortress. Secondly, we were interested to see if the analysis of the Late Roman pottery could assist in establishing the date of the fortress's decline.

Some Early Imperial ceramics were discovered in the excavations between the late 1960s and the beginning of the

1980s. The layers were badly damaged during more recent construction work, thus the material had become mixed up. However, fragments of Italic sigillata, thin-walled ceramics, Pompeian red ware and amphorae can be identified with a certainty among the Early Roman pottery (figs. 3–4).

A small cup of form Consp. 43.1.3 is almost wholly preserved (fig. 3,1). It displays the characteristics of the late Padanian production, mainly present in the Flavian period, but circulating also in the first half of the 2nd century AD¹⁵. A rim-fragment of a plate (fig. 3,5) belonged to the form Consp. 20.4.3, which was widespread in the second half of the 1st century AD and later¹⁶. To the same popular form Consp. 20 smaller wall-fragments of the walls could be attributed, one of them with an applied motif in the form of a dolphin¹⁷. They all belonged to the Padanian production.

A fragment of rim, most likely the rim of a *Sarius* cup (fig. 3,2), belongs to the late form Atlante 13D, the late (B) variety with a large diameter and, also with the characteristics of Padanian production. This form was most commonly in circulation during the last quarter of the 1st century, i.e. in the Flavian period¹⁸.

Some fragments belong to the thin-walled production (fig. 3,3,4). The cups with the barbotine decoration belong to the same production of grey ware with a black slip, most probably of North-Adriatic origin. The cup is most likely a long-lived form of cup with two handles, typical of the Augustan period, yet still produced, as the ornamentation proves in this case, in a later variety up until the Flavian period¹⁹. It displays elaborate forms of barbotine ornaments, typical of Flavian ware²⁰, found also at *Emona* in grave contexts²¹.

Some eastern sigillata (fig. 3,6,7) could be identified among the fragments²², for instance a plate of late A produc-

Julianae, Arh. vestnik 21/22, 1970/71, 33–44 = *Opera selecta*, Situla 30 (Ljubljana 1992) 728–739.

⁸ T. ULBERT, *Ad Pirum*, Spätromische Passbefestigung in den Julischen Alpen, Münch. Beitr. Vor- und Frühgesch. 31 (München 1981). — N. CHRISTIE, *The Alps as a Frontier* (A.D. 168–774). *JRA* 4, 1991, 410–430.

⁹ OSMUK 1997. — HORVAT 1999, 252.

¹⁰ S. CIGLENEČKI, Strukturierung spätantiker Besiedelung Sloweniens. Arh. vestnik 48, 1997, 191–202.

¹¹ M. SPRINGER, Die Schlacht am *Frigidus* als quellenkundliches und literaturgeschichtliches Problem. In: R. BRATOŽ (ed.), *Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätrömischen Zeit*. Situla 34 (Ljubljana 1996) 45–94.

¹² OSMUK 1997, Abb. 1.

¹³ C. SOTINEL, L'utilisation des ports dans l'arc Adriatique à l'époque tardive (IV^e–VI^e siècle). In: *Strutture portuali e rotte maritime nell'Adriatico di età romana*. *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 46 = Coll. de l'École Française de Rome 280 (Trieste, Roma 2001) 55–71.

¹⁴ VIDRIH PERKO/ŽBONA TRKMAN 2003.

¹⁵ *Consp.*, 128, Taf. 39.

¹⁶ S. ZABEHLICKY-SCHEFFENEGGER, Terra sigillata tardo-padana. *RCRF Acta* 31/32, 1992, 415–443.

¹⁷ E. SCHINDLER KAUELKA, Ceramica norditalica decorata del Magdalensberg: problemi aperti. In: BROGIOLO/OLCESE 2000, 53–67.

¹⁸ *Atlante II*, 220–228.

¹⁹ M. T. MARABINI MOEVS, The Roman thin walled Pottery from Cosa (1948–1954). *MAAR* 37 (Rome 1973) 83 form 25.

²⁰ Similar material was discovered in Loron (L. BRASSOUS, Les céramique à parois fines. In: TASSAUX ET AL. 2001, 177–191 fig. 5,42–45).

²¹ L. PLESNIČAR Gec, Severno emonsko grobišče, Kat. in monogr. 8 (Ljubljana 1972), grave no. 972, pl. 193,5, found together with an lamp Loeschcke X, stamped FESTI.

²² The eastern sigillata is known already from *Aquileia* (MANDRUZZATO/TIUSSI/DEGRASSI 2000) *Tergeste*, Fazine and Školarice (both

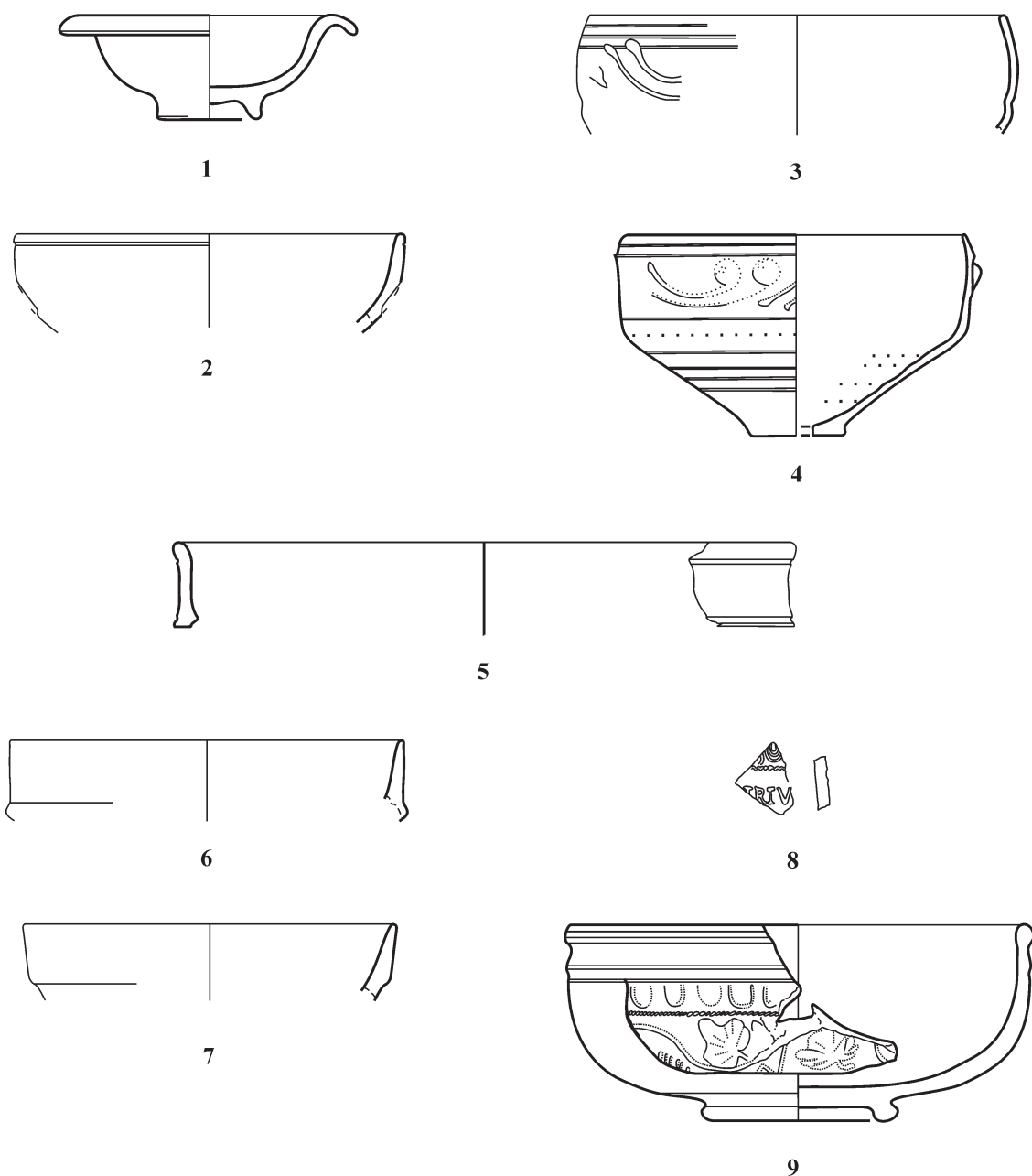


Fig. 3: Ajdovščina/Fluvio Frigido, Early Roman fine ware

tion, form Hayes 37B, dating back to the period between 60 and 100 AD²³. The second fragment resembles to the production of ESB 2 and is close to form Hayes 60. The vessel originates in same time period and could be found as late as the 2nd century AD²⁴.

Among the early imperial material also Pompeian-Red ware of Southern Italian origin was identified. The ware is often found in eastern archaeological sites of the tenth Region from the Augustan period onwards²⁵. It is common in the settlement layers of *Emona*, remaining present until the first half of the 2nd century AD²⁶. The shape of the pieces from the *Fluvio Frigido* indicates that these are forms from the late 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD²⁷.

Gaulish production is represented by a bowl of form Drag. 37 and a few further fragments (fig. 3,8,9). The decoration in a form of large continuous scroll on the bowl

unpublished), Loron, Pula and Brioni. (revised by P. MAGGI, La ceramica fine da mensa. La terra sigillata orientale. In: TASSAUX ET AL. 2001, 152–155). — Eastern sigillata A and B is not rarely present in settlement layers of *Emona*, ESB is known from recent excavations in *Celeia*, as well as from the road station *Romula*, modern site of Ribnica in the south-east Slovenian region of Dolenjska (unpublished).

²³ *Atlante II*, 31, tav. 5,13.

²⁴ *Atlante II*, 64, tav. 14,8.

²⁵ VIČIČ 1994, 32, pl. 26,1.2. — VIČIČ 2002, pl. 5,7–9.

²⁶ Pompeian-Red ware was on the early *Emona* settlement Pod grajskim gričem found in the 3rd layer, dated between the mid-Augustan and Claudian periods (VIČIČ 2002, pl. 5,7–10). — Pompeian-Red ware is well known from the site of Magdalensberg (E. SCHINDLER KAUDELKA, Unwetter und Muren im 16. Jahrhundert auf dem Magdalensberg? Die Roll- und Verfallschichten über dem Gebäude WR/1,2. In: F. LEITNER (Hg.), *Carinthia Romana und die Römische Welt. Festschrift für Gernot Piccottini zum 60. Geburtstag* [Klagenfurt 2001] 471–482 Abb. 2,45; 4,19; 6,14).

²⁷ They are common in the late Flavian settlement layers from *Emona* (unpublished).

(fig. 3,8), which is only partly reconstructable, together with the poor quality of the fabric, shows the characteristics of the late central Gaulish production from Lezoux and could be dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD²⁸. The second fragment with relief decoration belongs most probably also to the bowl form Drag. 37. On the fragment a part of the name (COBNE)R-TVIS is preserved. It could be identified as the skilled Rhein-zabern worker Cobnertus III, active between the years 150 and 190 AD²⁹.

With regard to the amphorae, there are mostly fragments which are classified according to their fabric and form as Dressel 6B oil vessels (fig. 4,2–4). The shape of the rims are the most common and typical for the end of the 1st and the 2nd century AD³⁰. The fragments of the rim of the smaller variety of Dressel 6B can be classified as a part of the same late Istrian production (fig. 4,3)³¹. A few fragments found among the amphora material may also belong to the wine containers of form Dressel 6A. This vessels are, beside the oil containers Dressel 6B, the most common on the North Adriatic and *Decima regio* sites until the middle of the 1st century AD.

Among the multi-purpose vessels Portorecanatian amphorae, with the funnel shaped rim or ‘*collo ad imbuto*’ type were recognized. These vessels are of western Adriatic and North Italian production and they represented an important part of the early imperial transport containers, common from the mid 1st and early 2nd century AD³².

Some fragments of a distinctive amphora shape, Schörgendorfer 558 were identified. These were containers for olives and their place of production is not known. However, they are frequently found in *Pannonia* and *Noricum*³³.

The fragment of rim illustrated in figure 4,1 is strongly reminiscent of the Cretan amphorae family, and belongs most probably to the form Cretaise 4b. This form is frequently present in the western Mediterranean in the 2nd and 3rd century AD³⁴. These are almost certainly all wine containers and are already well known from *Emona*, *Celeia* and *Poetovio* as well as from many other Pannonian sites. They are mostly of the Antonine period and later, frequently accompanied by the flat bottomed Adriatic amphorae³⁵.

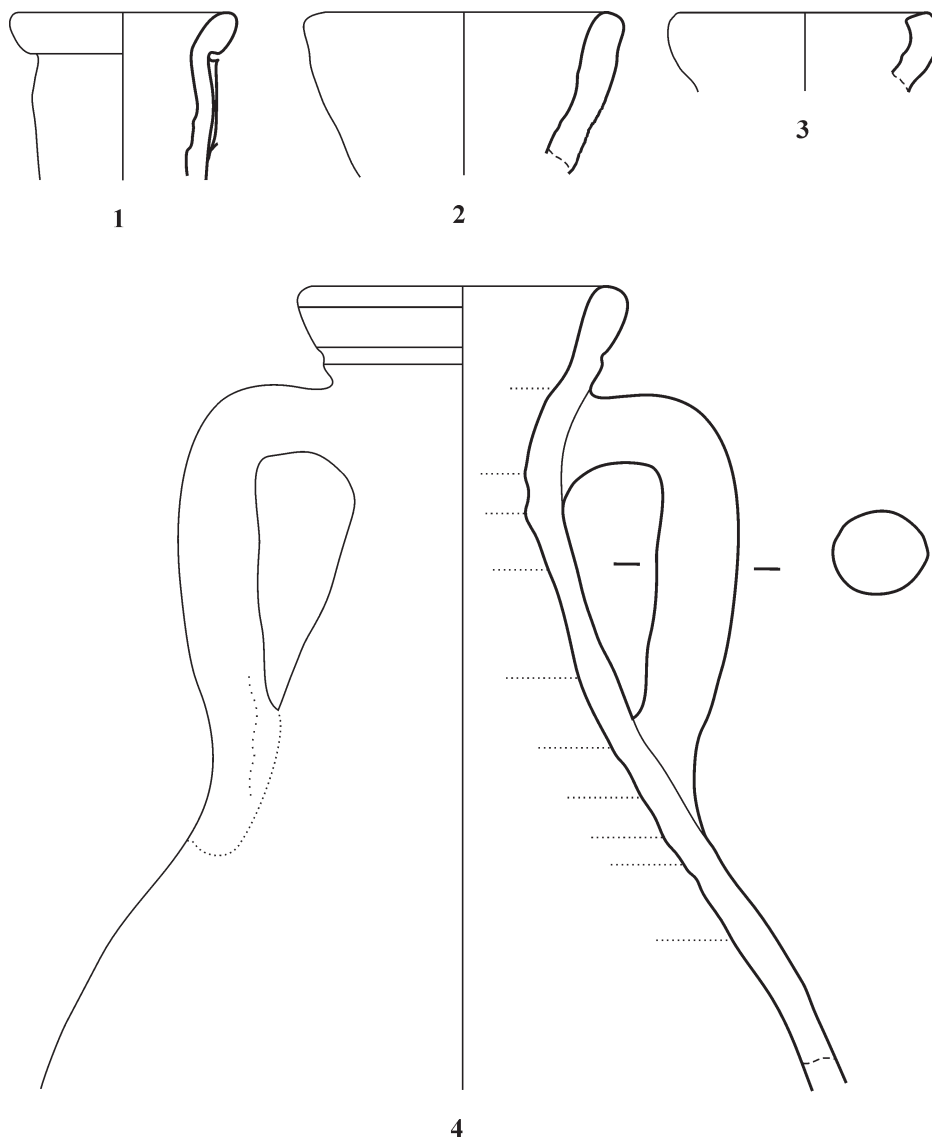


Fig. 4: Ajdovščina/Fluvio Frigido, Early Roman amphorae

As mentioned before, the Late Roman material from site Ajdovščina is prevalent; among it the African imports

²⁸ C. BÉMONT/J.-P. JACOB, (eds.), *La terre sigillée gallo-romaine. Lieux de production du Haut Empire: implantations, produits, relations*. Documents d'archéologie Française 6, 1986, 138–144.

²⁹ B. HOFMANN, *Catalogue des estampilles sur vaisselle sigillée, 2^{ème} partie* (Notice technique 22) 33 no. 69.

³⁰ KOVAČIĆ ET AL. 2004, fig. 11.

³¹ KOVAČIĆ ET AL. 2004, fig. 11. The fragment matches with amphora form Fažana 2/685 (BEZECZKY 1998, fig. 8). — For a further commentary see also S. PESAVENTO MATTIOLI, *Anfore: problemi e prospettive di ricerca*. In: BROGIOLO/OLCESE 2000, 107–120, part. 114.

³² A. TONIOLO, *Le anfore di Altino*, Arch. veneta 14, 1991, 29. — T. BEZECZKY, *Amphorenfunde vom Magdalensberg und aus Pannonien*. Kärntner Museumsschr. 74 (Klagenfurt 1994) 122.

³³ T. BEZECZKY, *Amphorae from the Auxiliary Fort of Carnuntum*. In: H. STIGLITZ (ed.) *Das Auxiliarkastell Carnuntum I*. SoSchrÖAI 29 (Wien 1997) 147–178.

³⁴ S. LEMAÎTRE, *Les importations d'amphores de Méditerranée Orientale à Lyon au III^e siècle ap. J.-C.* RCRF Acta 36, 2000, 467–476 fig. 6,8–11.

³⁵ Forms Forlimpopoli B and C (T. ALDINI, *Anfore foropoliensi*. Arch. Class. 30, 1978, 236–245).

predominate. Since the African red slip ware was an object of the study by Ph. Pröttel, this article doesn't dedicate special attention to this argument³⁶. It mostly focuses on the amphorae material and other imported ceramics.

African red slip ware was present already in its early forms, an example being the find of a fragment of the form Hayes 8A (**fig. 5,1**) a bowl from the second century and the beginning of the 3rd century AD³⁷. The fragment of a handle from a closed form, perhaps a mug, is most probably one of the 3rd century forms³⁸.

Nevertheless the majority of ARS ware is of C and D production with predominant forms typical of the 4th century AD, i.e. forms Hayes 45, 50A and B, 52, 58A and B, 59B, 61A and B, 64, 67, 68. However, also forms Hayes 70, 73B, 91A/B are represented, usually found in early 5th century AD contexts (**figs. 5–6**)³⁹.

In the contrast, amongst the ARS ware unearthed at the *Ad Pirum* fortress, a set of forms typical of the late 4th and the first half of the 5th century AD and E production, are not to be found⁴⁰.

Among the imported cooking ware from *Castra*, the African production is also prevalent (**fig. 5,2–7**). The form Hayes 23A and B is present. Both varieties are typical of the 3rd and 4th century AD, nevertheless the variant A is prevalent in Severian period⁴¹, and a variant of form Hayes 23B form (**fig. 7,5**) of north Tunisian production, appears already in the early imperial deposits of the Palatine and is most typical of 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The production of this form stops towards the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century AD⁴².

Of Tunisian production is also a deep casserole form Atlante 106,1 (**fig. 7,3**), dated from the 2nd to the 4th, or even in the beginning of the 5th century AD⁴³. A deep casserole of form Hayes 197 is a typical north Tunisian form, and together with the lid of late variant form Ostia III, fig. 108⁴⁴, seems to represent typical cooking vessels of the 4th and the first half of the 5th century AD (**fig. 7,7**)⁴⁵.

The lids of conical domed shape (**fig. 7,6**) with thickened rim, form Hayes 182/195, of central Tunisian origin and lids of form Hayes 196 (**fig. 7,2,4**) with blackened rim, produced in the northern and central Tunisian workshops, are long-lived types. They occurred frequently on the sites throughout the Western Mediterranean from the 2nd century AD onwards and disappeared from the market shortly after the 5th century AD⁴⁶.

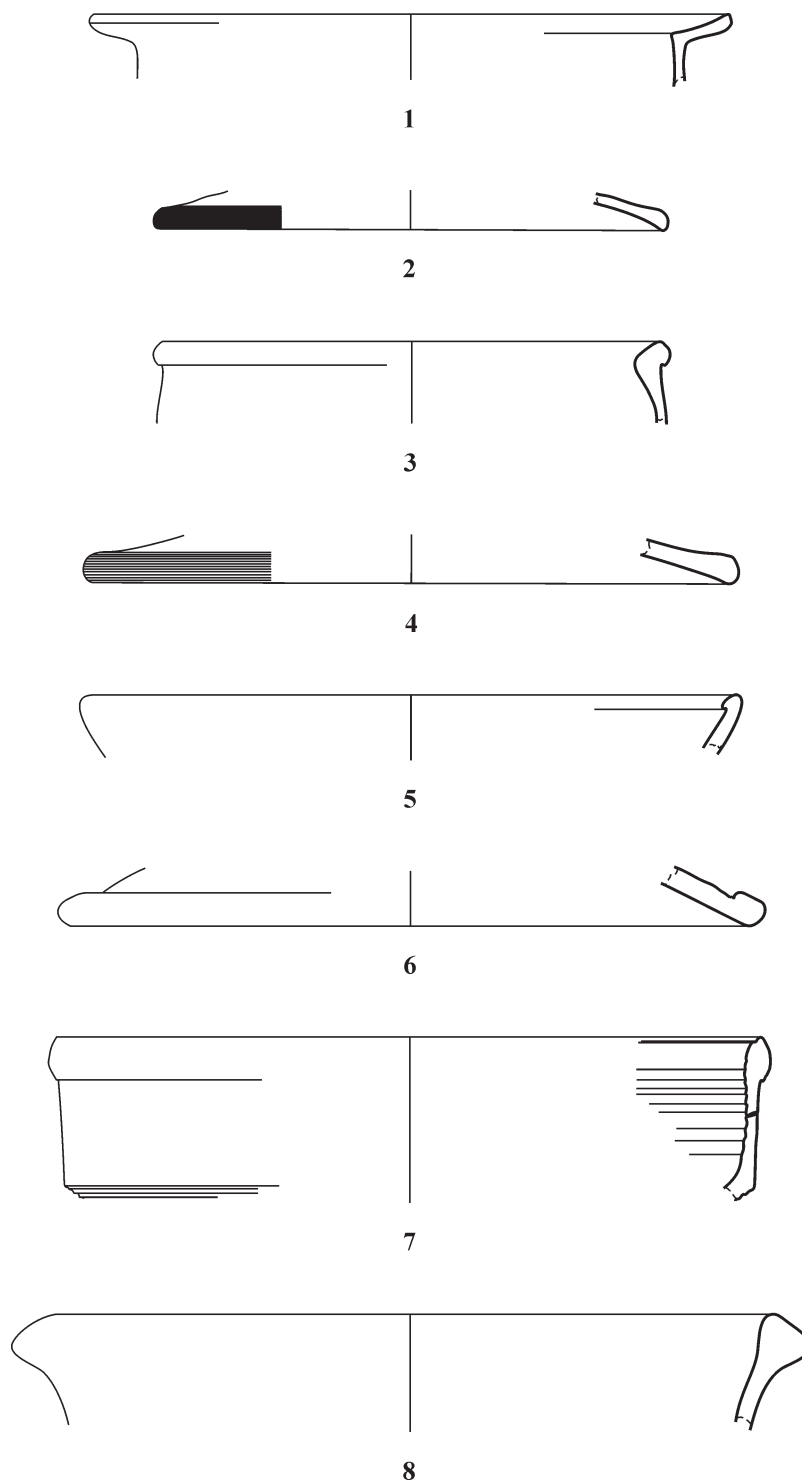


Fig. 5: Ajdovščina/*Castra*, African red slip ware

to Sigillata C³ with Appliqué Decoration in Central Tunisia, RCRF Acta 38, 2003, 279–286.

³⁹ PRÖTTEL 1996, 139. – VIDRIH PERKO in press.

⁴⁰ PRÖTTEL 1996, 140, Abb. 43.

⁴¹ *Atlante I*, 222, tav. 108,1. — IKÄHEIMO 2003, pl. 8,40.

⁴² IKÄHEIMO 2003, 54.

⁴³ IKÄHEIMO 2003, 68 S IV variant.

⁴⁴ A. CARANDINI/C. PANELLA (eds.), *Le terme del Nuotatore. Scavo dell'ambiente III, VI, VII. Scavo dell'ambiente V e di un saggio nell'area SO. Ostia III. Stud. Miscellanei 21* (Roma 1977).

⁴⁵ IKÄHEIMO 2003, 60 pl. 12,62 or 63, variant O. or O VI.

⁴⁶ *Atlante I*, 212 tav. CIV,6. — IKÄHEIMO 2003, 36 pl. 3,4 variants AI and AII.

³⁶ PRÖTTEL 1996, 138–140 Taf. 20,7–23; 21,21–25.

³⁷ Form Lamboglia 1b (*Atlante I*, 26 tav. 14,5).

³⁸ Mugs of forms Salomonson I/Hayes 171, III, VI in VIII have similar handles. — See also M. MACKENSEN, Production of 3rd Century Sigillata A/C (C¹⁻²) or 'El Aouja' Ware and its Transition

In *Castra* were identified also dish fragments of form Hayes 61 in an imitation of African red slipped D production. They occur amongst the finds from *Ad Pirum*, most likely being the product of the nearby Italic workshops of the 4th century⁴⁷ AD.

Beside the predominant African imports there were identified also eastern Mediterranean products. A fragment of a plate belongs most probably to a Late Phocaeon production (**fig. 7,5**). The shape is similar to form Hayes 2A and therefore datable to the 5th century AD⁴⁸.

Many fragments of LRA 3 type of micaceous jars were found (**fig. 9,9.12**) and fragments of Aegean cooking ware (**fig. 5,1**). Aegean cooking ware circulated intensively in the eastern Adriatic area from the 1st century AD on. It is known also from the Slovenian sites from the 2nd century AD onwards and is common on the Late Roman sites and fortresses of the *Claustra*⁴⁹.

It is particularly striking that in *Castra* the glazed ware is rarely found⁵⁰. It is important to mention that the Late Roman glazed ceramics were found on almost every Late Roman site in this area and it is considered that they are in some way competing with the African red slip ware.

The transport vessels of the African production prevail. By analysing the fragments of bases, handles, and rims (**fig. 9,1**), the Mauritanian wine amphorae of type Keay IB were identified, with Keay 25 and 26 types being the most common (**fig. 9,4–8**)⁵¹. Type 25 is represented by the B, S, P and Y vari-

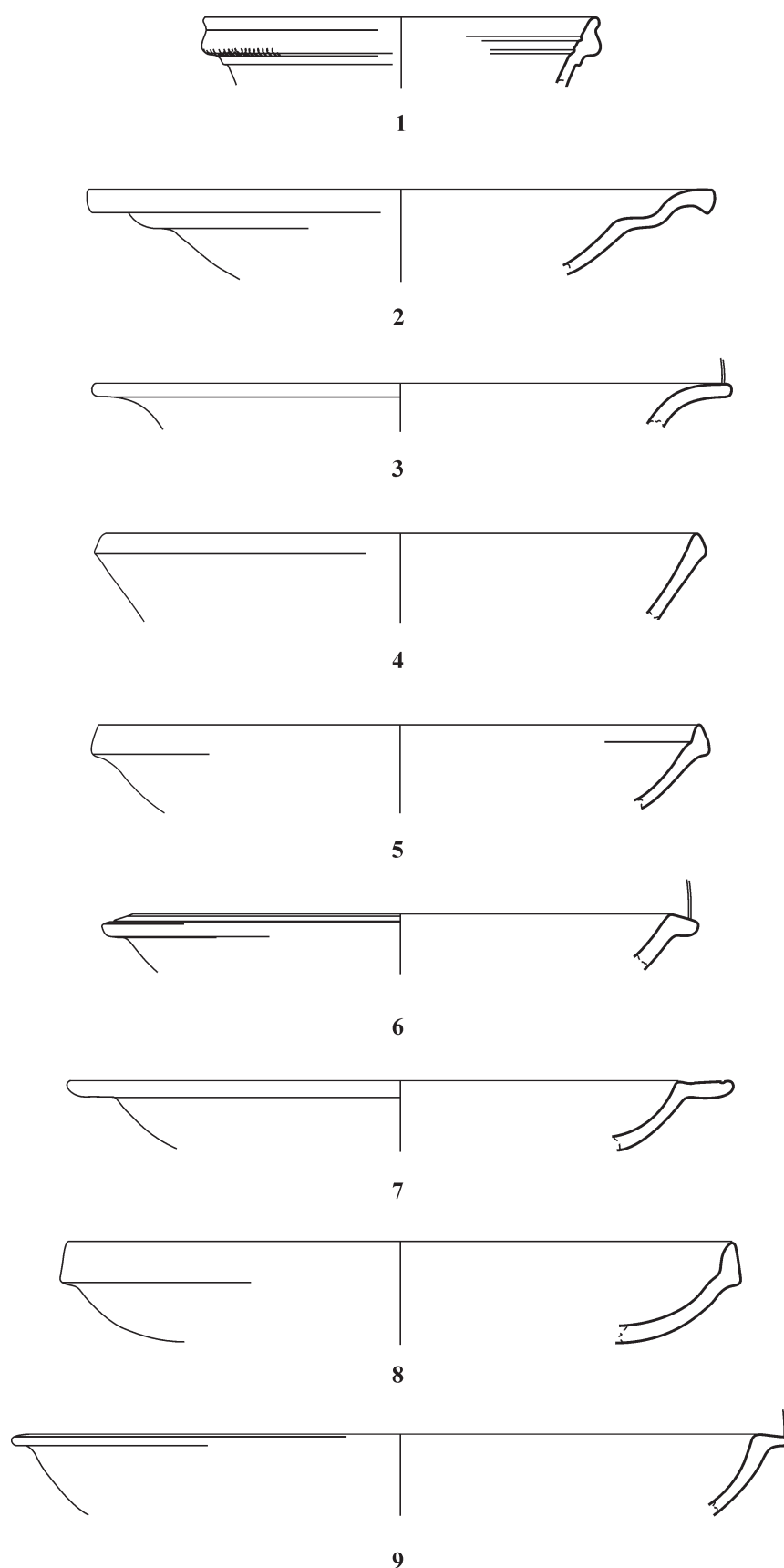


Fig. 6: Ajdovščina/*Castra*, African red slip ware

⁴⁷ S. FONTANA, Le 'imitazioni' della sigillata africana e le ceramiche da mensa italice tardo antiche. In: SAGUI 1998, 83–100. — A. GAMBERINI/L. MAZZEO SARACINO, Produzioni tarde di terra sigillata da Galeata (Fo). RCRF Acta 38, 2003, 99–107.

⁴⁸ *Atlante I*, 232 tav. CXI,7.8. — It was concluded that the beginning of the imports of LRC ware was after the year AD 450 (P. REYNOLDS, Trade in the Western Mediterranean, AD 400–700: the ceramic evidence. BAR Int. Ser. 604 (Oxford 1995), however, earlier examples from Italy have been known: A. MARTIN, La sigillata focese (Phocaeon Red-Slip/Late Roman C Ware. In: SAGUI 1998, 109–122.

⁴⁹ The Aegean Cooking Ware from the eastern Adriatic sites has recently been studied in detail by many authors (J. ISTENIĆ/G. SCHNEIDER, The Aegean Cooking Ware in the Eastern Adriatic. RCRF Acta 36, 2000, 341–348. — MANDRUZZA-TO/TIUSI/DEGRASSI 2000, fig. 5).

⁵⁰ Glazed ceramic workshops were discovered in Carlino, in next to *Aquileia* and therefore not far from *Castra*: C. MAGRINI, Progetto di revisione della ceramica invetriata di Carlino. In: BROGIOLO/OLCESE 2000, 199–202.

⁵¹ KEAY 1984, 95 fig. 35,36.

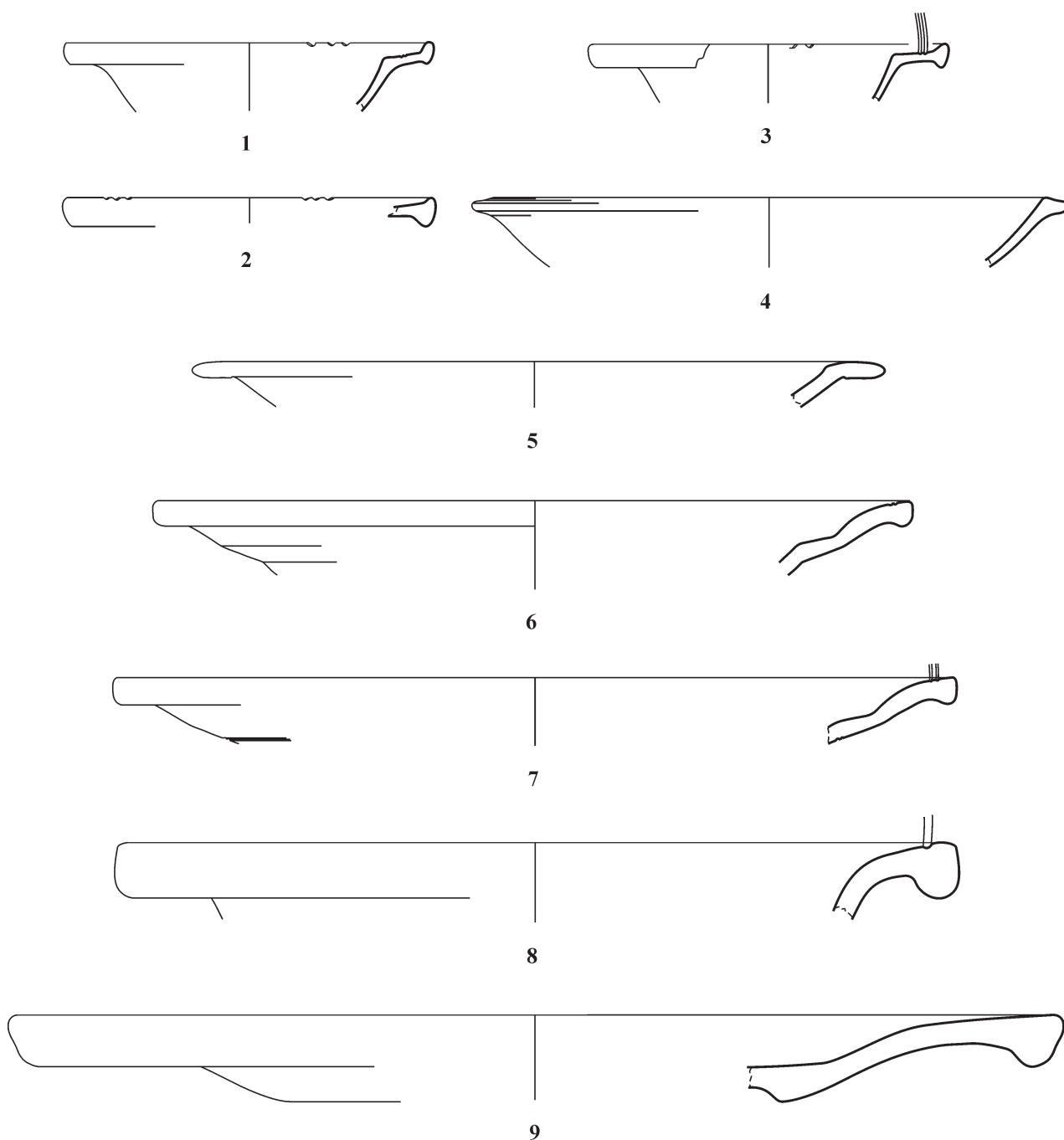


Fig. 7: Ajdovščina/Castra, imported cookware

ants. These were typical oil containers of the 4th and the first half of the 5th century⁵², apart from the D variant, which seems to be present mostly in the layers of the late 4th century AD, and finally disappears from the market in the early decades of the 5th century AD⁵³.

The late forms of Keay 26, close to the H and F variants, along with their bases, are distinct from the aforementioned group (fig. 9,10). The form, nevertheless, dates back to the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century AD. They are not found among the *Ad Pirum* material, but are present at the site of Rodik and other areas of Karst and Furlania and their late antique fortresses⁵⁴. The forms of the smaller amphorae are also common among the materials from hill-top settlements, military outposts and coastal centres from the 6th century AD⁵⁵.

Among the typologically identified amphorae LRA 4, the Gaza wine container is represented (fig. 9,11). This form is known from the fortress *Ad Pirum* and settlement layers at *Emona*, yet they also appear among the materials from the 4th and 5th centuries AD in *Celeia* and *Poetovio*⁵⁶ and are well known from late antique sites⁵⁷.

⁵² KEAY 1984, figs. 83,9; 77,12; 81.

⁵³ KEAY 1984, 195 fig. 79,2.

⁵⁴ V. VIDRIH PERKO, Some Late Roman Ceramic finds from the Slovenian Karst region, RCRF Acta 35, 1997, 249–258.

⁵⁵ V. VIDRIH PERKO, La ceramica tardo antica di Hrušica (*Ad Pirum*). RCRF Acta 31/32, 1992, 349–364.

⁵⁶ P. ARTHUR, Eastern Mediterranean amphorae between 500 and 700: a view from Italy. In: SAGUI 1998, 157–183, part. 161.

⁵⁷ LRA 4 amphorae are frequently found at late antique sites, e.g.

Two forms remain to be discussed. One of them could be most probably identified as an amphora of form Almagro 52B (**fig. 9,3**), which is well known from the coastal North-Adriatic settlements and is found on the sites along the Vipava river and the main route from *Aquileia* to *Emona*.

The last form, which is identified as the Calabrian or Sicilian wine vessel Keay 52 (**fig. 9,2**), and was circulating in the Mediterranean throughout the 4th century, disappeared in the first decades of the 5th century AD⁵⁸.

Numerous additional fragments belong to flanged bowls form Fulford 22 (**fig. 8,1–8**), partly in a recognizable African fabric, but also with another one which is unidentified.

The most common finds of this vessels are most common in the 5th century AD layers and they can be also found later⁵⁹. Bowls of this type seem to be particularly numerous in Aquileian Late Roman layers and were sporadically identified among material from *Nauportus*⁶⁰ and *Emona*, both of them important fortifications inside the *Claustra* defence system. It is particularly striking that flanged bowls were not found in *Ad Pirum*⁶¹.

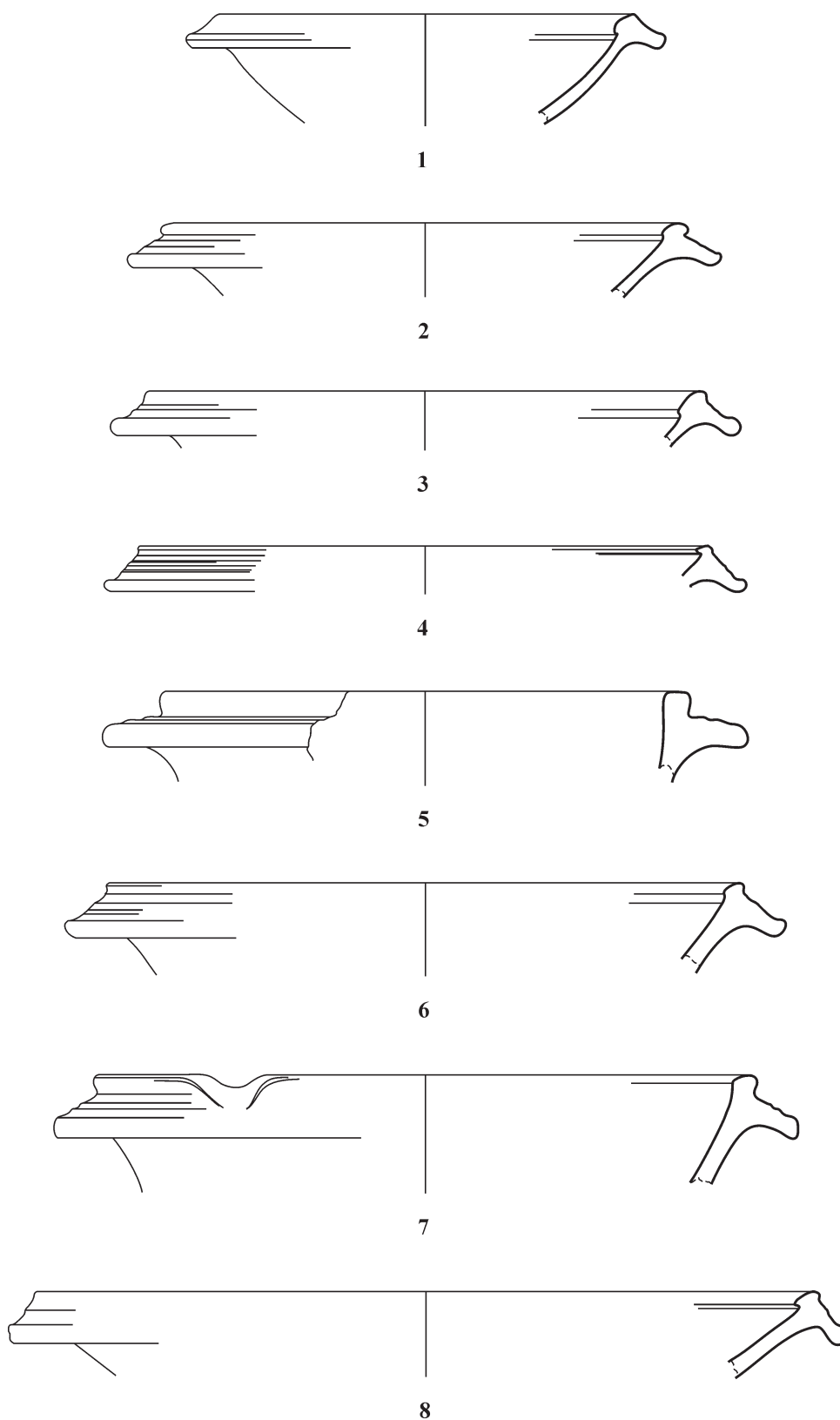


Fig. 8: Ajdovščina/*Castra*, imported coarse ware

Črnomelj, Kranj and particularly Koper and Piran (VIDRIH PERKO, in press).

⁵⁸ F. PACETTI, La questione delle Keay LII nell'ambito della produzione anforica in Italia. In: SAGUI 1998, 185–208. — The vessels are not rare in the 7th century layers, as proven by the deposit finds from the *Crypta Balbi*, however the form of the rim is noticeable different (L. SAGUI, Il deposito della Cripta Balbi: una testimonianza imprevedibile sulla Roma del VII secolo? In: SAGUI 1998, 305–330).

⁵⁹ C. M. COLETTI, Ceramiche comuni dai contesti di Porto (VI e VII secolo). Ceramica comune tardoantica da Ostia e Porto (V–VII secolo). In: SAGUI 1998, 401–417 fig. 11,7.

⁶⁰ HORVAT 1990, pl. 19,2. The fragment from *Nauportus* was found among the early imperial material, hold for a century in a museum deposit. The material from *Emona* has not yet been published.

⁶¹ R. CHINELLI, Ceramica depurata di impasto africano. In: M. VERZAR BASS (ed.), Scavi di Aquileia I, L'area est del foro. Rapporto degli scavi 1989–91. Studi e ricerche sulla Gallia Cisalpina 6 (Roma 1994) 290–307, with a comprehensive bibliography.

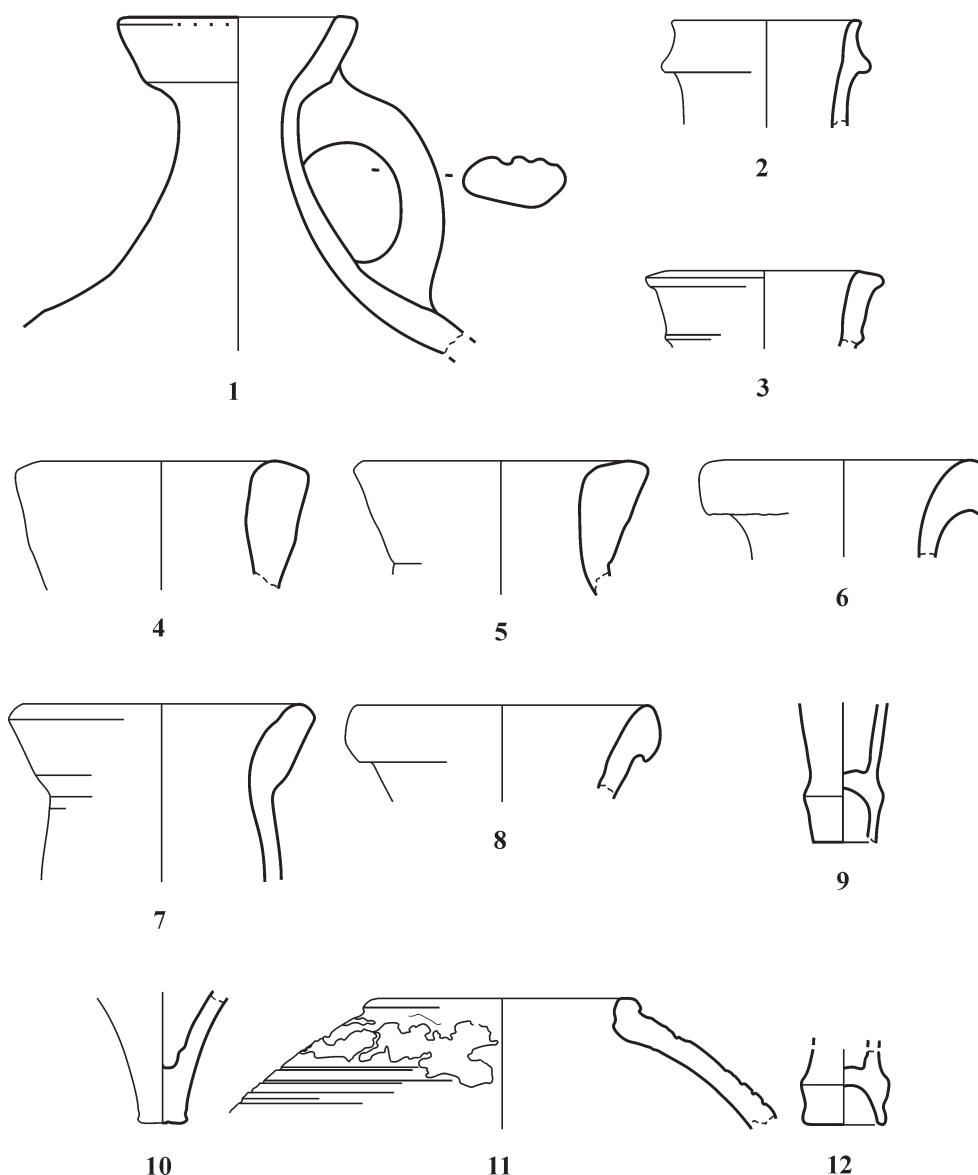


Fig. 9: Ajdovščina/Castra, Late Roman amphorae

Conclusions

- The early imperial period is mostly represented by the Italian and eastern sigillata forms, however, all these forms are typical principally of the Flavian period and in the following decades.
- The continuity of the settlement is confirmed by some Gaulish sigillata, along with the early forms of African red slip ware, typical of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century AD.
- Among the Early Roman imports there are also Pompeian red and Aegean cooking ware and various forms of wine and oil amphorae.
- The bulk of the *Castra* material can be placed in the Late Roman period. The African imports prevail, followed by few eastern imports. The majority of the red slip ware consists of forms typical of the 4th century AD, predominantly of C and D production. It is particularly striking that there are represented in *Castra* also forms (Hayes 70, 73B, 91A/B) usually found in early 5th AD century contexts

and that, in the contrast, they are not to be found among the material from the fortress of *Ad Pirum*.

- The imported flanged bowls of form Fulford 22, which mainly appeared in the 5th century AD layers, likewise cannot be found among the *Ad Pirum* materials; the presence of 5th century AD pottery could perhaps be confirmed in addition by the presence of some pieces of Phocian production.
- The African cylindrical amphorae are represented by the late 4th and early 5th century AD forms.
- The large quantity of African ware could reflect the constant supply of the *annona*, accompanied by other products from African workshops destined for the military units.
- The main competitor to the African red slip ware on the free market at the time was the glazed ware from the local and regional workshops, which rarely appears in the *Castra* and *Ad Pirum* fortresses.

The present contribution may help us to understand more clearly the rôle of the river transport in the road-net forming

process of developing the road-network and in choosing the location of the settlements. The observed characteristics and differences in the ceramic materials support the hypothesis of settlement continuity and help us to come closer to

determining the date of the decline of the *Castra* and *Ad Pirum* fortresses inside the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* defence system.

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