

KAPITÄN II AMPHORAE DISCOVERED AT REȘCA-ROMULA

MIRCEA NEGRU*

Abstract: This article presents a batch of Kapitän II amphorae discovered at Reșca-Romula, the main Roman settlement of Dacia Inferior (Malvensis). These amphora fragments were found in the archaeological campaigns from 2013 up to 2018, in the central area of the former Roman town. The presented items are dated between the second quarter of the 2nd century AD and the middle of the 3rd century AD. They complete the knowledge of this kind amphora and confirm some variants of this type of amphorae.

Key words: amphora, Kapitän II, Romula, Roman Period.

Brief introduction

In the last decades there have been published some articles and studies regarding the Kapitän II type amphorae discovered in Roman Dacia¹, but most of this category of ceramic pots is still unpublished.

Kapitän II amphorae have a high ovoid body, vertical lip, cylindrical neck and tubular base. The handles are usually higher than the level of the mouth of the vessel. In general, these amphorae are made from rough semi-coarse fabric, with a lot of sand and mica. The firing is oxidised, the predominant color is brick-red. On the outside, they have the slip in the same color.

Over time, these amphorae have been framed in other classifications such as Benghazi Mid Roman Amphora 7, Hollow Foot Amphora, Kuzmanov 7 type, Niederbieber 77 type, Ostia VI type, Peacock & Williams 47 Class, Zeest 79 type, Popilian 4 type, Dyczek 18 type, Brukner 15 type, Ardeț 9g type, Suceveanu LIX type, Jevremovic IV type.

*Assoc. Prof., PhD, Department of Law and Administrative Sciences, Spiru Haret University Bucharest, Romania, email: mnegru.ist@spiruharet.ro; Assoc. Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania.

¹ Gh. Popilian, *Contribution à la typologie des amphores romaines découvertes en Olténie (II^e–III^e siècles de n.è.)*, Dacia, NS, 18, 1974, pp. 137–146; idem, *Ceramica romană din Oltenia*, Craiova, 1976; A. Ardeț, *Amfora romană în Banat*, Tibiscum 8, 1993, pp. 95–140; idem, *Amforele din Dacia romană*, Timișoara, 2006, pp. 128–130, Pl. XXVI: 208–210, XVII: 211–214, XXVIII: 215–221.

As regards the content of those amphorae, it is alleged that they were used for the transport of wine².

Origin. Most specialists consider that the origin of these amphorae would be somewhere in the area of the Aegean coasts, the island of Samos and the region around Ephessos, the Aegean Sea area and the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean, the Lower Danube³, Pontes for the imports into Pannonia⁴, Aegean Sea, and also possibly at Romula⁵.

Production, spreading area, and general chronology

The production of this type of amphorae would have begun in the second half of the second century AD, at Ostia, in the period 190–260 AD in the castrum from Niederbieber, in Germany, the first half of the third century in Iraq, the second half of the third century at Athens, until the beginning of the fifth century at Histria⁶.

The Kapitän II type amphorae experienced a wide spread in the Roman Empire, in Britannia and Gallia, on the Adriatic coasts. In the Italian Peninsula, in Sicily, in Ostia, in the Greek islands of the Aegean Sea, in western Asia Minor and the Black Sea basin⁷.

Kapitän II type amphorae are common in the Roman Danubian provinces. In the north of the Lower Danube, in general, this type of amphorae was dated from the middle of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 4th century AD⁸. In Dacia Inferior (Malvensis), such amphorae discovered at Romula were dated to the 3rd century AD⁹.

In Moesia Inferior, they were generally dated to the 1st–5th centuries AD¹⁰, and Moesia Superior, at Diana-Karatas, this type of amphorae was dated to the 3rd century AD¹¹, while in Pannonia Inferior, at Mursa and Sirmium, they belong to some archaeological contexts of the 3rd–4th centuries AD¹².

New Kăpitän amphora fragments discovered at Reșca-Romula

In this article we have endeavored the presentation of a batch of Kapitän II type amphorae discovered at Reșca-Romula, during the archaeological researches

² P. Dyczek, *Roman amphorae of the 1st–3rd centuries AD found on the Lower Danube. Typology*, Warszawa, 2001, p. 143.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁴ O. Brukner, *Rimska keramika u Jugosloven delu provincije Dolnje Panonije*, Beograd 1981, p. 185.

⁵ A. Ardeș, *Amforele în Dacia romană*, pp. 128–130.

⁶ P. Dyczek, *op. cit.*, p. 143 (with the entire bibliography).

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 141–143.

⁸ A. Ardeș, *op. cit.*, p. 129, type 9g.

⁹ Gh. Popilian, *Ceramica romană din Oltenia*, pp. 44–45, Pl. XV: 201; Negru, Streinu, III.2.1. *Ceramica romană/Roman pottery*, in *Raport privind cercetările arheologice sistematice din anul 2015*, Seria Rapoarte Arheologice, I, Târgoviște, 2016, p. 37, Pl. 29: 2731, 2291.

¹⁰ P. Dyczek, *op. cit.*, pp. 141–143.

¹¹ N. Jevremovic, *La ceramique des remparts sud et ouest decouverte sur le site Diana-Karatas*, in: Kondic Vl. (Editor), *Cahiers des Portes de Fer*, IV, Beograd, 1987, p. 56, type IV: 5.

¹² O. Brukner, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–186, type 15, Pl. 163: 67, 69–71.

of 2013–2018, in order to contribute to a better knowledge of this type of amphorae, frequently found in Romula, respectively in the Roman province of Dacia Inferior (Malvensis).

For a long time, Kapitän II type amphorae were thought to belong to only one type, without variants¹³. Depending on certain details regarding the constituent parts of the vessel, the Kapitän II type amphorae fragments discovered at Romula in the period 2013–2018, which will be presented below, they can be divided into several variants and subvariants¹⁴.

Catalogue of discoveries

1. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains sand, mica and rare gravels. Red slip. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 5.0YR 6/18. MD = 7 cm, p.H. = 19 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 1, sq. 8, secondary position. The 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 9440.

2. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains frequently little fragments of hematite. Brick slip. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 5.0Y 6/2. MD = 6 cm, p.H. = 7.4 cm. Romula, 2013, CF, S 2, sq. 6, -1,50/-1,90 m, CFC 2/4. The middle of the 3rd century AD. SI 432.

3. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains frequent gravels. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 5.0YR 5/6. MD = 6 cm, p.H. = 6.6 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 4, sq. 12–14, secondary position. The 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 8789.

4. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains sand and rare gravels. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 2.5Y 5/4. MD = 8 cm, p.H. = 8.5 cm. Romula, 2013, CF, S 2, sq. 7, -1,70/-2,00 m. The 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 891.

5. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains sand. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 2.5YR 5/2. MD = 7.5 cm, p.H. = 9 cm. Romula, 2013, CF, S 2, sq. 4, -0.60/-0.80 m. The middle of the 3rd century AD. SI 168.

6. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains rare hematite fragments. Brick slip. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell MD = 7 cm, p.H. = 25 cm. Romula, 2017, CF, S 14, sq. C2, -0.39 m. The middle of the 3rd century AD. SI 5249.

7. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains fine sand. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 5.0YR 4/6. MD = 8 cm, p.H. = 132 cm. Romula, 2013, CF, S 2, sq. 4, -0.65/-0.85 m. The late half of the 2nd century, until the last but one decade of the 2nd century AD. SI 403.

¹³ I. B. Zeest, *Keramiceskaia Tara Bospora*, Materiali i issledovania po arheologii SSSR, 83, Moskva, 1960, p. 114; G. Kapitän, *Le anfore del relitto romano di Capo Ognina (Siracusa)*, Collection de l'école française de Rome 10, 1972, pp. 243–252; O. Brukner, *op. cit.*, p. 185; D.P.S. Peacock, D.F. Williams, *Amphorae in Roman economy*, London, 1986, pp. 193–194; P. Dyczek, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–144; F. Vilvorder, R.P. Symonds, S. Rekk, *Les amphores orientales en Gaule septentrionale et au sud-est de la Grand Bretagne*, RCRF Acta 36, 2000, p. 481.

¹⁴ M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *Kapitan II amphorae in Roman Dacia*, RCRF Acta, 38, 2003, pp. 209–214.

8. Upper part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains fine sand. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 5.0YR 5/6. MD = 7 cm, p.H. = 7.8 cm. Romula, 2013, S 4, sq. 13, -0.60/-0.70 m. The last decade of the 2nd century – the first third of the 3rd century AD. SI 1164.

9. Inferior part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains sand and rare gravels. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 2.5 R 5/2. BD = 9 cm, p.H. = 7.5 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 1, sq. 11, -3.15 m. The second quarter of the second century AD. SI 9212.

10. Inferior part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains fine sand and mica. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 7.5YR 4/4. BD = 8 cm, p.H. = 5,2 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 1, sq. 11, -2,50 m. The 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 8855.

11. Inferior part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains fine sand. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 7.5YR 4/6. BD = 7.5 cm, p.H. = 8.5 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 1, sq. 8, secondary position. The 2nd century – the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 9441.

12. Inferior part fragment. Coarse paste of brick colour that contains fine sand. Oxidizing combustion. Munsell 7.5YR 3/4. BD = 9 cm, p.H. = 13,8 cm. Romula, 2018, CF, S 1, sq. 11, secondary position. The 2nd century - the first half of the 3rd century AD. SI 8705.

The typological analysis of the discovered amphorae

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type A.1. (Plate 1: 1–4)

Type description. This type comprises of amphorae with a slightly bitronconic body, vertical rim and a groove on the inside. The base is tubular. The handles are attached to the shoulder from under the rim, below the level of the vessel mouth.

Discoveries. Fragments from the superior side of the vessels were discovered. The rim is short, vertical and slightly thickened.

Chronology. The presented fragments are dated in the 2nd century and the first half of 3rd century AD (Cat. Nos. 1, 3–4), respectively, in the middle of the 3rd century AD (Cat. No. 2).

Analogies. An almost complete item was discovered at Romula¹⁵, and a fragment was found at Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa in Roman Dacia¹⁶.

Other items were discovered in Moesia Inferior at Histria, where they were dated from the middle of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 5th century AD¹⁷.

¹⁵ Gh. Popilian, *op.cit.*, pp. 44–45, Pl. XV: 201.

¹⁶ A. Ardeț, *op. cit.*, p. 129, Pl. XXIX: 222.

¹⁷ A. Bădescu, *Amfore orientale de tip Kapitan II descoperite la Histria în sectorul Basilica extra muros*, Cercetări arheologice, SN, IX, 2013, pp. 192–193, Pl. 3: 2, 3.

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type A.2.2.1. (Plate 1: 5–6)

Type description. Ovoid body amphora with tall ovoid body and pronounced shoulder. The rim is vertical with inside slanted edge. The long and tronconic neck is slightly outcurved. Under the rim there is a ring, and below it there is a groove. The handles are slightly elevated over the vessel mouth level.

Discoveries. Fragments from the superior side with the tall slightly outcurved tronconic neck, the short vertical rim that prolongs the side is slightly thickened on the exterior, with the interior side of the lip slightly outcurved (Cat. Nos. 5–6).

Chronology. All the presented amphora fragments were discovered in the Central Fortification. They were dated in the middle of the 3rd century.

Analogies. Fragments of this variant were discovered in series of archaeological sites from Roman Dacia (Crâmpoia, Jidava, Răcari, Romula, Dierna, Gresia, Tibiscum, and Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa)¹⁸.

Amphorae from this variant were also discovered in Moesia Inferior¹⁹, in Pannonia²⁰, in Italy²¹, in Gallia²², in Greece²³, and in the northern shore of the Black Sea²⁴.

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type A.2.2.2. (Plate 2: 7–8)

Type description. Amphora with tall ovoid body and evidenced rounded shoulder. The rim is vertical. The neck is long and almost cylindrical, with slightly curved walls towards the base. The handles are heightened over the vessel rim level.

Discoveries. Fragments from the superior side of the vessels with long, and almost cylindrical neck were discovered (Cat. Nos. 7–8)

¹⁸ Crâmpoia: M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 209, Fig. 1: 5; Jidava: *Ibidem*, Fig. 1: 6, 9; Romula: *Ibidem*, Fig. 1: 7; Răcari: *Ibidem*, Fig. 1: 8; Dierna: D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III–IV*, Timișoara, 1996, pp. 91–93, Fig. 9A:1; Gresia: M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 209, Fig. 1: 11; Tibiscum: D. Benea, *Les amphores de Tibiscum. Les relations commerciales entre la Dacie et les territoires de la Méditerranée Orientale*, RCRF Acta 36, 2000, p. 435, Fig. 1:1; Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa: A. Ardeț, *op. cit.*, p. 129, Pl. XXIX: 226.a.

¹⁹ Histria: A. Suceveanu, *La céramique romaine des I er – III e siècle ap. J. – C. Histria X*, Bucarest 2000, pp. 173–174, Pl. 84:7.

²⁰ Aquincum: M. H. Kelemen, *Roman Amphorae in Pannonia III*. Acta Arch. Acad. Scien. Hungaricae 42, 1990, pp. 177–178, Fig. 7:6, 7; Mursa: O. Brukner, *op. cit.*, p. 185, Pl. 163: 69.

²¹ Capo Ognini: G. Kapitän, *Le anfore del relitto romano di Capo Ognina (Siracusa)*, Collection de l'école française de Rome 10, 1972, pp. 243–252. p. 248, Fig. 4; Ostia: C. Panella, *Appunti su un gruppo di anfore della prima, media e tarda età Imperiale, Ostia III*, Studi miscellanei 19, 1973, p. 596; Panella 1970, C. Panella, *Anfore, Ostia II*, Studi miscellanei 16, 1970, Pl. XXXIX: 544.

²² Bauvay: F. Vilvorder, R. P. Symonds, S. Rekk, *Les amphores orientales en Gaule septentrionale et au sud-est de la Grand Bretagne*, RCRF Acta 36, 2000, p. 481, Fig. 3:1.

²³ Athens: H. Robinson, *The Athenian Agora V*, Princeton, 1959, p. 106, Pl. 28, M 237; Corinth: K. Slane, *East-West trade in fine wares and commodities: the view from Corinth*, RCRF Acta 36, 2000, p. 311, Fig. 14f; Knossos: J. Hayes, *The Villa Dionysos Excavations, Knossos: The pottery*, Annu. British School Athens 78, 1983, p. 155, Fig. 25:26.

²⁴ Semenovska: I. B. Zeest, *op. cit.*, p. 114, Pl. XXXIII, nr. 79b.

Chronology. The discovered fragments were dated in the second half of the 2nd century to the last but one decade of the 2nd century AD (Cat. no. 7), respectively, in the last decade of the 2nd century and the first third of the 3rd century AD (Cat. no. 8).

Analogies. This variant of amphora was documented in some sites from Roman Dacia (Romula, Jidava, Răcari, Gârla Mare, and Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa)²⁵.

Similar amphorae were discovered in Moesia Inferior (Histria)²⁶, in Pannonia (Aquincum, Dunapentele, and Mursa)²⁷, in Greece (Athens)²⁸, and in the northern side of the Black Sea (Pantikapaion)²⁹.

Amphora bases

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type B.1.1. (Plate 2: 9)

Discoveries. Short cylindrical base, decorated with grooves (cat. No. 9).

Chronology. The discovered fragment of base was dated in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD.

Analogies. Fragments of this type were found in Roman Dacia at Romula³⁰ and Dierna³¹.

This variant of amphorae was also discovered in Moesia Inferior at Histria³², where they were dated at the end of the 2nd century, to the beginning of the 4th century AD.

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type B.1.2. (Plate 2: 10)

Discoveries. Short cylindrical foot, no grooves (Cat. No. 10).

Chronology. The discovered fragments belong to the inferior side of the amphora, and they were discovered in archaeological contexts dated in the period of time starting with the 2nd century, to the first half of the 3rd century AD.

Analogies. Bases of this variant were discovered at Romula, where they were dated at the end of the 2nd century AD, and the first half of the 3rd century AD³³.

Amphorae of this variant were also discovered in Moesia Inferior at Histria, where they were dated from the end of the 2nd century, to the beginning of the 4th century AD³⁴.

²⁵ Romula: M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 13; Jidava: *Ibidem*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 14; Răcari: *Ibidem*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 15–16; Gârla Mare: I. Stîngă, *Locuirea romană rurală de la Gârla Mare, jud. Mehedinți*, Drobeta VIII, 1998. p. 35, Fig. 8:7; Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa: A. Ardeț, *op. cit.*, p. 129, Pl. XXIX: 224.

²⁶ Histria: A. Suceveanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–174, Pl. 84: 5; A. Bădescu, *op. cit.*, p. 192, Pl. 3: 1.

²⁷ Aquincum: M. H. Kelemen, *op. cit.*, p. 177, Fig. 7: 4; Dunapentele: *Ibidem*, *op. cit.*, p. 177, Fig. 7: 1; Mursa: O. Brukner, *op. cit.*, p. 185, Pl. 163: 71.

²⁸ Athens: H. Robinson, *The Athenian Agora V*, Princeton, 1959, p. 69, Pl. 15: K 113.

²⁹ Pantikapaion: I. B. Zeest, *op. cit.*, p. 78, Pl. XXXIII: Fig. 79a.

³⁰ M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 18.

³¹ D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III–IV*, pp. 91–93, Fig. 9A:3.

³² A. Bădescu, *op. cit.*, p. 194, Pl. 3: 8, 9.

³³ M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, Fig. 2: 20–21.

³⁴ A. Bădescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 193–194, Pl. 3: 4, 5, 7.

Negru, Bădescu, Avram type B.2.1. (Plate 2: 11)

Discoveries. Cylindric base (Cat. No. 11).

Chronology. The only one fragment was discovered, in secondary position, in a context dated in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD.

Analogies. Similar amphora base fragments were discovered in some archaeological sites from Roman Dacia (Jidava, Colonești-Măruței, and Ampelum)³⁵.

An amphora fragment of this variant was also discovered in Moesia Inferior at Histria, where they were dated from the end of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 4th century AD³⁶.

An amphora with a similar base was as well discovered in Italy, at Ostia³⁷.

Negru, Bădescu, Avram, type B.2.2. (Plate 2: 12)

Description. Slightly tronconic base (Cat. No. 12).

Chronology. The fragment of the base was dated from the 2nd century, to the first half of the 3rd century AD.

Analogies. Similar amphora base fragments were discovered in some archaeological sites from Roman Dacia (Romula, Jidava, and Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa)³⁸.

Similar items were found in Pannonia (Aquincum)³⁹, in Britannia (Colchester)⁴⁰ and in Italy (Capo Ognina)⁴¹.

Conclusions

The batch of amphorae discovered at Romula confirms the typology proposed in 2003, and completes the previous information. This batch includes fragments of amphorae, discovered in the central area of the archaeological site.

From the technical point of view, there can be observed that the mouth breadth is small, varying between 6 and 8 cm. The diameter of the discovered bases is slightly larger than their mouth diameter.

The small diameter of these amphora mouths indicates their use for the transportation of liquids, wine probably being the most frequent content. The small dimensions of these amphora mouths, corroborated with the evidenced ring underneath the rim, seem to indicate the fact that the amphoras had a lid, made of cork.

³⁵ Jidava: M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 22; Colonești-Măruței: Gh. Bichir, *Geto-dacii din Muntenia în epoca romană*. Biblioteca de Arheologie 20, Bucharest, 1984, p. 39, Pl. XXV: 11; Ampelum: I.T. Lipovan, *Chiușuri și ulcioare romane de la Ampelum*, Apulum XXXI, 1994, p. 229, Pl. II: 4.

³⁶ A. Bădescu, *op. cit.*, p. 193, Pl. 3: 6.

³⁷ C. Panella, *Anfore...*, Pl. XXXIX: 545.

³⁸ Romula: M. Negru, A. Bădescu, R. Avram, *op. cit.*, p. 212, Fig. 2: 28–31; Jidava: *Ibidem*, Fig. 2: 25–27; Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa: A. Ardeț, *op. cit.*, p. 129, Pl. XXIX: 226.b.

³⁹ Aquincum: M. H. Kelemen, *op. cit.*, p. 181, Fig. 8: 20.

⁴⁰ Colchester: F. Vilvorder, R. P. Symonds, S. Rekk, *op. cit.*, p. 481, Fig. 3: 2.

⁴¹ Capo Ognina: G. Kăpitan, *op. cit.*, p. 248, Fig. 4.

From the chronological point of view, there can be noticed their presence from the second quarter of the 2nd century, to the middle of the 3rd century AD.

On addressing their origin, there can be made the assumption of an oriental origin, for the most of them, without excluding that one of them to be local products. This last hypothesis is to be subjected to a checking by means of physical and chemical investigations that are going to be done in the near future.

Abbreviations

S = section (trench)

SI = site inventory

sq. = square

BD = base diameter

p.H. = preserved height

RCRF Acta = Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta

CF = Central Fortification

Plates explanation

Plate 1. Kapitän II amphorae discovered at Reșca-Romula

Plate 2. Kapitän II amphorae discovered at Reșca-Romula

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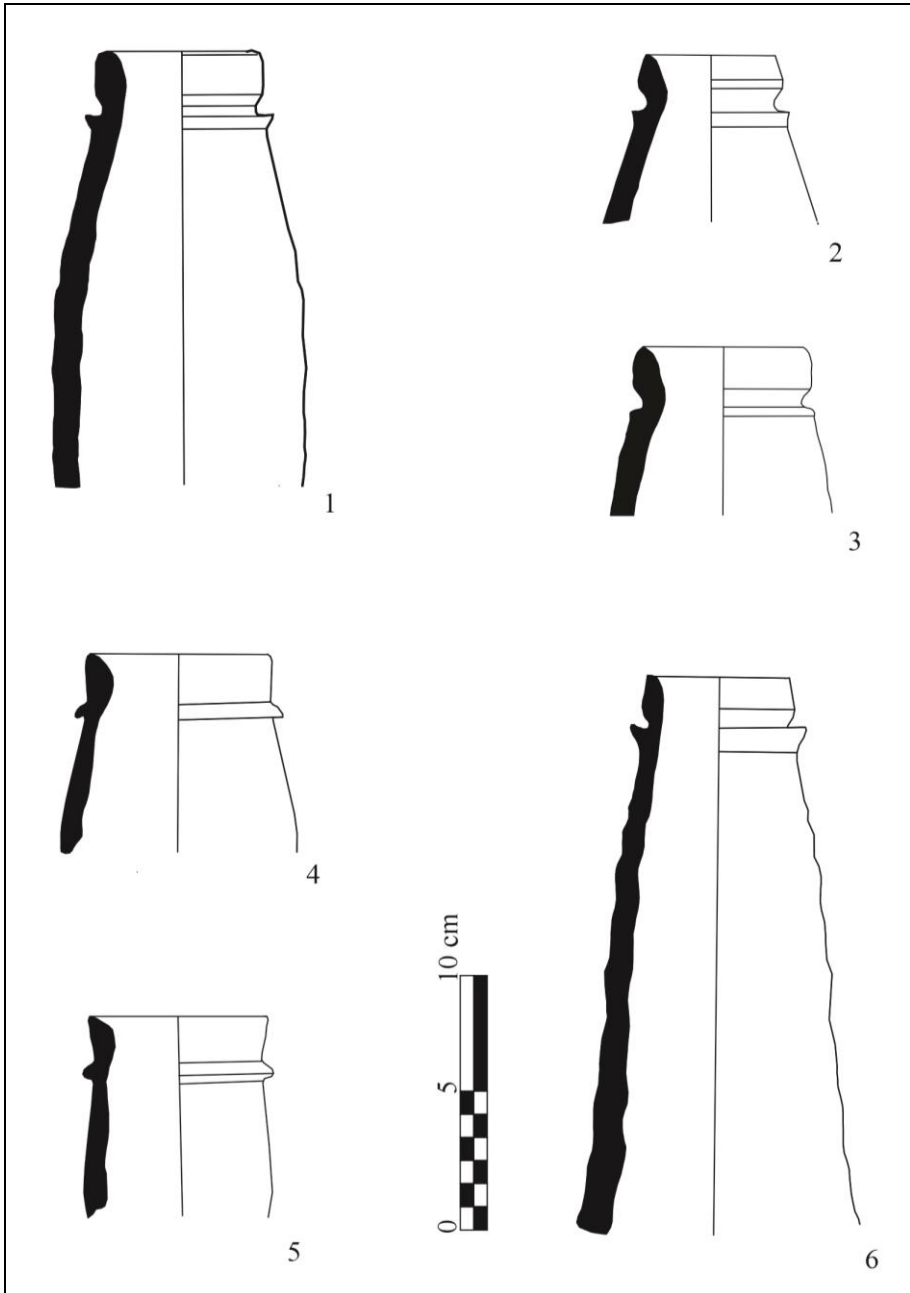


Plate 1. Kapitän II amphorae discovered at Reșca–Romula.

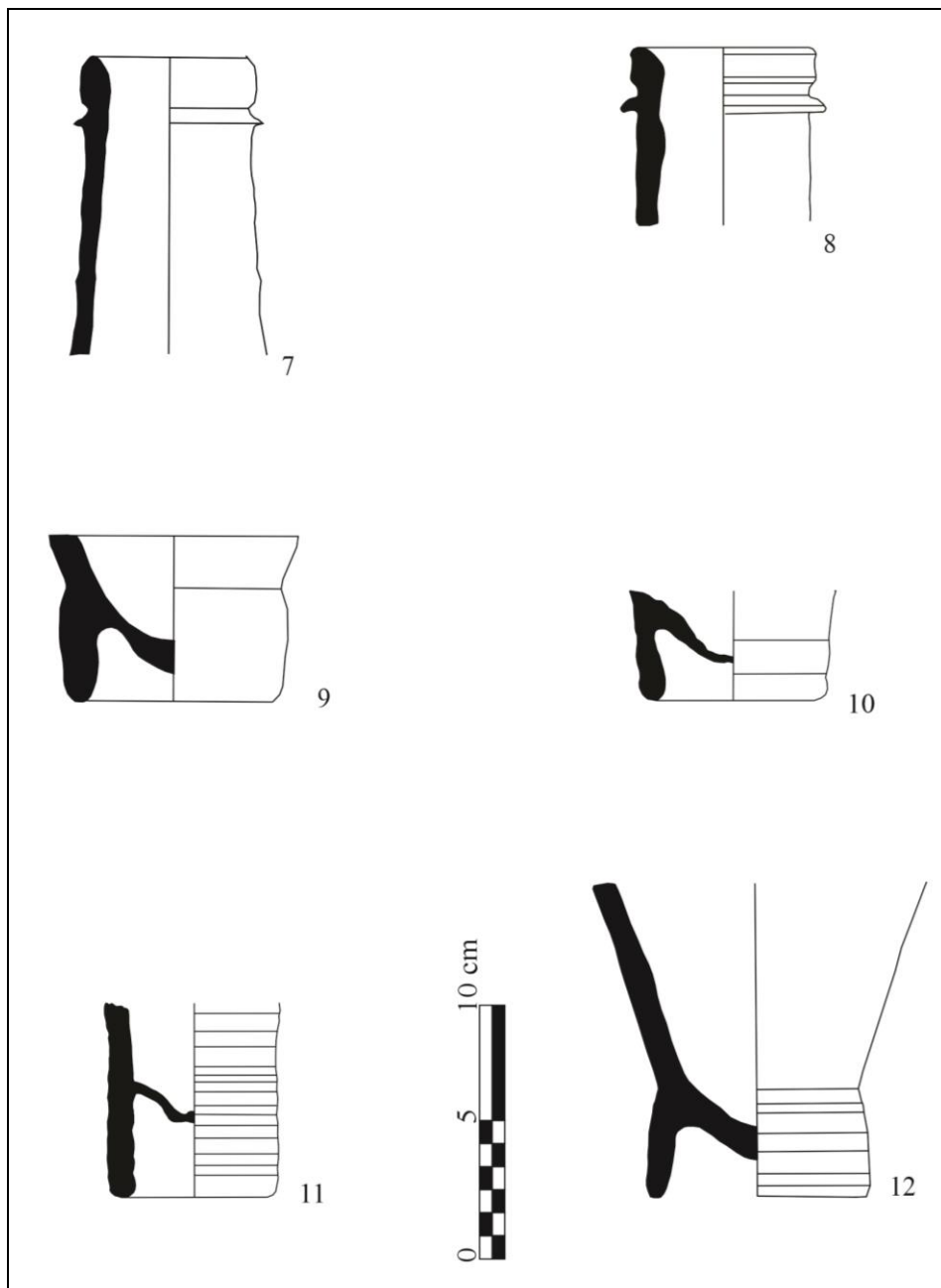


Plate 2. Kapitän II amphorae discovered at Reşca-Romula.

