SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS
OF CERAMIC PRODUCTION IN
ROMAN THRACE

Abstract: The province of Thrace was established in ca. AD 45-46 on the
territory of the last Thracian kingdom. In the course of more than two
hundred years, between the second half of the First and the late Third century,
ceramic production was developed in an unprecedented scale in this territory,
in both rural and urban context. A number of rural settlements in Thrace,
including agricultural estates (villae), agrarian and artisan’s villages (vici),
have accommodated pottery and tile workshops since the second half of the
First – the beginning of the Second century. From the late First – early Second
century onwards potteries were established also in towns and cities.
The presented and analysed data for the location and internal organisation of
the ceramic workshops in Thrace indicates that the most widespread type of
organised production was the individual workshop. Some of these ateliers were
clustered near available resources and developed trade routes, and occasionally
incorporated in single settlement units. However, the considerable size and
complex layout of the workshops from the early phase of ceramic production
under Roman rule could be viewed as a proof that the craft was initially
developed by people with certain financial abilities and social status (local
dynasts, immigrant civilians, enfranchised itinerant and indigenous army
veterans), who were among the first to perceive and advertise the Roman
way of life through, on the one side, the new construction techniques and
materials, and, on the other, the concomitant culture of eating and drinking,
visible through the archaeological discoveries of pottery and other vessels
used for the purpose.

Keywords: Roman Thrace, ceramic production, workshop organisation and
ownership, potters and landlords.

INTRODUCTION

The province of Thrace was established in ca. AD 45-46 on the territory
of the last Thracian kingdom. Initially it covered most of the lands of
nowadays Bulgaria along with the Romanian part of Dobrudzha,
modern Turkish (excluding the Thracian Chersonese) and Greek Thrace
(including the islands of Thassos, Imbros and Samothraki), and regions in
todays’ Serbia and North Macedonia. The borders of the province and the
one with Moesia Inferior in particular underwent several changes during the
Principate. The most noticeable of the latter occurred in the reigns of Hadrian
and Helvius Pertinax, when its Northern border was gradually shifted closer
to the Balkan mountain ridge. During the reign of Aurelian the North-
western part of Thrace was relocated within the newly established province
of Dacia, later Dacia Mediterranea, while under the Tetrarchy the rest of its

1 See most recently LOZANOV 2015, 76; BOTEVA 2017, 157–168.
The aim of this contribution is to explore the socioeconomic aspects of the local ceramic production in provincia Thracia during the Principate. In doing so, its first goal is to establish a reliable data base for future study on the topic, including information for the location and organisation of the production within the studied kiln sites, the types of identified workshop installations and manufactured articles there, and the chronology of their artisanal activity. A second objective is to examine the available archaeological and epigraphic evidence for the ownership of the workshops and the lands, upon which the latter have been built. The sought outcome of this complex approach would allow undertaking further analysis on the gathered data in search of the social status and financial abilities of the people engaged in production and distribution of ceramic items and thus to broader our understanding of the chaîne opératoire of ceramic production in Roman Thrace.

I. THE CERAMIC WORKSHOPS OF ROMAN THRACE

1. The villa workshops

Five of the studied here kiln sites were situated within rural settlements, identified by their researchers as Roman villas. Two of the sites were located to the North of the Haemus morn, while the rest were excavated to the South of the latter. The northern sites were found in the modern locality of Varbovski livadi, near the town of Pavlikeni, and close to the village of Madara, Shumen district. The southern villas were uncovered in the Chatalka locality, Stara Zagora district, near the village of Dragovishitsa, close to Sofia and by the village of Pokrovnik, nearby Blagoevgrad.

4 This could have also happened in stages, as testified by N. Sharankov, who presented newly found inscription dating to ca. AD 303, where Thrace (if it is not a reference to the late province of the same name) is still referred to as a single unit (SHARANKOV 2016, 971). Furthermore, in a recent re-examination of previously published inscription from Cabyile (situated in the province of Thracia or Haemimontus during Late Antiquity), the same author re-dated the text to AD 297 and underlined that in it was mentioned a provincial governor, formerly thought to have been such of the Late Roman province of Europa. One of the suggestions of Sharankov is that the Roman province has been subdivided into smaller Late Roman provinces in several phases (see SHARANKOV 2017, 228-231).

5 VELKOV 1977, 61-65; WIEWIOROWSKI 2011, 385-386.

6 HARIZANOV in press.

7 HARIZANOV 2018, 299-308.

1.1. Madara (Shumen district)

Site description

One of the largest rustic villas in Thrace was located near the modern day village of Madara, Shumen district (Fig. 1.1). The uncovered there architectural complex included residential quarters, bathhouses, dwellings, winery, horrea, and more buildings with agricultural and/or artisanal designation.

During construction work in the late 1980s, a poorly preserved kiln site was discovered between two small rivers, to the Southwest of the villa.

Identified production facilities

No ceramic production installations have been identified among the excavated structures in the inhabited area of the estate.

The separately located kiln site comprised seven circular two-chambered kilns with central supporting pillars, also clay depots, shed(s) and probably a levigation tank.

Production repertoire

According to G. Atanasov, the discovered kilns were involved in the manufacture of amphorae, kitchenware, tableware and oil lamps, with the former being made as containers for the wine and grain produced at the estate.

The production of wine at the site was further proven by the discovery of a wine press installation inside one of the excavated buildings from the architectural complex.

Chronology

The residential complex existed from the Flavian period until the 440s or more likely only to the late 370s, with a possibility for partial renovation and reuse during the late Fourth – early Fifth century. In the course of the second half of the Fifth and the first quarter of the Sixth century, a simple village existed on the same site.

The discovered coins during the research of the kiln site were issued between AD 141 and the reign of Julian II in the early 360s.

Workshop location and ownership

During the initial stage of its existence, the site was most likely located within the province of Thrace, which up to the times of Trajan or Hadrian included large parts of nowadays North-eastern Bulgaria. An inscription from AD 152 found in the vicinities of the modern village of Nevsha, located some 15 km to the East of Madara, informs that this area was part of regio Geletica within the city territory of Marcianopolis. However, whether this was the most western point of the early territory of this city, or it continued westwards, is not known. There is also uncertainty for the Northern border of Thrace and Lower Moesia in the period after the local reforms of Hadrian in the 130s up to the late Second century, caused by the lack of epigraphic and epigraphic evidence for the ownership of the workshops and the lands, upon which the latter have been built. The sought outcome of this complex approach would allow undertaking further analysis on the gathered data in search of the social status and financial abilities of the people engaged in production and distribution of ceramic items and thus to broader our understanding of the chaîne opératoire of ceramic production in Roman Thrace.


5 ATANASOV 1989, 106.


8 DREMSIZOVA-NELCHINOVA 1984, 95-97.

9 DREMSIZOVA-NELCHINOVA 1984, 120-121.

10 See DINCHEV 1997, 77-79.

11 DREMSIZOVA-NELCHINOVA 1984, 121.

12 HARIZANOV in press.
archaeological evidence. According to B. Gerov, during that period the vast territory between Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis was still within the borders of Thrace and was split into separate rural regions, ascribed to the territories of the two cities\textsuperscript{25}. On the contrary, M. Tacheva argued that the territories of the Thracian cities under Hadrian were still rather small and that the region between the said urban settlements was most likely part of Moesia Inferior since AD 136. Furthermore, she assumed that the inscription mentions the building of fortifications on the borders of the city territory and that in such case that of Marcianopolis stretched only to the modern village of Nevsha\textsuperscript{26}. However, B. Gerov seems to accept the term per fines citatiae rather as including the whole territory of the city and not only its borders\textsuperscript{27}. Such hypothesis was further developed by D. Nikolov who argued that the mentioned in this and several other inscriptions praeabid, burgi and phruri weren’t built on the borders of city territories (given that some of the cities were situated in the hinterland of the province and not at its borders) but along the major roads\textsuperscript{28}. This suggestion could be considered further proven if we accept the opinion of S. Torbatov, who presented credible evidence for the identification of the fortiﬁed sites of Melita (nowadays Lovech), Sostra (modern village of Lomets) and Mezdra (see below) with some of the praeabid, known to be built in regio Dyptensis\textsuperscript{29} of the city territory of Serdica\textsuperscript{30} during the 150s. The first two forts were located near road stations from the Oescus – Philippopolis road, while Mezdra was placed on the route from Oescus to Serdica\textsuperscript{31}.

Given all said it seems more plausible that the territory of Marcianopolis did not end for sure around Nevsha and in such case it could has easily reached the closely located area of Madara. On the other hand, the excavator and other scientists support the opinion for the presence of an imperial domain in the region of Madara, with an administrative centre probably located within the discovered architectural complex\textsuperscript{32}. Its size and layout, the identified buildings and finds were reason enough for its classiﬁcation as a villa residence\textsuperscript{33}. Such domains represented separate territorial category, being directly managed by imperial ofﬁcials and not by the administration of the nearby cities\textsuperscript{34}.

If we accept the last present hypothesis, the land upon which both the architectural complex and the kiln site at Madara were built should have been located within the boundaries of the province of Thrace either to AD 136 or (more likely) to AD 193 and presumably owned by the emperor. The imperial domains were usually managed by procurators of equesrian rank or freedmen. These managers were either directly involved in the estate’s affairs or were leasing some of their responsibilities to conductores or coloni for a ﬁxed term\textsuperscript{35}. Judging by the said, the lands of the Madara estate were probably state-owned. As for the practised within it crafts, Dremisizova-Nelchinova suggested that the various duties were performed by slaves and later coloni\textsuperscript{36}. According to another opinion on the matter, some of the most complex artisanal activities could have probably been carried out by specialist craftsmen, hired for the speciﬁc task\textsuperscript{37}. In consistence with this hypothesis, contracts from Roman Egypt between landowners and amphora producers were cited, where land and recourses were leased in exchange of manufactured containers\textsuperscript{38}. Additional evidence in support of this idea, were presumed orders for similar items made by the military to private contractors.

1.2. Varbovski livadi (Pavlikeni municipality, Veliko Tynovo district)

Site description

The other Roman villa, uncovered to the North of the Haemus mons, was excavated in the Varbovski livadi locality, about 3.0 – 3.5 km to the West-Northwest of the modern town of Pavlikeni (Fig. 1.2). It was explored during the 1970s by B. Sultov, who discovered three clusters of buildings and production installations\textsuperscript{39}, consecutively named Central, Western and Southern sectors (Fig. 2) by P. Vladkova in her more recent work, dedicated to the same site\textsuperscript{40}.

The most thoroughly studied was the so-called Central sector, where more than ten buildings (nos. A-I\textsuperscript{41}) and at least nineteen ﬁring installations were discovered (Fig. 3). Several of these buildings (nos. A-I, K) were built around a central yard and surrounded by a stone wall. The discovered kilns were found mostly outside the enclosure, while some were located within the latter and also inside premises\textsuperscript{42}. During the renewed excavations over the last years (2014–2017), two more buildings (nos. S and T) were uncovered to the East of the stone-walled enclosure\textsuperscript{43}.

Sector West was located less than 100 m to the West-
Northwest of the central complex. Four separate buildings (nos. O-R) and no less than seventeen kilns were discovered, the latter situated near or (in one case) partially within the former38.

Sector South was found a little more than 100 m to the South of sector West and about 140 m to the Southwest of sector Centre. Remains of living quarters were discovered here, separated by a stone wall of adjacent buildings with agricultural and artisanal designation. Seven or eight ceramic kilns were also found within this part of the complex39.

**Identified production installations**

Most of the identified ceramic production installations were uncovered within the Central sector of the complex. Securely recognised and still preserved in situ were seventeen of probably eighteen or nineteen ceramic kilns. Another kiln-like structure was most likely used for pitch production40.

Two large pits for clay extraction were also located within the Central sector41, while several of the discovered there buildings were also most probably used in various stages of ceramic production42. Two of these structures (nos. C and D) were identified by B. Sultov and later P. Vladkova respectively as a bath and living quarters43. According to a recent hypothesis, the so-called bath was actually used for initial treatment of raw clay material (levigation, moistening and/or mixing clay with additives) and the presumed living quarters served as place for forming and artificial drying of ceramic products44. Four or five of the other buildings (nos. A and K inside and nos. J, M and N outside the enclosure) were almost certainly used as workshop facilities and/or potters’ dwellings at least in part of their exploitation period45. Furthermore, three small intramural premises (G, H and I), structurally connected with two sheds, were identified as store rooms for agricultural stock and farming tools46 or ceramic products47.

To the North of the enclosure were situated buildings J and N and at least seven ceramic kilns, with six more kilns and two buildings (nos. L and M) being found to the Northeast of the latter48.

The four uncovered buildings in the Western sector of the site were identified by B. Sultov as individual potters’ workshops, used by the craftsmen also as living spaces49. P. Vladkova argued that two of them (nos. O and P) could have been used for housing in the first construction period and as potters’ ateliers in the second one. She suggested that the third one (no. Q) had functioned either as a warehouse or as an additional workshop, while for the fourth building (no. R) there was a probability to have been used as a small temple. According to her, the discovered structures were part of the complex, being dedicated to the estate *vicius*50. The last opinion on the matter presumed that the buildings were used by individual potters both for living and working spaces, with the latter being located within a possible artisan’s village, neighbouring the villa51.

The Southern part of the complex, with its separation of living spaces (where the most noticeable archaeological finds were discovered) and production installations, was supposedly used as residential quarters by the owner of the estate in the second construction period52. According to Vladkova, seven kilns were discovered within the enclosed yard, to the South of the residential quarter53. However, on the site plan in the publication of B. Sultov there could be clearly seen two kilns to the North and six to the South of the central sector54. Furthermore, an abandoned clay pit, filled with discarded pottery, was also found within the yard55. Some finds of early date (including coins of Nero, Claudius and Trajan), discovered within the crafting area together with the shapes of the described discarded ceramic vessels were accepted as an indication for a possible early start of the ceramic production in this sector, before the erection of the living quarters56. Additionally, it could also be assumed that the filling of the abandoned clay pit with debris has been done during a repurposing of the space from a pottery crafting area to living quarters and place for other agricultural activities, absent the undesirable side effects of kiln firing.

**Production repertoire**

The major part of the production repertoire of the Varbovski livadi workshops was dedicated to red slipped fine wares, mostly tableware (plates, bowls, cups, table amphorae and pitchers), also ritual vessels (crater-shaped vessels, *paterae*) and kitchen or storage wares (sifters and pots). Ceramic building material, grey-black kitchenware (cooking pots, pans, bowls, lids), oil lamps, terracotta figurines and so-called medallions were also manufactured, but in smaller quantities57.

**Chronology**

B. Sultov divided the habitation period of the site into four Phases, with the last one connected to a post-villa settlement. According to him, the first three Phases occurred between the beginning of the Second century and AD 170 (first: beginning of Second century – AD 120; second: AD

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39 SULTOV 1985, 24; VLADKOVA 2011, 43-44; HARIZANOV 2019a, 136-137.
40 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 546-580.
41 See SULTOV 1985, 22-23.
42 HARIZANOV 2019a, 130-134.
43 See SULTOV 1985, 22-24; VLADKOVA 2011, 29-34.
44 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 133-134. If we accept the hypothesis from the cited work, the purpose of the entire Central sector could be described as related to agricultural and artisanal activities and, in such case, defined as an actual *pars rustica* of the villa, leaving the building in the Southern sector for the place of *pars urbana*. Furthermore, given the discrepancy of the dating of the two sectors, the site could have been established as a villa of category I (without living quarters for the owner) and in time developed as a villa of category II (with a living space for the owners) – see DINCHEV 1997, 115-125, for description of the two categories and examples of such settlement development.
45 HARIZANOV 2019a, 131; 134-136.
46 SULTOV 1985, 23.
47 VLADKOVA 2011, 36-37.
49 VLADKOVA 2011, 43-44; HARIZANOV 2019a, 136-137.
51 VLADKOVA 2011, 40-43.
52 HARIZANOV 2019a, 137-138.
53 VLADKOVA 2011, 43-44; 138.
54 VLADKOVA 2011, 44.
55 See SULTOV 1985, Table IV.
56 SULTOV 1985, 24.
57 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 136-137.
120 – AD 138; third: AD 138 – AD 170), when the estate suffered a major destruction during the Costoboci incursion. Simple dwellings belonging to a vicus were built after AD 170 and were used until the mid-Third century68. After detailed analysis of the discovered coins, P. Vladkova assumed that the estate was inhabited from the second half of the First century to the second quarter of the Third century, with two major construction periods, first – probably from the reign of Domitian to AD 170 and second – from AD 170 to the late 230s. The abovementioned post-villa settlement existed from the last decades of the Third century until the 360s69.

As for the period of ceramic production, Sultov stated that fine ware production began in the first decades of the Second century, while that of grey-black coarse wares started after AD 17070. Vladkova argued that building ceramics were produced from the start of the estate’s occupation but that the manufacture of both fine and coarse pottery was developed after AD 17071. More recently she wrote that the latter happened around the mid-Second century72. Recent studies on the red slip vessels, manufactured at the site, led to another dating of this part of its production. The author claimed that red slipped items were produced only in the time between the reign of Hadrian or Antoninus Pius and the Costoboci incursion of AD 17073. However, similarly, to B. Sultov, S. Ivanov restricted the active period of the Varbovski livadi fineware workshops, and its starting date in part in particular, to a large extent on the basis of finds, discovered at sites, which were established at least two or three decades after the Varbovski livadi villa74. Given this inconsistency of his arguments, his hypothesis has been questioned most recently75, with additional support of previously laid assumptions, which had the evidence from the preserved in situ kilns also taken into account76. According to the latter, the artisanal activities in the villa began immediately after its foundation in the late First century with brick and tile manufacture, while the production of fine wares probably started after that, but no later than the beginning of the Second century. The major part of the red slipped items were produced until AD 170, however there still isn’t sufficient data for the secure setting the time for the total abandonment of this branch of the artisanal activity. As for the grey-black coarse wares, they were most likely manufactured during the Second and the first decades of the Third century, while some of their forms could have been produced during the post-villa occupation of the site77.

69 VLADKOVA 2011, 45-49; 137.
70 SULTOV 1985, 22-25.
71 VLADKOVA 2011, 39; 137.
72 VLADKOVA 2014, 13.
73 IVANOV 2018, 53-54; IVANOV 2019, 25-27. It should be noted, that the research of S. Ivanov enabled the thorough differentiation of the products of Varbovski livadi from those of Hotnitsa and especially Butovo, which have been more often referred to as “Pavlikeni-Butovo” in publications on the Varbovski livadi from those of Hotnitsa and especially Butovo, which have been more often referred to as “Pavlikeni-Butovo” in publications on the topic, because of the previous lack of precise information and knowledge on the subject.
75 HARIZANOV in press.
76 See HARIZANOV 2015, 28-29; HARIZANOV 2019a, 139-140.
77 For ceramic vessels found at the site of Varbovski livadi and dated to the Third – Fourth century see KABARČIEVA/SULTOV/VLADKOVA 1988, 12-14; 21-36; 39.

Workshop location and ownership
After its establishment, the site at Varbovski livadi was most likely located within the province of Thrace78, while between AD 136 and AD 193 it was very close to the latter’s border with Moesia Inferior. Its position is proven by a border marking from AD 136 found near the location closely to the North-Northwest villages of Nedan and Butovo79. The latter village is one of the supposed locations of Emporium Piretensium. According to some researchers, this emporium should be identified precisely with the production site underneath the modern village of Butovo80. According to B. Gerov, this site has been situated within the limits of the Thrace72, while M. Tacheva have disagreed, stating that it was part of Lower Moesia instead, but again situated very close to the borders between the two provinces81. In the latter case, the border line between the two provinces must have passed immediately to the west of the Roman villa at Varbovski livadi. On the same opinion is P. Vladkova, who argued that the villa was part of Thrace but wasn’t included in the Nicopolitan territory at least until AD 13673. Given all said, for now it seems more likely for the villa to have been part of Thrace until the provincial border relocation in AD 193.

As for the ownership of the Varbovski livadi estate, no secure evidence has been found so far. Nevertheless, two recent hypotheses must be mentioned in relation to this topic.

During the 1970s excavations, two branding irons82 were discovered inside an abandoned clay pit (Fig. 3.1; 4.1) within the central sector of the villa83, in context related to the first construction period of the complex. The tools bore the letters T F G – a supposed abbreviation of the name of the estate’s owner84.

In a recent salvage archaeological research, some 80 m to the Northeast of the Central sector, a funerary stele, one grave and a possible clay extraction pit were found. The preserved inscription on the stele informed that it was a

78 According to S. Torbatov the first official demarcation of the borders of Thrace occurred in ca. AD 74 during the reign of Vespasian (see TORBATOV 2012, 112-113).
79 This border stone is one of a number of such monuments erected, according to the preserved upon them text, during the reign of Hadrian and under the provincial governor Antius Rufinus in AD 136 for demarcation of the Northern border of Thracia with Moesia Inferior (for the text of inscription, see GEROV 1989, 197-198, no. 429; CIL III, 12407; for the Hadrianic border reform of AD 136, see TATSCHIEVA 2000, 62-65).
80 For description of the available opinions and literature on the topic, see mostly TSAROV 2005, 47-52; TSAROV 2006, 45-57. The author of the cited articles denies the mentioned hypothesis and supports a previously made identification of Emporium Piretensium with the ruins near the modern village of Gorsko Kosovo, some 21 km to the South (a little to the Southwest) of Butovo and 16 km to the South-West of Varbovski livadi. This opinion was also supported by I. Boyanov, who likewise mentioned all of the known controversies on the matter (see BOYANOV 2014b, 134-137).
81 GEROV 1979, 223-224.
82 See TATSCHIEVA 2000, 64. This is one of the reasons why this site is not included in the present contribution. Another argument in favour of his exclusion is the fact that most of the site’s pottery workshops began their operations around the same time when Nicopoli ad Istrum (and Butovo at the latest) was transferred to Moesia Inferior (see HARIZANOV 2019a, 142-144).
83 See VLADKOVA 2011, 137.
84 For a thorough description and drawings of these tools, see MINCHEV 2004, 76-77; 79; Fig. 1: 96-97; Fig. 29.
85 SULTOV 1977, 83; CHAKAROV 2018b, 74.
86 VLADKOVA 2014, 14.
tombstone of one Cai(us) Ursidi(us) Senecio, who died at the age of forty (Fig. 4.4-5). After examining the said name, the researcher concluded that the deceased was a Roman citizen of presumed Italian origin.

The grave, discovered some 4.50 m to the east of the stele, contained the buried remains of child and not the said person. Among the grave goods was a bronze coin of Hadrian, issued in AD 125-128. Due to its state of preservation, which indicated that it was used before being placed inside the grave, the author concluded that the burial could have taken place in the middle or the third quarter of the Second century.

The option for Caius Ursidius to have been the owner of the Varbovsko livadi estate was thoroughly studied by K. Chakarov. He argued that the iron tools with the supposed abbreviated name of the owner (TFG) and the funerary stele were found in contexts of similar date (Second century for the former, middle – third quarter of the same century for the latter) and that in such a case Caius Ursidius was either not the owner, or that TFG didn’t represent the latter’s initials. His final conclusion was that, despite the lack of evidence for his actual position, the former used to live in the estate and was probably involved in its management.

If we assume that the mentioned letters were truly an abbreviation of the owner’s name, then finding of attested in the epigraphic records person with such initials, who lived in the nearby region during the same period, could lead us to the landlord’s identity. A votive plaque of the Thracian horseman, discovered less than 20 km to the Southwest of Varbovsko livadi, near the modern village of Kramolin, could shed some light on this matter (Fig. 4.2). The inscription preserved upon the find (ILBulg 403; CIL III, 12419) was made by one Herculanus, an actor of the estate of (Titus) Flavius Gemell (Fig. 4.3). The latter was supposedly a veteran from the army. Both the name of this Titus Flavius Gemell and the fact that he owned an estate, managed by an actor, in the nearby region point him as a suitable candidate for a landlord of the Varbovsko livadi estate. Furthermore, the said person had probably acquired his citizenship and lands under the Flavian dynasty, at the same time in which the villa was most likely founded.

‘Gemell’ (meaning ‘twin’) appears to be more common for the Eastern part of the Empire, as could be judged by the available epigraphic data. A search in the online data base of Roman period inscriptions provided evidence for the use of Gemell (in the Aegean and Asia Minor, also Macedonia, Dacia and the East), also Gemellos (Asia Minor, Macedonia, Central Greece, the Aegean, also in Egypt and the East) and Gemellin (almost exclusively in Dacia). However, apart from the text of the described votive plaque, Gemell is mentioned in only three other inscriptions from Moesia Inferior and Thracia. The first one is from the sanctuary of Asclepios at Batkun near Pazardzhik, where a dedication by the bouleut Gemellos Gemell is found (ILBulg III, 1, 1123). The second is a funerary inscription from the area of the Roman fort of Iatrus (near modern Krivina), where one Iulius Gemell is mentioned (ILBulg 339). The third is the well-known inscription from AD 227 found near Butovo (or the nearby Nедан), where the members of a Dionysian cult society (bacchium vernaculum) are listed. Among them is a person called Aurelius Sulu Gemell (ILBulg 438). Given his name, he had probably received Roman citizenship after the Edict of Caracalla in c. AD 212-213, so a family relation to the said Flavius Gemell is not impossible but seems unlikely.

The possibility for Titus Flavius Gemell to have been the owner of the Varbovsko livadi estate, at least in the first decades of its foundation, leaves open the question for the role of the abovementioned Caius Ursidius. In his publication, K. Chakarov suggested that the branding irons were discarded after a possible change in the ownership of the estate. For such a change to be in concordance with the developed here hypothesis, this should have happened in the course of the Second century, probably in its first half. However, the discovered so far archaeological evidence indicate that if there have been such shift in ownership it should have occurred after the Costoboci incursion of AD 170, when the residential quarters in the Southern sector are erected. Even more, before the said incursion a hoard of 3727 coins had been concealed in a building from the Central sector, remaining hidden there to for more than 1800 years. Conversely, consistent with the current dating of the funerary stele, Caius Ursidius probably died prior to AD 170, which discards the option for his participation in a possible change of ownership after the same year.

As for the supposed origin of Titus Flavius Gemell, the possibility for him to be a veteran from the army and at same time own an estate of considerable size needs further clarification.

As already mentioned, the name of this person indicates that he have probably received Roman citizenship under the Flavian dynasty, which usually (but not always) is mentioned.

The research was done on the website https://inscriptions.pacshum.org/.

For the sanctuary and this inscription in particular, see VALCHEV 2015, 261-268. In the cited book, the name of this person is described as Roman (VALCHEV 2015, 267).

For an overview on the spread of Roman citizenship right and the effect on the latter of Constitucio Antoniniana, see lastly LAVAN 2019b, 21-54. For the list from Butovo, see GEROV 1989, 201-203, no. 438 (CIL 438). For the attested during the Third century practise of using only the nomen gentile and examples for post-AD 212 Aurelians in Thrace, see SHARANKOV 2005, 281-282.

I was consulted on this matter by N. Sharankov (assistant professor, Sofia University).

CHAKAROV 2018b, 74.

GEROV 1988, 45.
question was found partially preserved. It had circular plan of the combustion chamber and vertically arranged ceramic tubes, used as support for the perforated floor. A pair of tile kilns was discovered near the South-western corner of pars rustica of the villa (Fig. 5.D). The better preserved of the two structures had circular combustion chamber with a diameter of ca. 4 m, which made it the largest documented circular kiln from that time in the territory of Bulgaria.

The third section of the estate, where ceramic production was developed, was located in the Eastern part of pars rustica, found in the Delimyovona niva locality (Fig. 5.B, 6). Divided of the rest of the complex with a stone wall, it included a workshop building, one large water basin, living quarters for the potters and another building, supposedly used by the manager of the artisanal activities. The workshop building comprised four premises. The largest room was the actual workshop, where two kilns, few clay pits, a channel for running water and stone platforms, most likely used as bases for potter’s wheels, were found. The second and third premises had floors on suspension, while in the fourth a praefurnium was located. The described hypocaust system situated in the last three rooms had been used for pre-fire drying of the ceramic production.

Production repertoire
No publication concerning the locally made ceramic items exists. When describing the kiln site beneath mound no. 4, the excavators wrote that the pottery found there consisted of fine tableware, namely cups, bowls, plates and pitchers, with light coloured surface. The separately located tile kilns were most probably used for the firing of architectural terracotta.

The workshop located in pars rustica was involved in the production of fine tableware, as could be judged by the model for relief decoration discovered within premise A. It could also be suggested that most of the kitchenware, table amphorae and pitchers, discovered during the excavations of the villa, the vicus and the two necropoleis were likewise locally made.

Chronology
According to D. Nikolov, pars rustica was erected simultaneously with the living quarters of the villa in the second half of the First century. After a devastation of both complexes in the mid-Third century, they were rebuilt. During the second period, the larger of the two indoor located kilns and the water basin within pars rustica were constructed. However, the discovered coins, only one of which has been dated to a time prior the 160s, indicate that it is much more plausible for this part of the estate to have been established after the Costoboci incursion of AD 170. It was probably operational until some point in the second...
half of the Fourth century.

The pottery kilns near and beneath mound no. 4 were in operation most likely from the end of the First until the middle or the second half of the Second century, while the two tile kilns near pars rustica were related to the reconstruction of the villa in the mid-Third century, although there is also the option for their use in the initial construction of the entire complex or in the presumed post AD 170 erection of the farmyard.

**Workshop location and ownership**

The distance of only 18 km from the site to the Roman city of Augusta Traiana is a clear indication about its attribution to the latter’s territory. This, however, must have occurred after the foundation of the city in the time of Trajan (or Hadrian) and the enlargement of the urban territories in Thrace at the expense of the still preserved strategiae, which most likely happened under Hadrian or the early years of the rule of Antoninus Pius at the latest. An inscription found near the village of Yavorovo, 3.5 km to the South of the Chatalka villa, gave reason for the hypothesis that the estate was owned by the family of one Titus Flavius Dinis. The inscription was made in honour of Zeus Sabazios by his priest, the said Titus Flavius Dinis, son of Skeles, who was also an archpriest (archiereus) of the Thracian koinon. There is a discourse about the dating of the inscription. According to the first view, it should be dated to the Flavian period, while a second opinion claims that the text has been composed around the time of Hadrian. The last proposition on the subject sets the date in the late First or early Second century.

M. Tacheva suggested that Dinis had acquired his Roman citizenship not as part of the army but as a descendant of the pre-Roman Thracian aristocracy, which preserved their privileged status after the Roman conquest, a possibility noted also by B. Gerov and D. Boteva.

A recently found partially preserved inscription from the village of Kirilovo, some 5 km to the East of the Chatalka locality, contains the name of a possible relative (a son?) of Dinis, probably one Titus Flavius Longinus. This inscription is also dated to the very end of the First or more likely to the beginning of the Second century. Names of other supposed members of the Dinis family were identified in two inscriptions from Stara Zagora (Augusta Traiana) dated to the Second – the first half of the Third century. These possible relatives of his were Flavius Dinis (son of Longinus) and his son Titus Flavius Nepos. The last presumed member of the family is a priest called Titus Flavius Skeles. All of the latter three were most likely among the prominent citizens of Augusta Traiana.

Consistent with the prestige of this family is the prosperity of the villa from the late First to the mid-Third century, best attested by the rich grave finds from the adjacent tumular necropolis. One of the earliest and richest graves contained Roman face-mask helmet as well as weapons and armour of possible Sarmatian or Parthian origin. A recent re-assessment of the find led to the conclusion that the buried individual served as an auxiliary officer in the Roman army and that he could had taken part in a military operation against the Sarmatians in AD 92. Furthermore, the authors of this publication acknowledge the possible connection of the said Titus Flavius Dinis with the Chatalka villa and suppose that he could be the actual person buried in the mentioned grave. However, in the inscription from Yavorovo Dinis is mentioned as a hereditary priest of Zeus Sabazios making an offering for the fifteenth time. Given that, if we suppose that each period of priesthood lasted for a year, he could have been priest for at least fifteen years in the time of setting the stele, thus pointing to a different type of carrier development. This, along with the fact that he was also the archpriest of the Thracian koinon, makes his enlistment in the Roman army as an auxiliary officer rather unlikely. It seems more probable that the supposed auxiliary officer buried in the Roshava Dragana mound was only a relative of the priest, but not Dinis himself.

Given the presented facts and hypotheses, it could be concluded that the Chatalka estate was most probably owned by the Dinis family and since it was established shortly after the mid-First century (in the third quarter?) it is possible that its founder was either the first Dinis himself or his father Skeles. If these assumptions prove to be correct, it would relate ceramic production to the range of economic activities of one of the most prominent families in the province.

### 1.4. Pokrovnik (Blagoevgrad district)

**Site description**

The most recently discovered Roman villa in Thrace, with developed ceramic production, was excavated near the town of Blagoevgrad during construction work for the Struma highway in 2017 and 2018. The discovered structures comprised a large villa complex and situated to the North of it buildings and production installations belonging to adjacent vicus (Fig. 1.4; 7). The two settlement structures were separated by a tomb complex, situated within a stone-walled enclosure.

**Identified production installations**

Eighteen firing installations were discovered among the ruins of the villa and the vicus. Twelve of these facilities were identified as ceramic kilns. Six kilns (nos. 2-4; 7; 9-10) were found close or within the villa complex (four with circular and two with quadrangular floor plan), with the rest (six of quadrangular plan, nos. 13-18) being discovered among the structures from the presumed vicus (Fig. 7).
Production repertoire

Most of the kilns from the vicus were probably used for the production of ceramic building material, while for a few there is also a possibility for involvement in pottery manufacture.

Two or three of the villa kilns were also designed for brick and tile production, with the rest being most likely used in pottery production, including reduced fired vessels.

A number of loom weights (mostly with tipped tops) were discovered inside some of the tile kilns in both parts of the archaeological site. However, these were not kiln products but rather kiln furniture, used as props (stacking supports) for supporting the fired ceramic building material.\(^{129}\)

Chronology

The villa complex had two construction periods. The first one occurred in the Third century, when a villa of modest size existed on the spot. In the second construction period, between the end of the Third and the mid-Fifth century, the complex was enlarged and encompassed more than forty premises and four yards.\(^{130}\)

The buildings and facilities, situated within the vicus, were in use since the second half of the Second or the Third century. A second construction period occurred there during the Fourth century. After the end of the latter, the structures were probably abandoned.\(^{131}\)

Most of the discovered kilns were in use during the Third and the Fourth centuries, while some could have been built during the second half of the Second Century. An archaeomagnetic dating of three of the structures have provided terminal dates for their use in the second half of the Third century (ca. AD 252 – 290).\(^{132}\) The first of these three kilns was found beneath walls of the second villa complex and was probably in use during the first construction period of the site. The second and the third installations were located within the vicus and, in concordance with the latest dating, were likewise used during the first construction period. Given that the lifecycle of ceramic kilns could span from several years to several decades, the earliest dates for the construction of the three installations might be set in the first half of the Third century.

Workshop location and ownership

No secure data concerning the ownership of the estate was found during the excavations. Given the size of the villa complex it was probably owned by a wealthy landlord, maybe a citizen of Pautalia, to which territory belonged this part of the Struma valley during the Principate and probably the early Dominate.\(^{133}\)

As for the dwellings from the vicus, they were most likely inhabited by people engaged in the agricultural and artisanal activities developed by the villa’s owner. The presence of kilns near some of the buildings indicates that here could also have lived individual craftsmen, mostly engaged in the production of ceramic building material, leasing for that purpose both land and raw materials by the landlord.\(^{136}\)

1.5. Dragovishtitsa (Sofia district)

Site description

The last villa with traces of local ceramic production was discovered close to the Bulgarian capital Sofia (the Roman Serdica), near the village of Dragovishtitsa in 2015 (Fig. 1.5). An architectural complex, identified as living quarters of a rural estate, was excavated within the studied area.\(^{137}\)

Identified production installations

One ceramic kiln of quadrangular floor plan was found near the architectural complex.\(^{138}\)

Production repertoire

The kiln probably served for the firing of ceramic building material.\(^{139}\)

Chronology

The site was occupied from the second half of the Third until the beginning of the Fifth century.\(^{140}\) The kiln was most likely used during the initial construction of the estate.\(^{141}\)

Workshop location and ownership

The site was located within the city territory of Serdica.\(^{142}\) However, no data concerning the ownership of this complex has been found so far.

2. Ceramic workshops in artisan’s villages

From the early Second century onwards, rural ceramic production in Roman Thrace was also developed in what appear to have been separate artisanal establishments. The sites in question have produced limited amount of data for spaces used for permanent habitation, together with an overall large number of discovered production installations.

2.1. Hotnitsa (Veliko Tarnovo district)

Site description

The site near modern Hotnitsa was discovered during the 1960s about 2.5 km to the Southwest of the present day village, in an area close to a small river and in proximity to large stone quarries, exploited during the Roman period (Fig. 1.6; 8). Twenty one kilns (one dating to the Medieval Period) and a workshop building were excavated.\(^{143}\)

Identified production installations

The only discovered building had three adjoining rooms. A ceramic kiln and a clay pit were discovered in the central premise, while a stone platform, probably for a potter’s wheel, was found in the eastern one. A domestic oven was excavated in the western room, which might have been used as a living space (Fig. 9). The building had a roof Structure 137.

129 Finds of loom weights, reused in the same manner, are known from Greece. (see HASAKI 2002, 91-96).
130 DIMITROV/RAYCHEVA/RUSEV 2019, 381; DIMITROV 2019, 9-10.
131 DIMITROV/RAYCHEVA/RUSEV 2019, 381.
132 The analysis was made by the team of Dr. Maria Kostadinova-Avronova (Assoc. Prof., BAS).
133 See HASAKI 2002, 297-299.
134 For the rights of landlords to be elected in the council of the nearby city, to which territory their domains belong, see GEROV 1988, 89.
136 Like in the supposed artisan’s village at Varbovski livadi, see above.
137 HRISTOV/TANEVA 2016, 539-542.
138 HRISTOV/TANEVA 2016, 539-542.
139 HARIZANOVA in press.
140 HRISTOV/TANEVA 2016, 539-542.
141 HARIZANOVA in press.
142 For the city territory of Serdica, see GEROV 1988, 137-138.
143 SULTOV 1985, 18-19.
made of tiles, some of which had ventilation openings\textsuperscript{144}. Most of the kilns had circular floor plan and sunken or semi-sunken firing chambers, with central pillar(s) and tongue wall(s) being used as supports for the perforated floors. Several of the installations were grouped around common working platforms, while some had stoke pits surrounded by stone walls and placed under wooden sheds\textsuperscript{145}. The lack of permanent dwellings and installations, which could have provided opportunities for year-round production activities, led to the conclusion that the centre at Hotnitsa could have operated only seasonally\textsuperscript{146}.

Production repertoire

Grey-black kitchen wares were the main items in the repertoire of the Hotnitsa workshops. The manufactured shapes comprised mostly baking pans, bowls, cooking pots and lids. Among the vessels with special function were kernoi and turibulae. Several varieties of flat-bottomed vessels (mostly red slipped) were also produced at the site. Common forms among the red slip table wares were cups, bowls and dishes, probably also crater-shaped vessels and sifters\textsuperscript{147}.

Chronology

According to B. Sultov, the kiln site at Hotnitsa functioned from the beginning of the Second until the mid-Third or the beginning of the Fourth century. Grey-black kitchenware was produced throughout the entire period, while the manufacture of fine tableware was practised for a short time around the mid-Second century, under the influence of the centre at Varbovski livadi\textsuperscript{148}. St. Ivanov stated that fine wares were produced around the second quarter or the second half of the Second century\textsuperscript{149}. It seems plausible that most of the kilns at the site were in operation until the mid-Third century, while some could have been used up to the beginning of the Fourth century\textsuperscript{150}.

Workshop location and ownership

B. Sultov supposed that the production of the Hotnitsa workshops was purposet for the nearby stonemason villages, related to the exploitation of the large stone quarries\textsuperscript{151}. Vessels of presumed Hotnitsa origin were also discovered within the legionary camp of Nova\textsuperscript{152}. The presence of Hotnitsa limestone in buildings of the Second and Third centuries at the same military site\textsuperscript{153}, led to the assumption that the ceramic products of the local workshops were distributed at Nova\textsuperscript{154} in relation (probably as a side product) to the trade with stone material\textsuperscript{155}. According to some scientists, the organisation and management of stone quarries on the city territory were within the responsibilities of the city authorities\textsuperscript{156}, while others have argued that these sites, including Hotnitsa, were emperor’s property\textsuperscript{157} and as such were administered by his representatives\textsuperscript{158}.

If the closely located stone quarries (some 4 km to the East) had been part of emperor’s domain, the same could be supposed for the land where the kiln site was located. In such a case, there is the possibility that the potters were private entrepreneurs, who used the land and its resources in exchange for a rent\textsuperscript{159}. There is also the option for an organised production, managed by the procurator of the presumed domain or an administrator from the city of Nicopolis ad Istrum\textsuperscript{160}, to which territory the site’s area was most likely ascribed in AD 136 at the latest\textsuperscript{161}.

2.2. Nova Nadezhda (Haskovo district)

Site description

The site at the modern village of Nova Nadezhda was discovered in 2013 close to the right bank of the Maritsa River (Fig. 1.7; 10). Five kilns, three clay pits, two ovens and a possible shed or a house were discovered\textsuperscript{162}. The mentioned clay pits were discovered close to the kilns, with one of them being reused as a temporary dwelling after the end of the clay extraction\textsuperscript{163}.

Production repertoire

Ceramic building material (mostly tiles, smaller quantities of tubes and bricks) and mould-made terracotta figurines were among the earliest items produced at the site. However, the major part of the output of the Nova Nadezhda workshops was dedicated to table and kitchen wares. Common among the former were cups, bowls and dishes, while the latter were represented mostly by cooking pots, deep bowls and pitchers\textsuperscript{164}. The site was in operation from the time of Antoninus Pius (around the mid-Second century) until the mid-Third century at the latest\textsuperscript{165}.

Workshop location and ownership

The kiln site was most likely located within the city territory of Augusta Traiana\textsuperscript{166}. As for its exact nature, it functioned from the beginning of the Second until the mid-Third century, while some could have been used up to the beginning of the Fourth century\textsuperscript{150}. According to some scientists, the organisation and management of stone quarries on the city territory were within the responsibilities of the city authorities\textsuperscript{156}, while others have argued that these sites, including Hotnitsa, were emperor’s property\textsuperscript{157} and as such were administered by his representatives\textsuperscript{158}.

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the excavated facilities are an indication for the seasonal character of the developed artisanal activities and respectively to the occupation of this site. Furthermore, the lack of permanent dwellings suggests that during the colder months of the year the potters probably lived at another, still undiscovered location. The mentioned on several occasions in this contribution possible cooperation of artisans, formed near places with available resources and developed trade routes, could have also been the case of the Nova Nadezhda workshops. The kilns were situated near the river bed, in an area with availability of raw clay, also river sand and wood, and were probably used by more than one atelier. In addition, the local potters were able to benefit from the good location by exporting their production via the Maritsa River and the closely located Central road\textsuperscript{168}.

**2.3. Malko Tynovo (Burgas district)**

**Site location**

In 1958 a Roman and Late Antique industrial site was explored close to the western vicinities of the modern town of Malko Tynovo (Fig. 1.8). Remains of a massive building with three premises were discovered on a small hillside in the eastern part of the studied area. Fourteen graves were found beneath the building’s floor, in one of which there was a coin of Emperor Aurelian. To the West of it, on the next terrace down the slope, three stratigraphic layers of archaeological materials were distinguished. The upper one was formed in modern times, while the second consisted of considerable amount of copper slag lumps formed in Antiquity. The third layer contained the remains of several constructions – parts of dwellings and production installations, the latter dug into the bedrock\textsuperscript{169}.

**Identified production installations**

Four of the constructions, discovered in the western part of the site, were described by the author as metallurgical furnaces, used for copper smelting. He claimed that the copper ore was purified in crucibles, placed within those furnaces\textsuperscript{170}. However, among other uncertainties of this hypothesis, the installations in question were very similar to ceramic kilns (two of quadrangular floor plan – Fig. 13.2) and drying facilities (a drying shed and a dryer – Fig. 13.1), which led to the suggestion that they were actually used in ceramic manufacture\textsuperscript{171}.

**Production repertoire**

The remains of ore extraction are a certain indication for this type of activity, which could have been practised in the nearby area, but in other, undiscovered during the excavations facilities. On the other hand, the ceramic building material, coarse wares and oil lamps, found in large number during the archaeological research, could have all been manufactured at the site\textsuperscript{172}.

**Chronology**

In concordance with the discovered coin of Aurelian in one of the graves, the eastern building was dated to the Late Antiquity. The coins from the western sector were issued between the early Third and the Sixth century\textsuperscript{173}. A re-examination of the numismatic material allowed the distinguishing of two habitation periods in this part of the site, first – from the early Third until the beginning or the first decades of the Fourth century and second – from the late Fifth – early Sixth century to the 560s or 570s\textsuperscript{174}.

**Workshop location and ownership**

V. Velkov suggested that the excavated production site was part of a Roman town due to the many discoveries of monumental building remains (such as columns, marble decorations etc.) and epigraphic evidence in the area underneath and around Malko Tynovo\textsuperscript{175}. Another proposition was made by B. Gerov, according to whom an imperial domain existed in the region, in relation to the large scale mining activities developed there. This hypothesis was based on inscriptions from the third quarter of the Second century. In the first, a local ethnic and trade organisation of people of Greek origin has been mentioned (IGBulg III.2, 1859). The second was made by an actor, for himself, his family and his patron (IGBulg III.2, 1863), but whether this patron was a private contractor of an imperial property or possessed a domain of his own in the region, is unknown.

The third inscription is a funerary epigram of a freedman of Marcus Antonius Rufus (CIL III, 8256). The latter’s family is known from the epigraphic records as a major contractor for imperial mines exploitation in the Danubian provinces, including North-western Thrace\textsuperscript{176}. As for the possible presence of an unidentified Roman town underneath Malko Tynovo, Gerov cites an inscription from the modern town (found after the research made by V. Velkov), where it is mentioned that this region was in the territory of Bizye, thus disproving the previous hypothesis of V. Velkov\textsuperscript{177}.

If we accept the option for the presence of an imperial domain in the area around Malko Tynovo, it is very likely that the some of its lands were leased to private entrepreneurs. The discovered production installations indicate a significant financial investment, which could have been made either by a wealthy individual or by a cooperation of craftsmen. If the latter is to be believed, the facilities in question could have been part of an artisan’s settlement. However, given also the many finds of architectural elements in the area, there could have been located a centre of the imperial domain, as it is supposed for the architectural complex at Madara.

**3. Workshops in villages and other rural sites**

The other major category of rural settlements, where ceramic production in Thrace was attested for the Roman period, is the one where kilns were discovered in more or less inhabited environment. The exact nature of some of these sites remains uncertain, due to stage of the digs progress and/or the size of the excavated area.

**3.1. Pavlikeni (Veliko Tynovo district)**

**Site description**

During the 1950s remains of buildings and grave

\textsuperscript{168} HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2016a, 592-593; HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2019a, 157.

\textsuperscript{169} VELKOV 1965, 77-84; HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2016b, 36.

\textsuperscript{170} VELKOV 1965, 79-92.

\textsuperscript{171} HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2016b, 36-37; HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2019a, 154-156; 499-502.

\textsuperscript{172} HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2016b, 37; HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2019a, 154-156.

\textsuperscript{173} VELKOV 1965, 78; 86.

\textsuperscript{174} HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2016b, 37; HARIZANO\textsuperscript{V} 2019a, 155.

\textsuperscript{175} VELKOV 1965, 93-99.

\textsuperscript{176} GEROV 1988, 80-81.

\textsuperscript{177} GEROV 1988, 55; 139.
monuments were found beneath the modern day town of Pavlikeni (Fig. 1.9). The researcher assumed that they were part of a Roman settlement. In 2015 and 2016, in the course of construction work in the same, north-western part of the modern town, nine pottery kilns and remains of few stone-walled buildings were uncovered. 

**Identified production installations**

One stone-walled building with a tile roof (found fallen *in situ*) and adjacent water well, built probably within a stone enclosure, were discovered during the 1950s research. According to B. Sultov, the building could have served both as a craftsman’s workshop and a store, due to the finds of stone *exagia*, a terracotta mould, also unfinished *arae* and more than forty coins. The kilns from the 2015-2016 salvage excavations were found dug into a clayish layer of soil, in proximity to a small stream and were clustered in two groups, approximately 150 m apart, with some of them being situated near stone walls. The installations had circular floor plans, with central pillar or without an additional support for the perforated floors. Some of them had sunken or semi-sunken firing chambers. After their abandonment, they were used as rubbish pits.

**Production repertoire**

A large amount of ceramic finds was discovered in the course of the 1950s excavations. Most of the vessels were fine table wares, covered in red slip with occasional external decoration (mostly *en barbotine*), while there were also fragments of amphorae. A mould for terracotta figurines, few oil lamps and loom weights were found as well.

The finds from the 2015-2016 research included lamp moulds, discarded fine wares (mostly two-handled cups) along with a large number of fragments of more fine wares (cups, bowls), also *amphorae*, cooking pots etc. According to St. Ivanov, the fine wares in question resembled those produced by the Butovo workshops.

**Chronology**

The coins (three silver and forty bronze examples) from the research of B. Sultov were issued between the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Gordian III. Single coins were minted under the said emperors, another twenty bore the imprints of members of the Severan dynasty (Septimius Severus, Iulia Domna, Caracalla, Iulia Mamaea, Elagabalus and Severus Alexander) and Macrinus, while the rest were unrecognised and described as Second and Third century coins. The earliest and the latest mentioned coins were used to determine the chronological frames of the site’s occupation.

Similarly to the finds of B. Sultov, the coins from the most recent excavations comprised single example issued under Antoninus Pius, with the rest being minted during the Severan period (mostly during the reign of Caracalla and partly under Severus Alexander). According to K. Chakarov, the kiln site was in operation during the last decade of the Second and the first three decades of the Third century.

**Workshop location and ownership**

As the closely located villa at Varbovski livadi, this site was also part of the province of Thrace and was most likely under the administrative jurisdiction of *Nicopolis ad Istrum* since AD 136 or the 190s at the latest. After describing the various archaeological and epigraphic discoveries from Pavlikeni and its vicinities, P. Vladkova states that a road station has most likely existed beneath the modern town. Her major argument was a dedication from the Severan period of a *beneficiarius consularis* of the *Legio I Italica* stationed at Novae, presumably related to the management of this road station and the organisation of the legion’s supply. K. Chakarov complied with her hypothesis, adding that the local artisans have probably specialised mainly in the production of ceramic items, supplemented by stone working and other crafts.

The first attested road stations in Thrace and Moesia were most likely built under Nero to whose time are dated the earliest known inscriptions of construction of *tabernae* and *praetoria* along the Central road. The road stations of the Roman and Late Roman period differed in size and included buildings of various purposes such as inns, stables, baths, police posts and after Septimius Severus also warehouses, the latter supposedly related to the military annona. According to B. Gerov, in the early Third century many of the existing road stations (or at least those on the main roads in Thrace) were transformed into *emporia*. Attested from the rule of Marcus Aurelius onwards, these semi-urban settlements were further developed under the Severan dynasty as shown by the inscription from Pizos. Apart from engagement in local trade, many inhabitants of these settlements were probably also employed in agriculture. Another opinion on the matter claimed that *emporia* were established within the city territories most of all in order to ease the distribution and re-distribution of goods and increase the coin circulation. A third hypothesis, regarding the Pizos case in particular, suggests that it has been founded in order for better support of the state transportation system in this section of the Central road to be obtained.

Given the said, if a road station really existed beneath the modern town of Pavlikeni, it could have also been transformed into an *emporium* as its counterparts in Thrace, rather shortly after its secure establishment, regardless of it being placed within Moesian territory after AD 193.
Such change in the status could be explained by its favourable position, on the crossroad between two important roads, leading respectively from Novae to Augusta Traiana and from Marcopolis to Melita. Furthermore, even after the 190s border shift, it was still close to the Northern limits of Thrace, to which territory the emporium Diskoduratae, located some 25 km to the South, remained securely attached at least until the 240s.

According to the Pisos inscription, the inhabitants of the emporium were relieved by paying taxes (annona, fructus) to the city on which territory it was established, as well as of the obligation of supplying animals for the state system of transportation (cursus publicus). The dwellers were classified in two groups, one of more wealthy people and one of landless peasants and petty farmers.

The so far visible scale of the ceramic production underneath modern Pavlikeni indicates that the craft was most likely developed by people of certain financial abilities, closer to those of the upper strata of the rural inhabitants of the presumed emporium. However, at this state of research nothing could be stated for certain.

3.2. Georgi Dobreve (Lyubimets municipality, Haskovo district)

Site description

The rural complex near the modern day Georgi Dobreve, Lyubimets municipality, was discovered in the course of a rescue archaeological research, related to the construction of Maritsa highway (Fig. 1.10; 14.1). Three buildings (including a horreum) and two ceramic kilns were found within the excavated area.

Identified production installations

The ceramic kilns were discovered in the eastern part of the site, situated near a small river. The first installation had quadrangular combustion chamber and a central supporting pillar (Fig. 14.3), while the second had circular floor plan and again (most likely) central supporting pillar. The stoke pit of the larger kiln was placed under a shed covered with roof tiles. A clay depot was also found nearby.

The largest discovered building (Fig. 14.2), identified as a horreum, could have served also in certain stages of ceramic production. For instance, the presumed portico on the eastern side of the construction could have been used as a place for natural drying of ceramic building material and other pottery items, before their firing.

Production repertoire

The larger of the two kilns was supposedly used for the manufacture of bricks and tiles, while more recently was argued that it could have also been used for the firing of domestic pottery. The other kiln was involved in the production of kitchen and table wares (coated in red slip), mostly pots, pitchers, cups and bowls.

Chronology

The kiln site functioned from the end of the Second until the mid-Third century, simultaneously with the use of the uncovered buildings. The discovered settlement was located within the city territory of Hadrianopolis. When analysing its exact nature, E. Pencheva assumed that the discovered buildings and production installations were most likely part of a separate household, located within the boundaries of a vicus. According to her, the small amount of manufactured pottery forms is an indication for non-specialised production purpose for the inhabitants of the complex. On the contrary, the other opinion on the latter subject states that the restricted number of fabricated vessel shapes could be considered as a proof that the local atelier has been specialised in the production of small number of items, at least part of which intended for sale in the nearby area. Such a trade could have been eased by the location of the site near both the Maritsa River and the Diagonal road.

If we consider the supposed option for the type of settlement structure at hand, its owner could have been a wealthy dweller of a vicus, with substantial financial abilities which would have enabled him to support the manufacture of ceramic building material and domestic pottery (including red slip wares) as well as the other crafts, practised within the complex.

According to the researchers, agriculture and animal husbandry were also developed at certain scale. Furthermore, the discovered finds indicate divergent sources of goods supply, with olive oil, wine and other amphora-borne products coming mostly from the Aegean islands, fine table wares imported from the regions of Pergamon and Northern Africa, and oil lamps manufactured at Attic and Asia Minor workshops.

However, there are other possibilities for the ownership of the discovered structures. The presence of a horreum of considerable size, a possible workshop or farm building (with light construction and a thatched roof), and the two kilns within the excavated area could be an indication for joint ownership of the stored grain (where the harvest of more individual producers could have been stored) and crafting merchandise by more than one of the inhabitants of the presumed vicus. In such case this could have been the industrial part of the settlement.

Of course there is also the possibility for the site to have been part of a villa estate, with the only discovered building with housing purpose being used by a manager (vilicus?), engaged with the supervision of the developed various agricultural and artisanal activities.

186 HARIZANOV 2013a, 411-412.
188 PENCHEVA 2014, 17-25.
190 HARIZANOV 2019a, 153.
192 See PENCHEVA 2012, 33-49; PENCHEVA 2014, 14-17.
193 For the latter see PENCHEVA 2014, 3-14.
3.3. Poleto (Simitli municipality, Blagoevgrad district)

Site description

The site near the modern village of Poleto, Simitli municipality, was discovered during the 1980s in the course of construction work near the Struma River (Fig. 1.11). One lime kiln, a water fountain and a ceramic kiln (Fig. 15) were excavated.214

Identified production installations

The discovered ceramic kiln had rectangular floor plan and internal cross-walls, used as support for the perforated floor.215 The water facility was found 100 m to the Southeast of the ceramic kiln, in the lowest part of the studied area. Described as a water fountain, the installation was used for the capture of a nearby water spring. The construction was solid, made of bricks and stones with mortar bonding. The water came through an arched opening in a stone wall, the latter used to support the northern slope of the terrain. Beneath it, there was a small two-step basin, surrounded by brick pavement. Other features of the installation included a pipeline and another small shaft, used according to the excavator for draining the water during cleaning and repairs.216 It seems very likely that the water capture was constructed in relation to the developed artisanal activities (or vice versa217), given that water was needed both for lime and ceramic production. Furthermore, it is also possible that some of the features of the water facility were used in the process of initial clay preparation (breaking, purification, moistening, mixing and/or maturing).

Production repertoire

According to I. Kulov, the ceramic kiln was used for the production of ceramic building material.218 However, his hypothesis was based mostly on the shape of the kiln, since no production waste was mentioned. Given that kilns of rectangular floor plan were used for both pottery and tile manufacture,219 it could be assumed that the large quantity of fragmented and discarded ceramic vessels found near the three installations220 and outside their usual household context were also part of the workshop’s repertoire.

Chronology

Three of the seven coins, found during the research, were recognised. They were minted in the reigns of Septimius Severus, Gordian III and Claudius II. In concordance with their dating, the site’s exploitation was placed from the second half of the Second until some point in the Third century.221 probably around the end of its third quarter.

Workshop location and ownership

The industrial site was situated in the Southern vicinity of a presumed Roman vicus (not excavated) of the city territory of Pautalia,222 and its production was probably purposed for the inhabitants of this settlement.223 Judging by the well-crafted production installations, their erection and maintenance required a certain amount of funds and work force. They could have been owned by a wealthy dweller of the settlement or else, a joint enterprise of the latter’s inhabitants.

3.4. Breznik (Pernik district)

Site description

The archaeological site was discovered some 2 km to the South of the modern town of Breznik (Fig. 1.12). During the salvage excavations in 2016 and 2017 remains of a Roman rural site were found, comprising three stone-walled buildings, possible shed and three ceramic kilns.224

Identified production installations

The three ceramic kilns had quadrangular floor plan. Kiln no. 2 was situated in the Eastern part of the site, near a stone wall of a possible large shed. The combustion chamber, the stoking channel and the stoke pit were dug into the bedrock. The walls of the chamber, the two central supporting pillars and the remains of the perforated floor were all built of mud bricks and clay (Fig. 16).

The other two kilns (nos. 1 and 3) were found to the West of the first one (Fig. 17). Kiln no. 1 was built after kiln no. 3 was abandoned, with the southern section of the latter’s lower chamber being reused as a part of the stoke pit of the former. Kiln no. 1 was also positioned on top of the bedrock. The lower chamber and the preserved tongue wall with side pilasters, used as support for the perforated floor, were built of full-sized bricks and clay.

Kiln no. 3 was also only partially preserved. The combustion chamber had been positioned upon the bedrock. In its centre were situated two central supporting walls, only one of which was found in situ. The preserved kiln parts were built of full-sized bricks and clay.

An interesting discovery was made in the northern part of the site, within building no. 2. Several connected pits, cut into the bedrock, were found there, together with a pit filled with purified clay.225 They were probably part of an installation or installations, used in the initial treatment of the raw material.

Production repertoire

The three installations were most probably used for the production of tiles, bricks and loom weights.226 No secure data for pottery manufacture has been found until now.

Chronology

Two construction periods, the second with two phases, were identified on the site. The first period lasted from the second half of the Second until the 260s. The second period occurred between the 260s or 270s and the third quarter of the Fourth century. A date in the 310s or the 320s has been set as a margin of the two construction

214 KULOV 2007, 132.
216 KULOV 2007, 135-137.
217 If the water catchment was the first construction in the area, its presence could have been the stimulus for the choice of location of the production installations.
219 See HARIZANOVA 2019a, 118-122.
220 See KULOV 2007, 136-139, Fig. 9-11.
221 KULOV 2007, 132, 139-140.
222 For it see GEROV 1961, 177-184.
223 KULOV 2007, 132.
225 PAUNOVA 2018, 436.
226 I would like to thank the Dig Director of the site, Vasilka Paunova (Regional Historical museum Pernik), for the additional information on the matter.
227 PAUNOVA 2018, 438.
phases\textsuperscript{238}. The installations in building no. 2 and kiln no. 2 were used during the first construction period. Kiln no. 3 was most likely in operation in the course of the first phase of the second period, while kiln no. 1 was exploited in the second Phase of the latter\textsuperscript{239}.

**Workshop location and ownership**

The site was most likely located within the city territory of Pautalia\textsuperscript{240}. According to the researchers, the discovered buildings and installations were part of the industrial section of a villa complex, with the latter being located (but not excavated) to the Southeast of the studied area\textsuperscript{241}. However, there still isn't sufficient data for proving this hypothesis.

### 3.5. Mezdra (Vratsa district)

**Site description**

The site at Kaleto locality was situated on a rocky hill in the South-western vicinities of the modern day town of Mezdra, on the left bank of the Iskar River (Fig. 1.13). A Roman fort existed for a short period on the spot, replaced after its devastation by a pagan sanctuary. In the Late Antique period a fortified settlement was founded at the same place\textsuperscript{242}.

A large rural (semi-urban?) settlement existed close to the hilltop, near the river bank. One building of considerable dimensions, a great amount of movable finds (pottery, coins, stone artefacts, etc.) and also rich graves from the local necropolis testify for its prosperity\textsuperscript{243}.

**Identified production installations**

One partially preserved ceramic kiln, found filled with underfired pottery vessels, was discovered in the vicinity of the open settlement\textsuperscript{244}.

**Production repertoire**

The pottery from the kiln in question comprised mostly cups with red slip coating. In addition, a double-sided ceramic die, used for producing stamped decoration, was found near the installation\textsuperscript{245}.

Furthermore, a set of ceramic moulds for the production of vessels with applied decoration was discovered during the excavations of the pagan sanctuary. The four moulds represented deities (Heracles, Silvan and Athena) and were supposedly locally made\textsuperscript{246}.

**Chronology**

According to the latest finds, the Roman fort at Kaleto was established around the mid-Second century and existed until a devastating attack, which occurred between the 170s and 190s. The site was reoccupied in the early Third century (probably in 220s or the 230s) when a pagan sanctuary was settled among its ruins. The cult complex functioned until a devastating attack, which occurred between the 170s and were supposedly locally made moulds represented deities (Heracles, Silvan and Athena) during the excavations of the pagan sanctuary. The four production installations were discovered near the installation. Ceramic die, used for producing stamped decoration, was mostly cups with red slip coating. In addition, a double-sided ceramic die, used for producing stamped decoration, was found near the installation. However, there still isn’t sufficient data for proving this hypothesis.

### 3.6. Karanovo (Nova Zagora municipality, Sliven district)

**Site description**

Another Roman settlement was located 1 km to the Northwest of the present day village of Karanovo, Nova Zagora municipality (Fig. 1.14). During rescue excavations in the 1970s and the 1980s, remains of a rural settlement were discovered. They comprised a Roman sanctuary, a necropolis, a large building with thirteen premises, some smaller dwellings, several production installations, three consecutively built Christian basilicas and two separate fortifications\textsuperscript{247}.

**Identified production installations**

An unknown number of lime kilns and tile kilns, along with two pottery kilns, were discovered in the western part of the settlement, close to buildings with artisanal or agricultural function. Only the pottery kilns were described in detail in the so far published articles. They were two-chambered, sunken structures\textsuperscript{248}, had circular floor plan construction phases set around the mid-Third century\textsuperscript{249}. The date for the establishment of the civic settlement underneath Mezdra is still under consideration. What is certain is that it existed in the Second and the first half of the Third century\textsuperscript{250}. The settlement suffered from the same disastrous attack that ended the occupation of the nearby fort in the last decades of the Second century, after which the community was quickly revived\textsuperscript{251}.

The moulds were discovered in context related to the first phase of the occupation of the religious centre\textsuperscript{240}. The underfired vessels from the kiln were described as similar to the ones, discovered at the Kaleto site in contexts of the Third century\textsuperscript{241}. Given the said, the testified pottery workshop was most likely established in the late Second or early Third century and was in operation at least until the middle of the latter.

**Workshop location and ownership**

According to S. Torbatov, the two sites were situated near the road leading from Oescus to Serdica and were under the administrative jurisdiction of the city of Serdica. Furthermore, he identified the Roman fort with one of the four praesidia known from the epigraphic records to have been built in this region (regio Dyptensium) during the 150s\textsuperscript{242}.

As for the ownership of the ceramic workshop, no secure evidence concerning this issue has been found until now. It could be suggested, that it was owned by an inhabitant of the civic settlement and its production was purposed both for the local dwellers and the visitors of the nearby sanctuary.

\textsuperscript{237} TORBATOV 2015, 153-157.
\textsuperscript{238} TORBATOV 2009, 37.
\textsuperscript{239} MASHOV 1998, 19.
\textsuperscript{240} LUKA 2006, 161.
\textsuperscript{241} LUKA 2006, 164.
\textsuperscript{242} TORBATOV 2015, 153-154; see also the same paragraph for the site at Madara.
\textsuperscript{244} For the employed here kiln terminology, as well as for the techniques and materials, used in the construction of the antique kilns in the modern territory of Bulgaria, see HARIZANOV 2019a, 38-66; HARIZANOV 2019b,
and were placed around a common stoke pit (Fig. 18). The smaller kiln had no support for the perforated floor, while the slightly larger installation had a central supporting pillar. The chambers were dug into the bedrock and plastered with clay, while the perforated floors were constructed of full-sized and fragmented tiles (mostly imbrices) and clay.  

Production repertoire  
All of the pottery, discovered during the excavation of the kilns, has been described as locally made. Classified as kitchenware (red and grey-black coarse wares) and red slip tableware, the two groups included cooking pots, cups, bowls, plates, flat-bottomed amphorae (including two-handled jugs) and lids. However, some of the plates are almost identical to shapes of the Eastern sigillata C (ESC, Çandarlı ware) and more precisely to forms Hayes 1 and 4 of the so-called “late series” of Çandarlı products. Furthermore, these plates bore the same characteristics as the products of the Pergamon region – fine clay with pink-red to red colour after firing and good quality red gloss, thicker on the inside of the vessels.

Chronology  
According to B. Borisov, the site was inhabited from the mid-First century onwards. Four construction periods were distinguished for the Roman and late antique periods, first – from the mid-First to the middle/third quarter of the Third century, second – from the end of the Third/beginning of the Fourth century to the 370s, third – from the late Fourth/early Fifth to the middle of the Fifth century, and fourth – from the end of the Fifth/beginning of the Sixth to the end of the Sixth – beginning of the Seventh century.

The ceramic workshop was presumably active in the second construction period and more precisely during the second half of the Third and possibly the beginning of the Fourth century. The dating was based on the shapes of the described pottery and the chronological distribution of the pointed parallels, found at other sites in both Lower Moesia (later Moesia Secunda and Scythia Minor) and Thrace (including later Thracia and Haemimontus).

Several arguments could be pointed out in favour of an earlier starting date for the manufacture of clay-formed items in this workshop. The ESC forms Hayes 1 and 4, which if not imported (as it seems more plausible) were at least items in this workshop. The ESC forms Hayes 1 and 4, which if not imported (as it seems more plausible) were at least items in this workshop. The ESC forms Hayes 1 and 4, which if not imported (as it seems more plausible) were at least items in this workshop. The ESC forms Hayes 1 and 4, which if not imported (as it seems more plausible) were at least items in this workshop.

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Several arguments could be pointed out in favour of an earlier starting date for the manufacture of clay-formed items in this workshop. The ESC forms Hayes 1 and 4, which if not imported (as it seems more plausible) were at least imitated by the local craftsmen, were most common for the second half/last decades of the Second and first half (or a little later) of the Third century. In addition, some of the other locally made vessels from Karanovo find analogies in the production of closely located centres like Nova Nadezhda and Augusta Traiana and more distant ones like that at Pet mogul (Karavelovo), Hotnitsa and Varbovski livadi. As already mentioned (see above), the first one was active from the mid-Second until the mid-Third century at the latest. The site from the South-western necropolis of Augusta Traiana functioned until the late Third or early Fourth century at the latest (see below), while the one at Pet mogul (Karavelovo) – either to the mid-Third or the beginning of the Fourth century at the latest. The other described in this contribution sites at Varbovski livadi and Hotnitsa, functioned respectively to the 170s or 230s and to the mid-Third or early Fourth century (see above).

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in comparison with the data for the development of the craft in the rest of the urban settlements in the province, it has been suggested that they were in operation until the mid-Third century at the latest. However, until more archaeological evidence is found, this would remain only a hypothesis.

4.1. Philippopolis (modern Plovdiv)

Sites description

Four ceramic workshops from the chronological period in question have been studied so far on the site of the Roman city of Philippopolis, beneath modern Plovdiv (Fig. 1; 19). The first workshop (Ph-1) was located in an insula from the South-eastern part of the city, adjacent to the inner face of the later built Southern fortification wall. The second officina (Ph-2) was found to the South-east of the first one, close to the outer face of the same part of the city’s fortifications, situated above the ruins of private houses from a previous construction period. The third atelier (Ph-3) was located close to the outer face of the Eastern fortification wall and was also established above the remains of private houses and a street, after they were both ruined. The fourth workshop (Ph-4) was excavated in the vicinities of the Roman city, to the South of its habitation area.

Identified production installations

Ph-1 comprised eight kilns, a clay depot, waste pits and two wells, all situated in and near one building with a yard. At Ph-2 three kilns situated around a common stoke pit were found, along with two water wells. The preserved in situ production facilities of Ph-3 included one pottery kiln (with two construction periods), one basin for clay preparation, a ceramic pipeline, a clay depot, two sheds and several waste pits. Four kilns (Fig. 20), one from the first and three from the second construction period of the site, two wells, two waste pits, a clay depot, clay extraction pits and possible sheds were studied at Ph-4.

Production repertoire

Domestic pottery, terracotta figurines and oil lamps were produced in Ph-1. The repertoire of Ph-2 is not fully identified. However, at least part of its output was dedicated to table wares. Kitchenware, flat-bottomed amphorae and amphora stoppers were certainly produced at Ph-3, possibly together with terracotta figurines, oil lamps and tableware. The repertoire of Ph-4 included mostly kitchenware, with smaller quantities of tableware and flat-bottomed amphorae.

263 For the needs of this study, the four sites will be referred to as Ph-1 to Ph-4, numbered in the order of their description here. The same will be done for the four kiln site from Augusta Traiana (see below), which will be labelled AT-1 to AT-4.

264 HARIZANOVA 2018, 300-301, Fig. 2.


266 KOLEV 1973, 4; HARIANOVA 2019a, 174; 598-599.


268 ROZHOVNA-HRISTEVA 2014, 390-393; HARIZANOVA 2019a, 175; 603-608.

269 MARTINOVA-KYTOTOVA 2011, 342.

270 ROZHOVNA-HRISTEVA 2014, 393.
**Chronology**

Ph-1 was in operation from the beginning of the Second to the beginning of the Third century AD\(^{248}\) or until the 170s\(^{246}\) when the new city’s fortification wall was built\(^{247}\). Ph-2 probably functioned from the end of the Second\(^{248}\) until the mid-Third century AD\(^{248}\), when *Philippopolis* was besieged and ransacked by the Goths\(^{249}\). The first proposed dating of Ph-3 was from the second half of the Second to the mid-Third century\(^{295}\), while later its period of operation was set in the Third and the early Fourth century AD\(^{292}\). While some of the finds like terracotta figurines and lamps could be attributed to earlier times (and possible an earlier workshop at the same spot), the ceramic artefacts that were most certainly produced on the site were common for the period between the second half of the Third and the second half of the Fourth century AD, at the latest\(^{295}\). According to the discovered coins pottery and applied archaemagnetic, Ph-4 probably functioned from the second half of the Third to the second half (third quarter?) of the Fourth century AD, at the latest\(^{294}\).

**Workshop location and ownership**

So far, there is no secure evidence for the owners of the workshops in *Philippopolis*. The location within an *insula* from the early Roman urban network along with the layout and size of Ph-1 indicate that its owner most likely had substantial financial abilities. However, until more information is published, nothing else could be said on the matter.

Ph-2, Ph-3 and Ph-4 demonstrate another type of urban workshop planning, where the production installations were being set up aside from the populated area of the city. However, Ph-2 and Ph-3 were located in the immediate vicinity of the inhabited zones, while Ph-4 was situated farther to the South of the latter, near one of the city necropoleis. Given the location and dating of Ph-1 and Ph-2 it is not impossible for the two sites to have been owned by the same person of family. In such case, the production installations of the same workshop could have been relocated outside the fortified zone of the city, once the fortification wall was built, probably due to implemented safety regulations.

As for Ph-3, it was located within the so-called quarter of Eastern immigrants, where traces of the practise of other crafts have also been found\(^{295}\). Still, there is no secure data for tracing the origin of the potters who worked there and that of the workshop owner (if he was other than the employed craftsmen). Even more, some of the features of the excavated kiln could be viewed as evidence for a mix of both Western and Eastern influence\(^{296}\). The discovered production facilities and ceramic finds at Ph-1, Ph-3 and Ph-4 could serve as an indication for the significant amount of finances invested in the craft. Overall, it seems that the described workshops were able to achieve a substantial production output.

A possible owner of a ceramic workshop or an estate with developed agricultural production is one *Titus Flavius Dorzinthes*, whose name is found stamped on a *dolium* rim near the village of Dragomir close to Plovdiv. The said person was most likely a relative of *Tiberius Claudius Dorzinthes*, a philarc in Philippopolis during the Flavian period\(^{297}\). Given that *dolia* were used not only for storing of grain but also for wine production\(^{298}\) and wine storing\(^{299}\), it cannot be stated for sure what was the economic activity, developed by this member of the *Dorzinthes* family. He could have been both wine or grain producer and pottery workshop owner, as is seen by examples of known estates in Thrace\(^{300}\) and elsewhere in the empire, and also noted by some Roman agronomists\(^{301}\).

### 4.2. Augusta Traiana (modern Stara Zagora)

**Sites description**

Four kiln sites (ATr-1 to ATr-4) have been excavated so far within the margins of the Roman town of *Augusta Traiana*, underneath modern Stara Zagora (Fig. 1; 21\(^{302}\)). Two (ATr-1 and ATr-2) were discovered outside the city fortifications, among the grave structures from its Southwestern and Eastern necropoleis\(^{303}\). The remains of the other two potteries were found inside the fortified area of the town, close to the Southern gate (ATr-3)\(^{304}\) and in its Western intramural part (ATr-4)\(^{305}\).

**Identified production installations**

Seven kilns and two waste pits were discovered within ATr-1. The kilns had circular or quadrangular floor plan and central supporting pillars\(^{306}\). One kiln of quadrangular floor plan and support for the perforated floor comprising a central pillar and side pilasters (Fig. 22), along with a water basin (or a levigation/moistening tank), were found in ATr-2\(^{307}\).

The kiln from ATr-3 was found almost completely destroyed and no information concerning its construction had been published\(^{308}\). ATr-4 was discovered in the Western part of the town. One kiln with circular floor plan and central supporting wall was found near a partially excavated stone-walled building.

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246 MARTINOVA-KYUTOVA 2011, 342.
248 HARIZANOV 2015, 39; HARIZANOV 2018, 300; HARIZANOV 2019a, 176.
247 See TOPALLOV 2012, 375.
249 HARIZANOV 2018, 300.
250 For the latter, see TOPALLOV 2012, 375.
252 BOSPATCHIEVA 2004, 93.
253 HARIZANOV 2018, 300; HARIZANOV 2019a, 174-175.
254 HARIZANOV 2018, 300; HARIZANOV 2019a, 175, with additional information on the topic by E. Bozhinova (Regional Archaeological Museum Plovdiv), to whom I once again express my gratitude.
256 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 100-101; 600-602.
258 See for example the winery at Madara – DREMSIZOVA-NELCHINOVA 1984, 95-97.
259 See PEÑA 2007, 20; 46-47.
260 For instance, the included here estates at Varbovski livadi and Madara, where *horrea* and in the second case also a winery were discovered along with the pottery producing facilities (see above).
261 See AUBERT 1994, 204-206.
262 HARIZANOV 2018, 302-303, Fig. 3.
266 See KALČEV 1991, 248.
270 See KALČEV 1991, 248; HARIZANOV 2019a, 181; 675-676.
Few clay pits were also uncovered near and above the production installation\textsuperscript{310}. 

**Production repertoire**

ATr-1 was involved in the production of red slip fine wares, red and grey-black coarse wares, oil lamps and probably a small quantity of terracotta figurines and plaques\textsuperscript{310}. ATr-2 specialised in the manufacture of similar pottery categories – red slip fine wares and red and grey-black coarse wares\textsuperscript{311}. The ceramic vessels discovered during the excavations of ATr-3 included fine red slip wares and coarse wares\textsuperscript{312}. However, not all of the finds from the three sites could be securely classified as locally made, given that some of the vessels show similar features with imported fine wares of possible Eastern (Eastern sigillata A, B and C, henceforth ESA, ESB, ESC) and African (African red slip ware, hereafter ARSW) origin\textsuperscript{313}. 

No secure information about the production repertoire of ATr-4 has been initially found\textsuperscript{314}. However, during excavations in 2005 at another archaeological site situated to the West of the described workshop, near the inner face of the town’s Western fortification wall, a large number of ceramic lamps dated to the middle and the second half of the Third century AD were discovered. The close proximity of the two sites led to a suggestion that the abovementioned kiln was part of a production centre, specialised (but not exclusively) in the manufacture of oil lamps\textsuperscript{315}.

**Chronology**

ATr-1 was dated to the early Third – late Third/early Fourth century in concordance with the data from the discovered finds and pottery, and also in relation to the stratigraphic position of the kilns and the grave structures, some of which were found above or beneath the production installations\textsuperscript{316}. Judging by the discovered pottery and coins of Septimius Severus and Constantine I, ATr-2 most likely functioned from the late Second to the first decades of the Fourth century\textsuperscript{317}. The finds related to the period of exploitation of the kiln from ATr-3 were dated between the beginning of the Third and the third quarter of the Fourth century\textsuperscript{318}. It has been assumed that the production installation functioned after the mid-Third century\textsuperscript{319}.  

4.3. Hadrianopolis (modern Edirne)

**Site description**

During 2002-2003 rescue excavations were conducted near the so-called Macedonia tower in Edirne, Turkey (Fig. 1; 23). Parts of the fortifications of Roman Hadrianopolis were revealed, together with five ceramic kilns and several buildings, dating from the Roman to the Ottoman period\textsuperscript{322}. In a Master’s thesis, defended in 2008, L. Atli Akbuz examined the Roman age pottery from the excavations, including the findings from one of the discovered kilns, located outside the northern fortification wall\textsuperscript{324}. 

**Identified production installations**

The extramural kiln was found beneath tombs from the Byzantine period (Fig. 23). It had circular (close to hexagonal) floor plan and a central supporting pillar\textsuperscript{325}. 

**Production repertoire**

Twenty eight vessels were found inside the combustion chamber of the kiln. They were classified in three groups – open (cups, bowls, plates, etc.) and closed (pots, jugs, amphoriskoi, oinochoai, amphorae) forms of vessels for daily use, and unguentaria\textsuperscript{326}. 

**Chronology**

The kiln and the discovered pottery within it were dated to the Second century. The date was based both on...
parallels of the vessels’ shapes and the dating of the city fortifications. According to the author, the shapes were close to those made in the production centres at Butovo and Pavlikeni. Furthermore, the base of the kiln was discovered on the same level as the fortification wall, supposedly built in the time of Hadrian. We have secure terminus post quem for the erection of the kiln in the 120s, when the town was established. However, the discovered pottery was most likely produced after the mid-Second century. Similar cups were produced during the second half of the Second and the first half of the Third century in the centres at Nova Nadezhda and Augusta Traiana. Among the bowls are fragments very similar (or identical?) to the ESC form Hayes 3, distributed mainly in the second half of the Second and the Third centuries. Conversely, some of the plates could find analogies in form Loeschke 9 of the same Eastern wares, common for the second half of the First and the Second century. Judging by the said, it seems logical to set the date for the erection of the extramural production installation around the mid-Second century, while its abandonment could have happened at some point in the late Second or the first half of the Third century.

**Workshop location and ownership**

No data, concerning the ownership of this workshop has been published. Given that some of the presumed locally made forms resemble Eastern products, it could be suggested that the potter or potters, who worked here, were immigrants from Asia Minor. Of course, it is also possible that they were local craftsmen who followed the tendencies and produced pottery shapes popular in the region during that time period.

### II. DISCUSSION

The gathered and presented data about the ceramic workshops in Roman Thrace allows several aspects of the craft to be further analysed, namely the size, production repertoire and chronology of the studied ateliers and centres, along with to the potteries’ ownership, the social status and financial abilities of the people engaged in the production and distribution of clay-formed items.

#### 1. Chronological distribution

In a recent study on the ceramic kilns in the modern territory of Bulgaria, two major periods of development of the production of clay-formed items in the region were identified. In the course of the first of those periods, which occurred between the second half of the First century AD and the 370s, four distinct phases were recognised. The first three of those phases correspond to the time of the Principate and the first two or three decades of the Dominate and thus to the time frame set for the present study.

The presented periodisation could be used for the territory of *provincia Thracia* as well. During the first phase of the first period, which took place between the second half of the First and AD 170, several rural workshops and only one urban atelier were securely established. The extra-urban sites were located mostly within villa estates – the ones at Varbovski livadi, Chatalaka and Madara. The other two rural sites were situated within the presumed artisan’s villages at Hotnitsa and Nova Nadezhda. The only securely dated urban workshop is from the city of Philippopolis (Ph-1). The other atelier of possible starting date before AD 170 is the extramural site at Hadrianopolis. The only site, where ceramic production is supposedly terminated (or more likely only reduced) at that time is the one at Varbovski livadi.

The period between two of the most destructive series of Barbarian raids in Thrace – the Costoboci incursion of AD 170 and the invasions of the Goths in ca. AD 248-251, is set as a second phase of the first period of local ceramic production. During that time a number of both smaller and larger workshops were founded. These include the kiln sites at the villa at Pokrovnik, also the ones with still unidentified status at Pavlikeni, Breznik, Malko Tarnovo and possibly Karanovo (see above), the presumed *vici* at Georgi Dobrevo, Mezdra and Poleto. This is also the period of significant advancement of urban ceramic production, with functioning ateliers being attested at Philippopolis (Ph-2), Augusta Traiana (ATr-1, ATr-2), Hadrianopolis and possibly also at Marcianopolis.

The rest of the included here time period, i.e. the second half of the Third century with a possible extension in the first years or decades of the Fourth century, has been set as a third phase in the development of ceramic production in the modern Bulgarian lands. After the disastrous Barbarian invasions of the mid-Third century the number of operating rural workshops has been severely reduced. Starting from the 230s onwards, the production sites (in most cases along with the entire settlements) at Varbovski livadi, Nova Nadezhda, Georgi Dobrevo and possibly also Pavlikeni and Mezdra were abandoned. Terminal dates around the middle of this century are likewise the most plausible for the extramural urban kiln sites at Hadrianopolis (at the latest), Ph-2 at Philippopolis and maybe Marcianopolis, and also for the severe reduction (or abandonment) of pottery manufacture at the artisan’s village at Hotnitsa.

Only one new rural kiln site is securely dated to that period – the one at the Dragovishtitsa villa. However,

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327 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 194-199.
328 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 195.
329 However, judging by the discovered there pottery (see above), is seems much more likely for this site to have started its operation in the last quarter of the Second century.
330 Which prompted the fortification of the cities in Thrace during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, see for example LOZANO 2015, 87.
332 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 195-196.
333 See HARIZANOV 2019a, 196.
334 Given that the kiln was most likely used only for the production of ceramic building material for the needs of the estate, it cannot be related to the supply and trade with ceramic items in the province.
at the same time several urban potteries were most likely established at Philippopolis (Ph-3' and Ph-4) and Augusta Traiana (ATr-3' and ATr-4'). If correct, this observation could be considered as an indication that the urban ateliers were founded as a result of the decline of rural ceramic production and the resulting lack of sufficient pottery supply.

The rural sites at Poleto and possibly Karanovo functioned until the 270s or the 280s. The ones at Malko Tyrnovo and Hotnitsa were in operation until the early Fourth century at the latest, with a similar terminal date being the last possible for the Karanovo workshop and the extramural kiln sites (ATr-1 and ATr-2) at Augusta Traiana as well.

The only sites where a continuation of the artisanal activities is observed are the ones at Breznik, Madara, Chatalka and Pokrovnik, which functioned until some point in the second half of the Fourth century. This is also the last possible time for the abandonment of the extramural pottery producing sites (Ph-3 and Ph-4) at Philippopolis345.

2. Workshop location

The so far identified ceramic workshops were located within several city territories and possible imperial domains in Thrace.

Starting from North to South, the site at Varbovski livadi was most likely located in the territory of a Roman strategia – Rusike, if we accept M. Tacheva’s opinion that the latter was situated in the region of the future Nicopolis344. However, B. Gerov seeks Rusike around the auxiliary fort at Abritus346, so there could have been another administrative unit in this area. As for the period after Trajan’s urbanisation, to the West of the territory of Nicopolis, Gerov describes a rural regio with administrative centre at Melta (modern Lovech), while to the Southwest (around modern Sevlievo) – another rural region – civitas Usdicensis346. If the city territory of Nicopolis settled in AD 136 did not reach the area of Varbovski livadi, the site should have been incorporated in another rural civitas, given that the mentioned two regions (Meltensis and Usdicensis) were supposedly included within Moesia Inferior. The latest time of its inclusion in the city territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum is in the 190s, before or after the relocation of the town and his hinterland from Thrace to Lower Moesia347.

The site at Pavlikeni was also most likely located within the city territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum starting from AD 136 or the 190s at the latest. However, as said above, in AD 193 both Pavlikeni and Varbovski livadi were transferred to Moesia Inferior along with the rest of the Nicopian territory.

345 Where however tile kilns of later date were also found (see HARIZANOV 2019a, 175-176). Furthermore, after the beginning of the Fourth century there was again a noticeable development in ceramic production within the province (now compared to the second half of the Third century). This development however was to a large extent limited to the production of ceramic building material (likely related to the large scale building initiatives of the state) and less to that of domestic pottery (see HARIZANOV 2019a, 197).


349 For the border relocation in AD 193 and the possible date in the late 190s of enlargement of the city territory of Nicopolis, see BOTEVA 1996, 173-176.

The site at Hotnitsa was likewise probably within the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum since AD 136, while on the other hand there is also a possibility for its inclusion in an imperial domain, related to the exploitation of the nearby stone quarries.

The site at Madara was located within the territory of Thrace either until AD 136 or AD 193, depending on where the Northern provincial border was set in the mid-period. During that time and later it was either part of the city territory of Marcianopolis (regio Geletica?) or (more likely) placed within an imperial domain.

The territory of Serdica included production sites both to the North and South of the Haemus mons. To the North was the one at Mezdra (within regio Dyptensis?), while to the South – the villa at Dragovishititsa.

The territory of Pautalia encompassed the sites at Breznik, Poleto and Pokrovnik. Of the so far excavated potteries, under the administrative jurisdiction of Philippopolis were only the city workshops. Conversely, within the territory of Augusta Traiana were most likely situated also the sites at Chatalka, Nova Nadezhda and Karanovo.

The site at Georgi Dobrev was located within the territory of Hadrianopolis, while the one at Malko Tyrnovo was either under the jurisdiction of Bizye or within an imperial domain, related to the exploitation of the local copper ore mines.

Apart from the urban sites, the nature of almost half of the rural ones is still disputable. The ones at Chatalka, Dragovishititsa and Madara were located within the settlement structure of Roman villas. The same is likewise true for Varbovski livadi and Pokrovnik, however, at these sites production installations (around a half of all studied kilns) were situated also within adjacent vici (?). The site at Breznik is also presumed to have been part of a villa complex, but for now there still isn’t sufficient data for its proper identification.

The ones at Hotnitsa, Nova Nadezhda and Malko Tyrnovo were most likely organised as separate artisan’s villages, aside from the permanent dwellings of the craftsmen. The possibility to be placed within the compounds of a road station is noted for the sites at Pavlikeni and Karanovo.

The settlements at Mezdra and Georgi Dobrev were most likely with the status of vici, however of different nature – semi-urban for the first one and rural for the second.

3. Organisation of the production

Several modes of organisation of the manufacturing process have been attested in Roman Thrace.

Two major groups could be defined regarding the time cycles of production. Most of the described kiln sites were active only during the warmer part of the year. Installations (indoor located kilns, clay pits and facilities for clay treatment, drying sheds or dryers, etc.) that could have enabled year-round production activity were identified at the sites of Varbovski livadi, Chatalka and most likely Malko Tyrnovo. It is possible that some of the other potteries, especially urban ateliers like the earliest in Philippopolis, could have possessed such facilities and thus the prospect for operation throughout the year.
As for the precise layout of the production installations, several types of positioning could be recognised. Two types of internal organisation were attested for the urban potteries. According to the first one the production facilities were situated in or near a permanent building, which might has been also used as a dwelling. Two or three of the excavated workshops were settled in this manner – Ph-1 at Philippopolis, ATr-4 and probably also ATr-3 at Augusta Traiana.

The production process at the rest of the excavated urban kiln sites at Philippopolis (Ph-2, Ph-3 and Ph-4), Augusta Traiana (ATr-1 and ATr-2) and Hadrianopolis was organised in more or less open areas, separated of the potters’ living spaces. At these locations the indoor-related activities were most probably carried out under wooden sheds, as judging by the discovered remains of such constructions at the last two potteries in Philippopolis.

The greater options for the use of large opens spaces at the rural sites are mirrored by the more divergent organisation schemes attested there. Two types of internal organisation are observed within the villa estates. The first one is clustering of the production installations at a certain distance from the inhabited zone of the settlement and without the use of permanent workshop buildings, which is attested at Madara and the first kiln site at Chatalka. The kilns at Varbovski livadi and Pokrovnik were situated closer to the houses of the local dwellers, both in the zones of the villa complex and the one of the adjacent vici, while at least some (if not most) were located next to a permanent workshop. The second kiln site at Chatalka was likewise closer to the habitation zone, while the third was found within a permanent building. The kiln at Dragovishititsa was also located near the residential part of the villa (most likely in order to be closer to the building during its erection).

The presumed artisan’s villages at Hotnitsa, Nova Nadezhdha and Malko Tynrvo were settled aside from permanently inhabited zones. The kilns at Nova Nadezhdha were scattered near the exploited clay deposits. A similar lack of planning is observed at Hotnitsa, where most of the kilns were likewise situated near the deposits of raw material, while one was located within the only permanent building at the site. The lack of precise data for the Malko Tynrvo site impedes this part of the analysis. However, it seems that the kilns there were located close to permanent buildings and probable workshops.

The separate location of production installations is also attested for the site at Poleti, while clustering closer to the inhabited zone is observed at the sites of Georgi Dobrivo, Karanovo, probably Breznik and Mezdra. The situation for the site of Pavlikeni is unclear, given the lack of data for the precise inhabited area of the settlement. However, the discovered kilns were also grouped around used clay deposits, but probably not far from the permanent dwellings of the potters and the houses of the other local inhabitants.

### 4. Production repertoire

Fine wares, mostly table wares, were one of the major categories of products of the workshops in Thrace. They were certainly manufactured at nine rural sites (Chatalka, Varbovski livadi, Hotnitsa, Madara, Nova Nadezhdha, Georgi Dobrivo, Pavlikeni, Mezdra, Karanovo) and possibly also at three more (Pokrovnik, Poleti, Malko Tynrvo). Only the sites at Breznik and Dragovishititsa have failed until now to supply evidence for such a production. Among the urban workshops, fine wares were produced in Philippopolis (Ph-1 (?), Ph-2, Ph-3 (?), Ph-4), Augusta Traiana (ATr-1, ATr-2, ATr-3 (?)) and Hadrianopolis.

Coarse wares, and most of all kitchenware, were another of the major categories of manufactured items. They were produced at the same rural sites where fine wares were made, excluding the one at Mezdra, for which there is no sufficient information. In urban context, kitchenware was produced in Philippopolis (Ph-1, Ph-3, Ph-4), Augusta Traiana (ATr-1, ATr-2, ATr-3) and Hadrianopolis.

Oil lamps, terracotta figurines and/or so-called medallions were surely made at Varbovski livadi, Madara, Nova Nadezhdha, Philippopolis (Ph-1, Ph-3), Augusta Traiana (ATr-1, ATr-4) and probably also Chatalka, Pavlikeni, Malko Tynrvo and Marcianopolis.

Ceramic building material, mostly tiles, less frequently bricks and tubes, was part of the assortment of eight rural workshops (Chatalka, Varbovski livadi, Nova Nadezhdha, Georgi Dobrivo, Poleti, Pokrovnik, Breznik, Dragovishititsa), while the ones at Karanovo and Malko Tynrvo were also possible producers. Despite the discoveries of stamped bricks in the vicinities of Madara (see Gerov 1988, 75-76), no examples certainly produced there have been found until now. Among the urban sites possible evidence for such a production exists until now only for Philippopolis (Ph-1).

It should be noted that despite the lack of archaeological data for big rural producers of ceramic building material during the Principate, they were probably located precisely in the countryside of the province. So far, the evidence for the urban workshops in Thrace indicates that this part of the artisanal activity wasn’t developed there in larger scale until the Late Roman period. Furthermore, it has been assumed that the occasionally found tile kilns of earlier date in urban context could have been related to building programs initiated by the city or the state authorities, for example the fortification of the Thracian cities in the 170s.

### 5. Distribution patterns

Due to the current state of research, the territorial distribution of the products of most of the studied here kiln sites is yet unknown. However, in a recent study comments were made on the used trade routes by the potters at Varbovski livadi, Hotnitsa and Nova Nadezhdha.

The site at Varbovski livadi was most likely one of the largest producers in Thrace at the time. Its products have been identified at the necropolis at Butovo and the nearby region, as well as at the legionary camp of Novae and

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348 See also AUBERT 1994, 204, who argues that the production with a higher demand for quantity of raw material, like bricks, tiles, dolia and amphorae, was usually produced closer to the exploited large clay beds in the countryside.

349 See HARIZANOV 2018, 299-308.

350 See HARIZANOV in press.


352 VLADKOVA 2014, 13; KLEINNA 2016, 426; 430-431. In the recent years, chemical reference groups for ceramic products of Butovo, Pavlikeni (i.e. Varbovski livadi) and Novae have been established (see BARANOWKI, DASZKIEWICZ 2009, 125-152; DASZKIEWICZ et alii 2018, 541-549).
probably also to South of Haemus mons\textsuperscript{353}. Being one of the earliest ceramic workshops in Thrace, and North of the Haemus mons in particular, the site at Varbovski livadi was most likely able to exploit the increasing demand for cheaper and easily accessible fineware by the Roman soldiers and immigrant settlers in the province\textsuperscript{354}. Hotnitsa coarse wares were likewise supposedly found at Novae\textsuperscript{355}, while according to B. Sultov, most of the workshops’ production have been designated for the villages of the stonemasons, who worked at the closely located quarries\textsuperscript{356}. As part of a usually locally distributed class of pottery, the coarse wares of the Hotnitsa workshops were probably able to reach more distant places like Novae as a side product of other local goods, most likely stone material from the nearby quarries, which was used for construction projects in the military camp during the Second and the first half of the Third century\textsuperscript{357}.

The site at Nova Nadezhda, on the other hand, seems to have benefited from its location near the Central road and the large Maritsa River. A possible indication for the outreach of its products is the discovery of similar items at the site at Georgi Dobrevo\textsuperscript{358}, situated near the same road, about 40 km to the East – South-east of the former\textsuperscript{359}.

In a recent study on the supply of fine wares along the Central road, excavated during the 1930s sites near Mladinovo and Svilengrad were examined\textsuperscript{360}. Some of the discovered there vessels find analogies within the described as locally produced pottery assemblages at Hadrianapolis\textsuperscript{361}. The location of these sites (burial mounds of local villages) in the territory of the latter city probably eased the reaching of its ceramic products in the considered area, both through local traders or by individual purchase.

The presented observations, however, cannot be considered proven, before an interdisciplinar approach is undertaken, including significant increase in the number of produced chemical analyses of pottery finds from the kilns sites and their supposed destinations.

6. Social status of the potters and the workshops’ landlords

The presented data for the location and internal organisation of the ceramic workshops in Thrace indicate that the most widespread type of organised production was the individual workshop\textsuperscript{362}. Some of these ateliers were clustered near available resources and developed trade routes, and occasionally incorporated in single settlement units. Most of the craftsmen who lived and worked there were likely among the lower class of the population of the province, with a status of free but landless people. They were able to work through paying taxes both to the state and probably the local landlord or administrative unit (town, rural civitas, etc.)\textsuperscript{363}. Others could have been part of the middle class of the rural inhabitants, for example enfranchised army veterans, able to own plots of land\textsuperscript{364}.

On the other hand, some of the villa workshops (like Chatalka and Varbovski livadi), as well as few urban ateliers (like Ph-1), were most likely owned by a wealthier class of people, most of whom had Roman citizenship and were able to take important administrative posts both within the nearby towns and the province in general\textsuperscript{365}. These people were either directly engaged in the organisation of production or, more likely, were able to do that through their subordinates (\textit{vilici, actores, procuratores})\textsuperscript{366}. Furthermore, the mentioned estates in Varbovski livadi and Pokrovnik seem to have accommodated individual craftsmen in the adjacent \textit{vici}, so leasing of land and resources to them is a plausible suggestion.

Additionally, the location of some production centres within presumed imperial domains indicate that the state could have also had financial interest in the craft, likewise by lending land and resources to private entrepreneurs or by directly organising production via the imperial \textit{procuratores} or their subordinates.

The available epigraphic records do not provide further assistance in the clarification of this issue. Until now, no data is found for the presence of potter’s guilds (\textit{collegia, koima}) in Thrace, as the ones attested for example in Roman Egypt\textsuperscript{367} and Ephesus in Asia Minor\textsuperscript{368}. The inscriptions from Thrace contain information for the presence of a number of other craftsmen guilds, for example \textit{collegia} of stone workers (\textit{IGBulg II, 664}) and leather workers (\textit{IGBulg II, 674}) in Nicopolis ad Istrum and its hinterland\textsuperscript{369}, producers of woollen fabrics (\textit{IGBulg III.1, 916}) and leather workers in Philippopolis\textsuperscript{370} a fullers guild in Augusta Traiana (\textit{IGBulg V, 5585})\textsuperscript{371}, the mentioned \textit{collegium} of Hellenic metal workers near Malko Tyrnovo (\textit{IGBulg III.2, 1859})\textsuperscript{372}. In addition, one fragmentary preserved inscription from Serdica (\textit{IGBulg})

Egypt and archaeological data from Spain, Italy and France.\textsuperscript{362}

\textsuperscript{362} Similar situation is attested in Roman Egypt, where some of the mentioned in papyri potters were even slaves (see MAYERSON 2000, 97-100). However, as pointed by Sc. Gallimore, the papyrological evidence does not mention potters who operated their own workshops (see GALLIMORE 2010, 159).

\textsuperscript{363} As for example was one of the supposed workshop owners in the production centre at Butovo, judging by the military diploma discovered in one of the excavated buildings (see BOYANOV 2008, 152). However, opposite to the opinion of I. Boyanov, the retired soldier most probably was not the owner of the whole centre but rather the \textit{possessor} of one of the individual workshops there (see HARIZANOV 2019a, 143).

\textsuperscript{364} For example in the \textit{koinon} of the Thracian cities, like the mentioned \textit{Titus Flavius Dinis}, the supposed owner of the Chatalka villa.

\textsuperscript{365} See also AUBERT 1994, 204-207, for a discussion on the topic.

\textsuperscript{366} See GALLIMORE 2010, 161 and the cited literature.

\textsuperscript{367} See İÇTEN/ENGELMANN 1998, 88.

\textsuperscript{368} See MITEVA 2019, 51-62.

\textsuperscript{369} See CHERNEV A 2011, 99-105.

\textsuperscript{360} See HARIZANOV 2019, in press.
IV, 1922) contains a list of craftsmen and salesmen, who worked in the town735). However, potters are not among the mentioned there professions either736.

Despite the present lack of epigraphic evidence, it seems very likely that the ceramic producers in Thrace could have had collegia of their own, especially in cities like Philippopolis and Augusta Traiana, where their craft was developed in larger scale, as seen by the available archaeological data.

CONCLUSION
During the first three centuries of Roman rule in Thrace, ceramic production was developed there in an unprecedented scale. Pottery and ceramic building material was manufactured in large quantities by people of different social status and, most likely, also ethnic background377.

The considerable size and complex layout of the workshops from the initial phase of ceramic production under Roman rule could be viewed as a proof for the development of the craft by people with certain financial abilities and social status (local dynasts, immigrant civilians, enfranchised itinerant and indigenous army veterans), who were among the first to perceive and advertise the Roman way of life through, on the one side, the new construction techniques and materials, and, on the other, the concomitant culture of eating and drinking, visible through the archaeological discoveries of pottery and other vessels used for the purpose.

Thus, we can accept as one of the signs of peaceful Romanisation the large scale development of the ceramics’ craft in Thrace that occurred in the Second and Third centuries AD and through which both ceramic building material and the usually (but in my opinion wrongly) referred to as “luxury pottery” fineware were able to reach in significant quantities even the simplest villages and households from the interior of the province.

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Fig. 1. The province of Thrace, AD 136-193 (provincial border after TATSCHEVA 2000, 76, Obr. 2; design and additions by A. Harizanov).

Fig. 2. The villa and possible vicus in the Varbovski livadi locality (after VLADKOVA 2011, 24; additions by A. Harizanov).
Fig. 3. The Central sector at the Varbovski livadi villa: 1) findspot of the branding irons; 2) findspot of the tombstone of Gaius Ursidius (after VLADKOVA 2011, 24-25; additions and corrections by A. Harizanov).
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Fig. 5. The archaeological sites in the Chatalka locality: A) *pars urbana* of the large villa; B) *pars rustica* of the large villa; C) smaller villa in the Lambata locality; D) tile kilns; E) pottery kilns; F) *vicus*; G) Medieval fortification; 1-20) burial mounds (after NIKOLOV 1984, 30, Obr. 36; with additions and corrections by A. Harizanov).

Fig. 6. The Roman villa in the Chatalka locality; *pars rustica* in Delimyono niva locality and the ceramic workshop (after NIKOLOV 1984, 30, Obr. 36; with additions and corrections by A. Harizanov).
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