
MEDIEVAL AND MODERN ITALIAN CERAMICS IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA REGION¹

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ABSTRACT:

From the latter half of the 13th century, Italian maritime republics, particularly Genoa, Venice, and Pisa, became major political and commercial actors in the Black Sea region. They established a vast trade and communication network that functioned effectively until the late 15th-century Ottoman conquests. Numerous written sources document their trade, military, and religious activities along the eastern periphery of the Mediterranean Sea routes. Material evidence of their daily life in the Northern Black Sea Region, however, as well as information on the integration of different consumer goods from their homelands into exchange processes, and their potential impact on local craft, remains limited.

This study explores the circulation of Italian ceramics in the Northern Black Sea area, the impact of Italians ideas on local pottery production and distribution, and the evolution of exchange patterns before and after the Ottoman conquest of the region.

RÉSUMÉ: CÉRAMIQUES ITALIENNES MÉDIÉVALES ET MODERNES DANS LA RÉGION SEPTENTRIONALE DE LA MER NOIRE

À partir de la seconde moitié du XIII^e siècle, les républiques maritimes italiennes, en particulier Gênes, Venise et Pise, devinrent des acteurs politiques et commerciaux majeurs dans la région de la mer Noire. Elles établirent un vaste réseau d'échange et de communication qui fonctionna efficacement jusqu'aux conquêtes ottomanes de la fin du XV^e siècle. De nombreuses sources écrites documentent leurs activités commerciales, militaires et religieuses le long de la périphérie orientale des routes maritimes méditerranéennes. Cependant, les preuves matérielles de leur vie quotidienne dans la région de la mer Noire septentrionale et les informations sur l'intégration de différents biens de consommation provenant de leurs patries dans les processus d'échange, ainsi que leur impact potentiel sur l'artisanat local, restent limitées.

Cette étude explore la circulation des céramiques italiennes dans la région de la mer Noire septentrionale, l'impact des idées italiennes sur la production et la distribution de poterie locale, et l'évolution des modèles d'échange avant et après la conquête ottomane de la région.

KEYWORDS: Northern Black Sea Region, late half of the 13th-16th centuries, Italian glazed pottery, Genoese, Venetians, Ottomans, exchange patterns, archaeology.

MOTS-CLÉS : région nord de la mer Noire, fin du XIII^e-XVI^e siècle, la céramique glaçurée italienne, Génois, Vénitiens, Ottomans, les modèles d'échange, l'archéologie.

The Northern Black Sea region is generally defined as the coastal area of the Black and Azov Seas that stretches from the mouth of the Danube in the west to the Taman Peninsula in the east, with the Crimean Peninsula forming a prominent salient (Fig. 1). The Late Middle Ages constituted a period of profound geopolitical transformation across Eurasia that was driven by events like the Crusades and Mongol conquests, which simultaneously engendered significant challenges and remarkable economic growth facilitated by intensive commercial and cultural interactions between East and West. Italian maritime republics, particularly Genoa and Venice, emerged as key players in this dynamic, establishing a vast commercial network that lasted (with some changes) until the late 15th-century Ottoman conquests in the region. During this time, Azaq-Tana (modern Azov in the mouth of Don river, Rostov region, Russian Federation), Caffa, Sougdaia (in Oriental sources Soğdaq ~ Soudaq and in West-European sources Soldaia/Soldadia), Cembalo (in West-European sources Cimbalo), and Monkastro/

¹ This paper linked to the Humboldt Fellow project of Iryna Teslenko (2024-2025).

Maurocastro/Bilhorod (modern Theodosia, Sudak, and Balaclava in Crimea and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy in the Odesa region, Ukraine) should be mentioned among the main centers of Italian presents, international trade, and cultural interaction in the Northern Black Sea area (Fig. 1).

Were ceramics from the Italians' homeland involved in this circulation of people and commodities? If so, in what way and capacity? Did the Italian presence have any impact on local ceramic production, and how did the situation change after the Ottoman conquest of the Northern Black Sea region? These questions are central to this study.

Late medieval sites along the Northern Black Sea coast and the ceramics from them first attracted the attention of archaeologists more than a century ago. Studies of ceramic imports of Western and Eastern origin have constituted a substantial aspect of publications that have accumulated since then and have been greatly enriched by new research over the past four decades.² Italian ceramics, however, were largely overlooked by researchers for a considerable period. While individual examples have been documented in publications since the 1950s,³ they were often incorrectly attributed. For example, the bottom of a *Renaissance Sgraffito* dish from Bilhorod has been classified as a Byzantine ceramic,⁴ fragments of *RMR*⁵ vessels from Azaq as Bulgarian wares,⁶ and part of an *Archaic Maiolica* jug from Solkhat as a Spanish Luster Ware.⁷

In 1994, Azov archaeologists first identified several fragments of Italian *Archaic Maiolica* jugs in the ceramic assemblages of the Golden Horde Azaq and put them in a separate group⁸ constantly updated with new finds. However, this pottery was wrongly attributed to *semi-maiolica* (*mezza-maiolica*).⁹ Subsequently, the term “*semi-maiolica*” gained traction among local Azov archaeologists, who used it to refer to ceramics of presumed Italian origin that came from various workshops and exhibited diverse technological characteristics.¹⁰ Furthermore,



Fig. 1. Map of the Black Sea and Mediterranean basin with main sites mentioned in the text.

² For a historiographical review, see Teslenko 2021, 11-40.

³ Dmitrov 1955, Tabl. 1/7.

⁴ Karashevich 2010, Fig. 2/18.

⁵ ‘*Ramina, Manganese, Rosso*’ ceramic named after the three colors used for its decoration: red, manganese/brown, and copper/green. For more details on this pottery group, see below.

⁶ See reference in Maslovskiy 2006b, 423.

⁷ Seidalieva 2020, 263-264, Fig. 8/7-8.

⁸ Belinskiy 1994.

⁹ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 1998, 239, Fig. 24/4; Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005.

¹⁰ Maslovskiy 2006b, 432, Fig. 52; Kravchenko 2017, 556-557, Fig. 12.

another group of Italian red-clay sgraffito and dipinto pottery has been identified in local archaeological collections. It has been assigned tentatively to the “*Mediterranean region, possibly Italy*”.¹¹

The growing number of discoveries, coupled with their publication and intensive exchange with European colleagues at ceramological congresses, joint projects, and workshops, has enabled the more precise attribution of Italian ceramics in the ceramic assemblages of the Northern Black Sea area. Thus, they have been identified in the assemblage of the Novy Svet shipwreck 1260-1270s;¹² 14th-century deposits in the port area of Cherson/Sevastopol¹³ and on the territory of a medieval settlement located in Tikhaya Bay between Koktebel and Theodosia¹⁴ (Fig. 2); in pre-Ottoman and Ottoman deposits of the Genoese fortress of Cembalo/Balaklava,¹⁵ Sougdaia/Sudak¹⁶, and Lusta/Alushta;¹⁷ and in Ottoman contexts of Partenit and Büyük-Lambat/Malyi Mayak in Crimea¹⁸ and at Bilhorod/Akkerman on the northwestern Black Sea coast¹⁹ (Fig. 2). In addition, the revision of some collections from previous excavations in Crimea and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy that are stored at the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the National Conservation Area “St. Sophia of Kyiv” enables me to supplement this information with new data and so refine the attribution of previously published materials.

Still, it is important to note some gaps in the archaeological evidence. First, we lack information on Italian ceramics from medieval Caffa, the main Genoese trading post in Crimea. This is primarily because the medieval deposits in Caffa have generally been poorly excavated. Moreover, the material already obtained from the site has not been completely published, and the excavated collections stored in the Feodosia Museum of Local History in Crimea are now inaccessible for study.

Analysis of ceramic assemblages from medieval Bilhorod cannot be considered complete as well. A part of them consisting of over 1740 ceramic finds from excavations in 1946-1947, 1949-1950, 1953, 1958-1963, 1969, 1971, 1988, 2004-2005, and 2017 is held in the scientific repository of the Archaeological Museum at the Institute of Archeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and was processed together with L. Myronenko in



Fig. 2. Northern Black Sea Region. Map of sites where Italian glazed ceramics have been found. I – the late 13th – early 15th centuries; 2 – the shipwreck of the 1260s–1270s; III – the late 15th – 16th centuries.

¹¹ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005; Maslovskiy 2006b, 441, Fig. 54.

¹² Waksman, Teslenko and Zelenko 2009; Morozova 2012.

¹³ Ginkut 2023.

¹⁴ Gukin 2021; Gukin, Morozov and Andriuschenko 2023; Gukin et al. 2024.

¹⁵ Ginkut 2019.

¹⁶ Maiko 2012, 337, Fig. 7/1; Teslenko and Maiko 2020a.

¹⁷ Teslenko 2017, 403, Fig. 15/14.

¹⁸ Teslenko 2008; Aliadinova and Teslenko 2019, Fig. 5; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2023, 1166, 1168, Fig. 4.

¹⁹ Kravchenko 2005.

2020-2022.²⁰ This portion of the ceramic assemblages from Bilhorod contains glazed pottery from 14th-15th and 16th-18th centuries but no medieval Italian vessels, only Renaissance wares from the Ottoman-period. Meanwhile, the majority of the excavated material is stored in the repositories of the Odesa Archaeological Museum of NAS of Ukraine and the Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi Museum of Local History. A. Kravchenko partially processed these collections for her 1986 monograph.²¹ Besides examples dating to the Ottoman period, Italian ceramics are neither mentioned in the book nor subsequent papers.²² Given contemporary limitations on access to these museum collections, it is challenging to ascertain the completeness of the presented sample.

Thus, placing the potential of future contributions aside, the data available at present offers a representative basis for examining the patterns and trends of Italian ceramic circulation in the Northern Black Sea. Italian wares began to appear in this region during the latter half of the 13th century and continued to arrive with intermittent periods until the late 16th century or potentially slightly beyond. The Ottoman conquest in the last quarter of the 15th century significantly impacted exchange in the Pontic area. Pottery analysis is therefore structured into periods before and after this pivotal event.

Pre-Ottoman period, the 1260-1270s-1475-1480s

It might seem surprising, but despite over two centuries of Italian trade dominance in the Northern Black Sea region, pottery from their homeland remains relatively scarce. Among the numerous excavated late medieval sites in this area,²³ Italian ceramics have been identified at eight locations: one underwater in the Nowy Svet shipwreck and seven terrestrial sites at Cherson, Cembalo, Lusta, Soldaia, Provato, Solkhat, and Azaq (Fig. 2).

Underwater finds

The earliest and most numerous collections of Italian ceramics come from the well-known Nowy Svet shipwreck located in a bay about 3.5 km southwest of Sudak in Crimea. The site has been excavated since the late 1990s for more than a decade by a team from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv under the leadership of Sergiy Zelenko.²⁴ The shipwreck dates back to the late 13th century and is commonly related to the Pisans vessel mentioned in the historical record in the context of a conflict with the Genoese in 1277 that led to the ship's loss near Sudak.²⁵ This interpretation, however, lacks sufficiently strong archaeological arguments. The supporting evidence consists of the fact that this ship, like the Pisan one, was burned, and that the incident occurred no earlier than the 1260s. The *terminus post quem* is marked by the finds of three and a half dozen coins of the Trebizond emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1238-1263), which were in the 1260s.²⁶

Two groups of Italian ceramics have been identified in the ceramic assemblage of the shipwreck so far: *Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares (VLGW)* (Fig. 3; 4) and *Graffita Arcaica Tirrenica (GAT)* or *Savona Archaic Sgraffito (SAS)* (Fig. 5; 6/1-4).²⁷ A few small fragments of open-form vessels are comparable to *Lead-Glazed Polychrome Wares* from Southern Italy and Sicily and have two decorative series: one with geometric motifs filled with crosshatching executed in brown and manganese-colored paints (variation of *RMR?*) and the other with large spirals in brown paint under lead glaze.²⁸ Although both wares could be dated to the same period as the main cargo,²⁹ the fragmentary nature of the finds makes it challenging to definitively state whether they were part of the ship's assemblage.

Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares have fine, red to reddish-brown or reddish-yellow fabric with fine sand, occasional mica flecks and white grits (most likely calcareous inclusion). The Novy Svet collection represents these vessels through open-form wares with a minimum of six profiles (Fig. 3; 4).³⁰ With rare exceptions, all of these have ring feet and a conical protrusion at the center of the vessel's bottom. The glaze is lead, yellowish-brown or green (less

²⁰ Teslenko and Myronenko 2022a; 2023.

²¹ Kravchenko 1986.

²² Kravchenko 2005; for a review of publications on the Bilhorod excavations, see Teslenko and Myronenko 2022b, 2022c.

²³ Map of excavated Late Medieval Crimean site see Teslenko 2021, Fig. 1.

²⁴ Zelenko 2008, and others.

²⁵ Belgrano 1926; Zelenko 2008, 126-167.

²⁶ Dergaciova and Zelenko 2008.b.

²⁷ Waksman, Teslenko and Zelenko 2009, 854-855; Morozova 2012.

²⁸ These ceramics are still being processed. I am grateful to the excavation leaders S. Zelenko and Ya. Morozova for providing me information about them.

²⁹ See, e.g., Sanders 1987, 166-171; Avissar and Stern 2005, 67-70.

³⁰ The number of types and groups of Italian ceramics in the shipwreck's assemblage will be refined as data is processed. As Ya. Morozova points out, "recent finds showed a few more types of this group including dishes and plates", they are not yet published" (Morozova 2012, 156).

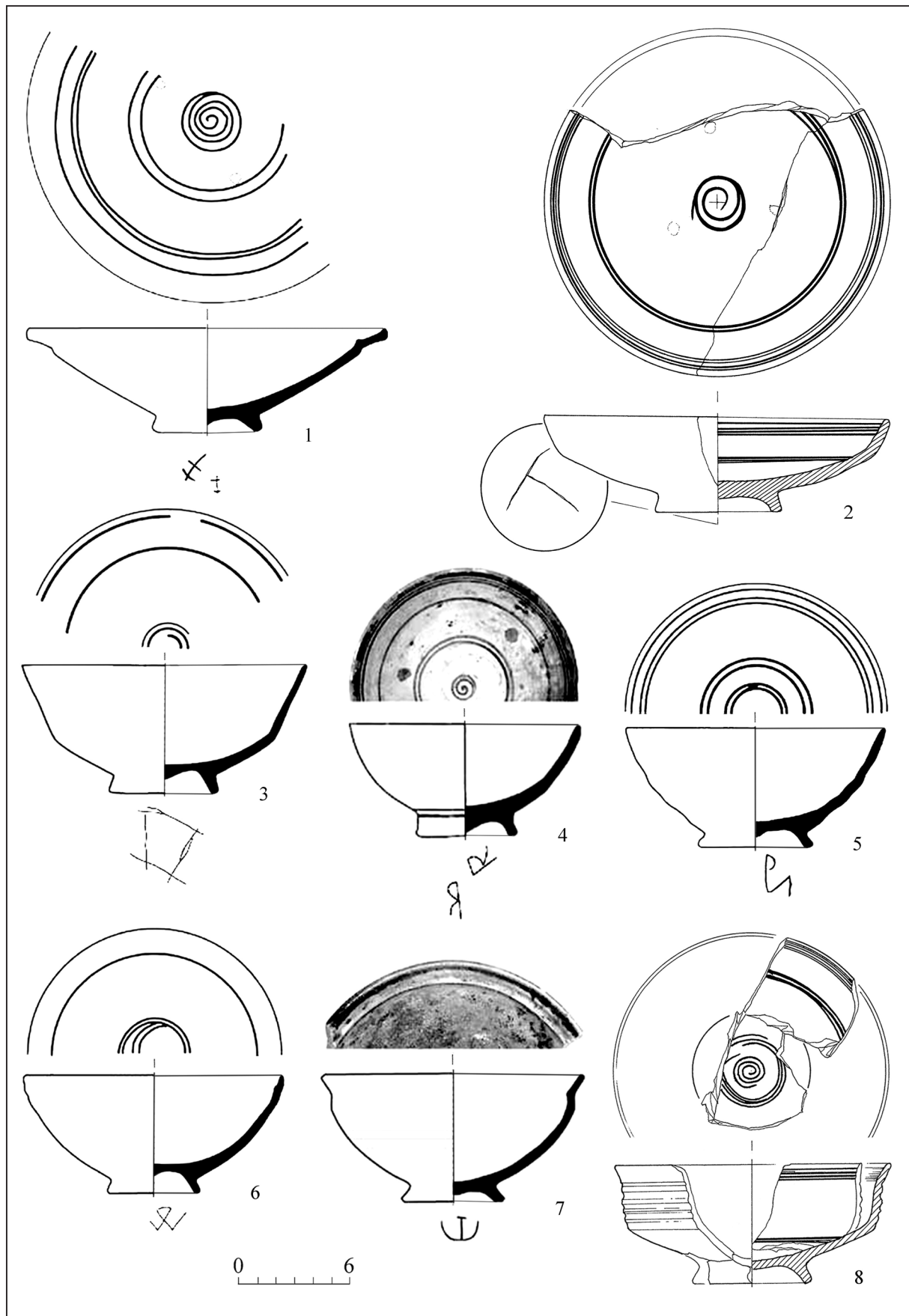


Fig. 3. Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares, Spirale Cerchio decorative series, 1260s–1270s. Crimea. Nowy Svet shipwreck. After Morozova 2012, Fig. 2 and Waksman, Teslenko, Zelenko 2009, Fig. 11.

common) and covers the interior and exterior in deep bowls or mainly the interior on shallow plates or dishes. The vast majority of *VLGW* is represented by two decorative series: *Spirale Cerchio* (*SC*) (Fig. 3) and *Roulette Ware* (*RW*) (Fig. 4). A Venetian provenance is beyond doubt and had been confirmed by chemical analysis.³¹ As of 2010, the total number of reconstructed forms was slightly over thirty, with the ratio of *SC* to *RW* being approximately 2:1; several dozen fragments were also found.³²

One more decorative variation involves two bases of the so-called *Double-Dipped (a doppio bagno) Ware* (*DDW*)³³ (Fig. 6/6, 7). The vessels were glazed in two colors, light yellow and green, and each color covers half of the ware due to the double-dipping process. A band of color diffusion was visible along the diameter line. The inner surface was initially coated with a thin layer of white engobe. The interior of the vessels shows evidence of support marks from tripod stilts used during firing.

This decorative technique was adopted in the late medieval pottery workshops of two regions of Italy, Veneto and Apulia,³⁴ but the period of their production at each location differed. While the first workshop developed this technique in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, the second did not begin until the late 14th and 15th centuries. Meanwhile, Apulian ware gained widespread distribution beyond the region, in the eastern Adriatic (Split and Stari Bar), the Peloponnese (Patras, Chlemoutsi, Glarentza), and Crete,³⁵ whereas Veneto *DDW* was primarily found not far from the workshop's location, such as in the facade of the church of San Bartolo in Ferrara.³⁶

Despite the lack of chemical analysis of the two *DDW* vessels from the Novy Svet shipwreck, their chronological context and technological features, including a fabric composition visually identical to *RW* and *SC* and the configuration of the bottom profile with its distinctive conical protrusion, provides more evidence in favour of their Venetian origin than against it. Thus, these vessels likely represent the discovery of the *DDW* type of Venetian glazed pottery most distant from their manufacturing center.

The second group can be attributed to polychrome *Graffita arcaica tirrenica* (*GAT*) or *Savona Archaic Sgraffito* (*SAS*) with green and brown-yellow painting (Fig. 5; 6/1-4), which is one of the variations of the *Graffita arcaica* (*GA*) family. The wares have carbonate-rich fabric and transparent, colorless lead glaze.³⁷ The morphology and decoration of the vessels from the shipwreck are very similar to *SAS*, as is the chemical composition of the raw material for some of the analysed items.³⁸ The Novy Svet finds are represented mainly in bowls and dishes with horizontal rims that differ only in size and the proportions of height and diameter. To the naked eye, their fabric is not uniform in composition and texture. Morozova describes the fabric as “red to reddish-yellow, or pale yellow or pink to light pink clay with limestone grits, sometimes including flecks of mica”.³⁹ The variety of shades of red color, however, is not inconsistent with the *SAS* group.⁴⁰ Variable percentages of Fe-oxides in the clay have been noted for Savona production as well.⁴¹

According to archaeological evidence, the chronology of *SC*, *RW*, and *DDW* fits into the middle-late 13th and early 14th century⁴² while the dating for *SAS* is somewhat broader. It appeared in the late 12th-early 13th,⁴³ with its diffusion peaking around the middle of the 13th-second half of the 13th century, and its production declining during the 14th century or even later varies from region to region.⁴⁴ The shape of the vessels and the style of their decoration also evolve over time until the 15th century.⁴⁵

³¹ Gelichi 1984a; 1986a, 383-385, Tav. XII; XIII, Fig. 37; Saccardo 1993, 212-214, Figs. 5, 6, 8; Tav. II; Berti and Gelichi 1997, 87-89; Waksman and Teslenko 2010, 367, 373, Fig. 13.

³² Morozova 2012.

³³ I express my gratitude to the site researchers S. Zelenko and Ya. Morozova, who provided me photographs of these wares and kindly allowed me to publish them.

³⁴ Gelichi 1992; Skartsis 2012, 143-144. The double dipping technique was used until the 20th century in Sicily and North Africa (Gelichi 1992, 62-63).

³⁵ Skartsis 2012, 143-144; Yangaki 2021, 72-73.

³⁶ Geliche 1992, 62-66.

³⁷ Varaldo 1997; Capelli, Cabella and Waksman 2007.

³⁸ Waksman, Teslenko and Zelenko 2009, 855.

³⁹ Morozova 2012, 152.

⁴⁰ Blake 1986, 322.

⁴¹ Capelli, Cabella and Waksman 2007, 150.

⁴² Berti and Gelichi 1997, 87; Gelichi 1984a, 55; 1986a, 387-388; 1992; Avissar and Stern 2005, 70-71; Stern 2012, 81-82.

The beginning of the 14th century is suggested more for “*Roulette Wares*” (Gelichi 1984a, 55; 1986, 387-388).

⁴³ Varaldo 1997, 439.

⁴⁴ Blake 1986, 324-326.

⁴⁵ Varaldo 1997, 450.

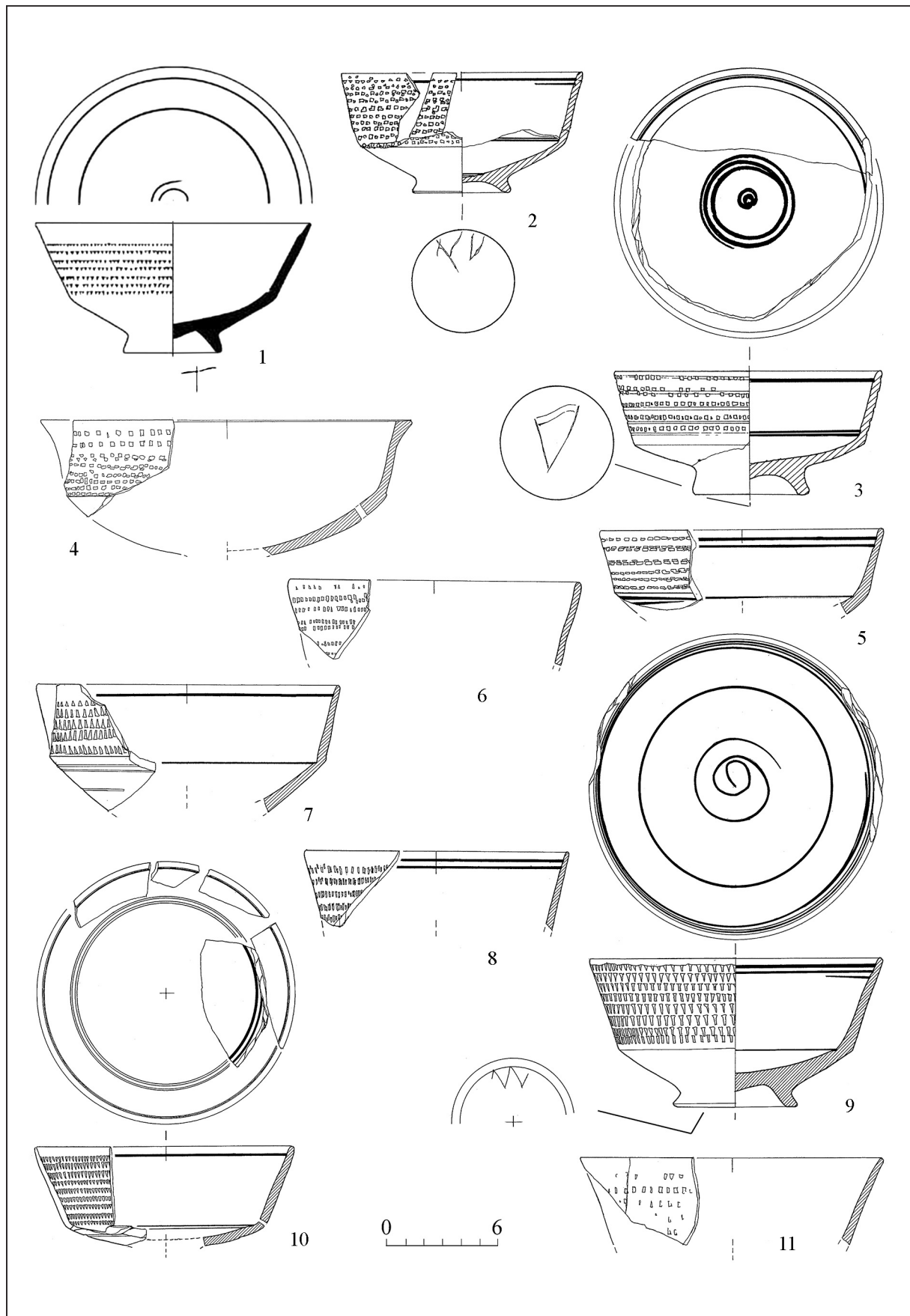


Fig. 4. Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares, Roulette Ware decorative series, the 1260s–1270s. Crimea. Nowy Svet shipwreck. After Morozova 2012, Fig. 3 and Waksman, Teslenko 2010, Fig. 13.

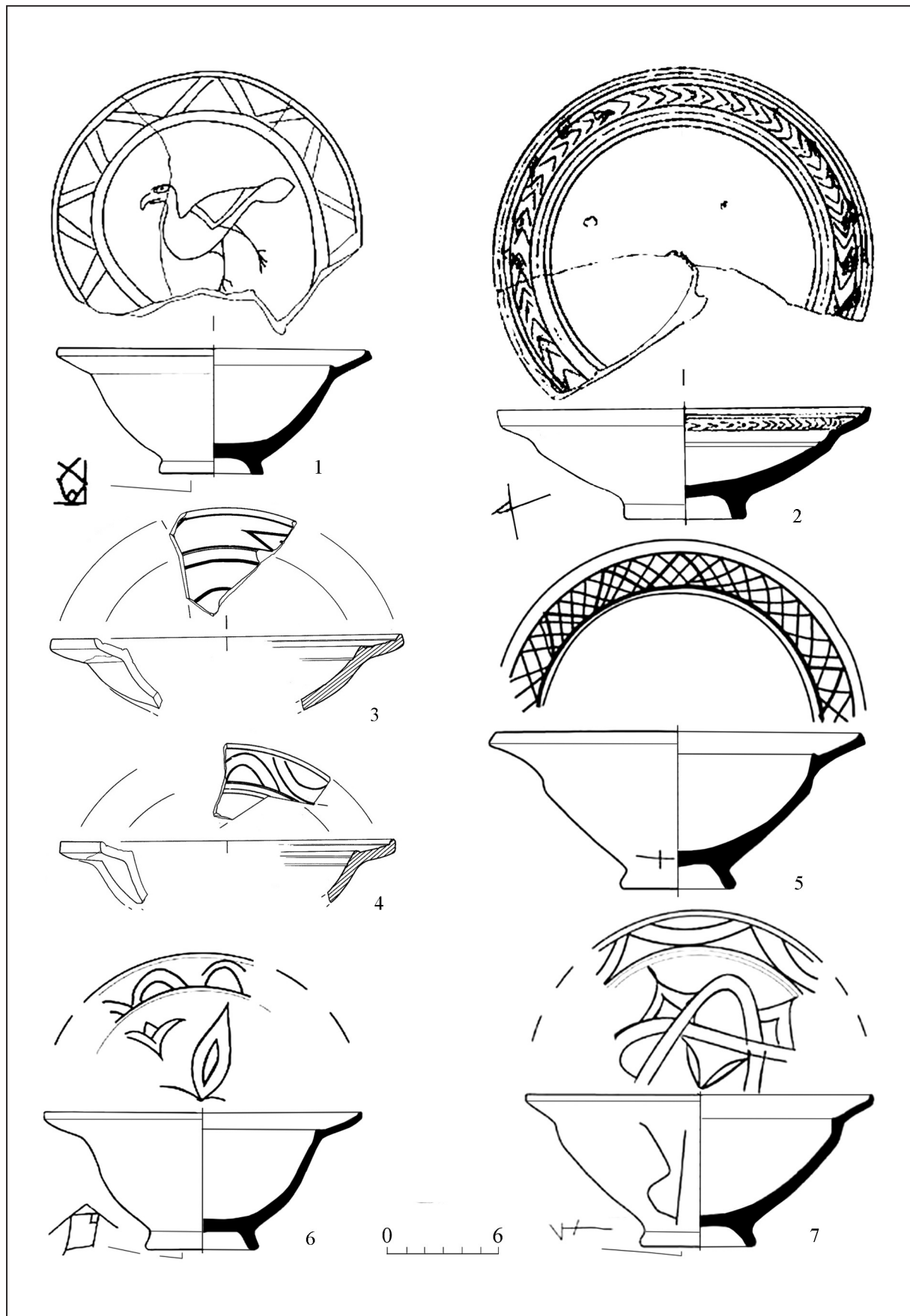


Fig. 5. Archaic Graffito family, *Graffita arcaica tirrenica* or *Savona Archaic Sgraffito* group, 1260s–1270s. Crimea. Nowy Svet shipwreck. After Waksman, Teslenko, Zelenko 2009, Fig. 11 and Morozova 2012, Fig. 1.

Both groups did not diffuse widely as long-distance imports. The greatest concentration of finds was recorded in the areas of their manufacturing and nearby regions: in northeastern Italy for *SC* and *RW* decorative series⁴⁶ and in Liguria, the Tyrrhenian area, and the South coast of modern France (mostly Provence) for *SAS*.⁴⁷ *SC* and *RW* are also well-known from the eastern Adriatic coast, South Greece, Cyprus, and Levant, and so within the area of Venetian political and economic interests.⁴⁸ Synchronous *GA* occasionally came into the same area and Northern-East Africa but its more precise attribution in some case needs further study.⁴⁹ This pottery is rare in the Northern Black Sea area as well. The Novy Svet shipwreck is the first recorded instance of both groups being found together. They do not appear like batches of regular merchandise either, since their share among ceramic finds is relatively small. *VLGW* and *SAS* comprise only approximately six dozen objects among several hundred glazed ceramic wares of other varieties in the shipwreck assemblage.⁵⁰ Thus, they could have been personal belongings of the crew and passengers or small consignments for private transactions.⁵¹

Terrestrial sites

How common were these and other groups of Italian ceramics at terrestrial sites of the Northern Black Sea region? An overview of published archaeological data and museum collections from this area indicates the presence of Italian ceramics in late medieval contexts in Crimea and Azaq. Meanwhile, various groups of Italian artifacts are distributed differently, both geographically and chronologically.

Italian wares in Crimea were primarily found in coastal urban centers: at Cherson, Cembalo, Lusta, Soldaia, and Provato as well as at Solkhat, the Crimean Ulus capital located about 30 km inland (Fig. 2). These sites were all within the sphere of Italian political and/or commercial interests. Late medieval architectural and archaeological remains have been studied at each, though to varying extents. Sougdaia/Soldaia, Solkhat, and Cembalo were the most significant sites during the Late Medieval period.

Sougdaia/Soldaia/Sudak is a city with a long history and a unique complex of medieval archaeological and architectural monuments of the 3rd-16th centuries. It is situated on the northern and western slopes of the conical coastal mountain Cenevez Qaya (Crimean Tatar: “*Genoese Rock*”) on the shores of the Sudak Bay in southeastern Crimea (Fig. 1; 2). It was an important (and initially the only) port in this part of the peninsula that had long-standing close relations with Anatolia, Constantinople, and the Middle East from early medieval times.⁵² After entering the Mongol Empire near 1230-1240s, the city had autonomous administration until the 1320s. Sougdaia served the needs of the Mongolian authorities for almost 100 years, being the final landing point for diplomatic missions travelling to the headquarters of the Mongol khans and a point of attraction for merchants of different nationalities.⁵³

In addition to Muslim and local Greek traders, Italians were also interested in Sougdaia’s market. Written sources contain fragmentary information about the Venetians’ rather early activity relative to this: trade contract in 1206, a decree of the Venetian government in 1288 on the amount of pay for the duties of the consul to Soldaia, mention that the Byzantine ambassador to the Golden Horde used a Venetian ship when returning from Soldaia to Constantinople in 1274-1278,⁵⁴ and information about the residence of Marco Polo’s family members in Soldaia after 1250. Written sources also note the presence of Franciscans at Soldaia, to whom the uncle of a famous merchant, explorer, and writer bequeathed his house there.⁵⁵ After 1261, Venetians were joined by the Genoese, whose attention to Sougdaia was probably sparked by their commercial interest in the slave trade between the Jochi Ulus and Egypt.⁵⁶ They were looking for an autonomous trading emporium in Crimea, which Caffa eventually became. It was founded between 1268 and 1275 50 km east of Sougdaia and the same distance from Solkhat and

⁴⁶ Gelichi 1986a, Tav. XII; Lo Mele 2015, 293-294.

⁴⁷ Varaldo 1997, Fig. 8.

⁴⁸ Sanders 1987, 162, 174, Fig. 4/12; Williams and Zevros 1992, 151-156, Fig. 7; 9; François 1997, 8-16, Fig. 1; 2; Athanasoulis 2005, 47; Avissar and Stern 2005, 70-72; Vroom 2005, 133; Skartsis 2012, 144; Yangaki 2012, 115-117; François *forthcoming*.

⁴⁹ François 1997, 8-16, Fig. 1; 2; François 1999, 74, 75, Fig. 17; Avissar and Stern 2005, 72-73; Stern 2012, 81-82

⁵⁰ This is the information for 2010 (Morozova 2012, 152). The excavations of the shipwreck continued for the next 5 years. According to the authors of the work, the proportion has not changed a lot so far. Since the obtained materials have not been completely published yet, these data can certainly be updated as they are further processed.

⁵¹ Waksman, Teslenko and Zelenko 2009; Morozova 2012.

⁵² For more details see Dzhanov 2006.

⁵³ For more details see Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, 278-279.

⁵⁴ Karpov 2021, 43.

⁵⁵ Hautala 2021, 255-256. For bibliography see Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, 278-279.

⁵⁶ Kedar 1977, 75-91; Amitai 2008, 349-368; Baker 2014.

was one of the largest trade centers in the Black Sea basin in the next two centuries. In 1365, the strengthened Genoese captured Sougdaia (Soldaia in Western European historical records) and held it until the Turkish invasion of 1475.

The late medieval Sudak fortress occupies an area of about 14 hectares adjoined by the harbours' residential areas (about 5-6 hectares) and an unfortified settlement with crafts quarters (about 11 hectares).⁵⁷ Archaeological study of the site was conducted from 1926 until 2014, with some interruption.⁵⁸ The literary historian A. Fomin, the archivist Y. Gautier, the Latinist E. Skrzhinskaya, and the Byzantinist N. Protasov were in charge of investigations in 1926.⁵⁹ In 1929-1930, N. Protasov and E. Veimarn began excavations of medieval residential quarters in the harbour area. The archaeological collection from these excavations is kept in the State Historical Museum in Moscow.⁶⁰ Preventive excavations near the Sudak fortress were resumed 34 years later by M. Frondzhulo. From 1964-1976, he managed to survey the suburbs and studied dwelling areas in the medieval harbour and the fortress.⁶¹ Excavations were carried out by I. Baranov from 1977 to 2000, mainly on the territory of the fortress.⁶² In 2002-2014, research was continued by the expedition of the National Conservation Area "St. Sophia of Kyiv".⁶³ In 2004-2005, Crimean historian V. Thur worked there as well.⁶⁴

During this time, Late Medieval contexts were studied both in and outside the fortress as well as in the craft settlement and harbour area. They include fortification structures (consisting of towers and fortress walls), residential and administrative buildings like the so-called "*Loggia of the Genoese Commune*", churches with necropolises including the Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary, workshop complexes, as well as various kinds of cultural deposits.⁶⁵ However, a detailed publication of the results of these excavations is still one of the tasks for the future.

Materials from structures situated on the northwestern segment of the Genoese defensive wall (curtain XIV) are most comprehensively represented. These structures were decommissioned in the late 14th century, presumably after the Genoese conquest of the city in 1365.⁶⁶ Publications include a short essay on excavations at the Jacobo Torsello tower (erected in 1385) and the barbican⁶⁷ that also discusses ceramic assemblages from a deposit at the Church of the Virgin Mary site dating to the time after the 1360s.⁶⁸ Initial findings from the 1997 archaeological fieldwork in "quarter I", situated southwest of the "*Loggia of the Genoese Commune*" in the northwestern fortress area near the main gate, have also been released.⁶⁹ A more in-depth study was undertaken on materials from a late 13th-century deposit and from two dwellings that operated from the mid-15th to the late 16th-early 17th centuries that were revealed during the 2006-2010 excavations in the harbour area.⁷⁰

Most of the materials from the excavations are stored in the National Conservation Area "St. Sophia of Kyiv" in Kyiv and the Sudak Fortress Museum in Crimea.

Solkhat was the Mongolian seat of power in Crimea established in the early 1260s. It is situated in the foothills about 30 kilometres away from the Black Sea coast. A *floruit* of urban construction occurred under Berke Khan's successor, Mengu-Timur (1267-1282), and peaked by the 1340s under Uzbek (1313-1341) and Janibek's (1342-1357) reigns. A wealthy Muslim community was formed in Solkhat as early as the 1260s, to which construction of the first mosques in Solkhat in 1262/1263 and 1280 attests.⁷¹ Muslim traders were followed by new settlers from various ethnic groups: Central Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims, Armenians, Jews, Latins, and others who were primarily skilled craftsmen, merchants, and scholars.⁷²

⁵⁷ Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, Fig. 21.

⁵⁸ Dzhanov 2006; Maiko and Dzhanov 2015, 13-22.

⁵⁹ Skrzhinskaya 2006, 138-157; Gotie 1928, 501-502; Protasov 1938, 162-169.

⁶⁰ For an overview of the collections, see Maiko 2017.

⁶¹ Frondzhulo 1974.

⁶² Baranov 1978, 295-296, etc.; Maiko and Dzhanov 2015, 19-20.

⁶³ Maiko, Dzhanov and Farbey 2007.

⁶⁴ Tur 2005; 2008.

⁶⁵ For a general overview see Dzhanov 2006; Maiko and Dzhanov 2015; Teslenko 2021, 22-23.

⁶⁶ Baranov 1988, 81-88; Baranov 1991, 107; Baranov 2004.

⁶⁷ Baranov 1988.

⁶⁸ Baranov 1998; Baranov and Maiko 1998.

⁶⁹ Maiko 2012.

⁷⁰ Teslenko and Maiko 2020b; Teslenko 2021, 22-23.

⁷¹ Kramarovskiy 2009; Kirilko 2013; Kirilko 2016; Kirilko 2019, 696-697. The existence of an earlier mosque in Sudak, associated with the consequences of the Seljuk campaign to the site in the time of Alā ad-Dīn Kayqubād (1220-1237), has not yet been confirmed Aibabina et al. 2021, 190.

⁷² For the population of Solkhat, see, e.g. Kramarovskiy 1997; 2011.

Solkhat acquires the features of a typical eastern city in which from the beginning the Muslim community peacefully coexisted with representatives of other religions, Orthodox, Catholic, and Armenian Apostolic Christians, as well as adherents of Judaism.⁷³ Later the influence of Muslim traditions began to prevail. The presence of Italians in Solkhat is recorded from the 1280s.⁷⁴ Kramarovskiy suggests the existence of a Latin quarter and a Catholic parish in the city as early as 1290, but archaeological evidence for it has not yet been found.⁷⁵ He also notes that the Franciscans of Solkhat were part of the Custodia Gazariae, which included Crimea, the Danube region, and the Dnieper region; the center of the custodia was Genoese Caffa.⁷⁶ The city reached its peak in the first half of the 14th century, and finally declined after the 1440s, when the capital of the young Crimean Khanate was moved from Solkhat to Qırq-Yeri (suburb of the modern Bakhchisaray).⁷⁷ The residential area of the site during its heyday was about 200 hectares in size.

The large-scale archaeological excavations of the site started in 1925-1926, 1928. The work was led by orientalist I. Borozdin, archaeologist and Byzantinologist A. Bashkirov, and Crimean archaeologists and orientalists O. Akchokrakly and U. Bodanskyi.⁷⁸ Their main priority was the study of significant architectural objects, like architectural complexes of the Karavan Saray and the so-called madrasah and mosque of Uzbek Khan, and epigraphic monuments. After a fifty-year hiatus, work resumed under M. Kramarovskiy, who had been digging at the site since 1978, in recent decades, in collaboration with E. Seidaliyev. V. Maiko and A. Gavrilov also conducted preventive surveys and small excavations there.⁷⁹

These expeditions studied the Solkhat's main public structures, including the ruins of a madrasah from the first third of the 14th century, three mosques from the 13th-15th centuries, mausoleums and necropolises, the remains of a Christian church with necropolis, a medieval bathhouse in Georgievskaya Balka, artisan complexes in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the settlement, as well as sections of the fortification line.⁸⁰ Despite long-term archaeological study at the site, however, the obtained materials are still poorly published.⁸¹ Some progress in the processing of ceramic finds has been achieved in the last decade,⁸² but this work is still far from complete. The archaeological collections from the Solkhat excavations were divided between the museums of Stary Krym and Simferopol. A significant part of the most attractive artefacts was taken to the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg in the Russian Federation.

Cembalo is a Genoese fortress located in modern Balaklava, a suburb of Sevastopol. In the late medieval period, it served as the administrative center of the eponymous consulate. The fortress occupies the summit and northern slopes of Mount Castron on the southeastern bank of Symbolon (modern Balaklava) Bay.⁸³ This site was one of the most important trade markets in the Northern Black Sea region. Researchers identify four main stages in its political history: 1) Byzantine (6th century-1270s), 2) Golden Horde (1270s-1345), 3) Genoese (1345-1475), and 4) Ottoman (1475-1771).⁸⁴

The Italians were likely interested in this location since the end of the 13th century. However, the Genoese managed to establish themselves at the mouth of Symbolon Bay only around the 1340s. At the very least, they built the first fortress structures on Mount Castron no earlier than the second half of the 1340s. Later between 1388 and 1455, the fortification was dominated by two features: 1) the citadel at the top of Mount Castron and 2) the Consular Castle of St. Nicholas at the entrance to the bay. Below was a port area containing shipyards, an arsenal, and a water cistern; the Latin Quarter adjacent to the port.⁸⁵

Throughout its 130-year history under the rule of the Commune of Genoa, the fortress underwent no fewer than seven reconstructions and repairs. During the Genoese period, it was a syncretic city with Latin elements, including fortifications, Catholic churches, and a castle, as well as Greco-Byzantine and Golden Horde features, reflected in the construction of Orthodox churches and residential buildings.⁸⁶ Cembalo was captured by the Ottomans in 1475.

⁷³ Kramarovskiy 2004; 2009; Kirilko 2008; Kirilko 2019; Bayburtskiy 2024.

⁷⁴ Hautala 2019, 72-73.

⁷⁵ Kramarovskiy 2012, 69.

⁷⁶ Kramarovskiy 2012, 71.

⁷⁷ Kramarovskiy 2022; Zaitsev 2013.

⁷⁸ Bocharov and Sitdikov 2016, 29-53.

⁷⁹ Gavrilov and Maiko 2014.

⁸⁰ For historiography see Lomakin 2016; Teslenko 2021, 24-25; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, 579, 588-593.

⁸¹ For more detail, see: Teslenko 2021, 24-25.

⁸² Teslenko 2018; Seidaliyev and Seidaliyeva 2021; Seidaliyeva 2021; 2024, etc.; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

⁸³ For more details on toponyms Symbolon-Cembalo-Balaklava, see, e.g.: Myts 2016b.

⁸⁴ Adakshina and Myts 2018, 206.

⁸⁵ Myts 2016b, 294.

⁸⁶ Myts and Adakshina 2015.

The area of the site is about 3.4 hectares inside the fortress walls and approximately the same outside. Excavations began in 1991 and continued in 1999-2013 under a joint archaeological expedition of the National Preserve “Chersonesos Tavricheskiy” and V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (S. Diyachkov, N. Alekseenko). From 2002 to the present day, Cembalo has been studied by the South Crimean Expedition of the State Hermitage Museum (S. Adaksina, V. Myts).

Excavations have revealed numerous elements of fortification (towers, curtain walls), a residential development area, and at least five churches with necropolises, including the Catholic St. Nicholas Consular Church, etc.⁸⁷ Due to active anthropogenic activity on the site during its intensive development, stratified remains of the initial stage of the fortress’s life and the preceding period have been preserved only in limited areas, and the associated finds are often redeposited. The contexts of the second to third quarter of the 15th century as well as the Ottoman period are best represented. The site’s excavation material has been well-published.⁸⁸ A series of specialized studies is devoted to Cembalo’s Late Medieval and Early Modern ceramics.⁸⁹

Cherson is located on the territory of modern-day Sevastopol (Fig. 2). It is a large urban site that existed from antiquity until the 15th century and was the center of Byzantine possessions in Crimea during medieval times. It was significantly reduced in size after devastation by the Mongols in the second half of the 13th century.⁹⁰ By the following century, the site constituted approximately one-fifth of the former Byzantine city; habitation then was located primarily in its port and southwestern and central area.⁹¹ Cherson Bay was used for ship mooring at least until the end of the 14th century. During this period, it was used as a port site included in the Genoese commercial system, mainly in the salt and grain trade. At the beginning of the 14th century, there was a Franciscan residence there as well.⁹²

Venetians also visited the site for the same purposes. Written sources at least mention their conflict with the Genoese in 1396, when the Venetians protested against the fact that Genoese officials at Caffa/Gazaria charged Venetian ships commercial fees for loading salt in the Cherson area, which the Venetians did not consider to be within Genoese jurisdiction.⁹³ It is generally accepted that the site finally fell into decline after a series of Tatar military raids in the 1340s, 1360s, and possibly the 1370s.⁹⁴ The aforementioned document, however, testifies to the functioning of the pier there at the end of the 14th century. Individual numismatic and ceramic finds also indicate some anthropogenic activity on the site in the 15th century, but it was apparently insignificant.⁹⁵

The city has been explored for almost two centuries. The scale of these works is truly grandiose. Although the main focus, especially initially, was on antiquity together with the Early and High Middle Ages, the Late Medieval layers of Cherson have also been studied in significant areas in various districts of the settlement.⁹⁶ Recently, N. Ginkut proposed detailed analysis of the archaeological contexts of the 14th century.⁹⁷ Ceramic assemblages dating to the second half of the 13th and 14th centuries from the site’s excavations have also been published in considerable detail,⁹⁸ and their processing is currently ongoing.⁹⁹

Alushta, whose medieval names were Aluston and Lusta/Alusta, is a small urban fortified center with a fortress situated in southern Crimea (Fig. 2). It is located on the summit of the coastal part of the ridge (the so-called Fortress Hill), which divides the valleys of the Demerdzhi and Ulu-Uzen (Mesarlı) rivers, and occupies a central place in the modern town of Alushta. A large settlement and at least three necropolises are associated with this fortification. The construction of the first fortification dates to the period between 527 and 560 AD and is associated with Justinian the Great’s activities in strengthening the northern borders of the Byzantine Empire. From the 1370s *de facto* and the 1380s *de jure*, Alushta was controlled by the Genoese (from the 1420s this territory is mentioned as *Capitaneatus Gothiae* in written sources).¹⁰⁰ The Ottomans destroyed the fortifications in 1475, but the settlement continued to exist up until today.

⁸⁷ For more detail, see Alekseenko et al. 2015; Teslenko and Musin 2024, 256, 259-263, etc.

⁸⁸ For a historiographical overview, see Teslenko 2021, 20.

⁸⁹ Ginkut 2001, etc.; for a historiographical overview, see Teslenko 2021, 32.

⁹⁰ For a historiographical overview of these events, see Ginkut 2024, 303-305; Tsymbal 2024, 283-286.

⁹¹ Ginkut 2024.

⁹² Hautala 2018, 50.

⁹³ Karpov 2021, 169.

⁹⁴ Teslenko 2021, 19-20; Tsymbal 2024, 286-289.

⁹⁵ Bogdanova 1991. I have had occasion to see ceramic materials relating to the 15th century from the Cherson excavations in 2000, but they remain unpublished.

⁹⁶ For a historiographical overview, see Rabinowitz, Sedikova and Henneberg 2010, 425-430; Teslenko 2021, 12, 18-19.

⁹⁷ Ginkut 2024.

⁹⁸ For a historiographical overview, see Teslenko 2021, 14, 30-31.

⁹⁹ Ginkut 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Dzhanov 2022.

The medieval fortification covers 1.065 hectares. Archaeological excavations on the site were carried out in 1981 (V. Sidorenko), 1984-1994 (V. Myts), and 1998-1999 (I. Teslenko).¹⁰¹ The total excavated area exceeded 0.5 hectares, and cultural layers reach a depth of up to 6 meters. Excavations uncovered the ruins of four lines of fortifications dated to the 6th-7th, 9th-10th, 14th, and 15th centuries, and cultural deposits were associated with these fortifications, the remains of two churches, a necropolis, a glazed pottery workshop from the 14th century, and residential quarters, in which 14th-15th century buildings are the best preserved. The results of archaeological study are partially represented in several papers.¹⁰² Ceramic ensembles from the late 13th and 14th-15th centuries are rather well published.¹⁰³

Provato is a locality known from written sources¹⁰⁴ that is now associated with a large settlement situated in the coastal valley and on the southern slopes of the Biyuk-Yanyshar ridge in the Tikhaya Bay area more than 10 km southwest of Caffa/Theodosia (Fig. 2).¹⁰⁵ The site was discovered in 1980-1990 during surveys by Crimean archaeologist A. Gavrilov.¹⁰⁶ Comprehensive archaeological (terrestrial test excavations and underwater surveys), geophysical, and topographical studies were led by V. Gukin in 2019-2023.¹⁰⁷

The site is over 45 hectares in area. It contains remains of a developed infrastructure: a fortified building (rectangular in shape with dimensions of 30×75 m) and a separate tower on the coastal area, a church with a necropolis, stone residential buildings, and a water supply system involving ceramic water pipes and storage tanks. Small-scale excavations have yielded abundant archaeological material, including a variety of local and imported ceramics: fragments of Byzantine Günsenin IV amphorae,¹⁰⁸ glazed pottery from Crimean workshops (Solkhat and Caffa), and a rather representative collection of Italian wares. Underwater surveys in Tikhaya Bay in 2023 located an anchorage associated with the settlement. Brief results of these works are presented in three papers.¹⁰⁹ Detailed publication is lacking.

Azaq-Tana is a large urban center of the Golden Horde located at the mouth of the Don River, the easternmost point of navigation from the Mediterranean. According to archaeological data, Maslovskiy dates the founding of the Azaq settlement to around the 1250-1260s. The beginning of Azaq's history as a city, however, is generally associated with 1269, when it was first mentioned in historical records.¹¹⁰ The core of the site's urban plan was developed by the 1270s-1290s. By the end of the first quarter of the 14th century to the beginning of the 1340s, the city reached its maximum size of 400-450 hectares, after which its area decreased due to various adverse factors.¹¹¹ After the turmoil in the Golden Horde, by the reign of Khan Tokhtamysh (1381-1395) the city's size decreased at least fourfold to approximately 100-120 hectares. Still, it continued to be a relatively large urban center with its own mint and developed crafts and trade.¹¹²

The Venetians and the Genoese started regular trade at the mouth of the Don River from the middle of the 13th century. They presumably began to settle there permanently from the second half of the 1260s. Before 1304 and most likely in the late 1280s, the Genoese consulate already existed in Tana. According to Karpov, the Venetian consulate could have emerged between 1317 and 1325. In 1332, the Venetian trading post received special legal status, formalized by a treaty with the Golden Horde Khan Uzbek and resolution of the Senate in February 1333.¹¹³ Khan Uzbek granted land for the Venetian quarter on 9 October 1332. The Senate resolution of 9 February 1333 established the procedure for settlement on the 379-pitch (659.46 metre)¹¹⁴ perimeter 28 field, much larger than the territory allocated to the Venetians in Trebizond in 1319 (227 passi).¹¹⁵ The Genoese quarter was situated next to the Venetian one. According to archaeological information, the area of both was about 6.6 hectares.¹¹⁶ The city was destroyed by Timur (1320s-1405) in 1395.¹¹⁷ After this catastrophe, however, the Genoese and Venetian

¹⁰¹ For more detail, see Kirilko 2014; Teslenko 2021, 28-29.

¹⁰² For a historiographical overview, see Kirilko 2014, 185-189; Teslenko 2021, 28-29.

¹⁰³ Myts 2016a; Teslenko 2017; 2018a; 2018b; 2021, etc.

¹⁰⁴ For more details on the data from written sources, see Karpov 2021, 140-142; 163.

¹⁰⁵ Gukin, Morozov and Andriuschenko 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Gavrilov 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Gukin at al. 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Typology after Günsenin 1989, 269-276.

¹⁰⁹ Gukin 2021; Gukin, Morozov and Andriuschenko 2023; Gukin at al. 2024.

¹¹⁰ Maslovskiy 2006a; 2018.

¹¹¹ Maslovskiy 2015; 2018, 262.

¹¹² Maslovskiy 2022, 186-192, Fig. 18; Karpov 2021, 170.

¹¹³ Karpov 2021, 43-48.

¹¹⁴ S. Karpova suggests that it could have been about 7.75 hectares (Karpov 2021, 71).

¹¹⁵ Karpov 2021, 71.

¹¹⁶ Maslovskiy 2015. For localization of both Italian fortresses, see Volkov 1992.

¹¹⁷ Maslovskiy 2022, 193; Karpov 2020.

fortifications were restored and used until the Ottoman conquest in the summer of 1475, which attests to the Italians' great commercial interest in the site despite the challenging times.¹¹⁸ In addition, a narrow strip of dwellings has been archaeologically documented outside the walls of Italian castles.¹¹⁹

Initial archaeological investigations at the site date to the late 19th century. More or less systematic excavations followed in the 1930s and 1940s, but the resulting materials were largely lost. After a 20-year break, research activities were restarted in the 1960s. Continuous, large-scale excavations have been underway at Azaq from 1979 to the present.¹²⁰ The findings of this research are regularly published in the collection "*Historical and archaeological research in Azov and the Lower Don*" by the Azov Museum of History, Archaeology and Palaeontology (since 1981), as well as in other journals and volumes. Furthermore, a series of detailed articles specifically focus on the site's ceramic assemblages.¹²¹ The recent Catalogue of the Azov Museum of History, Archaeology and Palaeontology presents photos of a big part of the glazed ceramics collection from the Azaq excavations.¹²² The majority of imported ware groups, however, including the Italian ceramics previously discussed in various publications, were not incorporated in the catalogue.

Consequently, all sites where Italian ceramics have been identified have undergone significant archaeological investigation. Therefore, the discovery of these wares cannot be attributed to chance. Instead, they constitute an integral component of numerous ceramic assemblages that provide objective data on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of these artifacts in the Northern Black Sea region.

Italian wares at terrestrial sites and their chronology

Graffita Arcaica Tirrenica (GAT) and *Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares (VLGW)*

As of now, these ceramic groups have been discovered at two locations in Crimea. One fragment of *GAT* or *SAS* ware came from Sudak. This is the bottom part of a bowl made from a yellowish-white calcareous paste (Fig. 6/5). It is decorated with a sgraffito floral rosette painted green and brown in the center. The sherd was found in 1998 in a displaced deposit within the Sudak fortress and southwest of the so-called "*Loggia of the Genoese Commune*", a large monumental building with a fireplace around the northwestern perimeter of the Genoese curtain wall (No. 15). It is currently kept in the collection of the National Conservation Area "St. Sophia of Kyiv". This remains the singular find of this *GAT* type at a terrestrial site in the Northern Black Sea region. It exhibits strong similarities to the corresponding group in the Novy Svet shipwreck assemblage.

The *VLGW* is mentioned among ceramics materials from the site associated with Provato. The author of the site's excavation noted a "*fairly representative collection of Venetian ceramic imports*" and published an image of one hemispherical unslipped bowl with a red body covered with a transparent lead glaze (Fig. 6/8).¹²³ More information about the number of Italian pottery finds and their diversity is not yet available in publications, but it is clear that finds are not isolated. The vessel's fabric is brownish-red with fine glitter of mica flakes. The ring foot is low, and the vessel's bottom has a conical protrusion at its center. The colorless or light-yellow glaze covers the bowl's inner and outer surfaces, excluding its bottom. It is a typical example of Veneto glazed pottery productions from the late 13th-14th centuries.¹²⁴ Based on the accompanying ceramic materials from Provato, the archaeological context of the vessel can be dated to around the mid-second half of the 14th century.¹²⁵

The Azaq-Tana assemblages include a more representative range of *VLGW* and *GA* than Crimean ones. The exemplars published by local archaeologists provide an idea of how these vessels appeared.¹²⁶ Both groups exhibit different decorative styles from those in the Novy Svet shipwreck but demonstrate some parallels with the Provato find. *SC* and *RW* ceramics have not been identified in the Azaq collection, at least based on published reports.

Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares from Azaq is mentioned in papers as "*Mediterranean ceramics*" or the "*group Italy (?)*" from the beginning of the current century.¹²⁷ The fabric is red or red-brown with fine glitter of mica flakes. The ware's range includes open and closed forms: two types of small (carinated and hemispherical) and one type

¹¹⁸ Karpov 2020, 41-45.

¹¹⁹ Zeniuk and Maslovskiy 2018.

¹²⁰ Volkov 1992; Maslovskiy 2015, 384.

¹²¹ The most important of these are Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 1998; Maslovskiy 2006b; 2012a; 2017, etc. For a general overview, see Maslovskiy 2012b, 7; Teslenko 2021, 34-35.

¹²² Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024.

¹²³ Gukin 2021, 93, Fig. 4/5; Gukin, Morozov and Andriushenko 2023, 152.

¹²⁴ Gelichi 1986a, 373, 387-388; Williams and Zervos 1992, 154, Fig. 8.

¹²⁵ Gukin 2021; Gukin, Morozov and Andriushenko 2023; Gukin et al. 2024.

¹²⁶ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005; Maslovskiy 2006b.

¹²⁷ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005, Fig. 10; Maslovskiy 2006b, 441-443, Fig. 54.

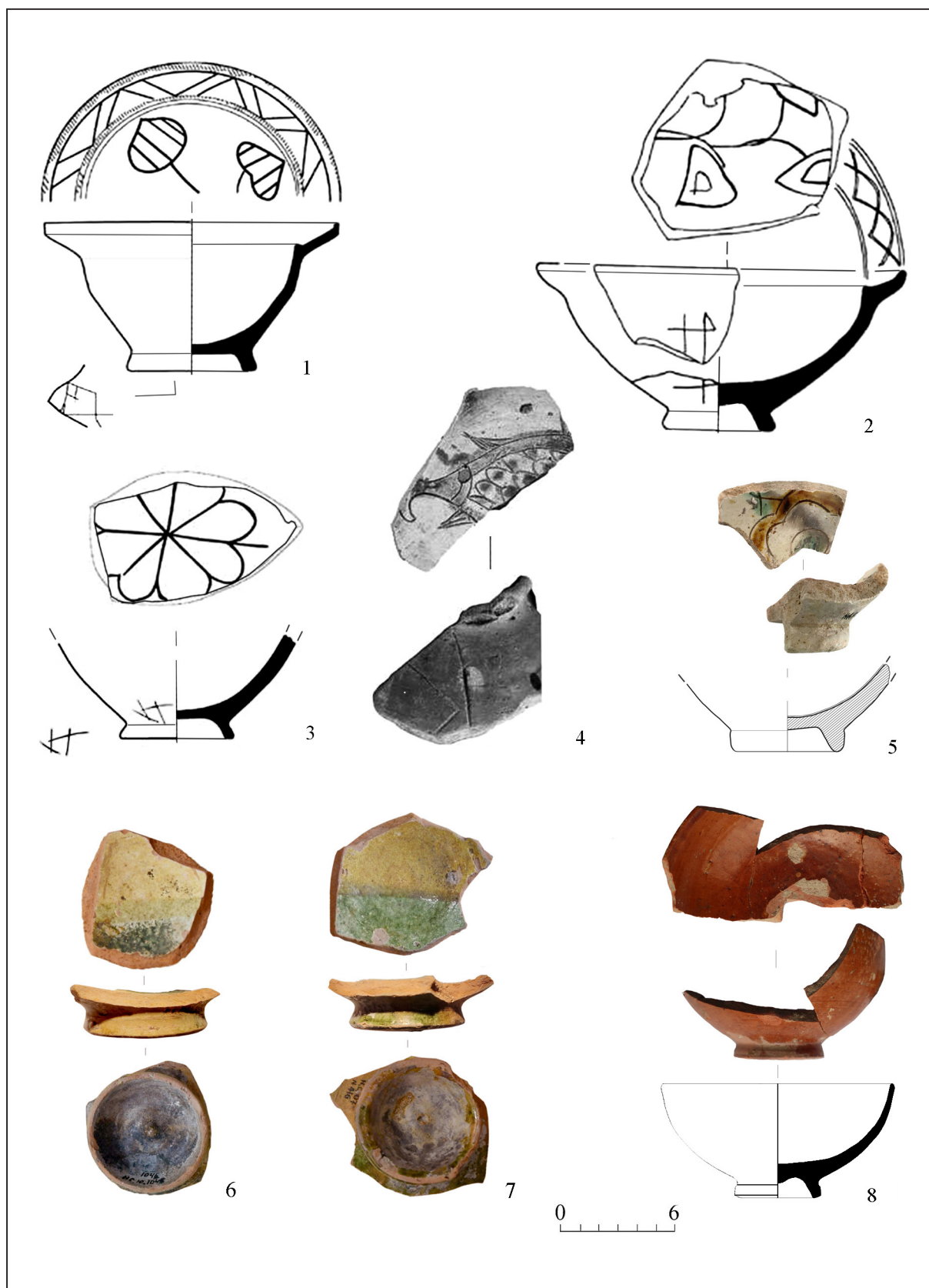


Fig. 6. 1-5 – Graffita arcaica tirrenica or Savona Archaic Sgraffito group, the late 13th–early 14th centuries; 6-8 – Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares: Double-Dipped decorative series, the 1260s–1270s (6, 7) and unslipped bowl covered with transparent lead glaze (8), the mid – late 14th century. Crimea: Nowy Svet shipwreck (1-4, 6, 7), Sougdaia/Sudak (5), Provato (8). 1-4 – after (Morozova 2012, Fig. 1); 6, 7 – photo Ya. Morozova; 5 – drawing and photo by the author; 8 – after Gukin 2021, Fig. 4.

of big bowl with an outward-protruding rim (Fig. 7/1-5; 7, 8, 11; Fig. 8/1), one type of a shallow small plate with an upraised rim (Fig. 7/6), and a jug with a deformed lip for draining liquids (Fig. 7/9-10). The bottoms of open-forms vessels have a conical protrusion at the center. These vessels' surface is decorated in four ways: covered with transparent glaze directly on the fabric's red body, covered with transparent glaze over a white engobe background (*ceramica invetriata da mensa*) (Fig. 7/6-11), painted with brown or green on the red fabric (*invetriata dipinta*) (Fig. 7/1-5),¹²⁸ bearing a transparent glaze over a white engobe coating (*ingubbiata dipinta*) (Fig. 8/1). The glaze is colorless, light-yellow, or greenish (rare). The morphological and decorative features of Azaq finds demonstrate close affinities with Veneto (Venice, Padua) ceramic production from the second half of the 13th-14th centuries.¹²⁹

The archaeological context of *VLGW* at Azaq is slightly variable. According to Maslovskiy, glazed wares without white slip background (including dipinto variations) "is represented by numerous finds in the deposits of the late 13th-first half of the 14th centuries".¹³⁰ The engobed bowl with painting (*ingubbiata dipinta*) comes from a 14th-century context, probably not earlier than the second quarter of the 14th century.¹³¹ The researcher, however, does not specify the number of finds or their percentage in the ceramic assemblages.

The diffusion of these types of Venetian ceramics was prominent predominantly in Italy and on the Adriatic coast.¹³² Carinated and hemispherical bowls, or less frequently shallow small plates with a raised rim, constitute a portion of the Italian ceramics imported into Southern Greece. Here they have been found in Corinth in contexts dating to the late 13th-early 14th and first half of the 14th centuries,¹³³ at other sites in the Peloponnese (Glarentza, Chlemoutsi, Argos), at the Athenian Agora, on Crete (Chania and Herakleion), and in Epirus.¹³⁴ In addition, Veneto's monochrome wares with and without engobe background (mainly carinated bowls with an extending ridge at the shoulder and hemispherical bowls with simple rims), together with Veneto and Padana decorative series, reached the Levantine coast in the Mamluk periods,¹³⁵ mainly in the late 14th-first half of the 15th centuries,¹³⁶ and arrived on Cyprus.¹³⁷

The *graffita arcaica* group from the site is represented in published materials by two bowls featuring a horizontal rim (Fig. 8/2, 3). They have similar details of floral engraved decorations painted in green and brown. The glaze is transparent and colorless; according to the author of the publication, it is "cloudy and whitish".¹³⁸ Maslovskiy has joined these vessels together with *RMR* and *Archaic Maiolica* into the same group that he named "*mezzo-maiolica*",¹³⁹ but this classification seems rather questionable. According to the photo from the paper, the shard of the wares is pink or light red. The description of the fabric composition is absent. Based on decorative and morphological features, these wares could be preliminary attributed to either *GAT*, as this ware has similar elements of rim decoration,¹⁴⁰ or *GA* from northeastern Italian workshops, as the profile configuration of the Azaq finds looks like the Veneto ceramics of the *San Nicolò graffiti* type from the 14th century.¹⁴¹ A more precise definition, however, is difficult without a detailed study of the fabric. The chronology of the finds is also not specified. It is only known that both wares come from the same context with a bowl of *RMR* type (Fig. 9/7) studied in the central part of the medieval settlement in 1990.¹⁴²

Lead Glazed Polychrome Ware or RMR and Archaic Maiolica (AM)

Other Italian wares in the Northern Black Sea region include *Lead Glazed Polychrome Ware* or *RMR*, often attributed to *Proto-Maiolica (PM)* variation, *Archaic Maiolica (AM)*, and *Archaic Maiolica Blue (AMB)* (Fig. 9; 10). The geographical distribution of these finds in the Northern Black Sea area extends beyond Azaq and Sudak,

¹²⁸ In some instances, the lack of color illustrations hinders the verification of specific details, such as the presence or absence of an underglaze engobe coating. Therefore, I only use information from Belinsky and Maslovsky's publications.

¹²⁹ Gelichi 1984a; 1986a, 365-369, 380, 387-388, Tav. VII; IX; XI; Fig. 27; Gelichi 1986b, 131-133, Tabl. IX.

¹³⁰ Maslovskiy 2006b, 441-442, Fig. 54; 2010, 216, Fig. 27.

¹³¹ Maslovskiy 2010, 200-208, Fig. 19.

¹³² Gelichi 1986b, 133; D'Amico 2006, 78, Pl. 4.2.8.

¹³³ Williams and Zervos 1992, 151-156, Fig. 6-9; Williams and Zervos 1995, 22, nos.16-17, Pl. 6.

¹³⁴ Skartsis 2010, 107.

¹³⁵ The Mamluk period in the Levantine coastal territory covers 1266-1516. Acre was among the last sites to be captured, in 1291. The fall of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem led to a century-long hiatus in the arrival of Italian ceramics there. From the end of the 14th century, however, imports resumed and various ceramics wares from Northern and Central Italian workshops became increasingly prominent in local pottery assemblages (Avisar and Stern 2005, 63).

¹³⁶ Avisar and Stern 2005, 73-73; Stern 2022b, 244-245.

¹³⁷ Von Wartburg 2013, 528-529, Fig. 4/5, 5/1.

¹³⁸ Maslovskiy 2006b, 438.

¹³⁹ Maslovskiy 2006b, 437-438.

¹⁴⁰ Varaldo 1997, Fig. 7/5.

¹⁴¹ Geliche 1986a, 377, Tav. IX/3, 5.

¹⁴² Maslovskiy 2006b, 444, Fig. 52/6, 9, 19.

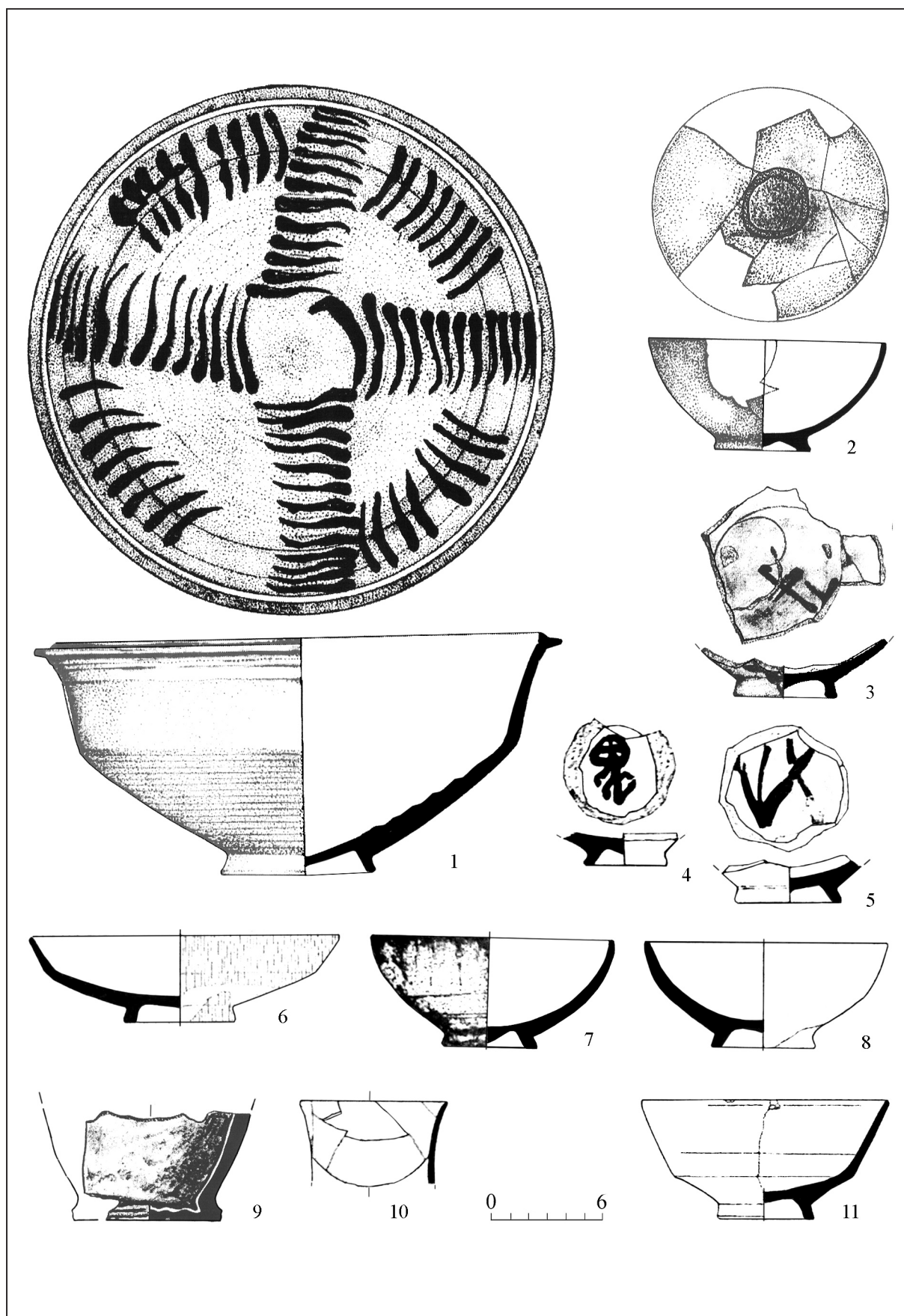


Fig. 7. Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares: plain (2, 6-11) and dipinto (1, 3-5) series, the late 13th – first half of the 14th centuries. Azaq–Tana. After Maslovskiy 2006b, Fig. 54.

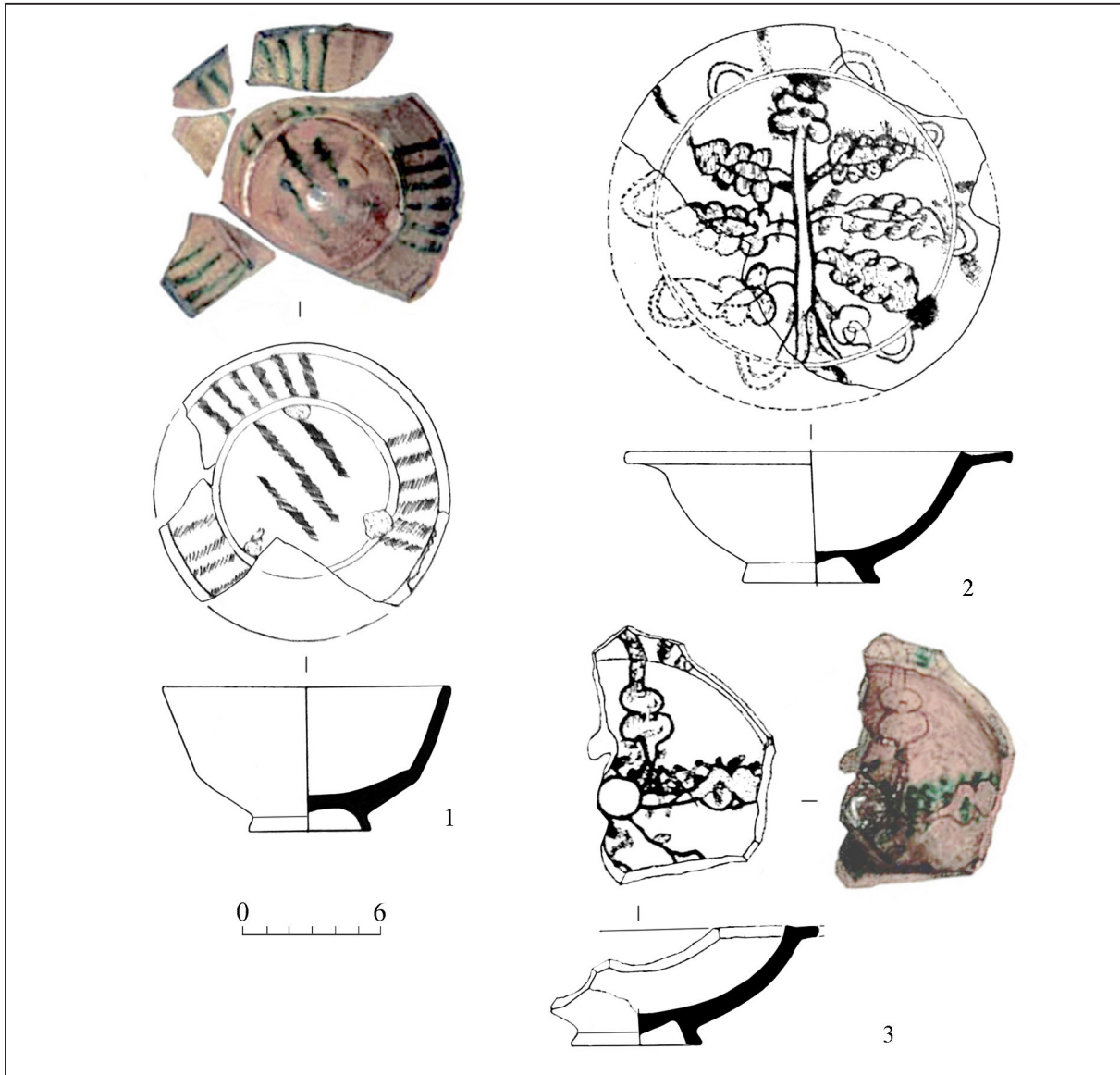


Fig. 8. Venetian Lead-Glazed Wares (1) and Archaic Graffito family (2, 3), the first half of the 14th century. Azaq–Tana. After Maslovskiy 2006b, Fig. 52; 2010, Fig. 19; and Kravchenko 2017, Fig. 12.

encompassing Cherson, Cembalo, and Alushta (Fig. 2). *PM* and *AM* are linked to another lineage of ceramic technologies adopted in Italy around the end of the High Middle Ages. The primary distinction between maiolica and other glazed pottery lies in the use of tin-opaque glazes. The clay body, initially fired red or white, was coated with an aqueous solution consisting of fired tin and lead oxides as well as finely ground quartz sand. This mixture was absorbed by the porous surface of the ware, creating a white ground upon which colored mineral paints were applied. The surface then could be covered with a colorless lead glaze (in case of *AM*) or not (in case of *PM*) and followed by a second firing.¹⁴³

These technologies are generally believed to have appeared independently in the south and north to central-north of Italy, where they probably come from different parts of the Mediterranean world before the early 13th centuries.¹⁴⁴ The ceramics from these regions differ in morphological, technological, and decorative features. In modern scholarship, they are known by their conventional names: *Proto-Maiolica* for the south, except for Savona in the north (*Ligurian Proto-Maiolica*), and *Archaic Maiolica* for the northern and central workshops, respectively.¹⁴⁵ Both of these big families are in turn not homogenous.

¹⁴³ Berti and Mannoni 1991; Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997; Tite 2009.

¹⁴⁴ Berti and Mannoni 1991; Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997.

¹⁴⁵ Whitehouse 1980b; 1986; Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986; Patitucci Uggeri 1990; Berti and Cappelli 1993; Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997; Giorgio 2016.

Proto-Maiolica (PM) includes several groups of wares differ in fabric, color, shape, decoration, and color of painting as well as in the tin content of the glaze. This group of wares was produced at workshops on Sicily (Gela, etc.) and in Apulia (Brindisi, Barletta, Taranto, Lecce, Ugento, Cutrofiano, etc.), Basilicata, probably Calabria, and Campania, where these wares were produced from at least the beginning of the 13th into the 15th century.¹⁴⁶ These wares have been known outside the Italy in the regions with an Italian (and especially Venetian) presence: on the Adriatic coast, in Greece (on the Peloponnesus, in Epirus, at Corinth, on the islands), and in the Eastern Mediterranean (Syria, Israel, Egypt). They were found in contexts dateable from at least the middle of the 13th century or earlier and became numerous toward the end of this century.¹⁴⁷ Some fragments were published among the materials from excavation at Hagia Euphemia and between Hagia Sophia and Hagia Irene in Istanbul.¹⁴⁸

RMR (Ramina, Manganese, Rosso) is one of the types of polychrome-painted Italian ceramics named after the three colors used on them: red, manganese/brown, and copper/green;¹⁴⁹ this is not always the case, however, because one or two of these colors might also appear.¹⁵⁰ Unlike maiolica, decoration was applied either to a white tin-less slip or directly onto the surface of the light-clay ware.¹⁵¹ There are other designations for this pottery such as *Proto-Majolica II*, *Lead Glazed Polychrome Wares*, *Italian Polychrome Ware*, and *Polychrome Glazed ceramic*, but these are less common.¹⁵² D. Whitehouse noted the low tin content in *RMR* glaze, which prevents it from being classified in the *maiolica* family. *RMR* is therefore often distinguished as a separate group. Based on the variable petrography and technological and stylistic diversity of *RMR*, Whitehouse suggest that it was produced in several regional workshops in southern Italy in addition to the one already known at Ugento on the southern tip of Apulia, where a pottery kiln has been discovered.¹⁵³

In 1986, D. Dufournier, A. M. Flambard, and G. Noyé published the results of their chemical studies of *RMR* fabric, slip, and glazes. According to their observation, all the pastes are based on calcareous clay (CaO percentages vary from 10 to 30%). Following the chemical composition of the fabric, they identified five groups (A, B, C, D, and E) corresponding to at least five production centers, four of which were located in southern Italy. Group A was manufactured close to Taranto in southern Apulia where a kiln was later discovered;¹⁵⁴ B in Salpi or its surroundings, C in the Tavoliere plain in northern Apulia, and D in Ugento at its southern tip. E was imported from Scribla.¹⁵⁵

Researchers also noted that all glazes are lead-bearing, and only one group C (Tavoliere) contains tin in addition to lead. They have also proposed replacing the acronym *RMR* with *glazed with painted decoration (glazurée à décor peint)*, but this name failed to gain widespread acceptance. *RMR* is one of the most common groups of Italian ceramics in the Adriatic Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Southern Greece, with its volume increasing significantly from the second half of the 13th century due to economic and political reasons.¹⁵⁶ Recent archaeological and laboratory research also confirmed the presence of many ceramic urban and even rural workshops in the Salento region (Apulia) that produced *Polychrome Lead-Glazed Wares*.¹⁵⁷

The chronology of *RMR* has not caused much debate. It is generally accepted that these wares were mainly produced between the middle/second half of the 13th and the end of the 14th century and in some cases into the 15th century.¹⁵⁸ Regarding distribution, the situation varies considerably across different regions. For example, in the Latin East, including the territory of modern Israel, the arrival of Italian ceramics appears to have been disrupted from the late 13th century for approximately a century due to the Mamluk invasion.¹⁵⁹ Conversely, in the Adriatic,

¹⁴⁶ Whitehouse 1980b; Whitehouse 1986; Patitucci Uggeri 1990; Saccardo, Lazzarini and Munarini 2003, 411-413; Vroom 2005, 169; Vroom 2011, 416-419; Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986; Tinelli 2012a; 2015.

¹⁴⁷ Sanders 1987, 166-170; François 1997, 8-16, Fig. 1, 2; Avissar and Stern 2005, 67-70; Metalla 2005; Yangaki 2008, 606-607; Yangaki 2021, 72-74; Vroom 2011, 416-419; Bradara 2012; Skartsis 2012, 140-142; 2021, 73-74; Stern 2012, 76-80.

¹⁴⁸ François 1997, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Whitehouse 1980b, 82-83.

¹⁵⁰ Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986, 255; Skartsis 2012, 140-142.

¹⁵¹ Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986, 261-271.

¹⁵² Whitehouse 1986, 581; Sanders 1987, 170-171; Saccardo, Lazzarini and Munarini 2003, 411; Vroom 2005, 129; Skartsis 2012, 141; Yangaki 2021, 74-81; etc.

¹⁵³ Whitehouse 1980b, 82-88; 1986, 579.

¹⁵⁴ Vroom 2003, 169.

¹⁵⁵ Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986, 259, Fig. 1-3.

¹⁵⁶ Buerger 1979, 63; Sanders 1987, 170-171; François 1997, 8-16, Fig. 1, 2; Riavez 2000; Saccardo and Lazzarini, Munarini 2003, 411; Avissar and Stern 2005, 69; Metalla 2005; Yangaki 2008, 606-607; Yangaki 2021, 74-81; Vroom 2003, 167-169, Fig. 6.32; 6.43/W22.1, 2; Vroom 2011, 416-419; Athanasoulis 2005, 44; Skartsis 2012, 140-142; Stern 2012, 79; Bradara 2012, etc.

¹⁵⁷ Tinelli 2012a; 2015.

¹⁵⁸ Whitehouse 1986, 579; Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986 254-255; Tagliente 2000; Scartsis 2012, 141; Tinelli 2015.

¹⁵⁹ Avissar and Stern 2005, 69; Stern 2012, 80.

Ionian, and Aegean regions, imports significantly increased in the late 13th century, and *RMR* continued to diffuse into these areas for at least another century and a half, or even longer.¹⁶⁰

Ceramics that could be confidently attributed to “classical” *Proto-Maiolica* have not yet been identified on the northern coast of the Black Sea.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, *RMR* (*Ramina, Manganeze, Rosso*) is already rather prominent in ceramic assemblages. Ten related items at minimum have been discovered at Azaq and Cembalo, where they were found in contexts dating to the first half of the 14th and 14th-15th centuries, respectively.¹⁶²

These are primarily open-form vessels with light-colored fabric bodies that encompass at least two distinct morphological types (Fig. 9/5-9; 10/14-18). Three whole forms and two shards came from Azaq.¹⁶³ Three of them are small bowls with a wide ledge triangular rim and a low ring base (Fig. 9/5-7). One more wall fragment is most likely part of a similar ware (Fig. 9/8). They have concentric decorations painted in brown, red, and green in bands on the lips and the walls with a floral or geometric figure in the center. This figure is enclosed in a double brown circle filled with green dots (Fig. 9/5-7), which is common for the so-called *Taranto type*. This is a technologically homogeneous ceramic manufactured in medieval Taranto on the Ionian Gulf.¹⁶⁴ A. Tinelli refers to two pottery kilns discovered inside the Celestine monks’ complex in Taranto, among other proofs, for its local production.¹⁶⁵ The Taranto style wares exhibited a broad diffusion along the entire Ionian and eastern Adriatic coasts, extending from Crete to Croatia¹⁶⁶ and, as recent evidence demonstrates, reaching as far as Azaq.

Another fragment from Azaq belongs to a bowl with a horizontally oriented rim that features a decorative motif of figures filled with grid hatching (Fig. 9/9). Maslovskiy suggests that this vessel belongs to a series with green-brown-red color painting.¹⁶⁷ The absence of color images and detailed descriptions in his paper limits the possibility of definitive attribution.

Another five small shards of open-forms vessel have been found at Cembalo (Fig. 10/14-18). Their morphological type is unclear.¹⁶⁸ The color of the fabric varies from yellow-pink to light yellow. The decoration includes floral motifs and grid hatching painted in brown and red or only dark brown colors. Reconstructing the original decoration scheme is challenging, as is pinpointing the specific workshops that produced these wares. Notably, a similar motif of a branch framed by dense rows of symmetrical leaves is in the repertoire of one of the Salento workshops that produced *Polychrome Lead-Glazed* ceramic.¹⁶⁹ Crosshatching is a frequently encountered decorative technique in *Proto-Maiolica* that is particularly evident in Brindisi-type wares and monochrome Sicilian ceramics¹⁷⁰ but is not typical for *RMR*.

Archaic Maiolica (*AM*) is characterized by predominantly green and brown/manganese decorations on a tin-containing white background covered with transparent lead glaze. Plain white and monochrome brown-painted wares were also part of the range, particularly in Pisa; however, they were less prevalent in early stages of production.¹⁷¹ *AM* is primarily associated with northern and central Italy, and its chronology mainly covers the 13th-15th centuries. Pisa is considered one of its earliest and most well-studied manufacturing centers, with *AM* production starting in the early 13th century and continuing into the 16th century. Production persisted after the early 15th century but featured a limited variety of forms and decoration.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁰ Buerger 1979, 63; Sanders 1989, 193; Vroom 2011, 416-419, tab. 6; 7; Fig. 11; Skartsis 2012, 14; D’Amico 2006, 75; Bradara 2012, Fig. 1; Tinelli 2012b; 2015, 155.

¹⁶¹ The full publication of collections from excavations at Azov, Caffa, and other sites could reshape this picture.

¹⁶² Maslovskiy 2006b, 439, Fig. 52/6-8; Maslovskiy 2010, 200-208, Fig. 19; Kravchenko 2017, 557, Fig. 12/5-8; Ginkut 2019, 174-175, Fig. 3/1-5. Maslovskiy and Kravchenko also mentioned other finds including “jugs decorated in red and black, etc.” from Azaq but avoided descriptive details and drawings (Maslovskiy 2006, 439; Kravchenko 2017, 556-557). So, identifying these vessels remains elusive.

¹⁶³ Maslovskiy 2006b, 439, Fig. 52/6-8; Kravchenko 2017, 557, Fig. 12/5-8.

¹⁶⁴ Dufournier, Flambard and Noyé 1986, 272; Tinelli 2015, 149, Fig. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Tinelli 2015, 149.

¹⁶⁶ Corrado 2003; Saccardo, Lazzarini and Munarini 2003, 411, Fig. 18/57; Athanasoulis 2005, 44; Metalla 2005, Tab. IV; Skartsis 2012, 14; Tinelli 2012b, 608-612; Yangaki 2021, 75-77; Fig. 45.

¹⁶⁷ Maslovskiy 2006b, 439, Fig. 52/7.

¹⁶⁸ There are no drawings of the profiles in the publication.

¹⁶⁹ Riavez 2000, 212, Tav. 3/2, 3; Tinelli 2012a, Fig. 2/ prod. 8.

¹⁷⁰ Saccardo, Lazzarini and Munarini 2003, Fig. 18/56-58; Avissar and Stern 2005, 67, Fig. 28/3-5.

¹⁷¹ Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997, 395

¹⁷² Berti, Cappelli and Francovich 1986; Berti and Cappelli 1993; Berti 1997; Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997, 396-398; Giorgio 2016, 13.

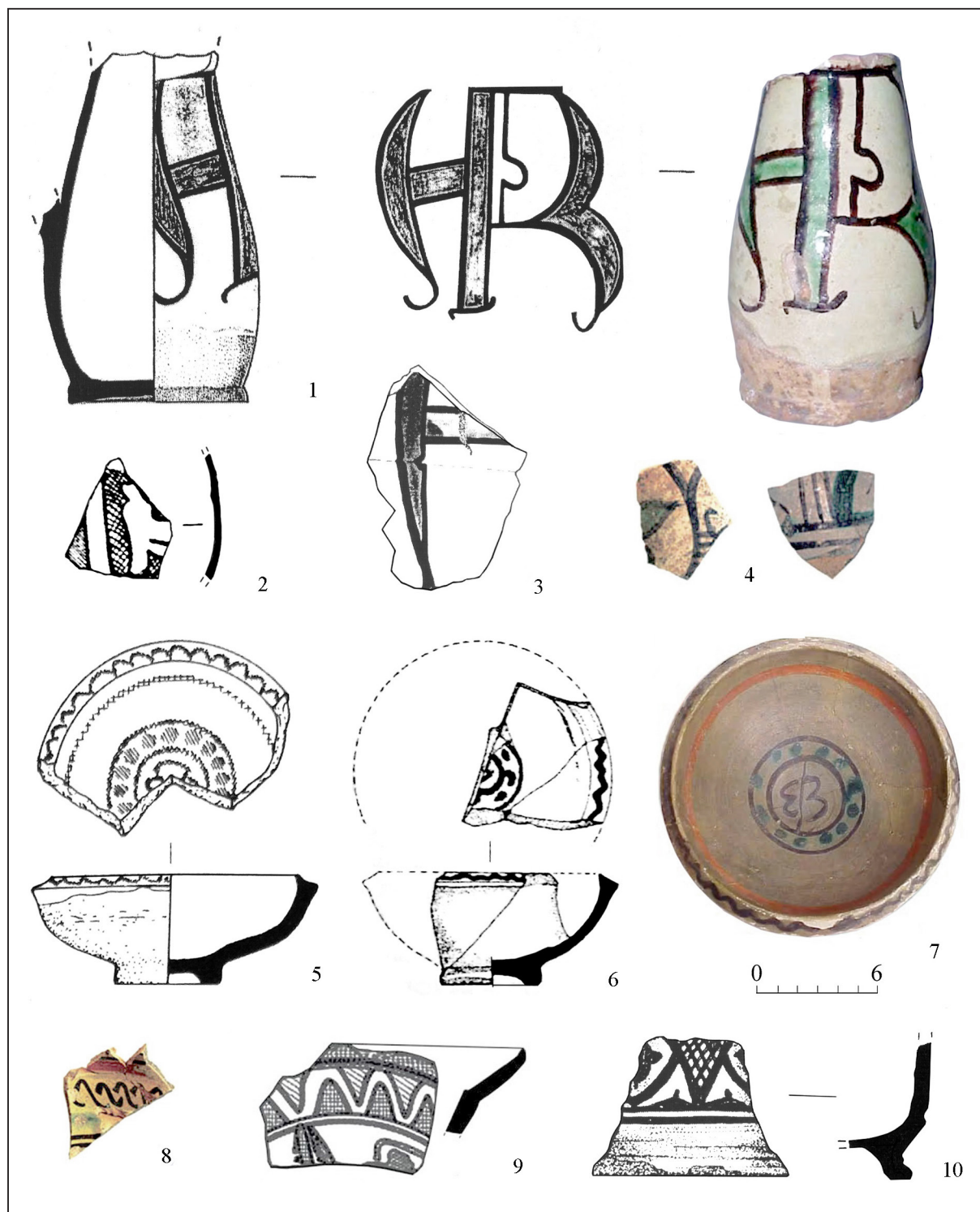


Fig. 9. Archaic Maiolica (1-4) and Lead Glazed Polychrome Ware or RMR (5-9), the first half of the 14th century; Archaic Maiolica Blue(?) (10), the context is unclear. Azaq-Tana. After Maslovskiy 2006b, Fig. 52; 2010, Fig. 19; and Kravchenko 2017, Fig. 12.

By the middle to second half of the 13th century, the technology diffused to various site of Tuscany and beyond: to Liguria,¹⁷³ Emilia Romagna, Marche, Umbria, and Lazio.¹⁷⁴ Given the frequent migration of artisans and the

¹⁷³ The technique was reintroduced to Savona near the middle of the 13th century, presumably through the migration of artisans from Tuscany (Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997, 395).

¹⁷⁴ Satolli 1983; Whitehouse 1983; Gelichi 1991, 344-345; 1992b; Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997; Lo Mele 2015; Distant 2014; Silvestrini, Virgiliviviana Antongirolami and D'Ulizia 2015; Giorgio 2016; Cirelli 2017, 117-147, etc.

widespread imitation of popular ceramic forms and designs, the style of *AM* wares can be quite similar across different regions, making it complicated to attribute specific pieces to particular workshops without relying on petrographic or chemical analysis.¹⁷⁵ It is worth noting that the *AM* of Pisa and its surroundings were made primarily from iron-rich clays of the Arno River valley. Upon firing, they produced a hard red body with rare color variations towards pink or grey resulting from fluctuations in temperature.¹⁷⁶ Potters from other centers located, for instance, in Upper Lazio, Emilia Romagna, Marche, and Umbria, used non-ferrous raw materials, which acquired a light-yellow or beige color after firing.¹⁷⁷ This type of fabric was specifically employed in further *maiolica* production.

The first half to middle of the 14th century saw the introduction of blue into the color palette of painting, which gradually replaced the green-copper and leading to the development of *Archaic Maiolica Blue (AMB)*.¹⁷⁸ The blue color was obtained from cobalt. There is also the opinion that it was initially based on copper oxide, but this idea is in doubt.¹⁷⁹ *Renaissance Maiolica*, which widely incorporated cobalt blue into its painting's palette independently and in polychrome combinations, gradually superseded *Archaic* types from the first half of the 15th into the 16th century.

Although less common in the Eastern Mediterranean than *PM* and *RMR*, *AM* has been found at sites across the region, including Corinth¹⁸⁰ and other locations in Southern Greece, along the Eastern Adriatic coast, in the Levant, and Egypt. These finds date from the second half of the 13th to the early 15th centuries.¹⁸¹ It also spread to northwestern Europe, possibly carried as spice containers or mariners' personal belongings,¹⁸² as well as is known in the Black Sea region in Crimea and Azaq. The Black Sea finds mainly consist of closed vessels, such as small jugs with wide necks, and occasionally, cups with handles (Fig. 9/1-4, 10; 10/1, 2, 5-13).

Azov archaeologists have published a complete jug bearing a monogram along with a base and four wall fragments from other closed-form vessels in the Azov assemblages¹⁸³ (Fig. 9/1-4). According to Maslovskiy, the fragments of such vessels are not numerous and are scattered across different parts of the city in the late 13th-first half of the 14th centuries contexts. He mentioned the "*light beige, pink*" finely dispersed fabric of wares free of visible inclusions. Among the painting motifs are figures filled with fine grid hatching, monograms, "*the simplest floral ornament*", and "*chains of turquoise circles*".¹⁸⁴

The bottom part of the jug with the lower handle attachment comes from the Solkhat excavations (Fig. 10/1); its fabric is yellowish-red. The vessel's surface exhibits remnants of dark brown painted decoration, including a horizontal stroke on the handle, three vertical and two horizontal lines, and a wavy motif on the body. The archaeological context is unspecified.¹⁸⁵

A few examples of *AM* were found in the upper cultural deposits of Cherson's harbour area, which indicates activity in the 14th century.¹⁸⁶ Three fragments presumably belong to two jugs with a yellowish-white fabric painted brown and green (Fig. 10/2). The predominant decorative element is contoured figures filled with hatching, as on the aforementioned fragment from Azaq. One is the small, hemispherical red fabric bowl with remnants of handle attachments on the rim (Fig. 10/4). The interior is coated with a white tin glaze, while a transparent lead glaze covers both surfaces. This monochrome item could be classified as "*White Slipped Maiolica Ware*" or "*Maiolica bianca*".¹⁸⁷

The Cembalo collection includes eight small fragments of jugs (neck, handles, body sherds) and a multi-handled bowl, which show traces of green and brown or brown-only painted decoration (Fig. 10/5-13).¹⁸⁸ All finds come

¹⁷⁵ Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997; Silvestrini, Virgiliviviana Antongirolami and D'Ulizia 2015, 391-399; Giorgio 2016, 12; Cirelly 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Giorgio 2016, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Whitehouse 1983; Gelichi 1988; Gelichi 1991; Gelichi 1992b; Silvestrini, Virgiliviviana Antongirolami and D'Ulizia 2015, 391-399; Cirelly 2017, etc.

¹⁷⁸ Gelichi 1988; Cirelli 2017, 20.

¹⁷⁹ Tite 2009, 2066.

¹⁸⁰ In the case of Corinth, accounts for just 2.4% of glazed wares and 11% of *maiolica*, with the rest made up of Southern Italian *proto-maiolica* and other types (Sanders 1987, 172).

¹⁸¹ Sanders 1987, 171-172; Pringle 1982, 110-111; François 1997, 8-16, Fig. 1; 2; François 1999, 72-74; Williams and Zervos 1992, 150-151, Pl. 37; Bradara 2003; Skartsis 2012, 144, Fig. 6.

¹⁸² Blake 2021a, 29-30, 43-45.

¹⁸³ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005; Maslovskiy 2006b, 437-438, Fig. 52; Kravchenko 2017, 556-557, Fig. 12. Maslovskiy also includes the bottom with a ring foot of an open vessel in the *AM* group but does not provide visual or descriptive details (Maslovskiy 2006b, Fig. 52/5). Therefore, it is difficult to check how appropriate his definition is.

¹⁸⁴ Maslovskiy 2006b, 438.

¹⁸⁵ Seidalieva 2020, 8/7-8.

¹⁸⁶ Ginkut 2023, 62-69; Fig. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Berti 1997, 147-153.

¹⁸⁸ Ginkut 2019, 172-174, Fig. 1; 2.



Fig. 10. Archaic Maiolica (1, 2, 4-13), Lead Glazed Polychrome Ware or RMR (14-18) and Archaic Maiolica Blue (3, 19-23), the 14th and the 14th–15th-century contexts. 1-23 – Crimea: Solkhat (1), Cherson (2-4), Cembalo/Balaklava (5-18, 20, 21), Sougdaia/Sudak (19), and Lusta/Alushta (22, 23). 1-18, 20, 21 – after Seidalieva 2020, Fig. 8; Ginkut 2019, Fig. 4-6; and 2023, Fig. 1; 19, 22, 23 – drawing and photo by the author.
24 – Archaic Maiolica jug from Faenza. After <https://www.maiolicaitaliana.com/storia/faenza-maiolica-tardo-medievale-verde-e-bruna-arcaica-secoli-xiv-prima-met%C3%A0-xv/>, access date 03.03.2025

from displaced deposits containing material from the 14th-15th centuries that was excavated at various locations within the fortress and at the nearby settlement in the Berman gully (one piece).¹⁸⁹ In terms of raw material, they represent at least two groups: those with a light yellow and those with a yellow-red or brownish-red fabric. The sherds' small size prevents a full understanding of their decorative program; however, the following elements are visible: a vertical row of green and brown horizontal lines on the handle, vertical and horizontal bands demarcating the body, vertical rows of S-shaped motifs on the body, and fine horizontal brown lines on the rim (Fig. 10/5-15). For the same reason of small fragment size, the details of the vessels' configuration are unclear. It is worth noting that bowls with handles were among the products of various workshops in Upper Lazio from the 13th century onward and were characterized by light-colored fabric, as seen in the case of Cembalo.¹⁹⁰

Thus, it is evident that archaic maiolica in Crimea is not homogeneous and could originate from different Italian workshops. Red-clay vessels, for example, are more indicative of workshops at Pisa and the surrounding area, where, in addition to vessels decorated with brown and green open forms of the "Maiolica Bianca" type, other types were also produced.¹⁹¹ Although less prevalent in the export trade than their polychrome counterparts, these monochrome bowls nonetheless reached destinations beyond Tuscany. This is evidenced by their presence in Southern Greece¹⁹² and, as the finds from the Northern Black Sea region demonstrate, as far as Cherson. Light-clay wares can come from workshops in Emilia Romagna, Marche, Umbria, Upper Lazio (Orvieto or Viterbo), etc., where motifs similar to those used at Pisa were introduced in decoration. For instance, the fine hatching to fill contoured figures is among features of the early development of *AM* in Pisa¹⁹³ and Upper Lazio.¹⁹⁴ This decorative style is also prominently represented within 14th-century Faenza wares,¹⁹⁵ which exhibit the closest stylistic affinities with Crimean and Azaq finds (Fig. 10/24). A monogram closely corresponding to that found at Azaq has been documented on the late 14th-century white-clay jug from Ravenna, which presumably has a Faenza provenance as well.¹⁹⁶

Stylistic details such as horizontal lines on handles, the partitioning of decorated vessel bodies by vertical and horizontal bands, the vertical or horizontal disposition of S-shaped motifs, and fine lines on the rim are commonly found across diverse Italian ceramic production centers. Thus, the attribution of these sherds to a particular provenance based exclusively on these features remains problematic. Consequently, it is tenable to hypothesize that ceramic products from workshops at Pisa (red-clay ware), Emilia-Romagna (light-clay ware), and potentially other production centers reached Crimea. Nonetheless, the lack of petrographic or chemical analyses makes their exact provenance unclear.

Archaic Maiolica Blue (AMB) is a later variety of *Archaic Maiolica* in which the copper green is replaced by blue color. As is commonly assumed from substantial archaeological data, the manufacturing of *AMB* started near the first decade of the 14th century in the Emilia-Romagna region. During the 14th-15th centuries, this technique defused to Marche and Tuscany.¹⁹⁷

In the Northern Black Sea region, *AMB* is mentioned among finds from Cherson.¹⁹⁸ Cembalo,¹⁹⁹ Sudak,²⁰⁰ Alushta,²⁰¹ and Azaq.²⁰² In total, these are eight fragments of light-clay wares with blue and manganese-brown painting (Fig. 9/10; 10/3, 19-23). In my opinion, not all of these specimens can be reliably attributed to the *AMB* group.

¹⁸⁹ Ginkut 2019, 172.

¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, it is worth noting that rather similar multi-handled bowls were part of the assortment of one of the potteries centers of Southern Apulia that produced Polychrome Lead-Glazed ceramics in the 13th-first half of the 14th century (Tinelli 2012, 516-517, Fig. 2/prod. 8; 2015, 153). The poor preservation of the glazed coating and the lack of archaeometric studies of the Cembalo bowl make its precise attribution difficult. I include it among the *Archaic Maiolica* types following the classification suggested by Natalia Ginkut in her 2019 publication (Ginkut 2019). There was no opportunity to examine this bowl, like other examples from Cembalo, personally, so I cannot be sure that this is the case.

¹⁹¹ Berti 1997, 147-153.

¹⁹² Williams and Zervos 1995, 22, cat. nos. 20-23, Pl. 7; Skartsis 2010, 257-258.

¹⁹³ Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997, 397-398.

¹⁹⁴ Whitehouse 1983; Silvestrini 2015.

¹⁹⁵ Berti, Gelichi and Mannoni 1997, 338-339; Cirelli 2017, 39, 77-92, Fig. 6. Many complete vessels of this style from 14th century are in the exposition of the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, room 6 <https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/museo-internazionale-delle-ceramiche>), see also <https://www.maiolicaitaliana.com/storia/faenza-maiolica-tardo-medievale-verde-e-bruna-arcaica-secoli-xiv-prima-met%C3%A0-xv/>

¹⁹⁶ Lo Mele 2015, 116, Tav. XLI/3.

¹⁹⁷ Gelichi 1988.

¹⁹⁸ Ginkut 2023, Fig. 1/3.

¹⁹⁹ Ginkut 2019, 175, Fig. 3/6-8.

²⁰⁰ Maiko 2012, 337, Fig. 7/1.

²⁰¹ Teslenko 2017, 403, Fig. 15/14.

²⁰² Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005, Fig. 9/4.

Specifically, three sherds from Cembalo are too diminutive to permit definitive identification (Fig. 10/20, 21). While Ginkut associated them with *AMB*,²⁰³ they could also be related to Renaissance *maiolica* wares. Furthermore, the lack of clear contextual information (the researcher only mentions that they come from various parts of the fortress) hinders a more precise chronology, which could contribute to clearer definition. The albarello base from Azaq (Fig. 9/10) should be considered a potential member of this group, as the authors of its publication note two colors in its painted decoration, “dark blue and brownish-violet”.²⁰⁴ The absence of a color image and detailed description, however, hinders definitive identification of the find. Furthermore, its archaeological context remains unclear.

So, only three fragmented wares, one from Sudak and two from Alushta, can be confidently attributed to *AMB* (Fig. 10/19, 22, 23). The find from Sudak includes body fragments of a small jug decorated with floral elements, applied with broad strokes of blue and fine lines of brown paint (Fig. 10/19).²⁰⁵ The vessel was discovered in 1997²⁰⁶ in the northwestern part of the Sudak fortress southwest of the “*Loggia of the Genoese Commune*”²⁰⁷ in the area of the northwestern perimeter of the Genoese curtain wall (No. 15). It came from a deposit accumulated after its construction or fortification and so not earlier than the 1380s²⁰⁸ and no less than 15 years after the Genoese captured the fortress in 1365.²⁰⁹ Thus, the find’s context does not clarify the date of the vessel but only indicates that it had already been fragmented after the 1380s, which does not contradict the chronology of the *AMB* group.

Two fragments from Alushta belong to different jugs. They are decorated with a figure contoured in wide bands of blue and filled with a brown-violet grid stroke or thick rows of a “dotted scales” motif (Italian: “*squame puntinate*”). I found both of the sherds in the storage of the Alushta Museum of Local History.²¹⁰ Based on the field inventory number of the items, they came from excavations in 1991 of a residential area of the 14th-15th centuries on the citadel of the Alushta medieval fortress.²¹¹ More details about their archaeological context are not recorded in the field documentation.

Close parallels to the “dotted scale” motif are observed on ceramics generally attributed to Faenza or the wider Emilia-Romagna region, which have been unearthed from 14th-century or late 14th-century deposits in Northern Italy, the Istrian Peninsula, and Southern Greece.²¹² Therefore, a comparable chronology can be projected for the jug from Alushta. Consequently, the latest documented occurrences of *AM* in the pre-Ottoman Northern Black Sea region are exemplified by the *AMB* type from Alushta and Sudak that dates approximately to the latter half of the 14th century. It is notable that Italian ceramics are not recorded in stratified deposits dating to the second and third quarters of the 15th century, despite the numerous studies conducted throughout Crimea.²¹³ This suggests a decline in their distribution in the region during this timeframe.

To summarize the first part of the paper, while the corpus of Italian ceramic finds from the Northern Black Sea region during the period of Italian dominance is not extensive, it nonetheless yields important data regarding the variety of wares and their diffusion. The distinct characteristics of underwater and terrestrial sites contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these patterns.

Regarding the shipwreck, it is crucial to note that visiting the Northern coast of the Black Sea may not have been part of this ship's route. It could have sunk near Sudak due to unforeseen events, such as the Genoese-Pisan conflict in August 1277 or other unrecorded incidents that occurred after the mid-1260s. On the other hand, the ceramic groups from the main cargo of the ship (*Byzantine Glazed White Ware IV/-GWW IV*,²¹⁴ *Sgraffito with Concentric Circles/SCC*,²¹⁵ *Seldjuk Ware*, etc., and *Günsenin III, IV, XX/GIII, GIV, GXX amphorae*²¹⁶) are well-represented at terrestrial sites in Crimea.²¹⁷ *SCC, GIII, GIV, and GXX amphorae* are also common in the Northern

²⁰³ Ginkut 2019, 174.

²⁰⁴ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 2005, Fig. 9/4.

²⁰⁵ Maiko 2012, 337, Fig. 7/1. The vessel is currently kept in the storage facility of the National Conservation Area “St. Sophia of Kyiv” in Kyiv.

²⁰⁶ The excavations were led by V. Maiko.

²⁰⁷ This is close to the area where the aforementioned *GAT* fragment was found.

²⁰⁸ Maiko 2012, 337. For the chronology of the curtain wall and the adjacent towers, see Dzhanov and Maiko 2015, 314-318.

²⁰⁹ More details about Sudak history see, e.g., Dzhanov 2006.

²¹⁰ One of the fragments was published before (Teslenko 2017, 403, Fig. 15/14).

²¹¹ The excavations were led by S. Adaksina and V. Myts.

²¹² Williams and Zevros 1992, 150, pl. 37/10, 11; Caiazza 1999, 26, Tav. II/3; Bradara 2003, 172, Fig. 18; Athanasoulis 2005, 48; Nepoti 2006, 102-103, Tav. IX/2.

²¹³ Teslenko 2021.

²¹⁴ Typology after Hayes 1992, 30-33.

²¹⁵ A term proposed by S. Y. Waksman for heterogeneous ceramics with concentric circle sgraffito decoration, often associated with the *Zeuxippus ware family* and its derivatives (Waksman et al. 2014, 415-417).

²¹⁶ Typology after Günsenin 1989, 269-276; 1990.

²¹⁷ Waksman, Teslenko and Zelenko 2009; Waksman and Teslenko 2010; Teslenko 2017; Teslenko 2018b; Teslenko 2020b;

Azov region, Azaq-Tana and rural settlements of its environs in the contexts of the last third of the 13th century.²¹⁸ Hence, these ceramics were widely incorporated into commerce during the latter half of the 13th century and were regularly delivered to Crimea and the shores of the Sea of Azov. The wrecked ship likely functioned as a transporter of such commodities in the Black Sea area. Conversely, the Italian ceramics discovered at the wreck site are notably absent from terrestrial assemblages in the region, implying a lack of their commercial diffusion. It appears the crew or passengers possessing these wares did not stay long on the Crimean and Azov shores during the period when the ship's principal ceramic cargo dominated local markets. These are likely indicative of sporadic occurrences, as evidenced by the *GAT* find from Sudak, rather than of any systematic activity. However, this situation soon shifted.

As demonstrated by the ceramic assemblages of Azaq, from the late 13th to the mid-14th centuries, Italian ceramics already represent a discernible component of ceramic assemblages. The majority of them are attributable to Venetian production (*VLGW* group) or are associated with Venetian trade, such as southern Italian ceramics and particularly *RMR* of the Taranto type.²¹⁹ The *AM* group, occurring in smaller proportions, may have been introduced through both Venetian and Genoese activity, given their concurrent development of trade routes through Azaq. Furthermore, Azaq was not the most distant point from the metropolis where Veneto and *AM* ceramics of the late 13th-first half of the 14th centuries have been documented so far. There are instances of Venetian glazed unengobed bowls recovered from inland urban centers of the Golden Horde, situated along the Don and Volga river trade arteries in Bolgar, Gorodets Nizhny Novgorod, Saray, and Ukek.²²⁰

In addition, jugs fragments of the *AM* group with brown and green painting are known in the Golden Horde Ukek and Djuketau on the middle Volga River.²²¹ They have yellow-red fabric, which might suggest a provenance from Pisa or nearby. The presence of Italian merchants, both Genoese and Venetian, and Catholic missionaries in the Golden Horde, notably during the first half of the 14th century, and their frequently contentious interactions with the Mongol administration are well attested in written sources.²²² Accordingly, the discovery of ceramics that may have accompanied these individuals on their journeys is unsurprising. As identification of these items improves in Golden Horde ceramic assemblages, the corpus of documented instances will most likely expand.

By the middle of the 14th century, the situation changes once again. Significantly, Italian ceramic finds are not yet recorded at Azaq and other urban Golden Horde contexts after the mid-14th century, although deposits of this time have been repeatedly studied through excavations.²²³ Among the most important reasons that could cause the cessation or substantial reduction in the influx of Italian wares to Azaq and the inland regions of Eastern Europe was the major crisis of Italian trade in the Mongol state in the 1340s. The culmination of this crisis was the so-called "Tana crisis of 1343" that was exacerbated by a subsequent chain of dramatic events including the Black Death pandemic and military conflicts of the 1340-1370s.²²⁴ This period witnessed a general disruption of trade networks across the Black Sea and into the Golden Horde that impacted the flow of various commodities including Italian ceramics. Furthermore, in the context of Azaq, it is possible that the potential owners of these wares after the crisis were concentrated in areas yet to be archaeologically explored, such as the Italian fortifications at Azaq.²²⁵ In addition, Italians, whether at Azaq or the Golden Horde, could have transitioned to using other kinds of ceramics.

The diffusion of Italian ceramics in Crimea was marked by characteristic features. The wares are less numerous and less diverse and follow a slightly differing distribution chronology. In contrast to Azaq, the majority of Crimean finds came from contexts dating no earlier than the 1340s and do not have Venetian provenance. These predominantly comprise *RMR* types distinct from those found at Azaq as well as *AM* and *AMB*. Tikhaya Bay, linked to the Provato mentioned in historical records, is the only Crimean site with a ceramic assemblage containing *VLGW*. It was founded after 1340, meaning after the end of Venetian ceramics' diffusion at Azaq. Only in the spring of 1356 did Khan Janibek authorize the Venetians to establish a trading post in Provato Bay at a location where a Golden Horde settlement was evidently already present and the grant them the authority to appoint a consul.²²⁶

Zelenko and Morozova 2010; Morozova, Zelenko and Timoshenko 2013; Morozova, Waksman and Zelenko, 2021; Sedikova 2018, etc.

²¹⁸ See, e.g., Volkov 2005; Maslovskiy 2006a; Maslovskiy 2006b, 382-383, etc.

²¹⁹ Geliche 1993; Skartsis 2012.

²²⁰ Kubankin and Maslovskiy 2013, 141; Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin 2018, Pl. 4/8, 9.

²²¹ Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin 2018, 122, pl. 4/6, 7.

²²² Hautala 2018; Hautala 2019; Hautala 2021; Karpov 2021, 50-57.

²²³ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 1998; Maslovskiy 2017, 459-461; Zeniuk and Maslovskiy 2018, etc. Only the bottom of the albarello with cobalt blue and manganese painting (Fig. 9/10) can hypothetically be attributed to a later time, but its archaeological context is not clear.

²²⁴ Di Cosmo 2010; Karpov 2015.

²²⁵ Maslovskiy 2015, 397; Maslovskiy and Papka 2024, 247.

²²⁶ Karpov 2021, 140-143. In fact, this was the maximum duration of stay, commensurate with the profitability and safety of trade, officially established by both the Venetian Senate and the Genoese Officium Gazariae to reduce the operating costs of

Venetian ships had already been staying there 9-10 days at a time in 1356 and 1357. In 1358, the new Khan Berdibek confirmed this right, which they exercised until the 1380s.²²⁷ In 1358, the Venetians were also allowed to visit the harbours of Soldaya and Calitra (wrongly Caliera).²²⁸ However, no archaeological evidence of their stay in Calitra has been found yet. Thus, although the Venetian stay in Provato was fraught with insecurity and strict regulation,²²⁹ it provides the clearest archaeological evidence of Venetian activity in Crimea. A comprehensive publication of the excavated materials is crucial for a more thorough assessment of the extent of their presence.

A series of intense military conflicts with the Genoese, including the War of the Straits (1350-1355) and the War of Chioggia (1377-1381),²³⁰ severely impacted the Republic of St. Mark's political and economic stability. This, combined with the ensuing prohibition on entering the Sea of Azov for two years, likely contributed to a decline in Venetian engagement with the Crimean coast. Furthermore, taking advantage of the instability within the Golden Horde, Venice's rivals the Genoese expanded their territorial control in Crimea. They seized Soldaia and its environs in 1365 and by the mid-1370s had seemingly established dominion over the coastal region west of Sudak, known as Gothia. Their claims to these territories were subsequently formalized through a series of treaties with the Tatars in 1381, 1382, and 1387.²³¹ Consequently, following the 1380s, the Venetians ceased efforts to re-establish permanent trading posts on the Crimean Peninsula, limiting their presence to brief visits.²³²

Other Italian ceramics from Crimea are more associated with sites of Genoese activity. Specifically, the find spots of *RMR*, *AM*, and *AMB* coincide with principal centers of Genoese commercial, administrative, ecclesiastical, and residential presence: Cherson, Cembalo, Solkhat, Soldaia and Lusta. Specifically, fragments of *AMB* from the area of the "*Loggia of the Commune of Genoa*" in Sudak and the citadel of the Alushta fortress demonstrate a chronological correlation with the establishment of Genoese administrative presence in those cities after 1365 and from 1374-1375, respectively.

Consequently, the presence of Italian ceramics in the Northern Black Sea region primarily reflects non-commercial diffusion, thereby indicating their owners' personal presence: the Venetians (Azaq, central Golden Horde regions) or the Genoese and Venetians (Crimea, Azaq, and central Golden Horde regions). This suggests that these ceramics either accompanied individuals on their travels, which is the more probable scenario, or were imported in limited quantities for their needs, a possibility primarily confined to coastal areas.

A similar pattern of ceramic diffusion from Venice and southern Italy to the Morea and the Crusader states (fueled by Western consumer demand) has been proposed by V. François²³³ and subsequently corroborated by S. S. Skartsis.²³⁴ It is notable that in the Eastern Mediterranean and Southern Greece, well-established local ceramic production remained largely impervious to Western influence until the mid-13th century.²³⁵ According to J. Vroom, the integration of Italian ceramics into Greek markets during the 13th and 14th centuries was driven by a complex interplay of political and economic forces: geographical proximity to Italy, the disintegration of the Crusader states in the Levant, and potential Latin migration to Greece and its islands. These factors contributed to trade expansion, the development of new markets, rising living standards, and increased purchasing power among Frankish and Greek populations, ultimately creating a demand for Italian ceramics in a developing fashion.²³⁶ The combination of these factors resulted in a heightened influx of Italian ceramics into Greece and its islands and stimulated transformations in local ceramic traditions, vessel forms, dining habits, and culinary techniques from approximately the mid-13th century.²³⁷ This enduring impact led to the 16th-century adaptation of *maiolica* production in Greece that drew on Italian Renaissance decorative ideas.²³⁸

ships (Karpov 2021, 61-62).

²²⁷ One of the latest documented instances of a 10-day Venetian galley stay in Provato is recorded for 1382 (Karpov 1994, 65). While subsequent visits remain a possibility, they are not corroborated by the extant resolutions of the Venetian Senate, particularly those consulted by Karpov.

²²⁸ Karpov 1994, 65; 2021, 145.

²²⁹ For example, the ship's captain was forbidden to leave the ship, goods were loaded ashore in small batches, etc. (Karpov 2021, 145).

²³⁰ For more details see Zorzi 1979; Norwich 1982; Balard 1997.

²³¹ More details concerning Genoese-Tatarian agreements in the 1380s include a clause on the transfer of part of the southern coast of Crimea to Genoese jurisdiction (see Dzhanov 2018, 60-63; 2022).

²³² Karpov 1994, 52, 72.

²³³ François 1997.

²³⁴ Skartsis 2012, 140.

²³⁵ François 1997, 392-393.

²³⁶ Vroom 2011, 417-419.

²³⁷ François 1997, 393-394; Vroom 2011, 417-426.

²³⁸ Vionis 2012, 247.



Fig. 11. Ceramics manufactured in Crimea (1-3) and Azaq (4-6) that imitate Italian forms, the 14th century.
After Bocharov, Maslovskiy 2024, 315-316, 472, 488, 493.

Although Italian ceramic influx was much more limited in the Northern Black Sea, could it have influenced local glazed pottery manufacturing there? If so, how? Local glazed pottery manufacturing started around 1270 and continued for two centuries. It displays predominantly Anatolian and less Byzantine-Balkan influences,²³⁹ but Italian styles are also seen in some pottery shapes. Imitations of Venetian open vessels, for example, have been documented at Azaq-Tana. In his study of the site's local ceramic industry, Maslovskiy notes the presence of bowls that replicate Venetian vessels in both profile configuration and glazing technique: they are hemispherical with yellow or green glaze applied directly to the red fabric (Fig. 11/5).²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Teslenko 2020; Teslenko, Waksman and Ginkut 2021; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

²⁴⁰ Maslovskiy 2012a, 27, Fig. 61; Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin, 2018, 122, Pl. 3/20-25; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 493.

The reasons why these specific vessels were imitated remain unclear. It is possible that their popularity as personal travel items, which the geography of their diffusion suggests, played a role. Furthermore, the absence of unglazed slipping may have simplified production. These bowls represent a limited share of the diverse repertoire of Azaq potters, who demonstrated a propensity for creative innovation. This is evidenced by the extensive range of their ceramic production, which includes imitations of other imported ceramic types.²⁴¹ Notably, they continued to be produced for approximately a quarter of a century after Venetian originals ceased arriving into Azaq around the mid-14th century.²⁴² Accordingly, these bowls remained in demand despite the probable departure of the majority of Italians from Azaq and the wider Golden Horde territories after the 1343 crisis.

Small, single-handed closed vessels commonly referred to as “wine jugs” represent another instance of an Italian ceramic derivative. These vessels are imitations of Italian jugs typical for the *MA* group. They were produced in diverse variations at the workshops of Azaq and Crimea, particularly at Caffa, it seems (Fig. 11/1-4, 6).²⁴³ Azaq’s “wine jug” production started in the late 14th century after Italian prototypes, as in the case of the bowls, disappeared from the local market. Crimean variations, however, were in use “*throughout the entire period of Azaq’s existence*”.²⁴⁴ Overall, both categories of Italian derivatives (bowls and jugs) constituted a relatively minor component in the broader repertoire of local pottery.²⁴⁵ Thus, the influence of the “*Latin ceramic style*” on local pottery artisanries both at Azaq and in Crimea cannot be considered substantial.

The Italian impact was more pronounced in the development of Crimean ceramic craft in general. During the latter half of the 14th century, Genoese Caffa and subsequently Cembalo emerged as the leading centers for glazed pottery manufacturing in Crimea. From around the 1340-1350s, their products were extensively integrated into external trade, which the Genoese predominantly controlled. By the 15th century, these ceramics had effectively supplanted the wares of other regional workshops.²⁴⁶ This suggests a strategic preference of the Genoese for the commercialization of ceramics manufactured within their Black Sea “emporium” over those from Italy or elsewhere. Consequently, it is highly probable that the local Genoese administration actively stimulated and patronized the Caffa and Cembalo ceramic workshops. The potential transfer of Italian production technology such as enhanced kiln designs, particularly in the case of Caffa, is also possible.²⁴⁷

In addition, Italian activity in the Pontic and Eastern Mediterranean regions significantly contributed to the spread of fashionable Eastern Mediterranean ceramic styles such as polychrome sgraffito.²⁴⁸ Therefore, despite the limited direct impact of Italian ceramic style on the local pottery repertoire and the minor role of Italian wares in Black Sea circulation, the establishment and growth of the commercial ceramic industry in Crimea in the late half of the 14th and 15th centuries were largely enabled by the Italians, specifically the Genoese. The Ottoman invasion of 1475 disrupted established pattern.

Ottoman period

The Ottoman conquests of Crimea and Azaq in 1475, followed by Bilhorod and Kili in 1484, had a profound impact on the Northern Black Sea region and surrounding lands. They effectively predetermined the history of these areas for the subsequent three centuries. The territories of the Genoese commune and the Principality of Theodoro in Crimea, along with sites at the Dniester and Don river mouths, became Ottoman possessions at the end of the military campaign.

Under Ottoman rule, Caffa (Kefë) was transformed into the center of the Ottoman province (a *sancak*) subordinate to the Rumelia Eyalet and later elevated to a *vilayet* in 1578, which was comprised of six judicial administrative districts (*kazas*, later *sancak*). Four of these—Kefë, Sudak, Mangup, and Kerch—were situated in Crimea while the other two—Azaq and Taman (located on the Taman peninsula in Krasnodar kray, Russia)—lay beyond.²⁴⁹ Kili, Akkerman, and southern Bucak (Bessarabia) were included in the Silistre (Silistra) *sancak* in Rumeli. Subsequently in 1538, the expansion of Ottoman holdings led to the establishment of the Akkerman *sancak* (Bender and Akkerman) that encompassed the *kazas* of Akkerman, Kili, Bender, and Cankerman (Ozi, modern Ochakiv).²⁵⁰

²⁴¹ Maslovskiy 2012a; Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin 2018.

²⁴² Maslovskiy 2012a, 27; Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin 2018, 122.

²⁴³ Maslovskiy 2012a, 14-15, Fig. 3/1-6; 25/3; Maslovskiy 2017, 471, Fig. 13/7; 25/7; Bocharov, Maslovskiy and Iudin 2018, 122, Pl. 3/10-17; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 315-318.

²⁴⁴ Maslovskiy 2012, 15; Maslovskiy 2017, 471.

²⁴⁵ Teslenko 2018; 2021.

²⁴⁶ Teslenko 2021.

²⁴⁷ Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, 611-612.

²⁴⁸ Teslenko 2020; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

²⁴⁹ Oztürk 2000.

²⁵⁰ Ostapchuk and Bilyayeva 2009.

Historical and archaeological evidence indicate that most urban centers and settlements in Southern and Eastern Crimea from the 14th-15th centuries persisted after 1475.²⁵¹ Analysis of Ottoman tax registers from 1487-1493 reveals that the events of 1475 did not fundamentally change the Caffa population as well, with the key exception of the Latin community. Their representatives were deported to Constantinople, where they formed a distinct quarter.²⁵² By 1477, this quarter consisted of 267 houses belonging to Genoese and Armenians deported from Caffa.²⁵³ Consequently, Genoa's dominance in the Black Sea was permanently lost.

Seeking to avoid deportation, some Genoese moved to the Crimean Khanate. They first settled compactly in Süyür Taş (modern Bilokamyane) 7 km southwest of Bakhchisaray and subsequently in Foti-Sala (modern Golubinka), a mountain valley 17 km south of Bakhchisaray. The Italian community's presence is evidenced by tombstones adorned with crosses and inscriptions, the most recent of which is dated 1685. The lack of any record of Roman Catholics in Foti-Sala in 18th-century written sources ultimately suggests the complete assimilation of the Italians' descendants into the local population.²⁵⁴

It is also worth noting that the presence of Italians in the Crimean Khanate was significant for its foreign policy, given that representatives of the Italian community, predominantly from prominent Genoese families, held key diplomatic roles in the Tatar state.²⁵⁵ A notable example among these influential persons was Giovanni Antonio Spinola, who was in diplomatic service from 1588 to 1622 and is frequently mentioned in historical documents. He actively promoted an alliance between the Crimean Khanate and the Habsburgs as well as Crimea's separation from the Ottoman Empire.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, these efforts aimed primarily at regaining Italian rights in the Northern Black Sea did not succeed, despite the Crimean Khanate's periodic support. Kefë, which housed the Ottoman administration for the entire Northeastern Black Sea area and a substantial military contingent, never returned to Genoese control and continued to serve as a military hub for the Empire for three centuries.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, Bilhorod (renamed Akkerman) and Azaq developed into key trading centers for the Northern Black Sea. Their fortifications were modified over time as well, transforming both sites into formidable and well-defended fortresses.²⁵⁸

Even though the Italians lost their former advantages in the Black Sea in the late 15th century, the arrival of Italian ceramics to the region did not cease. Since this ceramic was first identified in Crimea²⁵⁹ and Bilhorod,²⁶⁰ the number and geography of published finds have expanded. To date, Italian glazed wares have been documented in Ottoman-period contexts at five sites across Crimea: both large urban centers such as Sudak and Balaklava and smaller provincial sites including Alushta, Partenit, rural cemeteries in the village Büyük-Lambat (modern Malyi Mayak),²⁶¹ Azaq, and Bilhorod/Akkerman (Fig. 2). While the Ottoman-period deposits at these sites are generally representative, it is important to acknowledge variations in their accumulation, investigation, and analysis, and the archaeological contexts of Italian pottery finds.

Archaeological contexts

The 1475 Ottoman military campaign in Crimea left numerous material remains, including battle sites and fire-destroyed fortifications, religious buildings, elite complexes, and ordinary households.²⁶² These ruins hold evidence for the preceding period, and their excavation provides a fairly complete picture of the everyday culture of various strata of the local population before and during the Ottoman military campaign.²⁶³ Moreover, these contexts reliably

²⁵¹ Öztürk 2000; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019; 2023; Teslenko and Maiko 2020a; 2020b; Dyachkov 2017; Naumenko 2020, etc.

²⁵² For bibliography see Haivoronskyi 2008, 9.

²⁵³ Dzhanov 2021, 177-178. Regarding the Italian community 1453-1696 in Istanbul, see Ceracchi 2016.

²⁵⁴ Haivoronskyi 2008, 11-12.

²⁵⁵ See, e.g., Andreescu 2001, 163-173; Ivanich 2006.

²⁵⁶ Kołodziejczyk 2011, 458; Dzhanov 2024.

²⁵⁷ For more detail and bibliography, see Dzhanov 2021, 172-182. The end of the Ottoman rule in the Northern Black Sea region was marked by a series of Russo-Turkish wars, culminating in the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which subordinated Crimea and Azaq to the Russian Empire. Russia subsequently annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 1783 and captured Akkerman and Bessarabia during the 1806-1812 war, which concluded with the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russo-Turkish-wars>, access date 24.03.2025). These events significantly transformed the region's history, population, material culture, and urban landscapes.

²⁵⁸ Volkov 1992; Ostapchuk and Bilyayeva 2009, etc.

²⁵⁹ Teslenko 2008; 2012a.

²⁶⁰ Kravchenko 2005.

²⁶¹ Significantly more Ottoman-period sites in Crimea have been archaeologically investigated (for an overview, see Naumenko 2020), but Italian ceramics are not yet documented at other locations, including Caffa/Kefë.

²⁶² Crimea is most revealing in this case, as there is currently no information about similar material evidence of Ottoman conquests from Bilhorod and Azaq.

²⁶³ Teslenko 2021, 50; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2023; Ruev 2014, 33-56, etc.

establish a *terminus post quem* for subsequent Ottoman-era deposits.²⁶⁴ Based on their accumulation patterns, the latter can be categorized into four types.²⁶⁵

The first type encompasses *in situ* deposits resulting from long-term continuous accumulation. They include various rubbish dumps and layers associated with the prolonged use and gradual deterioration of architectural structures. This first kind of deposits also reflects the natural processes of discard and the evolution of everyday objects, thereby illustrating changes in daily culture over time. Particularly informative are the so-called *ash dumps*²⁶⁶ at two sites: in Alushta atop the ruins of the 15th-century Genoese tower Orta-Kule and in Sudak's port area inside a stone dwelling abandoned in the final quarter of the 15th century.²⁶⁷ Stratigraphic horizons at both sites accumulated successively over approximately 100-120±10 years following 1475.²⁶⁸ This category of deposits also includes certain layers associated with the partial destruction of the church building and the later burial ground on the southern periphery of Büyük-Lambat.²⁶⁹

The second type of contexts comprises short-lived dwelling complexes and various pits filled within a brief period. Their ceramic assemblages primarily reflect the contemporary market. Archaeological evidence of this type includes the remains of a stone dwelling with a pit in Partenit that was dated to the mid-16th-early 17th centuries based on coin and ceramic finds,²⁷⁰ 16th-century pits at the Alushta fortress citadel and Büyük-Lambat's burial ground,²⁷¹ two dwellings from the 15th-16th centuries in the harbor area of Sudak,²⁷² a residential area of the 16th-17th centuries on the northwestern slope of Mount Castron in Balaklava,²⁷³ the remains of a late 16th-17th centuries elite complex near Bakhchisarai,²⁷⁴ and the dwelling from the second half of the 17th-early 18th centuries at Alushta.²⁷⁵

Deposits relocated from their original position within a brief timeframe by human activity form the third type of accumulations. These include various leveling fills and similar contexts (with the latest dating being determined by the displacement time), but the deposits typically contain older mixed material. This kind of layers from the Ottoman period is frequently excavated, for instance, at Balaklava, Sudak, Alushta, Partenit, and Mangup, etc.²⁷⁶

Finally, the fourth type of mixed contexts includes repeatedly redeposited sediments irrelevant to chronological reconstruction. These are the top layers of most long-term Crimean sites with extensive human activity. The artifacts from them mainly reveal their diffusion area but not their chronological order.

The geography of finds and the archaeological context of Italian ceramics in Crimea are as follows. Sudak has yielded at least two dozen fragments of 16th century *maiolica* jugs (Fig. 12/2, 5, 6, 9, 11-14, 16-18, 22; 13/2-7).²⁷⁷ The context of seven fragments remains unclear: six were found in the fortress, likely in the 1960s (Fig. 12/5, 6, 11, 14, 17, 18), and one in a nearby settlement (Fig. 12/16). Two fragments were recovered from a late 15th-18th century layer (deposit type 4) during excavations in 1970 and 1984 of the Genoese towers of Bernabò di Franchi di Pagano (built 1414) (Fig. 13/7) and Pasquale Giudici (built 1392) (Fig. 12/2). The rest originated from the excavations in the port area in 2006-2012: one from an *ash dump* (deposit type 1) (Fig. 13/3) and others from contexts related to the use and destruction of a 15th-16th century dwelling (deposit type 2) (Fig. 12/9, 12, 13, 22; Fig. 13/2, 4-6).²⁷⁸ These finds reliably date to the transition between the Genoese and Ottoman periods.

Several shards from two closed and three open-form *maiolica* vessels came from Balaklava (Fig. 12/7, 8; 13/12-14). These artifacts were found in the fortress in deposits of types 3 and 4.²⁷⁹ Notably, no Italian vessels are mentioned in the pottery assemblage of 16th-17th century households on the northwestern slope of Mount Castron.²⁸⁰

In Alushta, six fragments from four *maiolica* jugs (Fig. 12/3, 4, 20, 21) were recovered from an *ash dump* (deposit type 1) located at the Orta-Kule tower ruins and formed shortly after its partial destruction.²⁸¹ Three fragments of

²⁶⁴ Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019; 2023.

²⁶⁵ Attention was focused on contexts with Italian ceramic finds and the relevant of these.

²⁶⁶ These are centralized domestic waste dumps saturated with ash, likely disposed of compactly from various residential areas.

²⁶⁷ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015; Aliadinova, Teslenko and Maiko 2015.

²⁶⁸ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015, 160-162; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, 300-301.

²⁶⁹ Teslenko and Lysenko 2004, 269; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, 300-301.

²⁷⁰ Aliadinova 2015.

²⁷¹ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015, 160; Teslenko and Lysenko 2004, 296; Teslenko 2012b, 242.

²⁷² Teslenko and Maiko 2020b.

²⁷³ Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, 301.

²⁷⁴ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2017.

²⁷⁵ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015, 160.

²⁷⁶ Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, 301.

²⁷⁷ Teslenko and Maiko 2020a, 408-411.

²⁷⁸ Teslenko and Maiko 2020a, 403-407; 2020b.

²⁷⁹ Ginkut 2019, 175-183, Fig. 4-7.

²⁸⁰ Ginkut 2019; Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, 301, 313.

²⁸¹ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015, 186, 190, Fig. 22/2-4.

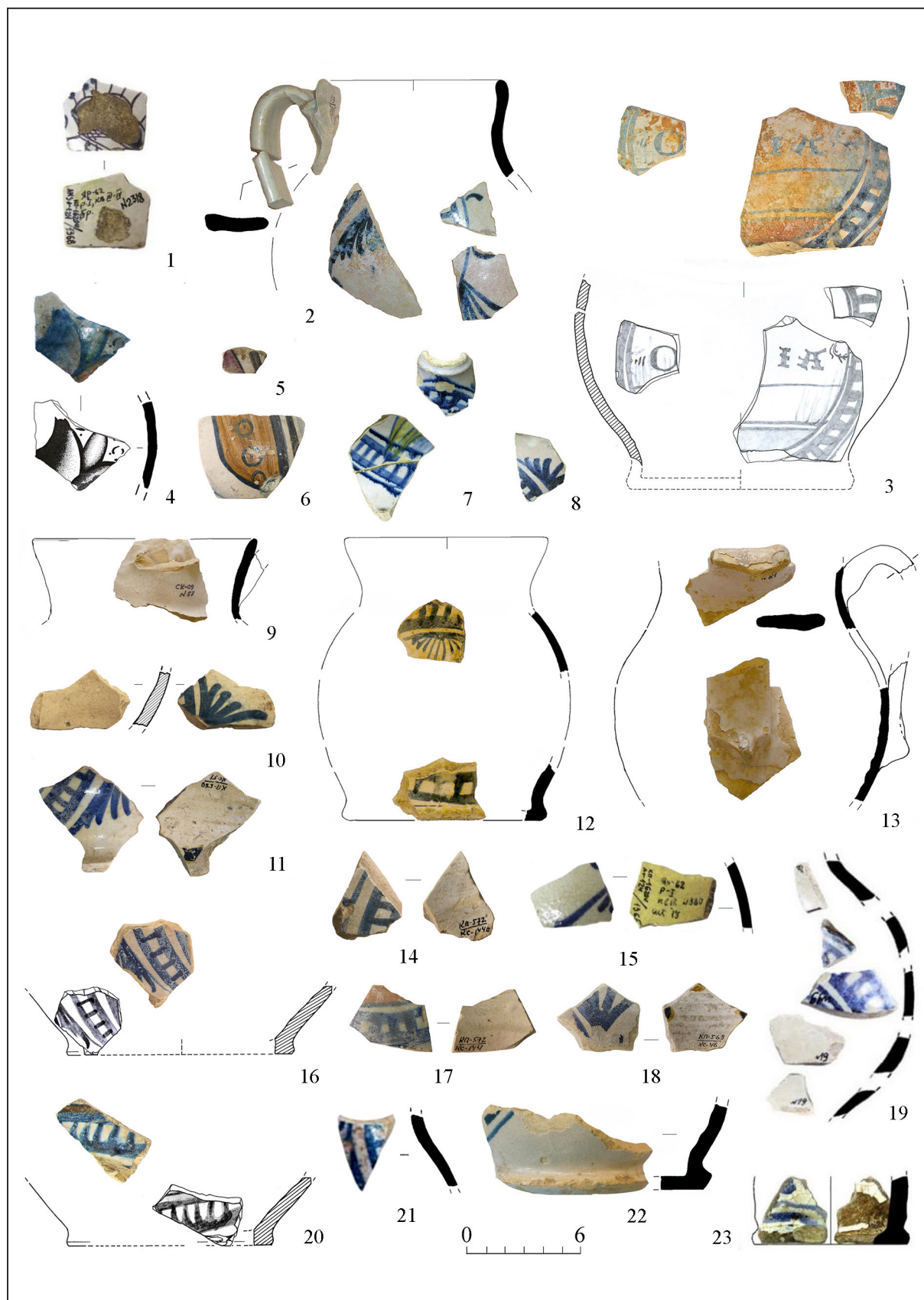


Fig. 12. Renaissance Maiolica, Severus Style. Crimea: Sudak (2, 5, 6, 9, 11-14, 16-18, 22), Alushta (3, 4, 20, 21), Balaklava (7, 8), Partenit (10); Azaq (1, 15, 19, 23). 1, 15, 19, 23 – after Gusach 2023, Fig. 2; 2, 5, 6, 9, 11-14, 16-18, 22 – after Teslenko, Maiko 2020a, Fig. 3, 4; 7, 8 – after Ginkut 2019, Fig. 5; 10 – after Aliadinova, Teslenko 2019, Fig. 5; 3, 4, 20, 21 – drawing and photo by the author.

a single jug were found in the layer of light-grey loose ashy soil that formed the base of the *ash dump* (Fig. 12/3). The *terminus post quem* of these deposits is determined by the period of tower's partial destruction in the last quarter of the 15th century. The final stage of the layer's accumulation is dated by five coins of the Crimean Khanate of the *akche* denomination: one of Sahib Giray I (1532-1550) minted at Quirk-Yeri, two of Devlet Giray I (1550-1577) minted in Krym, one of Devlet Giray I (1550-1577) minted at Quirk-Yeri, and two of Muhammad Giray II (1577-1584) also minted at Quirk-Yeri.²⁸² Consequently, the vessel fragments ended up in the dump between the 1475-1490s and the last decades of the 16th century. The remaining three fragments are scattered throughout the upper layers of the *ash dump* and may have been redeposited from earlier contexts (Fig. 12/4, 20, 21).

Two *maiolica* sherds: a jug wall and a dish rim (Fig. 12/10; 13/11), were recovered from deposit type 4 at the medieval and early modern settlement site in Partenit.²⁸³ Remarkably, no similar items were documented in the context of the 16th-17th century dwelling.²⁸⁴

A partly reconstructed *maiolica* jug was discovered at one of the cemeteries at Büyük-Lambat.²⁸⁵ It was found near a child burial alongside six 16th-17th century coins (Fig. 13/1). The vessel was likely used in memorial practices related to this burial.²⁸⁶

Italian ware finds are notably rare at Azaq and its environs, even though Ottoman-period deposits (types 1-3) have been extensively studied from the 1960s to the 2020s.²⁸⁷ Only 11 small fragments of *maiolica* vessels have been recorded (Fig. 12/1, 15, 19, 23; 13/8-10). They came from a redeposited cultural layer (type 3) that contained material from the late 15th to early 16th centuries.²⁸⁸

Bilhorod/Akkerman features substantial anthropogenic layers from the Ottoman period (1484-1806) that reach 4.0-6.4 m in depth.²⁸⁹ Despite being noted since the site's archaeological exploration in 1900, these deposits were typically removed as ballast without proper documentation. Only the most attractive artifacts, mainly complete examples of ceramics and especially *Iznik Wares*, were chosen for museum collections.²⁹⁰ Although Ottoman-period contexts were discovered at the citadel²⁹¹ and other site areas²⁹² over different years, they remained largely unstudied until the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Between 1999 and 2010, the international Southern Medieval Expedition of the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine led by S. Biliaeva carried out the first focused investigations of Ottoman-era remains.²⁹³ Excavations concentrated on the Trading Court west of the fortress²⁹⁴ and revealed a Turkish bathhouse, water barbican, and associated fortifications.²⁹⁵ Despite extensive publication of the materials with specific attention to pottery,²⁹⁶ Italian ceramics were not noted in the ceramic assemblages of the bathhouse nor in those of the barbican and other fortress areas.

All Italian ceramic finds documented before the early current century came from upper mixed layers (type 4) with Ottoman-period materials that overlay the remains of a late 13th-15th century medieval settlement northeast of the fortress walls. These include four red clay bottoms from open-form vessels with engraved decoration (Fig. 14/1-5) discovered in 1945, 1950 (Fig. 14/1, 3), and 1983 (Fig. 14/5) as well as other open-form vessels with an unrecorded

²⁸² Teslenko 2008, 73.

²⁸³ Medieval Partenit is located in the southeastern part of the modern urban-type settlement with the same name on the banks of the Ayan-Dere-Uzen River near the seashore in Southern Crimea. It is dated to the 8th(?)-16th-18th centuries. The total area of the site is about 12-15 hectares. Large-scale systematic excavations were carried out there from 1985 to 1988 under the direction of O. Parshyna. Material evidence of the Turkish supremacy period has been preserved rather fragmentarily due to active anthropogenic activity in later times (Aliadinova and Teslenko 2019).

²⁸⁴ Aliadinova 2015.

²⁸⁵ The Büyük-Lambat archaeological complex is situated on the southern Crimean coast between Alushta and Partenit. It encompasses a large medieval settlement dating from the 8th to 18th centuries and several churches with burial grounds (Teslenko and Lysenko 2004).

²⁸⁶ Teslenko 2012a, 213; 2012b, 243.

²⁸⁷ For a detailed review, see Gusach 2024, 22-32.

²⁸⁸ Gusach 2023, 67-68.

²⁸⁹ Kleiman 1979, 56-58, 62-62.

²⁹⁰ Stoliaryk 1982.

²⁹¹ Avakian 1931, 97-104; Căndea 2016.

²⁹² Kleiman 1979, 56-58, 62-62; Kravchenko 1986, 16-17.

²⁹³ Ostapchuk and Biliaeva 2009; Biliaeva and Fialko 2015; Biliaeva, Boltryk and Fialko 2022.

²⁹⁴ The terms "lower court" or "port court" are frequently found in publications, see, for example: Ostapchuk and Biliaeva 2009; for more details on the purpose of this fortress space, see Krasnozhan 2012, 216-219.

²⁹⁵ Biliaeva, Boltryk and Fialko 2022.

²⁹⁶ Biliaeva and Fialko 2017, etc. For a bibliography see Teslenko and Myronenko 2022a, 243

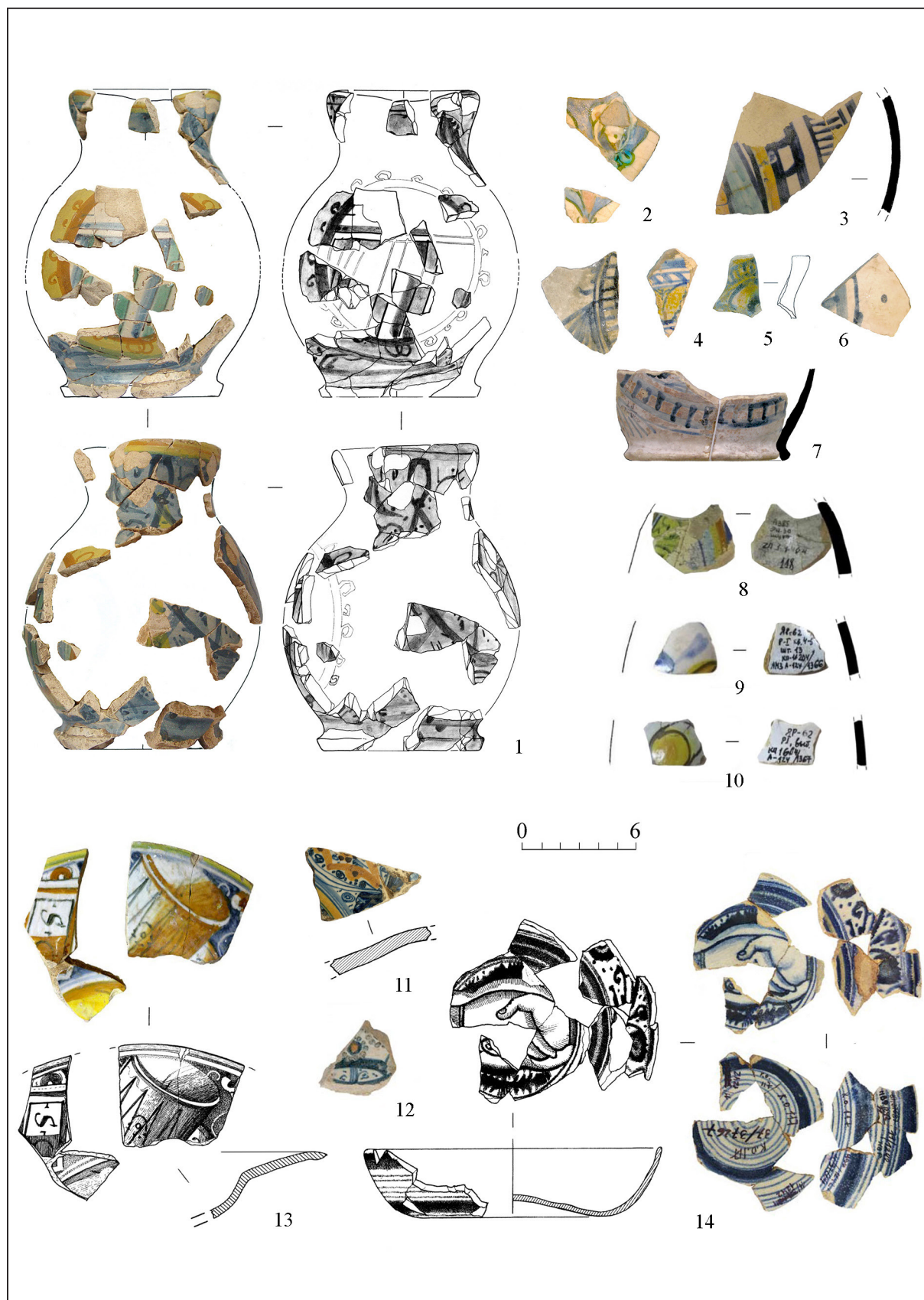


Fig. 13. Renaissance Maiolica: Severus Style (3, 6, 7, 14) and Polychrome Ware (1, 2, 4, 5, 8-13). Crimea: Büyüç-Lambat (1), Sudak (2-7), Partenit (11), Balaklava (12-14); Azaç (8-10). 1 – drawing and photo by the author; 2-7 – after Teslenko, Maiko 2020a, Fig. 4; 8-10 – after Gusach 2023, Fig. 2; 11 – after Aliadinova, Teslenko 2019, Fig. 5; 12-14 – after Ginkut 2019, Fig. 6.

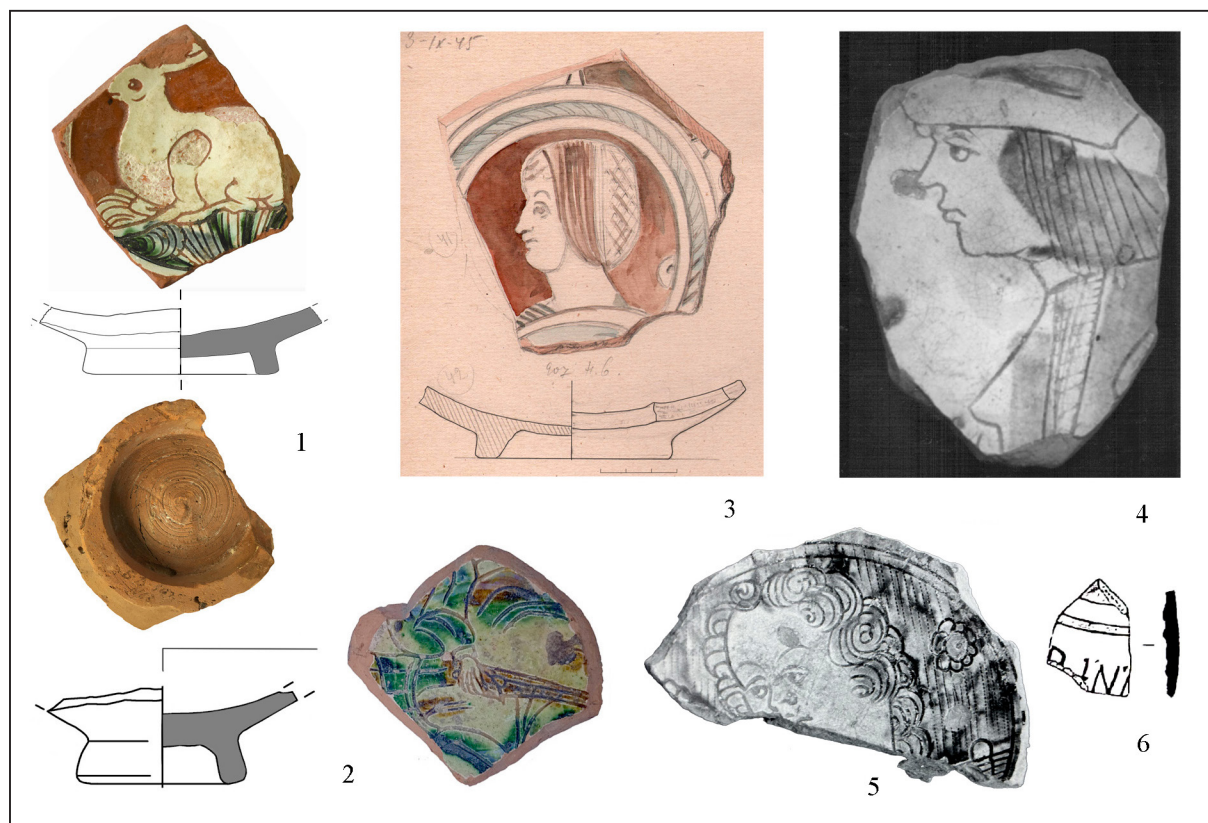


Fig. 14. Bilhorod/Akkerman. Renaissance Sgraffito Ware: *graffita rinascimentale canonica* (2, 4, 5) and *graffita cinquecentesca a fondo ribassato* (1, 3); Renaissance Maiolica (6). 1 – drawing and photo by the author; 2 – drawing and photo by O. Savelyev; 3 – from the Scientific Archive of the Institute of Archaeology of NAS of Ukraine, folder No. 1946/8; 4, 5 – after Kravchenko 2005, Fig. 2; 3; 6 – after Boguslavskiy 2010, Fig. 1.

year of discovery (Fig. 14/4).²⁹⁷ One more bowl base belonging to the same group was unearthed in 2020 at the southwestern fortress territory in the vicinity of tower 16²⁹⁸ in the upper layer (Fig. 14/2).²⁹⁹

Furthermore, a wall fragment from a *maiolica albarello* featuring the remnants of a Latin inscription in cobalt that was recovered during excavations conducted from 1996 to 2004 east of the fortress walls (also in a type 4 deposit) could be a potential Italian artifact³⁰⁰ (Fig. 14/6). The publication's author attributes it to 'Valencian semi-faïence' neither explains what this term means, nor supports his claim with a comparative analysis.³⁰¹ Closed-form vessels bearing Latin inscriptions, however, are more common for Italian *Renaissance maiolica*.³⁰² Nevertheless, without examining the actual fragment, attempts to clarify its possible origin are speculative.

Italian wares and their chronology

Ottoman-era Italian ceramic finds in the Northern Black Sea region mainly consist of *Renaissance Maiolica* (*maiolica rinascimentale*) and to a lesser extent *Renaissance Sgraffito* (*graffita rinascimentale*) of diverse types and origins. These groups are distributed unevenly across the sites. Thus far, the first group is documented in Crimea and at Azaq whereas the second is recorded at Bilhorod/Akkerman.

The vast majority of *Renaissance maiolica* finds are ware with blue as the predominant or only color in its painted decoration. Such finds are often comparable to the *Severus Style Ware* (*stile Severo*), or *SSW*, that encompasses several families distinguished by decorative features.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ Dmitrov 1955, Tab. 1/17; Kravchenko 1998, 131, Fig. 2; 2005.

²⁹⁸ For tower numbering see Krasnozhan 2012, Fig. 351.

²⁹⁹ I extend my gratitude to O. Savelyev, who led the work, for granting permission to publish this artifact.

³⁰⁰ Boguslavskiy 2010, 175-176.

³⁰¹ Boguslavskiy 2010, 176, Fig. 1/7.

³⁰² See, e.g., Richez 1993, Fig. 43-44; Amouric, Richez and Vallauri 1999, 62-63, Fig. 128; 130-133, etc.

³⁰³ The etymology of the term and the categorization of *maiolica* within this style into different families, including related classification questions, are discussed in Geliche 1988, 72-73, 95-97.

The earliest examples in the Northern Black Sea assemblages are likely two small fragments of jugs (a wall and bottom pieces) from Azaq, which tentatively have been associated with the *Relief zaffera* family (Fig. 12/1, 23).³⁰⁴ *Relief zaffera* (*La zaffera a rilievo*) or *Zaffera* (“sapphire”) is a type of *maiolica* characterized by relief cobalt blue (or dark green) glaze with manganese dark brown details and outlines on a white tin-glazed ground. This pottery was produced in numerous Emilia-Romagna workshops (Rimini, Imola, Faenza, etc.) from the late 14th century and disseminated throughout and beyond the region, including in Tuscany, Umbria, and upper Lazio, mostly within the 15th century and at least until the 1450s-1460s.³⁰⁵

One Azaq sherd demonstrates remnants of manganese and blue relief painting featuring blue dots on thin, short, purplish-brown stems (Fig. 12/1). Another fragment displays traces of slightly protruding blue relief (Fig. 12/23). The exiguous size of these fragments, however, precludes any confident assertions regarding their attribution and chronology. Since both come from the third type of early Ottoman deposit, the possibility of redeposition from a preceding context cannot be dismissed.

The majority of *SSW* finds in Crimea and Azov consist of jugs decorated with a ladder medallion (*medaglione a scaletta*) flanked by thick fan-like palms. Over 16-17 of these finds came from Sudak, four from Alushta, one from Partenit; Balaklava and Azov each yielded two items (Fig. 2, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 18, 19, 21, 22; 13/3, 6, 7). The most abundant are fragments bearing remnants of blue (cobalt) ladder designs (Fig. 12/2, 8, 22; 13/6, 7). Additionally, seven sherds exhibit blue elements combined with dark brown, yellow, or manganese paints (Fig. 12/3-7, 17, 20; Fig. 13/3), which are typical for the so-called *Gotico* or *Gotico-Floreali* family.³⁰⁶ The two jugs are represented only by unpainted fragments of their necks, bodies, and handles, which could be parts of decorated vessels (Fig. 12/9, 13). The albarello wall fragment from Bilhorod/Akkerman (Fig. 14/7) may also be preliminary attributed to *SSW*, but this assumption remains subject to further investigation.

Images within the ladder medallion could be varied. The most common ones include floral motifs,³⁰⁷ images of birds,³⁰⁸ heraldic symbols,³⁰⁹ inscriptions mentioning God (e.g. *AMADIO*, *LAVSDIO*) or the contents of the vessel (e.g. *BONOVINO*, etc.),³¹⁰ and the Christogram IHS in the Gothic style combined with a cross.³¹¹ Among the less common imagery are animals (e.g., rabbits, feline predators, deer, etc.)³¹² and bust-length female (*belle donne*) or male portraits,³¹³ etc.

Due to the significant fragmentation of the jugs from Crimea and Azaq, the central subject of the medallion design remains unclear. Only the decorative idea on the vessel from Alushta can be partially reconstructed (Fig. 12/3).³¹⁴ In this instance, the space inside the ladder medallion is divided by horizontal lines into sections of different sizes. One section contains a single-line inscription in Latin letters along its diametrical axis. Only three of the letters have been preserved: “O” is the first, and “IA” are the last two. Another two or three letters are missing, making the entire word difficult to read. A small plant sprig marks the inscription’s end. A broad reddish-brown stripe occupies the lower section of the medallion. Additionally, four more jugs fragments exhibit floral motifs (Fig. 12/4-7). Thus, the color scheme and main decorative features of the fragments mentioned above suggest that a significant portion of them can likely be attributed to the *Gotico* or *Gotico-Floreali* family. This stylistic group is generally dated to the late 15th and early 16th centuries and associated with workshops located in northern and central Italy, notably the Emilia-Romagna and Marche.³¹⁵ Such ceramics were widely diffused beyond Italy, reaching the Western Black Sea region (from which they traveled extensively into the Balkans along water and land routes³¹⁶),

³⁰⁴ Gusach 2023, 67-68, Fig. 2/8, 14.

³⁰⁵ Moore 1984, 477-478; Gelichi 1986b, 152-157; Gelichi 1988, 72-97.

³⁰⁶ Gelichi 1988, 98-102; Gelichi 1991b; Bojani 1997, 13-22.

³⁰⁷ Gelichi 1988, 98-102; Gelichi 1991b, 29-30, Fig. 18; Lo Mele 2010, 83, Fig. 8.

³⁰⁸ Gelichi 1991b, 29, Fig. 17; Gelichi, Guštin 2005, 69, Fig. 6.29; Guionova 2015, Fig. 4/5.

³⁰⁹ Amouric, Richez and Vallauri 1999, 64, Fig. 141.

³¹⁰ Richez 1993, Fig. 43-44; Amouric, Richez and Vallauri 1999, 62-63, Fig. 128; 130-133.

³¹¹ Amouric, Richez and Vallauri 1999, 62-63, Fig. 129; 136; Blake and Hughes 2003, Fig. 3; 8; Jékely 2008, Fig. 3; Lo Mele 2010, 83, Tav. III/3.

³¹² Poole 1995, 150, n. 213.

³¹³ Ravanelli Guidotti 2000; Asioli Martini 2017, 11, n. 13; Lo Mele 2010, 85, Fig. 9.

³¹⁴ Teslenko 2008, 73.

³¹⁵ Bojani 1997, 13-22; Gelichi 1988, 66; 1991, 29-30; Gelichi and Guštin, 2005, 69.

³¹⁶ Guionova 2015, 685, 688, Fig. 4; Stănică 2008.

the Adriatic coast,³¹⁷ Mainland Greece, the Aegean islands, Crete, and Cyprus,³¹⁸ the Southern France,³¹⁹ and Northwestern Europe.³²⁰

Nevertheless, the imports of *SSW* to the Northern Black Sea region were not limited to these mass-produced exemplars. More elaborate wares, such as the bowl with a symbol of Eternal Faith discovered in Balaklava in 2012-2013,³²¹ also occasionally reached the area³²² (Fig. 13/14). The bowl has a semi-ellipsoidal form with rounded walls and a slightly concave base. Its rim measures 15 cm in diameter, the bottom 10 cm, and height 4 cm. Its inner and outer surfaces are painted with blue (cobalt). The exterior is decorated with concentric circles composed of fine and broad lines. The central medallion on the obverse shows a handshake (“*dextrarum iunctio*”) of two right male hands set within a symbolic radiance. The medallion is enclosed by multiple concentric circles and a border with a floral design.

Since antiquity and through the Renaissance, the handshake is an allegory for love, fidelity, and concord. Depictions can include pairs of male hands as well as male and female combinations. In ceramic decoration, they are often flanked by rays of light, flames, a crown, and/or symbolic inscriptions, e.g., “*Amore*” (Love) or “*F. E.*” for “*Fede Eterna*” (Eternal Faith). Ceramics bearing this type of symbolism, such as bowls, plates (“*coppe d’amore*”, “*piatti amatori*”), jugs and albarelli, were manufactured in workshops of various northern and central Italian sites, including Faenza, Gubbio, Deruta, and Montelupo.³²³ Considering its color scheme, style and decorative features, the vessel from Balaklava can be attributed to the Faenza production of the late 15th to the early 16th centuries.³²⁴

Polychrome Maiolica Ware (*maioliche policrome rinascimentale*), or *PMW*, is less common. Several fragmented closed and open-form vessels associated with this group have been found in the Northern Black Sea region. Specifically, four fragments belonging to two jugs came from Sudak (Fig. 13/2, 4, 5), three possibly from a single vessel from Azaq (Fig. 13/8-10), and one jug from Büyük-Lambat (Fig. 13/1). Three fragmented plates have also been recovered at Cembalo/Balaklava (Fig. 13/12, 13) and Partenit (Fig. 13/11).

The shape and decoration of Büyük-Lambat’s finds could be partially reconstructed (Fig. 13/1). It is a small vessel with a rounded body, a low neck that has been deformed to create a spout, and a low base. The total height is 16 cm, the height of the neck is 3.6 cm; the neck’s size 7.7 x 7.9 cm, the vessel’s body diameter approximately 12 cm, and the diameter of its base 8.5 cm. The jug is painted in dark and light blue, yellow, orange, turquoise, and dark brown (manganese). The central composition of its decoration is based on a medallion with a three-color border and is located on the front of the body. The medallion is filled with pairs of blue and green vertical and horizontal stripes separated by thin dark brown lines on a white background. The remaining space features blue decorative motifs on light blue. Professor Gelichi attributed the jug to a Northern Italian provenance and dated it to the mid-to-late 16th century.

The vessel was discovered during excavations of a burial yard near the ruins of a medieval Christian church on the southern outskirts of Büyük Lambat. The majority of the jug’s fragments were found in a compact area of approximately 1.5 m² in the vicinity of the northeastern part of a child’s burial (both outside and inside the grave) that was situated a meter from the church’s northwestern wall.³²⁵ Six coins were discovered in the same stratigraphic horizon. Three of these have been identified precisely as being from the Moscow state during the reign of Ivan IV (1533-1584) and the Crimean Khanate during the reigns of Sahib Giray (1532-1550) and Muhammad Giray IV (1654-1666). Three more, presumably from the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire, have been dated to the 15th-17th centuries.³²⁶ So, the period between the jug’s manufacture in Italy and its settling in a provincial Crimean cemetery therefore could have exceeded fifty years or more.

³¹⁷ Gelichi and Guštin 2005, 69-73; Gelichi 2016, 159, Fig. 11.

³¹⁸ Vroom 2003, 172-173; Von Wartburg 2002, 513, Fig. 12; Von Wartburg 2013, Fig. 3: 3, 4; Vionis 2012, 243-244; Vionis 2016, p. 367, Fig. 14/c1-c3.

³¹⁹ Richez 1993, 50-51.

³²⁰ Blake and Hughes 2003, 450, Fig. 8.

³²¹ A more precise context of the find remains unclear. The authors of excavations S. Adaksina and V. Myts, mention only “*the edge of square 8*” and “*a layer with charcoal*” in the area of the north-eastern fortification line of the Cembalo fortress. Notably, they do not provide further details regarding the deposit’s chronological position or the related archaeological material (Ginkut 2019, 178).

³²² Ginkut 2019, 177-178, Fig. 11/7.

³²³ Ravanelli Guidotti 1990, p. 51, Fig. 84a; Lo Mele 2010, 83, Fig. 7; Sannipoli 2010, 162 n. 2.27; Asioli Martini 2017, 46, n. 50, 51; Wilson 2017, 256, n. 114.

³²⁴ See e.g. Lo Mele 2015, 296. I also express my gratitude to Professor Sauro Geliche for help with this attribution.

³²⁵ Some fragments were found as far as 3 meters to the southwest of the main cluster of fragments in later strata. This dispersion is likely a result of the substantial disturbance of cultural remains (both vertically and horizontally) that occurred while the complex was in use (Teslenko and Lysenko 2004, 269).

³²⁶ Teslenko 2008, 75-76.

Fragments of other closed vessels and one bowl display remnants of floral motifs (Fig. 13/8-10, 12), including those within a light blue ladder medallion (Fig. 13/4, 5). This medallion is notably more delicate than those found on *SSW*. Nevertheless, the sherds are too small to fully reconstruct the vessels' design, which impedes their precise dating. Polychrome decoration generally became widely adopted in Italian *maiolica*, especially in the northern and central regions, beginning in the late 15th and reaching its peak throughout the 16th century.³²⁷ Thus, this chronological frame could apply to the fragments above.

By contrast, the provenance and chronology of the other two *MW* examples could be relatively well-determined. One small fragment of a wide-brimmed plate from Partenit, decorated with orange and blue “ovals and rhombuses” (Fig. 13/11),³²⁸ shows direct analogies to the production of Montelupo ceramic workshops in Tuscany from the early 16th century.³²⁹ It can therefore be attributed to *Montelupo Ware*. The *maiolica* from this workshop enjoyed extensive distribution across the Mediterranean mainly from the early 16th to the 17th centuries and reached Northern Europe and the Americas.³³⁰ Nevertheless, the presence of *Montelupo Ware* on the Northern Black Sea coast was notably limited, indicating that the region was largely outside of this commodity's circulation.

The second artifact is a plate's upper section featuring a broad horizontal rim and adorned with an elaborate polychrome (blue-green-yellow) painted decoration (Fig. 13/13).³³¹ The decorative elements represented by the military drum and ribbons bearing an inscription with the preserved letter “S” (possibly part of *S.P.Q.R. - Senatus Populusque Romanus*) are indicative of the “*trofei*” stylistic group, representing military trophies that symbolize victory and prestige.³³² Such subjects are most commonly encountered in the *maiolica* of the Duchy of Urbino (Castel Durante, Urbino, or Pesaro), although they are also attested in wares from other workshops.³³³ The design elements on the Balaklava fragments exhibit a close affinity to *Castel Durante Ware* (*CDW*) dating from the mid-to-second half of the 16th century.³³⁴ This makes a relatively sure connection possible.

The *Renaissance Sgraffito* documented at Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy/Akkerman is represented by the *Polychrome Sgraffito Ware* family with human and animal depictions (Fig. 14).³³⁵ Green and brown or brown and blue paint highlights the incised patterns. The glaze is transparent, ranging from colorless to a slight yellowish tint. These items demonstrate two variations of the engraved decoration technique.

Three of them could be associated with *graffita rinascimentale canonica* (Fig. 14/2, 4, 5) that commonly dated between the mid-15th and the third quarter of the 16th centuries.³³⁶ One of these displays elements of a full-bodied, striding human figure facing right and holding what appears to be an arquebus or musket (?) in his right hand; the figure is framed by stylized vegetation (Fig. 14/2). Another fragment depicts a profile portrait of a young man with straight long hair, wearing a headdress, and facing left (Fig. 14/4). The third shows a picture of a young man with curly hair who is turned in a leftward three-quarter view (Fig. 14/5). The background is filled with dotted lines, the so-called *campitura a rotella* motif, and enriched with two auspicious rosettes on both sides of the portrait. The lower section of the fragment shows several horizontal lines, probably details of the so-called *hortus conclusus* (*the closed garden*) motif. It like the two preceding ones is typical for *graffita rinascimentale canonica*. While precise parallels for the first image have not yet been found, the second and third examples show significant similarities to *graffiti rinascimentale* produced in Venice or the Veneto from the late 15th to the first half of the 16th centuries.³³⁷

Two additional base fragments exemplify *graffita cinquecentesca a fondo ribassato*, which integrates background removal around a central medallion in the so-called *champlevé* technique with fine-line engraving to achieve intricate detail (Fig. 14/1, 3). One base retains an image of a hare or rabbit seated on a green-tinted clump of grass (Fig. 14/1). Another features a female bust portrait in profile (facing left) that is enclosed in a triple circle (Fig. 14/3). In this instance, brown and cobalt blue were used to color the incised design. Given that cobalt blue is characteristic of Veneto lagoon production from the early 16th century,³³⁸ this fragment can be dated to that period.

³²⁷ See e.g.: Wilson and Syson 2016, 8-9.

³²⁸ Teslenko and Aliadinova 2019, Fig. 5/6.

³²⁹ Berti 1986; Marini 2014, 124-126, n. 61; Anversa 2016, 70-73, n. 14; Blake 2021a, 143-145, Fig. 1.

³³⁰ Blake 2021a.

³³¹ Ginkut 2019, 177-180.

³³² Piccolpasso 1857, Fig. 93, Tav. 25.

³³³ Fiocco and Gherardi 1997; 2004.

³³⁴ Fiocco and Gherardi 1997, n. 14-16.

³³⁵ Kravchenko 2005. More comprehensive analysis of the entire Bilhorod/Akkerman excavation collection will probably reveal more Italian *Polychrome Sgraffito Ware* examples in the future.

³³⁶ Gelichi 1987, 37-39; Munarini 1990, 78-96; Saccardo 2000, 61-63; Saccardo 2022, 180-182, etc.

³³⁷ Munarini 1990, 78-94; Saccardo 2022, 180-182.

³³⁸ Saccardo 2000, 61-63; 2001, 107-108.

Bust portraits and animal depictions created with the *a fondo ribassato* technique are prominent in the ceramic artistic output of Northern Italy, especially the Veneto region, from the late 15th or early 16th century.³³⁹ These objects are associated with the *genre amatorio* or *gamelii*. It is commonly believed that couples exchanged these exquisite ceramics as gifts for engagements or weddings. Beyond images of beautiful ladies, youths, or angels, symbolic animals alluding to marital qualities were also common: the dog for fidelity, the deer for nobility, the rabbit for fertility, and so on.³⁴⁰ Consequently, the Italian ceramics discovered at Akkerman suggest a function as luxury items for specific contexts rather than as utilitarian objects. In its various forms, *Renaissance Sgraffito* has a wide geographical distribution, primarily across modern Greece,³⁴¹ Cyprus,³⁴² Turkey,³⁴³ the eastern Adriatic coast,³⁴⁴ Egypt,³⁴⁵ and the Near East.³⁴⁶ Akkerman's evidence now also confirms its presence in the northwestern Black Sea region.

To conclude the second part of this paper, it can be said that the analyzed data highlight clear regional differences in the supply of Italian ceramics to Akkerman and the Crimea-Azov area. It is notable that Veneto pottery has not yet been documented in Ottoman Crimea and at Azaq, and tableware from other Italian workshops (except for a sherd from a single *maiolica* vessel bearing an inscription) remains unrecorded in Akkerman. The involvement of traders from different Italian regions, including Genoese merchants in Crimea and Azov, and Venetian in Akkerman, offers a potential explanation. Historical records do not contradict this idea.

Written sources primarily reveal Italian commercial activity, including the ceramics trade, in the Black Sea region in an early Ottoman timeframe. As an example, A. Galenko cites the *Kefé Tax Debt Register* (1487-1490), which records the ship of a Frank named Lorenzo that transported bowls and jugs from Azak to Tana. The same register also notes that Domenico, son of Bernabek, participated in this ceramic trade, but his cargo was carried on the ship of the Muslim captain Ahmed Celebi.³⁴⁷ While the origin of these individuals (Genoa, Venice, Crimea, Caucasus, etc.) and whether they traded specifically in Italian ceramics or in goods of diverse provenance (the latter being more probable) is unclear, their mention nonetheless confirms Italian participation in Black Sea pottery commerce during the late 15th century.

The data presented below offers certain insights into the specialization and geographical reach of Genoese and Venetian mercantile activities. A. Ragona's research demonstrates that in the 1550s and 1560s, Castel Durante potters supplied substantial quantities of their export-oriented maiolica wares to Genoese merchants in Sicily for subsequent sale.³⁴⁸ The find of a dish from this workshop in Cembalo/Balaklava could indicate that their activities potentially extended to this region as well. E. Todorova provides information about the trade of Venetians from Crete (Candiote) with the Western Black Sea area, particularly the Danube estuary, during at least in the mid- to late 15th century.³⁴⁹ Given this, it is quite possible that neighbouring Bilhorod/Akkerman also fell within their sphere of interest.

The chronology of Italian tableware from the Northern Black Sea region indicates that this commerce, at least as it has left ceramic evidence, was limited to early Ottoman times. Both analogies and archaeological data suggest that the upper chronological limit for Italian ceramic finds from Akkerman, Crimea, and Azov do not generally extend beyond the mid- or end of the 16th century. The later archaeological record has thus far yielded only seven smoking pipes from Azaq and its vicinity that have been dated to the late 17th-18th centuries and provisionally attributed to Venetian manufacture.³⁵⁰ The author of the cited publication suggests a possible link between these items and sailors, whose identities are hard to determine.

Meanwhile, the reduced supply of Italian tableware to the Northern Black Sea region cannot be attributed to the cessation of relevant ceramics workshops or a decline in the ceramic trade, as these activities persisted into the subsequent century.³⁵¹ The diffusion area for such ceramics notably included territories under Ottoman control like the Balkans.³⁵² Therefore, the disappearance of Italian ceramics in the Northern Black Sea region may have resulted from political and economic factors specific to that area.

³³⁹ Munarini 1990, 97-104.

³⁴⁰ Saccardo 2022, 181-182.

³⁴¹ Michailidou 1993; Vroom 2003, 170-171; Vionis 2012, 244, Fig. 8/11; Vionis 2016, 366-367, Fig. 14; Yangaki 2021, 93-96.

³⁴² Von Warburg 2013, 530-531; François 2024.

³⁴³ Hayes 1992, 265, Fig. 47/a.

³⁴⁴ Vroom 2005, 143.

³⁴⁵ François 1999, 77-81.

³⁴⁶ Stern 2022a; Stern 2022b.

³⁴⁷ Halenko 2005, 502-503.

³⁴⁸ Ragona 1976, 106-109.

³⁴⁹ Todorova 1981, 232, 235-236.

³⁵⁰ Gusach 2023, 69, Fig. 2/1-4.

³⁵¹ Blake and Hughes 2003, 447-453; Blake 2021b; Yangaki 2021, 87-90, 98-99, etc.

³⁵² Guionova 2015, 688.

Conclusion

To summarize, the introduction of Italian ceramics to the Northern Black Sea region began in the late 13th century and continued intermittently until the late 16th century. This process had specific characteristics before and after the last quarter of the 15th century, which corresponded to pre-Ottoman and Ottoman periods. This research makes it clear that even during the peak of Italian merchant activity in the Northern Black Sea from the late 13th until the late 15th century, archaeological evidence for this activity in the form of ceramics is scarce. Pottery from Italian lands was not circulated as a commodity but was mostly associated with personal belongings brought by travellers and marked the presence of their owners or items delivered to a limited group of consumers, most likely Italians for their own needs.

During the same period, Italians evidently played a significant role in supplying ceramics to the Northern Black Sea region, primarily from the Byzantine cultural area and then Spain. They also widely distributed ceramics originating from Crimean workshops, initially Solkhat and its surroundings and potentially Sudak and followed by goods from their Caffa and Cembalo trading posts. Italians delivered these commodities both to inland Eastern Europe (until the mid-14th century) and across the entire Black Sea area and beyond (the second half of the 14th into the 15th century). Consequently, they facilitated the economically beneficial expansion of commercial pottery production in their trading centers. The direct impact of Italian traditions on local pottery techniques was minimal, however, and observable primarily in the construction of the pottery kiln at Caffa and local potters' adoption of some Italian tableware shapes in Crimea and Azaq.

During the Ottoman period after Italians lost their preferential status in the Black Sea market, the presence of Italian ceramics became more prominent in the region. In the early stage of Ottoman rule at least until the mid-16th century, Italian ceramics were even more common in Crimea than luxurious Ottoman *Iznik Ware* (*IW*)³⁵³. It appears that *IW* began arriving in Crimea in significant quantities no earlier than the mid- to late 16th century, which is nearly half a century later than Italian ceramics. At least in Sudak's port area structures, the context from the late 15th-early 16th centuries already contains fragments of *Renaissance Maiolica* jugs but lacks *IW*³⁵⁴. The lower levels of both dumps at Alushta and Sudak have only one fragmented bowl of *IW*³⁵⁵ in each location³⁵⁶.

Deposits from the mid- to late 16th century already contain five *IW* vessels (one jug and four bowls dating from the second quarter to the mid- and late 16th centuries) found alongside sherds of two *maiolica* jugs³⁵⁷. From approximately the mid- to late 16th century, *IW* constitutes a noticeable part of the ceramic assemblages both in Crimea, especially within the territory of the Crimean Khanate³⁵⁸, and at Azaq³⁵⁹. In Bilhorod, however, *IW* was well-represented from the beginning of the Ottoman period in archaeological contexts of the first and second types³⁶⁰. This is likely due to the presence of a large Ottoman community in the city shortly after the Turks' conquest. So, it seems that Italian ceramics occupied a niche in the Northern Black Sea tableware market only during the early phase of Ottoman rule.

Consequently, the evidence provided leads to the following observations. First, during the early Ottoman period Italian ceramics appear to have been imported into the Northern Black Sea region primarily as a trade commodity. *Renaissance Maiolica* constituted the majority of vessels arriving in Crimea and Azaq whereas *Renaissance Sgraffito* was mainly destined for Akkerman. Sudak received the largest share of these shipments, mostly small *maiolica* jugs featuring a *ladder* motif, while smaller amounts went to Cembalo/Balaklava and Azaq. It remains important to note the current lack of data for Kefé. Individual specimens have been discovered along the southern coast, the area formerly under Genoese influence. The topography of finds in Sudak indicates that the primary consumers of these goods inhabited the port area. Several dwellings there endured the Ottoman invasion and remained in use, with minor modifications, until the end of the 16th century³⁶¹.

The presence of Italian maiolica indicates ongoing trade in this area from the late Genoese into the early Ottoman period, a tendency to maintain commercial ties with Italians, and the financial capacity of harbor area residents to purchase such wares. Consequently, Sudak and likely Balaklava/Cembalo were of interest to such goods' suppliers. Balaklava has also revealed more refined examples, such as a bowl with a handshake motif and a *trophy* style dish.

³⁵³ For more detail about this ceramic group, see, e.g.: Atasoy and Raby 1989; Hayes 1992, 245.

³⁵⁴ Teslenko and Maiko 2020b, 295-298.

³⁵⁵ Both belong to type IB according to Hayes 1992: 245, dated back to 1500-1530.

³⁵⁶ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2015, 186, Fig. 22/1; Aliadinova, Teslenko and Maiko 2015, 489, Fig. 19/1.

³⁵⁷ Teslenko and Maiko 2020b, 304-306.

³⁵⁸ Aliadinova and Teslenko 2017.

³⁵⁹ Gusach 2017, 585-595, Fig. 2, 3, 6, 7.

³⁶⁰ Beliaeva and Fialko 2017.

³⁶¹ Teslenko and Maiko 2020b, 304-306.

Both wares are extraordinary for Crimea. They could have come to Balaclava as a special (diplomatic?) gift, for instance.

Secondly, Italian ceramics typically constitute a minor and comparatively short-lived (the late 15th to late 16th centuries) proportion of local ceramic assemblages in the Northern Black Sea region. This stands in contrast to other areas under Ottoman rule. In the Balkans, for example, Italian wares represented a more substantial and long-lasting segment of imported ceramics (late 15th-17th centuries)³⁶².

Thirdly, the presented data likely indicates Italian efforts to re-establish their presence in former markets, primarily in Crimea and at Azaq, in the decades following 1475. These intentions were further supported by diplomats from the Latin community who had found refuge in the Crimean Khanate and their kin in the Caucasus. However, by the late 16th and early 17th centuries, this interest seems to have declined. Possible reasons include increasing difficulties in relations with the Ottoman Empire and a reduction in both the population size and financial resources of the local community. Archaeology at least indicates the decline of anthropogenic activity in Sudak's port area by the late 16th-early 17th century³⁶³. Causes might be found in the unfavorable tax policies of local Turkish officials and the precarious military-political situation on the Crimean coast due to raids by the Zaporozhian and Don Cossacks and the Nogais, which began from the late 16th century and intensified in the 1620s. Altogether, these factors ultimately led to the population's inland migration on the peninsula³⁶⁴. The diminishing interest of Italians in Crimea was also likely due to the gradual erosion of connections with their descendants from Crimea and the Caucasus. By the 18th century, this group had fully assimilated into the local population, leaving a trace of their origin only in the "*Dzhenevizler*" (Genoese) nickname, which was used until recently for residents of the Foti-Sala village³⁶⁵.

Undeniably, further archaeological and historical research still holds significant promise for revealing more detailed aspects of trade connections and cross-cultural interactions involving Italians in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Black Sea region.

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³⁶² Guionova 2015, 685, 687-688.

³⁶³ Teslenko and Maiko 2020b, 304-306.

³⁶⁴ For more details, see Dzhanov 2016.

³⁶⁵ Haivoronskyi 2008, 12.

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