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CRIMEAN MEDIEVAL GLAZED POTTERY IN VARNA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS, BULGARIA¹

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MARIYA MANOLOVA-VOYKOVA
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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the diffusion of Crimean glazed ceramics within Varna and its surroundings during the 14th and 15th centuries. Throughout this period, the Black Sea functioned as a “maritime international highway”, linking, among others, the Bulgarian coast with the Genoese colonies of Crimean Gazaria. Through typological and comparative analysis of pottery from urban sites and coastal fortresses, this research identifies glazed wares originating primarily from Southern Crimean workshops. The number of finds in and around Varna indicates that Crimean ceramics were an important part of the local ceramic assemblages from around the mid- and late 14th century, despite robust local production. Furthermore, these goods could be classified as mass-produced commodities rather than luxury items, and most likely arrived as supplementary cargo, primarily linked to expanding Genoese commercial interests. Notably, these trade networks, becoming remarkable during the Despotate of Dobruja, flourished under early Ottoman rule in Varna. Ceramic finds suggest this activity did not wane until the 1475 Ottoman conquest of Crimea.

RÉSUMÉ : CÉRAMIQUES MÉDIÉVALES GLAÇURÉE DE CRIMÉE À VARNA ET DANS SES ENVIRONS, EN BULGARIE

Cette étude examine la diffusion des céramiques glaçurées de Crimée à Varna et dans ses environs aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles. Durant cette période, la mer Noire a fait office d’« axe maritime international », reliant, entre autres, le littoral bulgare aux colonies génoises de la Gazarie criméenne. À travers une analyse typologique et comparative des poteries issues de sites urbains et de forteresses côtières, cette recherche identifie des pièces provenant principalement des ateliers du sud de la Crimée. Le nombre de découvertes indique que ces céramiques constituaient une part importante du mobilier local dès le milieu ou la fin du XIV^e siècle, malgré une production locale robuste. En outre, ces produits peuvent être classés comme des marchandises de grande consommation plutôt que comme des objets de luxe, et ils arrivaient probablement en tant que cargaison supplémentaire liée aux intérêts commerciaux génois. Remarquables sous le Despotat de Dobroudja, ces réseaux d’échanges ont prospéré au début de la domination ottomane à Varna. Les découvertes archéologiques suggèrent que cette activité ne s’est pas essouffée avant la conquête ottomane de la Crimée en 1475.

KEYWORDS: Black Sea region, 14th-15th century, Varna and environs, Crimea, Crimean glazed pottery, trade networks

MOTS CLÉS : La région de la mer Noire, XIV^e-XV^e siècles, Varna et ses environs, la Crimée, céramique glaçurée de Crimée, réseaux commerciaux

Introduction

In the Late Middle Ages, Crimea’s major urban centers, notably the Golden Horde’s Solkhat (modern Saryi Krym) and its environs, former Byzantine Sougdaia (Sudak), Genoese Caffa (Theodosia), and Cembalo (Balaklava), fueled by their rapidly expanding economies, also emerged as prolific producers and suppliers of glazed ceramics (fig. 1/I). Much of this local craft was intended for export, with the Genoese, firmly established in Crimea, serving as the primary intermediaries. Consequently, Crimean glazed pottery became a diagnostic marker of Genoese commercial activity.

¹ This paper linked to the SAFE project of Iryna Teslenko.



Fig. 1. Maps of the main sites mentioned in the text

I – The Bulgarian coast, indicating sites where Crimean pottery was discovered;

II – The location of glazed ceramics workshops, and evidence related to this production in Crimea. Author: I. Teslenko

Production and trading patterns remained fluid, evolving alongside economic and geopolitical trends. While the market initially favored Eastern European regions within the Golden Horde's sphere of influence (late 13th to mid-14th century), distribution later expanded toward the Black Sea and beyond to the Eastern Mediterranean basins in the second half of the 14th through the late 15th centuries. Simultaneously, by the mid-14th century, primary pottery production migrated from the inland Golden Horde Solkhat to the coastal Genoese possessions of Caffa and Cembalo, where output reached its zenith between the mid-14th century and 1475.²

Despite the fact that Crimean wares became one of the main commercial ceramic commodities in the Black Sea region through this period, many questions remain about the precise boundaries and dynamics of Crimean glazed pottery's external markets. Data on the distribution of Crimean ceramics are most abundant in Azraq/Tana (modern Azov, Rostov region, Russia) at the mouth of the Don River, in the Golden Horde's Eastern European territories, and in medieval Bilhorod/Moncastro (modern Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, Odesa region, Ukraine) at the mouth of the Dnister (fig. 1). In Azraq, these imports are recorded from the late 13th and early 14th centuries, initially comprising 20-30% of local glazed pottery.³ This proportion remained significant even as local manufacturing evolved. By the 15th century, after local production had stopped, Crimean imports constituted as much as 90% of the glazed finds.⁴ High concentrations are also noted in 15th-century Bilhorod (up to 80%) and at the Dnieprov's'ke-2 site, usually associated with the Genoese trading post of Illice in the lower reaches of the Dnieper, where Crimean ware was the dominant ceramic type.⁵ Additionally, these wares were the primary glazed ceramics found at contemporary Adyghe sites along the Eastern Black Sea coast near the mouth of the Kuban River.⁶

² For more detail and bibliography see: Teslenko 2018; 2021; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

³ Maslovskiy 2012; 2017.

⁴ Maslovskiy 2007; Zenyuk and Maslovskiy 2018.

⁵ Burakov 1991.

⁶ Volkov 2007.

Crimean pottery is also widely diffused across Southern Pontic sites. A significant assemblage has been documented during the Balatlar or Sinope Koimesis Church excavations in Sinop,⁷ while additional specimens have been identified at the Şavşat Fortress in Eastern Anatolia⁸ (fig. 1). Furthermore, polychrome Crimean sgraffito ware has been recorded as far west as Crete, an important transit hub for international trade.⁹

In this context, it remains a paradox that until recently, there was a notable lack of information about the presence of Crimean ceramics along the Bulgarian coast and in its hinterland. This is especially striking because the coastal cities of the Northwestern Black Sea were actively involved in late medieval trade networks, and Varna stands out as a key hub in that trade. With the expansion of Italian maritime power in the late 13th century, it became the leading trading center for the Zagora north of the Stara Planina, maintaining its strategic importance throughout the Ottoman period.¹⁰ Consequently, the presence of various ceramic imports there, including those from Crimea, makes perfect sense. However, to date, scholarly attention has primarily focused on the extensive range of Byzantine and Spanish lusterware from this region.¹¹ Occasional publications have included only isolated items without definitive attribution, whose formal characteristics suggested a Crimean provenance, for instance, the bowls from Balchik¹² and Varna.¹³ A primary factor in this neglect was largely due to the absence of well-defined criteria for identifying Crimean ceramics.

Recent research into late medieval glazed pottery has established a framework of stylistic, morphological, and archaeometric markers for pinpointing provenances from workshops in Azaq/Tana, Bilhorod, and the Crimea.¹⁴ Such markers enable the precise identification of their products across various assemblages and museum collections.¹⁵ Based on these findings, the first author of this paper initially identified a group of items with technological and decorative similarities to Crimean wares during doctoral research at the Varna Archaeological Museum and the Historical Museum of Balchik. Following its expansion under the SAFE European project 2026–2027, this study offers a more accurate attribution of finds. The current research builds on those results by synthesizing the data through a comprehensive analysis of Crimean-imported glazed wares in Varna and its surroundings. Our aim is to develop a clear typology and chronological framework for these artifacts while examining the socio-economic factors that influenced their presence in the local market.

Glazed Pottery of Crimea, General Features

Archaeological data indicate that major Crimean glazed pottery workshops appeared between 1270 and 1340, and mainly linked to growing urban centers in the southeast. Key locations included the Mongol administrative site of Solkhat (Staryi Krym) and its nearby areas, as well as the Mongol-controlled port of Sougdaia (Sudak) (fig. 1/I). By the early 14th century, production had expanded to the Genoese colony of Caffa (Feodosia), and by the 1340s, Cembalo (Balaklava) in the southwest was also involved¹⁶ (fig. 1/I). A small workshop operated in the small coastal urban center of Alushta during the 14th century, but its influence was limited.¹⁷ In addition, isolated artifacts related to glazed pottery manufacturing have been found at sites such as Mangup and Chersonesos (fig. 1/I), but we currently lack sufficient evidence to confirm the existence of workshops there.¹⁸

From the late 13th to the mid-14th century, Solkhat and possibly Sougdaia ceramics dominated local and export markets.¹⁹ From the 1330s onward, they were gradually replaced by productions from the Caffa and Cembalo.²⁰ These ceramics were part of regional trade and well reflected transformations in economic patterns driven by geopolitical changes. In the 15th century, Caffa and Cembalo variations became the most common in the Northern Black Sea region and beyond.²¹

⁷ Inanan 2012, 154, Tab. 3/10-12.

⁸ Yılmaz, Özkul Findik and Aytekin 2022, 422, fig. 63.

⁹ Yangaki 2020, 432-446.

¹⁰ For further details and bibliography, see Pletnev 2007, 236-240; 2008; Pavlov and Tiutiundzhyev 1995.

¹¹ Manolova-Voykova 2022; 2023.

¹² Kuzev 1981, 280.

¹³ Kuzev 1980, 23-24, fig. 22.

¹⁴ Maslovskiy 2017; Teslenko 2018; 2021; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

¹⁵ Teslenko forthcoming.

¹⁶ Teslenko 2018; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

¹⁷ Teslenko and Waksman 2016.

¹⁸ Teslenko 2018.

¹⁹ Maslovskiy 2017, 484-485; Teslenko 2018, 39.

²⁰ Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024; Teslenko 2021, 88-89; Teslenko and Waksman 2024.

²¹ Teslenko 2021, 88-89; Teslenko and Waksman 2024.

Although they originate from various workshops across Solkhat (Bokatash II), Sougdaia, Caffa, and Cembalo, these Late Medieval mass-produced wares share distinctive technological features that allow them to be grouped within the South-East Crimean (SEC) Ceramic Group, which includes several subgroups, the most recognizable of which are the Solkhat (with the closely related Sudak) and the Caffa (with the closely related Cembalo). While subgroups exist based on minor regional variations, the SEC group is defined by four primary features.

1. **Fabric Composition.** The wares have red-burning plastic, sandless clay, often containing calcareous inclusions (causing surface “spalling”) and small grains of siltstone/argillite minerals. Some workshops, particularly Solkhat, utilized a chamotte-like artificial additive.
2. **Firing and Color.** Sherds range from light reddish-brown to deep brick red. Caffa wares frequently exhibit notably lighter surface tones.
3. **Glazing.** A transparent lead glaze in green, yellow, or brown colors is standard. It often features uneven coloration and undissolved pigment grains.
4. **Foot Construction.** Two distinct methods were used to create the ring foot: carving or cutting the ring from a solid disc (common in Solkhat and Sudak) and attaching or welding a clay ring to a flat base on the wheel (typical of Caffa and Cembalo).

The SEC group comprises over fifty vessel types, from utilitarian containers to fine tableware. Decoration was highly varied, utilizing seven core techniques: moulding in the decorated moulds, slip-painting (white engobe), purple splashes under glaze, body/rim impressions, *champlevé*, monochrome sgraffito, and polychrome sgraffito (two or three colors).

While these techniques reflect a shared regional tradition, specific decorative styles often distinguish individual production centers. The following analysis focuses on the characteristics manifest in finds from Varna and its vicinity.

Archaeological Contexts

The study incorporates finds from Varna and three neighboring sites: Petrich Kale, Kastritzi, and Balchik (fig. 1/II).

Varna

Varna is among the first toponyms mentioned by Byzantine chroniclers when describing the settlement of the Bulgars and the events of 680–681 AD, which led to the creation of the Bulgarian Khanate (GIBI III, 231, 295). Nevertheless, there is currently no definitive evidence of the settlement being inhabited during the Early Middle Ages (fig. 2).

Excavations carried out in the ancient city during the 1960s and 1970s revealed traces of a massive fire, dated by coins of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) to the beginning of the 7th century.²² Following this period, life within the Late Antique fortress ceased for a long time, and the first clearer signs of habitation date back only to the late 9th and early 10th centuries.²³

The prosperity of medieval Varna began at the end of the 10th century, following the campaign of Emperor John I Tzimiskes (969–976) in 971 AD. As a result, the northeastern Bulgarian lands, including the Black Sea coast, were reintegrated into the Byzantine Empire. Shortly thereafter, new stone walls were constructed.²⁴ The city reclaimed its role as a primary military-strategic and commercial hub on the western Black Sea coast, developing as a typical provincial Byzantine city with a multi-ethnic population until the beginning of the 13th century.

In 1201, after a grueling siege and extensive destruction, Varna was captured by Tsar Kaloyan (1197–1207) and annexed to the Bulgarian Kingdom. The military campaign inflicted lasting damage on the city’s economy and culture, and several decades were required to overcome these setbacks. It was not until the last quarter of the 13th century that the city recovered and began to participate actively in the Black Sea trade network, which at the time was already dominated by Venice and Genoa. Its port once again became a major commercial center, this time for the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, and it is most often referred to in Western European historical sources as *Zagora*.²⁵ To ensure its protection, a new fortress was built near the shore during the second half of the 13th century.²⁶

The economic rise of the city in the 14th century was driven by the grain trade and the import of manufactured goods from Italy. Consequently, it is no coincidence that Venice established a *loggia* in Varna, whose consul around

²² Dimitrov 1980, 39-40; Lazarenko 2003, 156.

²³ Dimitrov 1982, 69, 72.

²⁴ Pletnyov 2007, 234-235.

²⁵ Kuzev 1981, 297.

²⁶ Pletnyov 2007, 236-238.

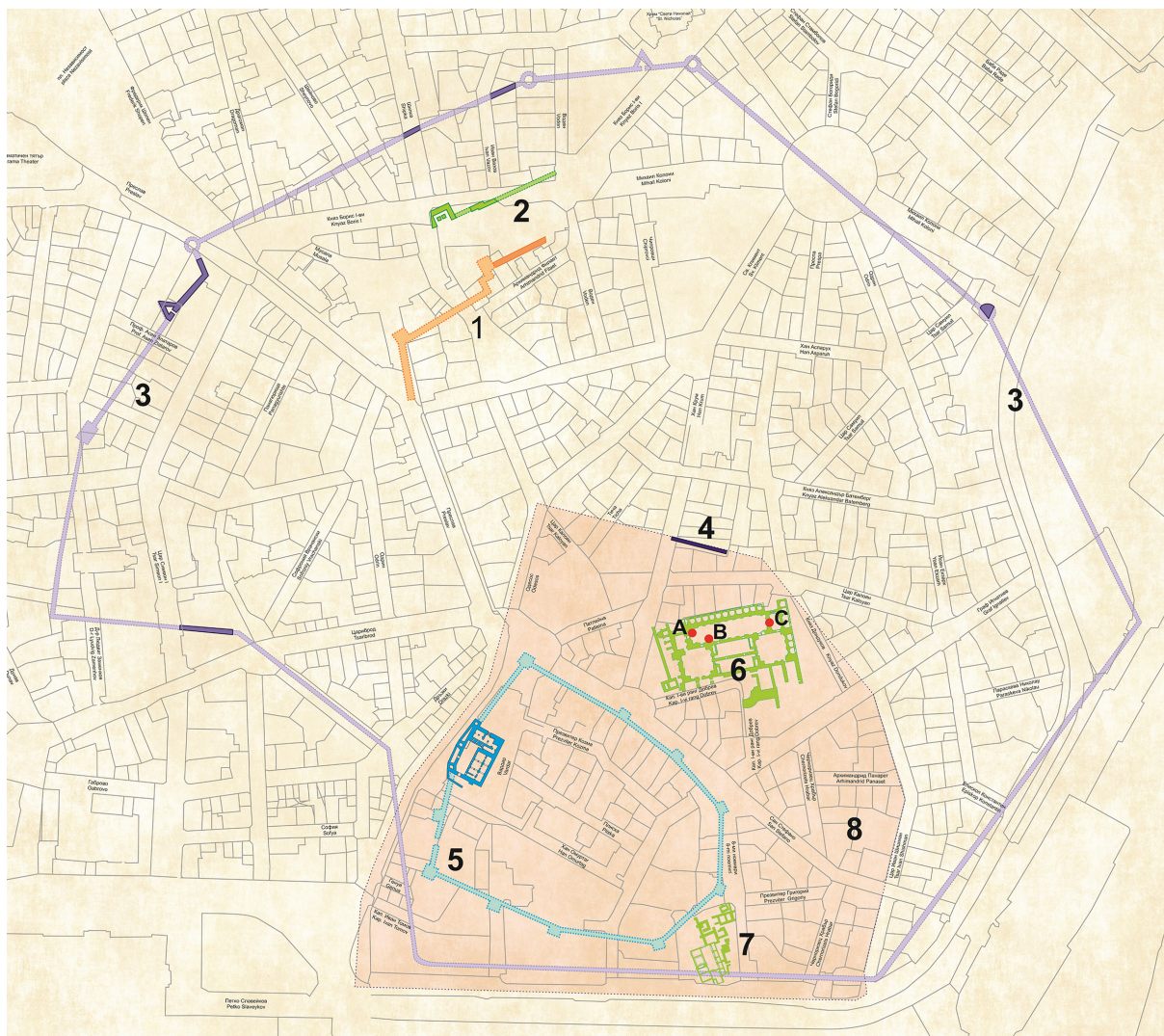


Fig. 2. Mediaeval settlement of Varna within the boundaries of the Antique and Late Antique fortifications:
 1 – Hellenistic fortification wall (4th–1st centuries BC); 2 – Late Roman fortification wall (4th century AD);
 3 – Early Byzantine fortification wall (5th–6th centuries AD); 4 – Medieval fortification wall (11th–12th centuries AD);
 5 – Medieval citadel (after the 13th century AD); 6 – Roman Baths (2nd century AD); 7 – Small thermae (4th century AD);
 8 – Presumed boundaries of the medieval town (marked in pale orange); A – Dwelling 1; B – Dwelling 2; C – Dwelling 3.
 Author: M. Manolova-Voykova

1352 was Marco Lionardo.²⁷ During this period, the settlement covered approximately one-third of the Early Byzantine city, extending to the south, north, and east of the medieval fortress (fig. 2).

During the excavations of the Roman Thermae in the 1950s and 1960s, traces of a district with residential and storage premises dating to the second half of the 14th century were uncovered. The archaeological record established that at the very end of the same century, this medieval quarter was destroyed by fire, likely during the Tatars' capture of Varna in 1399.²⁸ As a result of the destruction, a dense layer of charred debris, ranging in thickness from 0.80 to 1.30 m, was deposited over the remains of the medieval buildings. A description of this burn layer is found in the field diaries of one of the excavation participants – Alexander Kuzev: “It consists of ash, charcoal, entire charred logs (small beams), large stones, thin layers of white mortar, fragments of ancient bricks, and pieces of ancient mortar (from antique walls), a large quantity of sgraffito pottery, thin-walled medieval ceramics, and fragments of medieval amphorae” (A.K.1: 56).²⁹

²⁷ Gyuzelev 1981, 177-178.

²⁸ Kuzev 1981, 304.

²⁹ Information regarding the medieval layer above the remains of the Roman Thermae is contained in the unprocessed archive of Alexander Kuzev, consisting of handwritten notes and diaries kept in the Scientific Archive of the Regional Historical Museum – Varna. For the citation system used in the text, see the list of archival units at the end of the bibliography.

The majority of the ceramic findings of Crimean origin, which shall be discussed hereafter, pertain to the described stratum, although their precise provenance can no longer be definitively established (fig. 6/1-15; fig. 9/2, 5, 6, 8; fig. 10/1-6, 8, 9; fig. 12/3; fig. 14/3, 5; fig. 17/1-7; fig. 19/1-14).

Immediately below the level of the 1399 fire, three structures were discovered, which are described in greater detail in the archival documentation of Alexander Kuzev.

Dwelling 1 was excavated in 1961 in the northwestern corner of the palaestra of the Roman Thermae (A.K.1: 55-60, 63-64). The structure consisted of a single room, built of roughly processed stones bound with mud mortar, with an open hearth in the northwestern part. Two pits with rectangular openings were dug into its floor, likely grain storage pits, lined with wooden boards and arranged small quarry or slab stones. In addition to these pits, scattered grain was found across the entire floor of the room and near the remains of a charred wooden chest. The excavations revealed that the inhabitants of the dwelling fled in haste, leaving behind their entire inventory – ceramic and copper vessels, parts of scales, jewelry, and clothing elements. Along with these, two hoards containing over 100 copper and silver coins were discovered, most of which have been identified as akçes of Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402). Nine of the Crimean vessels presented here were discovered among the remains of Dwelling 1 (fig. 9/1, 3, 4; fig. 10/7; fig. 12/1, 2, 4; fig. 13/2; fig. 14/1).

Dwelling 2 was excavated in 1961 in the southwestern part of the palaestra of the Roman Thermae, in close proximity to Dwelling 1 (A.K.1: 64-71). Similar to the former one, it was uncovered beneath a layer showing traces of a massive fire, containing charred stones, earth, charcoal, and ash. Beneath the burnt debris, archaeologists found a thick layer of grain (wheat and millet) that covered the entire floor of the room to a depth of 10-15 cm. In Alexander Kuzev's diary, the situation is described as follows: "...a thick layer of wheat clearly emerged, interspersed in places with millet, mixed with a peculiar weave (resembling a mat), which likely covered the grain or was perhaps laid beneath it" (A.K.1: 65).

A pit excavated in the eastern part of the structure was also filled with millet. The immense quantity of grain, the absence of a heating facility, and the wattle-and-daub (lightweight) construction of which only postholes for wooden supports were traced, led Kuzev to identify the structure as an economic shed intended for the storage of cereals. Among the finds from the structure is a Crimean sgraffito bowl with polychrome decoration (fig. 16/2).

Dwelling 3 was excavated in 1963 and 1964 at the eastern end of the palaestra of the Roman Thermae (A.K.4: 15-16). Its western part was fitted within the width of the eastern doorway of the Roman hall by a partition wall of quarry stones bound with mud mortar. Its eastern boundary, located outside the palaestra, was obliterated by the foundations of later Ottoman-period houses. The room was shallowly sunken, approximately 0.20 m below the surrounding terrain. Similar to the other late medieval structures, it was discovered beneath a layer of heavily charred debris. In the excavation field diary, the fill of the dwelling is characterized as follows: "...heavily burnt soil, many charcoals (entire layers); burnt (charred) wheat, plenty of kitchen ceramics, and several sgraffito bowls, also scorched by fire..." (A.K.4: 16). Among the sgraffito bowls noted by the author are also two Crimean specimens (fig. 14/2; fig. 16/1).

Petrich Kale

The fortress of Petrich Kale is located 30 km west of Varna, on a high, rocky promontory, offering a wide panoramic view of the entire Devnya Valley, the Provadiya Plateau, and Lake Beloslav (fig. 3). This strategic location led to the settlement of the impregnable rock massif as early as Antiquity and its continuous habitation until the mid-15th century.

During the Middle Ages, the settlement, then named Batarni, was first described in the geographical work of al-Idrisi from 1153 as "...a flourishing city, of medium size, a beautiful city" located on the road from Varna to Veliki Preslav.³⁰ In the following centuries, Byzantine sources refer to it as Petriou or Petrich. In Western European literature describing the crusade of King Władysław III Jagiello (1424–1444) through the Bulgarian lands in the autumn of 1444, it is named Pezehium, Perresse, Petrzecz, Petrus, or Peterspurkt.³¹ It was precisely this crusade that brought life in the fortress to an end – a historical fact further supported by contemporary field archaeological research.

Archaeological excavations at Petrich Kale have been conducted intermittently since the 1960s. During these surveys, a solid fortification was uncovered, consisting of two curtain walls and a moat, located on the only accessible eastern side. Based on stratigraphic and numismatic data, the fortification walls are dated to the mid-3rd century AD.³² Their use, accompanied by multiple repairs, continued throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

³⁰ Nedkov 1960, 81.

³¹ For the names of the city, see Manolova-Voykova 2019, 81-85.

³² Manolova-Voykova and Lazarenko 2021, 348-349.

Dating to this final period are a small single-apsed church with an adjacent necropolis and a residential quarter along the inner face of the fortress wall. The remains of the dwellings and utilitarian structures are poorly preserved, having suffered extensive degradation due to their proximity to the surface and prolonged exposure to weathering. Consequently, they comprise a deposit up to 0.80 m thick, consisting of humus intermingled with rubble, decomposed mudbrick, and fragments of burnt wattle-and-daub. Within this layer, numerous nails and brackets from lightweight timber constructions have been recovered. In certain instances, partially preserved foundations of dry-stone or clay-bonded masonry were identified, likely once supporting timber-framed superstructures.

The cultural layer formed by the latest residential horizon is distinguished by an abundance of diverse household objects of both local and imported origin. Its secure dating to the 14th and the first half of the 15th century is supported by numerous numismatic finds – Bulgarian, Ottoman, Tatar, Wallachian, Moldavian, and Polish issues, with an upper chronological limit in the 1440s.³⁴ The fifteen fragments of Crimean origin included in the present study originate from the aforementioned stratigraphic layer (fig. 7/ 3, 4; fig. 14/4; fig. 20/1-11).

Kastritsi

The Kastritsi Fortress (fig. 4) is situated on the Black Sea coast at the northern periphery of the Gulf of Varna, occupying the small “St. Yani” promontory. The site is well documented on nautical maps and portolans from the 14th to the 18th centuries under various linguistic derivatives of the name Kastritsi, with its location recorded with high precision.³⁵ Scholarly consensus identifies the fortification as Macropolis – a toponym mentioned in a chronicle regarding the 1444 crusade of Władysław III Jagiello.³⁶

Systematic archaeological excavations conducted from 2004 to the present indicate that the fortification was initially constructed in the 6th century. The Late Antique phase of occupation ended in the early 7th century, when the city was abandoned after the Avar-Slavic invasions of Black Sea coastal centers between 614 and 618.³⁷

Intensive habitation within the fortress was re-established only during the second half of the 13th century, marked by the restoration of the curtain walls and the development of a dense residential architecture within the intramural space. In the mid-14th century, the city was likely affected by an earthquake that caused significant structural damage to the housing. Immediately after this natural cataclysm, the structures were repaired or rebuilt atop the leveled ruins of earlier layers.³⁸ During the latter half of the 14th and the early 15th centuries, Kastritsi was characterized by a compact urban layout, intersected by narrow streets paved with cobblestones or massive limestone slabs. The residential architecture was strictly aligned with the street network; notably, buildings at street intersections often featured rounded facade corners to optimize traffic flow. The maximum use of space led to a “blocked” (wall-to-wall) construction pattern. Open areas were recorded only around the two urban churches, whose courtyards served as small necropolises.

The processes of remodeling and structural modification continued until the beginning of the 15th century. The final occupational horizon is numismatically dated by the coinage of Sultan Murad II (1421–1451).³⁹ The absence of evidence for violent destruction suggests that the site’s abandonment was an organized withdrawal, although the underlying causes remain under discussion.

Kastritsi’s prosperity in the 14th century was closely linked to active Italian maritime trade. The building stock includes not only residential units but also structures typical of port centers, such as warehouses, craft workshops, and an inn.⁴⁰ The high standard of living is evidenced by a diverse ceramic assemblage, dominated by imported goods (amphorae and luxury tableware) from Constantinople, Western Europe, and the Black Sea basin. Of particular scholarly interest are three vessels from Crimean production centers. One (fig. 7/1) was discovered in 2008 without a precise archaeological context. The two other specimens were found during the 2018–2019 excavations of the southeastern quarter within Dwelling 3 and Dwelling 5 (fig. 4).

Dwelling 3 is located east of a main street paved with limestone slabs. Three construction periods were identified. The latest phase (late 14th–early 15th century) is associated with a rectangular clay-daub oven. It was situated over a refuse pit (Pit No. 4), whose fill yielded a fragment of a Crimean glazed bowl with slip-painted decoration (fig. 7/2).⁴¹

³⁴ Data from the field documentation. The numismatic material was processed by Dr. Igor Lazarenko.

³⁵ Dimitrov 1984, 21; Pletnyov 2006, 453-454.

³⁶ Kuzev 1981, 292; Pletnyov 2006, 453.

³⁷ Pletnyov 2014, 51-52.

³⁸ Pletnyov 2019, 178.

³⁹ Data from the field documentation. The numismatic material was processed by Dr. Igor Lazarenko.

⁴⁰ Pletnyov et al. 2017, 594-595.

⁴¹ Darakchieva 2024, 127, fig. 13: 13.



Fig. 4. Kastritsi, photo of the site with plan of the south-east sector indicating Dwellings 3 and 5, and the findspots of Crimean ceramics, after (Lazarenko, Manolova-Voykova 2020, fig. 2). Author: M. Manolova-Voykova

The chronology of the context is supported by numismatic finds: a coin of Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–1371) and a coin-like plate from the turn of the 15th century.⁴²

Dwelling 5 adjacent to the eastern masonry of Dwelling 3. The destruction layer above the floor level was saturated with household inventory and coins. The latest specimens – akçes of Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402), date the building to the very end of the 14th century.⁴³ A fragment of a sgraffito bowl of Crimean origin (fig. 13/3) was documented within this context.

Dzheni Bair Hill in Balchik

The hill, known among the local population of Balchik as Jenny Bair, is a naturally fortified place with an area of about 3.5 hectares. It stands approximately 500 m from the seashore and today is located within the boundaries of the modern city (fig. 5).

Archaeological surveys on the hill were conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The excavations revealed parts of an earthwork fortification, including a rampart and a ditch, as well as dozens of residential and utility structures, grain storage pits, a church, and a necropolis.⁴⁴ Based on stratigraphic and numismatic data, the settlement is dated to the period between the 11th and the mid-15th centuries. Representative finds discovered within the dwellings have led some historians to identify the discovered settlement with the medieval town of Karvuna, known from written sources as the administrative center of the Karvuna chora during the 11th–14th centuries.⁴⁵

The question of the localization of medieval Karvuna remains a subject of debate. However, it is indisputable that the settlement uncovered in Balchik possesses a rich material culture, comparable to the high standard of living found in the cities along the Western Black Sea coast during the 12th and 13th centuries. Eloquent evidence of this is the abundance of imported Byzantine amphorae and glazed ceramics.⁴⁶



*Fig. 5. Balchik, photo of the settlement on the hill Jenny Bair where Crimean ceramics were discovered.
Author: M. Manolova-Voykova*

⁴² Lazarenko and Manolova-Voykova 2020, 1163.

⁴³ Lazarenko and Manolova-Voykova 2020, 1164.

⁴⁴ Dimitrov 1987, 197-198; Dimitrov 1988, 78-82; Dimitrov 1990, 41-42.

⁴⁵ Kuzev 1981, 283-284; Bozhilov 1990, 16-18.

⁴⁶ Manolova-Voykova 2015; Manolova-Voykova 2023, 331-350.

The Balchik Historical Museum collection includes one complete vessel of Crimean provenance recovered from this site (fig. 13/1). Detailed contextual data regarding its discovery is unavailable.

Ceramic types, chronology and comparative analyses

A total of 82 items in the museum's collection has been attributed to a Crimean origin, sourced from four sites: Varna (63), Petrich Kale (15), Kastritsi (3), and Balchik (1). All specimens are open-form tableware with a ring foot. The morphological and fabric features match those of Crimean production: the clay is red-fired, plastic, and lacks sand temper. It contains calcareous inclusions, resulting in crater-like spalling on the surface, sometimes with dense mineral grains in reddish-brown or gray. Identified decorative techniques include monochrome glazing, white slip painting, and both monochrome and polychrome sgraffito.

I. Undecorated Monochrome Ware (UMW)

Two upper parts of bowls from the Petrich Kale excavations (fig. 20/1, 3) can confidently be assigned to this group. The vessels belong to two morphological types: one with a vertical rim decorated with ribbing and an everted lip (a variation of Type 9.1 according to Teslenko 2021⁴⁷); the other with a rounded wall and a thickened, triangular-sectioned everted lip (Type 9.2A according to Teslenko 2021). Both items have a maximum diameter of 16.0 cm. In both cases, the glaze is pale greenish-yellow with small undissolved brown or green grains. Two more base fragments of bowls, showing no signs of further decoration, can be tentatively assigned to UMW. The upper parts of the vessels, which may have been decorated, are lost (fig. 9/3; 20/2). One piece from the Petrich Kale excavations is coated internally with a pale greenish-yellow glaze, similar to the previous specimens (fig. 20/2). The other, from Dwelling 1 in the medieval settlement layers of the Varna Roman Baths, has an unevenly colored brown glaze (fig. 9/3).

UMW remained a consistent part of the Crimean glazed pottery assemblage throughout its production period, though it was more dominant in the early phase. Vessel size and profile morphology might be chronologically important. However, a definitive typology for them remains a work in progress. In the early stages, large bowls with diameters of 20.0 cm or more were common.⁴⁸ From the second quarter to the mid-14th century, medium-sized bowls (14.0-19.0 cm in diameter) and drinking cups or goblets (mainly 9.0-10.0 cm in diameter) became more widespread,⁴⁹ and they continued being used until the Ottoman conquest in 1475.

Bowls with a morphology analogous to the Petrich Kale and Varna examples were prevalent in Crimean ceramics from the late 14th century through the last third of the 15th century (fig. 21/ 5). Consequently, they could also be associated with this period. A more precise chronology can only be established through their archaeological context.

II. Slip Painted Ware (SPW) is represented by one whole and eighteen fragmented vessels (Fig. 6; 7). Fifteen of these originate from the Varna excavations (fig. 6/1-15), two small fragments from Petrich Kale (fig. 7/3, 4), and one complete form and a fragment from Kastritsi (fig. 7/1, 2).

The majority of the items are hemispherical bowls with a rim diameter of 15.0-16.0 cm (where determinable) and a base diameter of 6.0-6.2 cm. Only one base likely belongs to a plate (fig. 6/4), its diameter is 7.8 cm.

The decorative schemes consist of three main types. The most common are so-called "diving fish" motifs arranged in swirling rosettes that fill the entire interior (fig. 6/1-6; 9, 10, 12; 7/2). In three cases, these are combined with large spirals in the center of the vessel (fig. 6/3, 4; 7/2); once, on a complete bowl, with four rows of wavy lines (fig. 7/1); and in another instance, with a band of Kufic epigraphic decoration conveying wishes for happiness (fig. 6/13). Four examples feature radial bands that divide the interior into sectors (up to eight), each filled with the "diving fish" motifs, which appear either on their own, in combination with dots, or with dots alone (fig. 6/8, 11, 14; 7/3, 4).

In both shape and decoration, these items share many similarities with Crimean ceramics, where this technique, with roots in the Islamic and Byzantine worlds,⁵⁰ was adopted in the early 14th century.⁵¹ Initial local models were quite simple, consisting of wide straight lines radiating outward like rays from a single point at the center.⁵² A shift in decorative trends took place between the second quarter and the mid-14th century, favoring dense, detailed surface ornamentation. Major motifs included stylized "diving fishes", which are symbols of happiness, usually

⁴⁷ Teslenko 2021, 82, fig. 74.

⁴⁸ Maslovskiy 2006, 359-364, fig. 19-22; Teslenko 2018, fig. 19/1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13-20.

⁴⁹ Teslenko 2018, fig. 19/21-30.

⁵⁰ Böhlendorf-Arslan 2013, 26-27.

⁵¹ Maslovskiy 2012, 194, fig. 1/8; 2/6.

⁵² Teslenko 2018, 44.

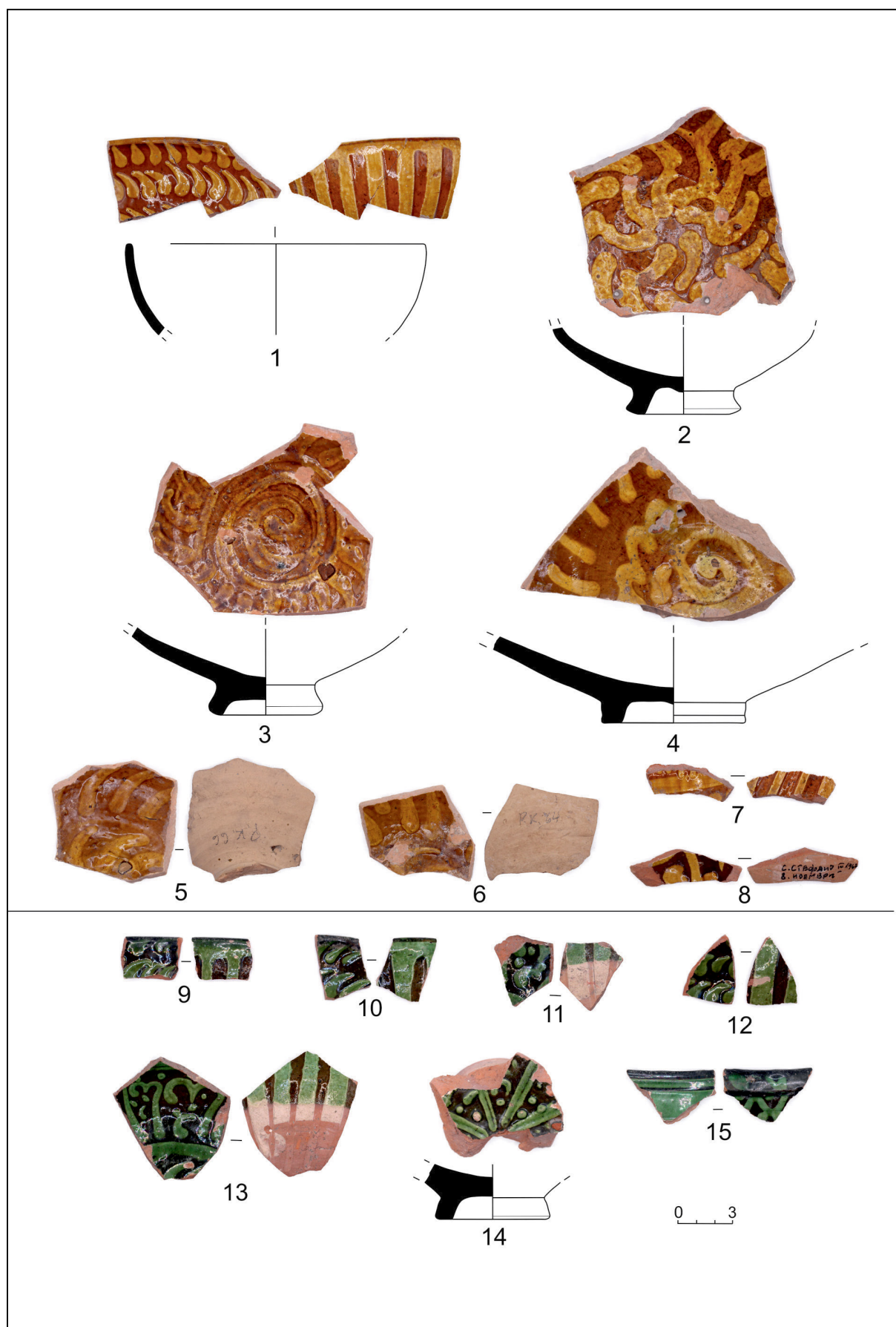


Fig. 6. Slip-painted wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna. Author: M. Darakchieva

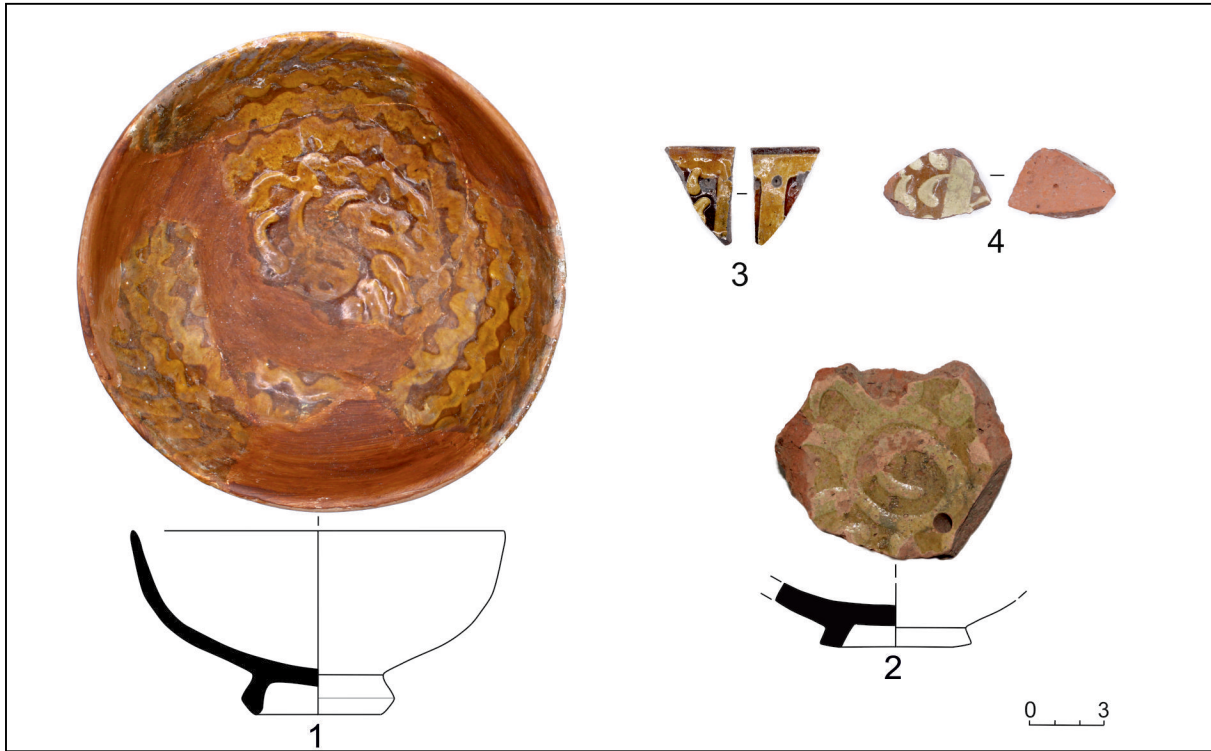


Fig. 7. Slip-painted wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations at Petrich Kale (3, 4) and Kastritsi (1, 2).

Author: M. Darakchieva

depicted in swirling rosette compositions (fig. 8/2-7, 9). This imagery was often paired with Kufic epigraphic bands bearing auspicious inscriptions (fig. 8/3, 4). Arranging decor in radial sections filled with fine details was another common practice (fig. 8/8, 10).⁵³

The provenance of these decorative motifs is traditionally linked to the quartz-frit wares of the Syro-Iranian region, dating from the 13th to the early 14th centuries.⁵⁴ It is widely held that these patterns, alongside quartz-frit technology, were assimilated by workshops in the Volga Golden Horde centers around the mid-14th century.⁵⁵ This popular aesthetic likely spurred the development of underglaze engobe painting on red-clay ceramics throughout the Golden Horde and Crimea during the mid-to-late 14th century, eventually becoming a staple of the repertoires in Solkhat, Caffa, and Cembalo.⁵⁶ Furthermore, archaeometric analysis of two vessel bases from Sudak and Chersonesos (fig. 8/5, 6) indicates a chemical composition closely aligned with the primary production centers of Caffa or related workshops.⁵⁷ The Varna wares most closely resemble finds from Sudak, Solkhat, Southern Crimea, and Chersonesos, where they date from the mid to late 14th century.⁵⁸ In Azaq, these imports appear in contexts ranging from the second quarter to the late 14th century.⁵⁹

Thus, a synthesis of these data suggests that the SPW from Varna and the region may be attributed to a Crimean provenance (most likely the Solkhat or Caffa subgroup) and date to the period between the second quarter and the end of the 14th century.

III. Monochrome Sgraffito Ware (MSW)

The collection consists of 17 items: one reconstructed form, and fifteen large fragments of upper (5) and lower (10) vessel parts from the excavations in Varna (fig. 9/1-6, 8; 10/1-9), and one small wall shard from Petrich Kale (fig. 9/7).

⁵³ Teslenko 2018, fig. 22/4, 9-11.

⁵⁴ Koval 2005, 83-84; Koval 2010, 90-91.

⁵⁵ Bulatov 1968, 95-109; Fedorov-Davydov and Bulatov 1989, 133-248; Fedorov-Davydov 1994, 78-124; Koval 2005, 83-84; Koval 2010, 18-21, 72-75, 90-91; Maslovskiy 2006, 420-426, and so on.

⁵⁶ Teslenko 2018; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

⁵⁷ Waksman and Romanchuk 2007, 387, 389, fig. 3, 4; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

⁵⁸ Teslenko 2018, 44-46.

⁵⁹ Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 306-308, 312, Nos. 299-301, 304.

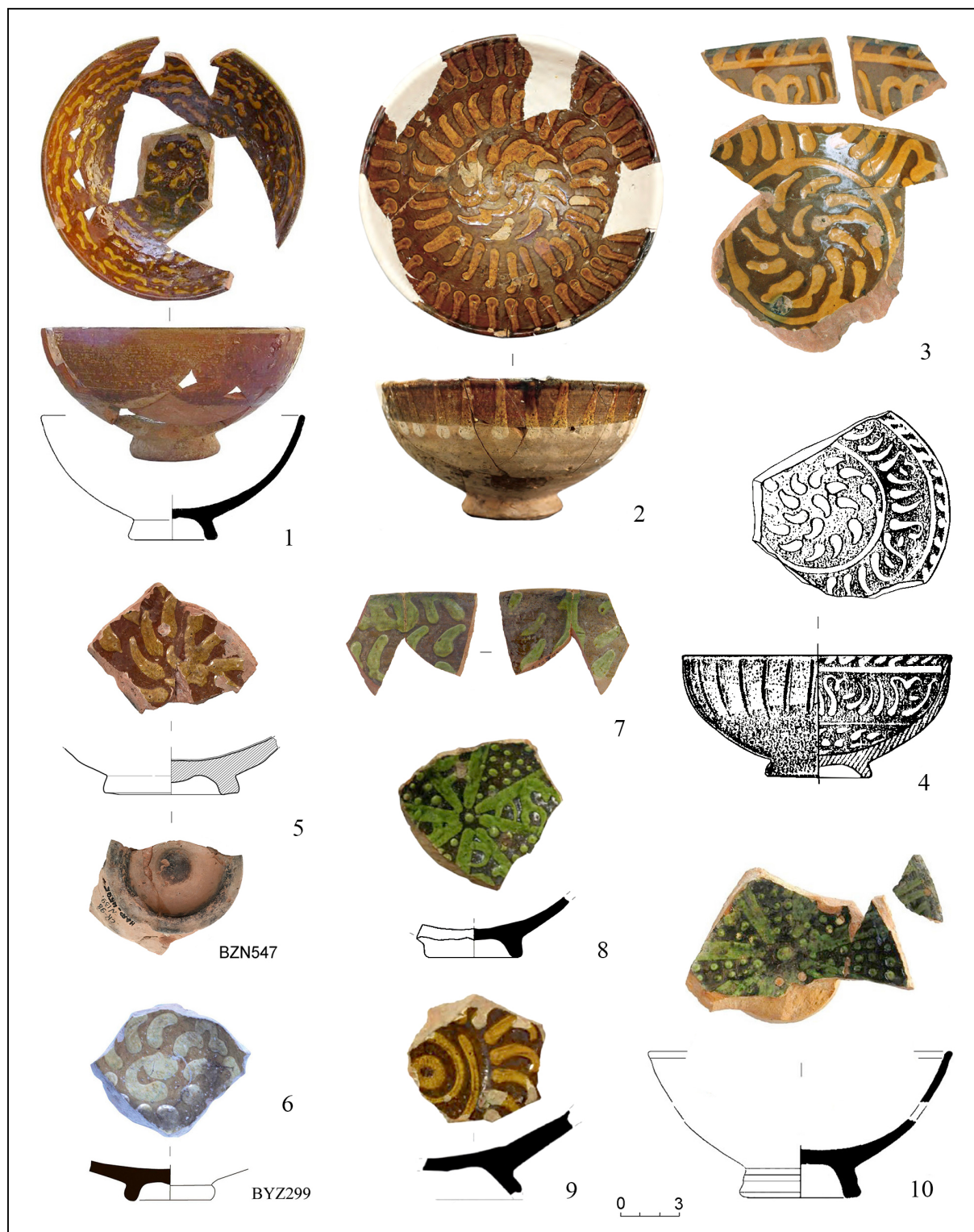


Fig. 8. Slip-painted wares of Crimean origin, from excavations in Crimea and Azaq/Azov, mid-to-late 14th century. 1, 10 – Solkhat/Staryi Krym, medieval bathhouse in Georgievskaya Beam, ceramic assemblage from the context of the third quarter of the 14th century, after (Seidalieva, Maiko and Seidaliyev 2022, fig. 3; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 19); 2 – Azaq/Azov, 14th-century context, after (Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 306, cat. No 299); 3, 5 – Sougdaia/Sudak, pre-Genoese residential development, dated before 1365 (3), redeposited artifact (5), after (Teslenko 2018, fig. 22; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 35), one sample are indicated by Lyon laboratory id.; 4 – medieval church with a burial ground on Polikurov Hill in Yalta, South Crimea, 14th century, after (Teslenko 2018, fig. 22); 6 – Chersonesos/Sevastopol, redeposited artifact, sample are indicated by Lyon laboratory id., after (Waksman and Romanchuk 2007); 7 – Funa Castle area, Southern Crimea, late 14th-early 15th centuries context, after (Teslenko 2016, fig. 10); 8, 9 – Solkhat/Staryi Krym, 14th century (Seidaliyev and Seidalieva 2021, fig. 6). Author: I. Teslenko

They comprise two types of open-ware: bowls with vertical rims and slightly turned outward lips, diameters of 15.8, 17.0, 15.0, and 19.5 cm (fig. 9/1, 2, 4; fig. 10/1), and plates featuring horizontal rims, diameters of 18.0 and 25.0 cm (fig. 10/2, 3). Both types exhibit minor variations in profile configuration. The glaze is green and yellow-brown with uneven coloring.

Originating in Southwestern Central Asia and the Near East between the 9th and early 10th centuries,⁶⁰ monochrome sgraffito technique was adopted by Byzantine potters on white wares a century later. It eventually transitioned to red-clay fabrics, diversifying into various regional styles from the 12th to the 14th centuries.⁶¹ On the Crimean Peninsula, monochrome sgraffito was one of the earliest and most dominant decorative traditions until the mid-14th, later giving way to polychrome sgraffito.⁶² Nevertheless, MSW remained a consistent part of ceramic assemblages until the Ottoman period, with their decorative patterns evolving over time.⁶³

The technique involved three primary methods: single-tool engraving (0.15-0.25 cm), using fine and broad graters to achieve varying widths (up to 0.5 cm), and a combination of engraving with the *champlevé* style. Sporadic use of multi-pronged tools, like in polychrome sgraffito traditions, has been observed since the mid-14th century. Vessels were typically finished with unevenly colored transparent lead glazes in shades of green and yellow, often featuring a bi-chrome scheme with yellow interiors and green exteriors.⁶⁴

Monochrome sgraffito appears on numerous open and closed vessel types. Its rich decorative range includes geometric, floral, animal, and human motifs arranged in various combinations. Recent studies have established a detail chronology for several of these specific decorative series.⁶⁵

The following examination focuses on key parallels within the Varna assemblage. At least nine main decorative motifs are identified and analyzed for their chronological development.

1. An upper bowl fragment features two concentric circles incised with single and double tools, connected by radial wavy lines incised with a three-pronged tool beneath the brown glaze (fig. 9/4). Lip diameter: 17.0 cm.

Concentric-circle sgraffito decoration spread across Byzantine-style ceramics from the late 13th century and remained in use through the early 14th century. It was typical of production centers across the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Black Sea region.⁶⁶ In Crimean glazed pottery, a similar decorative pattern based on concentric circles, often supplemented by simple elements between them, is among the earliest and can also be dated from the late 13th to the early 14th century.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the Varna find comes from a more recent archaeological context: Dwelling 1, destroyed by fire around 1400. Accordingly, the upper chronological limit for this item may be later than is generally accepted for such decorative series. An analysis of other ceramic finds from the same assemblage follows below.

From the second quarter of the 14th century onward, the decorative repertoire of Crimean monochrome sgraffito diversified significantly. Several of the most prevalent types are represented in the Varna collection as well.

2. A fragment of a plate rim decorated with an ornamental band of almond-shaped figures arranged in a zigzag pattern (fig. 10/3). Rim diameter: 25.0 cm.

This motif was a common feature of Crimean pottery art, and appeared in many variations, most often on the rims of bowls and plates. First emerging in local designs during the second quarter of the 14th century, it remained a staple of Crimean glazed ceramics until the late 15th century, featured in both monochrome and polychrome designs (fig. 11/1; 15; 18; 21).⁶⁸ It has strong parallels with the Seljuk ceramic's tradition in Anatolia and the Caucasus, being especially evident in the so-called Port Saint Symeon ware family and its derivatives. These styles were widely diffused across Anatolia, the Caucasus, Northern Syria, Cyprus, and Northwestern Italy from the 13th century.⁶⁹ The emergence of this motif in Crimean pottery, alongside other decorative patterns, was likely a result of artisan migration and the subsequent introduction of these stylistic traditions.⁷⁰

⁶⁰ Watson, 2004, 253; Shyshkina 1979, 51-52; Byashymova 1989, 17-18.

⁶¹ Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1999; Sanders 1995, 76-77, 239-241; Vroom 2005, 85-93, 107-123, and so on.

⁶² Maslovskiy 2012; Teslenko 2018, 46-61, fig. 25-32.

⁶³ Teslenko 2018, 46-61; 2021, 83-84.

⁶⁴ Teslenko 2018; 2021.

⁶⁵ Maslovskiy 2017, 458-486; Teslenko 2018, 46-61.

⁶⁶ Papanicola-Bakirtzi 1999, 188-189, 220-223, 233; Waksman and Teslenko 2010; Inanan 2010; 2013; Waksman 2013.

⁶⁷ Maslovskiy 2017, 468, fig. 1/8; 14/6; Teslenko 2018, 48-49, 57.

⁶⁸ Teslenko 2018, fig. 25/8, 9; 32/2; 34/9; Teslenko 2021, 91, fig. 94-116.

⁶⁹ Maysuradze 1954, Taf. 25/358, 415; François 1995, 96-97, pl. 14/a-c; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, pl. XVIII/94; Varaldo 1997; Ibragimova 2000, 157, fig. 30; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004, Taf. 148/758; 165/893; Avissar and Stern 2005, 52-56; Waksman et al. 2015, fig. 2.

⁷⁰ For more detail and bibliography see: Teslenko 2020, 164-165; Karasu 2021.

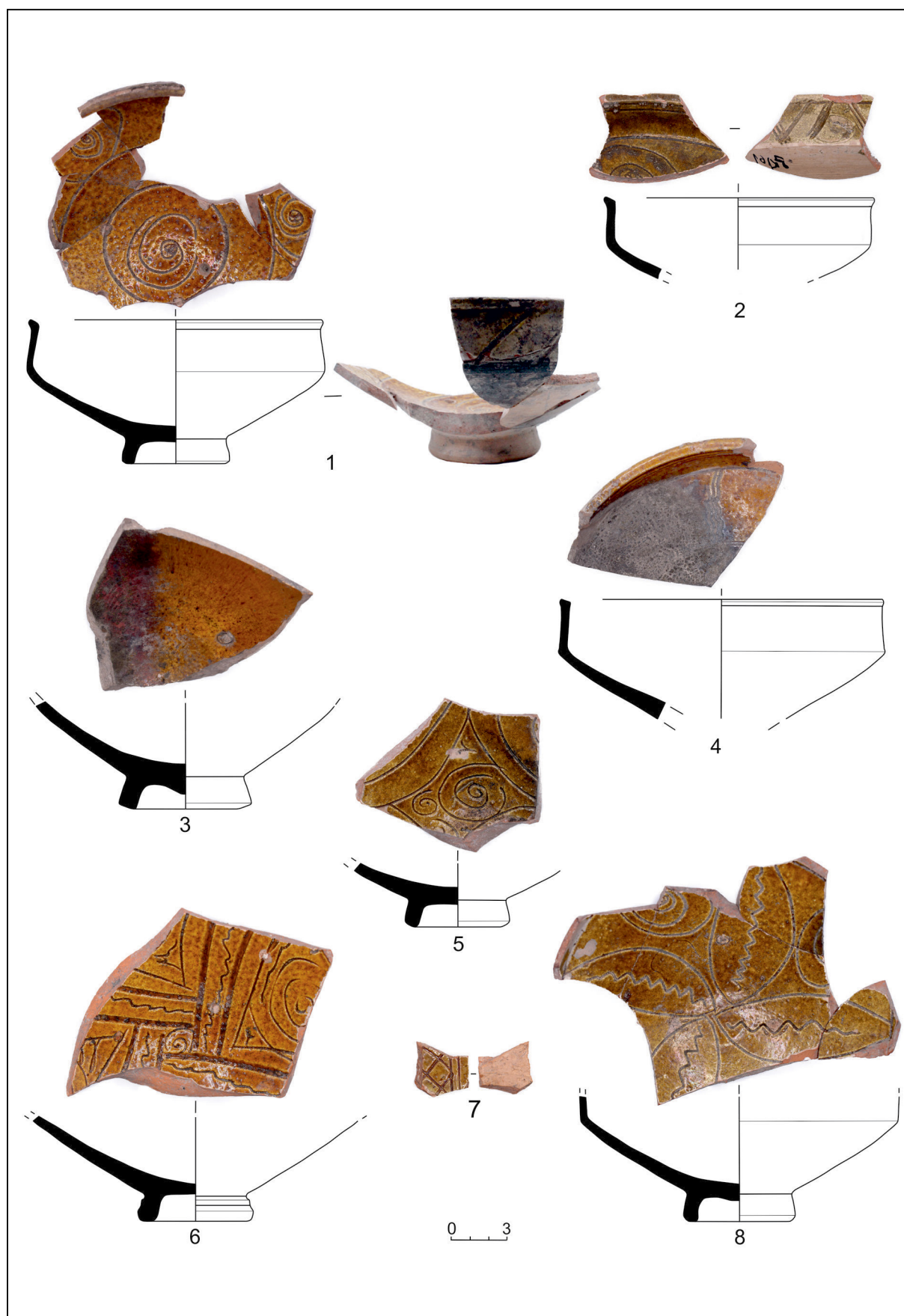


Fig. 9. Monochrome Sgraffito wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna (1-6, 8) and Petrich Kale (7).
Author: M. Darakchieva

Drawing on parallels with monochrome sgraffito from Crimea and Azaq,⁷¹ the Varna specimen could be dated from the second quarter to the late 14th century. The lack of a clear stratigraphic context prevents a more precise chronology. Assigning the piece to a specific Crimean workshop remains challenging because the motif was widely circulated at the time.

3. A rim fragment from a plate featuring a zencerek motif – a traditional chain-like border pattern prevalent in medieval Islamic, Seljuk, and Ottoman art⁷² (fig. 10/2). The design consists of an ornamental band of horizontal stripes accented by symmetrical slanted strokes at both ends. Rim diameter: 18.0 cm.

This motif entered the repertoire of Crimean craftsmen approximately simultaneously with the aforementioned one. It was used to decorate the rims and bodies of predominantly open-form vessels (fig. 11/2) and, less often, closed-form vessels throughout the second half of the 14th century.⁷³ It is especially notable within the assemblage attributed to the Solkhat workshops,⁷⁴ and like the previous one, is rooted in the Anatolian-Seljuk decorative tradition.⁷⁵

4. A fragment of a bowl base, the central part of which features a medallion enclosed in a double circle with mirrored spiral motifs inside, surrounded by fine radial rays (fig. 10/4). Foot diameter: 7.0 cm.

Similar compositions and decorative elements are common in Crimean pottery from the 1330s and subsequent decades.⁷⁶ The medallions of early versions are mostly filled with fine, stylized floral motifs, and the radial rays have small spirals at the base.⁷⁷ This ornamental pattern also finds numerous parallels within the Anatolian-Seljuk ceramic tradition.⁷⁸ Its evolution in Crimea is closely linked to the workshops of Solkhat and its environs. The closest parallel to the Varna item originates from the Solkhat excavations, but its specific context remains unknown⁷⁹ (fig. 11/6). However, the Varna specimen is more schematic in execution; this stylistic simplification may reflect design evolution over time, suggesting a later date.

Therefore, based on this information, the provenance of the Varna specimen is likely linked to Solkhat and its workshops. Its chronology falls in the mid-to-late 14th century.

5. A base of the bowl features a small central floral rosette with rounded petals, created by a continuous double-ribbon braid. The design is executed using sgraffito and champlévé techniques under a green glaze (fig. 10/8). Foot diameter: 6.4 cm.

Similar motifs applied across different styles were adapted in Crimean pottery from roughly the 1330s onwards.⁸⁰ Prominent among these variations are champlévé patterns, sgraffito featuring intricate spirals in the center and petals, and hatch-filled cores, among others. The area around the rosettes was also decorated in various ways.⁸¹ Outside of Crimea, besides Azaq, where they also exist in local variants,⁸² items of this series are known in the Bug (Torhovytsia) and the Volga regions (Bolgar, Uvek).⁸³

The floral rosette motif, composed of a double-ribbon interlace and mostly rendered in champlévé, was a common feature of glazed pottery across the Caucasus, Anatolia, Cyprus, and Central Byzantium,⁸⁴ from which this decorative pattern likely spread to Crimea.

Most of the Crimean variations were found in contexts dating from the 1330s to the late 14th century.⁸⁵ The youngest example comes from excavations at the Funa Fortress site in Southern Crimea. It was discovered in a residential

⁷¹ Maslovskiy 2017, 471-472, fig. 4/5; 19/4; Teslenko 2018, fig. 25/8, 9; 32/2; 34/9; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 224, 229, Nos. 221, 225.

⁷² For more details see: Ersoy 2008.

⁷³ Teslenko 2018, fig. 25/8; 27/6; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 160, No 156; Seidaliyeva 2024, 239, fig. 9.

⁷⁴ Seidaliyeva 2024.

⁷⁵ Karasu 2021.

⁷⁶ Belinskiy and Maslovskiy 1998, 210, fig. 14/9; Maslovskiy 2017, 479-482, fig. 6/1; 16/1; Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/6-9.

⁷⁷ Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/7-9.

⁷⁸ Karasu 2021.

⁷⁹ Seidaliyeva and Seidaliyeva 2021, fig. 5.

⁸⁰ Maslovskiy 2012; 2017, 481-483; Teslenko 2018, 57-60.

⁸¹ Maslovskiy 2012, fig. 3/3; 2017, 481-483, fig. 7/2, 3; Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/1-5; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 171-177, Nos 167-173.

⁸² Maslovskiy 2012, fig. 14/2, 3.

⁸³ Kozyr and Borovyk 2017, fig. 2/1; Poluboyarinova 2008, fig. V/5.

⁸⁴ François 1999, 124, fig. 29/314; 2005, fig. 2; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 83, No. 91; Ibragimova 2000, 154, fig. 26; Karasu 2021.

⁸⁵ Kramarovskiy and Gukin 2007; Kozyr and Borovyk 2017; Romanchuk 2003, 72; Maslovskiy 2012; 2017, 481-483; Teslenko 2018, 57-60; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 171-177.

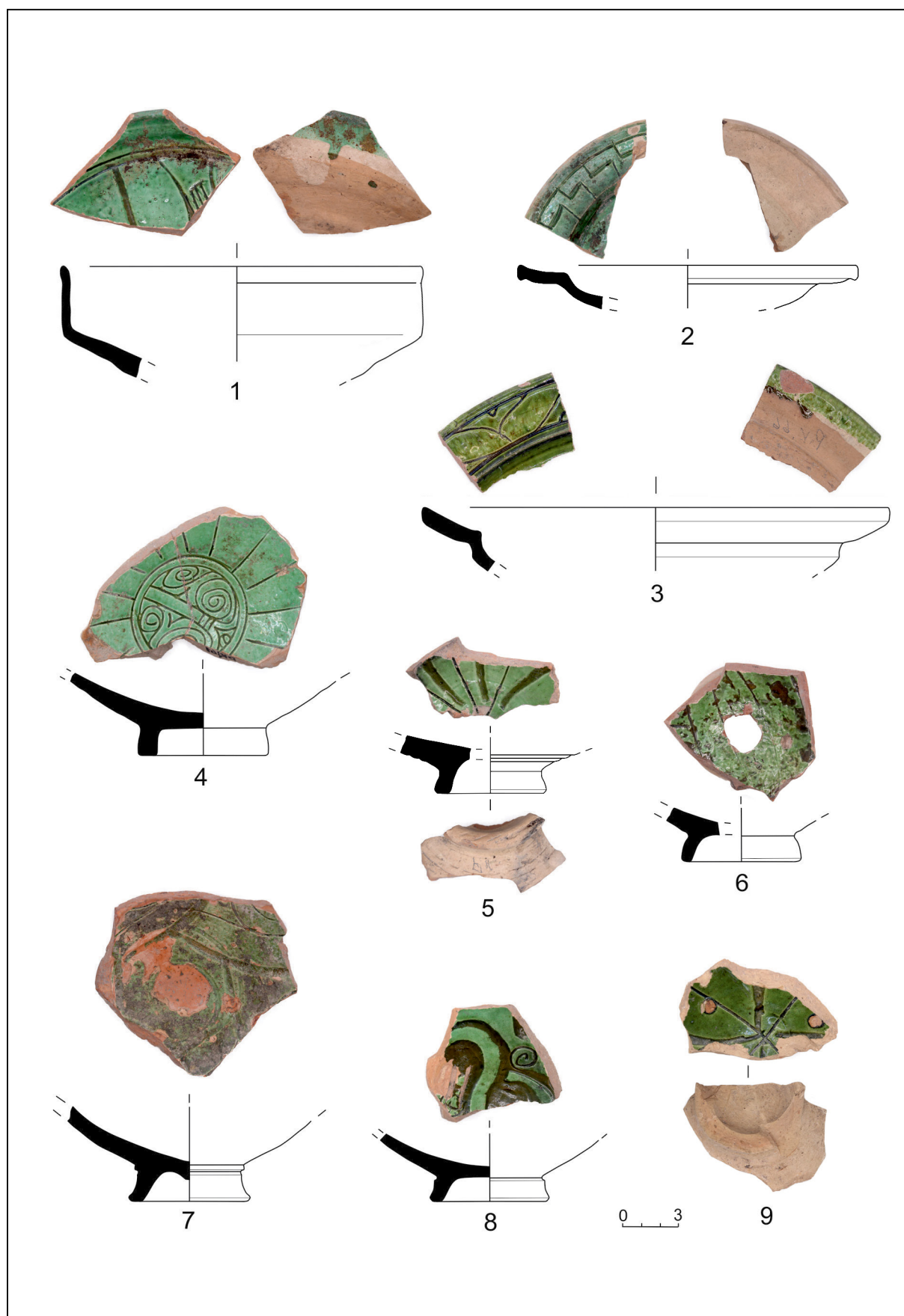


Fig. 10. Monochrome Sgraffito wares of Crimean origin, from excavations in Varna.
Author: M. Darakchieva

area preceding the fortress and dates to the turn of the 15th century.⁸⁶ This suggests a similar date range for the Varna specimen. Currently, it is difficult to link it to any specific workshop.

6. Three fragments from the Varna collection feature big floral rosettes that covered the entire vessel surface. Two pieces consist only of small base fragments with four-, and seven- or eight-petaled designs. The patterns were cut out using thin and thick incising tools and coated in green glaze (fig. 10/5, 9). Foot diameter: about 6.0 cm. One bowl, reconstructed to two-thirds of its original form, is decorated with a four-petaled rosette. Each petal has a wavy line running down its length, with large spirals filling the spaces in between. The decor is executed with fine lines and covered in a brown, unevenly coloured glaze (fig. 9/8). Foot diameter: about 6.0 cm. Rim diameter: about 15.0 cm.

This decorative pattern appeared in Crimean ceramics during the 1330s. In its early stages, it was mostly seen on large plates and bowls, with delicate, thin-lined six-petaled rosettes covering the entire surface.⁸⁷ By the mid-to-late 14th century, it had developed into various forms on smaller-diameter vessels. The rosettes, having four or more petals, were applied using thin or thick tools, or a combination of both. Big spirals normally fill the space between petals (fig. 11/2, 3, 6). Their production is primarily attributed to the Caffa workshops.⁸⁸ Similar compositions were also known in Cypriot ceramics.⁸⁹ It cannot be ruled out that this Cypriot style had some influence on Crimean ceramic art. Consequently, based on Crimean and Azaq's findings, the Varna specimens can be dated to the mid-to-late 14th century and likely originated in Caffa or in related workshops.

7. A fragment of a bowl base featuring an interior with a six-lobed swirling rosette made of ribbons, forming a hexagon in the center, and separated by simple spirals. The design was created using both thin and thick incising tools and was covered in green glaze (fig. 10/7). Foot diameter: 6.4 cm. Museum documentation records that it came from Dwelling 1.

The similar decoration was rather common in the Crimean glazed pottery repertoire. It was observed in both monochrome and polychrome variations, with the former being predominant in the context of the second half of the 14th century,⁹⁰ and the latter during to the 15th century.⁹¹ In monochrome, whether under a green or yellowish-brown glaze, this ornament was typically created using two tools (thick and thin), similar to the Varna example, and applied to bowls with a straight vertical rim (fig. 11/8).

While the precise origins of this decorative pattern warrant further investigation, both its monochrome and polychrome variants were defining features of West Anatolian pottery. This aesthetic emerged during the Beylik period (mid-14th to mid-15th centuries), supplanting Byzantine traditions and signalling the arrival of new artisanal influences.⁹²

Regarding the item from Varna, the combination of features, such as the fabric, vessel's shape, decorative details, along with glaze quality, colour, and application method, indicates its chronological position in the mid-to-late 14th century and potential provenance from Caffa, Cembalo, or related workshops.

Overall, medium-sized bowls with simplified, somewhat schematic full-field designs became common during the second half of the 14th century. These were usually made with a single graver or, more often, two gravers of different thicknesses. In addition to the patterns already mentioned, common motifs included geometric shapes such as diamonds, quadrangles, and pentagons, sometimes combined with floral elements. Other popular designs include radial patterns paired with simple spirals, as well as continuous mesh or linear-wavy hatching across the bowl's surface.⁹³ The glaze is yellow-brown or green, unevenly colored, covering the entire inner surface and outer rims. A typical collection of such bowls comes from the layers of the third quarter of the 14th century at the Alushta hillfort.⁹⁴ However, they are consistently found across sites from the same period in Crimea and the Azov region.⁹⁵ Their production is mainly linked to the Caffa and related workshops, although other options cannot be ruled out,⁹⁶ and it was widely distributed as a commodity.

⁸⁶ Teslenko 2016.

⁸⁷ Maslovskiy 2017, fig. 5/1, 4; 16/2, 4.

⁸⁸ Teslenko 2018, 60, fig. 28.

⁸⁹ Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, pl. XIX/96-99; XX; Papanikola-Bakirtzi et al. 1999, 163, No. 366.

⁹⁰ Teslenko 2017; 2018, fig. 30.

⁹¹ Teslenko 2021, 84-85; fig. 93; 103-105.

⁹² Vroom and Findik 2015, 218-219, pl. 10/94; Waksman 2014, fig. 3/d.

⁹³ Teslenko 2018, fig. 30.

⁹⁴ Teslenko 2017, 392-393, fig. 8-10; 13; 14.

⁹⁵ For bibliography and illustrations, see Maslovskiy 2017, 485, fig. 12; 13; 24; 25; Teslenko 2018, 60-61, fig. 30.

⁹⁶ Teslenko 2018, 60-61; for more details on the output from various workshop productions in Crimea, see (Teslenko and Dzhhanov 2024).

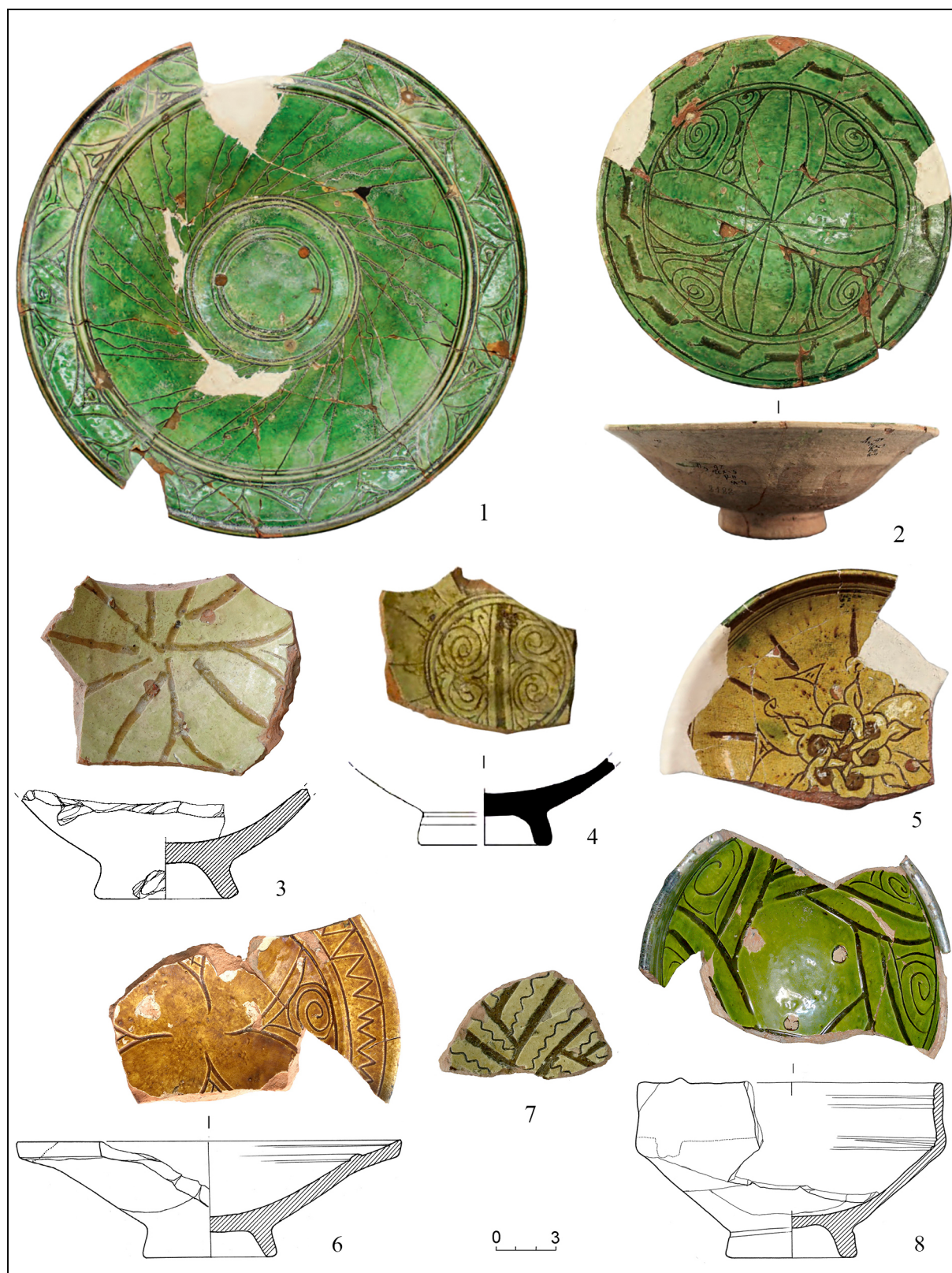


Fig. 11. Monochrome sgraffito ware of Crimean origin, from excavations in Crimea and Azraq/Azov, 14th century.
 1, 2, 5 – Azraq/Azov, 14th century (1), second (5) and third (2) quarter of the 14th century, after (Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 160, 73, 229, cat. No 156, 169, 225); 3, 8 – Alushta Fortress, Southern Crimea, residential area from the late 14th, dwellings with the 1360-s fire and destruction layers, after (Teslenko 2017, fig. 10; 14); 4, 7 – Solkhat/Staryi Krym, 14th century, after (Teslenko 2018, fig. 31; Seidaliev and Seidalieva 2021, fig. 5); 6 – Mount Ayu-Dag, western foothills, Southern Crimea, settlement of the 14th–15th centuries, after (Teslenko 2018, fig. 28).

Author: I. Teslenko

8. The bottom of the bowl features a vortex rosette of four rays, each filled with wavy lines, and large concentric spirals between them (fig. 9/6). Foot diameter: 6.2 cm. Although exact matches for this decor have not yet been identified, similar motifs appear on ceramics from Solkhat. These include radially arranged, centrally intertwined rays and wavy lines that cover the entire inner surface of the vessel (fig. 11/7). The specific context of artifacts in this style remains unclear, making it difficult to provide a detailed chronology.

The Varna specimen likely represents a later stage in the development of this motif. Its sloppy drawing and poor glaze quality suggest it probably dates from the second half of the 14th century. These traits, along with the visual features of the fabric, allow for a preliminary attribution to the Caffa or related workshops.

9. One more reconstructed vessel and two fragmented ones (the upper section and the base) feature large spirals as the primary decorative element (fig. 9/1, 2, 5). Both upper parts belong to the same morphological type of medium-sized bowls, characterized by a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim and everted lips (variants of type 9.1B according to Teslenko 2021⁹⁷). The outside of their rims features a band of zig-zagging almond-shaped motifs, created with double- and triple-pronged tools (fig. 9/1, 2). In all cases, the glaze is brown and uneven in colour, and is applied to both the inside and outside of the bowl rims. Two artifacts (fig. 9/1, 2) originate from a shared context: Dwelling 1 within the medieval quarter situated on the site of the Roman baths in Varna. The details of the find for the base fragment (fig. 9/5) remains unclear. Foot diameter: 5.6 cm. Rim diameter: 15.0 cm. Dimensions of the complete form: foot diameter – 5.6 cm; rim diameter – 15.8 cm; vessel height – 7.6 cm.

The use of double- and triple-pronged incisors in sgraffito decoration began to spread in the second half of the 14th century and became most popular in the following century with polychrome variations.⁹⁸ From the last third of the 14th century onward, featuring the exterior rims of medium-sized bowls with vertical lines or zigzag bands also became common. This style was mostly seen in polychrome sgraffito, although monochrome versions also appear.⁹⁹ Thus, based on these two technological features, both artifacts from Varna can be dated no earlier than the second half of the 14th century.

The decorative motifs on the last three fragments are difficult to reconstruct (fig. 9/7; 10/1, 6). However, their dating is likely in the 14th century because such designs are not typical of 15th-century glazed pottery.¹⁰⁰

IV. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware (PSW), also known as painted, brown-and-green, or green-brown-manganese sgraffito, represented a significant component of the Crimean ceramic repertoire. Tracing its origins to 9th-century Central Asia and the Near East, following Chinese precedents,¹⁰¹ this tradition gave birth to several notable styles, including so-called Splashed, Bamiyan, Amol, Aghkand, and Garrus Wares,¹⁰² before spreading to the Caucasus by the 12th century.¹⁰³ During the 13th century, the technique flourished in the Eastern Mediterranean through Port St. Symeon (Al-Mina)¹⁰⁴ and Cypriot Wares.¹⁰⁵ It subsequently reached Italy via maritime trade routes, appearing as a Savona Archaic sgraffito (Graffiti Arcaica Tirrenica).¹⁰⁶ By the 13th and 14th centuries, polychrome sgraffito had spread through the Balkans¹⁰⁷ and Western Anatolia, where it replaced Byzantine ceramic styles during the Beylik period.¹⁰⁸

Crimean polychrome pottery first appeared sporadically in the early 14th century, comprising just 1-5% of assemblages,¹⁰⁹ before becoming widespread after 1350.¹¹⁰ Local sgraffito typically features engraved motifs enhanced with two (brown and green) or three (brown, green, and manganese/purplish-brown) pigments. Each

⁹⁷ Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

⁹⁸ Maslovskiy 2017, fig. 12/3; 24/3; Teslenko 2018, fig. 31/4, 5.

⁹⁹ Maslovskiy 2017, 446, fig. 12, 22, 26; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Teslenko 2021, 83-88.

¹⁰¹ Shyshkina 1979, 52; Byashymova 1989, 18; Jenkins 1983, 11.

¹⁰² Brend 1991, 41; Pope and Ackerman, 1965, 681-715; Watson 2004, 260-264, etc.

¹⁰³ Majsuradze 1954; Jakobson 1959, 260-270, pl. XXV-XXX; Mitsishvili 1976; 1979; Shelkovnikov 1957; Shyshkina 1979; Babajanyan 2018, 271-272, pl. 1/4-8.

¹⁰⁴ Blackman, Redford, 2005, 83-186; Avissar and Stern 2005, 52-53; Burlot and Waksman 2022, 611-631 <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcim.12726>.

¹⁰⁵ For bibliography see: Von Wartburg, 2007, 419-440; Papanikola-Bakirtzis, 2012; Redford 2014, 125-152; Waksman 2014, 257-278.

¹⁰⁶ Varaldo 1997, 439-452; Riavez 2001, 528-530.

¹⁰⁷ Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1999, 23, 222-242; Zekos 1999, 243-248; Georgieva 1974, 45-61; Bikić 2016, 167-173, and so on.

¹⁰⁸ Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004; Bursalı 2010, 525-536; Waksman 2014, 107-125; Burlot and Waksman 2021, 157-190; Meriç 2021, 526-542, and so on.

¹⁰⁹ Maslovskiy 2012, 194, fig. 1/12, 14.

¹¹⁰ Maslovskiy 2017, 475, 486; Teslenko 2018, 61-67; 2021, 84-91.

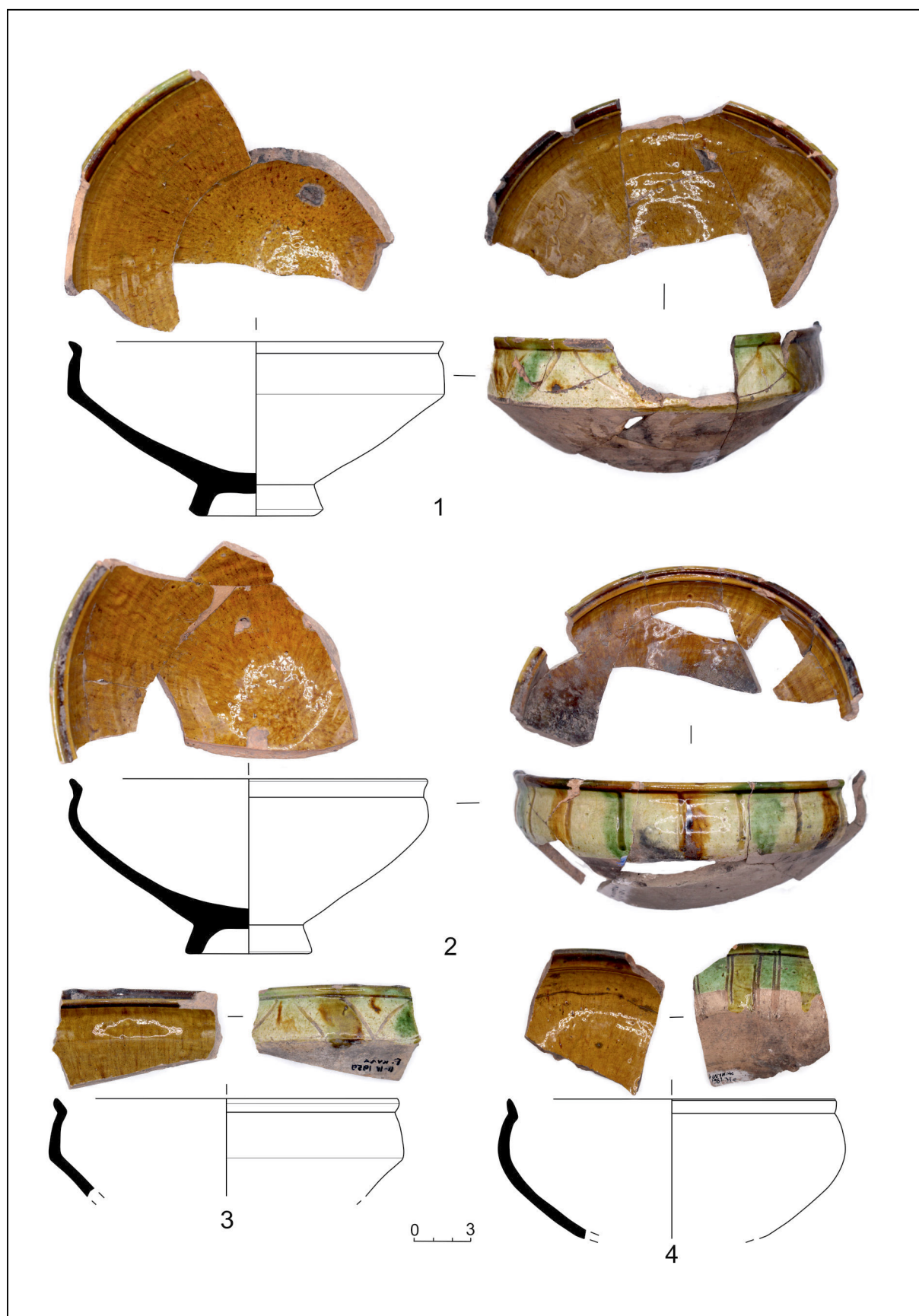


Fig. 12. Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna.
Author: M. Darakchieva

palette follows its own chronological path, with the tri-chrome option typical of earlier periods (no later than late 14th – early 15th centuries).¹¹¹ Monochrome (brown or green) applications are less common, and their chronological details remain unclear.¹¹² Two primary painting methods are evident: an earlier, precise style in which colours align strictly with engraved figures (typical of Solkhat), and a later, more fluid technique in which blurry color washes follow the ornamental rhythm rather than the outlines. This latter style reached its peak in 15th-century Caffa and its associated workshops.¹¹³ Crimean polychrome wares are characterized by a rich variety of decorative motifs and patterns; therefore, we will focus only on those that have parallels with finds from Varna and its surroundings.

This decorative group is the most well-represented within the analyzed collection. The finds comprise 32 complete and fragmented pieces from Varna and nine fragmented bowls from Petrich Kale (fig. 12; 13/2; 14/1-3, 5; 16; 17; 19; 20). Additionally, two fragments and one complete bowl were recovered from Kastritsi and Balchik (fig. 13/1, 3; 14/4). Categorized by form and function, the collection includes plates (one whole and five upper rim profiles; fig. 16/1; 17/2, 4-7), medium-sized bowls (four reconstructed forms and twelve upper profiles; fig. 12-14; 16/2; 17/1, 3; 20/4), and a single goblet (fig. 14/5). Remaining specimens are represented by the base or wall fragments lacking diagnostic features for precise morphological classification (fig. 19; 20).

In terms of decoration, these pieces fall into three main groups, each with its own chronological traits.

I. The first group brings together pieces with polychrome sgraffito decoration applied only to the exterior of the rim. It is further divided into two subgroups.

I.1. The first one includes items with an unevenly coloured yellowish-brown or brown glaze inside, and a pale yellow, greenish-yellow, or green tinted glaze on the outside along the decorated rim. These are three reconstructed forms and six fragments of medium-sized bowls of two primary morphological types with variants, types 9.1B and 9.2A according to Teslenko 2021,¹¹⁴ from Varna (fig. 12; 13/2; 14/3), Petrich Kale (fig. 14/4), Kastritsi (fig. 13/3), and Balchik (fig. 13/1). In one case, the internal surface is decorated with sgraffito made with a thin line (fig. 13/2).

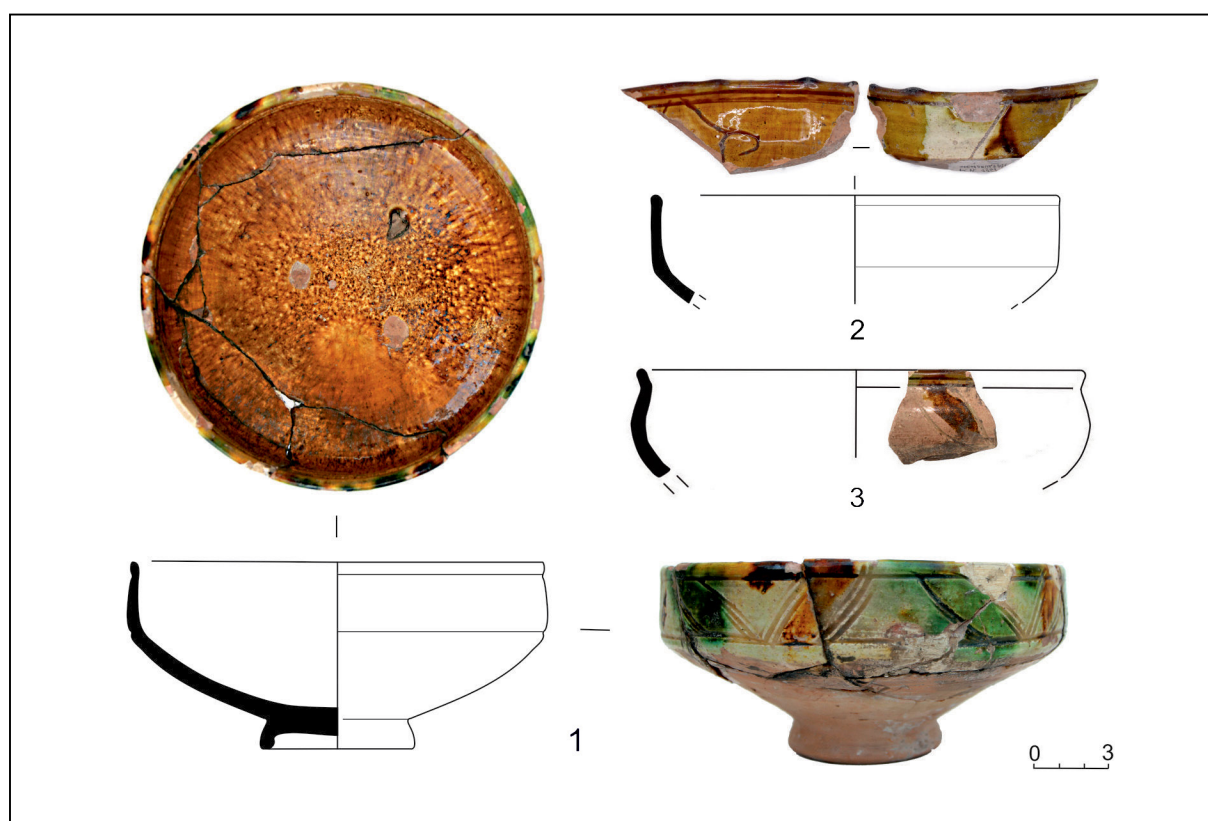


Fig. 13. Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna (2), Kastritsi (3) and Balchik (1).

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¹¹¹ Teslenko 2018, 63-67; Teslenko 2021, 88.

¹¹² Teslenko 2021, 84.

¹¹³ Teslenko 2018, 62-67, fig. 33-37.

¹¹⁴ Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

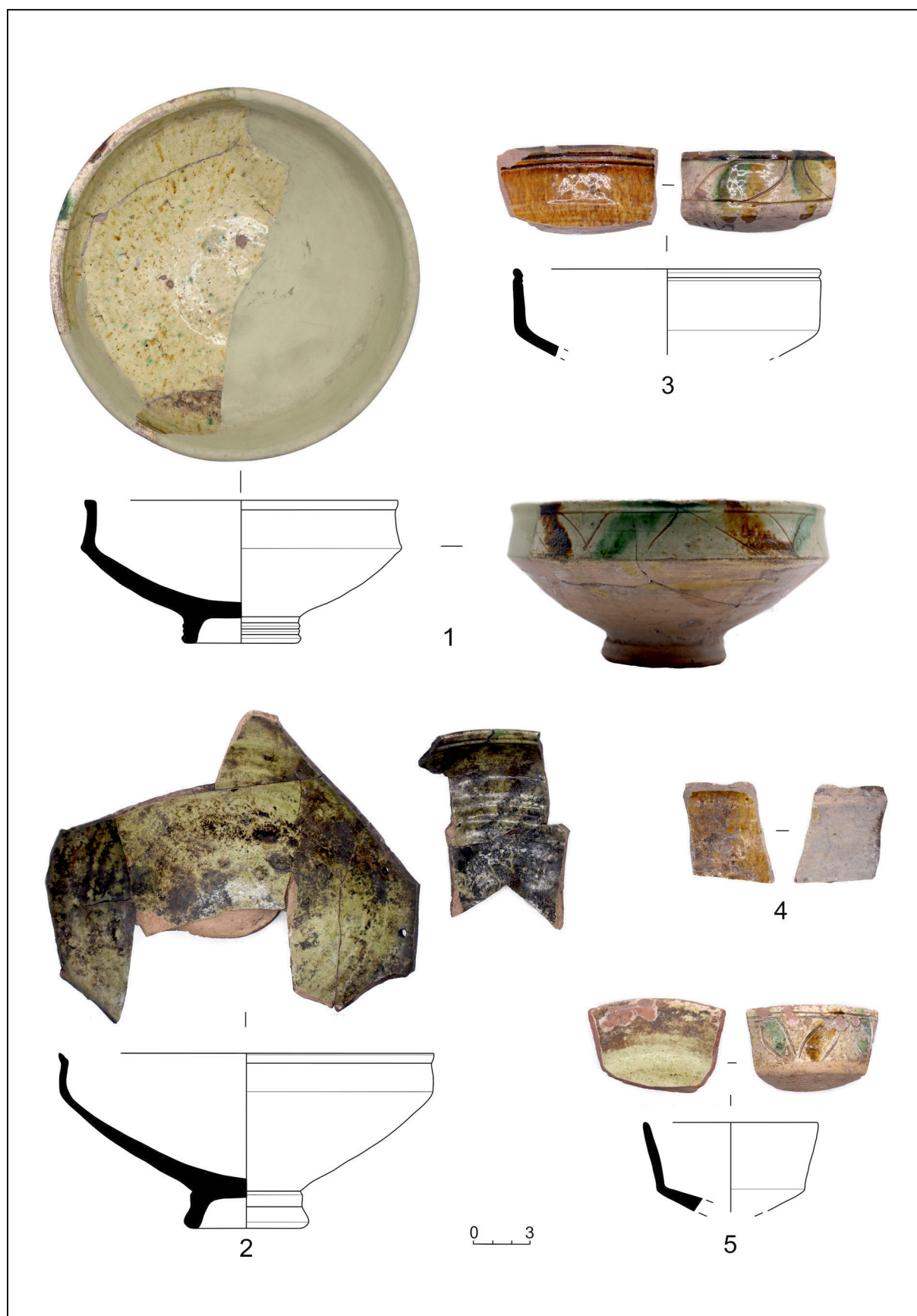


Fig. 14. Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna (1-3, 5) and Petrich Kale (4).
Author: M. Darakchieva

Rim diameter: from 16.2 to 19.6 cm. The decorative scheme on the outside of the vessels is quite standard, representing a row of zigzag-placed almond-shaped figures or vertical lines, performed in four ways: by single thin, single wide engraver, as well as by a two-pronged and three-pronged tools.

As mentioned above, similar polychrome decoration on the exterior of the rim became common in Crimean pottery from the third quarter of the 14th century until the Ottoman conquest in 1475. The inside of the vessels may be plain or decorated with monochrome or multi-colored sgraffito techniques.¹¹⁵ Such items are primarily associated with the production of Caffa and Cembalo,¹¹⁶ although a similar decorative pattern on the exterior of the rim is also present on items linked to the Solkhat area, for example, a semi-finished bowl from the Krynychky II settlement.¹¹⁷ Based on decorative features, these products are categorized into several chronological series. Among the earliest are bowls with an internal coating of yellow-brown or brown glaze. They are more typical for the assemblages from the second half of the 14th to the early 15th centuries.¹¹⁸ For instance, they comprise less than 1% of the ceramic assemblage excavated from the 15th–18th-century church with burial ground in Maly Mayak village (Southern Crimea). Notably, the largest fragments and partially reconstructed vessels were recovered from the contexts dated to around the middle of the 15th century.¹¹⁹ The upper part of a similar bowl was also discovered in dwellings from the turn of the 14th–15th centuries, which predates the construction of the Funa Fortress (located about 9 km north of Alushta in Southern Crimea)¹²⁰ (fig. 15/4). A few shards come from the 14th–15th-century residential area of the Alushta hillfort (fig. 15/3). Complete vessels are known from closed late 14th-century contexts at Azaq¹²¹ (fig. 15/1, 2). Additionally, they make up nearly half of the decorated Crimean-group pottery in the early 15th-century assemblage from the same site.¹²² No reconstructed vessels belonging to this decorative group were found in layers dating to the third quarter of the 15th century, which suggests their “terminal date” should be limited to the second quarter of the century.¹²³

I.2. Another subgroup features a light yellowish glaze with fine brown or green specks of undissolved pigment at varying concentrations, covering both the vessel's interior and the upper part of its exterior (fig. 14/1, 2, 5). The collection includes two reconstructed mid-sized bowls representing the two types mentioned above (rim diameters of 16.2 and 20.0 cm), along with a rim fragment from a small goblet, type 10.1 according to Teslenko 2021¹²⁴ (rim diameter: 9.0 cm). The outer rim features a row of almond-shaped motifs arranged in a zigzag pattern, drawn with a single delicate line and accented with green and brown splashes.

This subgroup spans a broader chronological range and appears in contexts from the early 15th century through the Ottoman conquest of 1475. Similar glazed goblets, both undecorated and with sgraffito designs on their exterior rims, became particularly common in Crimean ceramics from the second half of the 15th century.¹²⁵ They are linked to the Caffa subgroup or a related tradition. Most of these artifacts have been found in the layers of fire and destruction caused by the 1475 Turkish invasion, or from sediments that accumulated atop these ruins, such as rubbish dumps and levelling backfill. Two closely related analogies stem from the 1475 fire and the associated destruction deposits at Funa Castle. Additionally, one more item was found in a pit within the area of a pottery workshop in Sudak, dating to the late half of the 15th century (fig. 15/5), and others were discovered within redeposited material at Cembalo Fortress (fig. 15/6, 7).¹²⁶

Thus, drawing on analogies from Crimea and beyond, the chronological position of the first subgroup of Varna finds can be placed within the late 14th to the first half of the 15th century, while the second belongs to the 15th century. Contextual data for five items from Varna, representing both subgroups (figs. 12/1-4; 13/2; 14/1), is more specific: they come from Dwelling 1 in the medieval district (1961 excavations). This case proves that both subgroups coexisted, likely during the late 14th to early 15th century. Other finds lack such clear contextual associations.

II. The next decorative group comprises wares with polychrome sgraffito on the interior, or on both the inside and outside, beneath a lightly yellow-tinted glaze that includes particles of undissolved pigment in different amounts. These are divided into three subgroups based on the number of colours used.

¹¹⁵ Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88.

¹¹⁶ Teslenko 2018, 66; Teslenko and Dzhano 2024; Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6.

¹¹⁷ Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

¹¹⁸ Ginkut 2005, 500-502, fig. 2/4, 5; Yashayeva 2005, fig. 3, 8; Maslovskiy 2007, 87; Zhenyuk and Maslovskiy 2018, 214.

¹¹⁹ Teslenko 2012, 236, fig. 9/I.1, 3, 5-7.

¹²⁰ Teslenko 2016, 142, fig. 7/2.

¹²¹ Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 300-303, Nos. 295, 296.

¹²² Zhenyuk and Maslovskiy 2018, 214, fig. 6/3-5; 7/6-9.

¹²³ Teslenko 2021, 87-88, fig. 83/ 5-12.

¹²⁴ Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

¹²⁵ Teslenko 2021, 87, fig. 113/8-14.

¹²⁶ Teslenko 2021, 215, fig. 13/8-14; Teslenko and Dzhano 2024, 607, fig. 28.

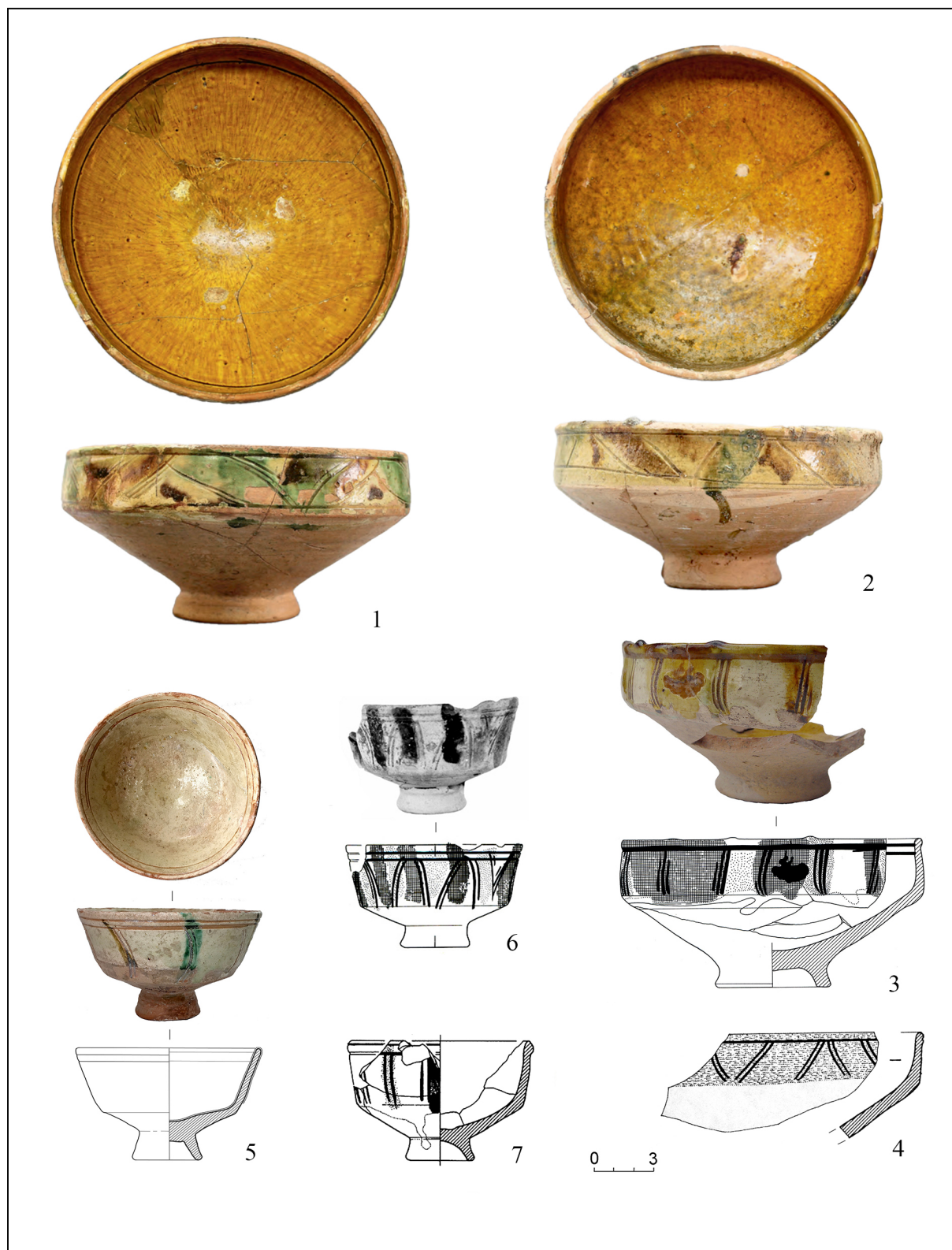


Fig. 15. Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Crimea and Azaq/Azov, late 14th – early 15th centuries. 1, 2 – Azaq/Azov, late half of the 14th century, after (Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 300, 301, Nos. 295, 296); 3 – Alushta fortress, Southern Crimea, residential area from the late 14th and 15th centuries, after (Teslenko 2018, fig. 36); 4, 6 – Funa Castle area, Southern Crimea, late 14th – early 15th centuries context (4) and the 1475 fire and destruction layers (6) after (Teslenko 2016, fig. 17; 0); 5 – Cembalo Fortress, Balaklava, Southwestern Crimea, redeposited finds, after (Teslenko 2021, fig. 113); 7 – Sougdaia/Sudak, an area of the glazed pottery workshop, the pit from the middle – second half of the 15th century, after (Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 28).
Author: I. Teslenko

II.1. Decorated with three pigments: brown, green, and manganese (fig. 19/10). It survives as a single base fragment with a ring foot, measuring 7.0 cm in diameter. Executed in a fine single line, the decoration remains as a fragment depicting a diametrically elongated oval bordered by double lines and spirals. The composition is further highlighted by longitudinal stripes of green and brown pigment, flanked by manganese spotting on each side.

The closest parallel we identified comes from excavations at Golden Horde Azaq. It is a large bowl (17.6-18.4 cm in diameter) from a ceramic assemblage excavated in 2014 from a mid-14th-century trash pit (fig. 21/3).¹²⁷ Although this specific design model is not commonly represented in Crimean wares, similar motifs, both in monochrome and polychrome variations, and a comparable colour palette appear fairly regularly from approximately the second quarter to the end of the 14th century.¹²⁸ Further monochrome parallels, though more remote, were found in excavations of a 14th–15th century residential area in medieval Alushta,¹²⁹ Partenit (medieval settlement in modern Partenit, about 13 km southwest of Alushta), a 14th–15th century settlement on the western foothill of Mount Ayu-Dag,¹³⁰ and a burial ground in Massandra (Yalta region, in Southern Crimea),¹³¹ and so on.

Because the context of the Varna object is unclear, aside from its discovery in the Roman Baths area in 1966, it can only be dated by comparing its technical and stylistic features with those of others. This places it between the second quarter and the end of the 14th century, similar to Azaq's exemplar.

II.2. The brown and green sgraffito decoration is the most common among the decorative subgroups. It includes 30 complete and fragmented pieces recovered from excavations at Varna (22) (fig. 16/1; 17; 19) and Petrich Kale (8) (fig. 20/4-11). These are plates and bowls of five morphological types.

The plates with a sub-horizontal rim separated from the body by a ridge, or with profiles featuring two or three ribs (fig. 16/1; 17/2, 4-7), belong to the morphological types 7.1, 7.4, and 8.1 according to Teslenko 2021.¹³² Parameters of the complete form: rim diameter – 23.0 cm, base diameter – 7.4 cm, height – 6.0 cm. Rim diameters of the remaining pieces: 18.0, 19.0, 20.0, 22.0, and 24.0 cm. The bowls belong to two types: one features a straight vertical, lightly fluted rim, classified as Type 9.1A according to Teslenko 2021¹³³ (fig. 20/4); the other has a rounded wall and everted lip, classified as Type 9.2A according to Teslenko 2021¹³⁴ (fig. 17/1, 3). Rim diameters are 15.0 and 17.0 cm.

During the mid-to-late 15th century, brown and green sgraffito became the dominant styles of decorated glazed pottery produced by Crimean workshops. This trend is evident in the ceramic assemblages both within Crimea and across the broader Black Sea region.¹³⁵ Their range featured numerous decorative motifs created with single-, double-, and triple-incisors.¹³⁶

All of the ornamental compositions on the vessels from Varna and Petrich Kale find direct parallels among Crimean products (fig. 18; 21; 22). These include floral rosettes, ranging from four to six petals with various treatments of the surrounding space (fig. 16/1; 19/11-14; 20/5, 6; 22/1-4), six-pointed stars in diverse styles (fig. 19/6, 8, 9; 20/7, 10; 22/5, 6), swirling rosettes (fig. 19/1, 2, 4; 20/9, 11; 21/4, 6), interlace of two tapes forming figure-eight patterns (fig. 19/7; 21/1), "endless knot" motif (fig. 16/2; 17/2; 18/2; 21/2, 6), checkerboard decor consisting of densely hatched rectangles (fig. 19/5; 18/3), and rows of parallel bands and wavy lines (fig. 20/4; 22/7), which are quite common in Crimean glazed pottery art. The majority of these items originate from archaeological contexts dating to the mid-to-late 15th century. They represent an established decorative tradition in Crimean pottery, whose provenance is rooted in the work of Anatolian artisans.¹³⁷

Thus, drawing on these parallels, decorative group II.2 from Varna can be dated to the 15th century, primarily the middle two quarters. The context for one plate (fig. 16/1) is more specific (similar to bowl fig. 14/2, group I.2): it was found in the fire layer of Dwelling 3 alongside coins from Bayezid I's reign (1389–1402). This narrows the date for both items to the late 14th or early 15th century. Consequently, both could have been delivered to the port of Varna around this time.

¹²⁷ Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 292, No. 287.

¹²⁸ Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 291, No. 286; Teslenko 2018, fig. 31.

¹²⁹ Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/8.

¹³⁰ Teslenko et al 2017, 192-233, fig. 12/5.

¹³¹ Teslenko 2018, fig. 31/8, 9.

¹³² Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

¹³³ Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

¹³⁴ Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74.

¹³⁵ Burakov 1991, 105-109; Inanan 2012, Tab. 3/10-12; Teslenko 2021, 80; Teslenko and Waksman 2024; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024.

¹³⁶ Teslenko 2021, 84-89, fig. 85-115.

¹³⁷ Teslenko 2020.

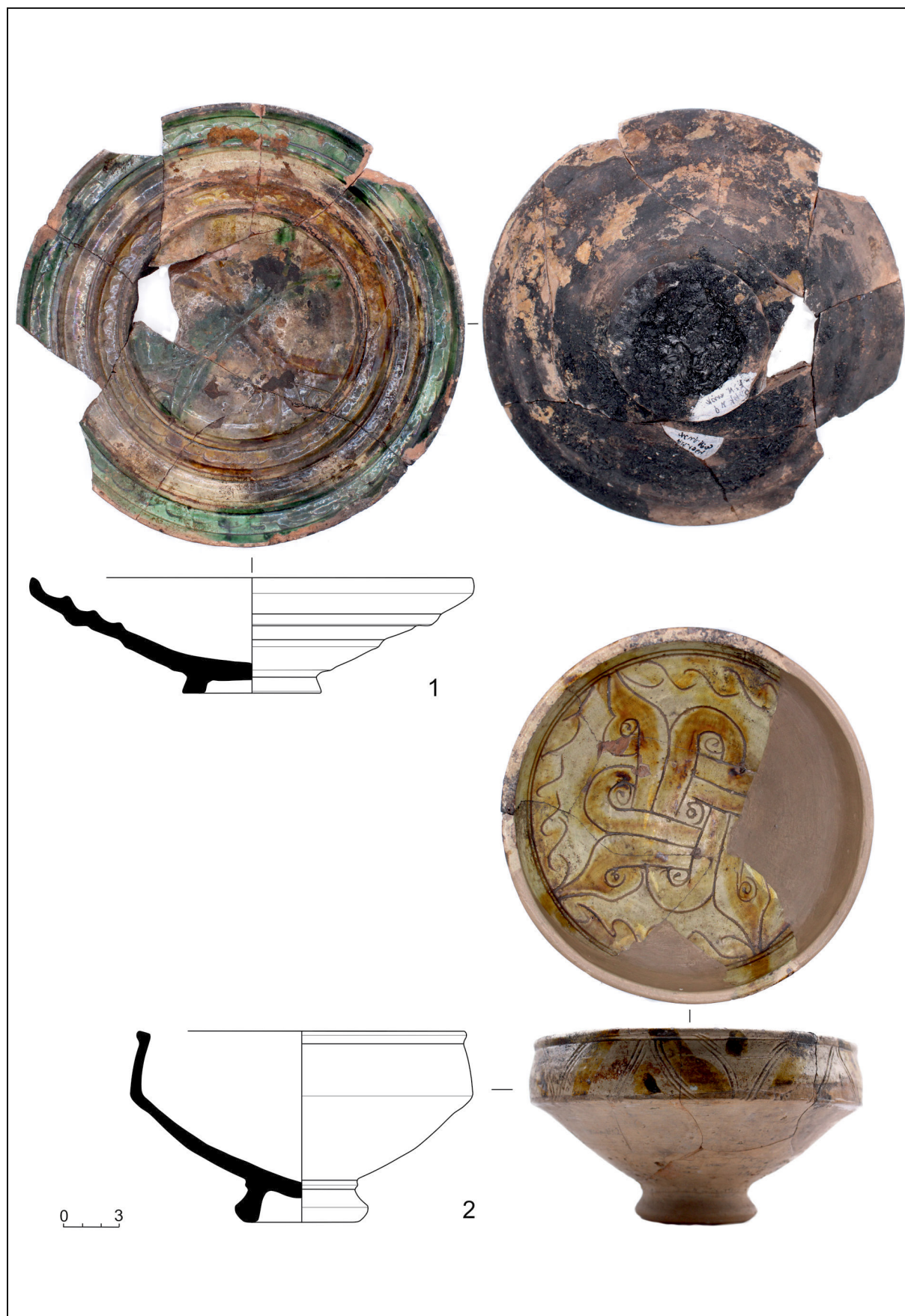


Fig. 16. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna.
Author: M. Darakchieva

I.3. Finally, the last subgroup is represented by sgraffito painted only with brown pigment (fig. 16/2). This subgroup includes one entire bowl of type 9.1B according to Teslenko 2021.¹³⁸ Rim diameter – 17.2 cm, base diameter – 7.0 cm, height – 10.0 cm. The inner surface has a single-line engraving of an “endless knot” pattern, bordered by S-shaped scrolls. Frequently seen in Crimean pottery (fig. 18/2; 21/2, 7), this design is rooted in the Anatolian tradition as well, offering almost identical parallels.¹³⁹ The exterior of the bowl’s rim features almond-shaped patterns incised with a three-pronged graver. Thus, the vessel’s technical features could be pointed as typical for the late 14th or 15th century. Museum records associate the bowl with the 1961 excavation of Dwelling 2. Meanwhile, the lack of other artifacts from the same assemblage makes it difficult to determine a more precise chronology of the entire context. If Dwellings 2 is part of the same urban development as Dwellings 1 and 3, the bowl could then be dated to the late 14th or early 15th century.

Conclusion

The analysis of a representative corpus of Crimean ceramics from Varna and its surrounding areas yields several conclusions about the nature and development of trade relations in the region during the 14th and 15th centuries. The relatively high number of finds in Varna (63 specimens) and at the Petrič-Kale fortress (15 specimens), along with their presence at other coastal sites (Kastritsi, Balchik), demonstrates a steady flow of these imports. The distribution of artifacts suggests that Crimean products were not only concentrated in a major port center but also circulated throughout a regional network of settlements.

Regular shipments of Crimean pottery have been recorded from the second quarter-mid-14th century onward. In the Varna collection, items from this period (SPW and MSW series) account for 47.6%, while in Petrich-Kale, they account for approximately 20%.

Whether Crimean imports arrived earlier (in the early 14th century) is still debated. The sole potential indicator is a bowl with concentric-circle decoration. However, the context of its discovery in Dwelling 1 contradicts an early dating: the fragment was found alongside a representative assemblage of items from the second half of the 14th to the early 15th centuries (monochrome and polychrome sgraffito). Analogies from Azak confirm that such assemblages date to the early 15th century.¹⁴⁰ The presence of an earlier artifact within the later assemblage may have several explanations: the structure existed for a long period, the item was redeposited from an earlier context, or this ware reached Varna much later than its original production date (a scenario that is plausible and supported by other materials from Crimea). Either way, additional data are needed to support the suggestion that deliveries of Crimean glazed pottery could have begun in the early 14th century.

The volume of Crimean ceramic import increased towards the 15th century, especially around the turn of the 14th–15th centuries and during the first half of the 15th century. In Varna, the share of these pottery rises to 53.4%, while in Petrich Kale, where the sample is more representative, it reaches 80%. This upward trend in Crimean imports reflects a broader pattern across the Black Sea region, also shown by findings in Bilhorod/Moncastro and Sinop.

These economic shifts were likely driven by geopolitical processes involving military, political, and economic factors, culminating in the so-called Tana Crisis and the ensuing period of political instability in the Golden Horde in the mid- to late 14th century. This turmoil disrupted stable connections with the East through Golden Horde territories and was accompanied by a series of military conflicts between competing Italian republics, among others factors.

Thus, the supply of Crimean ceramics to Varna and its surrounding areas generally follows the overall pattern of their circulation across the Black Sea region. The Genoese, who controlled the production centers in Crimea, clearly served as the primary trading agents in this process. Notably, however, the start of Crimean ceramic imports to Varna aligns with the reign of Despot Dobrotitsa (1347–1386). This could suggest that, despite his alliance with Venice and frequent conflicts with Genoa, he evidently allowed trade with Genoese outposts in Crimea. The subsequent growth in imports at the turn of the 15th century occurred during the Ottoman period, supporting the idea of a partnership between Genoa and the Ottoman Porte during early Ottoman rule.

To validate these findings and gain a more detailed understanding of regional trade networks and Crimea’s role within them, future research should include a comprehensive technological and statistical analysis of the entire ceramic assemblage from Varna and other 14th–15th-century Bulgarian sites.

¹³⁸ Teslenko 2021, 81–82, fig. 74.

¹³⁹ Karasu 2021, 721, Tab. 1/7.

¹⁴⁰ Zenyuk and Maslovskiy 2018.

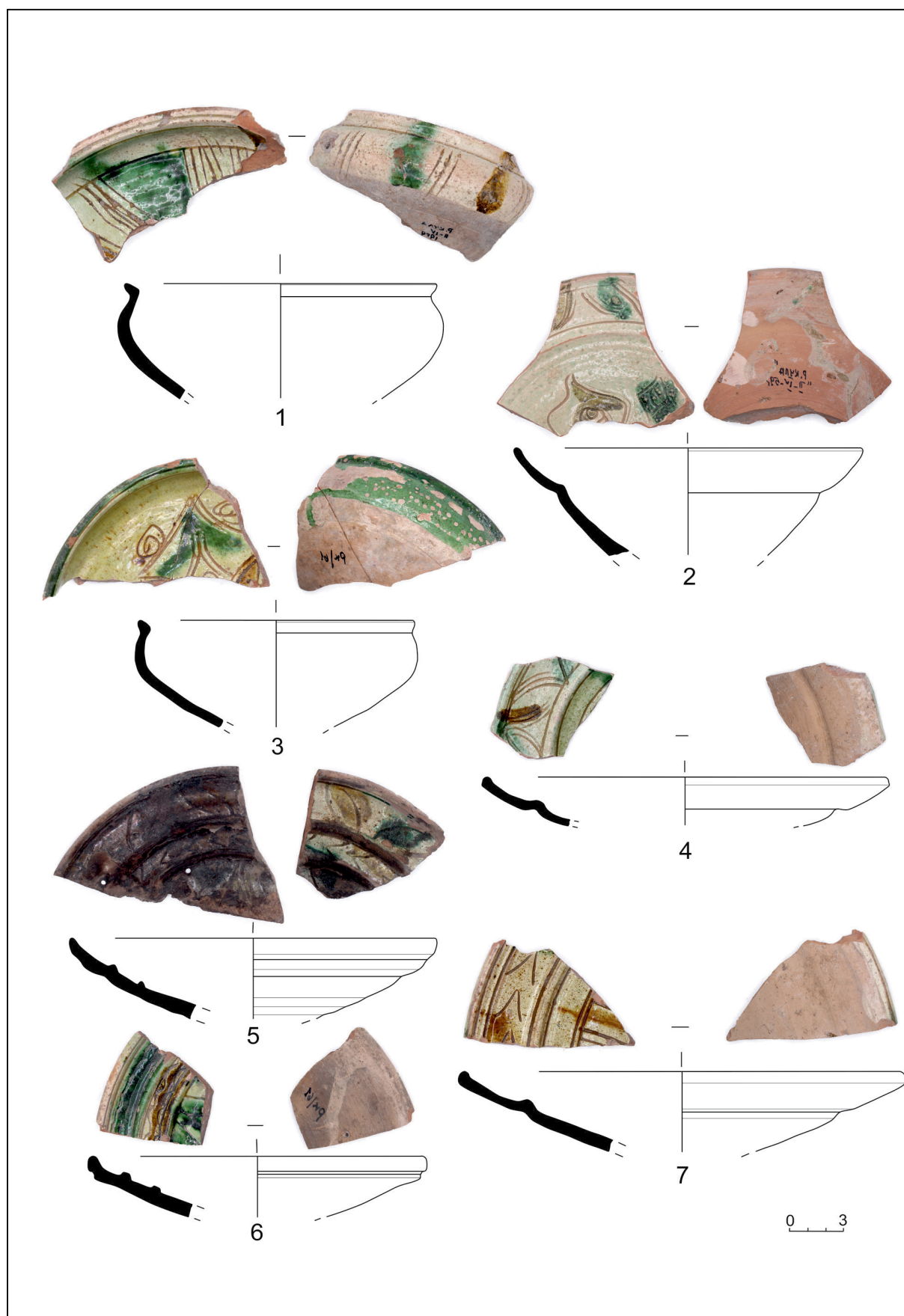


Fig. 17. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna.
Author: M. Darakchieva

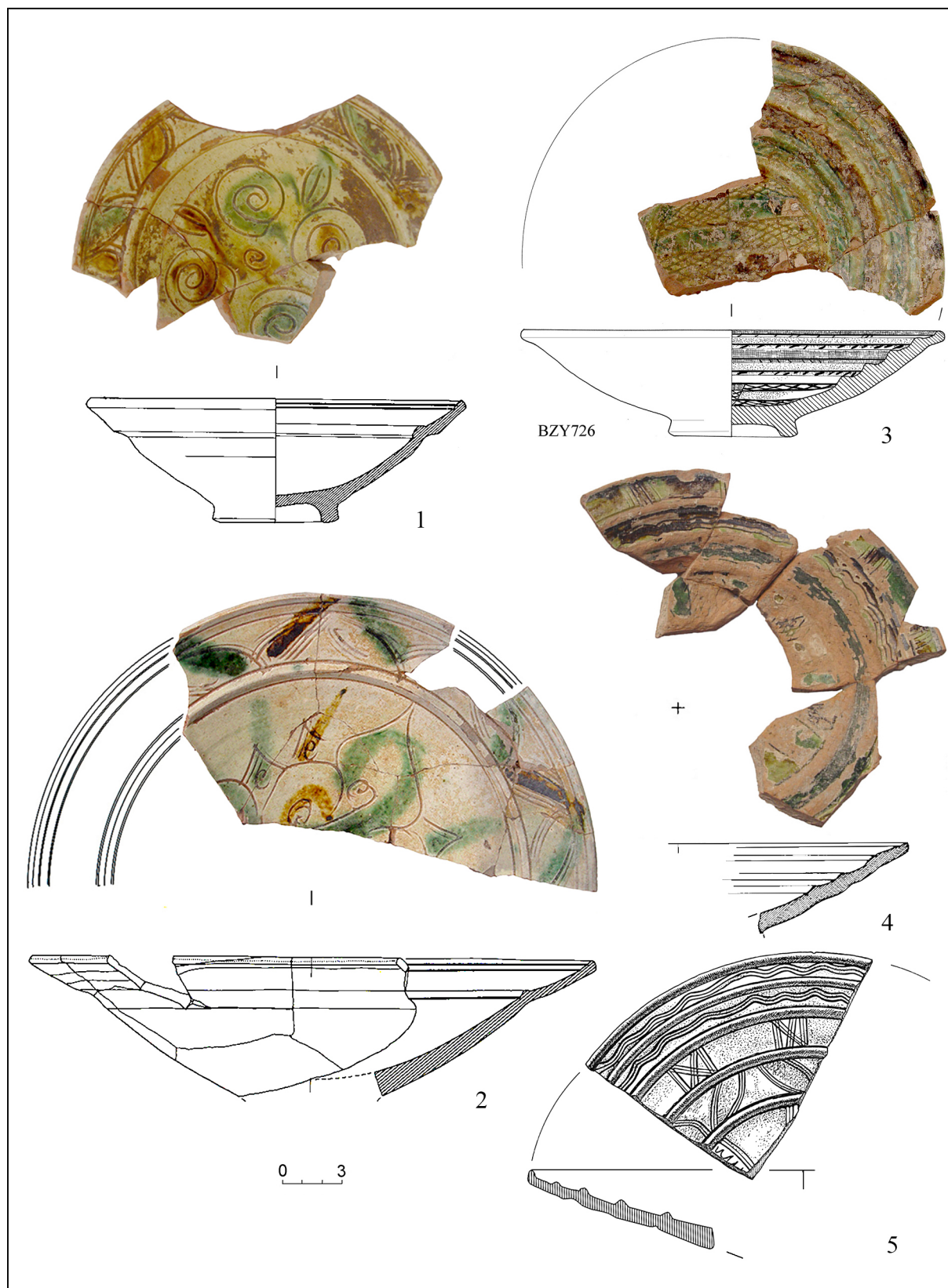


Fig. 18. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimea origin, from the excavations in Crimea, late 14th – 15th centuries.
 1, 3, 5 – Alushta Fortress, Southern Crimea: dwellings with the fire layer of 1475 (1); residential area from the late 14th and 15th centuries (3, 5), one samples are indicated by their Lyon laboratory id.;
 2, 4 – Funa Castle, Southern Crimea, mid-to-late 15th century structure: dwelling with the layer of the fire of 1475 (2) and cistern (4), after (Teslenko 2021, fig. 85; 107; 112; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 39).
 Author: I. Teslenko

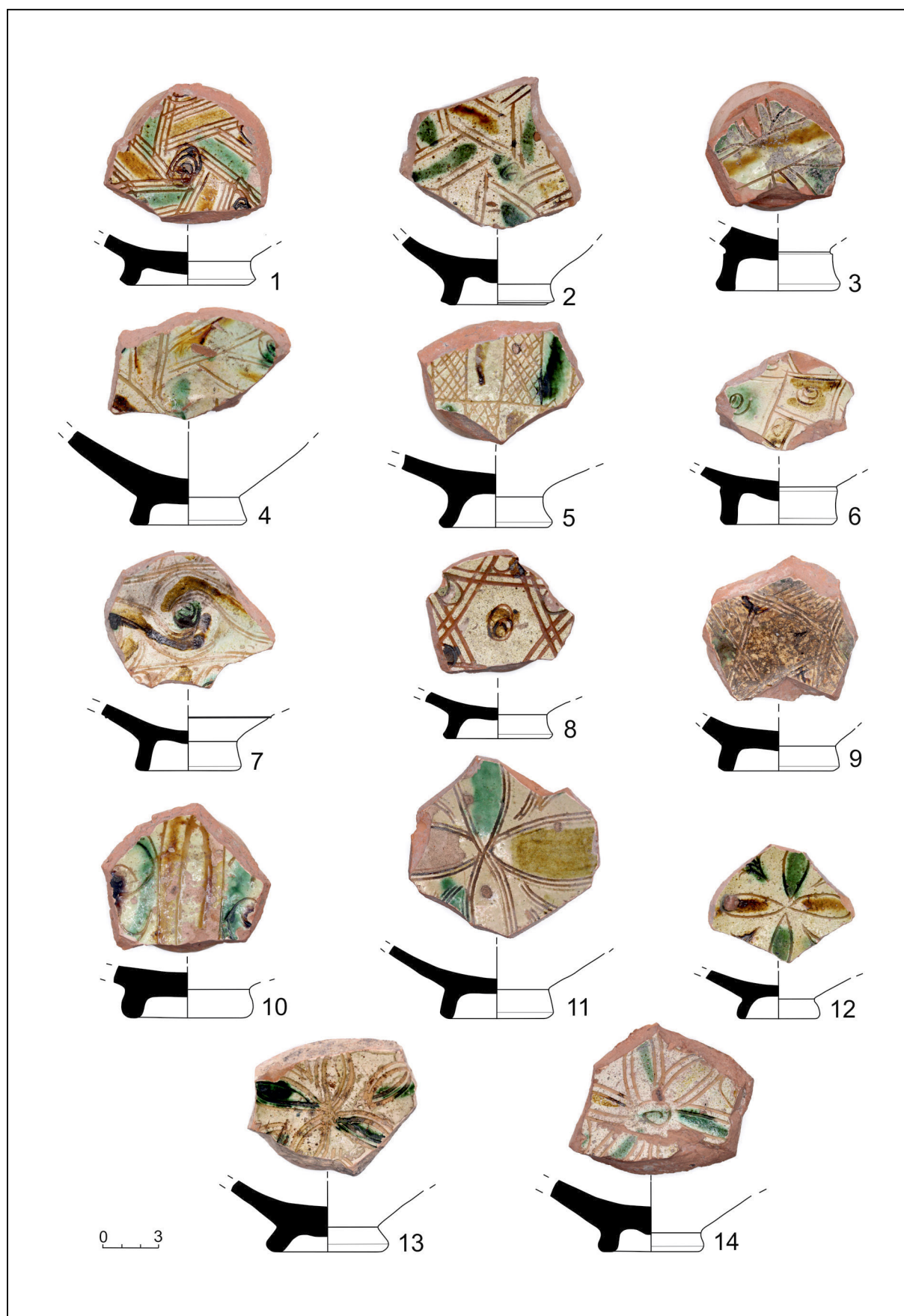


Fig. 19. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna.
Author: M. Darakchieva

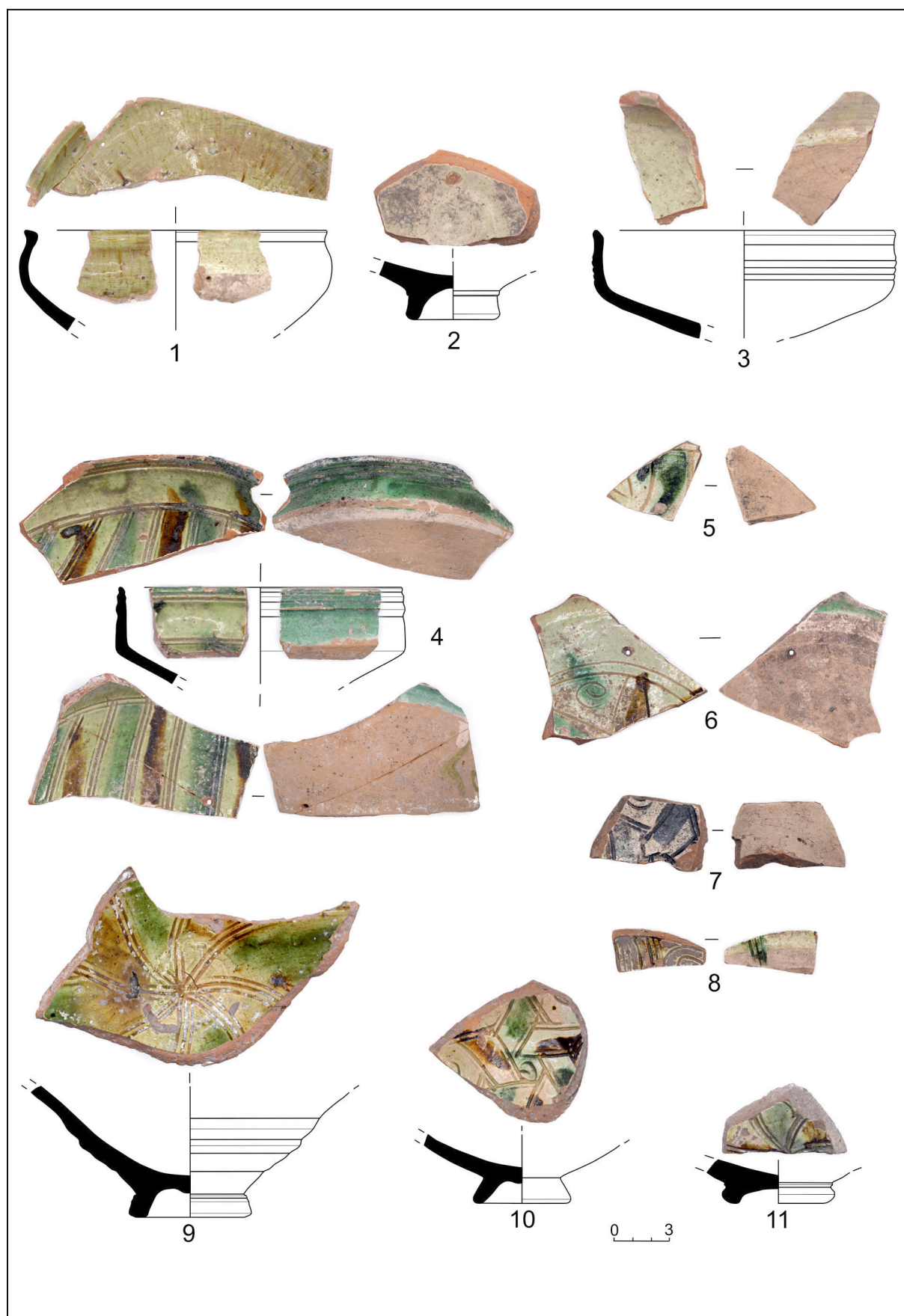


Fig. 20. Polychrome Sgraffito Ware, Crimean origin, from the excavations at Petrich Kale.
Author: M. Darakchieva



Fig. 21. Polychrome sgraffito wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Crimea and Azraq/Azov, 14th (3) and 15th centuries (1, 2, 4-7). 1, 2, 4-6, 7 – Funa Castle, Southern Crimea, mid-to-late 15th-century structures, residential contexts (2, 5), leveling deposits (7), and the 1475 fire and destruction layers (1, 4, 6), after (Teslenko 2021, fig. 176; 105; 106; 111); 3 – Azraq/Azov, second quarter of the 14th-century context, after (Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 292, No. 287).

Author: I. Teslenko



Fig. 22. Polychrome sgraffito wares of Crimean origin, from excavations in Crimea, late half of the 15th century.
 1, 2, 4-6 – Funa Castle, Southern Crimea: mid-to-late 15th-century structures, residential contexts (2), leveling deposits (6), and the 1475 fire and destruction layers (1, 4, 5); 3, 7 – Alushta Fortress, Southern Crimea, mid-to-late 15th-century structures, Orta-Kyle Tower: the 1475 fire and destruction layers (3), lower level of the later rubbish dump (7), after (Teslenko 2021, fig. 87; 97-100; 109; 110; 113).
 Author: I. Teslenko

CATALOG

Slip-painted wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna

1. Upper part of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths (Sector III); 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: Hemispherical bowl with a rounded lip. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a white-slip “diving fish” motif arranged in a swirling rosette, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip. A yellowish-brown lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: Rim diameter – 16.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.9×9.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 306-308, 312, Nos. 299-301, 304.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Bottom of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a central swirling rosette of white-slip “diving fishes” and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 12.0×11.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 306-308, 312, Nos. 299-301, 304.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Bottom of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1963 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a white-slip central spiral, surrounded by “diving fish” motifs, and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.7 cm; fragment dimensions – 10.4×12 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Bottom of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a white-slip central spiral, surrounded by concentric wavy line and “diving fish” motifs, and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 7.8 cm; foot height – 1.1 cm; fragment dimensions – 8.5×14.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1966 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with concentrically arranged white-slip “diving fish” motifs, and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: 6.6×6.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

6. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/6)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with concentrically arranged white-slip “diving fish” motifs, and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: 4.9 × 6.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

7. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/7)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a white-slip concentric line and figures of “diving fish”, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip. A yellowish-brown lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: 1.6 × 4.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

8. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/8)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths (st. San Stefano and 8th November, III); 1962 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with white-slip radial lines and figures of “diving fishes” between them. The glaze is lead, yellowish-brown.

Dimensions: 1.8 × 6.1 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

9. Lip fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/9)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The lip is rounded and lacks additional profiling. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with concentrically arranged white-slip figures of “diving fish”, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip. A green lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: 2.2 × 3.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

10. Lip fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/10)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The lip is rounded and lacks additional profiling. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with concentrically arranged white-slip figures of “diving fish”, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip. A green lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: 2.5 × 3.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

11. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/11)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic and sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with white-slip radial lines, complemented by “diving fish” motif and dots, while the exterior features vertical engravings cut through a white slip. A green lead glaze covers the interior and the upper exterior.

Dimensions: 3.4 × 4.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

12. Rim fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/12)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository. Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with concentrically arranged white-slip “diving fishes”, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip.

Dimensions: 2.8 × 4.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

13. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/13)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a band of Kufic script between concentric stripes, complemented by rows of “diving fish” motifs, while the exterior features vertical engravings through a white slip. A green lead glaze covers the interior and the upper exterior.

Dimensions: 6.4 × 6.6 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

14. Bottom of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/14)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths (east vestibule, depth 2.20 m); 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with white-slip radial lines, complemented by “diving fishes” and dots between them and is covered with a green lead glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.2 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.5 × 7.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

15. Lip fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 6/15)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with two concentric engraving lines, while the exterior features white-slip painting in the form of cross-hatching. A green lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: 2.8 × 4.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Slip-painted wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Petrich Kale and Kastriçi

1. Slip-painted bowl (fig. 7/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository.

Inv. No.: № IVE 181

Archaeological context: Kastritsi, residential area; 2008 excavations by V. Pletnyov.

Description: Hemispherical bowl with a rounded rim and ring foot. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. Interior decorated with a central swirling rosette of white-slip “diving fish” motifs within concentric wavy lines. Yellow-brown lead glaze applied to the interior and upper exterior.

Dimensions: Rim diameter – 15.0 cm; bowl height – 7.2 cm; foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 306-308, 312, Nos. 299-301, 304.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Bottom of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 7/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Kastritsi, sq. XXXVI-2, Dwelling 3, Pit 4; 2019 excavations by I. Lazarenko.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with a white-slip central spiral, surrounded by “diving fish” motifs, and covered with a light yellow-greenish lead glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 0.8 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.8 × 9.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Darakchieva 2024, 127, fig. 13/13.

3. Lip fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 7/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. C8-23, topsoil; 2025 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The lip is rounded and lacks additional profiling. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with white-slip radial lines, complemented by “diving fishes”, while the exterior features vertical engravings cut through a white slip. A yellowish-brown lead glaze covers both surfaces.

Dimensions: 2.8 × 4.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Wall fragment of a slip-painted bowl (fig. 7/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. F9-6, layer of charcoal and ash over a floor level; 2022 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with white-slip radial lines, complemented by “diving fishes”, and covered with a yellowish-brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: 2.8 × 4.3 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 22.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Monochrome Sgraffito Wares of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna and Petrich Kale

1. Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito design inside features a large central spiral encircled by a band of smaller, fine-line spirals. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a three-pronged tool. The glaze is brown, unevenly colored, applied to the interior and upper exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 15.5 cm; max. diameter – 15.8 cm; bowl height – 7.6 cm; foot diameter – 5.6 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

References: Maslovsky 2017, 446, fig. 12, 22, 24; Teslenko 2018, fig. 25; 2021, fig. 83.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Upper part of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim, everted lip, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito design inside features a large fine-line spiral. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a three-pronged tool. The glaze is brown, unevenly colored, applied to the interior and upper exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 15.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.0 × 7.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

References: Maslovsky 2017, 446, fig. 12, 22, 24; Teslenko 2018, fig. 25; 2021, fig. 83.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Bottom of a monochrome glazed bowl (fig. 9/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, partially burned out; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The glaze is brown, unevenly colored, inside the bowl.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 7.0 cm; foot height – 1.7 cm; fragment dimensions – 9.2 × 12.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th – early 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, 43.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Upper part of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, brick-red, partially burned out; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito design inside the bowl features two concentric circles incised with single- and double-pronged tools, connected by radial wavy lines etched with a three-pronged graver. A brown lead glaze applied to the interior and upper exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 17.0 cm; max. diameter – 17.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.3 × 11.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 14th century.

References: Maslovskiy 2017, 468, fig. 1, 4; Teslenko 2018, 48-49, 57, fig. 25.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, IX; 1953 excavations by M. Mirchev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, partially burned out; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is etched with a single fine line. An extant fragment shows spirals enclosed within a rhombus, and covered with lead, brown, unevenly colored glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 5.6 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 8.0 × 9.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

6. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/6)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, II–IV; 1959 excavations by M. Mirchev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration, applied with thick and thin tools, features a vortex rosette of four rays, each filled with wavy lines, and large concentric spirals between them. The glaze is brown and unevenly colored.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 9.5 × 11.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 31/3.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

7. Wall of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 9/7)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. C9-16, topsoil; 2025 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The fabric is dense, brick-red; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The extant fragment features a grid sgraffito pattern of fine lines, finished with an unevenly colored brown lead glaze.

Dimensions: 2.8 × 2.9 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 14th century.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

8. Monochrome Sgraffito bowl, partially reconstructed (fig. 9/8)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1953 excavations by M. Mirchev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim and a ring foot. Lips are missing. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and plastic; it is sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The bowl's interior is decorated with a four-petaled rosette rendered in fine sgraffito. Each petal features a central wavy motif, with large decorative spirals filling the interstitial areas. The glaze is brown, unevenly colored, inside the bowl.

Dimensions: Rim diameter – 15.0 cm; max. diameter – 15.8 cm; preserved height – 6.8 cm; foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

References: Maslovskiy 2017, 446, fig. 12, 22, 26; Teslenko 2018, fig. 28

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Monochrome Sgraffito wares of Crimean origin, from excavations in Varna

1. Upper part of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, brick-red; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with thick and thin tools. A green lead glaze covered the interior and the upper exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 19.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.0 × 10.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 14th century.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Upper part of a Monochrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 10/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The rim of the plate is horizontally oriented, with a thickened sub-triangular lip. The fabric is dense muted-brick, and lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with thick and thin tools. The design consists of an ornamental band of horizontal stripes, accented by symmetrical slanted strokes at both ends, known as the zencerek motif. The interior of the vessels was covered with a green lead glaze.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 18.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 2.3 × 7.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second half of the 14th century.

References: Teslenko 2018, fig. 25/8; 27/6; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 160, No 156; Seidaliyeva 2024, 239, fig. 9

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a Monochrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 10/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The rim is horizontally oriented, straight, and separated from the body by a small rib. The fabric is dense, muted-brick, and lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with thin tool. The plate rim is adorned with an ornamental band of almond-shaped figures arranged in a zigzag pattern. The interior of the vessels was covered with a green lead glaze.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 25.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 3.4 × 6.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Second quarter – late 14th century.

References: Maslovskiy 2017, 471-472, fig. 4/5; 19/4; Teslenko 2018, fig. 25/8, 9; 32/2; 34/9; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 224, 229, Nos. 221, 225.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/4)**Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is applied with a thin tool. It features a medallion enclosed in a double circle with mirrored spiral motifs inside, surrounded by fine radial rays. The interior of the vessels was covered with a green lead glaze.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 7.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.2 × 11.0 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Second half of the 14th century.**References:** Maslovskiy 2017, 479-482, fig. 6/1; 16/1; Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/6-9.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**5. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/5)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick, and lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with thick and thin tools in the form of eight-petaled floral rosettes that cover the entire surface of the vessel. The glaze is green lead inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.2 × 7.6 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Mid-to-late 14th century.**References:** Maslovskiy 2017, fig. 5/1, 4; 16/2, 4; Teslenko 2018, 60, fig. 28.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**6. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/6)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is executed with a thin tool. The design details are unclear. The interior of the vessels is covered with a green lead glaze. There is a circular hole in the middle of the bowl's base, punched into the finished object, likely intended for the secondary use of the fragment.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.4 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.4 × 8.0 cm; hole diameter – 2.0 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 14th century.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**7. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/7)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is rendered using tools of diverse thickness. At the heart of the composition lies a six-lobed swirling rosette composed of ribbons framing a central hexagon; the design is complemented by a series of simple spirals. The interior of the vessels is covered with a green lead glaze.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.4 cm; foot height – 1.6 cm; fragment dimensions – 9.8 × 10.7 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Second half of the 14th century.**References:** Teslenko 2018, fig. 30.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**8. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito and Champlévé bowl (fig. 10/8)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, brick-red, plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The design is executed using sgraffito and champlévé techniques in form of a small central floral rosette with rounded petals, created by a continuous double-ribbon braid. The interior of the vessels was covered with a green lead glaze.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.4 cm; foot height – 1.3 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.4 × 6.3 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Second quarter – late 14th century.**References:** Maslovskiy 2017, 481-483, fig. 7/2, 3; Teslenko 2018, fig. 27/1-5; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 171-177, Nos 167-173.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.

9. Bottom of a Monochrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 10/9)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, light-brick, and lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with thick and thin tools in the form of four-petaled floral rosettes that cover the entire surface of the vessel. The glaze is green lead inside the vessel.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6 cm; foot height – 0.9 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.6 × 8.3 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Mid-to-late 14th century.

References: Maslovskiy 2017, fig. 5/1, 4; 16/2, 4; Teslenko 2018, 60, fig. 28.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna

1. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 12/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, applied with a single-pronged tool. The design is accented with strokes of green and brown. The glaze is unevenly brown on the inside and pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains on the outside of the rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 19.6 cm; max. diameter – 19.8 cm; bowl height – 9.0 cm; foot diameter – 7.0 cm; foot height – 1.6 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 12/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The rim's exterior features sgraffito patterns of vertical lines, enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is brown and unevenly colored inside, and pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains on the rim's exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 18.6 cm; max. diameter – 18.8 cm; bowl height – 9.2 cm; foot diameter – 6.6 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 12/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Roman Tower; 1959 excavations by M. Mirchev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool and enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is uneven brown inside and pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains on the rim's exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 18.0 cm; max. diameter – 18.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.1 × 8.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 12/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The rim's exterior features sgraffito patterns of vertical double lines, enhanced with brown brushstrokes. The glaze is brown, unevenly colored inside, and light green with undissolved colorant grains on the rim's exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 17.0 cm; max. diameter – 18.2 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.3×6.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydalieva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna, Kastrici and Balchik

1. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 13/1)

Repository: Historical Museum Balchik, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Balchik, Medieval settlement on the Dzheni Bair Hill; 1980s excavation by M. Dimitrov.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a three-pronged tool, enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is uneven brown on the inside and pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains on the rim's exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.2 cm; max. diameter – 16.6 cm; bowl height – 7.4 cm; foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydalieva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Kuzev 1981, 280; Atanasov 2009, 235, fig. 68.

2. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 13/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool and enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The interior features traces of single-line sgraffito and an uneven brown glaze. On the exterior rim, the glaze is pale yellow, with undissolved colorant grains.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.0 cm; max. diameter – 16.2 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.3×9.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydalieva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 13/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Kastritsi, sq. XXXVI-4/5, Dwelling 5, on the first floor level in the eastern part, 7.30 - 7.20 m; 2019 excavations by I. Lazarenko.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim and everted lips. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool and enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is unevenly brown on the interior and pale yellow on the exterior rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 18.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 3.6×4.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydalieva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Sgraffito ware with monochrome glaze inside and polychrome decoration outside the rims, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna and Petrich Kale

1. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 14/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 1; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, slightly concave rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool, that is accented with

brushstrokes of green and brown. The glaze is light yellowish, with fine brown and green undissolved colorant grains both inside the bowl and outside its rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.2 cm; max. diameter – 16.8 cm; bowl height – 7.5 cm; foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 14/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 3; 1963 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, slightly convex rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool, that is accented with brushstrokes of green and brown. The glaze is light yellowish, with fine brown and green undissolved colorant grains both inside the bowl and outside its rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 20.0 cm; max. diameter – 20.0 cm; bowl height – 9.5 cm; foot diameter – 6.6 cm; foot height – 2.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 14/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, straight rim, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool and enhanced with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is unevenly brown inside and pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains on the outside of the rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.0 cm; max. diameter – 16.2 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.6 × 8.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl, wall fragment with a transition to the rim (fig. 14/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, 2018, sq. G8-11/16, grey-ashy layer containing building rubble, SE corner of Tower 1; 2018 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. Traces of polychrome sgraffito decoration are visible on the lower part of the rim. The glaze is unevenly brown inside the bowl and pale yellow outside the rim.

Dimensions: 4.2 × 5.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – early 15th centuries.

References: Ginkut 2014, 316, fig. 6; Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, 66, fig. 36; 2021, 87-88, fig. 83; Seydaliyeva 2024, fig. 8.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito goblet (fig. 14/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The goblet has a tall, straight, funnel-like rim. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, created with a single-pronged tool, that is accented with brushstrokes of green and brown. The glaze is light yellowish, with fine brown undissolved colorant grains both inside the bowl and outside its rim.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 9.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.6 × 6.9 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 77; 88/7; 113/8-14; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 28;

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna**1. Polychrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 16/1)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 3; 1963 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The plate is wide, cone-shaped with an upturned lip, triple-ribbed top profiling, and a low ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, lighter near the surface, and partially outburned; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The central part of the plate features a large four-petaled rosette created with a double incisor, with thin spirals between the petals. Single wavy lines partially fill the areas between the ribs. The composition is tinted with green and brown paints and covered with a pale-yellow glaze.**Dimensions:** Lip diameter – 23.0 cm; plate height – 6.0 cm; foot diameter – 7.4 cm; foot height – 0.9 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Late 14th – 15th centuries.**References:** Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74; 112.**Bibliography:** Kuzev 1980, 23-24, fig. 22.**2. Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 16/2)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths, Dwelling 2; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The bowl has a vertical, straight, slightly inward-tilting rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The inner surface features a single-line engraving of an “endless knot” pattern, framed by S-shaped scrolls. The outer rim is decorated with a zigzag of almond-shaped motifs, applied with a triple-pronged tool. Sgraffito decoration is accented with brushstrokes of brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown undissolved colorant grains both inside the bowl and outside its rim.**Dimensions:** Lip diameter – 17.0 cm; bowl height – 10.0 cm; foot diameter – 7.0 cm; foot height – 2.2 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Late 14th – 15th centuries.**References:** Maslovskiy 2017, 486, fig. 12/4-9; 22/3-6; 26/1, 3; Teslenko 2018, fig. 36; 2021, fig. 106, 107; Karasu 2021, 721, Tab. 1/7.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna****1. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 17/1)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths, II–IV; 1959 excavations by M. Mirchev.**Description:** The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim, and everted lips. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a three-pronged tool to both the interior and the outer rim. It features radial stripes inside and vertical stripes on the exterior. The design is highlighted with green and brown paint and finished with a pale yellow glaze on the interior and the upper exterior.**Dimensions:** Lip diameter – 17.0 cm; max. diameter – 18.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.3 × 12.9 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 105; 111.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**2. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 17/2)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths II–IV; 1959 excavations by M. Mirchev.**Description:** The rim is horizontally oriented, slightly concave and separated from the body by a small rib. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with single and three-pronged engravers. The plate rim features an ornamental band of almond-shaped figures arranged in a zigzag pattern, while the central area is occupied by a rosette motif combined with small rhombi, further embellished with small spirals. The design is highlighted with green and brown paint and finished with a pale yellowish glaze.**Dimensions:** Lip diameter – 19.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.9 × 10.7 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 106; 107.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 17/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1963 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim, everted lips, and a ring foot. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The interior is decorated with sgraffito, featuring an intricate rosette with a four-petaled base, complemented by delicate spirals, all created with single- and two-pronged tools. The design is highlighted with green and brown pigments, then finished with a pale yellow glaze. The upper exterior is coated with a contrasting green glaze.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 15.0 cm; max. diameter – 15.6 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.9 × 11.1 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 96-100.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 17/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The rim is horizontally oriented, slightly concave, with upward lips, separated from the body by a small rib. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red and lighter near the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with single- and three-pronged tools. The rim features an ornamental band of almond-shaped figures arranged in a zigzag pattern, accented with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown undissolved colorant grains.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 22.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 2.7 × 5.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 96; 103; 104; 106; 107; 111.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito plate (two fragments) (fig. 17/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, II; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The plate is wide, cone-shaped with an upturned lip, and double-ribbed top profiling. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, lighter near the surface, and partially outburned; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions.

The sgraffito decoration is created with a single-pronged tool, forming almond-shaped figures arranged in zigzag and angular patterns between the ribbed ridges. It is accented with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown undissolved colorant grains.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 20.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 10.2 × 11.6 and 6.8 × 8.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74; 112.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

6. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 17/6)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, II; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The plate is wide, cone-shaped with an upturned lip, and double-ribbed top profiling. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, lighter near the surface, and partially outburned; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions.

The sgraffito decoration is created with a single-pronged tool. The main decorative composition is unclear; the spaces between the ribs are filled with wavy lines and highlighted with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown undissolved colorant grains.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 24.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 3.3 × 5.6 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, 81-82, fig. 74; 112.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

7. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito plate (fig. 17/7)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The rim is horizontally oriented, slightly concave, with upward lips, separated from the body by a small rib. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red and lighter near the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare chamotte-like

or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is created with single- and two-pronged tools. The main decorative composition is unclear; the rim is embellished with a sequence of angled motifs, painted with green and brown splashes. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 24.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.4 × 5.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 90; 92.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

Polychrome Sgraffito Ware of Crimean origin, from the excavations in Varna

1. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1966 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor created with single- and three-pronged tools, in the form of a swirling rosette combined with simple spirals, and highlighted with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 7.2 cm; foot height – 1.3 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.3 × 8.5 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 104; 105; 110; 111.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths, IX; 1953 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor created with single- and double-pronged tools, in the form of a swirling rosette combined with simple spirals, and highlighted with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.1 cm; fragment dimensions – 8.0 × 9.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 88/3, 5.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a single-pronged tool. The bowl's field is bisected by two parallel lines, flanked by symmetrical triangular figures. The composition is accented with green and brown paint and finished with a pale yellow glaze.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.6 cm; foot height – 2.1 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.0 × 7.0 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 88/3, 5.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with single- and double-pronged tools in the form of a swirling rosette combined with simple spirals, and is highlighted with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.0 × 9.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 104; 105.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1960s excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is executed with a single-pronged tool, forming a checkerboard design with densely hatched rectangles. It is highlighted with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.7cm; fragment dimensions – 6.8 × 8.2 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 88/2; Teslenko and Dzhanov 2024, fig. 39.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

6. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/6)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1966 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with single- and double-pronged tools in the form of a five- or six-pointed star, combined with simple spirals and accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 2.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.4 × 7.1 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 109; 110.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

7. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/7)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1961 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decoration executed with single- and three-pronged tools. It features two interlaced bands forming figure-eight patterns, supplemented with simple spirals at their centers and accented with green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 5.6 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.1 × 8.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 106/3-6.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

8. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/8)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with single- and double-pronged tools in the form of a six-pointed star, combined with simple spirals, and accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.2 cm; foot height – 1.3 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.6 × 7.7 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 109.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

9. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/9)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Varna, Roman Baths; 1964 excavations by A. Kuzev.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a three-pronged tool in the form of five-pointed star, and accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.4 cm; foot height – 1.3 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.6 × 7.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 109.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

10. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/10)**Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1966 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is rendered in a fine single line and remains as a fragment of a diametrically elongated oval, bordered by double lines and spirals. The composition is further highlighted by longitudinal stripes of green and brown paint, flanked by manganese spotting on each side. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 7.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.5 × 8.2 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** Second quarter – late 14th century.**References:** Teslenko 2018, fig. 31; Bocharov and Maslovskiy 2024, 291, 292, No. 226, 287.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**11. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/11)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1959 excavations M. Mirchev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a double-pronged tool. A central four-leaf rosette forms the core of the composition, featuring stylized buds nestled between the leaves, and accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 10.2 × 10.6 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 96-100.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**12. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/12)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1953 excavations M. Mirchev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a single-pronged tool. A central four-leaf rosette forms the core of the composition, featuring stylized buds nestled between the leaves, and accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 4.4 cm; foot height – 1.1 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.3 × 7.6 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 87.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**13. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/13)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1959 excavations by M. Mirchev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a double-pronged tool. The composition is anchored by a central four-leaf rosette that incorporates stylized buds and almond-shaped leaves nestled between its petals. The drawing is accented with green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.5 cm; foot height – 1.3 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.4 × 8.9 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 96-100.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**14. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 19/14)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Varna, Roman Baths; 1967 excavations by A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a double-pronged tool. A four-leaf rosette forms the core of the composition, featuring simple spirels in its center and between the leaves. The drawing is accented with green and brown paint and covered with a pale yellow, almost colorless glaze.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 5.6 cm; foot height – 1.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.8 × 8.0 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 99-100.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.

Polychrome Sgraffito Ware, Crimean origin, from the excavations in Petrich Kale

1. Upper part of a glazed, undecorated bowl (fig. 20/1)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, 2018, sq. F8-14/19, grey-ashy layer next to the southern wall of a dwelling; 2018 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The bowl has a vertical, rounded rim and everted lips. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The glaze is pale greenish-yellow, with undissolved colorant grains both inside and on the upper exterior surface.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 3.2×4.4 and 5.4×6.4 cm

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2018, 2021, fig. 74, 76.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

2. Bottom of a glazed, undecorated bowl (fig. 20/2)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. C8-18; dark loose deposit; 2025 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 5.0 cm; foot height – 1.5 cm; fragment dimensions – 4.4×7.8 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 99-100.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

3. Upper part of a glazed, undecorated bowl (fig. 20/3)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. G7-11, dark loose deposit over a burnt layer; 2019 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The bowl has a straight, vertical rim with shallow ribbing and a slightly outward lip. The fabric is dense, yellowish-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The glaze is pale greenish-yellow, with undissolved colorant grains both inside and on the upper exterior surface.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 5.8×3.3 cm

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: Late 14th – 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2018; 2021, fig. 74, 76.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

4. Upper part of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (three fragments) (fig. 20/4)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, fill in the tower of the proteichism; 2017 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The bowl has a straight, vertical rim with shallow ribbing and a slightly tapered edge. The fabric is dense, brick-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is executed with a three-pronged tool, creating parallel lines accompanied by streaks of green and brown paint that cover the entire surface of the bowl. The glaze is pale greenish-yellow, with undissolved colorant grains inside and green on the upper exterior.

Dimensions: Lip diameter – 16.0 cm; fragment dimensions – 6.9×13 , 3.8×5.1 and 7.7×11.3 cm

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 113/2.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

5. Wall fragment of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 20/5)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, sq. F9-11, grey ashy deposit; 2022 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The fabric is dense, yellow-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is applied with a single-pronged tool and complemented by streaks of green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.

Dimensions: 3.5×5.6 cm

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th centuries.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 113/2.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

6. Wall fragment of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 20/6)**Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Petrich Kale, fill in the tower of the proteichism; 2017 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.**Description:** The fabric is dense, yellow-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration was executed with a single-pronged tool in the form of a floral rosette complemented by simple spirals and brushstrokes of green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** 8.2 × 8.4 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th centuries.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 87/5.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**7. Wall fragment of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 20/7)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Petrich Kale, Sq. C8-23/18; dark loose deposit over a floor level; 2025 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.**Description:** The fabric is dense, yellow-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is executed with single- and double-pronged tools. The design features a five- or six-pointed star formed by interlacing ribbons, further accented by simple spirals and green and brown brushstrokes. The glaze is pale yellow with undissolved colorant grains. Inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** 4.1 × 6.0 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th centuries.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 110-111.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**8. Wall fragment at the transition to the rim of a Polychrome Sgraffito bowl (fig. 20/8)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Petrich Kale, Sq. G7-16, gray-ashy deposit over a floor layer; 2019 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.**Description:** The fabric is dense, yellow-red, and lighter near the surface; it is plastic and sandless, with calcareous and rare chamotte-like or argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration, created with single- and three-pronged tools, is applied to the interior and the outer rim. It features radial stripes inside, complemented by simple spirals, and vertical stripes on the exterior. The design is highlighted with green and brown brushstrokes and finished with a pale yellow glaze on the interior and the upper exterior.**Dimensions:** 2.3 × 4.8 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th centuries.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 105; 111.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**9. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 20/9)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository.**Inv. No.:** 411**Archaeological context:** Petrich Kale, dark loose deposit; 1961 excavations by D. Dimitrov and A. Kuzev.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a three-pronged tool, forming an eight-rayed swirling rosette, with the interspaces painted green and brown. The glaze is pale yellow, with fine brown colorant grains inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 6.5 cm; foot height – 1.2 cm; fragment dimensions – 17.1 × 9.8 cm.**Provenance:** Crimea.**Dating:** 15th century.**References:** Teslenko 2021, fig. 111/4; 113/6, 7.**Bibliography:** Initial publication.**10. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 20/10)****Repository:** Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.**Archaeological context:** Petrich Kale, Sq. F8-24, gray-ashy deposit; 2018 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.**Description:** The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. The sgraffito decoration is applied with single- and double-pronged tools, forming a five-pointed star from interlacing ribbons and complemented by simple spirals and brushstrokes of green and brown paint. The glaze is pale yellow inside the vessel.**Dimensions:** Foot diameter – 5.2 cm; foot height – 1.4 cm; fragment dimensions – 7.6 × 7.9 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 110-111.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

11. Bottom of a Polychrome Sgraffito ware (fig. 20/11)

Repository: Archaeological Museum of Varna, Medieval repository, Reference collection.

Archaeological context: Petrich Kale, C8-23/18, dark loose deposit over a floor level; 2025 excavations by M. Manolova-Voykova.

Description: The foot is ring. The fabric is dense, red-brick, lighter towards the surface; it is plastic, sandless with calcareous and rare argillite mineral inclusions. Sgraffito decor is applied with a three-pronged tool in the form of a six-rayed swirling rosette, with the interspaces painted in green and brown. The glaze is pale yellow with fine brown colorant grains inside the vessel.

Dimensions: Foot diameter – 6.0 cm; foot height – 1.1 cm; fragment dimensions – 3.0 × 5.9 cm.

Provenance: Crimea.

Dating: 15th century.

References: Teslenko 2021, fig. 111/4; 113/6, 7.

Bibliography: Initial publication.

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Unprocessed archival materials:

A.K.1: Notebook with hard covers, 24.8x17 cm, 92 leaves, numbered on the right-hand page (recto). Handwritten text. Title on the front cover (in Bulgarian): “Al. Kuzev. Nar. Muzey Varna. 1961. Rim. termi - zhilishta. Rim. bani. Razni”. Varna Regional Museum of History Scientific Archives, “Alexander Kuzev” archival fonds (unprocessed).

A.K.4: Notebook with hard covers, 23x15.5 cm, 71 leaves, numbered on the right-hand page (recto). Handwritten text. Title on the front cover (in Bulgarian): “Al. Kuzev. Dnevnik. Rimski termi 1964–1967”. Varna Regional Museum of History Scientific Archives, “Alexander Kuzev” archival fonds (unprocessed).

Liste des illustrations

Fig. 1. Cartes des principaux sites cités dans le texte

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II – Ateliers de céramique glaçurée et témoignages de cette production en Crimée. Auteur : I. Teslenko

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Fig. 13. Céramique de type sgraffito, à glaçure monochrome à l'intérieur et à décor polychrome sur les rebords extérieurs, d'origine criméenne, issue des fouilles de Varna (2), Kastritsi (3) et Balchik (1). Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 14. Céramiques sgraffito à glaçure monochrome à l'intérieur et à décor polychrome sur les rebords extérieurs, d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Varna (1-3, 5) et de Petrich Kale (4). Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 15. Céramiques sgraffito à glaçure monochrome à l'intérieur et à décor polychrome sur les rebords extérieurs, d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Crimée et d'Azaq/Azov, fin du XIV^e – début du XV^e siècle. 1, 2 – Azaq/Azov, seconde moitié du XIV^e siècle, d'après (Bocharov et Maslovskiy 2024, 300, 301, n° 295, 296) ; 3 – Forteresse d'Alushta, Crimée du Sud, zone résidentielle de la fin du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle, d'après (Teslenko 2018, fig. 36) ; 4, 6 – Secteur du château de Founa, Crimée du Sud, contexte de la fin du XIV^e – début du XV^e siècle (4) et couches d'incendie et de destruction de 1475 (6), d'après (Teslenko 2016, fig. 17 ; 0) ; 5 – Forteresse de Cembalo, Balaklava, Crimée du Sud-Ouest, découvertes remaniées, d'après (Teslenko 2021, fig. 113) ; 7 – Sougdaia/Soudak, secteur de l'atelier de poterie glaçure, la fosse du milieu – seconde moitié du XV^e siècle, d'après (Teslenko et Dzhanov 2024, fig. 28). Auteur : I. Teslenko

Fig. 16. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Varna. Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 17. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Varna. Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 18. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles en Crimée, fin des XIV^e – XV^e siècles. 1, 3, 5 – Forteresse d'Alushta, Crimée du Sud : habitations avec la couche d'incendie de 1475 (1) ; zone résidentielle de la fin du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle (3, 5), certains échantillons sont identifiés par leur identifiant du laboratoire de Lyon ; 2, 4 – Château de Founa, Crimée du Sud, structure du milieu à la fin du XV^e siècle : habitation avec la couche d'incendie de 1475 (2) et citerne (4), d'après (Teslenko 2021, fig. 85 ; 107 ; 112 ; Teslenko et Dzhanov 2024, fig. 39). Auteur : I. Teslenko

Fig. 19. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Varna. Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 20. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles de Petrich Kale. Auteur : M. Darakchieva

Fig. 21. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues des fouilles en Crimée et à Azaq/Azov, XIV^e (3) et XV^e siècles (1, 2, 4-7). 1, 2, 4-6, 7 – Château de Founa, Crimée du Sud, structures du milieu au milieu/fin du XV^e siècle, contextes résidentiels (2, 5), dépôts de nivellement (7) et couches d'incendie et de destruction de 1475 (1, 4, 6), d'après (Teslenko 2021, fig. 176 ; 105 ; 106 ; 111) ; 3 – Azov/Azaq, contexte du deuxième quart du XIV^e siècle, d'après (Bocharov, Maslovskiy 2024, 292, n° 287). Auteur : I. Teslenko

Fig. 22. Céramiques polychromes à sgraffito d'origine criméenne, issues de fouilles en Crimée, de la seconde moitié du XV^e siècle. 1, 2, 4-6 – Château de Founa, Crimée du Sud : structures du milieu au bas du XV^e siècle, contextes résidentiels (2), dépôts de nivellement (6), et couches d'incendie et de destruction de 1475 (1, 4, 5) ; 3, 7 – Forteresse d'Alushta, Crimée du Sud, structures du milieu au bas du XV^e siècle, tour d'Orta-Kylé : couches d'incendie et de destruction de 1475 (3), niveau inférieur du dépotoir ultérieur (7), d'après (Teslenko 2021, fig. 87 ; 97-100 ; 109 ; 110 ; 113). Auteur : I. Teslenko

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