Late Antique eastern Adriatic connectivity in the light of typology and distribution (GIS) studies and archaeometric analyses of Roman coarse wares

ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation examines changes in the pottery market in the eastern Adriatic during Late Antiquity (4th–8th centuries AD), as reflected in the emergence and distribution of Adriatic Late Antique Coarse Ware (ALACW). The main research questions concern the typo-chronology of ALACW, the geographical range of the distribution zones for individual types, and the location of production centers.

The research material comprises coarse ware assemblages from thirty Late Antique sites in the eastern Adriatic region, spanning the province of Dalmatia and the northwestern Istrian peninsula. The methodology combines (1) typological classification and typo-chronological analysis of vessel forms and decorations, (2) GIS-based distribution mapping to identify supra-regional distribution zones, (3) macroscopic fabric analysis, (4) mineralogical-petrographic thin-section analysis, and (5) elemental composition analysis (ICP-OES/MS) of selected samples, as well as comparative analysis including reference groups from Apulia.

The study establishes a comprehensive typo-chronology for ALACW and identifies five major supra-regional distribution zones: the Northern Adriatic, Northeastern Adriatic, Pan-Adriatic, Central Dalmatian, and Central-Southern Dalmatian zones. Archaeometric analyses confirmed that vessels of the North Italic Burnished Ware group were imports from the Po Valley, while the dominant calcite-tempered fabric group points to production within broader region of the northern and eastern Adriatic. The research also documents a significant shift in the vessel repertoire — the gradual disappearance of bowls and pans and the rise of the rounded pot as the dominant form — reflecting broader changes in Late Antique culinary practice observable across the Mediterranean world, attested in the eastern Adriatic from at least the late 5th century onward. The dissertation represents the first regional synthesis of ALACW for the eastern Adriatic.