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# Daily Material Life in Sofia through Locally Produced Ceramics, 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

ARCHAEOLOGIA BULGARICA  
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Guergana GUIONOVA

**Abstract:** The article proposes an overview of the ceramic forms of daily life of Sofia's residents for the period 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. This observation is limited to the common furniture of local production from the Ottoman contexts of the archaeological excavations of the Roman Amphitheater site. The objects are grouped by their function, defined by the form and traces of use. Their place in daily life is explored through written sources (kadi registers and cookbooks) and iconographic sources (paintings and photographs from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century).

**Key words:** Sofia, pottery production, Ottoman Empire.

Archaeological research attentive to the strata of the Ottoman period has become more frequent on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula as well as in Bulgaria. In the last two decades, material culture and, in particular, ceramics, have been studied more often. The elements of material everyday life in the Ottoman period remain, on the whole, poorly known in Bulgaria (Guionova 2005). Few studies deliver descriptions of archaeological ceramics from the Ottoman period (Генюва 1993; Плетньов 2004). The objects presented are often chosen and isolated and the assemblages are little discussed.

Since the 2000s, urban archaeological excavations have focused on this period. Those of Sofia have brought to light about twenty Ottoman pits on the site of the Roman amphitheatre<sup>1</sup>. Their material was systematically collected and studied as a whole. Dating is proposed, based on the presence of coins and imported objects. The closed sets illustrate the periods from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The city of Sredec, medieval name of Sofia, was then the main city of the province of Roumelia, since the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and of the eyalet since 1591. It developed as an important economic and cultural centre, defined until the 18<sup>th</sup> century by travellers as an important place for trade. At the beginning of this period, the population of the city, including Christians, enjoyed relative wealth as evidenced by the figures in the tax records of 1576 (Кил 2002, 64-65). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the city is gradually abandoned by the Ottoman administration in favor of Monastir (Bitola) and undergoes a real decline during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Sofia is defined as a rehabilitated urban centre populated by Turks. In reality, 16<sup>th</sup> century records indicate that only about a quarter of the city's households were non-Muslim (Christian and Jewish). This share gradually increased, especially with the high proportion of Christian population in the surrounding countryside. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christian and Jewish households slightly outnumbered Muslim ones (Кийл 2017, 43-45).

<sup>1</sup> Director Jharin Velichkov (Regional History Museum, Sofia), Assistant directors: Katia Trendafilova, Yunian Meshekov (National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage – Sofia).

The location of the site is at the edge of the administrative and commercial center of the city, 400-500 m in a direct line from the markets (**plate 1/A**). This area was located between two residential quarters (mahalle) whose names appear in the documentation of the late Ottoman occupation period: Gül Cheshmeh mahalle and Siya(v)uş Pasha mahalle (map 1879). The last name appears in the sources since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whereas Gül Cheshmeh is mentioned more recently, as the names and limits of the districts are not fixed along the centuries. There are no studies detailing the nature of the population that would have inhabited the quarters during this period. The few details indicate that the centre of the city was mainly populated by foreign traders (Ragusans from Dubrovnik, Greeks, Armenians, Jews) while Bulgarians and Turks lived in separate quarters. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, those of the Bulgarians would have been located in the so-called “varoch” part of the city, which could be located in the northeastern area of the city (Чолева 2001, 179; Иширков 1912, 15; Блог Стара София). On the other hand, many studies mention the settlement of Bulgarians in the Turkish quarters from the same period onwards, when the number of the Christian population increases in spite of the Muslims. In fact, it is impossible to determine the ethnicity of the settlements in the area of the amphitheatre site.

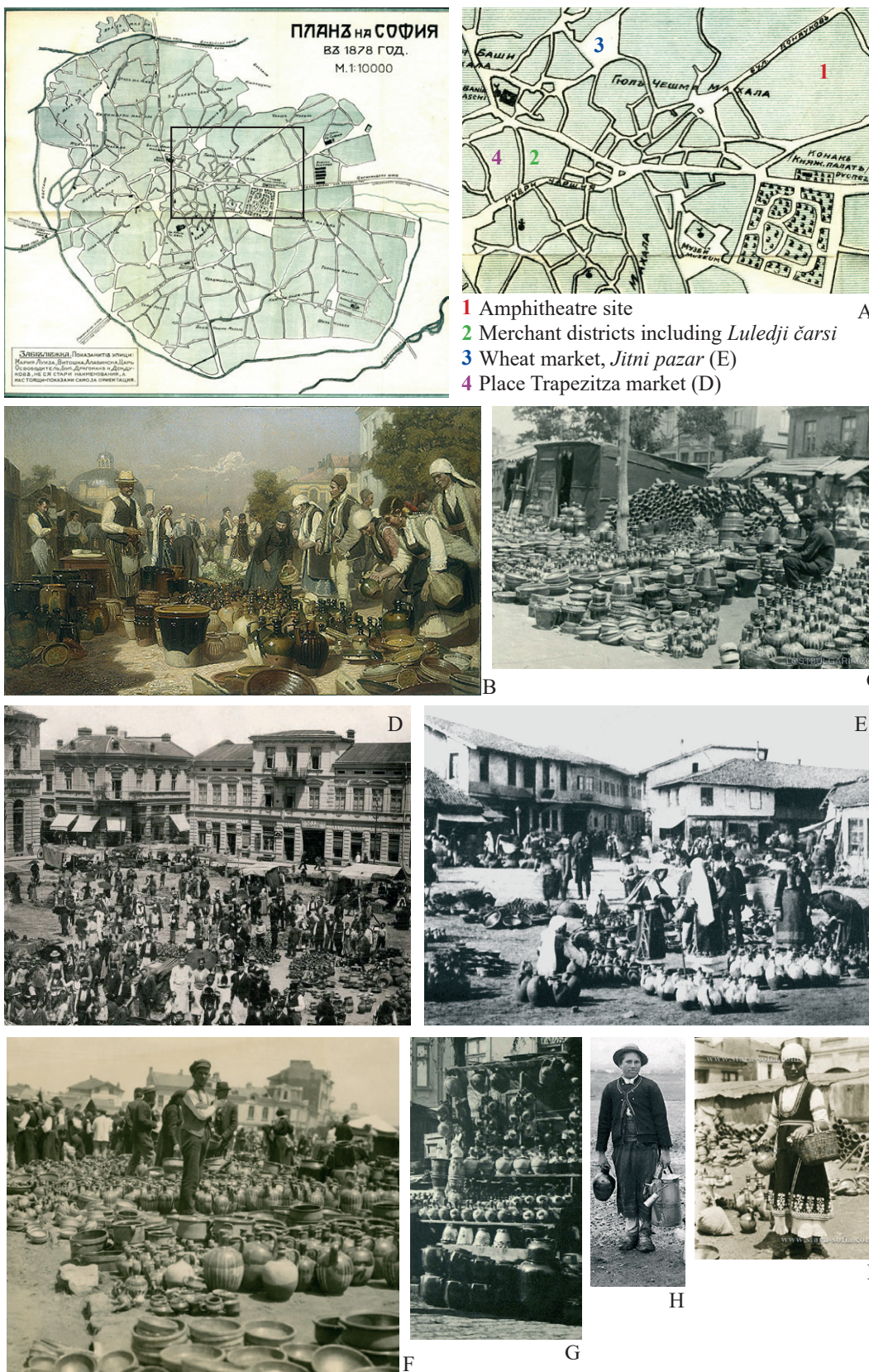
#### CERAMIC ENSEMBLE

The material analyzed here totals nearly 8000 fragments that have allowed to estimate about 1400 items. They are distributed unevenly among the assemblages of the different periods. Four pits show the 15<sup>th</sup> century, four other assemblages are clearly attributed to the 16<sup>th</sup> century; five pits are more broadly dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (probably its end) and 17<sup>th</sup> century. The 17<sup>th</sup> century is better identified by three assemblages, the 18<sup>th</sup> century – by three pits and, finally, three others illustrate the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

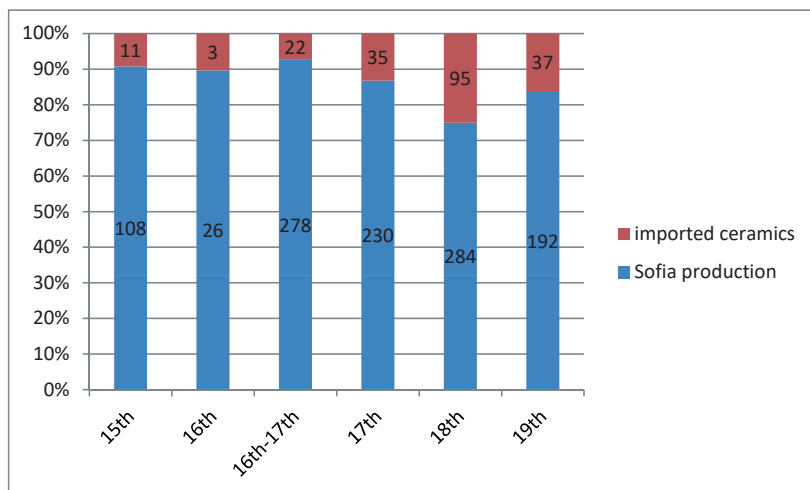
The quantification of the material is done by estimating the Minimum Number of Individuals (NMI in French). This method takes into account the morphological elements and the technical characteristics of the objects. After sorting, reassembling and grouping the elements, it allows to determine the minimum number of objects present for each technical category and morphological group. The number of items per period is presented in **graph 1**.

It is therefore difficult to propose generalizations on the evolution of ceramics consumption and related practices. However, certain observations are proposed here. In this presentation, they concern only the locally produced ceramics, which obviously represents the majority of the objects (**graph 1**). Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it accounts for 90% of the finds. It is in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that its share decreases to 75% to the benefit of imports from other regions of the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe. For the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the share of imports is reduced to 16% despite the arrival of manufactured products.

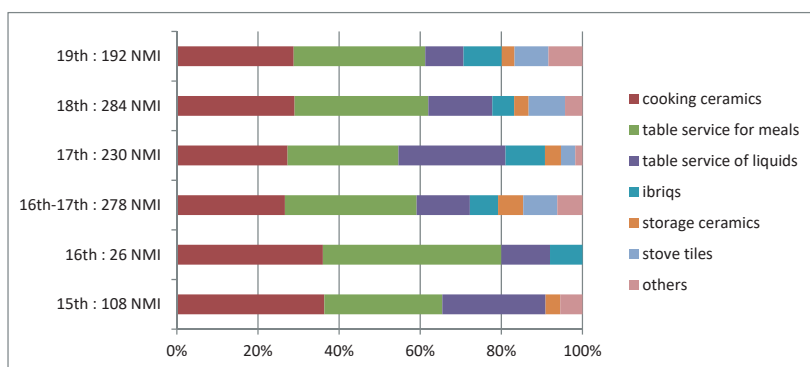
The activity of the Sofia workshops is affirmed for the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Станчева 1964). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the potter's craft in Sofia was practised only by Bulgarians, as shown by the Christian names among the members of the potters' *esnaf* (Иширков 1912, 44, 61). According to other written sources, this situation continued until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Димитров 1989, 105). Among the a priori wealthy members of society who fit the category of *celepkеşan*



**Plate 1.** A Locations of the amphitheatre site and the markets on the 1878 Sofia map (<https://pbase.com/ngrujev/mapsofsafia>). **B** Anton Mitov, *Sofia vegetable market (pottery market)*, 1917. Galerie nationale d'art, Sofia. (Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons). Postcards from Sofia: **C** *Women's market*, 1930s (www.lostbulgaria.com). **D** *Trapezica Place*, ca. 1900 (www.stara-sofia.com). **E** *Jitni Pazar* (Wheat market), ca. 1900 (www.stara-sofia.com). **F** *Pottery market*, 1930s (coll. part.). **G** *Women's market*, 1930s (www.lostbulgaria.com). **H** *Boza seller*, early 20<sup>th</sup> century (www.lostbulgaria.com). **I** *Sofia*, ca. 1917 (www.stara-sofia.com)



**Graph 1.** Distribution of local and imported ceramics, the 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries



**Graph 2.** Proportions of functional categories, 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries

according to 1576 tax records of the city of Sofia is a potter among other craftsmen (Грозданова / Андреев 1998; Кил 2002, 65). A potters' quarter would be located near that Orta Meşcit quarter which is mentioned in documents from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century is remains unlocated (Тахов 1987; Чолева 2001, 183). It seems clear that some of the pottery used in the city came from this production. The forms presented here have homogeneous technical characteristics, evolving over time. Traces of similar manufacturing gestures and characteristic failures for second-rate, usually distributed locally products are noticeable in the assemblages from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Without going into technical details, it should be mentioned that the clay is red, sometimes gray or brown, micaceous, rich in irregular grains of quartz, often limestone and iron nodules. The organic additions can be important but not systematic. The preparation and purification of the clay is generally more important for tableware, the cooking ware has coarser structures. For the entire period, the glaze has a mainly utilitarian function for cooking ware: the same shapes are left uncoated or glazed on the inside and on the rim. For tableware, an aesthetic effect is added by the use of white or cream engobes under glazes. Decorative processes can be particular for certain forms. They are then linked to the functions of the objects.

### FUNCTIONS AND SOURCES

The functions are determined by the traces of use on the vessels, put in relation with iconographic (paintings and old postcards) and archi-

val sources. The paintings by artists living in Bulgaria in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are cited. Their works are known and regularly presented by exhibitions or in virtual sites (**plate 1/B**). The postcards from the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries mainly represent the sale of pottery on Sofia markets (**plate 1/C-I**). Details of these photographs are present in the tables with the letter corresponding to the postcard. The texts exploited are a hundred translated after-death inventories from 1731 to 1833 (Тодоров / Калицин 1977) or cook-books from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Information gathered in the multiple regional ethnographic surveys are also exploited. The ceramic material thus sheds light on certain facets of the daily life of the inhabitants of Sofia.

## FOOD PREPARATION

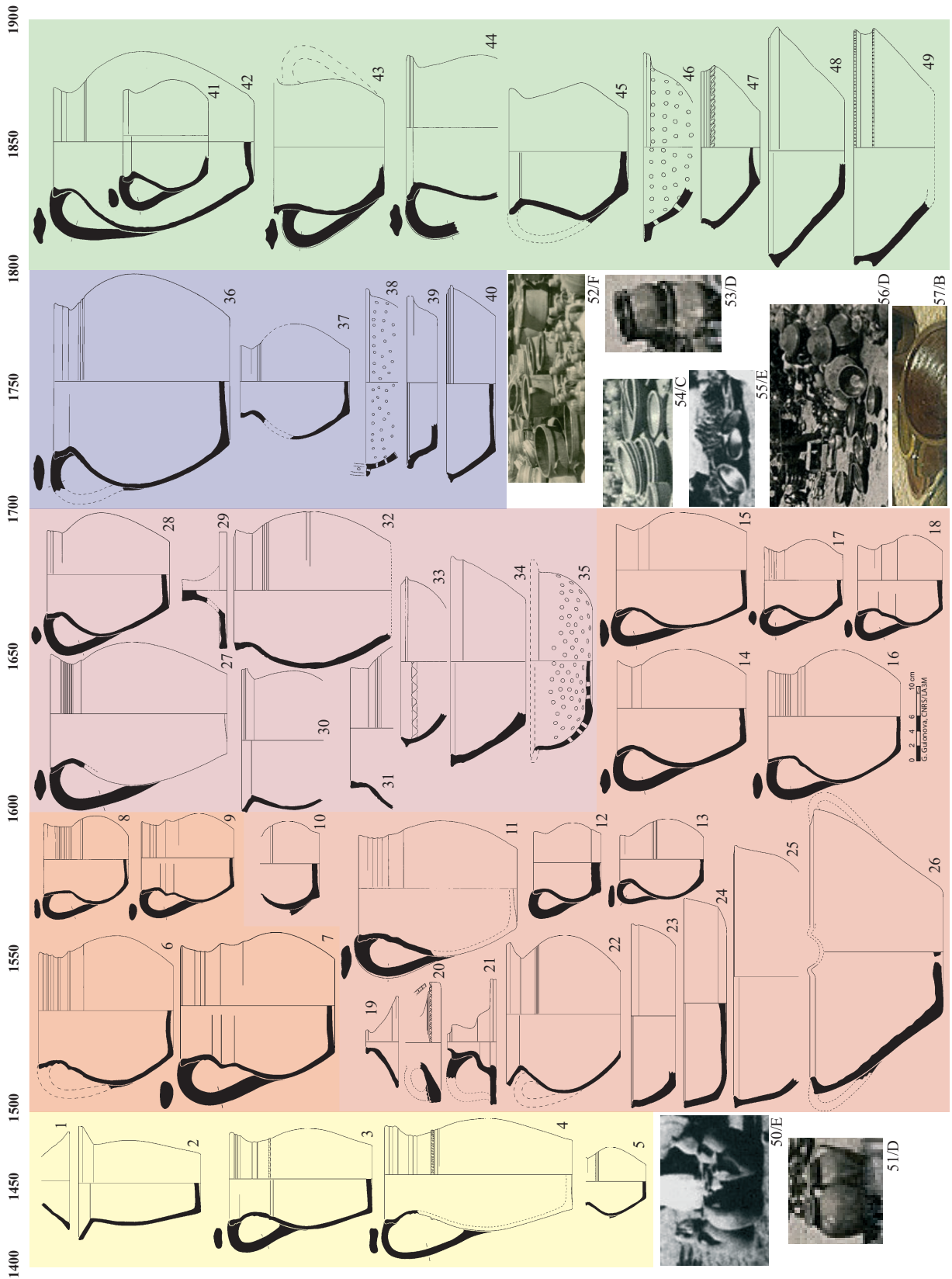
### The preparation of bread

Ethnographic surveys describe the preparation of bread. Once a week, a large quantity of dough was prepared and baked in a domestic or communal oven. In addition, women could make smaller quantities, often in the same dough but with less time to rise. The baking was then done in tray-like vessels, *podnica* (**Plate 5/1**). They are 30-40 cm to 1 m wide and 4-5 cm thick, made of coarse clay enriched with organic inclusions. They are usually closed with lids (*vrachnik*, *satch*) made of metal or also of clay. Traditionally, these forms are the products of domestic crafts, practiced once a year on St. Jeremiah's Day (1<sup>st</sup> May). Women prepare the clay, shape the forms, and bake them in a pit kiln. Several studies, old and recent, concern these objects (Николчовска 1993; Djordjević / Zlatković 2014; Djordjević 2016). These forms are part of all ethnographic collections. Among the archaeological material from Sofia, these items are very rare, but present in all contexts from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. An irregular collecting of its coarse fragments similar to architectural ceramics is likely. It is also likely that in urban areas, this practice of bread preparation was pushed out by the production of communal ovens. This idea is supported by a series of paintings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with equivocal titles: "Baker" (J. V. Mrkvička, 1887), "Bread seller" (A. Mitov, 1888), "The old bakery" (J. Oberbauer, 1892). Thus, these objects are absent from the notary inventories, while 13 of 104 lists mention another fireplace component – "iron andirons." Either these dishes are really rare in Sofia, or of low value, they are an integral part of the fireplace and are not specifically mentioned.

### Cooking preparations

The cooking pottery produced in Sofia accounts for about one third of the local ceramics of the Amphitheater site. It is slightly more numerous in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries with 34-35%. Its share is reduced to 26-28% thereafter while the culinary forms are more diversified (**graph 2**).

The cooking-pots are theoretically associated with preparation over fire. This use has actually left traces of heating, often in the lower part, on the side opposite the handle – the pot was placed in the fireplace, in contact with the embers. An evolution of this shape can be noted. Elongated, ovoid forms characterize the 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts (**plate 2/2-4**). A hatched groove and splines decorate their shoulders.



**Plate 2.** Chronology of cooking ware: 15<sup>th</sup> century (1-5), 16<sup>th</sup> century (6-9), 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (10-26), 17<sup>th</sup> century (27-35), 18<sup>th</sup> century (36-40), 19<sup>th</sup> century (41-49); details of their sale on markets (50-51, 52-57)

They do not reach 2.5 l in volume. Their interior is left rough or covered with transparent lead glaze, sometimes very poor. A few smaller, more spherical forms and fragments of conical lids suggest a variety of forms that are difficult to estimate (**plate 2/1, 5**).

From the 16<sup>th</sup> and during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the cooking-pots are more rounded, often with protrusions under the neck and grooves above. The sizes are very variable, from 0.5 to more than 3.5 l (**plate 2/6-17**). They are almost always glazed on the inside. Sometimes, only the rim is covered with slip which brings out the green color of the glaze. A few small pots, of the same shape, are entirely engobed and glazed (**plate 2/18**). They do not bear any traces of firing and were probably used as drinking vessels. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, globular shapes with a wide opening, marly edge and inner glaze appear (**plate 2/30**). Their capacity is larger, often more than 3 l. From the 17<sup>th</sup> and especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the shapes and sizes are very variable, often the rims are triangular in profile on a vertical neck and the volumes reach up to 9-10 l (**plate 2/31-32, 36-37, 43**). For these last two centuries, the glaze inside is often absent, especially for the very large pots. These culinary forms are rarer in the assemblages, replaced by open containers (cf. *guvec* below) and metal ware. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pans with a wide opening and a brim became widespread (**plate 2/43-45**).

It should be noted that the lids associated with the cooking-pots are rare. For all the material, one lid is present for every 12 or 13 pots. Of varying shapes, they are present throughout the five centuries but appear more frequent at the beginning of this period (**plate 2/1, 19-21**). The use of metal lids, not necessarily matching the diameters of the openings, cannot be excluded.

Open forms, shaped in the same clays, probably appear as early as the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During this first period, shallow, quasi-cylindrical dishes have volumes of 1.5-2 l, rarely reaching 5 l (**plate 2/23-25**). They are always glazed on the inside, with burnt deposits. They are very quickly replaced by deeper, frustoconical shapes (*guvec*) and, most probably, by metal dishes. The *guvec* is used until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (**plate 2/26, 40, 47-49**). Their volumes vary from about 2 to 8 l. The larger ones sometimes have a pinched edge between two vertical handles. They may be glazed on the inside or left uncoated. Blackening and soot are present on the outside.

Local pottery production provides other forms for culinary preparations such as the colander. An example is recorded as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but these forms are more frequent in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (**plate 2/35, 38, 46**). They are made of the same coarse clay as the cooking ware, covered with a poor and irregular glaze. Their shape of hemispherical bowl with holes has a more or less wide rim, with holes for hanging. These colanders have no traces of contact with fire.

In cookbooks of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, cooking is often recommended in a container, without specifying its shape. However, many recipes call for a specific vessel. The mention of “pots” is often associated with preparations of dairy products or preserved fruits or vegetables. They can be heated in the oven or near the fireplace, but long cooking in them is rarely mentioned. These same recipes indicate the need for lids. However, the rarity of lids and the systematic traces of

fire show a discrepancy between these late texts and the reality of the material from Sofia.

Cooking over fire is indicated in deep pots or dishes (probably already made of metal), with variable temperatures: on the tripod of the fireplace (*pirostia*, *sadjak*) or with “live embers” for a more intense temperature; on the “ash fire” or “from afar” for a gentle cooking. Unlike cooking-pots, which do not seem to be systematically closed with lids, pans are often covered. This allows cooking in water or in a pan, but also braised or stewed. The dishes (*tava*), more or less deep, are generally used in the oven. The recipes in the cookbooks called “in dish”, of meat or vegetables, suggest such a quantity of fat (butter, nut oil, animal fat), that the food is really fried in the oven. In reality, many recipes call for “boiling” the food in the fat until all traces of liquid have disappeared. The use of *gavec* is mostly mentioned for the usage in the oven. It is often a final cooking of already boiled, browned or braised food.

The use of colanders is not well documented in cookbooks. Generally, the liquid is not rejected but reduced. To drain certain preparations (dairy products, preserves), the texts mention different types of textiles. More rarely, the liquid of a preparation is collected and reused and, in this case, the recipes mention a strainer but more probably a metal net. Moreover, in a recipe for improving the taste of water, what could be named as a colander is described with a whole sentence: “such a vessel that lets the water poured through the coals pass” (Славейков 1870, 71).

According to ethnographic surveys, the functional presence of the glaze inside culinary forms may be dictated by the specific purpose of the vessel – cooking with or without fat, for example. It is also related to regional preferences or habits of preparation of certain traditional dishes or to the concern of maintenance after use.

## MEAL CONSUMPTION

In reality, given the archaeological remains, locally produced cups and bowls predominated at the table. They generally constitute another third of the recorded local production – 29% at the beginning of the period, between 42 and 26% for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (but with some very poor assemblages) and 32% at the end of the period (**graph 2**). Slightly less numerous are the closed forms intended for the transport, storage and serving of liquids. Their share is around 20-25% with a significant decrease by half for the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Open forms

The open forms are more standardized at the beginning of the period examined. They are deep, hemispherical or with a low or mid-sided carination, set on a ring-shaped base (**plate 3/3-7**). The glazes are mainly green, often dark, more rarely mustard yellow, always laid on slip. A quarter of its forms is decorated in sgraffito, covered with yellowish glaze and enhanced with green and brown (**plate 3/1-2**).

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, these forms and decorations persist (**plate 3/8-10**). The very poor assemblages already show more flattened forms (**plate 3/11**). From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the shapes and patterns are more and more varied. The hemispherical bowls have profiled edges, often retracted. The ring bases are high (**plate 3/16-**



**Plate 3.** Chronology of table ware, open forms: 15<sup>th</sup> century (1-7), 16<sup>th</sup> century (8-11), 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (12-24), 17<sup>th</sup> century (25-31), 18<sup>th</sup> century (32-40), 19<sup>th</sup> century (41-50); decors from the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (51-55)

19). Cups with horizontal edges appear, more or less deep. The edges are sometimes scalloped (**plate 3/12-15, 20**). The majority of the open forms are always green or more rarely yellow with glaze on slip, outside, they are placed only on the edge. Elements of sgraffito are always present but the more elaborate compositions seem to be presented by residual fragments. Rougher incised and often monochrome examples probably date from this period.

The decorations worn mainly by these forms attest to their service function, in a visible position on the table. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, polychrome decorations, composed of glazes or engobes, appear, as do bowls with a yellow interior and green exterior (**plate 3/26-30**). In addition to the older imports of Monochrome Turquoise-Blue Glazed Ware (Guionova 2016), bowls with inner turquoise and outer yellow or green glaze appear to belong to local production. This would imply the use of glazes with an alkaline component and only comparative analyses of clays could confirm this hypothesis.

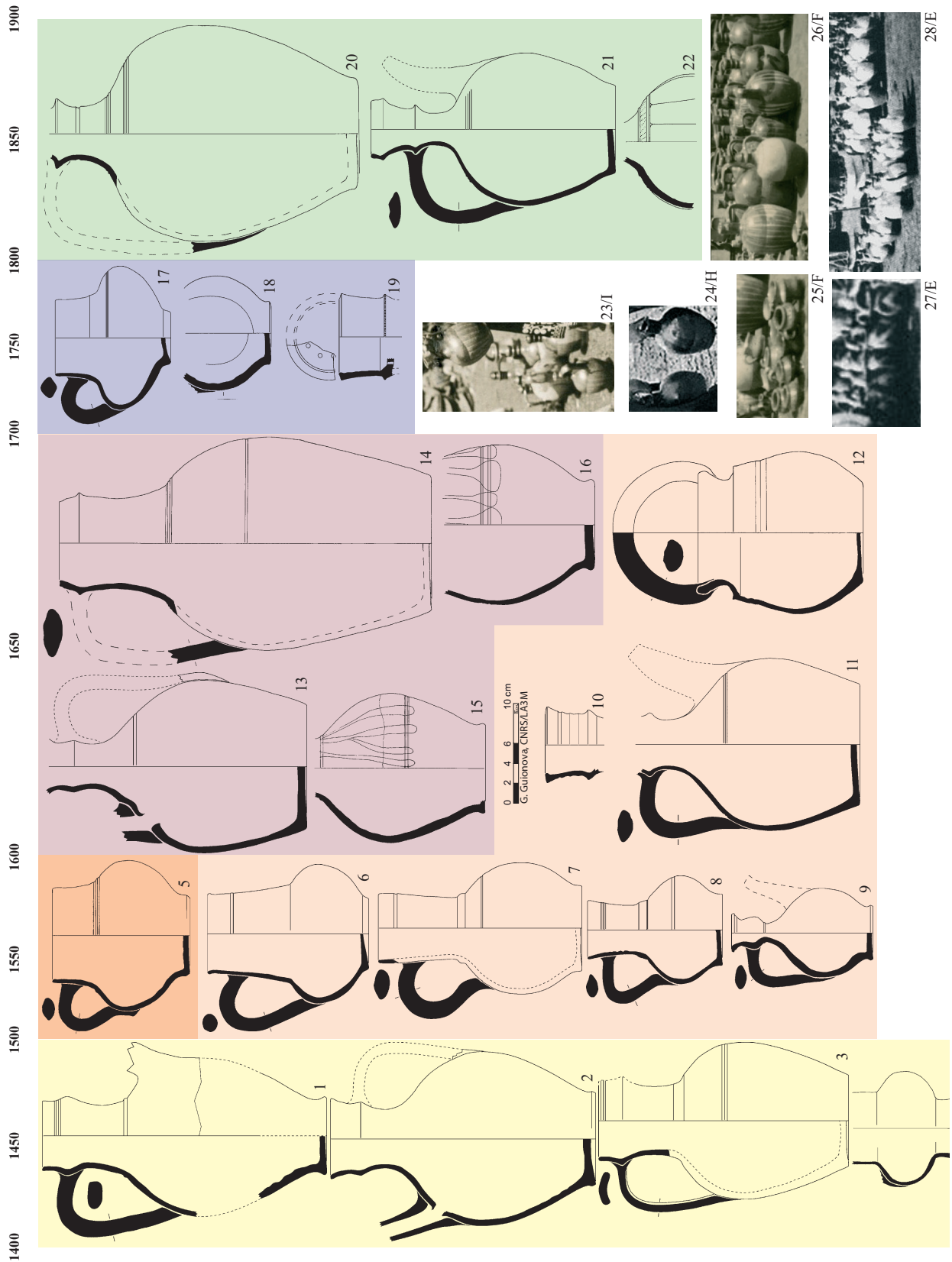
The real diversification of decoration techniques takes place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hatchings, depressions, digitations, incisions and impressions are applied on very varied forms (**plate 3/32-39**). White and red engobes are frequently dripped and marbled and painted decorations with engobe or colored glaze also appear (**plate 3/40, 51**). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the forms are also varied (**plate 3/41-45, 47-50**). The glazes are always green or yellow but they are sometimes very poor, often laid down in very thin layers and sometimes absorbed. On some forms, the vitrified glaze appears in patches, the rest of the surface shows the slip, fixed by the diluted glaze (**plate 3/52-55**). Decorations traced with engobe, without glaze, also exist (**plate 3/56**). Among the printed decorations appears the motif made with comb fragments (**plate 3/45-47**). These decorated but not impermeable bowls (partial or no glaze), seem to be unsuitable for the consumption of liquid meals.

Bowls of larger volume, around 1-1.5 l, from the entire period presented, regularly bear the traces of use. Rubbing of the spoon has damaged or removed the glaze of the sgraffito or monochrome bottoms. The smallest ones, barely 0.2-0.3 l, could be used for drinking – a fact regularly mentioned by ethnographic sources. Many of these bowls, mostly sgraffito but also monochrome, have post-firing engraved signs in the center of their ring feet – usually compositions of crossed lines. Rare engobed and glazed lids, with diameters corresponding to the bowls or cups, are recorded from the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (**plate 3/46**). They were not used over fire and were meant to cover food to protect it or keep it warm.

Rare forms of cylindrical mugs appear from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (**plate 3/31, 32**). Culinary recipes mention the use of a “pot” or “mugs” for certain macerations or fermentations – a reflection of the varied uses or random designations of forms.

### **Closed forms**

Vessels for serving water are less standardized and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century jugs have various profiles that become richer in the following periods. With a capacity of 0.4 to 1 l, they often do not have a spout to pour the liquid and could have been used for drinking (**plate 4/4-8, 17**). Jugs with a larger capacity, between 1.9 and 2.5 l at the beginning and up to 6-7 l later, were used to store water (**plate 4/1-3, 14, 20**). In the 15<sup>th</sup>



**Plate 4.** Chronology of the forms of service of liquids: 15<sup>th</sup> century (1-4), 16<sup>th</sup> century (5), 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (6-12), 17<sup>th</sup> century (13-16), 18<sup>th</sup> century (17-19), 19<sup>th</sup> century (20-22); details of their sale on the markets (23-28)

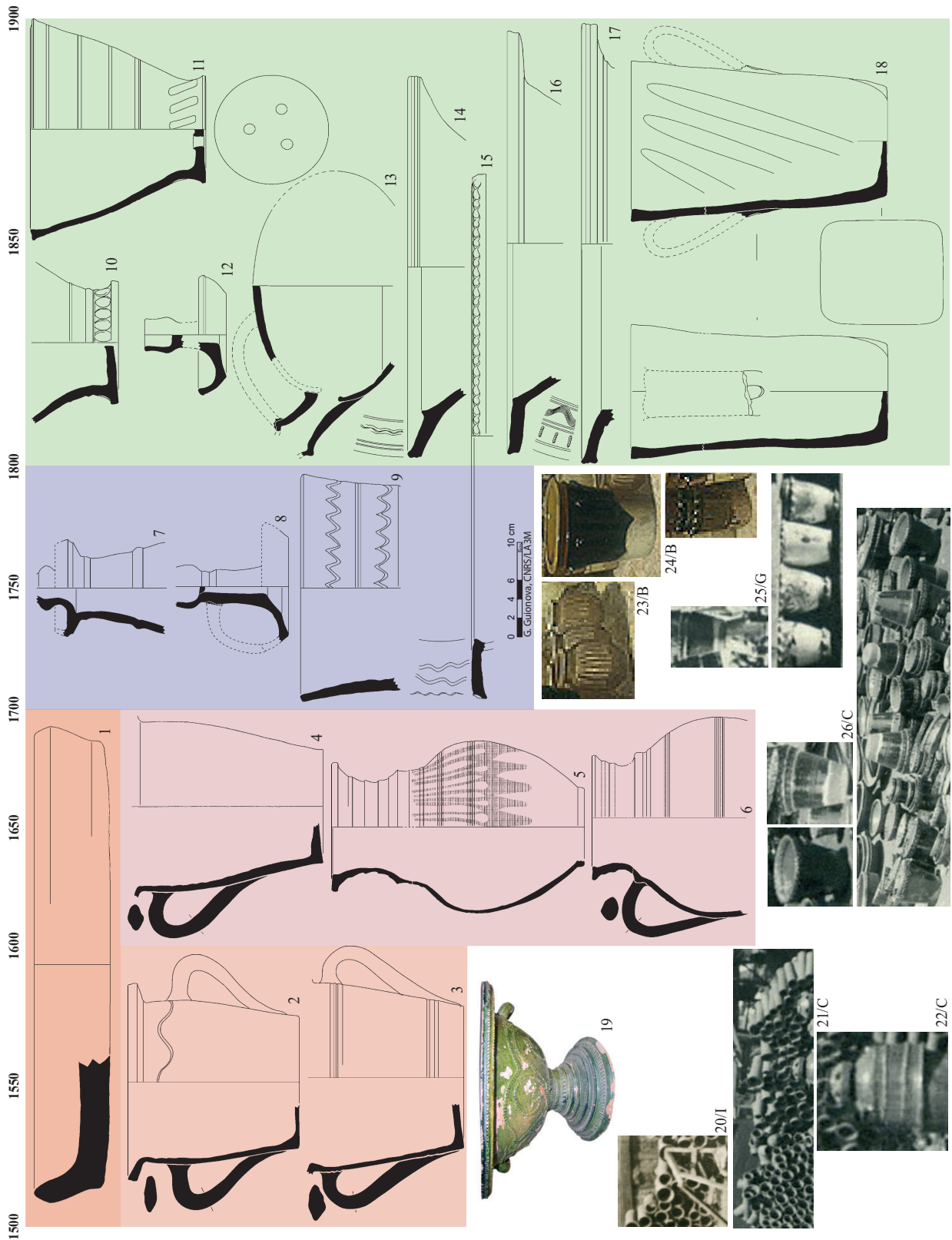
century they sometimes have a tubular spout. Glaze is applied only on the lip and the tip of the spout when it exists.

The forms of the service are most often green, rarely yellow, usually glazed on slip only from the outside and in the upper part. This coating is clearly decorative. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen on postcards, controlled engobe drips add to this decorative effect (**plate 4/15-16, 23, 26**). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the decoration can be completed by depressions, flattening or incisions on the body or by colored glaze motifs (**plate 4/18**). The absence of a coating is functional for large water storage forms – it promotes evaporation and thus cooling of the contents.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> and especially the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *ibriqs* with tight necks and long spouts were integrated into the assemblages. At that time, their shapes totaled between 5 and 10% of the local production of assemblages. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this share decreased in the face of the diversification of tableware and returned to 9% in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their capacity is between 1.5 and a little less than 3 l and, usually, they are not glazed. Traces of fire on the side of the spout, suggest their use for heating water (**plate 4/11, 13, 21**). At the same time, the same shapes, often of more modest dimensions and with a monochrome outer glaze over slip, were intended only for serving liquids (**plate 4/9**).

A well assemblage dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century yields 15 particular basket-handle pot forms (**plate 4/12**). No other context offers this form. It is known by different names in ethnographic sources and studies, often derived from “milk” which was usually kept inside (suspended on a beam) or from “hand” since its handle facilitated its use as a container for carrying meals taken outside. Their capacity varies from less than a liter to nearly 7 l. The smallest ones have the handle and the rim covered with green glaze on slip, most of them are without any coating. They do not seem to have been exposed to fire. The origin of their discovery suggests a use for water transport. In any case, in light of the archaeological material, the use of this form was very brief.

Filter jugs, very characteristic for Islamic ceramics, are anecdotal for the Ottoman Balkans. The Amphitheatre site provides only three examples from 18<sup>th</sup> century contexts (**plate 4/19**). From this period and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the forms and decorations multiply to the point that it is difficult to identify homogeneous series. Particular names linked to certain forms appear in the literature: *stomna* for a jug with a tubular handle and a nipple fitted on the handle (almost absent from the material studied); *dincenka* for body with linear and vertical rhythmic depressions, reminiscent of watermelon slices (**plate 4/22**). In addition, there are some particular uses, explained by the ethnographic sources, which require specific forms. Thus, spherical vessels with a side spout could have been used for the preparation of hot alcohol, wine or fruit spirit (**plate 5/13**). On the Black Sea coast, similar vessels are attributed to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and to the activity of fishermen (Плетньов 2004, 146). The ritual consumption of spirits, during celebrations or weddings, was done in *ibriqs* or *kondirs* (*ibriqs* with a spout connected to the neck by a decorated element) often loaded with decoration. These rarer forms have also left some traces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century assemblages. Their names, like other tradi-



**Plate 5.** Chronology of rare and specific forms: 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (1), 16<sup>th</sup> century (2, 3), 17<sup>th</sup> century (4-6), 18<sup>th</sup> century (7-9), 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century (15), 19<sup>th</sup> century (10-18); *mangal*, coll. part. (19); details of their sale on the markets (20-26)

tional names for vessels, change throughout the Balkan regions or do not always designate the same object.

### Written sources

The use of ceramic cooking forms was simultaneous with other metal cooking vessels. This presence can be guessed in negative in the archaeological material – by the reduction of earthenware cooking forms – from 34-35% to 26-28% along the period. The written sources are quite explicit. In addition to foodstuffs, inventory after death from the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries detail various clothing items, with details on the state of preservation of many objects. However, they hardly mention earthenware, both cooking and table ware. The exception is made of few records concerning porcelain or coffee cups called *finjans*, all imported. A few rare series of “earthenware vessels” are mentioned, but these are either the production of a potter (?) who died in 1756, or containers from the stores of merchants, filled with pitch, olives, salt or vegetable oil. It is sometimes impossible to know the material of certain dishes, *ibriqs* or storage forms.

In contrast, metal forms, mainly copper but also iron, lead or silver, are detailed by form in the 18<sup>th</sup> or more often by lot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with their value regularly indicated. More than half of the 104 translated inventories mention copper or metal containers. The quantities and value of this ware increase significantly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century records. Dishes (*tepsia*) often appear separately, in 23 inventories, with mentions, “in copper”, “in iron”, or in associations of vessels suggesting metal forms. Their function is only rarely specified: “for *burek*” (preparation of dough sheets) or “for coffee” (to roast or to serve?). The attention paid to metal ware implies mentions such as “pot with lid”, an important detail with regard to the culinary recipes! Throughout the period, *ibriqs*, sometimes specified as “copper” or “golden”, rarely mentioned as “for *salep*” or “for vinegar” (thus, in other materials), appear in 14 of the inventories. *Ibriqs* for coffee are listed in addition in 8 of the registers. It is highly probable that the majority of these *ibriqs* are made of metal, especially copper, but it is certain that this designation evokes the form rather than the material. Finally, glassware (glasses, plate, bottle) is mentioned in 4 inventories (Тодоров / Калицин 1977). This overview confirms the variety of domestic objects and somewhat clears up the negative suggested by the archaeological ceramic material.

### Iconographic sources

Paintings and postcards from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century confirm the observation of the reduction of pots sold in market stalls (**plate 2/50, 51**). In contrast, stacks of *guvecs* with varying sizes, sometimes of large pots, are more recurrent (**plate 2/52-57**). None of these forms appear to be sold with a lid. Bowls and cups occupy a large part of the stands, also stacked, with variable dimensions (**plate 1/C, F**). Just as much space is reserved for jugs, small and large. The variety of decorations and coatings in the photos from the period 1900-1930 evoke either the sale in Sofia of the production of different centers, or rapid changes in fashion and taste (**plate 4/23, 24, 26, 28**). Pots with basket handles appear occasionally, as do mugs with one handle and varying shapes (**plate 4/25, 27**).

Postcards and paintings also provide information about the everyday use of jugs. A frequent subject of postcards are the *boza* sellers, each equipped with a wooden container with a spout and metal measures as well as a small tight-necked jug with water (**plate 1/H**). Between 1870 and 1906, the painters J. V. Mrkvička and A. Mitov painted several compositions entitled “At the well” or “At the fountain”. In addition to the presence of metal cauldrons or buckets for drawing or collecting water, the large jugs are obviously intended for transporting water to the houses. These large forms do not seem to be very frequent among the material studied. It is necessary to take into account the practices of transporting water with metal or wooden containers. That said, outside of southern regions, the conservation of water was short. It was drawn at least daily from fountains, rivers or wells, numerous on the rich water table of Sofia (Диков 2007).

### CONSERVATION OF FOODSTUFFS

Fragments of large vessels are present in all contexts from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Often glazed on the inside from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with two grips, these large pots or jars were intended for storing foodstuffs. They have very variable sizes for the same shape, with capacity of 3-4 l and maximum 15-20 l. Their shapes, trade and the ways of preparing preserves have already been discussed in detail (Guionova 2014). The smaller sizes often take on the morphological and decorative characteristics of contemporary closed forms (**plate 5/5, 6, 23**).

These forms contained mainly preserved fruit or vegetables, often for the winter. The sources reveal a multitude of other containers for food reserves: made of wood, animal skins, tissue, later glass... In the city, already prepared food was also sold in shops, as revealed by the lists of foodstuffs in the inventories. It is therefore not surprising that the share of these forms did not exceed 3-4% throughout the period. That said, photos very well document their sale on the markets of Sofia until the 1930s.

### PERSONAL HYGIENE

Among the *ibriqs* mentioned above, some were intended for heating water. Commonly, these vessels are interpreted as related to ritual ablutions or, at least, to hygiene. Previous research and ethnographic sources demonstrate their frequent use, independent of the ethnicity of the population (Плетньов 2000). If the function of hygiene for the body is not to be excluded, these forms could provide hot water for any other domestic need.

Chamber pots, cylindrical, with two handles, have probably existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (**plate 5/2-4**). They are rare – 6 objects out of 926 counted for the period. They are glazed on the inside, and the outside often has straight or wavy lines at the attachments of the two handles. The 19<sup>th</sup> century sets, although quite rich, no longer contain these objects. This hygienic form is much rarer in the Ottoman world of the Balkans than it is for the contemporary archaeological contexts of the Western world.

In the inventories, hygiene-related object is mentioned in 17 registers, almost all of which are the property of Muslims. These are essentially basins, often associated with *ibriqs*. The mentions “of bath” or “of enema” are sometimes associated with these basins, once “of wash-

ing” is specified. Clearly, these were once again metal basins. It is more interesting to note the association of *ibriqs* with these hygiene devices.

### LIGHTING

The lighting modes are only slightly illustrated by the ceramic material from Sofia. The rare fragments of candlesticks come from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts. Two models are present: with a large conical body and a high cup or with a thinner, hollow stem with a low cup (**plate 5/7, 8, 12**). All are glazed in green on slip. These forms seem very rare for the period, some similar examples are known in Veliko Tarnovo or Varna dated from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ten of the notary inventories list candlesticks. They are often associated with other small objects – a sign of their low value. Their material is not specified, except once when they are said to be “brass”. In one of the inventories, the candlestick is associated with a lamp and another mentions a “candle holder”. Ethnographic sources mention metal, gas or oil lamps, candles and tapers, resinous pieces of pine lit on metal supports, etc., so many modes of lighting that appear neither in the inventories nor among the material.

### HEATING

Ceramic stove heating is attested in Bulgarian lands for the Ottoman period both by the study of written sources and archaeological material (Станчева / Кръстанова 1967; Бучински 1970). A recent publication has reviewed the stove tiles from Sofia, their variants seem to fall between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Guionova 2015). The oldest ones are deep, unlined, with a circular bottom and round or square opening. In Sofia, over the centuries, they always become square, shallow, glazed in green. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, relief and printed decorations appeared on the inside, sometimes enhanced with yellow. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to the construction cups of the stoves, small decorative forms were to animate the brick structures.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries assemblages contain fragments of large, often incised and scalloped horizontal edge basins with diameters of 40-55 cm (**plate 5/14-17**). Generally unglazed, these sherds bear irregular traces of blackening by fire inside the shapes. Sometimes interpreted as hygienic basins, it is very likely that they are braziers (*mangal*) intended to receive live coals to heat a room. Their often coarse clay, similar, in Sofia, to that of cooking dishes, pleads for this hypothesis. More recent examples, more often made of copper but also of ceramics, are part of the ethnographic collections of Bulgarian museums (**plate 5/19**). When they are covered with glaze, it is only on the visible part of the exterior and the edge.

### SPECIFIC AND OTHER USES

Pottery production sometimes meets the secondary needs of daily life. Some of these remain unidentified: for example, the function of the deep, rectangular vessel with one or two handles, interior glaze and traces of fire on the outside (**plate 5/18**).

Usually, flower pots are adapted in various shapes with a post-firing hole for this second life. This practice is found in examples from Sofia from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is supplanted by the production of specific shapes probably from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the

19<sup>th</sup> century, two flower pots testify to this diversification of pottery production. Conical in profile, they are visibly wider than they are tall. Their base is pierced with 1 or 3 holes (**plate 5/9-11**). The examples are unglazed, with grooves or digitations above the stub. On postcards from the 1930s, they are clearly visible but with wavy rims, slip and glaze – later, more decorative variants amidst equally highly decorated ware (**plate 5/24-26**).

Observation of photographs from this period allows us to identify objects with specific functions on the stalls that have not been recognized among the archaeological material: still caps for spirits cooking, poultry troughs (**plate 5/22**). Certainly, some decades separate these iconographic documents from the material studied, but it is also necessary to recall the frequent discrepancy between the archaeological remains and the sources.

Sofia's pottery craft included specific branches, such as the production of architectural ceramics – tiles, bricks and water pipes. Elements of pipes are present in the assemblages of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Piles of these objects can be seen in photos of all markets from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (**plate 5/20, 21**). Their use throughout the Ottoman period is described in detail in an early study (Станчева / Медарова 1968b). The punctual collection of architectural ceramics during the excavations did not allow a more precise observation of this furniture.

A more in-depth observation at the local tobacco pipe production that complemented the imports is possible. Archaeological material from the vicinity of the Bania Bashi Mosque, 500 m from the Amphitheater site, contains firing failures that attest to smoking pipe production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Near the site of the Amphitheater was, still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the market (*čarsi*) for pipes and *čibuk* (Монеджикова 1946, 164). The products sold obviously came from the regions of the Empire: in view of the archaeological material, Dutch white clay pipes did not compete with them. The Sofia pipes have benefited from two publications that place them between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Станчева / Медарова 1968a; Todorov / Markov 2010). The contexts studied seem to confirm this diffusion. The pipe craft was organized independent of that of the potters, its production as well as the pipes from the site assemblages are the subject of a future publication.

The share of imported pottery products completes the daily needs of the Sofia population, especially the needs of the table service but also some specific uses. These older forms, from the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, have already been presented (Guionova 2015). The Persian or Kütahya findjans mark the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, Chinese and Saxon porcelain arrived, along with rare fragments of English and then European fine earthenware and porcelain and stoneware of the same origin. After-death inventories confirm the relative importance of these objects, which were passed down through the generations. Their use was intended more for pomp and circumstance in front of guests than for everyday use. This rarity motivated their more careful collection during urban works and explains the rather important quantity of this material in the collections of the Museums. Several publications have discussed this objects in Sofia (Станчева 1960; Станчева / Шалганова 1989).

## CONCLUSION

Thus, pottery objects were used for many aspects of everyday life. But the material environment presented through ceramics remains partial – the partly contemporary contexts of the archaeological site of Metropolitan Palace in Belgrade represent a convincing example (Поповић / Бикић 2004). In addition to the ceramic forms, often very similar with the Sofia one of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, glass and metal objects complemented and enriched the domestic equipment. They are also used for meal preparation, table service, lighting. In fact, the everyday tableware is naturally similar to that of the neighbouring Balkan regions – Serbia, northern Turkey, Greece (Bikić 2003; Hayes 1992; Vionis et al. 2012). More distant regions such as Hungary, Croatia, Montenegro, or groups defined as *Middle European ceramics* in Belgrade show other specificities (Gerelyes / Kovács 2003; Guštin et al. 2008; Bradara 2007). The forms of imports are reminiscent of the large economic entity that was the Ottoman Empire. These rarer and more valuable objects seem to characterize mainly the material culture of large urban centers. It is therefore not surprising to note, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a reduction in the share of imports, while manufactured products prevail elsewhere. This period marks the decline of the city, which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was accelerated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by demographic, administrative and political events. The local production, still active at this period – 9 potters counted in 1867 (Диков 2007, 86) – seems to benefit from the vivacity of the craft industry initiated already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Iconographic documents, quite abundant between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attest to the richness of the forms sold on the markets of Sofia. These same documents – in examples not presented here – as well as the notary inventories offer a complementary vision of the material environment. It is possible to observe containers or packages made of cloth, wood, wicker, metal, copper, glass... for everyday needs that ceramics did not or no longer meet.

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## Битът в София според местното керамично производство XV-XIX век

Гергана ГЪОНОВА

(резюме)

Статията предлага обзор на керамичните форми от ежедневието на софийските жители от периода XV-XIX век. Представен е масовият материал от местното производство, открит в османски пластове при археологическо проучване на късноримски амфитеатър в центъра на града.

Основната част от съдовете произхождат от затворени археологически комплекси – ями и кладенец – датирани с нумизма-

тичен материал и/или вносна керамика. Изследваната керамика е с различно количество през тези векове, но позволява изводи. Местното производство, разпознато по общи технически характеристики, обхваща 90% от керамичните комплекси от XV-XVII век. През XVIII век вносните продукти от Западна Европа и други части на Османската империя достигат дял от 25%, който намалява до 16% през XIX век (**графика 1**). Грънчарското производство в София е засвидетелствано в писмени извори от XV до XIX век. А християнските имена в документи за грънчарския еснаф от XVII и XIX век, разкриват, че грънчарите са преимуществено българи.

Предметите са групирани във функционални категории (**графика 2**), определени според формата им и следите от използване. Тяхното място в ежедневието е допълнено с информация от писмени източници: описи от кадийските регистри и готварски книги от края на XIX и началото на XX век. Използвани са и иконографски свидетелства като картини и снимки от същия период, илюстриращи продажбата им на пазарите (**табло 1**).

Около една трета от формите принадлежи на готварската керамика – гърнета, тави и гювечи (**табло 2**). Те представляват 34-35% от местната продукция през XV-XVI век. Делът им намалява до 26-28% през следващите векове. Гърнетата от XV век са издължени, без или с бедно глазирано вътрешно покритие (**табло 2/2-4**). През XVI и XVII век формите са по-закръглени, но често с ъгловат преход между гърлото и раменете. Като правило те са глазирани отвътре. Понякога се среща бяла ангоба по устието (**табло 2/6-18**). В същия период се появяват и широко отворени форми с оформено като крило устие (**табло 2/30**). През XVIII и XIX век формите са много разнообразни. Устието често е вертикално и с триъгълен профил. Вместимостта също варира в рамките на 10 л (**табло 2/31-32, 36-37, 43**).

Може би в първата половина на XVI век се появяват за кратко цилиндрични, плоски или по-дълбоки глазирани тави (**табло 2/23-25**), които много бързо са заместени от конично оформени, по-дълбоки форми, определени като гювечи и използвани до XIX век (**табло 2/26, 40, 47-49**). От същите глини са изработвани и цедки още през XVII век. Те са по-чести през следващите векове – глазирани и използвани без контакт с огън. Към готварската керамика са причислени и подници, откривани редовно, но в малък брой в контексти от XV до XVIII век. Тяхното производство се свързва по-скоро с домашно производство, отколкото с професионално организирано грънчарство.

Още една трета от керамиката, със слабо променящ се във времето дял, включва паници, купи и чинии за приготвяне и сервиране на храната (**табло 3**). През първите два века на османска власт формите са по-еднообразни: дълбоки, полусферични купи, понякога с ръб. Те са обикновено едноцветни. Понякога са украсени със сграфито орнамент (**табло 3/1-7**). От края на XVI и XVII век съдовете са по-разнообразни, често с профилирани или широки хоризонтални бордюри и ниски или високи пръстеновидни столчета (**табло 3/12-24**). През XVII век купите с бордюр стават все по-плитки (**табло 3/26-29**), а от XVIII и XIX век разнообразието на форми и декори, включително релефни и с ангоби, лишава отворените сервизни форми от стандартизация (**табло 3/32-55**).

По-малобройни са съдовете, предназначени за съхраняване и разливане на течности. За консумация са използвани основно кани с нестандартизирани форми и обеми (**табло 4**). С по-постоянна форма са неглазираните ибрици, вероятно от XVI и основно от XVII век, използвани за нагриване на вода и хигиенни цели (**табло 4/11, 13, 21**). За кратко време изглежда е използвана формата на гърне с арковидна дръжка (ръкатка). То е обикновено неглазирано с изключение на малките екземпляри. Предложената функция за носене и съхраняване на вода е свързана с контекста на откриване на тези форми – кладенец от XVII век (**табло 4/12**).

Редки екземпляри илюстрират други аспекти на ежедневието. Делви за консервиране с вместимост от 3-4 до 15-20 л са използвани от XV до XIX век. Вътрешното им глазиране се практикува от XVI век. Нощните гърнета – цилиндрични и с две дръжки (**табло 5/2-4**) – се произвеждат вероятно от XVI век, но се налагат през XVII-XVIII. Употребата им не е регистрирана в по-късни контексти. За осветление са използвани само свещници – в два модела и то едва от XVIII век нататък (**табло 5/7, 8, 12**). От керамиката, свързана с отоплението от края на XVI до XIX век, местното производство е представено с дял от около 8% от панички от кахлени печки. През XVIII и XIX век се появяват мангали – купи с широк, хоризонтален, глазиран бордюр, често украсен с фестони и връзвания. Вътрешната им страна е без глазура и със следи от горящите въглини (**табло 5/14-17**). Пробити съдове за вторична употреба като саксии са открити във всички керамични ансамбли, а произведени специално саксии за цветя се появяват чак в XVIII век като разнообразието им се повишава през XIX век (**табло 5/9-11**).

Сравнението между реалността на археологическия материал и сведенията от писмени извори разкрива чести разминавания, дори за най-близкия до съвременното ни период. Например, почти всички снимки на грънчарски пазари от началото на XX век показват струпани керамични тръби за водозахранване и канализация. Такива са използвани през целия османски период, но рядко са проучвани сред неговия керамичен материал. Отделен бранш в местното керамичното производство е и луладжийството, чиито продукти са включени в ансамблите от обекта на амфитеатъра, но не са представени в това проучване. Разбира се, някои от ежедневните нужди, като консумирането на шербет и кафе, са покрити от вносна керамична продукция, част от която е вече обнародвана.

Някои несъответствия между археологическите резултати и писмените или изобразителни сведения могат да се обяснят с ниската стойност на битовата керамика и разнообразието на съдове и опаковки от дърво (включително кошничарство), метал, стъкло, кожа и текстил. Друга причина са малкото на брой и обем керамични комплекси от някои периоди на османската епоха, както и неточни или многозначни термини за керамични изделия в синхронните писмени извори.

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