

PLATES from BOLJETIN SITE

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Abstract: Roman fortress Boljetin, usually assumed as Smorna, together with necropolis, has three phases of living, from the 1-st to the 6-th century. Plates were not identified in large numbers in Boljetin. They can be shared in ten types, in the period from 1-st to the 4-th century. “Finer” forms of plates, as imitation of terra sigillata, Drag. 17 and 32, are single finds. The main methodology approach in this paper is typology and chronology of the roman plates from Boljetin. The main goal of this paper is to show that the plates from the roman fortress Boljetin represent significant exhibit and very popular attraction for many tourists.

Key words: roman period, fortress, necropolis, Boljetin, plates.

Roman fortress Boljetin is very attractive archaeological site for tourism and tourists. Unfortunately, the finds from Boljetin site are not still represented to the public, i.e. tourists. The main goal of this paper is to show that the plates from the roman fortress Boljetin represent significant exhibit and very popular attraction for many tourists.

Roman fortress Boljetin (map 1, 2) was excavated in the period from the year 1965 to 1969.¹ The exact name of the camp is not known but it is usually assumed that it was Smorna.² The materials from excavations haven't been published up to now, except in the little part of it.³ The archaeological researching occurred Roman fortress as well as roman necropolis next to it. Roman fortress has three phases of living: 1. I and the beginning of II century; 2. phase of reconstruction, the most probably from the time of the second half of III until the beginning of V century, and 3. phase of rebuilding, the most probably in the period of Justinianus in VI century. Roman necropolis belong to the first, the earliest phase of living of the fortress.

Plates were not identified in large numbers in Boljetin. An interesting comparison is that there seems to be a similar situation in Tekija as well.⁴ Out of ten types of plates the most numerous typological group is the one including type I/2 plates, glazed on the inside. Judging by the same type of bowls also being the most numerous, it can be concluded that ceramic of this type of workmanship and related forms were popular in Boljetin.

¹Zotović Lj. /Petrović 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968; Zotović, Љ. 1984

²Кондић 1971, 51-58

³Dušanić 1974, 275, no. 1, fig. 1, 276, no. 4, fig. 4; Gudea 1974, 142; Крунић 1994, 81-85; Zotović, R. 2006, 549 - 558; 2007, 95-103; 2007a; 2016, 473 – 479.

⁴Cermanović-Kuzmanović - Jovanović 2004, 147 - 148.

The plates identified in Boljetin site appear in the chronological span from 1st to 4th centuries and they mostly represent provincial production. “Finer” forms of plates, as imitations of *terra sigillata*, Drag. 17 and 32 (I/ 5, 6, and 9), are single finds.

Type I/1 is a biconnically shaped plate, with a flat rim that is not moulded and a flat bottom. They were made of refined, slightly sandy earth, of gray firing colour. One example of this type of plate was identified in Boljetin. It is dated into early 2nd century.⁵

1. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Field inv. No 943/68; square K8; depth 2.50 m.

Type I/2 is a calotte-shaped plate, with a slanting or horizontally everted rim and a flat or slightly ribbed profile of the bottom. They were made of red or red-brown fired earth of sand-like fabric, glazed green on the inside. They may have been decorated with a geometric ornament along the rim. They are the most numerous plate type in Boljetin. They are dated into the period of the first half of 4th century.⁶

2. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Study material 1969

3. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Study material 544/67; square K9; depth 1.70 m.

4. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a bowl.

Field inv. No 717/67; square F7; depth 1.80 m

5. A fragment of a plate, rim, and belly.

Field inv. No 30/65; square B2; depth 1.70 m.

6. A fragment of the rim and belly of a plate.

Field inv. No 42/65; square B5; depth 1.50-1.65 m.

7. A fragment of the rim and belly of a plate.

Study material 1967.; square J11; depth 1.80 - 1.95 m.

8. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

⁵ Ibid., 148, n. 9; Fidanovski 1990, 56, T.19/10.

⁶ Ibid., type III/3, n. 3, 4. This plate type appears also in the area of Singidunum and it is dated into a broader chronological span – 4th century, Djordjević-Nikolić 2000, 99 - 100, type III/10.

Field inv. No 685/67; square I10.

Type I/3 is a plate with an everted downward-slanting rim decorated with ribs, slanting belly sides and flat bottom. They were made from well refined yellowish-white earth. Only one plate of this type was identified at Boljetin site. This type of plate was produced in the province and may be dated into 2nd century,⁷ and in Boljetin it was used during early 2nd century.

9. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Study material 1968.; square J5; depth 0,92 m.

Type I/4 is a plate with a slanting moulded rim, round belly and wide, flat bottom. The belly is decorated with ribs. They were made of refined yellowish-white clay, and are dated into the period from mid-2nd century to the first decades of 3rd century. Only one example of this type of plate was identified in Boljetin.⁸ This type of plates at the site was in use during late first phase of the camp life.

10. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Field inv. No 43/69; probe C, block III; depth 1.40 m.

Type I/5 is a plate with rim which is not moulded, belly sides slanting and angular and a ribbed profile, low pedestal foot. They were made of refined yellowish-white earth, glazed greenish-yellow on the inside. According to the form and fabric this type of plates is usually dated into the period of 2nd and 3rd centuries, and it is imitation of *terra sigillata*, Drag. 32.⁹ One of the plates of this type that was identified in Boljetin may be dated, judging by the glaze, into the chronological frame of the second half of 3rd century.

11. A plate preserved in fragments.

Study material provides no data

Type I/6 is a plate with a ribbed profile rim, distinctly angular belly and a ribbed profile bottom. They were made of well refined clay of grey colour, with dark grey, black or red burnished slip. Models for this type of plates were the vessels made of *terra sigillata*, Drag. 17. Earlier examples of this type of plates were made of grey clay with black slip and are dated into late 1st and early 2nd centuries.¹⁰ It is to that period that the only example of this type of plate from Boljetin belongs.

⁷ Brukner 1981, 87, T. 68, n. 54.

⁸ Dating performed according to the presence of the same type of bowls with two handles in Singidunum, Djordjević - Nikolić 2000, 30 - 31, type I/30.

⁹ Brukner 1981, 88, type 14, T. 71, n. 20.

¹⁰ Djordjević-Nikolić 2000, 105 - 106, type III/27.

12. A fragment of the rim and belly of a plate of grey firing colour with black burnished slip.

Study material 1969; probe D, block III-IV, pit.

Type I/7 is a plate with a slanting everted rim, slightly rounded belly and a wide flat bottom. Both the inside and the outside of the belly are decorated by wider or narrower ribs. They were made of poorly refined earth of brown-red firing colour. This type is dated into the period from 2nd to 3rd centuries.¹¹ One example of this type of plate was identified in Boljetin, chronologically corresponding to early second phase of the camp life, i.e. second half of 3rd century.

13. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Field inv. No 66/65; square B7; depth 0.85 m.

Type I/8 is a plate with slanting sides and a flat, not moulded rim, which is decorated on the outside near the rim edge with narrow plastic ribs. They were made of sandy, brown-red fired clay, glazed green on the inside. Only one example of this type of plate was found in Boljetin. In line with the analogies from Tekija, it is dated into 4th century.¹²

14. A fragment of the rim and belly of a plate.

Study material 1965.; square F5; depth 1.10 m.

Type I/9 is a plate with a slanting belly, a flat rim that is not moulded and slightly curves inwards, and a ribbed profile bottom. They were made of poorly refined earth, of grey firing colour, burnished on the outside. Only one example of this type of plate was identified. It is an imitation of *terra sigillata*, Drag. 32, and dated into the period 2nd – 3rd centuries.¹³ The plate from Boljetin chronologically corresponds to the late first phase of the camp life, early 2nd century.

15. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate.

Field inv. No 372/66; square E3; depth 2.0 m.

Type I/10 is a type of shallow plate, with slanting sides, flat bottom, and the rim which is slightly accentuated by ribs on the inside. They were made of well refined earth, grey, red-brown or red firing colour, and burnished outer surface. They are dated into the period from 1st to 4th centuries.¹⁴ Boljetin plates chronologically correspond to the first phase of camp life, i.e. the period of 1st century.

¹¹ Ibid., 101 - 102, type III/14.

¹² Cermanović-Kuzmanović - Jovanović 2004, 147, n. 2. In Tekija it is dated into the period of 4th and 5th centuries.

¹³ Brukner 1981, 88, T. 71, n. 21 - 23.

¹⁴ Ibid., 86, T. 65, n. 12 - 17.

16. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate, grey firing colour, burnished surface.

Field inv. No 393/66; square E4; depth 2.05 m.

17. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate with red burnished slip.

Field inv. No 956/68; square H3; depth 2.40 m.

18. A fragment of the rim, belly, and bottom of a plate with red burnished slip.

Field inv. No 965/68; square H8; depth 2.50 m.

This typology and chronology of the roman plates from Boljetin site is small contribution to the touristic knowledge of the past of our country.

Plates from Boljetin site

- Summary -

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