

## THE AMPHORAE DEPOSIT OF ISLAM GEAFERCA

In Northern Dobrudja, in the depth of the valley which slopes to the spot called «Coadă Rîpii», an amphorae deposit was uncovered north of the village Islam Geaferca (Horia commune, district of Măcin). The waters, after the heavy rains of the 1955 spring, cut into the 7 m high bank of the gully and near a source washed out the sand from a shallow pit, dug into the clay layer, thus overturning most of the amphorae deposited there <sup>1</sup>.

Out of the 26 amphorae discovered and — owing to the curiosity stirred by the pointed-bottomed «pitchers» — soon scattered through the neighbouring villages, 20 items could be recovered <sup>2</sup>.

Nearly the whole set consists of a single sort of amphorae, similar in form, dimensions and structure of the paste, some of them bearing also a seal on their neck (fig. 1). However, two of them are of a quite different fabric, as regards their shape and paste; one of these is different too by its size (nos. 19—20).

Amphorae identical to one of the most frequent types in the Islam Geaferca hoard were already found in Dobrudja, but quite isolated. At Meidanchioi, a neighbouring village, for instance, two spray amphorae were found (nos. 21 and 22), one of them bearing a seal <sup>3</sup>; at Galeșu, a village dependent on the Poarta Albă commune, near Constanța, another amphora of the same type was uncovered, equally having a sealed neck <sup>4</sup> (no. 23).

<sup>1</sup> The discovery was made by Gheorghe Gh. Mocanu, an inhabitant of the village and notice about it was given by the teacher Gh. Albu. The field research was pursued by the author of the present paper, in company of prof. Gavrilă Simion, director of the District Museum of Tulcea.

<sup>2</sup> The District Museum of Tulcea is in possession of twelve items; at the Regional Museum of Constanța there is one item more; at the District Museum of Brăila there is another, while six other

items were brought to the National Museum of Antiquities, of the Archaeological Institute.

<sup>3</sup> The amphorae are now deposited at the District Museum of Tulcea: one of them was found in 1950 in the vineyard of Toader Chioseua (acces. no. 1 291), and the other one was discovered in 1952 by the peasant Anesulai (acces. no. 1281).

<sup>4</sup> The amphora found in 1950 is now at the National Museum of Antiquities (reg. no. V 13 135).

## ISLAM GEAFERCA

1. — *Amphora* with large neck and thickened lip over a narrow collar. The handles, oval in section and bearing vertical grooves, start horizontally from under the collar and after bending at a right angle, slope towards the belly, on whose upper part they repose. The large belly, pointed towards the bottom, ends in a frustum shaped foot, stuck like a concave thimble at the basis. The vase is 0.450 m high; its largest diameter measures 0.220 m.



Fig. 1. — Amphorae of Islam Geaferca (the numbers correspond to those in the table).

The well-kneaded paste contains much sand, but little mica and limestone; it is of a whitish light-chestnut colour with a faint slip.

On the neck, just on the central line, a rectangular seal was stamped vertically, by pression. The seal, in Greek type normally drawn, easily reads, when looked at from the right handle,  $\Delta\text{IONY}(\sigma\iota\upsilon\upsilon)$ . Traces of red paint are still preserved on the neck and the collar.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 15 418.

2. — *Amphora* of the same type; the foot, broken, is missing. Without foot, the vase is 0.370 m high; its maximum diameter, 0.200 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is light red.

On the neck, the same seal,  $\Delta\text{IONY}(\sigma\iota\upsilon\upsilon)$ , and traces of red paint.

D.M.Tl. acces. no 1 283.

3. — *Amphora* of the same type; the broken foot is missing. Without the foot, the height measures 0.380 m; the maximum diameter is 0.270 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a light-red tint.

On the neck, the same seal,  $\Delta\text{IONY}(\sigma\iota\upsilon\upsilon)$ .

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 290.

4. — *Amphora* of the same type. The frustum shaped foot is preserved. The total height is 0.420 m; the maximum diameter, 0.200 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite is of a pinkish-chestnut colour.

On the neck, near the right handle, the Greek letters  $\Delta I$  are stamped by pression and about the right handle again, externally as well as internally, brown stains are still preserved.  
D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 282.

5. — *Amphora* of the same type, whose broken foot is missing. Without the foot, the vase is 0.375 m high; the largest diameter measures 0.200 m.

The paste containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite is of a reddish tint.

On the neck, beneath the narrow collar and along the centre line, the Greek letter  $\Delta$  is impressed in a reclining position, in the middle of a halfcircle.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 288.

6. — *Amphora* of the same type; the broken foot is missing. Without the foot, the height is 0.420 m; the maximum diameter is 0.210 m.

The paste, containing sand, is of a reddish colour.

On the neck, beneath the broad collar and just on the centre line, the letters NI are horizontally impressed, the first letter being very broad.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 15 419.

7. — *Amphora* of the same type. The lip is broken along the collar's height; the broken foot is missing. The present height measures 0.390 m, the maximum diameter, 0.210 m.

The paste, containing sand, is of a whitish light-chestnut colour, and covered with a sandy slip.

On the neck, beneath the collar, along the centre line, an ivy-leaf-shaped seal, stamped by pression, has no distinct letters left, owing to the water corrosion.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 15 420.

8. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with narrow collar; the frustum shaped foot is preserved. The whole vase is 0.430 m high, its maximum diameter is 0.200 m.

The paste, containing fine sand, mica and limestone, is of a chestnut colour.

No seal.

D.M.Br. acces. no. 1 232.

9. — *Amphora* of the same type; one handle, with part of the neck and the foot are missing. Without the foot, the height measures 0.390 m; the maximum diameter is 0.200 m.

The sandy paste is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

N.M.A. acces. no. V. 15 421.

10. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with a broad collar. The broken foot is missing. Without it, the vase, is 0.430 m high and 0.210 m in diameter.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish hue.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 286.

11. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with a narrow collar. The frustum shaped foot is preserved. The total height is 0.430 m, the maximum diameter 0.190 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 285.

12. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with a broad collar. The frustum shaped foot is preserved. The total height is 0.420 m, the maximum diameter 0.190 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.  
No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 287.

13. — *Amphora* of the same type, with a double broad collar; the frustum shaped foot is preserved. The total height measures 0.390 m, the maximum diameter 0.220 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.

On the neck in a vertical position is a rectangular stamp at the down side of which are kept the two first letters, the other letters of the noun ΔΙΟΝ[Υ(σίου)] being insufficiently impressed.

R.M. Constanța, acces. no. II 39 033.

14. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with a broad collar; the broken foot is missing. Without it, the height is 0.390 m; the maximum diameter is 0.215 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite is of a reddish tint.

On the neck, the seal .ΟΥΑΟΥ, whose first letter, most likely a Δ, is poorly impressed.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 4 516.

15. — *Amphora* of the same type, with double broad collar; the broken foot is missing. Without it the vase is 0.395 m high, the maximum diameter measures 0.200 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 4 515.

16. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with narrow collar; the broken foot is missing. The height, without the foot, is 0.370 m, the maximum diameter is 0.190 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite and of limestone, is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 294.

17. — *Amphora* of the same type, with very narrow collar. The broken foot is missing; without it, the vase is 0.390 m high. The maximum diameter measures 0.210 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 289.

18. — *Amphora* of a related type, with large neck and thickened lip (no collar under it). Just above the shoulder the neck is surrounded by a circle impressed on the paste. The handles, oval in section (and without vertical grooves), start beneath the lip and after bending, slope winding towards the shoulder, against whose border they lean. The large belly is pointed towards the bottom; the broken foot is missing. The vase, without foot, is 0.440 m high. The maximum diameter measures 0.210 m.

The well-kneaded paste, containing fine sand, mica and limestone, is of a reddish tint.

No seal.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 15 422.

19. — *Amphora* of great size; the upper part of the large neck, one handle and the upper part of the other handle are missing. The handles, oval in section (and without vertical grooves), slope downwards to the shoulder, against which they are leaning. The large belly, pointed towards the bottom, ends in a compact cylindrical foot, with convex basis. The present height measures 0.530 m and the maximum diameter 0.260 m.

The soft, well-kneaded paste, containing fine sand, mica and black quartzite granules, is of a pink colour, with slip of the same hue.

No traces of a seal are preserved.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 280.

20. — Broken *amphora*, out of which only the large belly is extant, pointed towards the bottom and ended in a compact cylindrical foot, with concave basis. With the foot, the fragment is 0.300 m high; the maximum diameter measures 0.220 m.

The soft paste, containing fine sand and kaolin, is whitish. The thin walls are brittle.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 15 423.

### MEIDANCHIOI

21. — *Amphora* of the type with narrow collar beneath the lip and vertically grooved handles. The frustum, shaped foot is applied like a concave thimble at the basis. Total height, 0.447 m; maximum diameter, 0.225 m.

The paste containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a yellowish chestnut colour.

On the neck, on the centre line, a rectangular seal is stamped vertically by pression. It is normally written in Greek type; seen from the left handle it easily reads ΔΙΟΝΥ (σίου).

D.M.Tl. acces. no 1 291.

22. — *Amphora* of the same type; the frustum shaped foot is preserved. One handle and part of the lip, broken, are missing. The total height is 0.490 m, the maximum diameter measures 0.235 m.

The paste, containing sand with hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish yellow colour.

No seal.

D.M.Tl. acces. no. 1 281.

### GALEȘU

23. — *Amphora* of the same type, but with double large collar; the broken foot is missing. The total height measures 0.415 m, the maximum diameter, 0.220 m.

The paste, containing sand and hard granules of black quartzite, is of a reddish tint.

On the neck, along the centre line, the letters MI are horizontally stamped by pression.

N.M.A. acces. no. V 13 135.



The first seventeen amphorae of Islam Geaferca, to which must be added the amphorae of Meidanchioi, and the Galeșu amphora as well, belong to a peculiar category, which is represented by the amphora type with large neck and a collar beneath the thickened lip (fig. 2); the handles, oval in section and bearing vertical grooves, start horizontally from under the collar and after curving, slope towards the shoulder, against which they lean. The large belly is pointed towards the bottom, where it ends in a frustum shaped foot, applied like a thimble, swollen at its upper part and concave at the lower one. Some items have a broken foot.

The paste is well kneaded, mixed with sand and sometimes with mica or with hard granules of black quartzite. It varies in colour from reddish to a light chestnut; on certain items the slip too is preserved.

On the neck of some of these amphorae a rectangular englyphic seal was vertically stamped by pression; sometimes even, stray letters were impressed (fig. 3).

On all the amphorae belonging to that first category, the ratio between their component parts is the same. Their height (taking into account the fact that they all had a foot), varies from 0.400 m to 0.490 m; the ratio between the upper portion of the body, upwards from the maximum diameter to the lip, and the lower part downwards from the same maximum

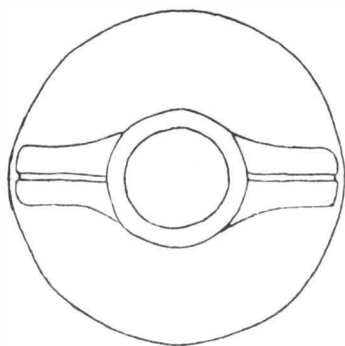
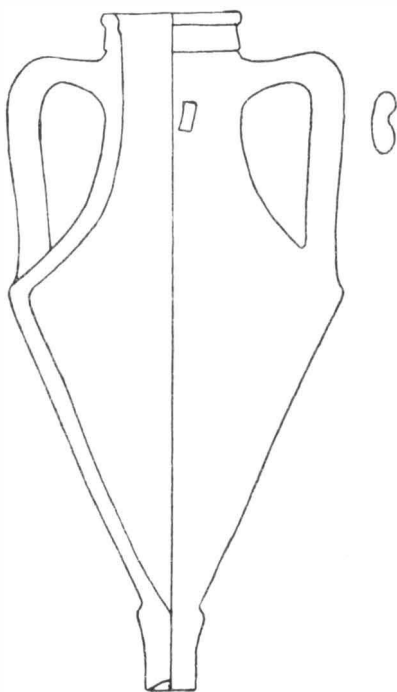


Fig. 2. — Type of amphora from Islam Geaferca (size 1/5).



diameter, the foot included, is constant. At the upper part, the height varies between 0.160 m and 0.200 m, while at the lower part it goes from 0.220 m to 0.290 m. Thus, if for the upper height of 0.160 m, the corresponding lower height is 0.220 m, for a height of 0.200 m, at the upper part of the body, the corresponding height at the lower part is 0.290 m. The size of the handles is equally somewhat balanced to that of the upper parts of the amphorae; for a height of 0.165 m, the corresponding handle is 0.135 m high, and even the handles of such amphorae whose upper body measures 0.200 m, do not exceed 0.160 m. The only exception is constituted by an item whose neck is 0.180 m high, while its handle is only 0.125 m high,

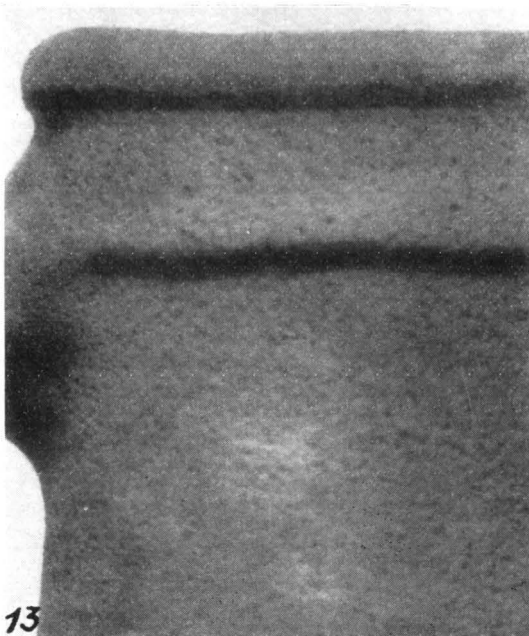
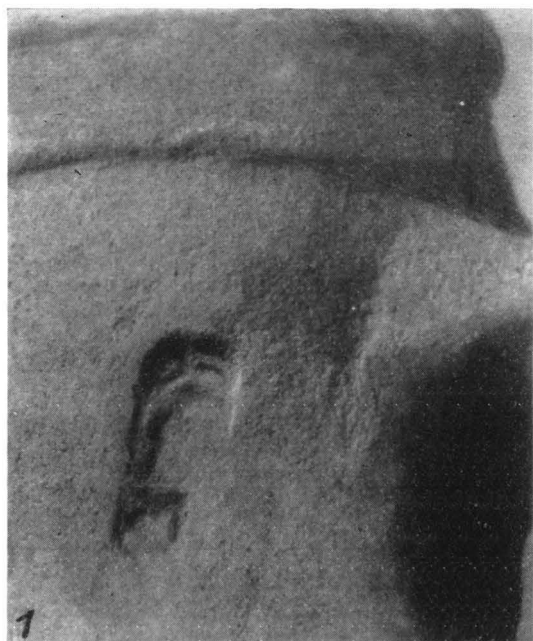


Fig. 3 a. — The seals on the neck of the amphorae (size 1/1).

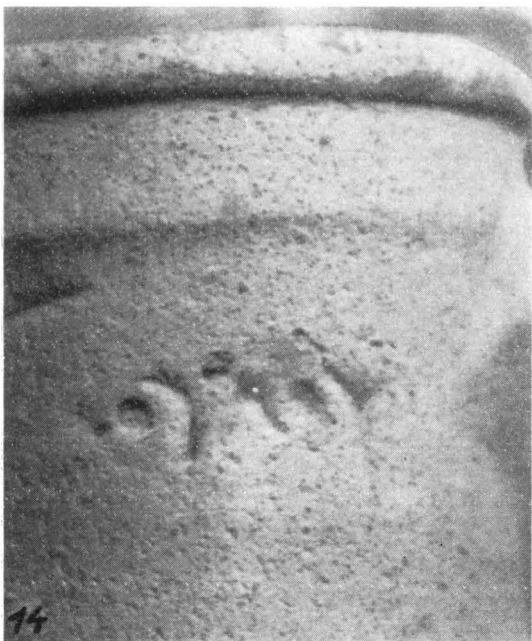


Fig. 3—b. The seals on the neck of the amphorae (size 1/1).



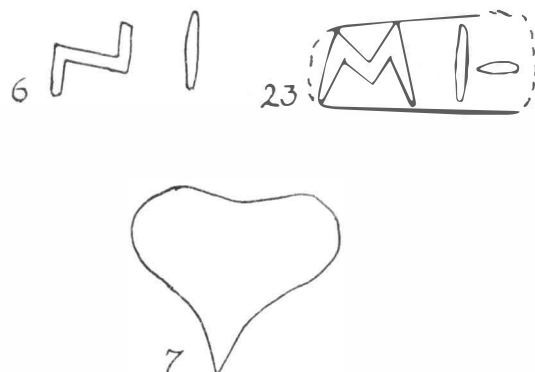
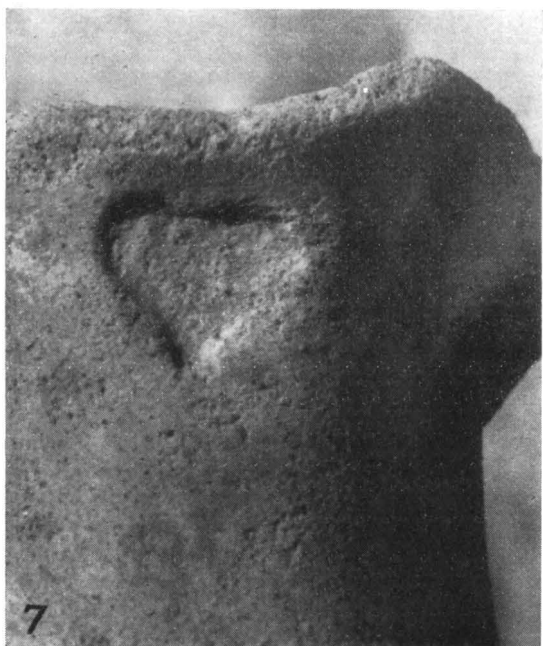


Fig. 3—c. The seals on the neck of the amphorae (size 1/1).

owing to the presence of a double broad collar. The maximum diameter seems proportioned to the belly's height: to 0.215 m in height correspond 0.200 m in diameter, and to 0.290 m in height, 0.235 m in diameter. Notwithstanding, one of the items is 0.260 m high, while its diameter measures 0.190 m, which shows a certain fluctuation. The foot varies in height from 0.038 m to 0.050 m, and its maximum diameter measures between 0.040 m and 0.048 m; but

Table of the size and characteristic features

| Running no. | Height  | Internal height | Diameter | Neck's diameter | Collar's breadth | Neck's height | Handles' height | Belly's height | Foot's height | Maximum diameter of the foot |
|-------------|---------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 0           | 1       | 2               | 3        | 4               | 5                | 6             | 7               | 8              | 9             | 10                           |
| 1           | 45      | 40              | 22       | 9.2             | 1.5              | 18.5          | 16              | 26.5           | 5             | 4.7                          |
| 2           | 37—     | 36              | 20       | 8.5             | 1.7              | 17            | 13              | 20—            | —             | —                            |
| 3           | 38 ..   | 34.5            | 21       | 9.5             | 1.5              | 16            | 14              | 22             | —             | —                            |
| 4           | 42      | 36.5            | 20       | 8               | 3                | 17            | 15              | 25             | 4.5           | 4.5                          |
| 5           | 37.5 .. | 35.5            | 20       | 8.5             | 1.7              | 17            | 14              | 20.5 ..        | —             | —                            |
| 6           | 42—     | 41.7            | 21       | 9.4             | 2.5              | 17.5          | 14              | 24.5—          | —             | —                            |
| 7           | —39—    | —38.7           | 21       | 9.2             | —                | —16           | 13.5            | 23—            | —             | —                            |
| 8           | 43      | 36              | 20       | 8.4             | 1.5              | 17            | 15              | 26             | 4.5           | 4.8                          |
| 9           | 39—     | 37.7            | 20       | 8.8             | 1.6              | 17            | 14.5            | 22—            | —             | —                            |
| 10          | 43 ..   | 42              | 21       | 8.7             | 2.5              | 18            | 15              | 25—            | —             | —                            |
| 11          | 43      | 38              | 19       | 8.3             | 1.7              | 17            | 15              | 26             | 4.5           | 4.8                          |
| 12          | 42      | 35.5            | 19       | 8.3             | 2                | 17            | 14.5            | 25             | 4.5           | 4.8                          |
| 13          | 39      | 34.5            | 22       | 8.5             | 3                | 16            | 13.5            | 23             | 4             | 4.5                          |
| 14          | 39      | 36.5            | 21.5     | 8.5             | 1.7              | 17            | 14.5            | 20.5—          | —             | —                            |
| 15          | 39.5    | 36.5            | 20       | 8.5             | 1.8              | 16.5          | 13.5            | 22.5           | —             | —                            |
| 16          | 37—     | 35              | 19       | 8.7             | 1.5              | 16.5          | 15              | 21—            | —             | —                            |
| 17          | 39—     | 39              | 21       | 9               | 0.7              | 17            | 15              | 22—            | —             | —                            |
| 18          | 44—     | 41.3            | 21       | 8.7             | —                | 17.5          | 15.5            | 26.5           | —             | —                            |
| 19          | —53     | —43             | 26       | 10              | —                | —             | —               | 37             | 4.5           | 4                            |
| 20          | —       | —22.8           | 22       | —               | —                | —             | —               | 30             | 4.5           | 3.8                          |
| 21          | 44.7    | 38.5            | 22.5     | 9.5             | 2                | 16.7          | 14              | 28             | 3.8           | 4.5                          |
| 22          | 49      | 40.5            | 23.5     | 7.7             | 2                | 20            | 16              | 29             | 4             | 4.7                          |
| 23          | 41.5—   | 39              | 22       | 8.4             | 3.5              | 18            | 12.5            | 23.5           | —             | —                            |

Explanations: the minus symbol (—) before a figure means a lack at the upper part of the amphora; after a figure it shows a lack in the lower part.

14th col.: db = double broad; vn = very narrow; n = narrow; b = broad

15th col.: g = groove

16th col.: c = cylindrical; t = thimble-shaped

18th col.: c = chestnut; lc = light chestnut; yc = yellowish chestnut;

## of the amphorae at Islam Geaferca

| Minimum diameter of the foot | Length of the seal | Letters' height | The collar on the neck | Handle | Foot | Seal    | Colour | Paste     | Provenance | Museum, and accession no. |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|-----------|------------|---------------------------|
| 11                           | 12                 | 13              | 14                     | 15     | 16   | 17      | 18     | 19        | 20         | 21                        |
| 3.3                          | 3                  | 0.8             | n                      | g      | t    | ΔIONY   | lc     | s.m.l.    | I.G.       | B. V 15 418               |
| —                            | 3                  | 0.8             | n                      | g      | —    | ΔIONY   | lr     | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1283                   |
| —                            | 3.                 | 0.8             | n                      | g      | —    | ΔIONY   | lr     | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1290                   |
| 3.5                          | 1.3                | 1               | db                     | g      | t    | ΔI      | rc     | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1282                   |
| —                            | 1.5                | 1               | n                      | g      | —    | Δ       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1288                   |
| —                            | 1.9                | 0.8             | b                      | g      | —    | NI      | r      | s.        | I.G.       | B. V 15 419               |
| —                            | 2.5                | —               | ?                      | g      | —    | leaf    | lc     | s.        | I.G.       | B. V 15 420               |
| 3.5                          | —                  | —               | n                      | g      | t    | —       | c      | s.m.l.    | I.G.       | Br. 1232                  |
| —                            | —                  | —               | n                      | g      | —    | —       | r      | s.        | I.G.       | B. V 15 421               |
| —                            | —                  | —               | b                      | g      | —    | —       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1286                   |
| 3.5                          | —                  | —               | n                      | g      | t    | —       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1285                   |
| 3.2                          | —                  | —               | b                      | g      | t    | —       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1287                   |
| 2.5                          | 3                  | 0.8             | db                     | g      | t    | ΔION[Y  | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | C-ța. II 39 033           |
| —                            | 4                  | 1.3             | n                      | g      | —    | Δ]OYΛOY | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 4516                   |
| —                            | —                  | —               | n                      | g      | —    | —       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 4515                   |
| —                            | —                  | —               | n                      | g      | —    | —       | r      | s.g.l.    | I.G.       | TL 1294                   |
| —                            | —                  | —               | vn                     | g      | —    | —       | r      | s.g.      | I.G.       | TL 1289                   |
| —                            | —                  | —               | —                      | —      | —    | —       | r      | s.m.l.    | I.G.       | B. V 15 422               |
| —                            | —                  | —               | —                      | —      | c    | —       | p      | s.m.g.    | I.G.       | TL 1280                   |
| —                            | —                  | —               | —                      | —      | c    | —       | w      | s. kaolin | I.G.       | B. V 15 423               |
| 3.8                          | 3.                 | 0.8             | b                      | g      | t    | ΔIONY   | yc     | s.g.      | M.         | TL 1291                   |
| 3.5                          | —                  | —               | b                      | g      | t    | —       | yr     | s.g.      | M.         | TL 1281                   |
| —                            | 2.8                | 0.9             | db                     | g      | —    | MI      | r      | s.g.      | G.         | B. V 13 135               |

r = reddish; rc = reddish chestnut; lr = light reddish; yr = yellowish red; p = pink; w = whitish

19th col.: s = sand; s. kaolin = sand, kaolin; s.g. = sand, quartzite granules; s.m.l. = sand, mica, limestone; s.m.g. = sand, mica quartzite granules; s.g.l. = sand, quartzite granules, limestone.

20th col.: I.G. = Islam Geaferca; M. = Meidanchioi; G. = Galeșu

21st col.: B = National Museum of Antiquities, București; Br. = District Museum of Brăila; C-ța = Regional Museum of Constanța; TL = District Museum of Tulcea.

here again there is an item whose foot is only 0.038 m high, while its maximum diameter is 0.045 m.

All the amphorae in the first group had certainly, a foot as resulted from the ratio between their total height, foot included, and their internal height: thus, for the missing-foot amphorae it is necessary, at the making up of the whole form, to add the few centimetres representing the foot's height. The diameter of the neck varies from 0.077 m to 0.095 m, it being also somehow balanced to the largest diameter of the belly. As for the collar, placed just beneath the lip, it varies from 0.007 to 0.035 m and does not seem to have been proportioned on purpose to some other parts of the vase.

If, in point of form, of ratio between the size of the component parts, and of evident features — collar, handle, foot — these amphorae belong to a single great group, when details are taken into consideration, other more limited categories are needed.

The composition of the paste is somehow different with some items. A larger group is formed by amphorae made out of a sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite — 16 items. Another group includes the amphorae of a sandy paste, mixed with mica and limestone — three items. To the third group must be listed the vases of a sandy paste free of other elements — three items. One item alone is made out of a sandy paste with kaolin.

The colour too varies visibly enough, yet without constituting a criterion for the grouping of the amphorae, it being generally dependent on the firing, and only seldom on the paste's composition. Most of the amphorae — 13 items — are of a reddish tint; two items are of a light reddish hue and two other are of a light chestnut colour; there is then one item of the following colours each: pink, light red, reddish-chestnut, yellowish-chestnut, chestnut, and whitish.

Besides these groups delimited by their technical features, the vases ought to be also grouped by manufacturing places and fitted into a chronological framework.

The criterion which could be applied in determining the chief place of manufacture is furnished by certain characteristic traits of shape and paste and of the seal as well. As regards the form, the first category — collared amphorae, with grooved handles and thimble-foot — leads to one and the same centre (taking the term "centre" in a general, larger sense, and not as a precise point), where such amphorae were manufactured. The production area is rather restricted by the resemblance, approaching sometimes the quasi-identity, of the technical features and the size of the vases. Yet the small differences noticed in the composition of the paste, the shape of the collar (broad, narrow, very narrow, double large, or no collar at all), compel us to suppose the existence of different workshops in the range of the same great commercial and administrative centre. The seals, in their turn, show the presence of different potter's workshops, independent of one another, in the scope of the same manufacture centre.

Thus, judging by the seals, we believe the amphorae came from at least seven potter's workshops. One workshop is attested by the seal of the master potter ΔΙΟΝΙ(σίου), stamped on three amphorae made out of a sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite. On one amphora of a sandy paste with mica and limestone, the seal is somewhat different (no. 2), with letters which seem less accurate. A second workshop is revealed by the seal ΔΙ, appearing on an amphora of a sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite; a third one, by the seal Δ in a halfcircle opened to the right, on an amphora equally of a sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite. The existence of a fourth workshop is proved by the seal [Δ]ΟΥΛΟΥ, on an amphora of a sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite; that of a fifth workshop, by the seal ΜΙ on an amphora of a sandy paste again, with hard granules of black quartzite. A sixth workshop is documented by the seal ΝΙ, seen on an amphora of a sandy paste; and the

seventh, by the seal shaped as an ivy-leaf, with blotted-out letters, on a sandy paste amphora. Another workshop, the eighth, could be the one which produced the unsealed amphorae, all made out of a reddish, sandy paste with hard granules of black quartzite. And another workshop again, the ninth, could be the manufacturer of the amphorae with cylindrical foot and handles without vertical grooves.

The manufacture centre could be the city of Heraclea Pontica, whose amphorae bore englyphic seals, stamped often on their neck <sup>5</sup>. The rough paste too, with hard granules of black quartzite, very much resembles that out of which the Hellenistic sealed amphorae of Heraclea origin were made.

As for their epoch, we think these amphorae are contemporary of the Hellenistic ones — although the conical belly is different — displaying the general features of their epoch. The shape of the upper part of the amphorae — short and large neck — make us limit their time to the final Hellenistic. To the same epoch seem to direct us the neck seals, which, unlike the seals from the previous centuries, show a certain negligence of fabric. The vertically grooved handles, however, lead to the Roman epoch. And to that same Roman epoch seem to point the cylindrical foot of the two amphorae belonging to the second group of the lot.

The Islam Geaferca amphorae, and the Meidanchioi and Galeşu ones as well, may therefore be considered products of a Pontic chief place of manufacture, perhaps Heraclea Pontica, or even of another local centre, which was active during the 1st century B. C. and possibly at the beginning of the 1st century of our era too. The two amphorae with cylindrical foot may come from another centre, or from two different centres. The presence in Dobrudja of these amphorae proves once more the commercial relations of the autochthonous population with the Greek world, by means of the merchants dependent on the Pontic colonies.

The circumstances of the discovery and the field conditions are a source of difficulties for those who try to find the meaning of the amphorae store at Islam Geaferca. The scarce remains of ruins which are seen at the upper part of the gully allow us to suppose that they belonged to the cave of a merchant, where the amphorae were stored; it is not impossible that that store was in connection with some neighbouring settlement. Stray finds, especially of the Roman epoch, were made both more to the south, in the area of the Horia village (the former Orta-chioi) <sup>6</sup> and more north-eastwards, in the area of the Meidanchioi <sup>7</sup> village; they could be connected to a settlement once existing at Islam Geaferca, whose traces are still preserved on the so-called walnut trees road, "Drumul nucilor", towards the point called the old forest, "Pădurea vechă", near that amphorae store <sup>8</sup>.

## EXSPECTATUS BUJOR

<sup>5</sup> E. M. Staerman, *Керамические клейма из Тирь*, in KS, XXXVI, 1951, p. 35 and fig. 4.

<sup>6</sup> V. Pârvan, *Cetatea Ulmetum*, I, p. 584, no. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Gr. Tocilescu, *ms.*, 5192, p. 100; V. Pârvan, *Descoperiri nouă în Scythia Minor*, p. 502 — 509.

<sup>8</sup> The deposit, out of which only one amphora is somewhat greater in size, was thought to represent offerings brought during the sources' worship, which supposition seems doubtful. (For such interpretation see D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, 2nd edition, 1958, p. 331).