


## POTTERY AND SOCIAL PRACTICE: BETWEEN HOME AND ABROAD<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This article aims to explore the uses of material culture and their relevance to identity formation. The premise is applied specifically to the moving *auxilia*, in order to observe the effects of movement and transfers on the selection and consumption of material culture within the military environment. It is common knowledge that pottery supply and use within the Roman military were to an extent governed by specific state-controlled supply routes and contracts, meaning that the same pottery styles could have been observed at different forts from different regions. Nonetheless, the cultural side of demand should not be overlooked as it may have tailored supply differently to various regions depending on the preferences in the area. Similarly, auxiliary units transferred from home may have preserved some of their familiar pottery styles and reproduce them upon arrival to the new territory. This article will explore the ways pottery was employed at locations associated with Batavian *auxilia* in order to capture their image construction between home and abroad. Once removed from their core territory and placed in a new environment with new norms in terms of material culture and even dressing and addressing one another, how did their consumption adapt to the area and to which extent did it keep a unique character? The main case-study explored in this paper is Războieni in order to assess the pottery consumption patterns of Batavian *auxilia* abroad in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

**Keywords:** pottery, social practice, identity, consumption, *auxilia*.

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## Introduction

This study examines the correlation between pottery consumption and ethnic identity among the Batavian *auxilia* stationed abroad, using a social practice framework. Material culture is a useful tool for understanding identity, but the relationship between pottery and identity should not be assumed to be direct. Rather than inferring identity solely from pottery styles, this study analyses the social practices associated with pottery, such as supply, demand, and replication, to explore the expression of identity. The theoretical framework is applied to the case of Batavian *auxilia*, focusing on their consumption practices at various locations. Specifically, the site of Războieni in Romania during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD is examined to observe changes in pottery consumption patterns as auxiliary units were transferred abroad.

The main case-study analysed in this paper, Războieni, was associated with the Batavian cavalry unit, *ala I Batavorum milliaria*. By studying the pottery consumption at this site through the lens of social practice, this paper seeks to reveal the ways in which Batavian identity was formed and changed throughout time and space, between home and abroad. Specifically, it will explore the big supply systems and the specific choices overriding it, the cultural side of demand, and the local replication of widely available styles. Through this analysis, this paper will shed light on the preservation of a specific ethnic character in Batavian pottery consumption and its fit within the wider regional context. Overall, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between pottery consumption and ethnic identity, and to provide insights that can inform future research on this topic in the field of archaeology.

## Theoretical framework

This section discusses the importance of analysing patterns of supply and demand as part of the pottery social practice, in order to understand the adoption and adaption of mass-produced standardised objects. It is essential to should be recognise that supply co-exists with demand, together corroborating theories on the resulting pottery patterns. Pottery studies may tend to favour the economic reason of supply over the cultural demand, especially when discussing the spread of *terra sigillata*,<sup>2</sup> but the distribution of mass-produced standardised objects need to consider the cultural side of demand, for it could cover the gaps left by the economic approach of supply. In short, supply and demand work together to explain the dispersion, adoption and adaption of mass-produced standardised objects.

On the one hand, the power of supply is one of the main reasons for the rapid dispersion of *terra sigillata* among the Empire, for it created the availability and the convenience to quickly acquire the goods.<sup>3</sup> The mechanism behind this reasoning suggests that large production centres flooded the market with a limited number of choices, which resulted

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<sup>2</sup> Cooper 1996; Fulford 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Cooper 1996, 85.

in the use of objects ‘without any allegiance to *Romanitas* being attached’.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, state-sponsored supply made *terra sigillata* transport cheap and affordable, leading to its adoption in both military and civilian contexts.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the economic side of supply is an important variable in the adoption of *terra sigillata* and other mass-produced objects because it explains the ready availability across widespread regions, and the convenience it entails for the individuals in need for goods.

Conversely, a large local demand will stimulate the production and thus the supply over long distances,<sup>6</sup> whereas low demand could cause the cessation of production and supply to that specific area. It is imperative to understand that ‘consumption entails the **selection**, adoption, and the use of goods’,<sup>7</sup> meaning that people will select their preferred objects and demand them, creating a customary supply depending on the targeted market. Similarly, Cool argues<sup>8</sup> that cultural demand impacts on the adoption of new objects in local cultures. The distribution patterns rely on both supply and demand, and considered separately, they will leave gaps in the knowledge and understanding of the goods circulation across the Empire. Demand dictates the amount of production and the destination of the goods, while supply creates the convenience and availability of products in the markets to fulfil the cultural needs of the population. The two intertwine and coexist in the process of production, amount and destination of goods in motion.

The main advantage of this two-way visualisation of the distribution patterns from an economic and cultural angle allows identities to become more visible.<sup>9</sup> Firstly, an overview of the background supply system helps at better scrutinising and identifying the objects that do not fit in the overall picture. A strict focus on the economic side of supply systems only will fail to distinguish between identities expressions in military, urban, or rural communities, creating the false impression that identity cannot be expressed through pottery use, especially in the case of standardised mass-produced objects. For this particular reason, the cultural side of demand needs to be introduced, since it is more likely that this will shed light on aspects and circumstances in which people had a choice, such as use, replication, copy or selection. Therefore, as part of the social practices of pottery use, it is important to consider both the economic and the cultural aspects of supply and demand when analysing the adoption and adaption of mass-produced standardised objects, as together they allow to identify unusual patterns, as well as revealing the ways in which people expressed their identities through the use, replication, copy or selection of these objects.

When narrowing the discussion of pottery supply and demand specifically to the military environment, the main factors to be considered are local production, pottery sub-markets, imports, and state-sponsored contracts, as they make up the totality of the supply systems in the military environment. These factors are mostly determined by the ceramic character of the area, meaning that whether sufficient pottery was present

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<sup>4</sup> Eckardt 2005, 140.

<sup>5</sup> Fulford 2018, 314.

<sup>6</sup> Woolf 1998, 201.

<sup>7</sup> Hodos 2010, 19.

<sup>8</sup> Cool 2006, 171.

<sup>9</sup> Monteil 2004, 3; Willis 2011, 189.

in the area determined the mechanisms of military supply, including the military production of pottery, the imports, and the state-sponsored contracts.

In the case of local satisfactory fulfilment of pottery upon the Roman armies' arrival to an area, the soldiers would have employed it in their routines. Conversely, in the case of aceramic regions, or areas with scarce indigenous pottery production, the pottery supply would have branched out to cover the needs of the soldiers. One option was self-production, meaning that the soldiers made their own pottery. This task could have been handled by civilians<sup>10</sup> or undertaken by soldiers themselves.<sup>11</sup> In time, the impulse of pottery production sparked by the presence of the military in various areas shifted from local, military-coordinated production to bigger industries, centralisation and local markets and sub-markets serving the needs of the communities.<sup>12</sup> In other cases, bigger ceramic industries developed and grew into larger industries, such as the Lower Nene Valley, Oxfordshire or New Forest.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the supply of pottery to military communities in time developed from local, small-scale workshops, to established industries.

In the military environment, supply reached even the furthest regions, which had similar goods to those better connected. This was possible through the contracting arrangements, which made affordable otherwise expensive transport of imported pottery to the less reachable forts.<sup>14</sup> Conversely, the coarsewares tended to continue their production locally in military environments, due to the cost-distance difficulties of importing higher quantities without a state-sponsored arrangement.<sup>15</sup> On discussing the supply of *terra sigillata* and its far reach, Fulford<sup>16</sup> proposes the existence of contracts arranged between the individual units and the state, specifically provincial procurators. This state or procuratorial control of *sigillata* distribution allowed equal access to these products regardless of their location on Hadrian's Wall or on the German frontier, for example. Therefore, the military supply systems of pottery seem to have been a blend between local production, independent industries and state-controlled imports which altogether led to the resulting assemblages from forts.

## ***Auxilia* and material culture**

This paper concerns the pottery choices made by the Batavian *auxilia*, to better understand the ways in which identities have been constructed, maintained, and transformed within these units through the use and consumption of material culture. This means that a discussion of the migrant character of auxiliary units and their changing cultural make-up is imperative, since this phenomenon shaped the way material culture was selected and consumed by soldiers within the *auxilia*. Local recruitment, interaction with other

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<sup>10</sup> Haynes 2013, 185; Cooper 1996, 87.

<sup>11</sup> Greven – Pfahl 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Monaghan 1993, 706; Pitts 2021, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Davies 2002, 176; Cooper 1996, 87.

<sup>14</sup> Webster 1992, 114.

<sup>15</sup> Davies 2002, 176.

<sup>16</sup> Fulford 2018, 314.

cultures, and pottery supply lines are all dependent on the location of the auxiliary unit. They change as the *auxilia* move to a new place, leading to tailored made assemblages in different geographical locations. Therefore, considering the migrant element of the military in relation to a unit's composition and its consumed material culture it is necessary to understand the assemblages under analysis.

Firstly, within the context of migration, it is important to understand the relation between the origin of the unit and the origin of the soldiers composing that unit. The two are in no way dependant on one another, hence the initial sources of the unit may differ significantly from those of the then current soldiers. This point is crucial since it pertains to the idea that the material culture of an 'ethnic' unit may in fact bear no connection to the ethnic identity of the soldiers. The name of the *auxilia* often indicates the place of their formation.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the initial geographical area used for raising the unit must not be confused with the ethnicity of its later soldiers. This discrepancy between the origin of the unit and the origin of the soldiers in that unit makes it dangerous to directly link pottery or any other type of material culture of a unit with the ethnicity read in its name.

Ideally, the material culture should be approached from a historical context, meaning that before looking into the 'ethnicity' of the material culture, one should analyse the direct ethnicity declarations of a unit: the documentation of ethnic groups, as well as the members of the units may have also individually self-ascribed ethnic identity through epigraphic expressions of tribal allegiance.<sup>18</sup> This is evidence of not only the presence of a Batavian unit by name only, but also of self-identification of its members. Essentially, this type of information strengthens the link between the name of the unit and the ethnicity of some of the soldiers, which as discussed above, may be misleading at times, especially after consecutive re-locations and local recruitment.

Material culture may come as great help in identifying social practices and their link to specific facets of identity. Previous research<sup>19</sup> attempted to identify the presence of ethnicities through foodways. For example, past work on Ebor ware from York<sup>20</sup> indicated that the presence of this local fabric and some of its associated forms, the casseroles, could have been directly connected to the arrival of North-African units in northern England. A more recent study<sup>21</sup> added to the knowledge on Ebor ware, suggesting that the ware is unique in the regional context and therefore could be connected to a newly arrived wave of incomers and their associated consumption practices. This example shows that looking at individual types within the wider quantitative background may help identify outliers possibly connected to an ethnic auxiliary unit.

However, linking pottery forms to an ethnic identity without additional qualification may result in misleading assumptions on ethnicity. Factors such as recruitment or supply may be the result of adopting specific wares by a unit, which may not reflect the overall ethnicity of all soldiers. Thus, this should be a caution towards linking pottery forms to ethnicity without first researching their regional distribution or their quantities

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<sup>17</sup> Haynes 2013, 103.

<sup>18</sup> Eckardt 2014, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Swan 1999; Swan 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Swan 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Pitts 2021, 17.

in relation to other pottery types for reference.<sup>22</sup> While finding specific analogies for material culture may reveal a potential origin for an object, it is necessary to remember that objects move across several cultures and acquire different meanings and uses which push them away from their original creation. It is not only necessary to look at associations, but also analyse holistically—across wider regions—and culturally—across the meanings and uses of the objects.

The occasional unreliability of epigraphy, combined with the high potential of socio-cultural practice analysis of material culture, specifically pottery, have the power to untangle assumptions about ethnic associations and instead shed light on the consumption practices of these communities. A ceramic approach looks at the whole assemblage as quantified data and moves beyond a simple typological analogy matching, which tends to draw simplistic links to other ethnic analogous forms. Instead, switching the focus from the pottery's style and universal character—such as the standardised *terra sigillata*—to social practice may reveal cues about identity through the use of objects, the evidence for specific choices that stood apart from the general supply systems, and the local replication. Therefore, material culture, in this case pottery, is a sensitive indicator of identity provided that a cautious approach is employed, taking a holistic view across provinces that separated general patterns in supply from selections resulting from distinct social practices.

### Introducing the case-study: Războieni and *ala I Batavorum milliaria*

The present-day site of Războieni belongs to Războieni-Cetate village, situated in the Western Transylvanian Plateau, in the Alba Iulia—Turda pass, at the congregation of three main landforms, namely the Transylvanian Plain, Tarnava Plateau, and Trascau Mountains respectively.<sup>23</sup> Within the Roman context, Războieni was located in Dacia Superior (Apulensis), in close proximity to the militarised western area of Dacia known as Dacia Porolissensis. Infrastructurally, it lied in the proximity of an important road junction close to Salinae, the salt mine from Ocna Mureș,<sup>24</sup> allowing for an easy flow of commodities and a convenient distance from salt resources. Additionally, its position on Dacia's main road network Lederata-Porolissum enabled the unit to reach any point within Dacia quickly, contributing to the protection of the whole central Transylvania.<sup>25</sup> Războieni was essentially located in the proximity of the main cities of Roman Dacia, namely Aiud, Turda, Campia Turzii, Cluj-Napoca, Targu-Mureș, and Alba Iulia.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, this position offered sufficient supply and security for the unit to exercise a suitable protection of the area of nearby important urban centres.

The founding and occupational phases of Războieni are mainly associated with the presence of the auxiliary unit *ala I Batavorum milliaria*. Epigraphic evidence illustrated that *ala I Batavorum milliaria* was the only unit of this type to arrive in Dacia. Its

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<sup>22</sup> Fulford 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Botis 2018, 143.

<sup>25</sup> Bota *et al* 2004, 291.

<sup>26</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 96.

character was attested by the funerary inscription from Sutoru,<sup>27</sup> which despite missing the ethnic name of the unit, mentioned an *ala milliaria*<sup>28</sup> in Dacia that had been identified by E. Birley as the same one cited in the epitaph of the *praefectus of ala I Batavorum milliaria*, C. Iulius Corinthianus from Apulum.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, no other *ala milliaria* existed in Dacia, except for the Batavian unit.

Both epigraphic and historical sources indicate that the Batavian cavalry unit arrived in Dacia during Hadrian's reign. The unit is explicitly mentioned in military diplomas dating to AD 136/138,<sup>30</sup> AD 144,<sup>31</sup> AD 157,<sup>32</sup> AD 158,<sup>33</sup> and AD 179,<sup>34</sup> as part of Dacia Superior's army. However, their actual arrival could have been earlier than the first mention in the AD 136/138 military diploma. The unit could have been brought to Dacia during the conflict with the Iazyges and the re-organisation of Dacia under Hadrian.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Cassius Dio<sup>36</sup> mentioned the belligerent qualities of the Batavian cavalry unit as they swam the *Ister* (Danube) with their arms to counterattack the barbarians (Iazyges) who 'stood in terror of the Romans' employed under Hadrian. This description could infer the crossing of the Danube and the undocumented arrival of the Batavian *ala* in Dacia. However, the unit does not appear among the military diplomas from Dacia Superior dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> of November AD 119,<sup>37</sup> hence this remains an 'unofficial' and uncertain arrival. Therefore, while the epigraphic sources suggest AD 136/138 as the arrival year of *ala I Batavorum miliaria* in Dacia, the historical literary sources open the possibility of an earlier arrival from AD 119.

The main and long-term stationing of *ala I Batavorum miliaria* in Dacia is linked to the fort from Războieni-Cetate. The Batavian presence here has been attested archaeologically and epigraphically, through stamped tiles and a votive monument respectively. Firstly, ceramic building material (*tegulae*) had been recovered from Războieni starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stamped as AL BA ∞.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, G. Teglas<sup>39</sup> observed the presence of several other stamped tiles as AL I B in the personal collection of Istvan Zichy in Războieni. Similarly, Daicoviciu<sup>40</sup> noted the existence of a stamped tile ALB displayed at the college from Ocna Mureș, the closest town to Războieni. The stamps also presented a wide variation of the unit's title, ranging from Al(a)e I Ba(tavorum), Al(ae) Bat(avorum) and Al(ae) Ba(tavorum), to Al(ae)<sup>o</sup>B(atavorum), A(lae) p(rimae) B(atavorum)

<sup>27</sup> *CIL* III 7644.

<sup>28</sup> Petolescu 2002, 61.

<sup>29</sup> Birley 1966, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Petolescu 2002, 120–126.

<sup>31</sup> *CIL* XVI 90.

<sup>32</sup> *CIL* XVI 107.

<sup>33</sup> *CIL* XVI 108.

<sup>34</sup> *RMD* II 123.

<sup>35</sup> Petolescu 2002, 64.

<sup>36</sup> *HR* 69.9.6.

<sup>37</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț – Onofrei 2010, 406.

<sup>38</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Téglás 1911, 504.

<sup>40</sup> Daicoviciu 1932, 62, no. 4.

and Alae I (?).<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the diversity and amount of stamped tegular material from Războieni indicates the almost certain presence of *ala I Batavorum miliaria* at Războieni.

Additionally, epigraphic material also suggested the presence of the Batavian auxiliary cavalry unit at Războieni-Cetate either directly or indirectly. One example is represented by a votive inscription recovered from the site and dedicated to Apollo by Atilius Celsianus, *decurio*,<sup>42</sup> who most likely was a decurion in the auxiliary unit *ala I Batavorum milliaria* at Războieni.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, a less direct indication of Batavian presence at Războieni could be the altar dedicated to Hercules Magusanus by L. M. Hadrianus. Despite the ethnic ambiguity of the dedicator's name, the name of the deity was closely linked to the Batavians as the principal deity in their homeland.<sup>44</sup> Similar cases were found in Britain and Italy, where the same god, Hercules Magusanus, was worshipped by Batavian *auxilia*.<sup>45</sup> This altar indirectly suggested that a Batavian unit was highly likely to have been stationed at Războieni, strengthening the link between *ala I Batavorum miliaria* and the fort at Războieni.

The selection of Războieni and its associated unit, *ala I Batavorum milliaria*, as case-studies represent an attempt to understand the extent to which indigenous or ethnic social practices have been preserved as the unit transferred from one province to another. The journey of the cavalry troop may have started in Nijmegen in the Augustan period, under the lead of the noble Batavian, Chariovalda.<sup>46</sup> This could be tied to Augustus' decision to introduce a regular recruitment system within the *auxilia*, paying special attention to Batavian units which shifted from *ad hoc* levies of local allies to permanent units with regular recruitment from home.<sup>47</sup> At this point, the Batavians supplied the Roman armies with one *ala* and eight cohorts.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, this first *ala Batavorum* from Nijmegen formed under Augustus could have held the roots of the same *ala* which eventually arrived in Dacia during Hadrian. However, this statement cannot be confidently made since in time another *ala* could have been recruited and thus it may have no connection to this first, original one from Nijmegen.

The next mentioning of an *ala Batavorum* comes from Elst in Germania Inferior from AD 98.<sup>49</sup> The correlation of this unit with the Augustan one from Nijmegen had been challenged before. On the one hand, J. Spaul<sup>50</sup> suggested that this *ala* must have been the same *ala* from Nijmegen which was transferred at Elst from AD 69. On the other hand, Willems and van Enckevort<sup>51</sup> disregarded any claims that the *ala Batavorum* from Elst is the same as the one from Nijmegen. Regardless of this disagreement, it is important to mention that the *ala Batavorum* from Elst has kept a strong ethnic character supported by the content of the diploma, which mentions not only the *praefectus* of the *ala Batavorum*,

<sup>41</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 88.

<sup>42</sup> *CIL* III 933.

<sup>43</sup> Mihăilescu-Birliba – Asăndulesei 2019, 33.

<sup>44</sup> Roymans 2004, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 61-62.

<sup>46</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 2.8.11; van Enckevort 2005, 85;

<sup>47</sup> Saddington 2008, 304.

<sup>48</sup> Nicolay 2007, 7.

<sup>49</sup> *RMD* IV 216; Onofrei – Rusu-Bolindeț 2010, 404.

<sup>50</sup> Spaul 1994, 63.

<sup>51</sup> Willems – Van Enckevort 2009, 113.



*T(iti)/f. Vol(ltinia) Rufus*, and the titular, *ex gregale Gaveri f. Batavo*, but also the name of the prefect's wife, [...*Pere]grini f./ uxori eius Bat(avae)*.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the wife's identification as Batavian suggests that the husband himself must have also been Batavian and had returned home after his service discharge.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, should the *ala Batavorum* from Elst be the same as the *ala Batavorum* identified at Nijmegen or the opposite where the two units were separate, one observation may definitely be ascertained. The Batavian units were replenished with their own people at least until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

The final stop of *ala I Batavorum milliaria* before Dacia, was in *Pannonia Superior*, where a military diploma dating to May 3<sup>rd</sup>, AD 112 mentioned the name of an *ala I Batavorum milliaria civium Romanorum pia fidelis*.<sup>54</sup> Popovici and Varga<sup>55</sup> suggested Fuzito as a possible fort of the unit, due to the stamped *tegulae* found there.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, Lorincz<sup>57</sup> stated that the unit was stationed in *Pannonia Superior* at Vindobona, where it replaced *ala I Flavia Augusta Britannica miliaria* which left for the Dacian wars under Trajan, during which the prefect of the unit was decorated twice.<sup>58</sup> This contradiction could in fact indicate that the Batavian *ala* undertook important activities in *Pannonia Superior* by sending garrisons around to help with fort constructions and stationing at more than once place. Ultimately, it is certain that the unit was stationed in the province of *Pannonia Superior* since a Batavian cavalryman recalls in one inscription<sup>59</sup> how his unit and himself crossed the Danube while carrying weapons as part of an intervention.<sup>60</sup>

The extensive journey undertaken by the Batavian *ala* likely resulted in various collateral effects, including local recruitment, ethnic dilution, time away from home, exposure to different cultures, and provincial transfers. As a later destination, Războieni would be expected to display a more diluted Batavian character. This was due to the significant provincial transfers, local recruitment, and foreign contact that had occurred by the time the unit reached Dacia. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, Batavian units that had been transferred abroad demonstrated a weaker link to their homeland concerning everyday drinking and eating practices. This was likely due to recruitment patterns and the consequent dilution of the unit's character. However, epigraphic evidence suggests that a Batavian nucleus may have persisted, which was expressed through the niche celebration of Magusanus cult. As a result, the Batavian image was preserved through more subtle, yet spiritually meaningful practices at Războieni between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. This has provided the basis for further research expansion into pottery, which can capture the general military and ethnic links expressed in daily consumption.

<sup>52</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț – Onofrei 2010, 404.

<sup>53</sup> Roselaar 2016, 152.

<sup>54</sup> *RMD* IV 223.

<sup>55</sup> Popovici – Varga 2010, 61.

<sup>56</sup> *CIL* III 4666, 13434, 11372.

<sup>57</sup> Lorincz 2001, 15–16, no. 2, 4.

<sup>58</sup> Matei-Popescu – Țentea 2006, 62, note 49.

<sup>59</sup> *CIL* III 3776.

<sup>60</sup> Popovici – Varga, 2010, 61.

## Assemblage overview

The assemblage under analysis throughout this paper originates from the *vicus*, specifically from a structure previously identified through geophysical survey. The archaeological context of the pottery is a refuse pit, directly linked and contemporary with the respective structure under scrutiny. While lacking stratigraphy due to its nature, this context sheds light on the broader pottery breadth. Considering that the garrisoning period lasted until just around mid-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD without further consecutive decommissioning of different units over short periods, it was necessary to select contexts which could have offered a snapshot into the whole occupational period. The refuse pit cut several contexts and therefore fulfilled the aim of this article, to obtain maximal information efficiently, that is understanding the diversity of pottery consumption at a site connected to a Bata-vian garrison across the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

The assemblage under consideration dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD and consists of 347 minimum number of rims (MNR), excluding the *terra sigillata* sherds. This assemblage has been contextualised regionally by comparison with other contemporary assemblages from sites in Dacia, namely Napoca, Buciumi, Romita, Porolissum, Potaissa and Rasnov. This approach allowed one to understand the background supply in Dacia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, and identify more easily outliers at Războieni. Additionally, these sites comprised forts, civilian settlements and urban centres, thus creating a comprehensive data set which could offer insights into pottery consumption at sites of different status across Dacia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

Firstly, the fabric pattern results from Războieni *vicus* assemblage showed on average 35.7% reduced greywares, 49.5% oxidised wares, 3.7% fine wares, 6.0% black slipped Pannonian slipped ware, 0.3% *mortaria*, 0.8% *amphorae* and 3.1% *turibula*. These results seem to blend in with the general consumption image depicted at other assemblages in Dacia, namely the high inclusion of oxidised wares. This pattern is typical of most sites in Dacia throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. By the time of Hadrian's reign, the northwestern part of Dacia had already reached a high level of infrastructural and economical connectivity, which enabled the flow of not only physical goods, but also ideas which were promoted at all these sites, creating a mutual consumption milieu between Războieni and the other sites in northwestern Dacia. In time, especially during the Severan period, the infrastructure and the consequent high economic development allowed for the growth of workshops and intensification of commercial exchanges across the province.<sup>61</sup> For example, within the category of stamped pottery in Dacia, between 77% and 92% of the production was fired in an oxidised environment at sites such as Napoca, Gilau, Caseiu, Potaissa and Cristesti.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, oxidised firings appear to have dominated the assemblages in Dacia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

The most prominent ware within the oxidised category was the local *terra sigillata*. Its presence within the *vicus* assemblage from Războieni represents a mutual trait of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD assemblages in Dacia. As its name indicates, this ware tends to imitate morphologically and/or aesthetically the original *terra sigillata*. Its firing is either oxidised or reduced and the outside has either a red or a black coat respectively (**Fig. 1**).

<sup>61</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț 2016, 379.

<sup>62</sup> Lăzărescu – Sido 2018, 37.



**Fig. 1.** Illustrations of red-slipped and black-slipped local sigillata from Războieni vicus  
(photo: author)

The increased consumption of these fabrics is most likely an effect of the pottery production development in central and northwestern Dacia in this period. Războieni, along with other eleven sites from Dacia have been identified as official producers of local *sigillata* products.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, it is expected that most assemblages from this area of Dacia in this particular period will contain such local products.

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<sup>63</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț 2014, 15.

It is likely that these local *sigillata* workshops did not operate individually, but instead communicated among each other and exchanged moulds and other utensils. As already mentioned, the infrastructure of Dacia developed continuously, resulting in road segments across all forts and urban centres from central and north-western Dacia. This enabled the flow of goods and information, supporting a mutual ceramic repertoire across military and civilian centres. For example, the emergence and consolidation of the local *sigillata* workshop from Războieni could have been enhanced by the already existent and well-established pottery workshop from Micăsasa. This argument is supported by one specific mould from Războieni, decorated with 'Minerva in *aedicula*' motive specific to Micăsasa workshop, which was already well-established before Războieni even emerged as a centre. Therefore, this analogy could designate two possibilities: either the workshop from Micăsasa lent their moulds to the new center from Războieni to help it start its production, or potters from Micăsasa relocated to Războieni where they opened a branch of their main workshop.<sup>64</sup> Regardless, this supports the communication between centres and its effect on creating a mutual fabric consumption seen in the local *sigillata* patterns at military and civilian sites.

Generally, jars and dishes/bowls are the two most popular forms at Războieni. However, the balance visibly inclines towards tablewares, with dishes and bowls amounting at Războieni almost double the quantity of jars. The bowls tended to pertain to the *sigillata* repertoire imitations, which is expected through the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. During the post-Hadrianic, Antonine, and especially Severan periods, *sigillata* imitations were not only consumed, but also produced extensively in northwest and central Dacia.<sup>65</sup> This phenomenon took over the other Danubian provinces: the production and export activity of the western *terra sigillata* workshops decreased, while the local workshops intensified their activity and started to produce many popular wares in the Roman world, including *terra sigillata*.<sup>66</sup>

This connectivity becomes obvious when zooming into the types from Războieni and other surrounding sites in Dacia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. The types are similar across the sites, showing indeed the consumption of similar pottery styles (**Figs. 2, 3**). These similarities highlight one aspect regarding the pottery consumption at Războieni: in terms of style, Războieni seems to have been part of a mutual milieu with the other forts and urban centres. These places were all connected by roads: the imperial segments Lederata-Napoca, which in Hadrian's times got extended to Dacia Porolissensis, where Romita and Buciumi were located.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, these sites were interconnected and allowed for the flow of ideas, information and goods which ultimately resulted in similar form types consumed all over Dacia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

In fact, this form-fabric similarity across sites extended beyond the Dacian borders in the neighbouring province, Pannonia. This province also produced local *sigillata*. Among its variations was the so-called Pannonian Slipped Ware, which essentially was an imitation of *terra sigillata*, made in reduced and black-slipped fabric. This class imitated a wide range of *terra sigillata* forms, and from AD 130s-140s onwards, contemporary

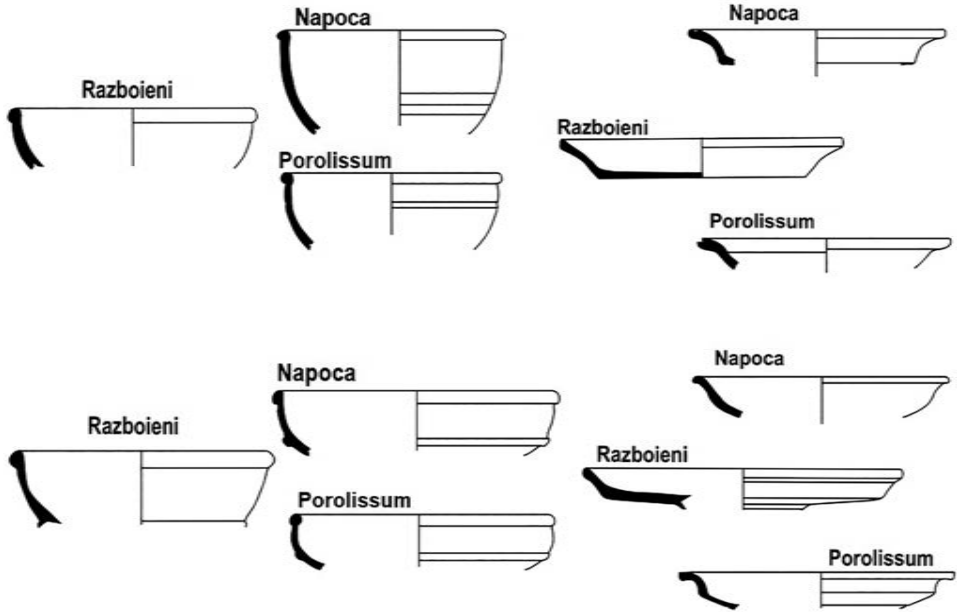
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<sup>64</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț – Onofrei 2010, 414.

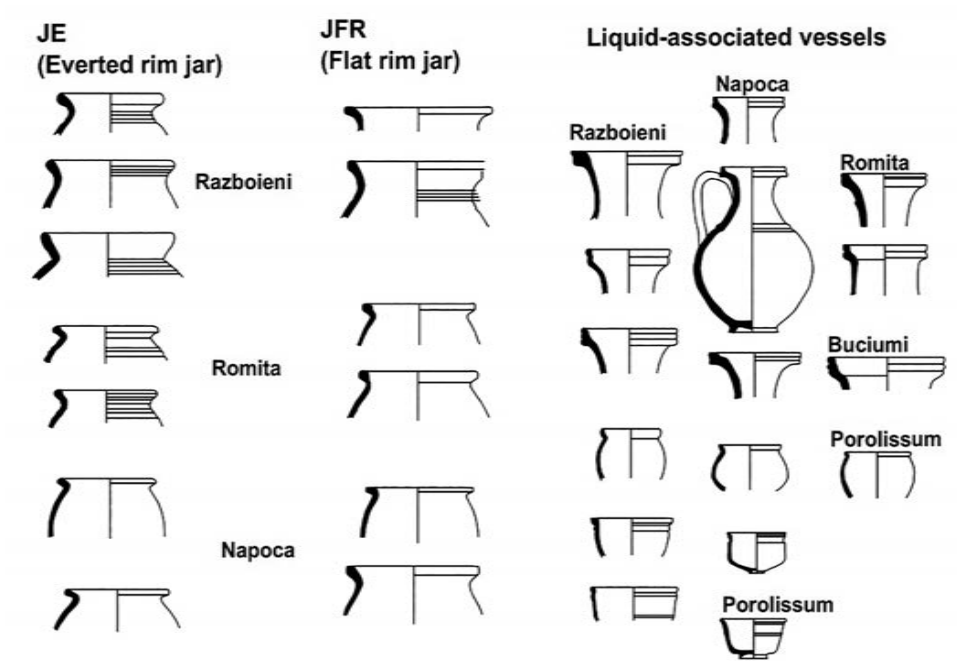
<sup>65</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț 2014, 170.

<sup>66</sup> Rusu-Bolindeț 2016, 384.

<sup>67</sup> Petolescu 2002, 53–54.



**Fig. 2.** Typological analogies across Dacia for the bowls and dishes at Războieni (analogies after Rusu-Bolindeț 2007; Lăzărescu – Sido 2018)



**Fig. 3.** Typological analogies across Dacia for the jars, drinking and pouring vessels at Războieni (analogies after Matei – Bajusz 1997; Rusu-Bolindeț 2007; Lăzărescu – Sido 2018; Petruț 2018)

with the Războieni assemblage, the Dr. 37 bowl became the predominant imitation at several sites in Pannonia such as Mursa, Cibalae, Aquincum and Siscia.<sup>68</sup> The same black-slipped reduced ware was found at Războieni and elsewhere in Dacia, known traditionally as ‘terra nigra imitation’. However, this was in fact a *terra sigillata* imitation which did not resume to Dacia, but spread out as a Danubian phenomenon. Therefore, the pottery consumption seen at Războieni and northwestern Dacia overall appears to reflect wider fashions which concomitantly unveiled in neighbouring provinces such as Pannonia and created parallel consumption styles regarding local *sigillata*.

## Facepots

One vessel that stands out from the whole repertoire recovered from Războieni is known as the facepot. These vessels had a stylized face applied to them and were predominantly found on military sites. The aesthetic aspect of the facepot (Pot 1) found at Războieni may provide valuable clues regarding its genealogy. The phallic decorations on the vessel suggest a Rhenish origin, similar to the initial origin of the unit associated with this site at the time, *ala I Batavorum milliaria*. Pot 1, found in the vicus context, has been well-preserved and exhibits three phallic representations as decorations.<sup>69</sup> This feature is particularly important as it is not only absent on any other facepots from Dacia but also points towards a specific tradition from the Rhineland. Braithwaite<sup>70</sup> has confirmed that these phallic decorations were almost entirely limited to the Rhineland in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Additionally, the fabric of the vessel suggests that it is an import and was not made locally at the site, despite the workshop present at Războieni.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the initial aesthetic assessment of the facepot from Războieni suggests a Rhenish origin, possibly brought by the Batavian *ala* as an import upon its arrival.

A comprehensive analysis of the distribution of phallus-decorated face pots across different regions reveals that these vessels are only found outside the Rhineland in two locations, namely Britain and Moesia, specifically at Gloucester-Kingsholm and Novae, respectively.<sup>72</sup> In both of these locations, the presence of recently arrived Gallic units from the Rhineland is evident and likely influenced the local material culture.<sup>73</sup> The British fragment, which is associated with a funerary context, dates back to AD 50-67 and its fabric appears to be local. Its contemporary date with the Rhineland examples from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD suggests that the face pot in the British cemetery was likely an attempt to replicate a familiar style to the newly arrived Gallic unit stationed abroad. In contrast, the example from Novae dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD and is removed chronologically from the original style. This is evident from its features, such as the eye, which bears less resemblance to the Rhenish examples.<sup>74</sup> However, the phallic decoration on this vessel is

<sup>68</sup> Leleković 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Bounegru – Varga 2019, 224.

<sup>70</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 380.

<sup>71</sup> Bounegru – Varga 2019, 222.

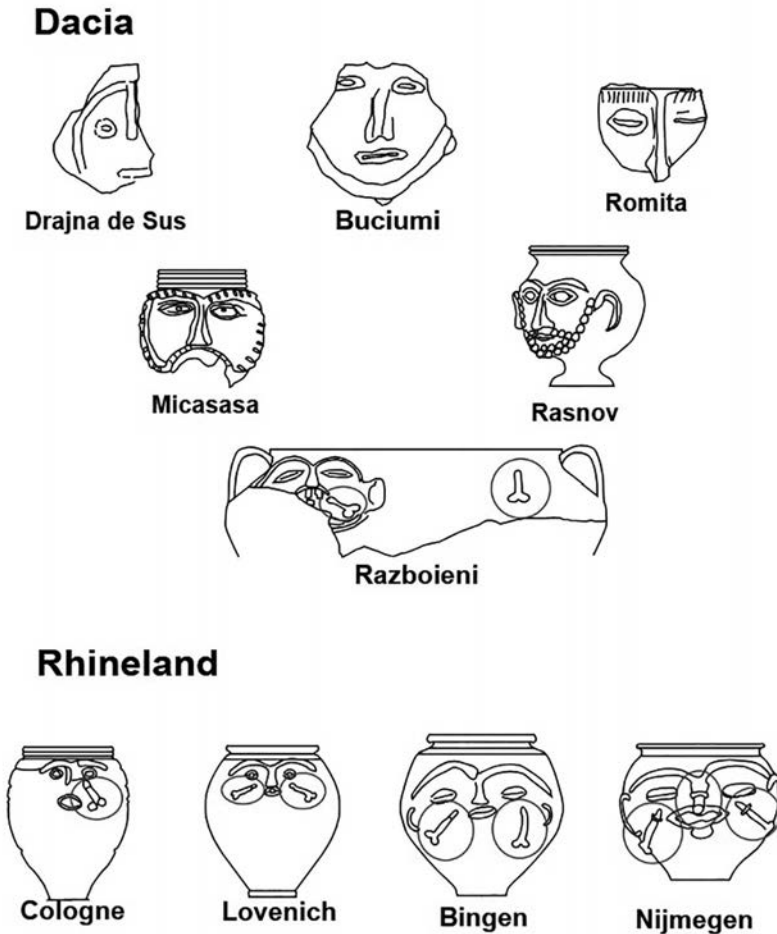
<sup>72</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 380.

<sup>73</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 380.

<sup>74</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 223.

similar to those found on the face jars from the Rhineland and is unique to the Danubian region. This example may represent the intentional preservation of an ongoing tradition among the Gallic units stationed away from their homeland. When compared to these two examples, the phallic-decorated face pot found at Războieni appears to be another isolated instance of such consumption outside the Rhineland, which is linked with the presence of a Gallic unit, specifically the Batavian *ala*. Hence, it is likely that Pot 1 from the Războieni vicus is an import brought by the unit upon its arrival, given the limited consumption of phallic face pots outside the Rhineland and their association with Gallic units when found elsewhere in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

The face pot discovered at Războieni stands out not only in comparison to other provinces but also within its regional context. The aesthetic features of the Pot 1 make it unique in the Dacian context. The comparison of face pots from Dacia and the Rhineland in **Fig. 4** shows that Pot 1 has more similarity with the Rhenish examples from the



**Fig. 4.** Facepots from Dacia and Războieni (after Braithwaite, 2007; Bounegru – Varga 2019)

military sites at Nijmegen, Bingen, Lovenich, and Cologne, which feature a phallic decoration. Conversely, no other Dacian example with such decoration has been found to date. Therefore, while face pots were generally an ordinary find across Dacia, those decorated with a phallus were rare outside the Rhineland, indicating that Pot 1 from Războieni is likely linked to an ongoing Rhenish tradition carried by the Batavian cavalry unit during its journey across the Empire until its arrival at Războieni.

## Conclusions

Based on the evidence highlighted above, it appears that material culture, specifically pottery, may indeed be a useful tool in understanding the behaviour of auxiliaries upon their transfer abroad. The social practices of pottery regarding local production, replication, and imports revealed important aspects related to the lifestyle, choices and consumption of the auxiliary units. It appears that in broad lines, identities of these units took various shapes, depending on the regional supply systems, previous stations of the unit, local recruitment and general supply lines in the province overall. Războieni fits well into its regional background regarding pottery fabric, form and type consumption.

Generally, the regional military supply systems overwhelmed any idiosyncracies in pottery use, cumbering any attempt to identify strong expressions of ethnicity. However, Războieni revealed traces of pottery styles rooted in *civitas Batavorum* and Northern Gaul, particularly the face pots. Their presence in the assemblage showed that attempts of expressing appurtenance to an ethnic group or a specific area shifted from everyday consumption of common ware to the more religious sphere to which the facepot may have belonged. While this pot represents insufficient evidence to claim a strong ethnic character of material culture consumption, nonetheless it defines the future directions for research regarding identity studies which could target these examples now identified as outstanding in their regional context.

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