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Late Hellenistic Red Slip Ware in Olbia

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Late Hellenistic red slip ware was not fixed in Olbia earlier. As a rule preservation of Late Hellenistic layers is bad, they were destroyed later. Besides it was the time of decline in Olbia and till now it is one of the 'dark' periods in its history.

This work is the first step in investigation of this group of ceramics in Olbia. It became possible only thanks to works on sector NGS. Red slip ware is not numerous on this sector and in the whole is not connected with the main period of its existence – Hellenistic one. But in any case there is the group of early red slip ware which could be dated by the 2nd – the first half of the 1st centuries AD. Some of them were found in closed contexts and that gave an opportunity to specify their dating. Separate fragments of Asia Minor and Pontic productions have no analogies in published materials.

For example, plates of type 1 are similar on their form only to African red slip ware (Enciclopedia, I, 1985, tav. XLII, 3, 4, 5, Ceramica Africana, Tipo Hayes 104 A, B – 500 – 600 AD, p. 94-95). But such dating is impossible for Olbia, life here did not exist later the 4th century AD. And clay and covering of these plates is different from African production and testify to their production in Asia Minor. Probably, they were connected with the beginning of red slip ware in some center of Asia Minor at least at the end of the 2nd century AD. It is confirmed by the fact, that one of such fragments was found in Context 331 of sector NGS. This type of plates was found in Olbia for the first time, it is absent in the complexes or layers of later periods.

Some groups of vessels from sector NGS in Olbia could be dated only by Late Hellenistic period (bowls of type 1, variant 3; plates of type 1, 2; skyphoi; kraters; beakers; saltcellars), others continued to exist later, but first appeared in Hellenistic period (jugs of type 1, type 4; most of bowls; cups of type 1; plates of type 2, 3, 4).