

Mapping Ottoman Pottery in the Balkans

A case study from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna
(15th-19th century)



Figure on Cover: 16th-century Iznik style dish (Atasoy and Raby 1994, 140).

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Introduction

The beginning of the Ottoman Empire can be traced back to the 13th century. This world imperial system lasted until 1923, when Sultan Mehmed VI was expelled and the modern state of Turkey was created (Özoğlu 2011, 7). This makes the Ottoman Empire the second longest lasting empire in the Mediterranean, after the Byzantine Empire. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and with large expansions in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman Empire reached its peak, stretching from the Balkans in the north, to the Arabian peninsula and North Africa in the south (Fig.1). Within this extensive territory, the Ottomans also encompassed a large number of various ethnical and religious groups. One would expect a lot of archaeological research taking place on such a long-lived period. However, from the archaeological perspective, the Ottoman Empire can hardly be noticed (Baram and Carroll 2000, 3).

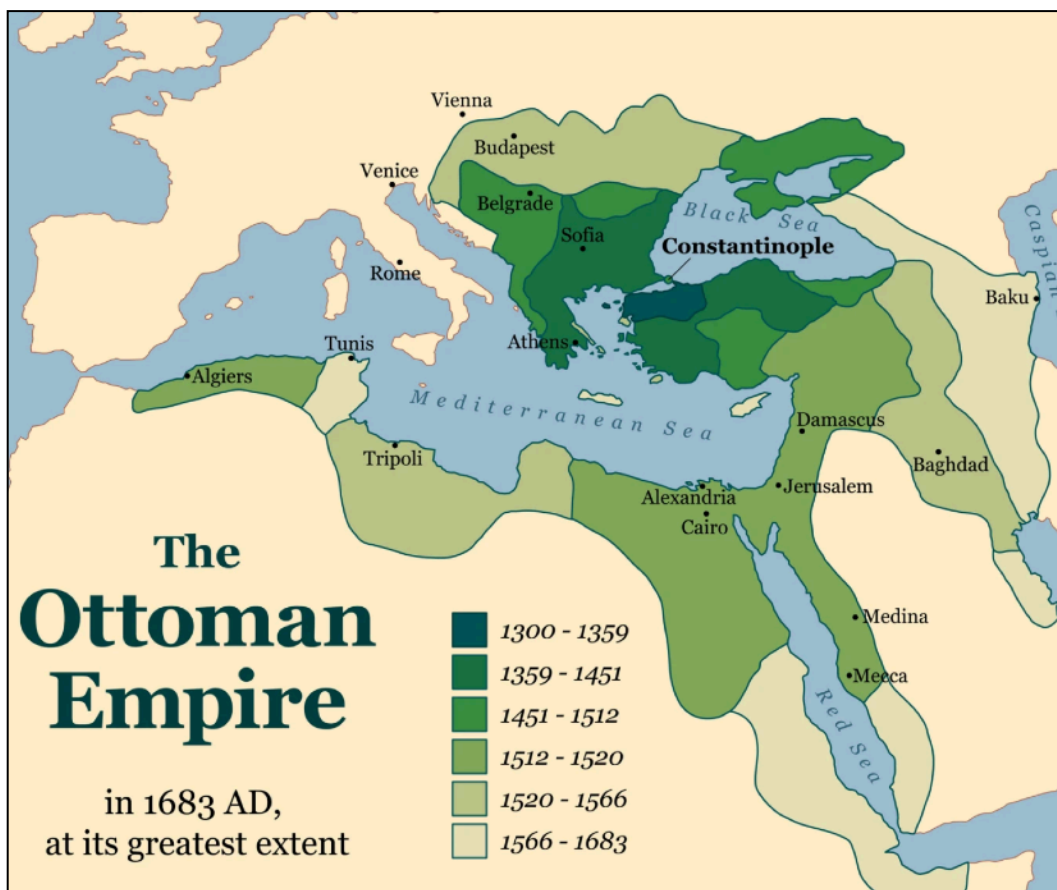


Figure 1: The Ottoman Empire at its greatest extent in 1683 (Source: www.history.com).

Although historians have done a very extensive research of the Ottoman period, they do tend to ignore material culture and exclusively use only the available written sources like tax registers, itineraries, treaties and etc. (Faroqhi 2016, 1). Another issue is that both the Muslim and non-Muslim groups of the former Ottoman Empire have destroyed a lot of the material culture and monuments that existed. The younger generations usually get rid of family objects that they do not have use. Even the museums

in Turkey only recently started to pay attention to artefacts that were not connected to the Ottoman sultans and the elites (Faroqhi 2016, 2). Still, there is not much interest in what is left of the Ottoman material culture.

There are a few reasons for the unpopularity of the Ottomans among archaeologists, most of which derive from the long period of negative Western perception (Baram and Carroll 2000, 5). In the 16th century, Europeans considered the Ottoman Empire as the perfect example of the centralised state, which they were desperately trying to achieve (Inalcik 1996, 20). Both the Ottoman Empire and China remained world powers for a long time but during the mid 18th-19th century, the rapid European industrial progress caught the Ottomans unprepared, which turned the tables. The perceived economic 'decay' of the empire caused for the derogatory attitude of the Western countries (Brown 1996, 5). It was in that period when the empire was labeled by the European powers as 'The sick man of Europe' (Temperley 1936, 272). Since modern history has been significantly shaped by the Western perspective, even two centuries later, this label still remains, because the Ottoman achievements have mostly been erased from historical memory and the empire is demoted to a symbol of a failed system (Brown 1996, 13).

After the disintegration of the empire in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th century, new nation-states started to emerge. In order to establish their own unique national identities and to differentiate themselves from the 'alien' Ottoman rule, these new nation-states aimed to disregard their common Ottoman past (Baram and Carroll 2000, 7). Instead, together with the arising nationalism, it was, and to a large extent still is, a common practice in the Balkans to search for the pre-Ottoman 'indigenous' past. The idea of this distant romanticised period is deeply-rooted in the Western tradition. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was a common practice to look for the Biblical or the Ancient past in the Ottoman lands as any relatively modern material was considered irrelevant and often disregarded (Baram and Carroll 2000, 5).

Almost no countries except Turkey claim their heritage from the Ottoman Empire. The nationalistic orientations among both Christian and Muslim populations in the Balkans prevent them from doing so. In addition, the Arabs regard the Ottoman period as a period of foreign invasion. The Ottomans are a troublesome heritage, often connected with economic and cultural decay (Baram and Carroll 2000, 5). Even Turkey, which is considered by many to be the sole successor of the Ottomans, has conflicting views of their not-so-distant past. Some Turks regard it as a period of underdevelopment, while others look at it with great nostalgia of the lost glorious times (Brown 1996, 5). Since archaeology is a tool that can be used for modifying the national identities of groups of people, it should be carefully used. We need a more balanced narrative of the Ottoman legacy today. Turkey cannot be seen as the only successor of this multiethnic empire. The countries rejecting their Ottoman past are nevertheless still linked to it (Brown 1996, 6).

In addition to political and historical issues, there is also another reason for the slow development of Ottoman archaeology - the economic situation of the countries which occupy the former territories of the empire (Guinova 2005a, 269). Especially in the Balkans, the region which will mostly be discussed in this paper, archaeological excavations rarely have a big budget. Thus, many of the excavations are done quickly and much of the excavated material is often ignored.

Even though the development of Ottoman archaeology can be traced back to the second half of the 18th century (Vroom 2017, 901), it still has a long way to go before it reaches the same level of research as most other archaeological periods (Guinova 2005a, 268). At first, a lot of the research was focused on the urban infrastructure of big settlements, such as mosques, markets, public bathhouses, monuments, etc. It was only in the last few decades when focus had shifted towards the excavation of smaller Ottoman towns and villages, where the material culture was taken into account (Vroom 2017, 902).

Research Questions

In this research, the published excavated ceramics from the Ottoman period from three cities are going to be discussed: Belgrade in Serbia, Sofia and Varna in Bulgaria. These cities were all demographically, geographically and politically very different from each other. Belgrade was an important military city on the border with the Habsburg Monarchy (Popović and Bikić 2004, 7). Sofia was a major Ottoman inland trade centre (Ishirkov 1912, 54), and Varna was one of the biggest Ottoman ports on the Black Sea (Pletnirov 2005b, 106). Whenever possible, the data on the ceramics will be compared with the available historical sources of trade and migration.

The research question and subquestions that I try to answer in this paper are the following:

- Belgrade, Sofia and Varna were demographically and politically very different from each other during the Ottoman era. Can these differences be traced by archaeology, based on the pottery distribution?
- Which pottery types and decorations of the Ottoman period are present in the three cities?
- How many vessels of each pottery type have been published from excavations in each city?
- How does the archeological record compare with historical sources of the period?

Artefacts have the ability to tell us stories which written sources never mention (Faroqhi 2016, 2). By answering these questions the goal is to gain more insight into economic processes in the Ottoman Empire. Pottery is an extremely good proxy for trade, and can be used for understanding social hierarchies as well.

An important difference should be made between the terms ‘Ottoman period archaeology’ and ‘Ottoman archaeology’. The former is fairly exclusive and regionally limited, because it concerns only the people in a given area. Ottoman archaeology, on the other hand, is inclusive and involves the economic and political system of the empire, providing a background for the mechanisms that take place (Baram and Carroll 2000, 12). Exactly this background and these mechanisms are going to be included in the research in this thesis. The ceramics will not be treated as static objects, but more like active agents in the formation of imperial processes.

In the next chapter, a short background of the current available information on the demographic situation in Belgrade, Sofia and Varna during the Ottoman period will be given. Afterwards, the most common pottery imports and luxury ceramics will be introduced, as well as locally produced pottery. This information will be used in the discussion, where it will be connected with the archaeological results from the research. Chapter 3 concerns the methodology of the pottery analysis. The pottery database which was created for this research will be explained. Further, any limitations of the publications which were used to collect the pottery data will be presented. The obtained results will be presented in Chapter 4 and a discussion will follow in Chapter 5, in which I try to explain the results with the help of historical information. I will finish the thesis with a conclusion, which summaries the results and answers the research questions.

Background

A simplified definition of an empire would be that it is a political unit which encompasses multiple populations differing in ethnicity and religion (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 2). It maintains a strict hierarchy with one political figure on top - in the case of the Ottomans that is the sultan. Unlike the nation-state, which aims to homogenise those inside its borders, the empire tends to acknowledge the differences of the people it rules and takes advantage of these differences to control them more efficiently (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 8). Usually, local elites are incorporated in the imperial system. The Ottomans involved different populations in their state organisation by taking Christian boys from the rural provinces away from their families and training them to become either high administrators or Janissaries - Europe's first modern standing army (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 14). This was known as *devshirme* or 'blood tax', and it was a common practice until the early 18th century, when it was abolished (Brown 1996, 14).

There was another way in which the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire was able to rise in the social ranks. Only Muslim citizens were allowed to become tax farmers, which were officials, responsible for collecting taxes from areas of the empire. They were paid with a portion of the collected taxes. However, since they usually lived in Istanbul or somewhere away from the province they have been given, they often employed locals who collected the taxes for them. In areas like the Balkans, where Christians were the majority, these locals were often Christian and sometimes also Jewish (Faroqhi 2016, 100). Some of these local notables were able to accumulate a lot of wealth.

The Ottomans policy was relatively tolerant towards Christians and Jews. By maintaining their religious systems and local institutions (Brown 1996, 24), they managed to exercise control over these ethnically different populations. The non-Turkish and non-Muslim ethnic groups of the empire were ensured some level of independence with the so-called *millet* system. *Millet* was an independent court which concerned the 'personal law' of the different ethnicities. These ethnicities were bound to a certain *millet* according to their religion (Baram and Carroll 2000, 6). Orthodox Christians were all under one *millet*, despite their ethnic differences. The Greeks had hegemony over the Orthodox Christian *millet* and for that reason the rest of the Balkan ethnicities, except the Serbs, were, to a large extent, 'Hellenised' over time (Stoianovich 1960, 310). Greek became not only the language of their culture, but also of their business activities. Slavic, Vlach and Albanian merchants often called themselves Greek, in order to obtain a higher social status. This was especially common in the 17th-18th century (Stoianovich 1960, 281).

Although the *millets* provided independence for the non-Muslim subjects of the empire, Christians and Jews were still restricted in many ways, since the Ottoman Empire was, after all, an Islamic state. This led to some non-Muslims converting to Islam in order to rise in the social hierarchy. In addition, they paid less taxes and obtained civil rights

they would not have otherwise. In areas like Bosnia and parts of Crete, a large part of the population converted right after the arrival of the Ottomans. Yet, in Albania, Islam started spreading around two hundred years after the Ottoman conquest (Faroghi 2016, 107). It is still not entirely certain why this phenomenon occurred. What is certain, however, is that the religious and cultural groups did not live in isolation from one another. There was constant cultural exchange between both Muslim and non-Muslim populations (Baram and Carroll 2000, 6).

The Case Studies

In this section, a short background on the history of Belgrade, Sofia and Varna (Fig.2) during the Ottoman period will be given. In addition, any population changes will be noted. This information will be used to provide context for the pottery data presented in the next chapter.



Figure 2: The approximate location of Belgrade, Sofia and Varna within the borders of the late 17th-century Ottoman Empire (after www.d-maps.com).

Belgrade

Located on the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube (Fig.3), Belgrade has always been of strategic importance. For this reason, the settlement was an important frontier garrison and it has often been the scene of conflicts. Belgrade has changed hands repeatedly over the course of history, but at the beginning of the 15th century, it became the capital of the Serbian kingdom. It was then fortified to be used as a stronghold against the Ottoman invasion (Popović 2004, 7).

In August 1521 the Ottoman forces led by the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent managed to conquer the fortress of Belgrade (Bikić 2003, 9). Soon afterwards, the city became the centre of the *Smederevo sanjak*. A *sanjak* was an Ottoman administrative unit

which belonged to a bigger province. In this case that was the *Rumelia eyalet* which spread over a vast area of the Balkans. (Bikić 2003, 9). During the Ottoman rule Belgrade maintained its role as a military stronghold. Its main function was to serve as a starting point of the military campaigns against the Habsburg Monarchy. In 1688, however, Belgrade was taken by the Habsburg armies, which controlled the city until 1690 when the Ottomans managed to reconquer it (Bikić 2003, 10). The Habsburg Empire managed to occupy the city two more times in the 18th century - from 1717 until 1739, and from 1789 until 1791. After two Serbian uprisings against the Ottoman rule in the 19th century, Belgrade and Serbia managed to gain autonomy from the empire in 1830 (Cox 2002, 42).



Figure 3: Belgrade Fortress (Kalemegdan) on the confluence of Sava and Danube today (Source: www.tripandtravelblog.com).

As a result of the continuous war between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, the population of Belgrade and the surrounding cities significantly declined. At the beginning of the wars more than 50,000 people, the majority of which were Muslim, lived in Belgrade. At the beginning of the 19th century, however, Belgrade had only 25,000 inhabitants (Stoianovich 1960, 249). Many of the big cities in the western Balkans were affected by the continuous wars and the Turkish urban population decreased. The cities slowly became more Slav, Vlach, Albanian and Greek. At the end of 18th century, many Bosnian Muslims settled in western Serbia and Belgrade. During the Serbian rebellion for independence in the early 19th century, these Muslims were either converted or expelled and the Christian element in Belgrade took over again (Stoianovich 1960, 252-253).

Sofia

Surrounded by three mountain ranges, Sofia is located in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula (Fig.4). Shortly before the fall of the Second Bulgarian Empire in 1396, the city was conquered by the Ottomans. Afterwards, in 1530, Sofia became the main city in the *Rumelia eyalet*. It held this position until 1836 when the council of provincial governors - *beylerbeys* was moved to the city of Bitola in modern North Macedonia (Ishirkov 1912, 1-2). In the beginning, the majority of Sofia's population was Bulgarian. However, during the 16th century Turkish settlers migrated to the city, becoming the dominant ethnicity. During the 16th century, Sofia also welcomed a lot of Jewish migrants coming from the Iberian peninsula and many merchant families from Dubrovnik (Ishirkov 1912, 45). Travellers that visited Sofia in the 17th century do not fail to mention the diversity of its population (Ishirkov 1912, 37). Even if they all give different numbers for the total population of the city, their narratives agree that the Turkish minority was most numerous, followed by Bulgarians and Jews. Other ethnicities, such as Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, Persians and Romani were also often mentioned (Ishirkov 1912, 38).



Figure 4: A view of Vitosha mountain from the centre of Sofia (Source: www.commonswikimedia.org).

Similar to Belgrade, Sofia's citizens suffered from the wars with Russia and the Habsburg Empire. As a result of this, and probably because of the effects of the plague and the practices of polygamy and abortion, the Turkish population in the city seriously declined in the 17th century. This encouraged the rural population around Sofia, mostly Slavs and Albanians, to settle in the big city (Stoianovich 1960, 249-250). In 1699, the sultan Mehmed IV issued a *firman* (Ishirkov 1912, 42) which allowed Bulgarians to settle in the Turkish neighbourhood of Sofia, while at the same time forbidding Jews and Turks from living in the Bulgarian neighbourhood. Eventually, Sofia became less Turkish and

after the migration of Jewish people to the West in the 18th century, Bulgarians started to dominate the city (Stoianovich 1960, 244).

After the Russo-Turkish war in 1878 and the creation of the Principality of Bulgaria, the population of Sofia did not exceed 12,000 people of which 56% Bulgarians, 30% Jews and only 7% Turks and 7% Romani (Kiradzhiev 2006)

Varna

Varna, located on the Black Sea coast (Fig.5), has been an important port city since its establishment as a Greek colony in 6th century BC under the name Odesos. Even during the periods when the city has been inside the borders of the Bulgarian Empire, Varna has always been closely connected to the Mediterranean culture and trade. The port city became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1399. The first evidence we have of Varna's demographics during the Ottoman period is a *firman* from 1527, in which it becomes clear that the city was a *hass* of the sultan Selim I (Pletniov 2004, 12) - meaning that the sultan received its revenue directly. During that time, Varna had ten Christian neighbourhoods and only one Muslim district (Pletniov 2005b). The ethnicity of the Christian neighbourhoods is not specified but a Greek majority cannot be ruled out, since Greek merchants were known to control a significant part of the Black Sea coast. It was only in the second half of the 17th century, when the Muslim population took over with a lot of migrants from Anatolia settling in the region (Pletniov 2005b). No other major demographic changes are recorded until the late 19th century.

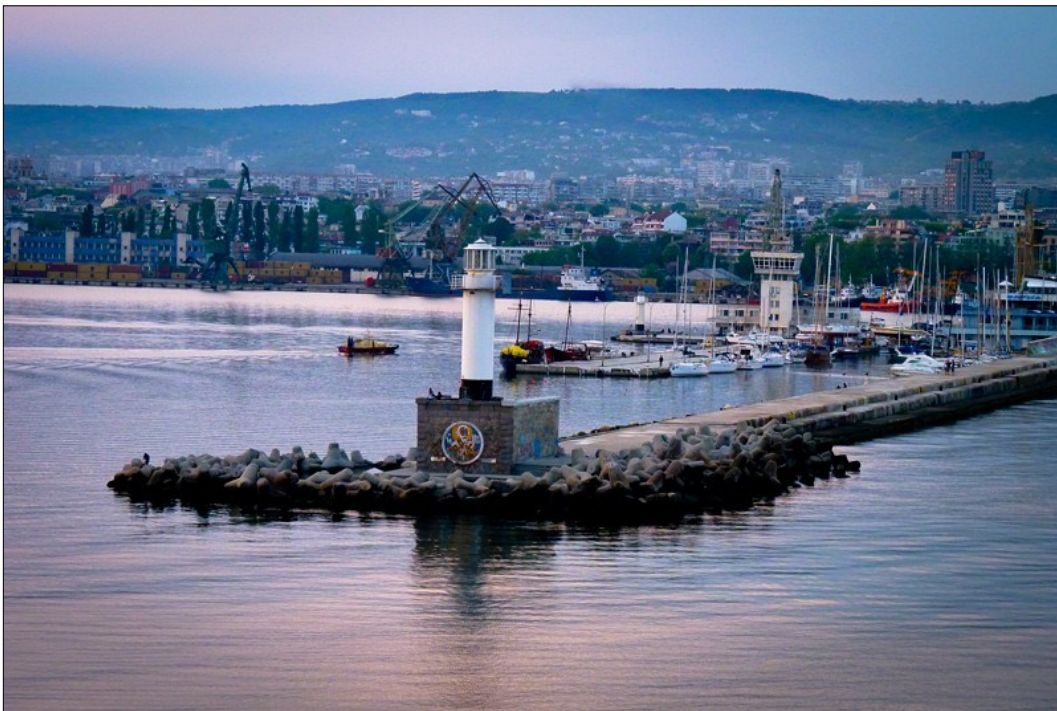


Figure 5: The port of Varna, with the Greek Neighbourhood in the background (Source: www.visit.varna.bg).

The Black Sea was often referred to as the ‘Ottoman lake’ since from the mid 16th century to the late 18th century it was completely cut off for European ships. With the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, Russian ships were permitted to pass through the Black Sea and from 1783 onwards, Russian merchants could also sell their goods to any Ottoman buyer (Stoianovich 1960, 240; 288). One of the primary tasks of Varna and the nearby ports was to load the grain that came from Dobrudzha, the Danube plain between modern Romania and Bulgaria, on ships that transported it to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire (Çelik, 2010, 21).

The first census of the population of the Principality of Bulgaria in 1880 was carried out a year after Varna joined the newly formed state. The city then had merely 27% Bulgarians (Ishirkov 1929, 11). The majority of the population was Turkish and Greek, followed by Jews, Russians, Tatars, Gagauzes, Armenians and others (Ishirkov 1929, 12).

Luxury Pottery and Imports in the Ottoman Empire

Luxurious high-quality pottery was produced exclusively for the higher classes of society. While many types of luxury ceramics were produced in the Ottoman Empire, other types were imported from abroad. Most of these imported vessels came from Italy, Central and Western Europe and China. In this section, a short background will be given on the most common luxury ceramics in the Ottoman Empire. This information will be used in the discussion, where the quantity and origins of the luxury pottery in the dataset will be analysed. With this, I try to reconstruct the state of the higher society in each city, as well as any visible trade links.

Ottoman wares: Miletus, Iznik, Kütahya and Çanakkale

Miletus ware was widely distributed in Anatolia and the Aegean during the 14th-15th century. Its production centres, such as Miletus, Ephesus, Iznik and Kütahya, were mostly located in western Turkey. Often the decorations imitated Chinese production, among which floral and geometric designs painted with blue or black on white or turquoise blue background (Vroom 2005, 157).

Chronologically, Miletus ware was followed by Iznik Ware (Fig.6) - probably one of the most famous Ottoman ceramics. It was manufactured from the 15th until the 17th century in the town of Iznik (Vroom 2005, 159), and its production soon became fully controlled by the state. This colourful tableware, which was also often imitating Chinese wares (Denny 1974, 76), and wall tiles were especially famous in the Topkapı Palace. Iznik ware, however, was not exclusively produced for the daily use of the Ottoman court. These ceramics were quite common among the urban elites and were found not only within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, but also in the West (Vroom 2017, 908).

After the decline of Iznik during the 17th-18th century a new centre in western Turkey - Kütahya, took over as the main manufacturer of Ottoman ceramics. Until then, the ceramics produced at Kütahya did not significantly differ from the ones made in Iznik. The Kütahya centre played a secondary role and helped the potters from Iznik when it was necessary (Vroom 2017, 908). This new type of glazed tableware was again influenced by the Chinese porcelain and it was often decorated with geometrical, floral or figural designs painted in various colours - blue, green, red purple and yellow (Vroom 2017, 910). It was stored in large quantities in the Topkapı Palace for everyday use, in the same way as Iznik Ware.

During the same period as the production of Kütahya ware, another production centre in western Turkey became famous, Çanakkale, which continued to be active up until the late 19th century. The vessels were covered with white slip layer and grey or creamish glaze. The decorations, painted in black-purple or dark-brown colour, varied from abstract floral and faunal motives to ships, kiosks and mosques (Vroom 2005, 181). Although both Kütahya Ware and Çanakkale Ware were very popular during their time, they never managed to rise to the level of prestige of the Iznik ceramics (Carroll 2000, 174).



Figure 6: Various Ottoman wares found at Varna: a) Kütahya plate 18th century; b) Çanakkale plate 18th-19th century; c) Iznik bowl 16th-17th century; d) Iznik ewer 17th century (after Pletniiov 2002).

Chinese porcelain

Up to the 18th century, the majority of porcelain was produced in East Asia, and mainly China. Blue-and-White Chinese porcelain (Fig.7) started to be imported to Europe in large quantities in the 16th century. The various decorations of the vessels, animals, plant motifs or mythical scenes, were painted in cobalt blue (Vroom 2009, 163). Chinese porcelain coffee cups were especially famous among the Ottoman and European elites. Since coffee was not popular in China before the 20th century, it is very likely that these coffee cups were made especially for export (Faroqhi 2016, 55). Except for Iznik and Kutahya wares, the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul also stored large quantities of Chinese porcelain. These Eastern imports were considered more luxurious than the Iznik wares and they were kept in special storerooms in the Treasury of the palace (Atasoy and Raby 1994, 14). It is possible that this large import of Chinese cups, contributed to the decline of Iznik ware in the 17th century (Atasoy and Raby 1994, 285).



Figure 7: Two 18th-century Chinese porcelain cups from the Regional History Museum of Sofia, decorated with flower motifs (after Guinova 2012).

Haban pottery

From the 16th century onwards, a new type of luxurious pottery, Haban pottery (Fig.8), started to be produced in Central Europe. The origins of the name *Haban* can be traced to the German term *Haushaben*, which was used to refer to the Anabaptist communities living in the region (Bikić 2012a, 206). The Anabaptists produced a very specific tin-glazed earthenware, which later became known as Haban pottery. Heavily influenced by the Italian Renaissance arts, Haban pottery was a high-quality product which was popular with the nobility of Central Europe, and especially the Hungarian elite who were the biggest consumers of Haban ceramics (Bikić 2012a, 207).



Figure 8: Various Haban vessels from Belgrade: a, b) Apothecary vessels 17th century; c) Blue and white pottery 17th-18th centuries (after Bikić 2012a, 211-213).

Later European imitations of Chinese porcelain and Iznik wares

The absence of industrialism in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th century forced the empire into becoming a supplier of raw materials for Europeans. Instead, the Ottomans started to import manufactured European luxury and colonial goods, like sugar, coffee, textiles, hardware and glassware (Stoianovich 1960, 259). Many factories producing cheaper imitations of Chinese porcelain were created in Germany, Austria, England, France and etc. European and especially Austrian business collaborated well with Greek, Vlach and Slavic merchants. After the late 18th century, the demand for Austrian goods from the Ottoman Balkans became much larger than the demand of Westerners for the goods of the Balkans (Stoianovich 1960, 300).

Wares from Italy

Italian imports (Fig.9) have been present in the Mediterranean long before the Ottoman Empire. The Italian Maritime states, among which Venice, developed a peaceful relationship with the Ottoman state. Because of their flexible policies, religious differences were often put aside in order to protect their own trade interests (Çelik 2010, 2).

The most common imports from Italy consisted of Monochrome and Polychrome Sgraffito wares as well as Majolica. Bowls, plates and jugs in these styles were largely imported during 15th and 16th century (Vroom 2005, 141;143;147). Italian Polychrome Marbled ware (16th-17th century) was also widely distributed in the Mediterranean, as well as in the rest of Europe and even to North America (Vroom 2005, 165). This style, however, is not very common in the Balkans. During the mid 18th and the early 19th century, a new style of Italian production, Polychrome Painted Majolica, started to appear in the Aegean and in parts of the Balkans (Vroom 2005, 167).



Figure 9: Italian Majolica found at: Varna, 16th-17th centuries
a) Ewer; b) Plate (Source: www.archaeo.museumvarna.com);
Sofia c) Ewer, 15th century (after Guinova 2012).

Local Production Centres

Last but not least, the different regions in the Ottoman empire had their own local production centres. Some of the wares which were produced continued earlier Medieval traditions while others were greatly influenced by the trending ceramic styles like Iznik Ware, Chinese porcelain or Majolica (Fig.10). When moving to a new place, people often brought with them their locally made wares, usually cooking vessels. Pottery styles

evolved together with migration, trade and social interactions. Thus, as it will be discussed later in the paper, local production constantly transformed.



Figure 10: Various local pottery from Varna: a) Ibrik, 18th century; b) Ewer, 16th-18th centuries; c) Dish, 17th-18th centuries; d) Plate, 17th-18th centuries (after Pletniov 2004).

Methodology

The data for the excavated pottery was collected from various publications, books, articles, etc. Only individual vessels were included in the general count. The number of individual vessels (NIV) can be calculated in different ways, depending on the type of excavation and the goals of the researchers. The minimal number of (individual) vessels (MNV) is the minimal number of original vessels that can be reconstructed from the sherds in an archaeological assemblage (Voss and Allen 2010, 1). Two of the most commonly used methods for calculating MNV are the quantitative and the qualitative methods. Quantitative MNV is based on counting the rim sherds, bases and handles, while body sherds are disregarded. Qualitative MNV groups together sherds, including body sherds, that probably represent a single object (Voss and Allen 2010). The publications which were used in this research mostly dealt with the best pottery examples, such as complete vessels, but it cannot be said for sure which method was used for categorising the pottery.

In the case of the Ottoman ceramics, such as Iznik and Kütahya wares, only the (almost) complete individual vessels from Sofia and Varna were included in the publications. Other sherds were disregarded, even if they could be counted as individual vessels. In order for the pottery ratio from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna to be more accurate, the Ottoman ceramics from Belgrade which were simply labeled as ‘fragments’ were not included in the general count in this thesis, as these sherds did not offer enough information to be properly categorised, which means they were probably not complete.

Where exact numbers of pottery vessels were not mentioned in the text, the number of vessels in the figures associated with a certain style were counted. Further, only objects with mentioned dating were included, since that is an important criteria which will be used for categorising.

The focus in this thesis showing consumption pattern of the cities, so tableware and kitchenware and whenever available other household ceramic objects like toys, candlesticks, basins and lamps were included. Parts of ovens were not included in my research, since they are were counted as part of the production. Tobacco pipes were also not included in the general count, because of their great numbers, diversity and complexity for which they would need a separate paper for a detailed analysis (see Bikić 2012; Stancheva and Nikolova 1989; Stancheva 1972).

For imports and locally produced ceramics from **Belgrade**, mainly two books were used (Bikić 2003; Popović and Bikić 2004). The collected data concerned 16th and 17th century, since this was the period of constant Ottoman presence in the city. Information on Ottoman period pottery excavated from 18th-19th century was scarcely available. Only a few sources (Bikić 2012; Gajić-Kvašček *et al.* 2018) gave insight on the Austrian style pottery from the 17th-18th century discovered in Belgrade. Regardless, the

difference between ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Austrian’ Belgrade will be discussed, as well as Belgrade during 16th-17th century in comparison to Sofia and Varna.

Information on ceramics from **Sofia** was mainly gathered from publications written by Magdalena Stancheva (Stancheva 1960; 1962; 1963; 1966; 1976; 1994; Stancheva and Shangalova 1989;) and by Guergana Guinova (Guinova 2005b; 2012). Unlike Belgrade, there was not much information on locally produced pottery in Sofia and the region, since no such study has been conducted yet. A lot of the ‘luxury’ Ottoman wares were either not dated or just presented as uncategorised fragments and thus were excluded from the general count.

One book with a catalogue with discovered local pottery from the Ottoman period was available for **Varna** (Pletnirov 2004). Two more catalogue books (Pletnirov 2002; 2005a) illustrated the best Iznik, Kütahya, Çanakkale, Majolica and Porcelain objects from the Varna Museum. However, they presented only some examples from these imports and did not give more information on the total number of excavated ceramics. In the book about locally produced pottery, some numbers of imports were also mentioned. However, the exact numbers were often not given. Instead, the author described them with ‘many’, ‘several dozen’, ‘a couple’ and *etc.* These ceramics were not included in the total count, which suggests that in reality there are a lot more imports than mentioned in my research.

All the information was distributed in an Excel database, separate for Belgrade, Sofia and Varna. The characteristics which were recorded for the **imports** were the following:

- **Origins/style** (23 attributes) - All attributes were arranged into 6 different categories for better bar/pie chart visualisation.
 1. **Central/Western European:** Haban pottery, imports from Hungary, Meissen, Thuringia, Vienna, Netherlands, England and other uncategorised Central European imports;
 2. **Mediterranean:** pottery coming from the old Byzantine production centres and the Eastern Mediterranean;
 3. **Anatolian/Ottoman:** Miletus, Iznik, Kütahya, Çanakkale and other unidentified ‘Turkish’ wares and pottery coming from Anatolia and Istanbul;
 4. **Italian:** Italian ceramics and Majolica;
 5. **Chinese porcelain;**
 6. **Other:** Unknown, Spain/Valencia, Near East.
- **Vessel shapes** (29 attributes) - The different vessels shapes were again divided into 4 categories
 1. **Kitchenware:** baking tray, guvech, pot, pot lid, salt and pepper dispensers, strainer;

2. **Tableware:** bowl, cup, ewer, ewer lid, ewer/ibrik, plate, plate (dish);
3. **Storage:** amphora, bottle, jar, jug, storage vessel;
4. **Other:** basin, candlestick holder, home object, ibrik, lamp, lid, music instrument, night pot, money container, small object, vessel.

- **Number of vessels**
- **Dating:** 15th until 19th century.
- **Other:** other remarks like special serial number from the source they were taken from.

The **local** wares were categorised in the same way, but the **Origins/style** category was replaced with **Tradition** and an additional **Decoration** feature was introduced.

- **Tradition** (11 attributes): Local (Bulgarian); Byzantine; Central/Western European; Central Asian; Chinese imitation; Majolica imitation; Ottoman; Iznik imitation; Local (Serbian); Unique for the region; Unknown;
- **Decoration** (5 attributes): Unglazed/ little decorated; Monochrome; Painted/ Decorated; Sgraffito; Metallic/Greyish;
- **Glaze colour:** Green and Olive, Yellow, Brown and Others;
- **Motifs/Design** (12 attributes): Anthropological, Floral motifs, Geometric, Rosettas/ Spirals, Reliefs, Colourful Spots, (Wavy) lines/stripes, Painted ornaments, Incisions, Partly glazed/painted, Combinations of motifs, Other.

Bottles, jars and jugs were categorised as storage vessels, but some of them could also serve as tableware and decoration. The reason for putting them together in a group with large storage pottery is because in most of the publications used for this research, the vessels were assigned to a storage category. Further, any uncategorised objects were placed under 'other', even though it is possible that these objects belong to one of the other three categories.

For the Dating attribute, each century corresponds to a separate column (15,16,17,18,19). The column was then marked with an 'x' next to the vessel or group of vessels. If an object was dated, for example, to the period 16th-17th century, both columns were marked. In the analysis, this object was included in all categories which covered either 16th or 17th century. For this reason it may appear that the analysed objects are more than the total count.

Results

In total, **1720** excavated ceramic vessels dating from the 15th-19th centuries from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna were analysed (Table 1). The ratio between the analysed imported and local pottery does not necessarily correspond to the ratio in reality, since as mentioned in the Methodology chapter, a lot of the data was not available. However, all discussions and interpretations in this paper will be based on the gathered material.

Table 1: The cities and the total amounts and percentage of the analysed imported and local pottery.

City	Imports	%	Local	%	Total
Belgrade	27	6%	432	94%	459
Sofia	102	53%	90	47%	192
Varna	84	8%	985	92%	1069
Total:	213		1507		1720

The imported and local pottery was divided into two groups by period - Early Ottoman pottery (15th-17th century) and Late Ottoman pottery (18th-19th century). Since Belgrade was conquered by the Ottomans in the 16th century and the information about excavated pottery mainly concerns the 16th-17th century, the Early Ottoman Pottery will be divided into two parts - 15th century, where only Sofia and Varna will be presented and 16th-17th century where the pottery from all three cities will be included. The 18th and 19th centuries will again concern only Sofia and Varna, since Belgrade was by then under Austrian rule and thus, the pottery would not be relevant to this research.

Most of the local pottery from Varna was dated to the 17th-18th centuries, on the border between the Early Ottoman and Late Ottoman periods. In order to get a better idea of this transition, the vessels from Varna that are dated from the 17th to the 18th century will be presented as its own group. The vessels from the Early and Late Ottoman periods will be shown without the vessels that are included in the 17th-18th century group. The results on pottery motifs and glaze colours during the 16th-17th centuries will also include 17th-18th-century pottery, but the results from the 18th-19th centuries will not include the vessels from this transitional period.

The results will be discussed further chronologically in this chapter. For additional information on Belgrade, Sofia and Varna - See Appendices 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Imports

In this section, the origins of the imported ceramics for each city throughout the different periods will be discussed. Other details, such as the number and variety of the types of the imported vessels (cups, bowls, plates, etc.), will also be examined.

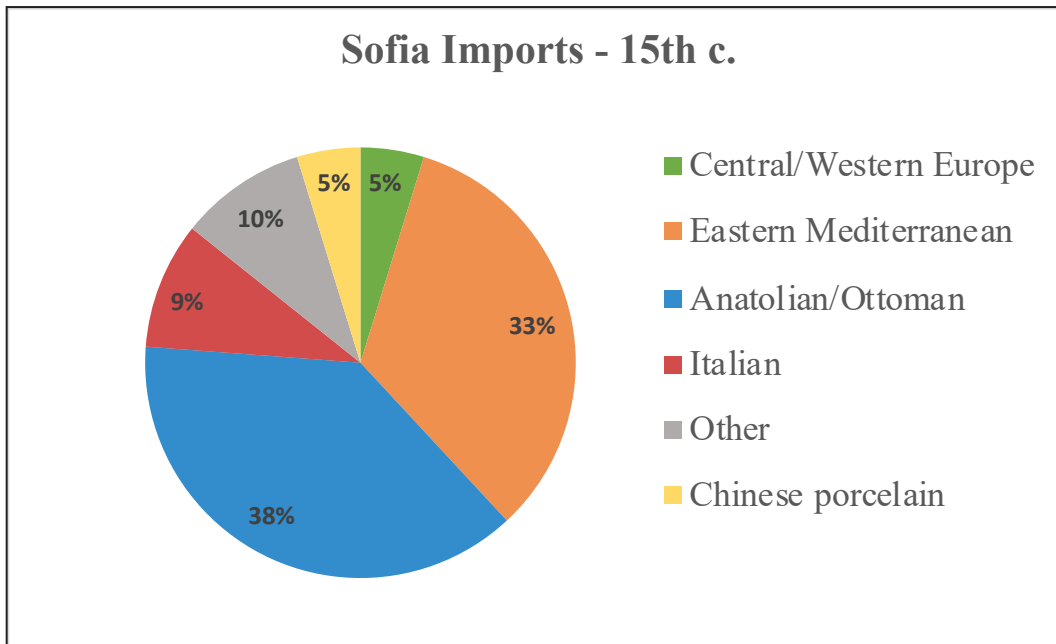


Figure 11: 15th-century imports from Sofia.

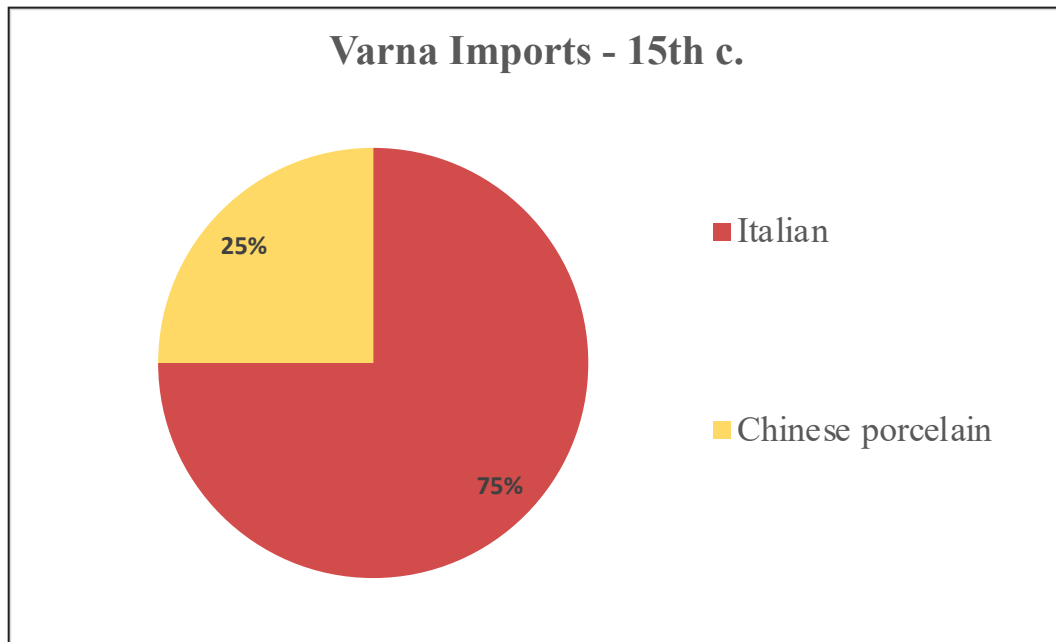


Figure 12: 15th-century imports from Varna.

Early Ottoman Period

There are big observable differences between the 15th-century imports from Sofia and Varna (Fig.11 and Fig.12). It can easily be concluded that during that period, Sofia received significantly more diverse imports compared to Varna. Further, Sofia had in total 21 imports, while Varna had only 4. The two biggest types of imports in Sofia consist of Miletus ware (Ottoman ceramics) and Eastern Mediterranean ceramics with unidentified origin. Two jugs imported from Italy and two vessels from Spain, probably produced in the region of Valencia, were discovered (Guinova 2012, 683). Finally one vessel from Central Europe and one Chinese porcelain cup were also found. In contrast,

15th-century Varna had imports from only 2 locations - three ewers from the Italian Peninsula and one cup from China.

The vessel forms of the imports can be seen in Table 2. Most identified vessel forms are tableware - bowls, cups and ewers. Jugs can also be included in tableware, however, in the main publication about Varna, they were identified as storage vessels (Pletnirov 2004, 141). In addition, there are 11 vessels which are identified, but there is no published information on what kind of shape they had. These vessels mostly concern the Miletus ware from Sofia (Guinova 2012, 682).

Table 2: The types of the 15th-century imported pottery from Sofia (left) and Varna (right).

Sofia		Varna	
4	Bowls	1	Cup
1	Cup	3	Ewers
5	Jugs		
11	Vessels		

The results from 16th-17th century are presented in Figs. 13,14 and 15. During that period, Varna received the most imports among the three cities - 54, followed by Sofia with 33, and finally Belgrade, which had 27 imports. From these three cities, both Varna and Sofia show a significant diversity of imports, with Varna receiving almost double the amount of imports Sofia has.

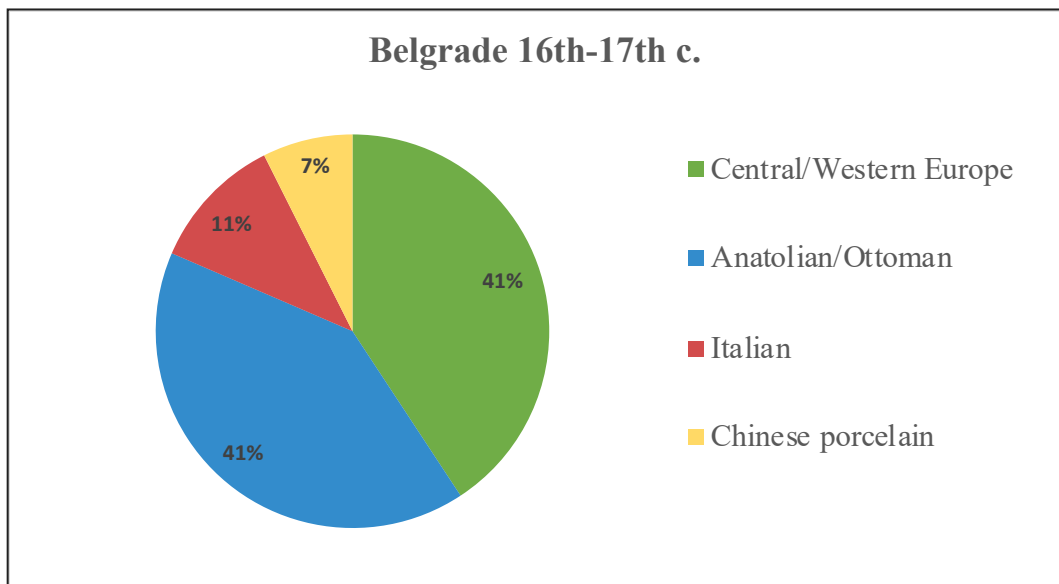


Figure 13: 16th-17th-century imports from Belgrade.

In the case of Belgrade, there are two major types of imported pottery - Haban pottery and luxury Ottoman vessels such as Iznik Ware. The Haban pottery which is found in Belgrade is all dated to the late 17th century, most probably when the Habsburg

Monarchy took over the city and introduced this typical Central European style. By that time, Haban pottery had already been widespread within the borders of the Monarchy. Further, three Majolica vessels made in Italy were also discovered in Belgrade dating to the 17th century, as well as two Chinese porcelain bowls.

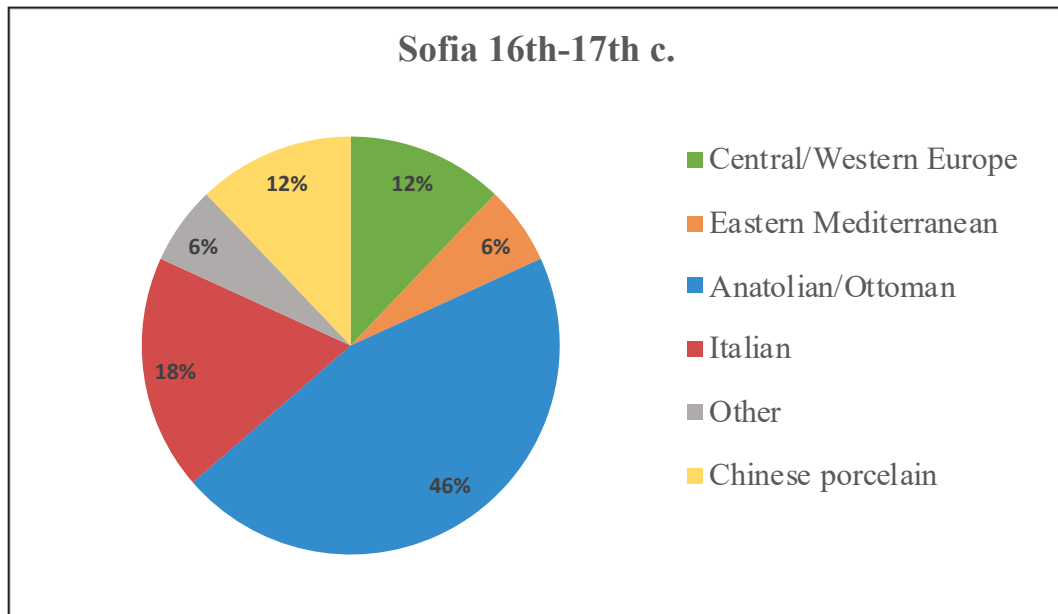


Figure 14: 16th-17th-century imports from Sofia.

The imports from Sofia tell another story. Almost half of the city's imports are Ottoman ceramics, mostly Iznik Ware. Other widespread types are Italian imports, Chinese porcelain and Central European pottery. One Near Eastern vessel and one from Spain, probably made at Valencia, make up the rest of the imports.

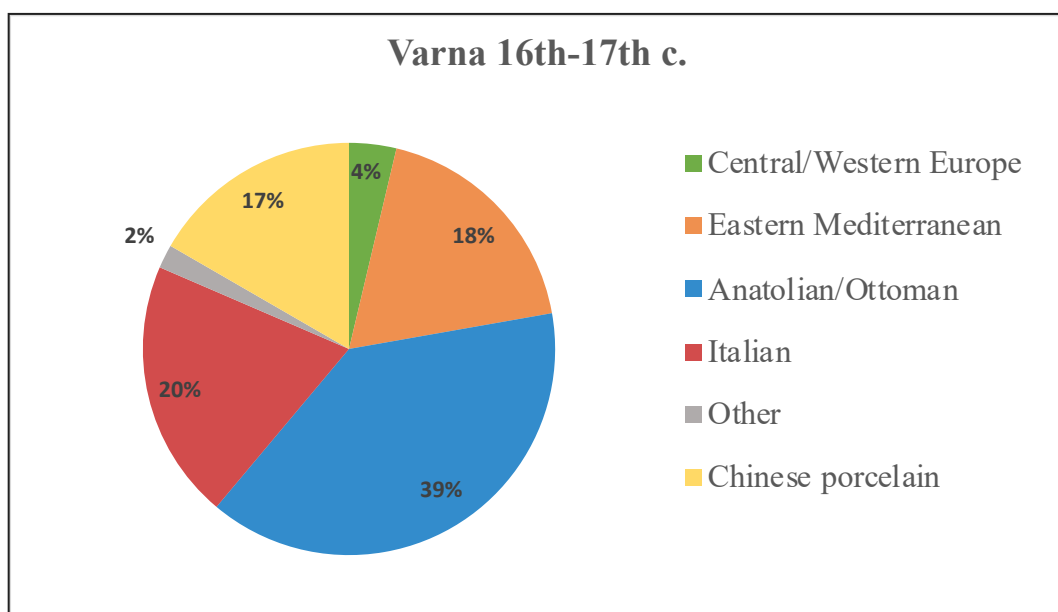


Figure 15: 16th-17th-century imports from Varna.

The import origin ratio of Varna is very similar to the one of Sofia. Iznik ware and imports from Istanbul make up the biggest proportion of the imports. They are followed by Italian ceramics, mostly Majolica, and ceramics in the traditional Byzantine style, which were still being produced in old production centres in the Eastern Mediterranean. A great number of the luxurious Chinese porcelain dating to 16th-17th century was also excavated in Varna. Finally, there are some ceramics which were most likely produced in Hungary, and one bowl with an unknown foreign origin.

Table 3: The vessel forms of 16th-17th-century imports from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna

	Belgrade	Sofia	Varna
Basin			4
Bowl	10	4	6
Cup	2	7	19
Ewer	2	2	11
Ewer lid		2	
Jar	3	1	
Jug	5	5	2
Lid	2		
Plate	3	6	12
Vessel		6	

The vessel forms of the excavated pottery are presented in Table 3. There are 6 identified vessels, but their function is not mentioned in the publication (Guinova 2012). All these vessels were excavated in Sofia. Some jugs, whose function was most probably storage, were also found in each city. Iznik, Italian Majolica and Haban jars which were probably used for storage and decoration were excavated in Belgrade and Sofia. Uniquely for Varna, four basins that served hygienic purposes were discovered. These basins were originally produced in Istanbul (Plentiov 2004, 156). The rest of the vessel forms are tableware - bowls, cups, ewers, ewer lids and plates.

Late Ottoman Period

In Sofia there are 55 excavated vessels of foreign origins dating to the 18th-19th centuries (Fig.16). In Varna, there are 40 vessels from the same period (Fig.17).

Almost all of the imported ceramics found in Sofia are of Central or Western European type. These are mostly imitations of Chinese porcelain cups coming from Austria, from the Meissen and Thuringia factories in Germany and even from England. There are also 4 porcelain cups produced in China and 1 Kütahya cup.

The largest imports in Varna, however, come from the centre of the Ottoman empire - Kütahya and Çanakkale ceramics. They are followed by 8 Chinese porcelain cups, 2 Meissen cups and 1 cup produced in one of the old Byzantine production centres.

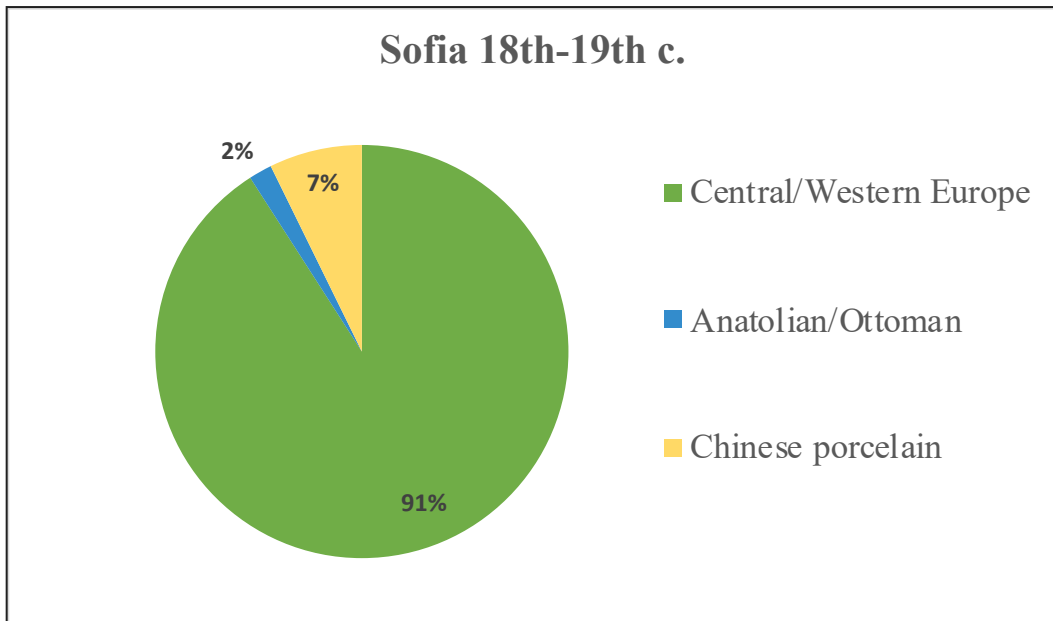


Figure 16: 18th-19th century imports from Sofia.

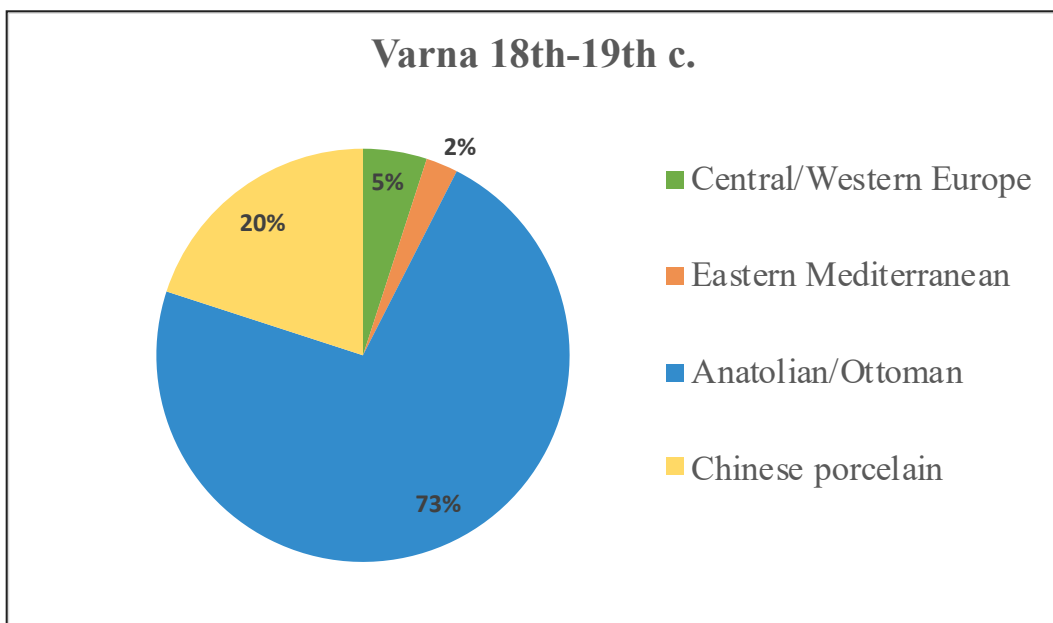


Figure 17: 18th-19th century imports from Varna.

The vessel forms of imports from the 18th-19th centuries are predominantly mass-produced cups (Table 4). Varna also received 13 Çanakkale and Kütahya plates. The same 4 basins from Istanbul which appeared in the results of 16th-17th centuries are also present in the Late Ottoman category, since their period ranges from the 17th until the early 18th century.

Table 4: The vessel forms of the 18th-19th century excavated pottery from Sofia (left) and Varna (right).

Sofia		Varna	
55	Cups	23	Cups
		4	Basins
		13	Plates

Local Pottery

Different aspects of the local pottery are going to be presented in this section. The ceramics are again going to be divided into Early and Late Ottoman period, and the section on Belgrade will again only include data from the 16th and 17th centuries.

One of the main features of local pottery is the tradition of their style. The decoration and production techniques which potters used were in some cases present before the Ottoman conquest. They are local traditions which have survived and evolved over time. However, sometimes the influence of Ottoman potters and imports, such as porcelain and majolica, leave their mark on local ware production. This influence will be traced in the following analysis. Additionally, other details such as motifs and the type of decoration will be included and connected to the different types of the analysed pottery - kitchenware, tableware, storage vessels and others.

Early Ottoman Period

During the 15th century, the locally produced vessels from Sofia and Varna differed noticeably in terms of the tradition in which they were made (Fig.18 and Fig.19). The number of ceramic vessels found in Sofia during that period is 43, while in Varna it is 27.

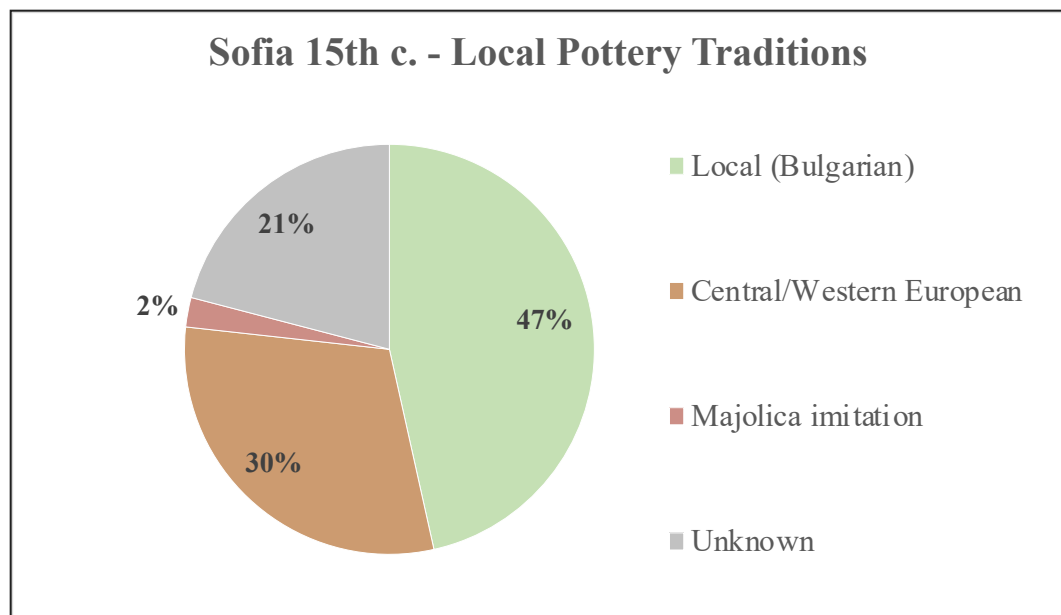


Figure 18: 15th century local pottery from Sofia.

Almost half of the vessels from Sofia followed the same local style that can be traced to the pre-Ottoman Medieval period. One-third of the locally produced vessels was heavily influenced by Western and Central European imports. The style of the rest of the vessels is unknown or it was not mentioned in the publications. Finally there is one local ewer which is argued to have been an imitation of Florentine Majolica (Stancheva 1994, 129).

To a large extent, the tradition in which the 15th-century local pottery of Varna is made is unknown or it was not mentioned in the publications. The rest of the vessels were influenced by Central and Western European styles and just a small part of the wares continued the traditions of the Second Bulgarian Empire.

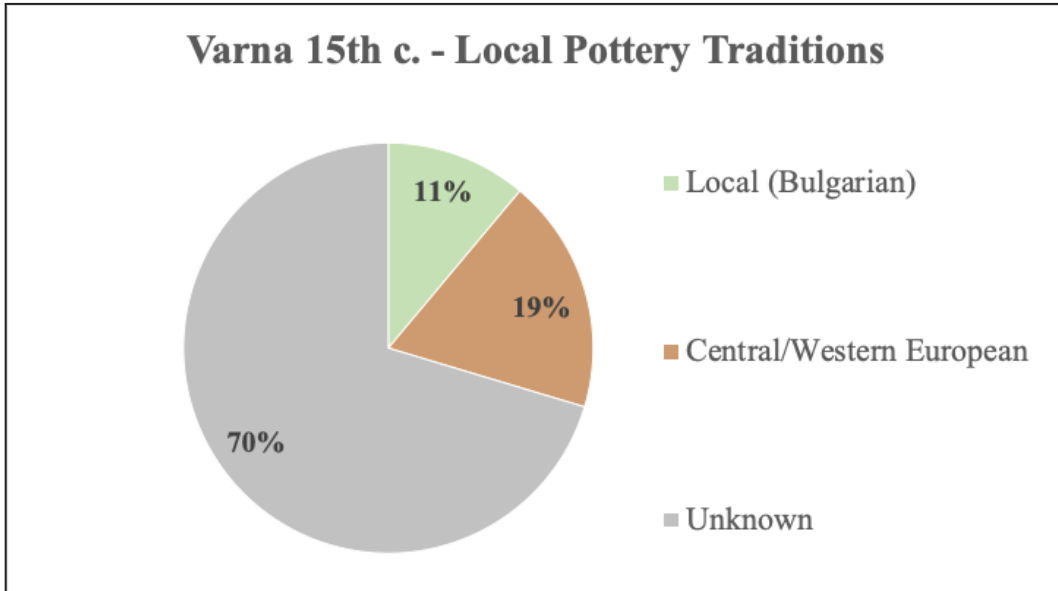


Figure 19: 15th century local pottery from Varna.

As it can be seen in Fig.20 and Fig.21, most of the excavated vessels from both cities are decorated. Little or no decorated vessels make up the second largest group. Monochrome vessels - only glazed in one colour, are present in Sofia, but not in Varna. Finally, one Sgraffito vessel was also discovered in Sofia. The motifs of the decorated ceramics can be seen in Table 5. Partly glazed/ painted decoration is most common in Sofia, while incised and painted spirals and rosettas are most common in Varna. The most common glaze colours are green and olive, followed by different shades of yellow (Fig.22). In addition, transparent and turquoise glaze are also fairly common.

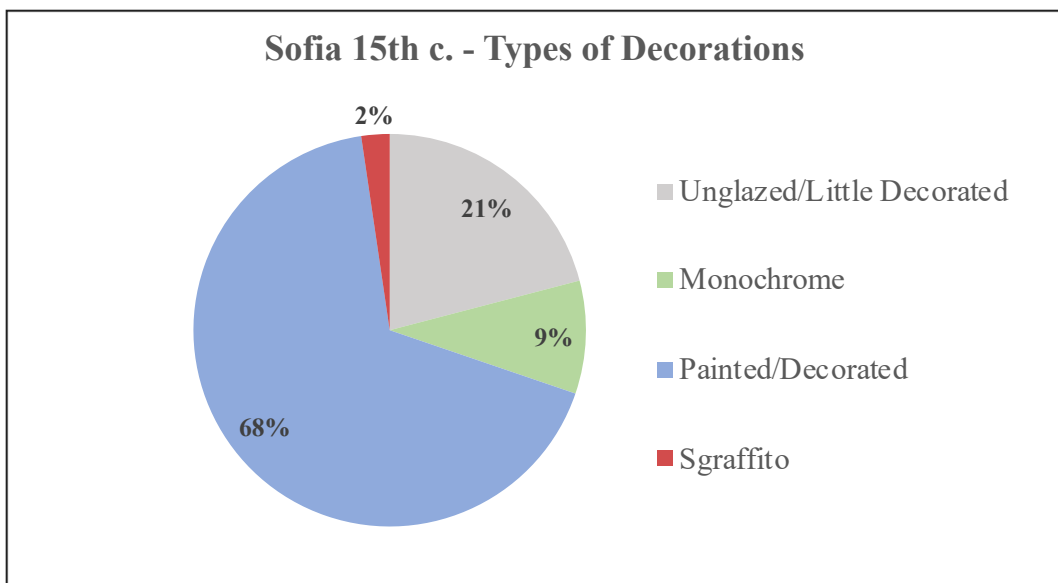


Figure 20: Decoration of the 15th century local pottery from Sofia.

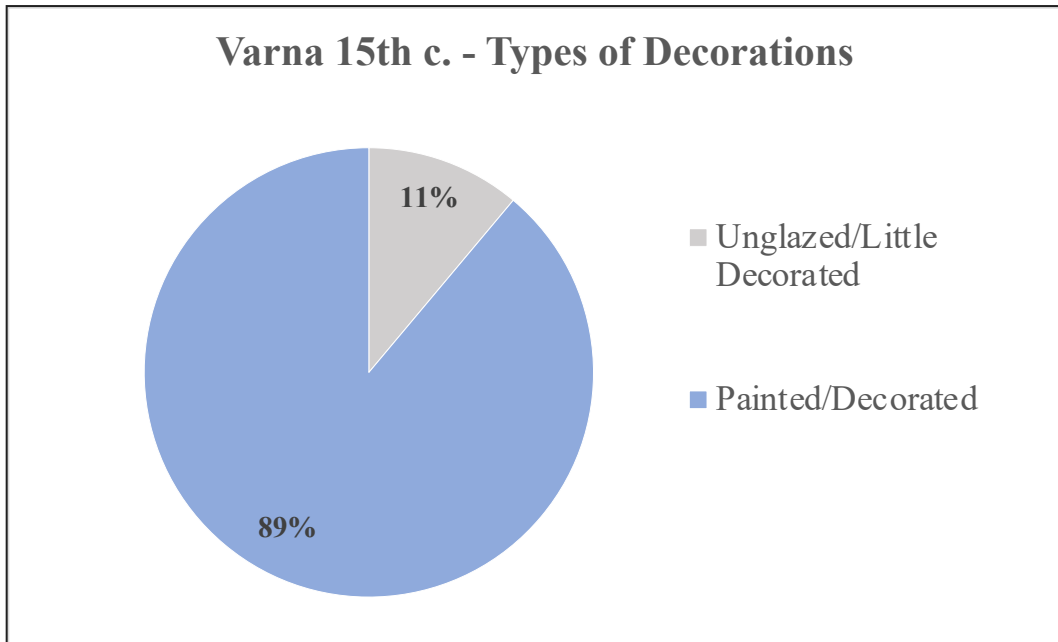


Figure 21: Decoration of the 15th century local pottery from Varna.

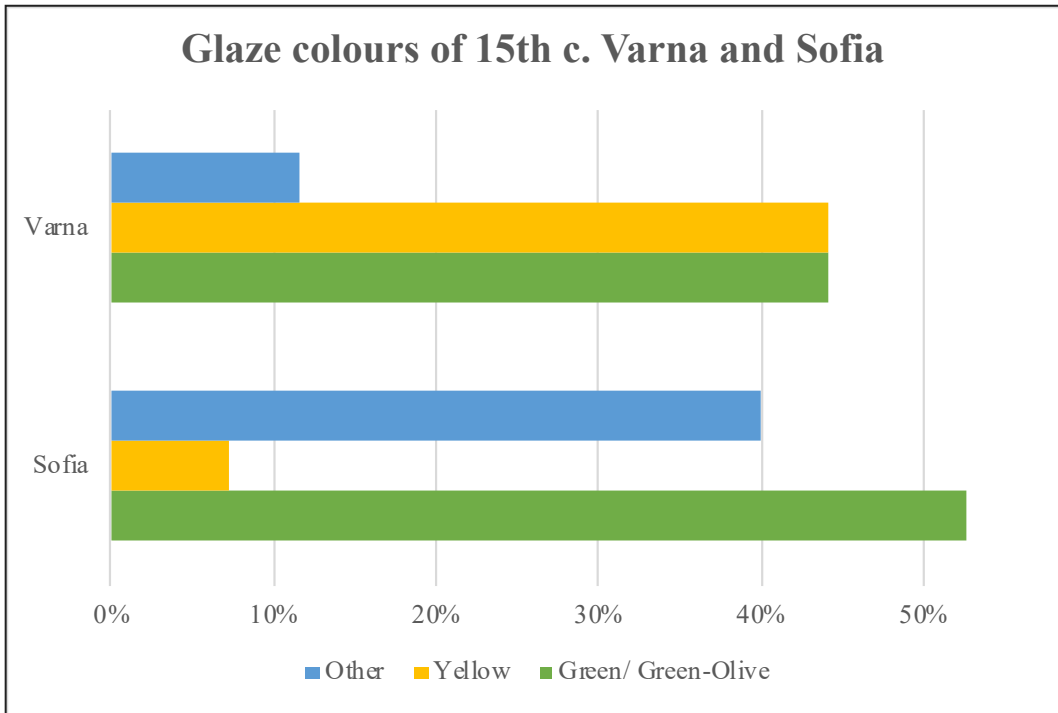


Figure 22: Most common glaze colours in 15th century Varna and Sofia

Table 5: Motifs of the decorations of 15th century local ware found in Sofia and Varna.

Motifs:	Sofia	Varna
Various ornaments	17%	x
Partly glazed	83%	x
Incisions	x	30%
Rosettas/Spirals	x	70%

The local pottery from the 16th-17th century is one of the most numerous groups of pottery. Belgrade is represented with 432 vessels and Varna with 889 vessels. However, Sofia only has information about 50 vessels. The reason for that is the lack of a large study on Late Medieval and Early Modern pottery. Such studies were conducted in both Belgrade and Varna, and the finds have been published (Bikić 2003; Popović and Bikić 2004; Pletnirov 2004).

Since the available pottery from Sofia is limited (Fig.23), we cannot get a very clear picture of the situation during the period. A little more than one-third of the studied pottery has a style which has derived from the local pottery prior to the Ottoman rule. This is followed by Central/Western European influenced pottery, which makes up a quarter of the assemblage. The rest is pottery of an unknown tradition. Ottoman influenced pottery is not present in Sofia, according to these results. This is highly unlikely because of the importance of the city within the Ottoman Empire and the high number of Turkish inhabitants throughout the centuries. However, not much can be concluded from the available information.

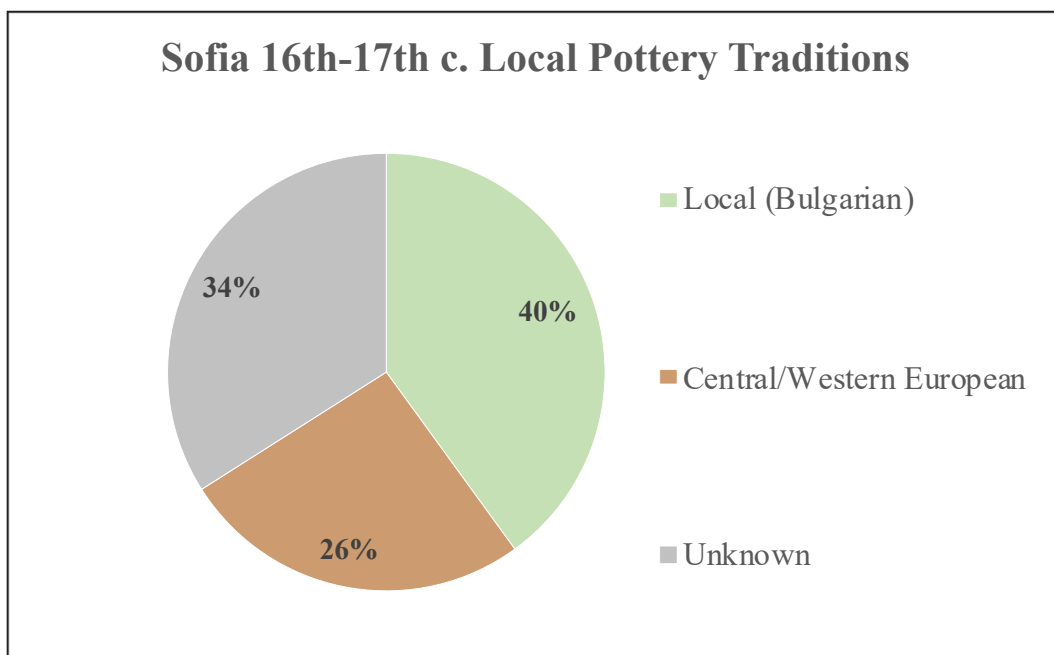


Figure 23: 16th-17th century local pottery from Sofia.

The data from Belgrade is a bit more promising (Fig.24). The style of more than half (60%) of the analysed pottery vessels shows Ottoman influence. The rest of the pottery styles follow either traditional methods of production and decoration, or are heavily influenced by Central and Western European styles. Only 4% of the pottery vessels have clear Byzantine traits. It is quite likely that the Byzantine tradition did not come with the Ottomans and that it was present in the region long before.

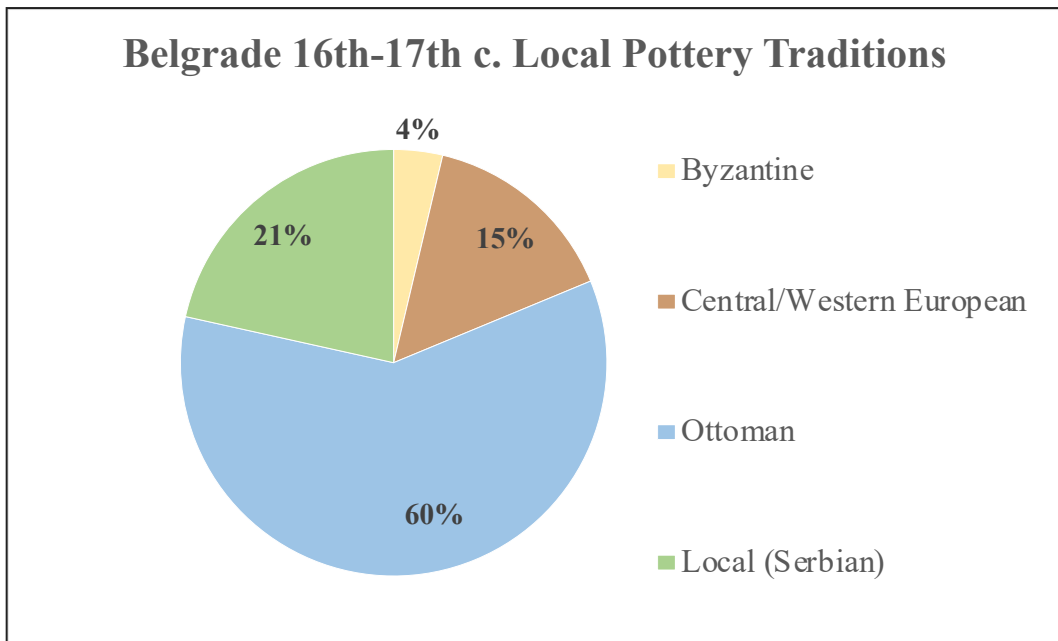


Figure 24: 16th-17th century local pottery from Belgrade.

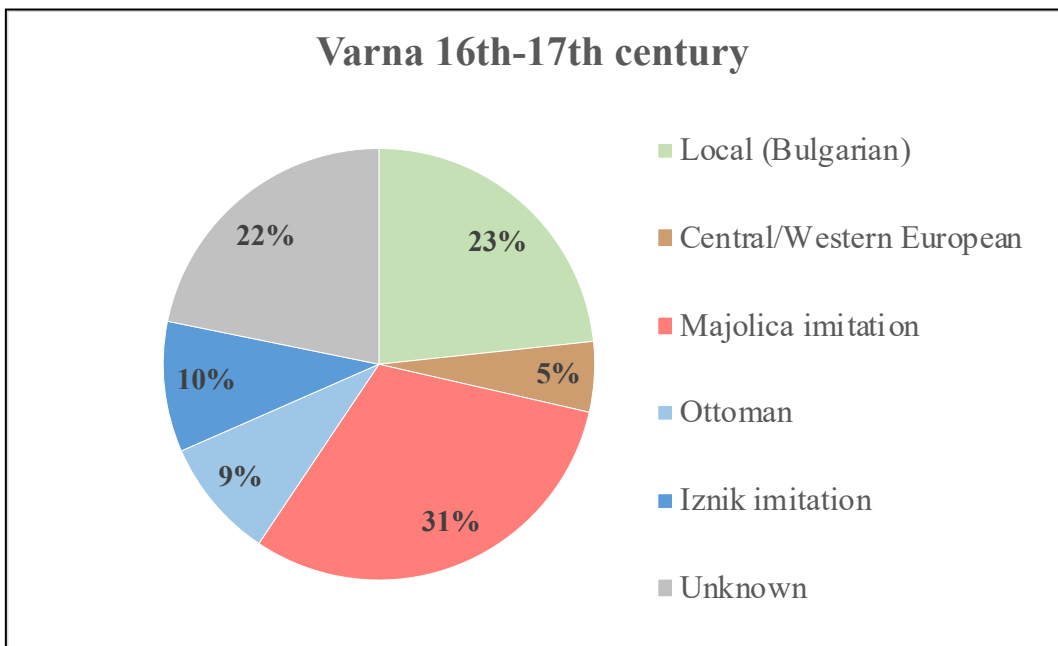


Figure 25: 16th-17th century local pottery from Varna, without the vessels which are also present in the 18th century.

Out of the three cities, the pottery from Varna is the most diverse (Fig.25). The Majolica imitations produced in the city are the most common (31%). The vessels which are part of the Ottoman tradition, amount to 19% of the total count. Half of these vessels are ceramics which have been influenced by and often imitate Iznik Ware. The local ware which follows the Bulgarian style makes up 23% of all vessels, and the rest of the pottery (22%) has not been attributed to any specific style. Only a small proportion of the local vessels were made in the Central or Western European tradition.

In the transitional period of 17th-18th century (Fig.26), the Ottoman tradition pottery becomes more numerous and makes up 38% of the total. The proportion of Iznik

imitations also significantly increases. The ratio of the other traditions remains relatively similar to the 16th-17th centuries, however, there are almost no Majolica imitations. New traditions also start to appear, such as Byzantine, and Central Asian. In addition, local vessels begin to imitate Chinese porcelain. One distinct characteristic of the Varna ceramics is the presence of unique styles which do not have analogues anywhere else in the Balkans. They represent a very small percentage (2%) of all excavated vessels in the city, but still this is the only information on unique regional styles in either of the three cities.

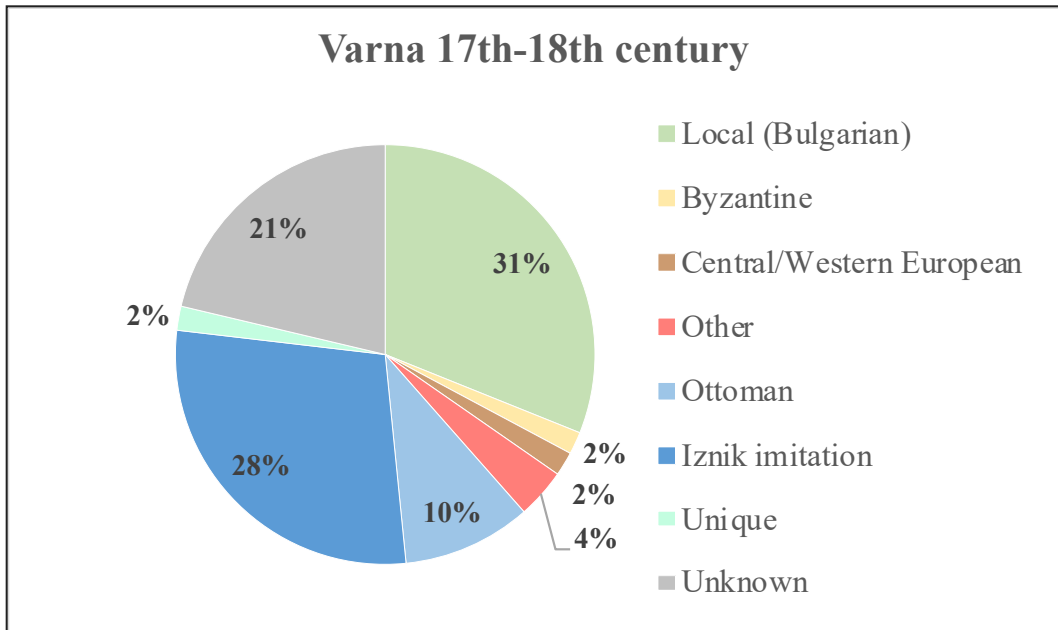


Figure 26: 17th-18th century local pottery from Varna.

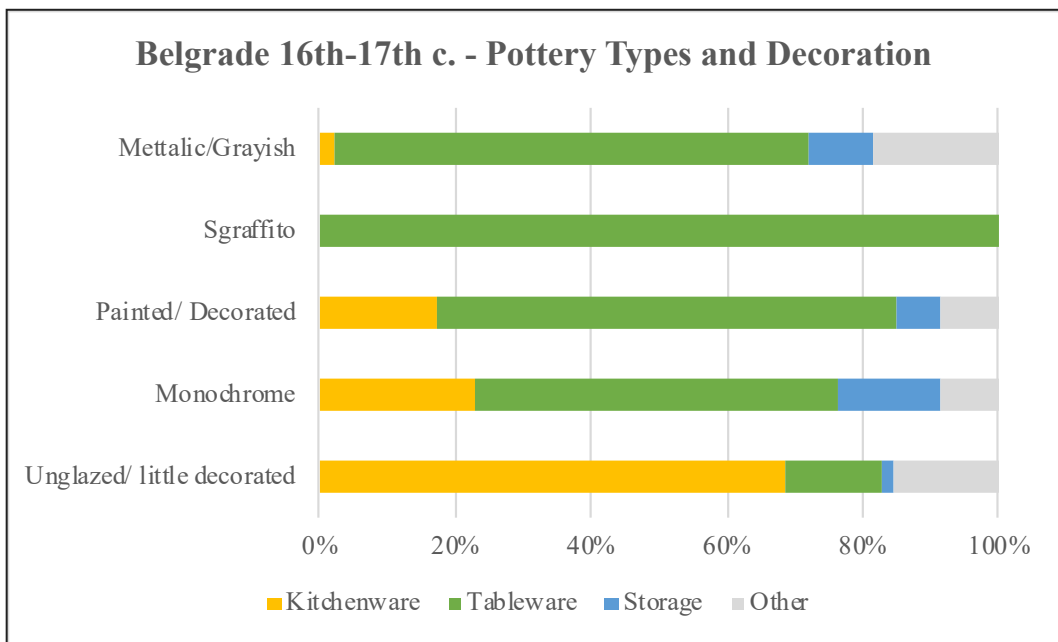


Figure 27: Type and decoration of 16th-17th century local pottery from Belgrade.

The different pottery decorations from the three cities, and their relation to the types of pottery are presented in Figs. 27, 28 and 29. Kitchenware is present in Belgrade

and Varna, but not in Sofia. The vessels from this type are also often unglazed and little decorated compared to vessels from other types. Tableware is often richly decorated and painted, but there are also some monochrome vessels present. The vessels used for storage, such as amphoras, jars, jugs, etc., vary from being single glazed or not glazed at all, to having colourful ornaments and glazes. This is most probably connected to the purpose they served - some containers were likely to be used for decoration in addition to storage. Other vessels, such as small household objects or unidentified objects, again vary in their decoration depending on the purposes they served. *Ibriks*, candlestick holders and lamps were most often elegantly decorated, unlike other objects, such as money boxes and night pots.

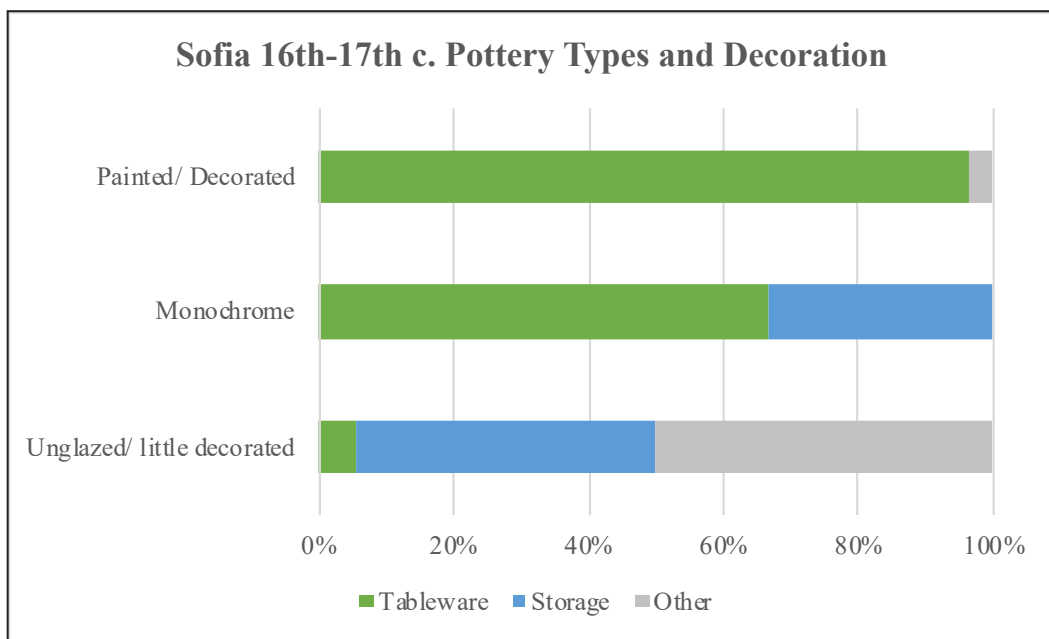


Figure 28: Type and decoration of 16th-17th century local pottery from Sofia.

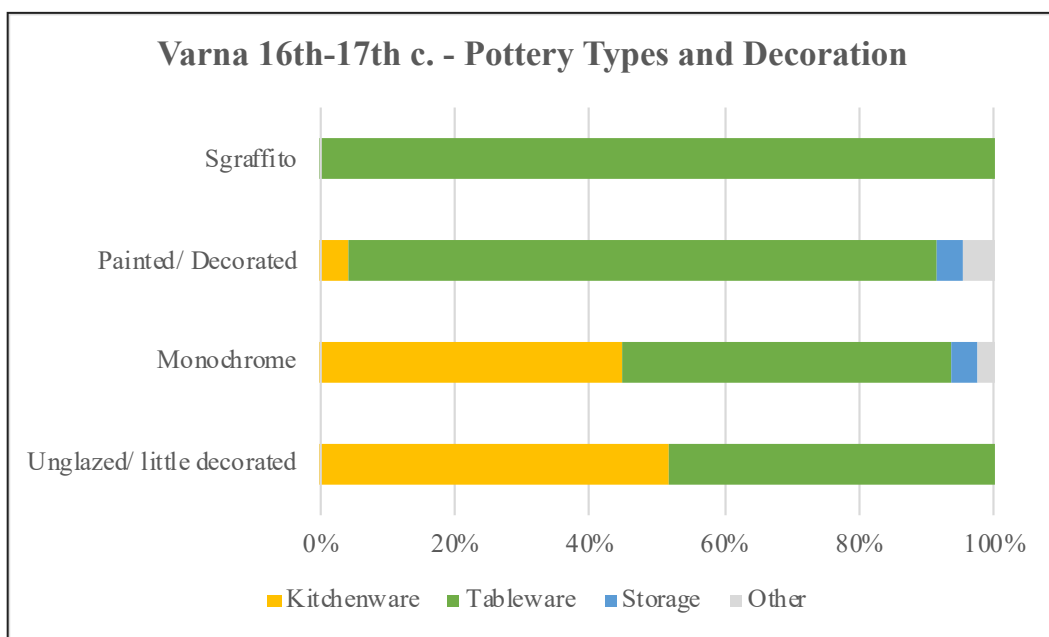


Figure 29: Type and decoration of 16th-17th century local pottery from Varna.

One style of decoration is present in Belgrade and not in the other two cities - the grey polished (metallic) pottery. This style emerged in the 16th-17th century and it was widespread in the region of Southern Hungary (Bikić 2003, 187). It is considered to be a high-quality luxury pottery and the fact that is seen mostly on tableware supports that idea. It is especially common among objects used to store liquids, replacing the traditional copper vessels (Bikić 2003, 187).

Similar to the 15th century, green and olive glaze are most common among the analysed vessels from the three cities (Fig.30). Again, yellowish glaze is the second most common glaze followed by brownish. Other types of glaze such as transparent, white and turquoise blue are also frequently present, especially in Varna.

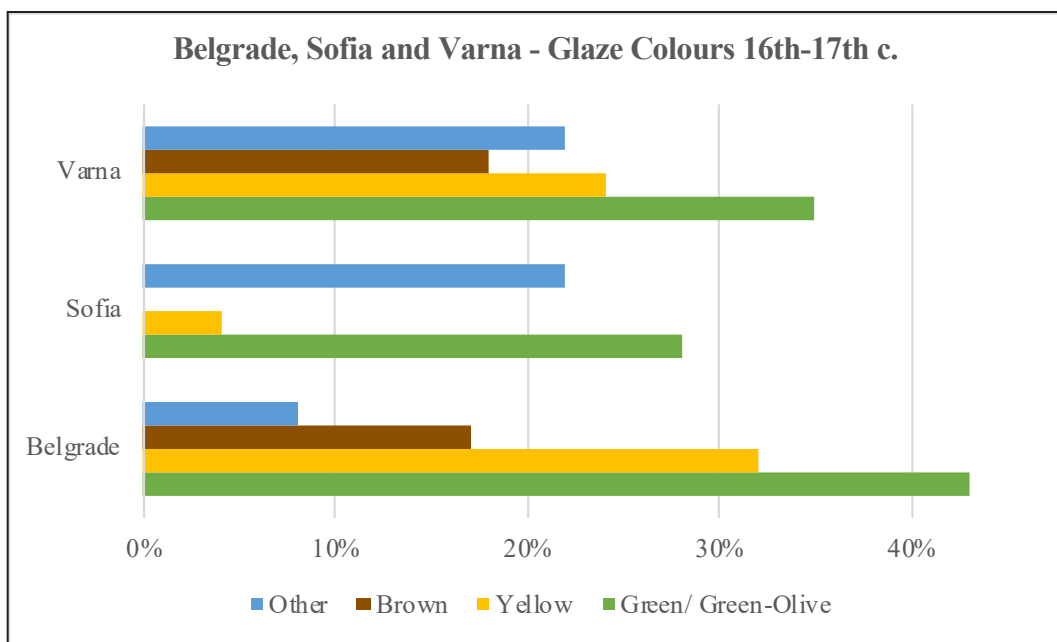


Figure 30: Most common glaze colours from 16th-17th century Belgrade, Sofia and Varna

The types of motifs on the vessels can be seen in Table 6. The numbers in brackets are the total amount of vessels which were included in the design analysis. Both Varna and Belgrade have a great variety of motifs. In Sofia, the vessels are most commonly partly glazed or painted and some ceramics have small ornament details painted on them. The vessels from Belgrade are characterised with various motifs, the most common of which are incised and/or painted straight and wavy lines, rosettas, spirals and small incised or painted ornaments. The pottery from Varna has slightly less variety of motifs compared to Belgrade, however, more than half of the analysed vessels (67,9%) combine more than one type of motif, most often spotted decoration with various incised ornaments. The reason for this difference could also be attributed to the fact that the assemblage of tableware from Varna is more than 10 times larger than the assemblage from Belgrade (Table 7). Further, the only anthropological decoration from a local ware was discovered in Varna; that is to say, a shallow bowl with a male figure with a chibouk pipe on the inside (Pletnirov 2004, 115).

Table 6: Motifs of the decorations of 16th-17th-century local wares found in the three cities.

Motifs	Belgrade (104)	Sofia (29)	Varna (750)
Anthropological			0,1% (1)
Geometric	1%		
Rosettas/ Spirals	11,5%		2,5%
Colourful Spots			7,1%
(Wavy)Lines/ Stripes	12,5%		0,9%
Painted small ornaments	11,5%	17,2%	
Incised small ornaments	24%		17,5%
Partly glazed/ painted	7,7%	82,8%	
Combinations of motifs	6,7%		67,9%
Other	25%		4%

Table 7: The amount of the different types of pottery with analysed motifs (16th-17th centuries).

	Belgrade	Sofia	Varna
Kitchenware	33		49
Tableware	49	28	647
Storage	5		26
Other	17	1	28

Late Ottoman Period

The local pottery from the Late Ottoman Period is limited to only Sofia and Varna. The pottery from Sofia, however, does not offer any information on the tradition it was made in and all 47 vessels were marked with ‘Unknown’. There are 227 vessels from Varna.

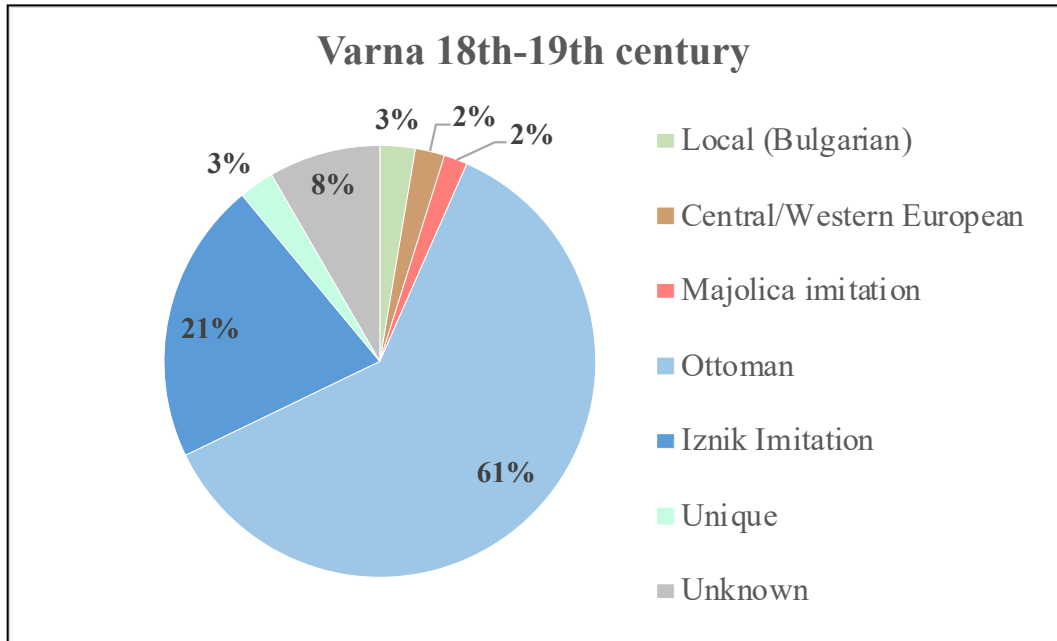


Figure 31: Pottery traditions from 18th-19th century Varna.

The ratio of the different traditions in Varna (Fig.31) has noticeably changed, in relation to the previous period. The local pottery produced in the Ottoman tradition is the majority, taking up more than 80% of the total vessels. The Iznik imitations have decreased in proportion, compared to the amount of Ottoman influenced pottery. This could be explained with the decline of Iznik ware at the end of the 17th century. No other traditions stand out as common, but some Majolica imitations and unique style pottery are still present.

Due to the small size of the assemblage, not much can be concluded from the pottery from Sofia. From the decoration of the wares (Fig.32), we can see that jugs, which were categorised as storage vessels, are all decorated. In addition to that, 1 jar and 4 *ibriks* are also colourfully painted. Two pots and two ewers are monochrome glazed and the rest of the assemblage which consists of money boxes is not decorated much or left unglazed.

The situation in Varna is similar to the one from the previous period (Fig.33). The sgraffito decoration can again be observed only on tableware, but this time only 2 sgraffito vessels were found. Colourful decorations are most often seen on tableware, but also appear on storage vessels and other objects such as *ibriks* and candlestick holders. Further, more of the kitchenware is decorated with monochrome glazing than during the previous period.

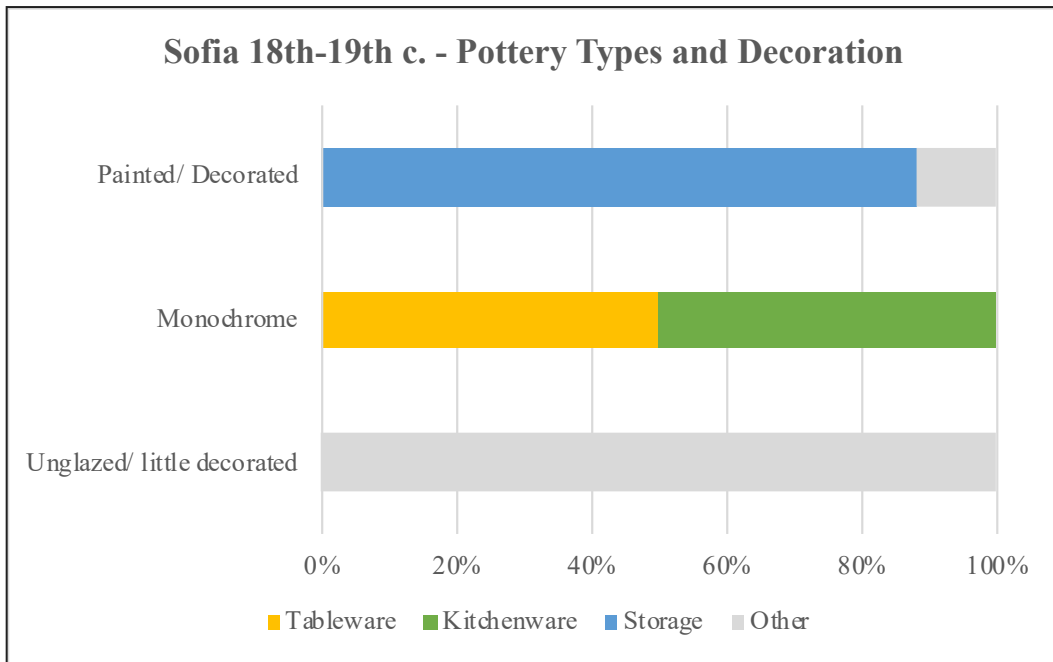


Figure 32: Pottery types and decoration from 18th-19th century Sofia.

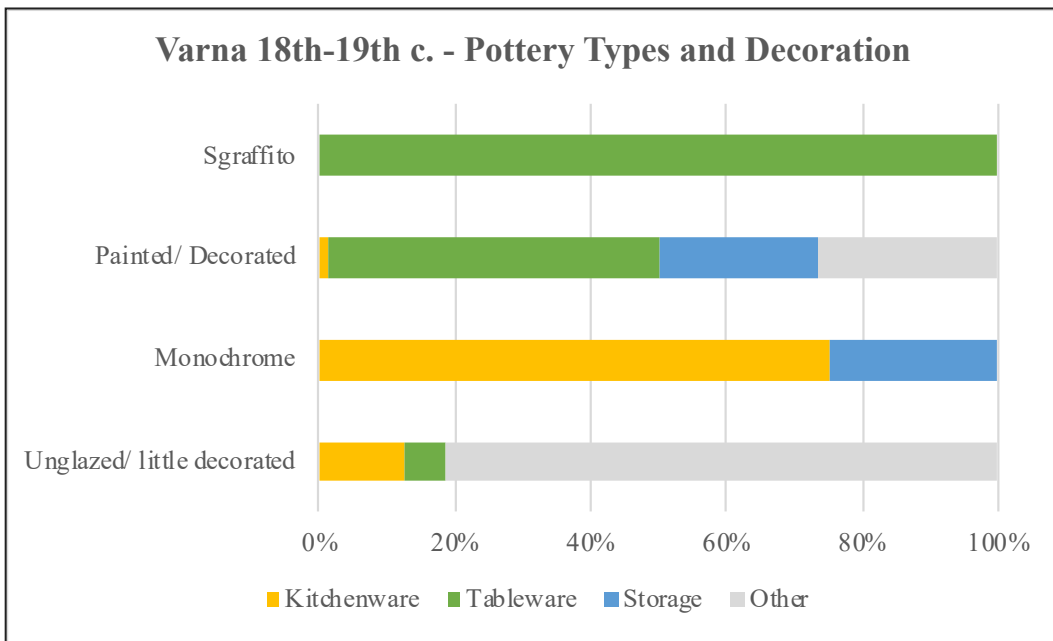


Figure 33: Pottery types and decoration from 18th-19th century Varna.

The glaze colour scheme is slightly different to the one from previous periods (Fig.34). Most common glazes are green and olive, followed by brown and only a small proportion of yellow glaze is present in Varna. During the Late Ottoman period, transparent and other types of glazes disappear from the pottery assemblage.

Most of the vessels from Sofia are storage vessels. For this reason, it is not surprising that there is not a big variety of motifs to be found on the pottery from Sofia (Table 8). The designs on the vessels from Varna seem simplified. They are most often incisions and geometric motifs. This is a big difference compared to previous periods, where combinations of motifs and colourful spots were predominant.

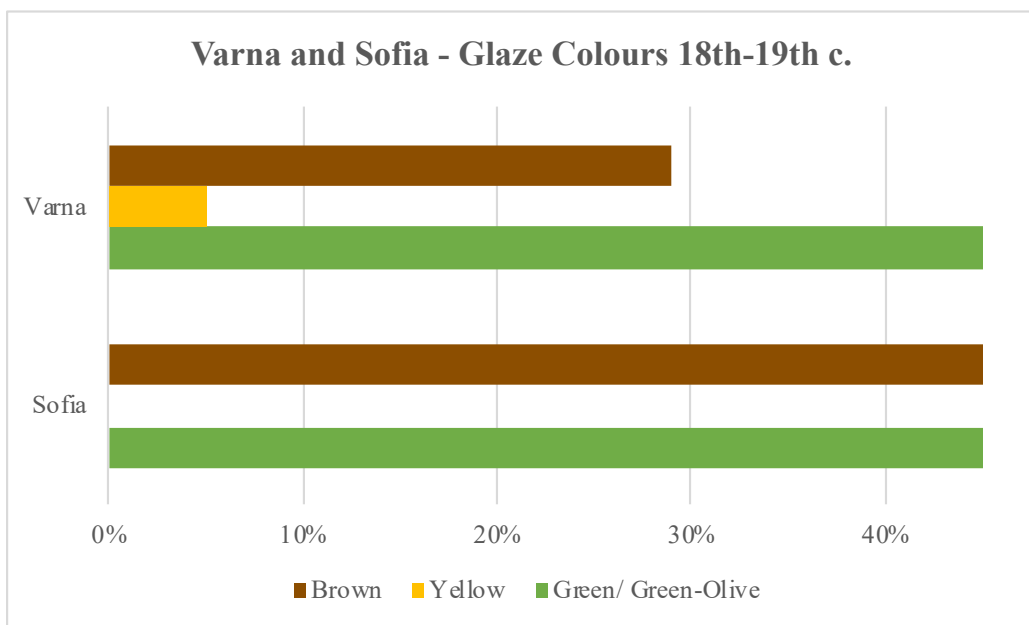


Figure 34: Different glaze colours during 18th-19th century in Sofia and Varna.

Table 8: The amount of the different types of pottery which had their motifs analysed (18th-19th century).

Motifs	Sofia (34)	Varna (81)
Geometric		27,2%
Rosettas/ Spirals		4,9%
Incised small ornaments	85,3%	41,8%
Floral motifs	11,8%	
Reliefs	2,9%	
Partly glazed/painted		1,2%
Combinations of motifs		14,8%
Other		3,7%

Concluding Remarks 15th-19th century

Overall, by dividing the results into two periods - Early and Late Ottoman, some general trends can be observed. The imports from Sofia during the Early Ottoman period (15th to 17th century) are predominantly luxurious Ottoman pottery and ceramics from the Eastern Mediterranean. In the Late Ottoman period there was a rapid shift towards Central and Western European imports; that is to say, 90% of the total imports were Western imitations of Chinese porcelain. Although the pottery produced in Sofia and the region has continued to follow local traditions throughout the centuries, Central and Western European ceramics have also had immense impact on its local production since the 15th century. There is no information on Ottoman pottery tradition in Sofia; however, this is mostly a result of poor data.

Most of the imports to Varna during the 15th century were produced in Italy. Chinese porcelain was also present and continued being imported to the city throughout the Early and Late Ottoman periods. During the 16th-17th century, Mediterranean ceramics continued dominating the imports, with Ottoman pottery from Turkey being the most common, followed by Italian and Eastern Mediterranean ceramics. From the 18th century onwards, the share of Ottoman imports increased to 70%. The tradition of local ware production in the 15th century is largely unresearched, but local Bulgarian and Central European traditions are present.

During the 16th-17th century, Varna stands out with a large variety in local ware production compared to Sofia and Belgrade. Local Bulgarian and Ottoman traditions are often encountered, but Majolica imitations are most popular. During the transitional period of 17th-18th century, the Ottoman tradition became more widespread and after the 18th century it became the predominant tradition in the city, with more than 80% of the vessels categorised as 'Ottoman'. After the 17th century, local vessels which are considered to be unique for the region started to appear. This is not seen in the other two cities.

The ceramics from Belgrade are present in our data for a smaller period - 16th until 17th century, but some trends can be identified. Belgrade has the least imports from all three cities. During the period of continuous Ottoman occupation, most imports are luxurious Ottoman ceramics, such as Iznik Ware. After the conquest of the Habsburg Monarchy, many Central European imports were introduced to the city. Small amounts of Italian Majolica and Chinese porcelain are also present, but the variety of imports in Belgrade is quite poor compared to Sofia and Varna. The locally produced ceramics mainly followed the new Ottoman tradition - more than half of the local ware is categorised as typically Ottoman. One tradition which is not seen in either Sofia or Varna is the grey polished or metallic ware, which is widespread in the regions of Hungary and Serbia. It is considered to be a luxurious surface treatment and it is most popular on tableware.

Despite these differences, the local pottery from the three cities also share some similarities. All of the Sgraffito vessels found are tableware. Almost all of the painted and decorated vessels are tableware, but sometimes other objects such as jars, jugs and *ibriks* were also richly decorated. Monochrome glazed ceramics are predominantly tableware, but especially in Varna, large amounts of kitchenware can also be colourfully glazed. Unglazed and undecorated ceramics are most often kitchenware, especially in Belgrade during the 16th-17th century.

General trends among glaze colours can be observed throughout the Balkan region. Different shades of green and green-olive are the most popular choice of local potters in each city. Yellow and brown glaze are also a very common choice. In Varna, transparent glaze is extremely widespread until the 18th century, after which it completely disappears.

The local vessels from the three cities share similarity in motifs, with some differences. The vessels from Sofia are most commonly half or partly glazed or painted. In Belgrade, partly glazed/painted vessels are observed, but in addition there is a great variety of motifs such as incised or painted ornaments and geometric figures. Partly glazed vessels are rare in Varna, but colourful spots, which are not seen in Belgrade and Sofia, are common until the 18th century. Varna is also the only city out of the three, where a depiction of a human as a pottery decoration is seen. The potters from Varna tended to experiment with combinations of many different motifs, but after the end of the 17th century, the pottery designs were simplified and became less varied.

A detailed discussion of the results will follow in the next chapter. The demographic and historical situation of the three cities will be connected with the archaeological data. By these means, I will attempt to answer the research questions posed in the introduction.

Discussion

In this chapter, I will attempt to connect the gathered archaeological results with the available historical information about demographics. Further, by investigating the pottery from the three cities, it is my intention to identify any visible economic trends. First, the similarities between local and imported wares of each city will be examined. Since all three cities are Ottoman, they all share similar features, such as ratio of imports and style and decoration of their local pottery. This would provide a solid base, from which individual differences can easily be observed. After that, Belgrade, Sofia and Varna will be analysed separately. Whenever possible, the imported and local pottery from one city will be also be compared to the pottery from the other two cities. A short summary of the chapter will be included at the end.

Similarities

Empires shape unique landscapes, but recognising empires solely from archaeological data can be challenging (Schreiber 2001, 70). The Ottoman Empire left behind a large number of historical and administrative documents, as well as travel itineraries written by foreigners who visited the Ottoman lands. For this reason, and the fact that the Ottoman state continued existing until the early 20th century, it is hardly a question if the Ottoman political system was an empire. Tracing the extent of the Ottoman Empire by archaeology, however, is another story. An empire would leave several indications of its existence in the archaeological record, such as military and imperial infrastructure, regional administrative centres and finally, a capital (Schreiber 2001, 73). Even though pottery is not the best proxy that could be used to identify the status of a political system in the archaeological record, because it could easily be traded and exchanged (Schreiber 2001, 72), it is still a useful tool for tracing regional differences of an already recognised state, such as the Ottoman Empire.

To some extent, every empire homogenises the culture of its citizens, while it also recognises their differences (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 12). Local 'indigenous' economies are generally preserved and incorporated into the imperial system, even if often modified to serve the needs of the empire (Schreiber 2001, 74). Such is the case with the local pottery productions in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Local traditions were preserved during the Ottoman rule. Although different Ottoman pottery traditions were introduced, they did not replace what was already present. This is exactly what the data in this thesis suggest, as evidence from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna indicates that local pottery traditions have been preserved well into the Late Medieval, and even Early Modern periods. The situation seems to be similar in other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well. Traditional models of pottery production in Palestine, for example, mainly remained unchanged well into the Early Ottoman period (Salem 2009, 24). However,

even if some regional variations existed, Ottoman pottery was by nature fairly homogenous (Bikić 2003, 186).

From the 15th until the 19th century, there was a general uniformity of pottery in all regions of the Ottoman Empire, but in the period from the 16th until the 17th century is when local pottery from the tree cities is the most similar. By then, the Ottomans had been in Sofia and Varna for around two centuries and Belgrade had already been introduced to the Ottoman pottery tradition, as a result of trade and migration. The decoration of the local pottery from the three cities most often has parallels from all over the Balkan region (Pletnirov 2004, 212). One example is the Balkan Sgraffito ware, which was richly decorated ware mostly used by local nobles. After the Ottoman conquest, the Sgraffito decoration was simplified, but continued to be used as a decoration of tableware, usually made for common people, both in rural and urban areas across the Balkans. (Stancheva 1986, 95).

In addition, humans are rarely depicted on Ottoman pottery. Only in Varna we find a bowl with a drawing of a man smoking a chibouk pipe (Fig.35). This lack of anthropological decorations could be a feature of Ottoman ceramics. Since Islam condemns the use of human imagery in religious art (Graves 2014, 317), it is likely that this concept could have spread to the secular sphere. Muslim potters might have avoided drawing anthropological decoration on their pottery, and this might have become a trend among Christian potters as well.



Figure 35: A 17th-century bowl, with a decoration of a man smoking a chibouk pipe, found in Varna (after Pletnirov 2004).

The results from this thesis also illustrate great similarities in the preferred glazes for pottery, with different variations of green, yellow and brown being the most common choice among potters from the 15th until the 19th centuries. This could suggest a shared sense of aesthetics among the people in this region of the Ottoman Empire.

Imports in Belgrade, Sofia and Varna also share a lot of common traits. Ottoman luxury ware from Turkey was most frequently imported in these cities, especially from

the 16th to the 17th century. Data from various sites in Israel from the 16th to the 19th centuries suggest that the most common pottery imports there also came from the luxury pottery production centres of the Ottoman Empire, such as Iznik, Kütahya and Çanakkale (Avisar 2009, 13). Ceramics coming from Italy are the second most popular imports during the 16th-17th century and all three cities have a similar ratio of Italian imports, compared to the Turkish ones. This could easily be explained with the popularity of the Italian wares all over Europe. The foreign policies of the Italian states were very likely to be in favour of trade with the Ottomans (Çelik 2010, 2). The archaeological record also shows that Chinese porcelain was the third most common import in Belgrade, Sofia and Varna from the 16th to 17th century. It was imported in smaller quantities than either Italian or Iznik Ware, probably because of its high status and the fact that only some elites could afford it (Faroqi 2016, 56).

A completely different trend occurred in the Late Ottoman Period. With the advance of industrialisation in Western Europe, the Ottoman market was overflowed with mass-produced Western imitations of Chinese porcelain (Stancheva and Shangalova 1989, 125). The effect of Western industrialisation can be observed in every corner of the Ottoman Empire. Local pottery in both Sofia and Varna declined in variation and quality of production (Pletnirov 2004, 241). During the 18th-19th centuries, porcelain from the Meissen factory in Germany could be found in every corner of the Empire, as well as in Sofia and Varna. Recent excavations at the city of Acre (Akko), In Israel, also revealed Meissen porcelain cups from the 18th century which were imported in the city (Avisar 2009, 8).

Now that similar trends between the three cities have been discussed in the context of the Ottoman Empire, each city will be examined separately for its regional variations.

Belgrade

As mentioned in Chapter 2, throughout history, Belgrade has mostly been used as a military stronghold. During the Ottoman conquest of the 16th-17th century, the city continued with its military role, but this time instead of simply serving as a fortress with a strategic location, Belgrade was transformed into the main military winter quarters and stored large amounts of supplies for the Ottoman army (Bikić 2003, 175). Belgrade gradually turned into an urban centre, in which the role of craftsmen and merchants became more and more important. Because of high demand and the expansion of the city, traditional style pottery started to be produced in larger quantities than the periods before (Bikić 2003, 176).

The results from this research show that the pottery which was produced in the Ottoman tradition, or greatly influenced by it, was more than half of all pottery produced in Belgrade. In Sofia and Varna, the proportion of Ottoman pottery is not nearly as big as

in Belgrade. In addition, the population of Belgrade increased during the first couple of centuries of Ottoman rule, but later, in the 18th century, the population was halved following the Austro-Turkish wars (Stoianovich 1960, 249). Because of the military importance of the city, especially for the war with the Habsburg Monarchy, a large migration of Ottoman soldiers into Belgrade could explain these trends.

Most of the Ottoman pottery from Belgrade is homogenous, which means it is very similar in shape and decoration. One exception is the unique grey-polished (metallic) pottery (Fig.36). This type of pottery emerged under Ottoman influence in the region of southern Hungary during the 16th-17th centuries, but it was also produced in Belgrade (Bikić 2003, 187). The metallic pottery is considered a high quality product, and the fact that most of the metallic decoration is seen on tableware supports the idea of it being a luxurious ware connected with high social status. Further, two jugs of metallic ware were also found in Sofia (Guinova 2012, 685), and two in Varna (Pletnirov 2004, 144-145). These vessels are believed to have been imported from Hungary, but there are clear parallels between them and the finds from Belgrade. The fact that these vessels were traded over long distances means that they were probably valued and in high demand. This type of pottery was found in huge quantities in Belgrade, which would suggest that there was enough consumption of these expensive luxury vessels in the city, so that production could flourish. Since Belgrade became the centre of the Smederevo *sanjak*, there was probably a formation of a ruling class in the city. These ruling elites, soldiers from high military ranks, and successful merchants were probably the biggest consumers of this type of ware.



Figure 36: Various grey-polished vessels discovered in Belgrade, from the 16th-17th centuries (Bikić 2003, 148).

In addition to this locally produced luxurious ware, there was a large import of expensive ceramics into Belgrade. Similar to Sofia and Varna during the 16th-17th centuries, the largest proportion of imports in Belgrade are luxurious Ottoman vessels such as Iznik ware. A small number of Italian Majolica and Chinese porcelain were also discovered in the city. These luxurious wares were again probably used by the high class ruling and military Ottomans for showing off their superior status. Chinese porcelain is generally found in many Ottoman forts, which suggests that it was a common luxury item among high rank military leaders (Faroqhi 2016, 56).

Ottomans did not bring trade into Belgrade, but the expansion of the fortress into a city did have an effect on the development of the merchant class. However, Belgrade has a noticeably smaller amount and variety of imports than either Sofia or Varna. The most common imported ceramics - Iznik ware, accounts to less than 1% of the total Ottoman period assemblage found in Belgrade (Živković *et al.* 2017, 135). This ratio is considerably small, compared to the Iznik ware found in Sofia and Varna. For the purpose of the research in this thesis, only identified vessels were used. Still, significant amounts of Iznik sherds were collected from Sofia and Varna, while such numbers were not recorded from any publication on Ottoman pottery from Belgrade.

One reason for this big difference of imports, compared to Sofia and Varna, could be the fact that Belgrade was still developing its merchant class. The expansion of this settlement, which had been used mainly as a fortress, happened shortly after it was conquered by the Ottomans. In the 14th-15th century, when Sofia and Varna established trade networks all over the Ottoman Empire, Belgrade had mainly been used for the wars against the Ottomans and the main objectives of the fortress did not include expansion of its trade routes. Even after the transition of Belgrade into a city, the constant wars with the Habsburg Monarchy did not have a positive impact on its population, as most of them were soldiers.

The data in this thesis, collected from Belgrade, stops shortly after the conquest of the city by the Habsburg Monarchy in 1688. Although Belgrade continued developing as a city, the Austrian rule left a huge mark on pottery production and imports. Such was the case with Haban pottery, which might have been present in Belgrade before, but as a result of the new regime, it became one of the new symbols of the city's upper class (Bikić 2012, 207). Pottery data from 18th-19th-century Belgrade is generally lacking. From the little available information, it is clear that many Central European pottery types, brought to the city by Austrian presence, greatly influenced or completely replaced local traditions (Gajić-Kvašček *et al.* 2018, 10).

For further research, it would be interesting to make a more detailed analysis of the pottery from Ottoman Belgrade, and the pottery from Habsburg Belgrade. Further, historical sources point to a large migration of Bosnian Muslims into Belgrade in the

beginning of the 19th century, and observing differences in pottery assemblages from this period would be beneficial to our understanding of the nature of this migration.

Sofia

During the research period, the demography of Sofia underwent several major changes, which can also partly be traced in the archaeological record. Historical sources indicate that until the 16th century, the population of Sofia remained predominantly Bulgarian (Ishirkov 1912, 41). The collected data in this research supports this idea, since almost half of the 15th-century local pottery discovered in Sofia was categorised as part of the local Bulgarian pottery tradition. In comparison, only 11% of the local pottery from 15th-century Varna could be attributed to the tradition of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Not even Belgrade from the 16th-17th centuries had such a large proportion of local traditional ware.

The merchant class in Sofia, the majority of which was Jewish, was already well developed before the Ottoman conquest of the city (Ishirkov 1912, 45). Further, Sofia served as a centre of inland trade in the Ottoman Balkans, from which various goods were distributed to the regions of Serbia, Macedonia and even north beyond the Danube river (Ishirkov 1912, 54). The variety of imported ceramics in 15th-century Sofia indicates that the city received imports from all over the Ottoman Empire, such as Miletus ware, Eastern Mediterranean vessels and Near Eastern pottery coming from either Syria or Iran (Guinova 2012, 683).

After Sofia became the capital of the Rumelia eyelet in the 16th century, the city's economy and trade prospered. Many Ottoman Muslims migrated to Sofia, which dramatically shifted the demographics of the city, with Turks becoming the major population (Ishirkov 1912, 39). Since local pottery finds from 16th-17th-century Sofia are scarce, not much can be concluded from them. There is a slight decrease of the ratio of traditional Bulgarian style pottery, followed by an increase of local pottery traditions marked as 'unknown'. This trend could be somehow related to the demographic change; however, more research is necessary for a better analysis.

After the Black Sea was closed off for foreign non-Ottoman ships in the 16th century, Sofia's position as an international trade centre and its connections with Central Europe grew even more (Ishirkov 1912, 55). The results from this research indicate that Central European imports in 16th-17th-century Sofia made up a larger percentage compared to the imports in the 15th century. Varna also has noticeably less Central and Western European imports than Sofia, and even the evidence from Belgrade does not suggest any Western or Central European imports in the city, until it was taken over by the Habsburg Monarchy. In the 16th century, many merchant families from Dubrovnik moved to Sofia (Ishirkov 1912, 47). Since Ragusan merchant ships were allowed to navigate in the Black Sea at least until the end of the 16th century (Stoianovich 1960,

240), the migration of these families cannot be explained with the blocking of the Black Sea as a motivating factor. Traders from Dubrovnik were often engaged with the import of goods from Italy and especially Venice. From the ratio of the imported pottery from the 16th to the 17th century, it can be seen that Sofia received many more Italian imports than it did during the 15th century.



Figure 37: Various European porcelain cups found in Sofia from the 18th-19th centuries: (left) Meissen cups; (right) Uncategorised fragments of cups, produced in Germany and Austria (after Stancheva and Shangalova 1989).

It is generally thought that the Ottoman Empire entered a period of economic decay, starting from the late 17th century (Pletnirov 2004, 213). Further, in the beginning of the 18th century, the Turkish population of Sofia significantly declined and many Slavs and Albanians from the rural surroundings settled in the city (Stoianovich 1960, 250). Unfortunately, the pottery record from 18th-19th-century Sofia is quite incomplete. None of the locally produced pottery vessels from this period were assigned to a pottery tradition, since crucial data is lacking. For this reason, the economic decay cannot really be traced in the local production.

The analysed imported vessels during that period are also scarce, but they still offer a bit more information about the situation in Sofia than the local pottery. The variety of imports is fairly small, compared to previous periods. Around 90% of all imports are cheap mass-produced Central and Western European porcelain cups (Fig.37). Only a few vessels of Chinese porcelain and Kütahya ware were found.

Industrialism in Western Europe flourished in the 18th century. The Ottoman Empire, however, did not experience the same rapid development and it was forced to import many of the European manufactures (Stoianovich 1960, 259). By the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire became the third largest market for British manufactured goods (Inalcik 1996, 22). Since Sofia was an inland trade centre, from which Italian, Western and Central European goods were distributed all over the European part of the Ottoman Empire, it is likely that such a drastic economic shift would greatly affect the types of imports the city received.

In general, some pottery trends could be connected with the demographic changes of Sofia. More research, preferably on local pottery, is needed for better understanding of the situation of the city throughout the Ottoman period.

Varna

Unlike Belgrade and Sofia, the majority of Varna's population from the 15th until the 17th century was Christian (Pletnirov 2004, 12). It is not known, however, if these Christians were mostly Greek or Bulgarian. It is likely that Varna was inhabited with predominantly Greek merchants, since historical sources point out that Greeks were in control of the trade in the eastern Balkan Peninsula and the coast of the Black Sea (Stoianovich 1960, 241). The tradition of more than 70% of the local 15th-century pottery from Varna is marked with 'unknown'. From the analysed data, only 11% of the local production follows the local Bulgarian pottery tradition. In comparison, half of the 15th-century pottery from Sofia is produced in the 'Bulgarian' style. Still, the pottery data from this period of Varna is considerably small, and conclusions should be made with caution. Scholars generally agree that in Varna, the ceramics from the 15th century cannot be differentiated from the ceramics from the previous centuries (Pletnirov 2004, 211). From this information, it can be assumed that no major demographic or economic shifts occurred in Varna after it was conquered by the Ottomans.

The imported vessels from the 15th century are just a few - Italian pottery and Chinese porcelain. The Italian ware probably arrived in Varna by sea. Since the 15th century, the Black Sea was not completely cut off for European merchants. Venetian treaties in the 15th and early 16th century allowed Venetian merchant ships to sail in the Black Sea (Stoianovich 1960, 240). The presence of Chinese porcelain, which is the most valued ceramic in the Ottoman Empire, implies that the higher classes in Varna were rich enough to afford such an expensive ware.

First, the demographic shift in the late 17th century and the available pottery data will be discussed. In the second half of the 17th century, many Muslims from Anatolia migrated to Varna and thus became the major group in the city (Pletnirov 2005b). From the pottery data gathered in this thesis, a clear trend can be observed in the transitional period of the 17th-18th century. While before, in the 16th-17th centuries, Ottoman ware

made up about only one-fifth of the total local production, in the 17th-18th centuries its ratio increased to one-third of all local pottery. Finally, in the 18th-19th century the Ottoman tradition was observed on more than 80% of all ceramics, while Bulgarian and many other traditions had almost disappeared. While the fact that the Ottoman influence increased on local production can be interpreted as a sign of demographic change, a simple aesthetic motivation also cannot simply be ruled out. By the 18th century, Varna had already been a part of the Ottoman Empire for more than three centuries. The port of the city was mainly used for loading ships with grain to the capital (Çelik 2010, 21). Thus, because of the direct connection between Varna and Istanbul, it is likely that Ottoman influence was intensified in and around the city and that the pottery preferences shifted towards a more ‘oriental’ fashion. If that is the case, similar trends should also be observed in other parts of the Empire. However, it should also be taken into account that the population census of the Principality of Bulgaria in 1880 indicated that the majority of Varna’s inhabitants identified themselves as Turkish (Ishirkov 1929, 12). Since no major population shifts have been recorded after the 17th century, this census supports the correlation between migration and pottery from the results in this thesis.



Figure 38: 16th-17th century cups, imported to Varna from one of the old Byzantine centres in Greece. The decoration represents a bird, most probably a peacock (after Pletnirov 2004).

Some economic trends of Varna in both Early and Late Ottoman Period can also be observed from the local and imported pottery (Fig.38). In the 16th-17th century, Italian Majolica imitations made up the biggest proportion of Varna’s local pottery production. This tradition is not seen in either Belgrade or Sofia. Majolica imports from that period are also in abundance in Varna. Even though the Black Sea was cut off for European ships, it is known that Ragusan ships anchored in Varna at least until 1590 (Stoianovish 1960, 240). For this reason, it is likely that until the 17th century, Italian pottery was shipped to Varna by the Ragusans. Later, the Italian ware was most probably transported by land trade routes through Dubrovnik and Sofia.

The most common pottery imports from the 16th until the 19th century in Varna were luxurious Ottoman ware from Iznik, Kütahya and Çanakkale. The influence of these imports could be observed on local production as well. In the 16th-17th centuries, more than half of all Ottoman pottery in the city imitated Iznik Ware. This trend later declined in the 18th-19th centuries, probably connected with the decay of the Iznik production.

Interestingly enough, all Iznik ware in Varna was discovered in the Christian neighbourhoods of the city (Pletnirov 2002, 2-3). This shows that the consumers of Iznik ware were not limited only to upper-class Muslims. This luxurious ware was also valued among the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Further, it implies that the richest people in Varna were Christians. This could be supported with the idea of a well developed Greek merchant class. The fact that Varna was a *hass* of Sultan Selim I in the 16th century also suggests that it had a very successful commerce (Pletnirov 2005b). The considerable amounts of Chinese porcelain imports and the various local imitations of these luxurious imports also show the richness of the city during that period.

The local pottery production in Varna has some unique characteristics, in comparison to the local pottery from Belgrade and Sofia. While the most popular glaze colours from the 15th to the 19th century are green, yellow and brown, a big proportion of Varna's pottery from the 16th to the 18th century is covered with transparent glaze. This could be a result of the big influence of Iznik, Majolica and porcelain on local production (Fig.39). Transparent glaze was often used with various colourful decorations. Local potters tended to produce vessels of high quality and various decoration. Even cheap kitchenware was often monochrome glazed, unlike, for example, kitchenware from Belgrade which was predominantly unglazed and undecorated. The motifs on Varna's pottery are also often composed of various combinations of colours and incisions or



Figure 39: A 17th-18th century plate produced in Varna. The shape of the vessel and parts of the decoration are influenced by Iznik Ware (after Pletnirov 2004).

ornaments. This complicated decoration is not as often seen on vessels from either Belgrade or Sofia, where the local pottery decorations tend to be simpler.

After the 18th century, Varna experienced, to some degree, a decline in local pottery production. Ornaments, geometric, floral and faunal elements are rarely seen on pottery of the Late Ottoman Period (Pletnirov 2004, 212). The archaeological data points out that Sgraffito decoration has decreased in importance. Further, the colourful spots design is not seen on pottery from Varna after the 18th century and the combined motifs are also less frequent. Instead, the incised ornaments and geometric figures become popular. While it can be argued that this shows a creative decline in pottery production, the change of motifs could also be evidence for a change in stylistic preferences.

Imports in the city from the 18th-19th centuries show less variation than previous periods. Ceramics from Kütahya and Çanakkale are most popular, followed by Chinese porcelain. Unlike Sofia, which received large amounts of mass-produced Western porcelain, only a few Meissen cups were discovered in Varna. This could be explained with the fact that the Ottoman influence in Varna was stronger because of a more direct connection with Istanbul.

Varna offers a rich archaeological record which can often be related to the available historical information. Thus, it is possible to paint a relatively detailed picture of the situation in the city during the Ottoman rule.

Summary

In both Varna and Belgrade, a connection between locally produced pottery and demographics can often be made. Sofia does not offer much information on local pottery, but the imports from the city can be used to reconstruct trade routes, which have been described in historical texts. A further research on local pottery from Sofia can shed light on the situation after the 'Slavinization' of the city in the 18th century. More information about this phenomena will also contribute to our understanding of the situation in Varna and Belgrade, after the migration of Muslims to the cities.

Conclusion

The research in this thesis aimed to explore the pottery record of Belgrade, Sofia, and Varna from the Ottoman period (15th-19th century). My main research goal was to examine the differences in the archaeological data from the three cities and connect these differences to the historical evidence of demographics and economics in the regions. To achieve this goal, the research was divided into two parts. In the first one, the numbers and characteristics of local and imported vessels from Belgrade, Sofia and Varna were studied. After that, the information was analysed and related to the historical record of population and economic changes in the Ottoman period.

The pottery data was gathered from various publications on Sofia, Belgrade and Varna and a database of all analysed vessels was created. Only individual vessels were counted and uncategorised sherds were disregarded. There was a lot of available information on locally produced pottery from Belgrade and Varna. In Sofia, however, there is still not a large study on this subject, and therefore the city did not provide much information on local ware. The imports, on the other hand, were extensively studied in all three cities. Still, some issues connected with the pottery characteristics were present everywhere. Sometimes little to no information was given on the decoration and the use of a vessel.

In the Results and Discussion chapters, the number, type and shape of the local and imported vessels were analysed and the data from the cities was compared. There were many similarities across the cities, such as glaze colour preferences, pottery design and origins of pottery imports, however, there were also differences.

In Belgrade, local pottery produced in the Ottoman tradition became the most common type of pottery during the 16th-17th centuries. This observation supports the historical sources which suggest that there was a migration of Muslims into Belgrade after the Ottoman conquest. The number of imported ceramics in Belgrade is lower than in Varna or Sofia, but this could be related to the fact that Belgrade was mainly used as a fortress in pre-Ottoman times and the upper and merchant classes of the city were still developing.

There were large changes in the imported wares in Sofia from the 15th until the 19th century. During the 15th-17th centuries, Sofia served as an important trade centre and a capital of the *Rumelia eyalet*. In this period, the imported ceramics were numerous and diverse. After the 18th century, together with the economic decay of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of industrialism in the West, mass-produced European porcelain imitations seem to have flooded the market in Sofia. Even though the city went through large-scale demographic changes in the 16th and the 17th centuries, these changes cannot be traced well in the archaeological record. Data on locally produced pottery is scarce and not much can be concluded from the available information.

The connections of Varna with the core of the Ottoman Empire can clearly be observed in the imports of the city, and especially after the 18th century, when the majority of the imported pottery comes from Turkey. Further, a major shift in the tradition of the local pottery can be noticed after the 17th century. During that period, many Muslims migrated to the city and the demographics of Varna changed drastically, with Muslims making up the largest part of the population. The archaeological evidence also seems to indicate a change, since the stylistically diverse local ware from the 16th-17th centuries was largely replaced by Ottoman style pottery in the 18th-19th centuries.

The intention of this thesis was to provide more information on the Ottoman period, which remains generally unresearched in archaeology. Together with the analysis of the archaeological pottery data and the comparison between the pottery record and the historical sources, to some extent I managed to answer the main research question posed in the beginning of this thesis: differences in the economic and demographic situation of Belgrade, Sofia and Varna can indeed be observed in the archaeological record, even if the lack of pottery data in some cases interferes with a thorough analysis. A larger, more detailed study on Sofia's local ware from the Ottoman period is needed. In this way, the impact of the population changes on the local production can be studied properly.

This thesis concerned just three cities in the Ottoman Empire, but much of the Ottoman lands still remain unresearched by archaeologists. Pottery proved to be extremely useful in tracing trade and migration and expanding the research area would provide us with even more information which cannot be collected solely from historical sources. A similar ceramic analysis of urban areas in the Ottoman Levant, Turkey and Northern Africa could shed light on trade networks, demographics, and ethnic influences on a larger scale. Further, a study on the pottery assemblages from Belgrade during the Austrian rule could reveal how the archaeological record is affected by the sudden change of authority, and thus how trade and production differed from previous periods.

Abstract

The archaeology of the Ottoman Empire has rarely been the focus of research and the period has often been neglected by scholars. Although a lot of information is available from the extensive historical record of the empire, the archaeological data is scarce. Pottery from the Ottoman period, however, is the exception and it has been the subject of a large number of publications. The aim of this research was to analyse the pottery assemblages from three cities - Belgrade, Sofia, and Varna, during the Ottoman period, from the 15th until the 19th century. Since historical sources mention that the cities are economically and demographically very different from each other, the research aimed to see if these differences were visible in the archaeological record. For that purpose, publications of Ottoman period pottery from the three cities were studied. The number and characteristics of both imported and local pottery vessels were noted and the gathered data was added to a database. Finally, this database was analysed and the results were compared with written evidence of trade and population change. The results showed noticeable differences in the pottery assemblages, during periods of migration and economic decay. For both Belgrade and Varna, the ratio of locally produced pottery made in the Ottoman tradition seemed to increase during periods of Muslim migration into the cities. Unfortunately, lack of local pottery data from Sofia prevented similar analysis. The economic situation in the cities also seemed to correlate to the type and amount of the imported ceramics they received. The decline in the economic strength of the Ottoman Empire could possibly be identified with the decline of the variety in both local and imported pottery. Overall, this thesis proves that combining both archaeological and historical data could provide us with a remarkably detailed picture of the processes not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in every historical state. Further research could include new cities and regions into the dataset. This could allow for a better understanding of the economic and demographic processes within the Ottoman Empire.

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Appendix 1: All studied pottery from Belgrade

No	Local/ Imported	Type/Origins	Tradition	Type	Nr Vessels	15	16	17	18	19	Decoration	Glaze: Green/ Green-Olive	Glaze: Yellow	Glaze: Brown	Glaze: Other	Details:	Other
1	Imported	Luxury/ Turkish ware		Bowl	5		x										
2	Imported	Luxury/ Turkish ware		Bowl	2		x	x									
3	Imported	Luxury/ Turkish ware		Plate	1		x	x									
4	Imported	Luxury/ Turkish ware		Cup	2		x										
5	Imported	Luxury/ Turkish ware		Lid	1			x									
6	Imported	Italian Majolica		Jar	1			x									
7	Imported	Italian Majolica		Plate	2			x									
8	Imported	Chinese porcelain		Bowl	2		x	x									
9	Imported	Haban		Jar	2			x									Austrian period
10	Imported	Haban		Jug	1			x									Austrian period
11	Imported	Haban		Ewer	2			x									Austrian period
12	Imported	Haban		Lid	1			x									Austrian period
13	Imported	Haban		Bowl	1			x	x								Austrian period
14	Imported	Haban		Jug	4			x	x								Austrian period
15	Local		Serbian tradition		43		x										
16	Local		Serbian tradition	Pot	4		x	x									
17	Local		Serbian tradition	Pot	6		x	x									
18	Local		Serbian tradition	Bowl	3		x	x									
19	Local		Serbian tradition	Bowl	1	x		x									
20	Local		Serbian tradition	Lid	9		x	x									
21	Local		Serbian tradition	Baking tray	21		x	x									
22	Local		Serbian tradition	Cup	1		x	x									Incisions
23	Local		Serbian tradition	Pot	7		x	x									Incisions
24	Local		C/W European	Lid	4		x	x									Other
25	Local		C/W European	Jug	2		x	x									Other
26	Local		C/W European	Ewer	7		x	x									
27	Local		C/W European	Cup	1		x										
28	Local		C/W European	Bowl	4		x	x									
29	Local		C/W European	Pot	10		x	x									
30	Local		C/W European	Ewer	4		x	x									
31	Local		C/W European	Jug	8		x	x									
32	Local		C/W European	Cup	8		x	x									
33	Local		C/W European	Bowl	1		x	x									Geometric
34	Local		C/W European	Ewer	5		x	x									Ornaments
35	Local		C/W European	Plate	1		x	x									Ornaments
36	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	1		x	x									
37	Local		Ottoman	Pot	4		x	x									Rosettes/ Spirals
38	Local		Ottoman	Ewer	4		x	x									(Wavy)Lines/ Stripes
39	Local		Ottoman	Strainer	1		x	x									
40	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	38		x	x									
41	Local		Byzantine tradition	Bowl	16		x	x									
42	Local		Ottoman	Pot	19		x	x									
43	Local		Ottoman	Ewer	3		x	x									
44	Local		Ottoman	Lid	4		x	x									
45	Local		Ottoman	Plate	4		x	x									
46	Local		Ottoman	Jug	10		x	x									Rosettes/ Spirals
47	Local		Ottoman	Cup	8		x	x									
48	Local		Ottoman	SKP dispensers	2		x	x									
49	Local		Ottoman	Strainer	2		x	x									
50	Local		Ottoman	Jar	6		x	x									

No	Local/ Imported	Type/Origins	Tradition	Type	Nr Vessels	15	16	17	18	19	Decoration	Glaze: Green/ Green-Olive	Glaze: Yellow	Glaze: Brown	Glaze: Or her	Details:	Other
51	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	9		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x	x			Other	
52	Local		Ottoman	Pot	2		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x	x			Other	
53	Local		Ottoman	Ewer	9		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x		x		Other	
54	Local		Ottoman	Lid	1		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x	x			Ornaments	
55	Local		Ottoman	Plate	2		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x	x			Ornaments	
56	Local		Ottoman	Jug	3		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x				Ornaments	
57	Local		Ottoman	Cup	3		x	x			Painted/ Decorated					Partly glazed	
58	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	27		x	x			Sgraffio						
59	Local		Ottoman	Ewer	1		x	x			Sgraffio						
60	Local		Ottoman	Plate	6		x	x			Sgraffio						
61	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	4		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
62	Local		Ottoman	Pot	1		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
63	Local		Ottoman	Ewer	23		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
64	Local		Ottoman	Lid	8		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
65	Local		Ottoman	Plate	3		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
66	Local		Ottoman	Jug	4		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
67	Local		Ottoman	Ewer/berik	4		x	x			Un glazed/ little decorated						
68	Local		Ottoman	Ewer/berik	7		x	x			Monochrome	x					
69	Local		Ottoman	Ewer/berik	7		x	x			Painted/ Decorated			x		Combined	
70	Local		Ottoman	Ewer/berik	1		x	x			Sgraffio						
71	Local		Ottoman	Ewer/berik	5		x	x			Metallic/ Grayish						
72	Local		Serbian tradition	Small object	2		x	x			Monochrome						
73	Local		Serbian tradition	Candlestick holder	3		x	x			Monochrome						
74	Local		C/W European	Small object	2		x	x			Monochrome	x				Partly glazed	
75	Local		C/W European	Piggy bank	1		x	x			Un glazed/ little decorated					Partly glazed	
76	Local		Ottoman	Small object	1		x	x			Monochrome						
77	Local		Ottoman	Small object	3		x	x			Painted/ Decorated	x				(Wavy) Lines/ Stripes	
78	Local		Ottoman	Small object	2		x	x			Un glazed/ little decorated						
79	Local		Ottoman	Candlestick holder	2		x	x			Monochrome						
80	Local		Ottoman	Candlestick holder	1		x	x			Un glazed/ little decorated						
81	Local		Ottoman	Music instrument	1		x	x			Un glazed/ little decorated						
82	Local		Ottoman	Night pot	12		x	x			Monochrome	x					

Appendix 2: All studied pottery from Sofia

No	Local/Imported	Type/Origins	Tradition	Type	Nr Vessel	15	16	17	18	19	Decoration	Glaze: Green/	Glaze: Green-Yellow	Glaze: Brown	Glaze: Other	Details:	Other
1	Imported	Mileus		Vessel	8	x											
2	Imported	Iznik		Vessel	4		x										
3	Imported	Iznik		Plate	2		x										
4	Imported	Iznik		Jar	1			x									
5	Imported	Iznik		Ewer	1				x								
6	Imported	Eastern Mediterranean		Bowl	2					x							
7	Imported	Eastern Mediterranean		Jug	1			x									
8	Imported	Eastern Mediterranean		Bowl	2					x							
9	Imported	Eastern Mediterranean		Jug	2					x							
10	Imported	Chinese porcelain		Cup	1					x							
11	Imported	Chinese porcelain		Cup	2					x							
12	Imported	Chinese porcelain		Cup	2					x							
13	Imported	Near East		Bowl	1					x							
14	Imported	Spain/Valencia		Vessel	2					x							
15	Imported	Spain/Valencia		Bowl	1					x							
16	Imported	Spain/Valencia		Jug	2					x							
17	Imported	Italian		Plate	2					x							
18	Imported	Italian		Plate	2					x							
19	Imported	Italian		Bowl	1					x							
20	Imported	Italian		Vessel	1					x							
21	Imported	Central Europe		Vessel	1					x							
22	Imported	Central Europe		Jug	3					x							
23	Imported	Meissen		Cup	5					x							
24	Imported	Meissen		Cup	10					x							
25	Imported	Meissen		Cup	3					x							
26	Imported	Thuringia		Cup	22					x							
27	Imported	England		Cup	3					x							
28	Imported	Venna		Cup	7					x							
29	Imported	Luxury Turkish ware		Ewer	1					x							
30	Imported	Luxury Turkish ware		Bowl	1					x							
31	Imported	Luxury Turkish ware		Cup	3					x							
32	Imported	Kutahya		Cup	1					x							
33	Imported	Luxury Turkish ware		Ewer/Id	2					x							
34	Local		Unknown	Jug	29					x							Incisions
35	Local		Unknown	Ewer	2					x							
36	Local		Unknown	Pot	2					x							
37	Local		Unknown	Jar	1					x							Relief
38	Local		Unknown	Ewer	4					x							Partly glazed
39	Local		Unknown	Plate	1					x							Ornaments
40	Local		Unknown	Jar	1					x							Ornaments
41	Local		Unknown	Vessel	1					x							
42	Local		BG tradition	Ewer	20					x							Partly glazed
43	Local		C/W European	Ewer	3					x							Ornaments
44	Local		Majolica imitation	Ewer	1					x							
45	Local		C/W European	Ewer	2					x							
46	Local		C/W European	Amphora	8					x							
47	Local		Unknown	Cup	1					x							
48	Local		Unknown	Vessel	1					x							
49	Local		Unknown	Ibric	4					x							Floral motifs
50	Local		Unknown	Piggy bank	9					x							

also early 20th c.

No	Local/Imported	Type/Origins	Tradition	Type	Nr. Vessels	15	16	17	18	19	Decoration	Green/Olive	Glaze: Yellow	Glaze: Brown	Glaze: Other	Details:	Other
60	Local		C/W European	Ever	2						Painted/ Decorated					Combined	
61	Local		Ottoman	Ever	2						Sgraffito					Combined	
62	Local		Unknown	Ever	7						Painted/ Decorated					Combined	some sgraffito
63	Local		Ottoman	Ever	11						Painted/ Decorated					Combined	some sgraffito
64	Local		Majolica imitation	Ever	41						Sgraffito					Combined	also painted/ decorated vessels
65	Local		Majolica imitation	Ever	1						Sgraffito						
66	Local		Unknown	Ever/Id	5						Monochrome						
67	Local		BG tradition	Cup	32						Painted/ Decorated						
68	Local		C/W European	Cup	5						Painted/ Decorated						
69	Local		Unknown	Cup	1						Painted/ Decorated						
70	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Cup	22						Painted/ Decorated						
71	Local		C/W European	Cup	2						Sgraffito						
72	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Cup	1						Unglazed/ little decorated						
73	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Cup	18						Painted/ Decorated						
74	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Cup	19						Painted/ Decorated						
75	Local		Unique for the region	Cup	2						Painted/ Decorated						
76	Local		Ottoman	Cup	16						Painted/ Decorated						
77	Local		Unknown	Bowl	32						Painted/ Decorated						
78	Local		Unknown	Bowl	19						Sgraffito						
79	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	22						Painted/ Decorated						
80	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	3						Painted/ Decorated						
81	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	17						Sgraffito						
82	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Bowl	13						Painted/ Decorated						
83	Local		Chinese imitation	Bowl	17						Painted/ Decorated						
84	Local		Chinese imitation	Bowl	4						Painted/ Decorated						
85	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	8						Sgraffito						
86	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	12						Painted/ Decorated						
87	Local		Unknown	Bowl	13						Painted/ Decorated						
88	Local		Unknown	Bowl	1						Sgraffito						
89	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	18						Painted/ Decorated						
90	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	1						Sgraffito						
91	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	22						Painted/ Decorated						
92	Local		Ottoman	Bowl	1						Painted/ Decorated						
93	Local		BG tradition	Bowl	3						Sgraffito						
94	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	36						Painted/ Decorated						
95	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	8						Sgraffito						
96	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	9						Painted/ Decorated						
97	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	6						Sgraffito						
98	Local		Unique for the region	Plate (bordo)	3						Painted/ Decorated						
99	Local		Majolica imitation	Plate (bordo)	4						Painted/ Decorated						
100	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	14						Painted/ Decorated						
101	Local		BG tradition	Plate (bordo)	9						Monochrome						
102	Local		Unknown	Plate (bordo)	2						Painted/ Decorated						
103	Local		Unknown	Plate (bordo)	2						Monochrome						
104	Local		Unknown	Plate (bordo)	4						Painted/ Decorated						
105	Local		Byzantine tradition	Plate (bordo)	5						Monochrome						
106	Local		Byzantine tradition	Plate (bordo)	1						Sgraffito						
107	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Plate (china)	20						Painted/ Decorated						
108	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Plate (china)	3						Sgraffito						
109	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Plate (china)	6						Monochrome						
110	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Plate (china)	117						Painted/ Decorated						
111	Local		C/W European	Plate (china)	3						Painted/ Decorated						
112	Local		Unknown	Plate (china)	9						Painted/ Decorated						
113	Local		Unknown	Plate (china)	9						Sgraffito						
114	Local		Unknown	Plate (china)	3						Painted/ Decorated						
115	Local		Unknown	Plate (china)	3						Monochrome						
116	Local		Unique for the region	Plate (china)	8						Painted/ Decorated						
117	Local		Ottoman/znik imitation	Plate (china)	10						Painted/ Decorated						
118	Local		Ottoman	Lug	3						Painted/ Decorated						
119	Local		Ottoman	Lug	11						Painted/ Decorated						

№	Local/Imported	Type/Origins	Tradition	Type	Nr Vessels	15	16	17	18	19	Decoration	Glaze:				Details:	Other
												Green/Olive	Yellow	Brown	Other		
120	Local		Unknown	Jug	6			X	X		Painted/Decorated	X				Incisions	Ship vessels
121	Local		Unknown	Jug	1			X	X		Painted/Decorated		X			Incisions	Ship vessels
122	Local		Unknown	Jug	4		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated					Incisions	Ship vessels
123	Local		Unknown	Jug	8		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated	X				Combined	Ship vessels
124	Local		BG tradition	Bottle	3		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated	X				Incisions	
125	Local		Unknown	Bottle	3		X	X	X		Monochrome	X	X			Incisions	
126	Local		Unknown	Storage vessel	2		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated	X		X		Incisions	
127	Local		BG tradition	Storage vessel	4		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated					Combined	
128	Local		Unknown	Jar	1			X	X		Monochrome	X				Incisions	
129	Local		Central Asian	lbrk	3		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated					Incisions	
130	Local		Unknown	lbrk	12		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated	X	X			Incisions	
131	Local		Ottoman	lbrk	13		X	X	X		Unglazed/little decorated					Incisions	
132	Local		Ottoman	lbrk	3		X	X	X		Painted/Decorated					Spots	
133	Local		Unknown	lbrk	1		X	X	X		Monochrome	X				Incisions	
134	Local		Unknown	lbrk	1		X	X	X		Monochrome			X		Incisions	
135	Local		Ottoman	lbrk	1		X	X	X		Monochrome			X		Incisions	
136	Imported	Istanbul	Unknown	Basin	17			X	X		Painted/Decorated	X		X		Geometric	
137	Local		Byzantine tradition	Lamp	4			X	X		Painted/Decorated		X			Spots	
138	Local		Unknown	Candlestick holder	1			X	X		Painted/Decorated					Combined	
139	Local		Unknown	Candlestick holder	3			X	X		Painted/Decorated					Combined	
140	Local		Unique for the region	Candlestick holder	6			X	X		Painted/Decorated					Combined	
					1				X		Painted/Decorated					Combined	