

Rotroff 1997: S. Rotroff. Hellenistic Pottery. Athenian and Imported Wheelmade Table Ware and Related Material. Princeton, 1997 (The Athenian Agora 29).

Rotroff 2004: S. Rotroff. Two emblemata from the Athenian Agora. - Mediterranean Archaeology 17, 2004, 71-78.

Rotroff, Oliver 2003: S. Rotroff and A. Oliver Jr. The Hellenistic Pottery from Sardis: The Finds through 1994. Cambridge Ma/London, 2003.

Πατσιαδά 1983: Β. Πατσιαδά Κεραμική του τύπου της „Δυτικής κλίτους” απο τη Ρόδο. - Αρχ. Δελτ. 38/1, 1983, 105-210.

Cup with relief and West Slope decoration from the necropolis of Mesambria Pontica (Abstract)

Anelia Bozkova

The article discusses a ceramic cup from the necropolis of Mesambria Pontica, discovered several decades ago in a cist grave. The dimensions of the cup are 6.3 x 15.3 cm, its shape resembling a hemisphere with rounded bottom and no additional foot. Only the interior of the vase is decorated. On the bottom, there is a complex relief device with floral elements, and the interior of the walls is decorated in West Slope style. The decoration consists of a central band of stylized Ionic cymation, on both sides of which there are two narrower bands, filled with white dots. The general impression is that the painted decoration is executed carelessly, without precision regarding the individual ornaments and the details. The cup belongs to a novel morphological type of the Hellenistic period, of hemispherical or conical shape, with central a device (medallion) and decoration on the interior of the vase. Such vases were manufactured both in pottery and metal (silver). The analysis indicates that the medallions of floral motives are extremely rare on ceramic cups with interior decoration and in this respect the cup from Nesebar is definitely an extraordinary product of the Hellenistic artistic crafts. The absence of parallels in pottery is compensated for by very close resemblance to silver vases with identical silhouette (including from Thrace), adduced as parallels in the text. The analysis of the decoration on the walls leads to the conclusion that the cup has the specific stylistic features and is very close to the ornamental repertoire of the so-called Microasiatic West Slope decoration. The

main element, a stylized Ionic cymation, could be seen on other specimens of the Microasiatic (“Pergamene”) circle, and the motif of a band of dots is also typical of the Microasiatic repertoire. Based on these observations, it is suggested that the cup from Nesebar is related precisely to the Microasiatic West Slope artistic style and was a product of a workshop in the Microasiatic cultural and geographical region. Regarding the rosette on the bottom of the cup from Nesebar, it is close to the decoration of silver vases (such as three specimens in the Metropolitan Museum), the manufacture of which seems to be scattered among numerous workshops, mostly in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Based on the parallels with silver vases and on the chronology of the datable items in the grave where it was found, the cup from Nesebar is dated to the late 3rd c. BC. One of the parallels, adduced in the analysis of the vase, is a silver cup from Tumulus No. 81 (“Sashova Tumulus”) in the necropolis at Shipka, near Kazanlak, which was declared in the primary publication “a product of the Thracian art” and reproduced in numerous catalogues of exhibitions abroad. In fact, both artifacts from Bulgaria were undoubtedly made in workshops in the new artistic centers of the Hellenistic world. They are testimonies to specific commercial imports in the West Pontic region on the one hand, and on the other in the Thracian interior, related to the emblematic attributes for symposium, feasting and funerary banquet, typical of both cultural spheres in the Late Hellenistic Period.