

General similarities and differences between the pottery from the period of Byzantine domination over Bulgarian territories (11th and 12th century) and the pottery of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (the late 12th to 14th century)

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A number of allegations about the typical pottery features in the period of Byzantine domination (11th and 12th century) could be found in Bulgarian archeological literature. Some of them present a wrong view about the pottery from 11th and 12th century, which provoked me to write this article.

There are technological, formal, and typological differences between the pottery of these two periods. The earlier pottery was made on a potter's wheel moved by hand or foot, while the later one was made mainly on a treadle potter's wheel. In 11th and 12th century, the clay was mixed with a large quantity of fine mica and fine sand. This pottery continued the Old Bulgarian pottery traditions. Vessels had clumsier bodies and thicker walls. There were layers of sand on the bottom and signs were still incised on them (fig. 1). Incised decoration covered the vessels' shoulders only. The incised signs on the bottom decreased in number, the walls became thinner and the neck straightened. Later on, in 13th and 14th century, the potter's hand-wheel was completely replaced by the treadle wheel.

The 13th and 14th century ceramic vessels made on a treadle potter's wheel had slimmer

bodies and thinner walls. The bottoms were always cut off and smoothed afterwards. In some cases, the eccentric circles left by the cutting are visible (fig. 2). Burnished decoration as well as handles with oval section always connecting the rim and the carination appeared (fig. 2).

In 13th and 14th century, pottery vessels had well refined clay paste without sand inclusions. The vessels' walls became thinner; the bottoms were cut and smoothed afterwards. Some vessels were decorated with combinations of incised and burnished ornaments covering almost the entire body. White painted decoration appeared at the end of the 13th century. Some vessels had colorless transparent glaze on the interior part and on the rim. The handles were also different (figs. 3-5).

There is a difference regarding the interior or the exterior pottery surface as well. The 11th and 12th century layer yielded golden and red slipped ware, which is not found in the 13th and 14th century pottery assemblage.

The pottery analyses provided the conclusion that the later assemblage has been a direct descendant of the earlier one.