


# Late Roman Fine Pottery from North-Western Asia Minor Found in Nea Paphos The Evidence from *Maloutena*

KRZYSZTOF DOMŻALSKI, MONIKA MIZIOŁEK

**Abstract:** This paper presents Eastern Sigillata C and Late Roman C ware vessels, discovered during the excavations in two residence buildings in the south-western area of Nea Paphos (*Maloutena*): the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion. One of the buildings, the House of Aion, destroyed by an earthquake in the late fourth century, was subsequently abandoned and demolished. The much larger residential complex of the Villa of Theseus was repaired, enlarged and continued to be inhabited for several decades after the same disaster, but for unknown reasons it was abandoned by its regular dwellers shortly after the mid-fifth century, and gradually ruined afterwards. The studied materials were found in the contexts connected with the aforementioned, chronologically defined events. This gave us a unique insight into the ceramics used in Nea Paphos in the fourth and early/mid-fifth centuries, which is the least known time of production of the two fine wares imported from the Pergamene and Phocaeen regions in north-western Asia Minor.

**Keywords:** Late Roman Cyprus, Nea Paphos, Villa of Theseus, House of Aion, terra sigillata, red slip wares, Pergamon, Phokaia/Phocaea

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In 2025, we celebrate the 60th anniversary of Polish archaeological investigations in Nea Paphos, started by prof. Kazimierz Michałowski and then directed for many decades by prof. Wiktor A. Daszewski, who discovered the most impressive residential buildings, richly decorated with mosaic floors, called Villa of Theseus and House of Aion. Regular

excavations carried out in these buildings until the late second decade of the twenty-first century yielded large amounts of ceramic materials. The majority of them were discarded after the initial analysis, and the diagnostic fragments provided the dataset for further studies. Of all these finds, only Hellenistic ceramics, originating from contexts preceding the construction of the above-mentioned residences, have been subject to a monographic study by prof. Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka.<sup>1</sup> Roman pottery still awaits comprehensive research and publication, as only a part of the Late Antique fine ceramics was published by dr Henryk Meyza in the work devoted to Late Roman D ware.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the authors of this paper decided to mark the aforementioned anniversary by presenting contemporaneous fine wares imported from the north-western part of Asia Minor (Pergamon, Pitane, Grynaion, Phokaia/Phocaea), found in the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion.

There are two reasons for this choice of materials discussed below. The first stems from the clearly defined and unambiguously dated contexts of the finds: the destruction of the House of Aion in the late fourth century and the abandonment of the Villa of Theseus after the mid-fifth century. They provide a comprehensive insight into the repertoire of imported luxurious ceramic vessels used by the inhabitants. The second reason is related to the history of production and long-distance trade in fineware vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean, and their consumption in Cyprus, in the Roman times including Late Antiquity.

The main production centers for this type of pottery, supplying the island, were located in Asia Minor and its immediate vicinity. During the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods, Cyprus received almost exclusively vessels manufactured in the southern part of Asia Minor and the adjacent Levantine coast: initially mainly Eastern Sigillata A from Cilicia or north-western Syria, later on predominantly Eastern Sigillata D from Pamphylia.<sup>3</sup> Imports from the western coast of Asia Minor: Eastern Sigillata B from Meander valley, and Eastern Sigillata C from Pergamon and Pitane,<sup>4</sup> reached the island in negligible quantities, as did products from even further regions in the Western Mediterranean. The situation changed drastically in the third century, when Eastern Sigillata A, B, and D ceased to be produced, leaving the only significant supplier in the Pergamene region (Eastern Sigillata C).<sup>5</sup> It was then that, for the first time, larger quantities of the fineware vessels produced there began to reach Cyprus. The recovery of production and long-distance trade in the discussed pottery began in the fourth century and included the Pamphylian centre, manufacturing vessels called Late Roman D ware, the successor of Eastern Sigillata D, while the Pergamene workshops, converting the production of Eastern Sigillata C vessels to the Late Roman C ware ones, gradually declined, and were finally transferred to Phokaia/Phocaea, from where the export of Late Roman C ware, known also as Phocaeen Red Slip ware, continued on a much larger scale than before.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Papuci-Władyka 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Meyza 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Hayes 1985: 1–48, 79–91.

<sup>4</sup> Hayes 1985: 49–78; Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Hayes 1972: 316–322.

<sup>6</sup> Hayes 1972: 316–386; 1980: 525–527.

The finds from *Maloutena* provide valuable evidence about this least-known phase of the production of the latest terra sigillata vessels and the first red slip ware ones, in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since the dominating Late Roman D ware finds have been extensively studied in the monograph by Meyza,<sup>7</sup> it seems important to supplement this picture by presenting the aforementioned, quantitatively and qualitatively significant imports from north-western Asia Minor. After a detailed discussion of the contexts of the fineware finds in the ruins of the House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus, the collected fragments are analysed below in typo-chronological order, against the background of the wide distribution of both products. Of particular importance is the presentation of the repertoire of vessel forms, as well as the determination of the share of their influx from individual production centres.

## THE VILLA OF THESEUS AND THE HOUSE OF AION – RISE AND DECLINE

Nea Paphos was hit by several earthquakes during the Roman period. The most devastating for the settlement in its south-westernmost part, called in modern times *Maloutena*, were two such events, in the early second century and in the late fourth century. The first of the earthquakes destroyed Hellenistic buildings regularly spaced in this part of the city, the most spectacular of which is the partially preserved ‘Hellenistic’ House, excavated in the last decades.<sup>8</sup> In the later years of the second century, the area affected by the earthquake was partially rebuilt in a slightly changed form, as exemplified by the House of Dionysos,<sup>9</sup> and partially levelled for the construction of a vast residence, known as the Villa of Theseus (**Fig. 1**).<sup>10</sup> This residential complex was continuously inhabited and underwent further reconstructions connected with clean-up and repair works after subsequent earthquakes. Despite the latest, most impressive, enlargement after the disastrous earthquake in the late fourth century, some unknown reasons led to its final abandonment by regular inhabitants shortly after the mid-fifth century.<sup>11</sup>

The history of the second building discussed in this paper is slightly different. The House of Aion was built in the late third century east of the Villa of Theseus, from which it was separated by a street (**Fig. 1**). This area remained undeveloped until after the earthquake of the early second century, when it was cleared to the walking-level of the neighbouring residence. In the next century, the *insula* adjacent to the Villa of Theseus from the east, north of the street leading to it from the harbour, was built up with smaller houses, including House of Aion, which gained its fame and name thanks to its preserved figural floor mosaics and wall paintings.<sup>12</sup> These rich decorations were made during repair works conducted

<sup>7</sup> Meyza 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Hayes 1991: 212.

<sup>10</sup> Medeksza 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Lichocka 2021: 193.

<sup>12</sup> The northern extent of the House of Aion is still not clear to the excavators, who have hypothesised the existence of a separate building in the northern part of the aforementioned *insula*, tentatively naming it North-Eastern House (Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 169–181). However, since this issue has not been definitively resolved,

after an earthquake or earthquakes which affected Nea Paphos in the early fourth century.<sup>13</sup> Complete destruction was, however, brought about by a much more devastating earthquake in the late fourth century, probably in the years 380–390s, after which the whole building was demolished and levelled to again create an open space in front of the main entrance to the repaired and significantly enlarged Villa of Theseus.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up the history of the two best-preserved and most richly decorated late Roman residences in *Maloutena*, it should be stated that in the case of the House of Aion, regular occupation ended in the late fourth century, while the Villa of Theseus continued to be inhabited until the beginning of the second half of the fifth century. This is clearly evidenced by numerous numismatic finds collected in layers of destruction and abandonment,<sup>15</sup> confirmed also by other categories of archaeological materials, including the finds of fine pottery.<sup>16</sup> Despite the fact that the finds of fine ware fragments, including those discussed below, are not particularly numerous, they provide insight into the provenance and shapes of the vessels used by the wealthy inhabitants of Nea Paphos in the above-mentioned periods. The basis for the analysis of these materials is the precise characterisation of the archaeological contexts in which they were found, and these contexts are different for the two buildings.

Before being finally abandoned, the ruins of the House of Aion were thoroughly searched and cleared of all kinds of valuable movable property, as well as of some construction elements, stone and wooden, which could have been used elsewhere. During the archaeological excavations, almost no ceramic vessels that would have been broken during the earthquake, were identified in the ruins and found *in situ*. However, several dozen small bronze coins, which had been in circulation directly before the earthquake, were collected there. Since their value was too small to constitute a serious loss for the surviving inhabitants, they were overlooked during the aforementioned search.<sup>17</sup>

It can be assumed that the described cleaning works lasted from several months to several years and, as a result, the still visible ruins of the House of Aion, which comprised walls preserved slightly above the floors, covered with stone rubble layer, 0.5–1.0m thick, were filled up with earth and small stones, creating an evenly levelled area. Archaeological materials found both directly on the floors of the House of Aion and in the mentioned backfill layer provide a chronologically homogeneous overview of various utensils used in the fourth century, with only a few intrusive finds revealed directly under the topsoil. The heavily fragmented sherds of the examined fine pottery within the House of Aion were scattered randomly in several rooms (**Fig. 1**).

The find contexts of the studied materials from the Villa of Theseus are partly different. This vast building, as mentioned above, also suffered during the late fourth century earthquake.

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and the described history of construction and devastation concerns the entire *insula*, this article presents pottery finds from the whole area, referred to for clarity as the House of Aion.

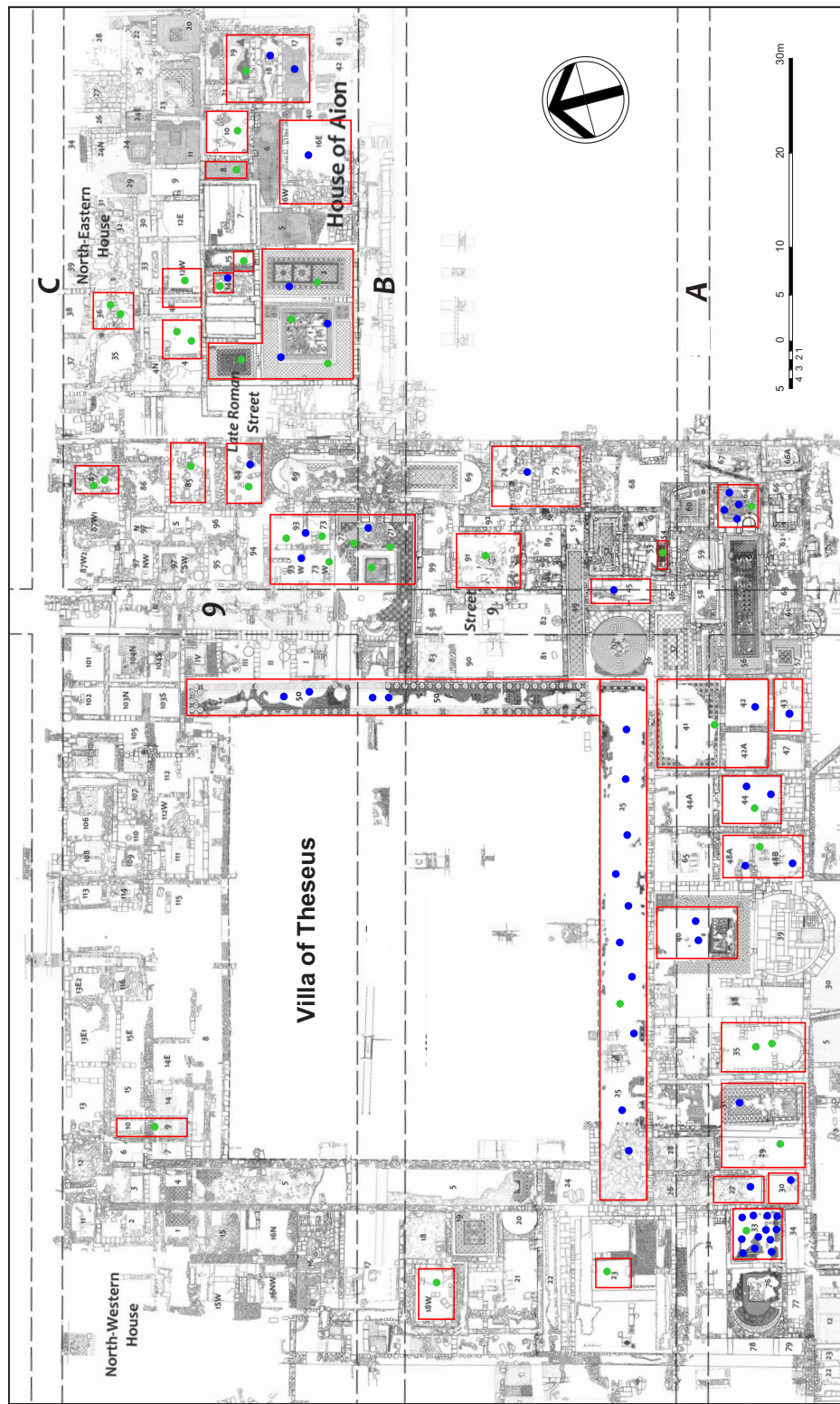
<sup>13</sup> Daszewski 1985: 47.

<sup>14</sup> Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 146, 207.

<sup>15</sup> Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 185–206; Lichocka 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 150–181; Meyza 2007: 126–133.

<sup>17</sup> Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 185–206.



1. House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus, with identified findspots of Eastern Sigillata C and Late Roman C ware, marked in green and blue, respectively (Drawing: S. Medeksza, M. Słowińska, A. Brzozowska-Jawornicka; courtesy of PCMA, UW; processing: M. Miziolek).



However, the destruction was not that serious, especially in the southern part, as it was decided to rebuild and enlarge the entire residential complex. As a result, the significantly expanded building was inhabited until the beginning of the second half of the fifth century, when it was abandoned, and afterwards fell into ruin, being partly adapted to various activities by the so-called squatters,<sup>18</sup> gradually demolished, and finally treated as a resource of building materials to be used in other parts of the city.

At the time of the commencement of excavations, the western, northern and eastern wings of the Villa of Theseus were covered by accumulation layers with a small total thickness of 0.5–1.0m, similar to those covering the House of Aion. Only the foundations and lower parts of the walls were preserved, as well as some pavements and walking levels. The picture was different in the southern part, where the walls were noticeably better preserved, and the rooms were covered with accumulated layers up to a height of 1.5–2.5m. The observed difference resulted from the fact that the southern, oldest part of the residential complex was built of much larger, regular stone blocks, while the walls of the wings added at the end of the fourth century were definitely less stable, made of much smaller, often irregular stones.

The distribution of the analysed pottery in the Villa of Theseus is also largely random (**Fig. 1**). This is particularly true of the west, north and east wings. The finds from there are characterised by significant fragmentation and were collected both in levelling layers made during the expansion of the residence in the late fourth century, as well as in mixed layers which accumulated after the abandonment of the building in the next century. The finds from the southern part of the Villa of Theseus, which has survived to our times in a much better state of preservation, can be divided in two categories of a different nature. The fragments collected in a number of rooms, in the layers above their floors, are noticeably larger in size, which indicates that they were discarded or left shortly before the building was abandoned by its regular residents. Of particular note here is the assemblage from Room 33. However, in the mixed accumulated layers formed after the dismantling of the upper structural parts, smaller fragments of the examined ceramics were also found in noticeable numbers. They ended up there accidentally, together with the levelling layers deposited after the final abandonment of the ruins.

## LATEST TERRA SIGILLATA AND EARLIEST RED SLIP WARES

The contexts described above, linked directly or indirectly to the destruction in the late fourth century, and to the final decline of the residential settlement activity in *Maloutena* in the second half of the following century, clearly indicate that imported fine ware vessels were commonly used by the inhabitants of this most prestigious part of Nea Paphos in Late Antiquity. Finds from the earlier periods, mostly late Hellenistic and early Roman vessels, usually strongly fragmented, which had been used before the construction of the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion, were in their majority buried in ruins and levelling

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<sup>18</sup> Pawlik 2018.

layers preceding the construction of the described residential complexes.<sup>19</sup> Some of their fragments were, however, also found as residual materials in later contexts. Subsequently, during the regular occupation of both buildings in the late second–early fourth century, everyday waste which may have contained ceramic fragments was deposited away from the residences. Therefore, the finds from occupation times preceding significantly the aforementioned destructions and abandonment, are rare in the investigated area.

Considering the diachronic changes in fine pottery market, it should be mentioned that the third century is known as a crisis period in the production and distribution of terra sigillata in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup> The Eastern Sigillata A and D workshops, located hypothetically in the north-western part of Syria or in Cilicia,<sup>21</sup> as well as in Pamphylia,<sup>22</sup> respectively, which had been the main suppliers of Cyprus since the late Hellenistic period, ceased or drastically reduced the volumes of their production. The influx of vessels from outside the region, Eastern Sigillata B and C from the western coast of Asia Minor,<sup>23</sup> was marginal, as it was even before the crisis.

The situation changed gradually in the fourth century, when the production of vessels macroscopically related to Eastern Sigillata D, called Late Roman D ware, was revived in Pamphylia,<sup>24</sup> reaching Cyprus along with imports from more distant workshops. At that time, the growing demand for fine ware vessels and the inability of the closest factories to satisfy it, caused an unprecedented increase in supplies from other producers, particularly those still active in the Aegean, manufacturing Eastern Sigillata C and then Late Roman C vessels around Pergamon. These workshops were soon transferred to Phokaia/Phocaea, where they achieved their highest rates of activity in the following centuries.<sup>25</sup> The remaining imported vessels, although quantitatively insignificant, were supplied by North African producers (African Red Slip ware).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Papuci-Władyka 1995: 61–62; Miziołek, Marzec 2024: 41.

<sup>20</sup> Lund 1992; 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Hayes 1985: 1–48.

<sup>22</sup> Hayes 1985: 79–91. For many decades, the hypothesis that Eastern Sigillata D (ESD) and its successor, Late Roman D (LRD) ware, were produced in Cyprus, was uncritically accepted, and these vessels were called Cypriot Sigillata (Hayes 1967) and Cypriot Red Slip ware (Hayes 1972: 371–386). This was due to the lack of knowledge of pottery on the Pamphylian coast, and to the ambiguous results of archaeometric analyses (Meyza 2007: 17–20; Lund 2024: 227–228, with further references). The recent discovery of LRD ware production remains at Pednelissos (Zelle 2014), and a new reading of a stamp on an ESD vessel indicating its origin from Aspendos (Lund 2024: 228) clearly show the need to abandon the misleading names. As we are only at the beginning of identifying the locations of all workshops manufacturing these vessels, it seems reasonable to return to the original designation, introduced by Frederick O. Waagé for LRD ware (Waagé 1948: 52), and to the nomenclature proposed by Kathleen M. Kenyon (Crowfoot, Crowfoot, Kenyon 1957: 282–284) for ESD, which have been applied in this article.

<sup>23</sup> Hayes 1985: 49–78; Lund 2015: 163–168. During the reported excavations in *Maloutena*, only single, isolated fragments of vessels imported from the Pergamene region were identified (Papuci-Władyka 1995: 220–221).

<sup>24</sup> Hayes 1972: 371–386; 1980: 528–529; Meyza 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Hayes 1972: 316–370; 1980: 525–527; 1985: 71–78; Domžalski 2014; Japp 2014; Bes, Keweloh-Kaletta 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Hayes 1972: 13–299; 1980: 484–523.

All these fine wares were found in the levelled ruins of the House of Aion and in the layers related to the final enlargement and subsequent abandonment of the Villa of Theseus.<sup>27</sup> Since the Late Roman D ware finds prevailing in these contexts had already been published,<sup>28</sup> and the African Red Slip ware imports were marginal, the present study is focused on the remaining fine wares, supplied from the north-western part of Asia Minor, which constituted a significant part of the highest quality vessels used in Nea Paphos in Late Antiquity.

## EASTERN SIGILLATA C AND LATE ROMAN C WARE FINDS FROM THE HOUSE OF AION AND THE VILLA OF THESEUS

During the excavations in the described residential buildings, a total of 121 diagnostic fragments of the late Roman fine ware vessels imported from north-western Asia Minor were identified: Eastern Sigillata C (hereafter ESC) – 46 fragments, and Late Roman C (LRC) ware – 75 fragments. In the House of Aion, there were altogether 22 fragments, of which ESC – 14 fragments, and LRC ware – 8 fragments, found during the excavation seasons from 1983 to 2007. In the Villa of Theseus, a total of 99 fragments were documented, of which ESC – 32 fragments, and LRC ware – 67 fragments, collected during the excavations carried out from 1966 to 1991.

All these finds were sorted out by the authors according to the typical macroscopic characteristics of their fabrics (clay and slip, see below), indicating origins of the respective vessels. For the typo-chronological analysis, the processed materials were subsequently divided into two groups: entirely diagnostic fragments (usually rims) which allow us to identify precisely shapes of the vessels according to the commonly used classifications (see below), as well as less diagnostic ones (mostly lower parts of vessels) defining only a range of forms they could have represented. All the analysed finds are listed in **Tables 1–2**,<sup>29</sup> and their distribution in both buildings is presented in **Fig. 1**. The best preserved fragments of respective vessel forms of the two wares, and those most relevant to the typo-chronological analysis, are presented in **Figs 2–8**.

It may seem that the numbers of finds are rather small, but as already mentioned above during the described excavations conducted in the last century, only the best-preserved diagnostic pottery fragments were collected and documented, while undecorated body sherds were not taken into account. The limited presence of discussed imports from

<sup>27</sup> Meyza 2007: 126–133; Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 150–168.

<sup>28</sup> Meyza 2007.

<sup>29</sup> The identified fragments are listed in chronological order of the excavation campaigns carried out in both residential buildings, and then according to the typo-chronological sequences of the vessel forms within the ESC and LRC ware. The subsequent excavation seasons are marked in abbreviated form (83 = 1983, etc.) in which they were recorded on the stored pottery fragments. Other abbreviations used in **Tables 1–2** and in the text below are as follows: MB – Mosaic Building (first name of House of Aion used in field documentation in 1983); HA – House of Aion; NEH – North-Eastern House; VT – Villa of Theseus; p. – pit; R. – Room; ESC – Eastern Sigillata C; LRC – Late Roman C; Diam. – Diameter; sm.var. – small variant; discol. – discoloured; metal. – metallic; radial. – radially; sl. – slight/slightly; asterisks mark non-Phocaean origin of LRC ware fragments.



north-western Asia Minor corresponds, however, to the relatively small numbers of the Late Roman D ware vessels, which dominated in the studied contexts, especially from the Villa of Theseus.<sup>30</sup>

The inverse proportions of the quantities of both analysed wares found in the House of Aion and Villa of Theseus are obviously due to the different chronology of their find contexts. Fragments of the ESC vessels, generally dated to the third–early fourth century, which prevail among the materials from the House of Aion, were definitively used by the inhabitants of this part of Nea Paphos before the earthquake in the late fourth century. A smaller number of fragments of the LRC ware, mainly dated to the late fourth–mid-fifth century, found in the same ruined building, were deposited in the uppermost accumulations, levelled after its destruction.

The materials collected in the Villa of Theseus are clearly dominated by the fragments of LRC ware, the vast majority of which were used by its regular inhabitants in the first half of the fifth century, before the abandonment of the residential complex. A noticeable number of ESC fragments were also found there, dated identically to those from the House of Aion. These are, however, residual finds consisting of smaller sherds coming both from levelling layers related to the expansion of the Villa of Theseus in the late fourth–early fifth century, as well as from the mixed accumulations formed after its abandonment, subsequent partial demolition, and final levelling of the whole area.

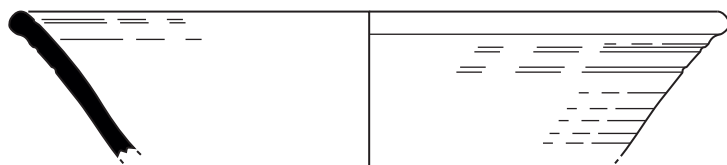
The lists of the ESC forms<sup>31</sup> found in the House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus are very similar. These are the latest vessels of this ware, mainly dishes, form H4 (33 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 2:2–4 and 4:5**), and some bowls, form H5 (3 fragments, **Table 1; Fig. 2:5**). Fragments of earlier products: dishes, form H1 (1 fragment; **Table 2; Fig. 4:3**) and form H2 (5 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 2:1 and 4:1–2**), as well as bowls, form H3 (4 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Fig. 4:4**), were also found but in small quantities. All these forms constituted a very limited repertoire of the ESC strongly standardised vessels, popular in the third–early fourth century, manufactured in the final phase of the discussed centre's activity. The collected fragments belong to vessels which could have been produced in the workshops located on the outskirts of the city of Pergamon or, more likely, in a branch factory in Pitane (today's Çandarlı), situated directly on the nearby coast of the Aegean Sea, and intended largely for exporting its products.

These latest ESC vessels were undecorated, which is also confirmed by the presented finds from Nea Paphos. However, they were still characterised by high quality of workmanship. Their clay is fine-grained in break, and the distinguishing feature of their fabric is rather regular appearance of medium-sized and large flakes of golden mica, which are visible not in the breaks but on the surface under the slip. The vessels were usually hard-fired, displaying pinkish-brown and red-brown fabrics (2.5YR 4/8–5/8–6/8), but some softer-fired, orange-brown (5YR 6/6–6/8–7/8)<sup>32</sup> fragments were also collected. Their slip,

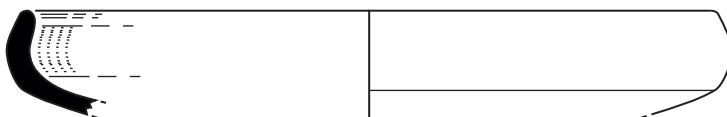
<sup>30</sup> Meyza 2007: 126–133.

<sup>31</sup> Hayes 1972: 316–322; 1985: 71–78.

<sup>32</sup> Munsell 1990.



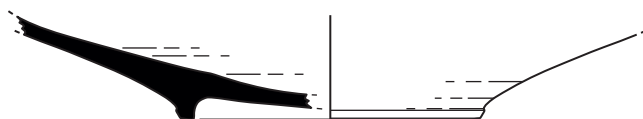
1 [HA 85 R.15]



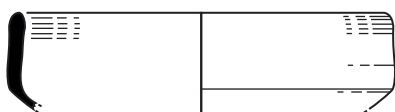
2 [HA 86 R.14]



3 [HA/NEH 86 R.4]



4 [MB/HA 83 R.1-3]



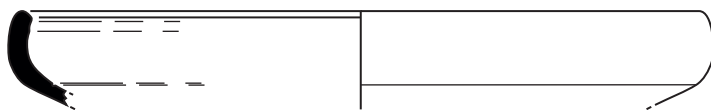
5 [HA 98 R.10]



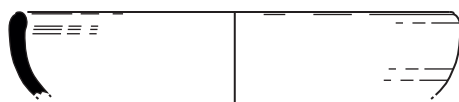
6 [HA 98 R.16]



2. ESC (1. form H2; 2–4. form H4; 5. form H5) and Late Roman C ware (6. form 0) finds from the House of Aion (Drawing: K. Domżałski; digitising: M. Miziołek).



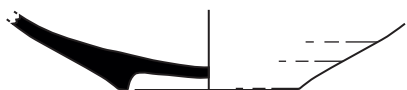
1 [HA 84 R.1–3]



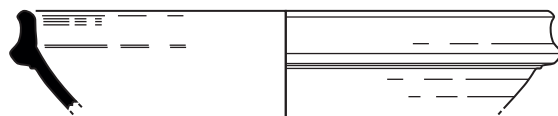
2 [HA 92]



3 [HA 84 R.1–3]



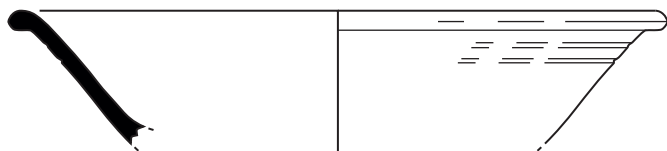
4 [HA 96-97 R.17–19]



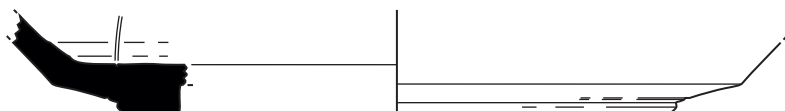
5 [MB/HA 83 R.1–3]

0 5cm

3. LRC ware finds (1. form 1A; 2. form 1B; 3. form 1D/4; 4. form 1–3; 5. form 3C/F) from the House of Aion (Drawing: K. Domżański; digitising: M. Miziołek).



1 [VT 75 R.25 p.4]



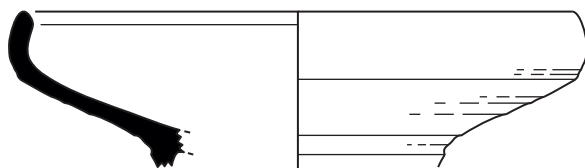
2 [VT 66]



3 [VT 83 R.35]



4 [VT 78 R.91]



5 [VT 73 R.48]



6 [VT 76 R.84]



7 [VT 82]



4. ESC (1–2. form H2; 3. form H1; 4. form H3; 5. form H4) and Late Roman C ware (6–7. form 0) finds from the Villa of Theseus (Drawing: K. Domżałski; digitising: M. Miziołek).

usually glossy, was similar in colour but usually slightly darker (10R 4/8–5/6–5/8 and 5YR 6/6–6/8–7/6, respectively), applied densely inside on the finely smoothed surface, and more diluted on the outer, rather poorly finished, and sometimes slightly rough surface.

LRC ware<sup>33</sup> finds from the House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus represent similar sets of the earliest forms, with the most numerous being dishes, form 1, variants A, B and D (17 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 3:1–2 and 5:1–6**), and form 2, variants A–C (8 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 6:2–5**). Form 3 is represented among the studied materials mostly by its small variants, which were bowls (8 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 7:1–4**), while the larger vessels associated with this form, also rather numerous, have been classified as dishes, variant 3A (6 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 7:5–6**). Fragments of other forms and variants were found in much smaller quantities (see below), and in the case of a considerable number of lower parts of vessels, it was not possible to precisely determine their form, but only to confirm that they represent an early phase of LRC ware production (22 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 3:4 and 8:1–2**).

It is generally accepted that a dish with vertical curved rim, shallow curved floor and tapering ring-foot, known as LRC ware form 1A (11 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 3:1 and 5:1–2**), appears to be the direct successor of the ESC form H4. This similarity was due to the long tradition of manufacturing this shape in the Pergamene centre,<sup>34</sup> before the transfer of the main LRC production workshops to Phokaia/Phocaea. The subsequent variants of LRC ware form 1, differing in the degree of the rim curves, gradually moved away from the Pergamene originals, as exemplified by the finds from *Maloutena*: variant 1B (4 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 3:2 and 5:3–5**), and variant 1D (2 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 5:6**).

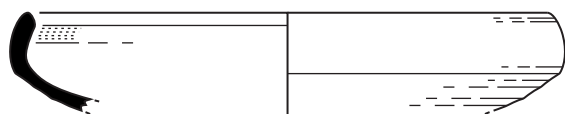
The finds from the House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus have, however, unexpectedly provided another link between the latest production of ESC and the earliest production of LRC ware. This concerns the similarity of the ESC small bowl with upright wall, distinguished as form H5, with a form previously unknown in the LRC ware early repertoire, hereinafter tentatively named form 0 (6 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 2:6 and 4:6–7**). The general shapes of both forms are almost identical, but the macroscopic analysis of their clay and slip unambiguously proved that some of them represent LRC ware manufactured in Phokaia/Phocaea. Moreover, the best-preserved vessel of form 0, shown in **Fig. 4:7**, indicates a rather unsuccessful product with an excessively thick floor. This may be evidence of the first attempts to make this form in the new workshop, in the late fourth century. The lack of identified finds of such vessels from other sites confirms a very limited scale of their production which, however, seems to have had its continuation, as exemplified by the LRC ware bowl, form 9, dated more than a century later.<sup>35</sup>

The development of LRC ware manufacturing in the new location at Phokaia/Phocaea, from the early/mid-fifth century onwards, no longer referred to the Pergamene predecessors,

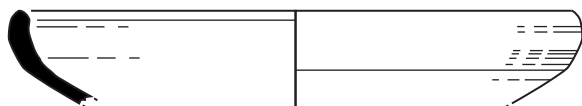
<sup>33</sup> Hayes 1972: 323–370; 1980: 525–527.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 134–135, form T3, Pls 17, 33.

<sup>35</sup> Hayes 1972: 342, Fig. 70; 2008: 244–245, Fig. 41.



1 [VT 73 R.64]



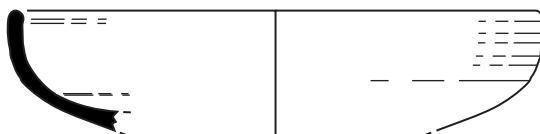
2 [VT 69 R.33]



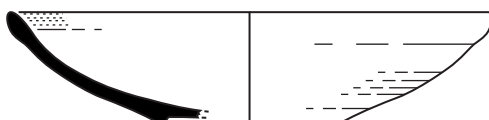
3 [VT 70]



4 [VT 72 R.50]



5 [VT 69 R.33]



6 [VT 71 R.43]



5. LRC ware finds (1–2. form 1A; 3–5. form 1B; 6. form 1D) from the Villa of Theseus (Drawing: K. Domżański; digitising: M. Miziołek).



but was inspired by contemporaneous most widespread fine ware products coming from Northern Africa (African Red Slip ware). This is exemplified by popular early dishes and bowls with broad flaring rims, form 2, which were found in *Maloutena* in the following variants: 2A (4 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 6:2–3**), 2B (1 fragment; **Table 2; Fig. 6:5**), and 2C (3 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 6:4**), differing in the modelling of their rims.<sup>36</sup>

Among the finds from the investigated residential buildings, examples of another, less obvious early vessels were also identified. They were tentatively classified below as form 1D/4, since their shape combines features of two distinctive vessels: bowl, form 1D, and dish, form 4 (2 fragments; **Tables 1–2; Figs 3:3 and 6:1**). These are rather large dishes, corresponding in size to contemporaneous forms 2 and 4, but with a thickened rim, reminiscent of that of bowl, form 1D, continuing the line of the shallow curved wall, similar to dish, form 4. This shape was not included in the classification published by John W. Hayes in 1972, and the largest number of such vessels has been discovered so far at Tanais, located at the mouth of the Don river into the Azov Sea (*Maeotis*), in contexts dated to the early/mid-fifth century.<sup>37</sup>

Another interesting similarity between the finds from the Villa of Theseus and from Tanais<sup>38</sup> is the presence of a significant number of bowls, representing early, small variants of form 3 (8 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 7:2–4**), as well as one example of a similar transitional variant, classified as 1D/3A (**Table 2; Fig. 7:1**). Evidently, these vessels are typical of the LRC production dated to the mid-fifth century.<sup>39</sup> A similar chronology was established for much larger vessels of form 3, namely dishes with slightly overhanging rims, triangular in cross-section, classified as variant 3A (6 fragments; **Table 2; Fig. 7:5–6**).<sup>40</sup> The almost complete absence of subsequent variants of form 3 clearly indicates that the beginning of the second half of the fifth century marked the end of the common use of the LRC ware vessels in *Maloutena*. The only find of a later vessel – dish, form 3C/F (**Table 1; Fig. 3:5**), dated to the late fifth/early sixth century, comes from the upper accumulations above the House of Aion, and can be regarded as intrusive among the studied materials.

The earliest LRC ware vessels – bowls, form 0, and dishes, form 1 – had no decorations, similarly to their ESC predecessors, forms H5 and H4, respectively. LRC large dishes, forms 1D/4, 2 and 3A were, however, embellished with radially stamped geometric and floral motifs forming a large medallion placed inside the vessel, in the middle of its floor. This type of ornamentation was inspired by similarly decorated vessels of African Red Slip ware ('Style A' or 'Palm-branch style') but on LRC ware ones it was, however, applied in a simplified, modest manner, referred to as 'Group I'.<sup>41</sup> Two fragments decorated in this way, found in the Villa of Theseus, are listed in **Table 2** and shown in **Fig. 8:1–2**.

<sup>36</sup> The overall shape and decoration of this form were inspired by the very popular African Red Slip ware dish, form 67 (Hayes 1972: 112–116, Fig. 19).

<sup>37</sup> Arseneva, Domžalski 2002: 431, form 1D/2, Fig. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Arseneva, Domžalski 2002: 432, form 1D/3, Fig. 17.

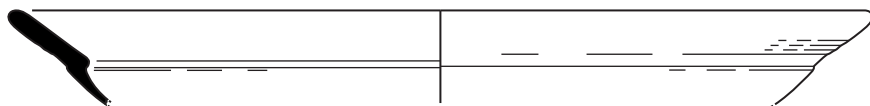
<sup>39</sup> Cf. Hayes 2008: 243–244, Fig. 41.

<sup>40</sup> This variant was not illustrated in Hayes 1972; cf. Hayes 2008: 238–239, Fig. 38.

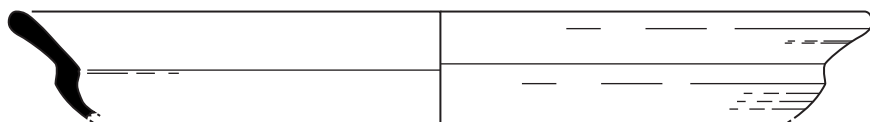
<sup>41</sup> Hayes 1972: 218–219, 346.



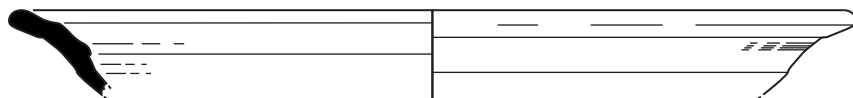
1 [VT 69 R.33]



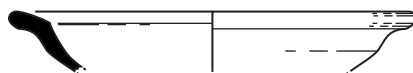
2 [VT 70]



3 [VT 71]



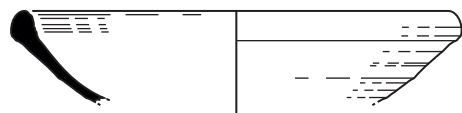
4 [VT 69 R.25]



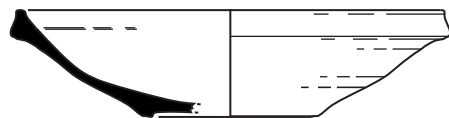
5 [VT 69 R.25]



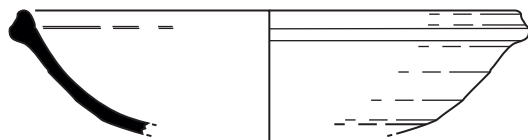
6. LRC ware finds (1. form 1D/4; 2–3. form 2A; 4. form 2C; 5. form 2B/small variant) from the Villa of Theseus (Drawing: K. Domżański; digitising: M. Miziołek).



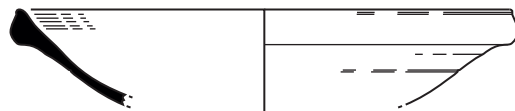
1 [VT 69 R.33]



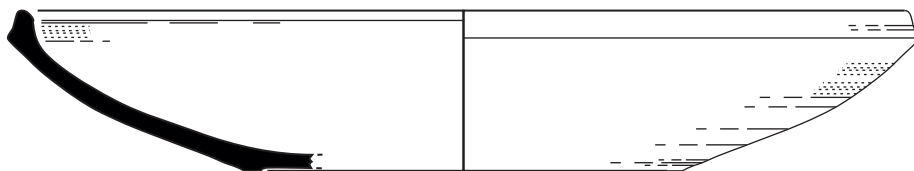
2 [VT 68 R.27]



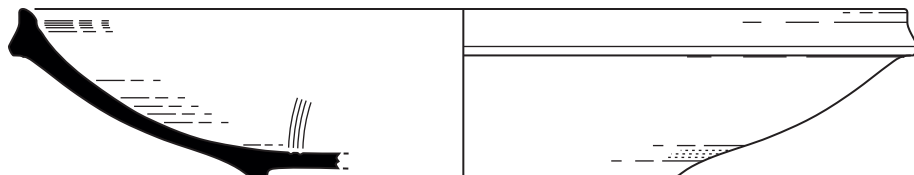
3 [VT 68 R.30]



4 [VT 68 R.42]



5 [VT 69 R.33]



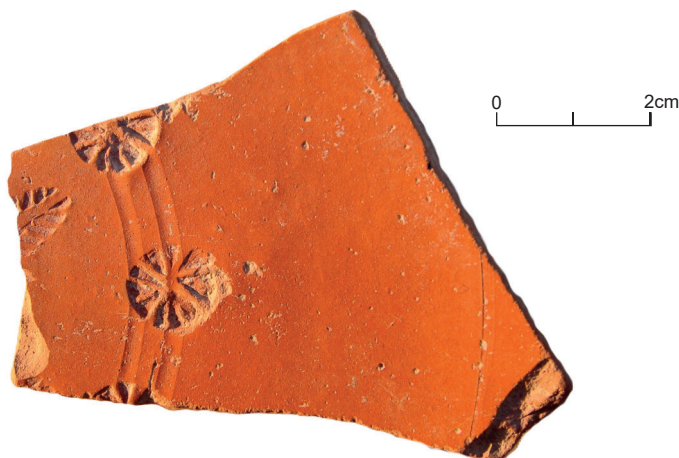
6 [VT 69 R.33]

0 5cm

7. LRC ware finds (1. form 1D/3A/small variant; 2–4. form 3/small variants; 5–6. form 3A) from the Villa of Theseus (Drawing: K. Domżański; digitising: M. Miziołek).



1 [VT 73 R.64]



2 [VT [?]] [S.4/IV]]

8. LRC ware stamped fragments from the Villa of Theseus (Phot. K. Domżański; processing: M. Miziołek).

Macroscopic features of the vast majority of the described LRC ware finds from *Maloutena* are typical of the workshops identified in Phokaia/Phocaea. Their clay is fine-grained, with some small lime particles visible in the case of hard-fired vessels, and small silvery mica visible in softer-fired ones. The hard-fired vessels display pinkish-brown and pinkish-orange (2.5YR 5/4–5/6–6/6) fabrics in break, and the fabrics of the softer-fired ones are orange-brown and orange-pink (5YR 5/8–6/8–7/6). Their slip, usually darker than the fabrics (10R 4/6–4/8–5/8 and 2.5YR 4/8–5/8–6/8, respectively), slightly lustrous or dull, was applied in a rather thin layer. Other typical features of the LRC ware vessels are discoloured, overfired rims, due to the firing in compact stacks. Such rims were often encountered among the collected fragments (**Tables 1–2**).

Although Phokaia/Phocaea rapidly became the main centre of production of the LRC ware by the mid-fifth century, its origins lie in the Pergamene region. It is clearly evidenced by the above-mentioned similarity of its earliest forms to the latest ESC ones,

but also confirmed by macroscopic observations of the fabrics, and by archaeometric, physico-chemical analyses.<sup>42</sup> They have indicated Pitane and Grynaion as production sites for these early vessels. Their clay is more granular and has a characteristic presence of gold mica, while the vessels themselves are somewhat thicker-walled, massive, and were made less precisely than those from Phokaia/Phocaea. The repertoire of their forms includes dishes, forms 1 and 2, and earliest variants of form 3. Although the influx of these vessels in noticeable amounts has been confirmed on the Levantine coast,<sup>43</sup> they constitute a trace percentage of the discussed finds from *Maloutena*. In fact, only four fragments matching this characteristic have been identified. They were found in the Villa of Theseus and are marked with asterisks in **Table 2**: two rims of dishes, form 1A and 1B (**Fig. 5:5**), as well as two foot and floor fragments with cross-sections typical of early LRC ware production.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The materials presented above were mostly found in secondary deposits, which are, however, closely linked to chronologically defined events, such as the devastating earthquake in the late fourth century, and the final decline of regular settlement activity in the south-western part of Nea Paphos, in the following century. This area, today called *Maloutena*, was a clearly distinguished urban residential district, located south of the *Fanari* hill, and of the agora lying at its feet. Judging by the high quality of the several buildings discovered there, expressed by their spacious layouts and the widespread presence of richly decorated mosaic floors, they were probably intended for the administrative elite associated with the city's capital function. The destructions of the late fourth century caused the transfer of the capital to Salamis/Constantia on the opposite coast of the island.<sup>44</sup> The reconstruction and expansion of the Villa of Theseus, remaining among the ruins of the nearby structures, represented the last attempt to revitalise the described area. However, it failed, i.e. the residential complex was abandoned by its regular inhabitants shortly after the mid-fifth century, which was followed by its gradual devastation and almost complete demolition. Fine ware fragments found in the latest-occupied and best-studied Late Antique buildings in *Maloutena*, the House of Aion and the Villa of Theseus, constitute, alongside the rich numismatic evidence, a strong confirmation of the chronology of the above-mentioned changes.

On the other hand, the analysed pottery materials from such chronologically defined contexts shed new light on the least known phases of red slip wares production in the fourth and early fifth century. They allowed Meyza to supplement the classification of the Late Roman D ware, dominant on the island in the Late Antiquity, with very important early forms, such as bowls, form H1/3, and dishes, form K1, which had been omitted by Hayes

<sup>42</sup> Empereur, Picon 1986; Japp 2009; Mommsen, Japp 2009; Bes, Keweloh-Kaletta 2024: 270–273.

<sup>43</sup> Domžalski 2013: 41, Fig. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Hill 1940: 249, 266.

in 1972 due to the lack of such finds at that time.<sup>45</sup> The same applies to the imports of ESC and LRC ware from the north-western coast of Asia Minor. The described materials confirm the significant presence of the latest ESC forms, but above all they enrich our knowledge about the repertoire of forms from the earliest phase of LRC ware production, especially those also omitted in Hayes 1972. The reported case study is intended by the authors to be useful both in updating the typo-chronological classification of this ware and in supplementing the knowledge about the decline of its production in the old locations and its rapid development in the new established workshops, shown by the broad distribution of these vessels.

### Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful to dr Henryk Meyza, the director of the Polish excavations in Nea Paphos between 2008 and 2019, for encouraging them to undertake the presented case study, enabling them to conduct the store-room research in 2018, and providing access to all the previously prepared documentation related to the analysed materials.

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<sup>45</sup> Meyza 2007: 49–51.



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Table 1. ESC and LRC ware finds from House of Aion; for abbreviations used in the table, see above, footnote 29

Inv. no.	Ware	Form	Preservation	Diam. (cm)	Fabric	Slip/Notes	Fig.
MB/HA 83 R.1–3	ESC	H3	rim	13	pink/brown	metal. lustre	—
MB/HA 83 R.1–3	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	2:4
MB/HA 83 R.1–3	LRC	3C/F	rim	17	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	3:5
HA 84 R.1–3	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	pink/orange	lustrous	—
HA 84 R.1–3	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	orange/pink	sl. lustre	—
HA 84 R.1–3	LRC	1A	rim	21	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	3:1
HA 84 R.1–3	LRC	1D/4	rim	18	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	3:3
HA 85 R.15	ESC	H2	rim	23	pink/orange	metal. lustre	2:1
HA/NEH 86 R.4	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	pink/brown	sl. metal. lustre	—
HA/NEH 86 R.4	ESC	H4	foot/base	11	orange/brown	sl. lustre	2:3
HA/NEH 86 R.4E/12W	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	pink/brown	sl. lustre	—
HA 86 R.14	ESC	H4	rim	22	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	2:2
HA 86 R.14	LRC	0	foot/base	6	orange/pink	dull	—
HA 89 R.8	ESC	H4	foot/base	17	orange/brown	metal. lustre	—
HA 92	LRC	1B	rim	14	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	3:2
HA 96–97 R.17–19	LRC	1–3	foot/base	6	orange/pink	dull/sl. lustre	—
HA 96–97 R.17–19	LRC	1–3	foot/base	6	orange/pink	dull/sl. lustre	3:4
HA 97 R.17–19	ESC	H4	rim	25	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	—
HA 98 R.10	ESC	H5	rim	12	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	2:5
HA 98 R.16	LRC	0	foot/base	5.5	pink/orange	dull	2:6
HA/NEH 07 R.36 channel	ESC	H5	foot/base	5.5	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	—
HA/NEH 07 R.36 channel	ESC	H5	rim	14	orange/brown	sl. lustre	—

Table 2. ESC and LRC ware finds from Villa of Theseus; for abbreviations used in the table, see above, footnote 29

Inv. no.	Ware	Form	Preservation	Diam. (cm)	Fabric	Slip/Notes	Fig.
VT 66	ESC	H2	foot/base	18	pink/brown	metal. lustre	4:2
VT 66	ESC	H4	rim	18	brown/orange	sl. metal. lustre	—
VT 66	ESC	H4	rim	18	orange/brown	sl. metal. lustre	—
VT 66	LRC	1A	rim	13	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	—
VT 66	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	6	orange/pink	sl. metal. lustre	—
VT 67 R.9–10	ESC	H4	foot/base	11	pink/brown	metal. lustre	—
VT 68 R.23	ESC	H4	foot/base	12	pink/orange	sl. lustre	—
VT 68 R.25	LRC*	1–4	foot/base	13	pink/orange	dull	—
VT 68 R.27	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim to base	14/6	pink/brown	sl. metal. lustre	7:2
VT 68 R.30	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	16	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	7:3
VT 68 R.42	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	16	pink/brown	dull; rim discol.	7:4
VT 69 R.25	LRC	2B/sm.var.	rim	13	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	6:5
VT 69 R.25	LRC	2C	rim	27	orange/pink	dull	6:4
VT 69 R.25	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	—	orange/brown	dull	—
VT 69 R.29–31	ESC	H3	rim	10	pink/orange	metal. lustre	—
VT 69 R.31	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	6	pink/brown	sl. lustre	—
VT 69 R.33	ESC	H4	foot/base	14	pink/brown	dull/sl. metal. lustre	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC*	1A	rim	27	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC*	1B	rim	17	orange/pink	dull	5:5
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1A	rim	18	pink/brown	dull; rim discol.	5:2
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1D/4	rim	25	orange/pink	dull; rim sl. discol.	6:1
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1D/3A/sm.var.	rim	14	orange/pink	dull	7:1
VT 69 R.33	LRC	3A	rim to base	29/14	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	7:5
VT 69 R.33	LRC	3A	rim to base	29/15	pink/brown	dull; rim discol.	7:6
VT 69 R.33	LRC	3A	rim	27	pink/orange	dull; rim sl. discol.	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	6.5	pink/brown	dull	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	8	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	8	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 69 R.33	LRC	2–4	foot/base	—	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 69 R.65	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	15	pink/grey	dull; rim discol.	—
VT 69 R.65	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	8	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 69 R.65	LRC	1–4	foot/base	15	pink/orange	sl. lustre	—
VT 69	LRC	1A	rim	13	orange/pink	dull	—

Inv. no.	Ware	Form	Preservation	Diam. (cm)	Fabric	Slip/Notes	Fig.
VT 69	LRC	1A	rim	23	orange/pink	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 70 R.25	LRC	1A	rim	27	orange/pink	dull; rim sl. discol.	—
VT 70 R.25	LRC	1D	rim	14	pink/brown	dull; rim sl. discol.	—
VT 70 R.25	LRC	2C	rim	—	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 70 R.25	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	7	pink/orange	dull	—
VT 70 R.25	LRC	1–3/sm.var.	foot/base	—	pink/brown	sl. lustre	—
VT 70 R.40	LRC	2A	rim	28	pink/orange	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 70 R.40	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	13	pink/orange	dull	—
VT 70	LRC	1B	rim	17	pink/orange	dull; rim discol.	5:3
VT 70	LRC	2A	rim	28	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	6:2
VT 70	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	15	pink/brown	dull; rim discol.	—
VT 70	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	14	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 70	LRC	1–4	foot/base	12	orange/pink	dull	—
VT 70	LRC	1–4	foot/base	10	pink/brown	sl. lustre	—
VT 70	LRC	1–4	foot/base	18	pink/brown	dull	—
VT 71 R.43	LRC	1D	rim to base	16/6	pink/brown	dull; rim discol.	5:6
VT 71 R.45	LRC	0	rim	9	orange/brown	dull	—
VT 71 R.48	LRC	1–4	foot/base	12	pink/brown	dull	—
VT 71	LRC	2A	rim	28	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	6:3
VT 71	LRC	3A	rim	26	pink/orange	dull; rim sl. discol.	—
VT 72 R.50	LRC	1B	rim	17	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	5:4
VT 72 R.54	ESC	H3	rim	15	orange /pink	dull	—
VT 73 R.48	ESC	H4	rim to base	18/9	brown/orange	dull/sl. lustre	4:5
VT 73 R.48	LRC	2A	rim	28	orange/pink	dull/ sl. lustre	—
VT 73 R.64	ESC	H4	rim	21	brown/orange	sl. lustre	—
VT 73 R.64	LRC	0	rim	10	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	—
VT 73 R.64	LRC	1A	rim	17	pink/orange	dull; rim discol.	5:1
VT 73 R.64	LRC	1–4	foot/base	12	orange/pink	sl. lustre	—
VT 73 R.64	LRC	1–4	base	—	orange/pink	dull; radial. stamped	8:1
VT 75 R.25 p.4	ESC	H2	rim	22	pink/brown	sl. metal. lustre	4:1
VT 75 R.71–73	ESC	H4	rim	20	brown/orange	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 75 R.71–73	ESC	H4	rim	21	brown/orange	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 75 R.71–73	ESC	H4	rim	22	brown/orange	dull/sl. lustre	—
VT 75 R.71–73	LRC	1A	rim	28	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	—

Inv. no.	Ware	Form	Preservation	Diam. (cm)	Fabric	Slip/Notes	Fig.
VT 75 R.72–73	ESC	H4	rim	26	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 75 R.74–75	LRC*	1–4	foot/base	7	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 76 R.50	LRC	1–4	foot/base	12	orange/pink	dull	–
VT 76 R.84	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	brown/orange	lustrous	–
VT 76 R.84	LRC	0	rim to base	9/5	pink/orange	dull	4:6
VT 77 R.41–42	ESC	H4	rim	23	brown/orange	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 77 R.44	ESC	H4	rim	27	brown/pink	lustrous	–
VT 77 R.44	LRC	2C	rim	28	orange/pink	dull	–
VT 77 R.44	LRC	1–4	foot/base	14	pink/orange	sl. lustre	–
VT 78 R.91	ESC	H3	rim	10	pink/orange	lustrous	4:4
VT 79 R.25	LRC	1–4	foot/base	–	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 79 R.73	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	orange/brown	sl. lustre	–
VT 79 R.73	LRC	1A	rim	15	pink/grey	dull	–
VT 79 R.73	LRC	1–4	foot/base	11	orange/pink	sl. lustre	–
VT 80 R.73/93	ESC	H4	rim	23	orange/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 80 court	ESC	H4	foot/base	8	pink/brown	sl. lustre	–
VT 82 R.85	ESC	H4	foot/base	10	pink/brown	sl. lustre	–
VT 82 R.87	ESC	H4	rim	21	pink/brown	metal. lustre	–
VT 82 R.87	ESC	H4	foot/base	12	pink/brown	sl. metal. lustre	–
VT 82	ESC	H4	rim	–	pink/brown	sl. metal. lustre	–
VT 82	ESC	H4	rim	18	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 82	ESC	H4	rim	22	pink/brown	dull/sl. lustre	–
VT 82	ESC	H4	foot/base	11	pink/brown	dull/lustrous	–
VT 82	LRC	0	rim to base	10/5	orange/brown	dull	4:7
VT 82	LRC	1A	rim	19	orange/pink	dull; rim discol.	–
VT 82	LRC	3A	rim	22	pink/brown	dull; rim sl. discol.	–
VT 83 R.35	ESC	H1	foot/base	9	pink/brown	metal. lustre	4:3
VT 83 R.35	ESC	H2	foot/base	12	pink/brown	metal. lustre	–
VT 84 R.18W	ESC	H2	rim	21	pink/orange	dull/metal. lustre	–
VT 84 R.50	LRC	3/sm.var.	rim	16	pink/orange	dull	–
VT 91 R.50	LRC	3A	rim	20	pink/orange	dull	–
VT [?] [S.4/IV]	LRC	1–4	foot/base	10	pink/orange	dull; radial. stamped	8:2



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