

Summary

A Group of Byzantine Ceramics, Underwater Finds of Aegean Type From Anatolia

35 pieces of ceramic vessels from the underwater finds stored in the Alanya, Antalya, Bodrum, Burdur and Fethiye Museums are discussed in this article.

The bowl-shaped vessels examined are all made of a dark tile-colored (Munsell 5YR 5/6) clay with loose texture and large pores. Having a low circular base and broad body, they displayed an assortment of brim forms.

Deformed products of a careless and rough workmanship, their inner surfaces are undercoated and glazed, while their exteriors are not, though some samples have brims undercoated on the outside. The glazed colors are defined as being clear light yellow, yellowish green, light green and olive green.

The scraping technique is employed in the decoration of vessels. The usage of sgraffito is observed on only one sample. The background was left plain in embellishments where a design with central composition is applied. An abstractionist style is prominent in their design.

The embellishments show a characteristic of simple expression. Silhouetted figures of waterfowl and fish, surrounded by curved lines in a free style or with quadrilateral geometric forms, are situated in the center. The embellishments with wavy lines radiating from the center outwards, and variations of them, resemble octopus designs.

Ceramics of an analogous style were found in Cyprus, Anatolia, Greece, and Crimea and in the Crusaders' settlement in Israel. The underwater findings of Kastellorizo and Skopelos in the Aegean are of the same quality as the vessels discussed in the article.

The samples considered in this paper should be dated to the mid-12th and the early 13th century. The site(s) of this pottery production has still not been discovered. Like its counterparts, it is Byzantine wares, which were traded by maritime transport on the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Black Sea.