Catarina Viegas

LATE REPUBLICAN AND EARLY EMPIRE COMMON WARE IN SOUTHERN LUSITANIA (ALGARVE-PORTUGAL): THE ITALIAN IMPORTS

Recent research on common wares from different Algarve sites has provided relevant information concerning different types of imported material, as well as on local and regional productions. This paper presents the data concerning Italian common ware that was distributed in southern Lusitania (today Algarve-Portugal) in the Roman Republic and Early Empire. The main forms identified are the unslipped common ware from Campania: platters and lids and Pompeian-Red ware platters. Common ware from the Roman towns of Balsa (today Torre de Ares, Tavira), Baesuri (Castro Marim) and Ossonoba (Faro) and elsewhere show that most of the vessels have their origin in Ulterior/Baetica. Apart from Roman towns in eastern and central Algarve, sites such as Loulé Velho (which could have been a Roman villa or even a vicus) provided examples of Pompeian-Red ware, showing that the distribution of these vessels spread beyond the strict urban sphere, as also Dramont D2 mortaria from Central Italy testify.

The Algarve towns such as Balsa (Torre de Ares Tavira) were particularly open to Mediterranean trade. The identification, for the first time in southern Lusitania, of a few examples of a Syracusan 'ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano' was confirmed.

Common ware - Pompeian-Red ware - Dramont D2 - Campania - Syracusa

1. Introduction

The study of the common ware of the Algarve Roman sites that we are undertaking,¹ has allowed the identification of different fabrics of such, both locally produced and imported common ware (Italian, Gaulish, Baetican, North African, etc.) so allowing the evaluation of the proportion of local production when compared to the imported. In the course of identifying technologically different groups of fabrics, it was also possible to determine whether certain fabrics were related to specific functions, as well as to identify consumption patterns of these products.

This study is focused on the Italian coarse ware, its different products and the contexts where it was retrieved in southern *Lusitania*. The sites that have been investigated are the Roman towns of *Baesuri* (in today Castro Marim), *Balsa* (in Torre de Ares, Tavira), and *Ossonoba* (Faro) (**fig. 1**). Further, we have also enlarged the scope by including other sites in the Algarve, like Loulé Velho (Loulé) where we have recently started a research project (together with Rui Roberto de Almeida), supported by the University of Lisbon (UNIARQ, School of Arts and Humanities) and the Municipality of Loulé.

Finally, we try to contextualize the circulation of these Italian products in the framework of the consumption of common ware in Southern *Lusitania* (not only the Algarve region, but also Alentejo), widening our approach again to include assemblages from published sites.

From a methodological point of view, the analysis of common ware undertaken was based on the macroscopic

observation of different fabrics and the characterization of both clays and slips, as well as their morphological characteristics. By following this procedure, it has been possible to differentiate technological groups of local/regional origin, as well as the imported common ware. The information acquired allowed us to identify quite easily the clays and fabrics that had their provenance in the Italian peninsula (Campania region and Central Italy), and made it possible also to recognize some fragments that were from Syracuse and belonged to the designated '*ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano*'.

2. Common ware in Roman Algarve. Sites and consumption patterns in the Late Republic and Early Empire

The data on the common ware in the Algarve was retrieved from sites such as urban centres of Castro Marim (ancient Baesuris), Torre de Ares (Balsa) and Faro (Ossonoba) (Viegas 2011). We were able also to enhance our sample with some information from the Roman site in Loulé Velho (Quarteira). This is an extensive coastal site, that is difficult to classify (a villa or vicus?), where a fish salting unit with cetariae was identified, but there is also evidence of wine or olive oil pressing (Luzia 2004; Almeida and Viegas forthcoming). Because of the accelerated process of destruction due to coastal erosion, the few structures identified correspond to an apse of a possible basilica (Gomes and Serra 1996), which is associated with several graves and materials from Late Antique period. Until now, the site was subject to a few emergency excavations motivated by the destruction caused by the sea tides. The complete study of the site, including all categories of pottery are under investigation and allowed the identification of a few fragments of Pompeian-Red ware platters, as described infra.

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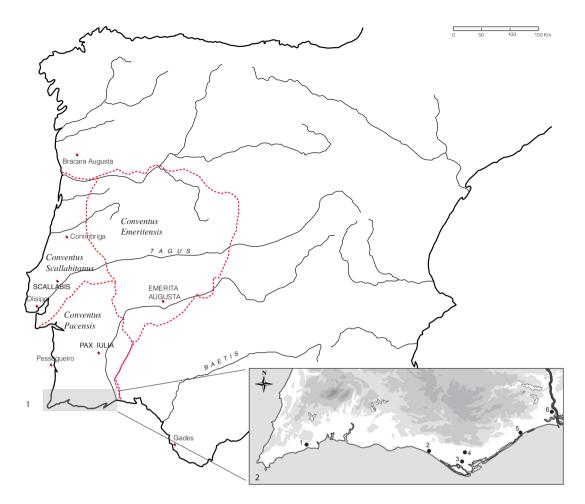


Fig. 1. 1. Iberian Peninsula. Limits of Roman province of Lusitania. 2. Map with main sites in southern *Lusitania* mentioned in the text. 1. Monte Molião (Lagos); 2. Loulé Velho (Quarteira); 3. Faro (ancient Ossonoba); 4. Milreu; 5. Torre de Ares, Tavira (Balsa); 6. Castro Marim (Baesuri). Approximate locations.

In a previous publication, we presented an overview of the archaeological research undertaken in the eastern/central Algarve Roman main towns of Castro Marim (*Baesuri*), Torre de Ares (*Balsa*) and Faro (*Ossonoba*) based on the imported fine wares and amphorae (Viegas 2011). Also, we have earlier compared the consumption pattern of foodstuff transported in amphorae and common ware (Viegas 2012a).

The assemblage from the Roman town of *Balsa* is the most significant and abundant (with 2456 Minimum Number of Vessels/MNV); it has allowed a better understanding of the consumption pattern of common ware in the Algarve region, mainly in the Early Empire until the Late Antique period. Beyond the town of *Balsa*, the general pattern has been confirmed by the study of pottery from other sites such as Faro, Castro Marim or Monte Molião (Lagos) (Arruda et al. 2008), thus improving our knowledge on both typologies and their chronological framework.

Consumption of common ware from urban centres in the Algarve follows the same pattern as other categories of imports such as foodstuff transported in amphora. There is a strong predominance of the products made in the neighbouring province of *Ulterior/Baetica* in the Republican period, and during the Early Empire, as is also evidenced by the amphorae that transported foodstuffs from the Guadalquivir valley (oil and wine products) as well as the Gaditan coast (fish sauces). The significance of *Baetica* dates back to the previous pre-Roman phase, showing the deep-rooted cultural and economic integration of the southern *Lusitania* and the Baetican provinces. Local/regional common ware is also represented during the Republican period and Italian imports are quite rare in Castro Marim (Viegas 2012) and Monte Molião (Sousa and Arruda 2014).

During the Early Empire (from the end of the 1st century BC until late 1st century AD) there is still a clear predominance of the Baetican common ware, which covered different functions: tableware, storage/preparation vessels, *mortaria* and *dolia* (except cooking ware). During this period there is a diversification of the sources of supply of the imported common ware and local/regional production becomes more substantial showing the healthy dynamics of the local pottery production. Concerning the imports, the kaolinite ware (from Gaul) and Italian coarse ware should be mentioned, such as the Pompeian-Red ware.

From the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century AD onward, the African cooking ware emerges in southern Lusitanian markets causing a relative decrease of

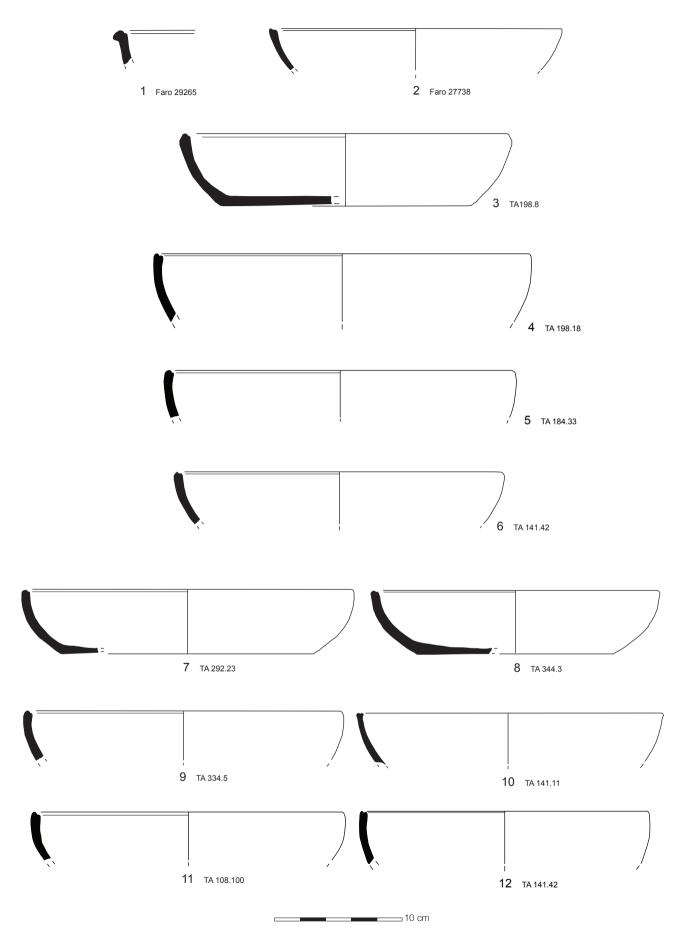


Fig. 2. Italian Coarse ware from Faro and Torre de Ares (TA). Platters ('orlo bifido').

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the Baetican imports, although not their complete disappearance. This process is well documented in other areas in the south of Iberia; it is clearly expressed in the stratigraphical data recovered in Monte Molião (Viegas and Arruda 2014). At this stage, only the presence of the central Italy *mortaria* represents the trade relations with the Italian peninsula, something that was once much more intense.

3. The Italian imports in Southern *Lusitania*: the coarse wares

The coarse ware from Italy identified in the Algarve region comprise the Pompeian-Red ware platters, unslipped Italian coarse ware platters and lids from the Campanian region, the Central Italy *mortaria* and the recently identified Syracusan ware, designated as '*ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano*', from Sicily. Taking as an example, the overall common ware from the Roman town of *Balsa*, Italian common ware represents a mere 0,6% of the assemblage formed by 2456 items (MNV).

The most frequent unslipped Italian coarse ware types in the Roman town of *Balsa* and in *Ossonoba*, as well as in Castro Marim are the platters with a groove on top of the rim

(Aguarod 4 form, 'orlo bifido', COM-IT 6) (fig. 2) (Aguarod 1991: 94; Olcese 2012: 344, Tav. 3 XLIV, nr. 14; Bats 1993). Without precise contextual data, except for some of the Castro Marim pieces that were retrieved in a 50-30 BC context, we have used the chronology proposed by C. Aguarod based on several Tarraconensis sites in northern Hispania (1991). This data shows that this forms of platters were imported from the middle of the 2nd century and the first decades of the 1st century BC until the Tiberius/Claudius period (Aguarod 1991: 95). For the Algarve examples, as elsewhere, the diameters can range between 23 and 30 cm, the most lying between 23 and 26,5 cm (fig. 2, 7-12). In Faro, they are represented by just one piece of unslipped coarse ware platter of the Aguarod form 1 (Emporiae 158, 15) with the characteristic groove on top of the thickened rim (fig. 2, 1). These earlier examples are also present further north in early Roman Republican contexts in Lisbon (Pimenta et al. 2014).

The typical red-brown fabric with volcanic black sand inclusions identificates them with the bay of Naples workshops in Campania. It is well known that this form was used for cooking, but some of the pieces do not show any trace of having been exposed to fire, so a function as tableware should be another possibility.

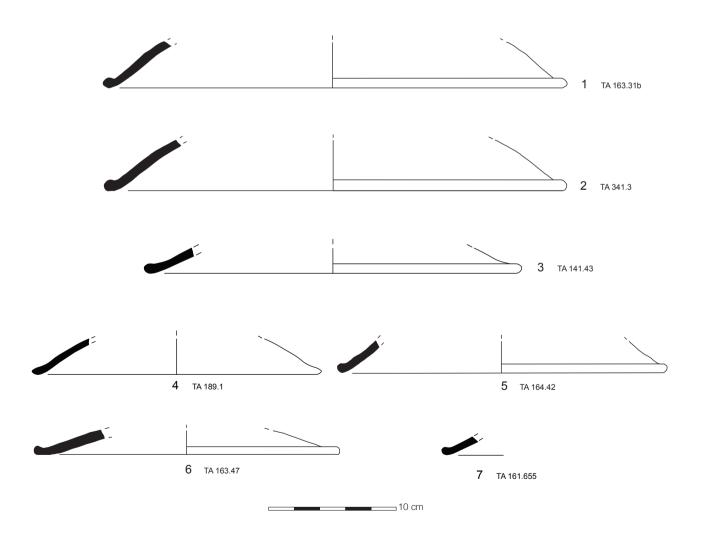


Fig. 3. Italian Coarse ware from Faro and Torre de Ares (TA). Lids ('orlo ingrossato').

In Monte Molião (Lagos, Algarve), common ware from Republican contexts dating from the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC show that Italian imports make up a mere 2,51% of the common ware in that period (Sousa and Arruda 2104). Again, the *Baetica/Ulterior* calcareous common ware is the most frequent here. The most represented Italian common ware forms are the platters and lids originating in Campania, but a few examples of *caccabi* and *mortaria* were also identified (Sousa and Arruda 2014).

Besides the unslipped platters of Italian coarse ware, the corresponding lids 'orlo ingrossato' (Aguarod 3 form, COM-IT 7) are also known in Faro, *Balsa* (**fig. 3**) and Castro Marim (Aguarod 1991: 113; Olcese 2012, 344, Tav. 3 XLIV, nr 16-18; Bats 1993). Their diameters can vary between 36 and 23 cm, but the most common is between 23 and 25 cm, to suit the platters they go with (**fig. 3, 4-6**).

The presence of these platters and lids in southern Portugal show that the distribution of these products included the western province of *Lusitania*. They must have been imported mainly from the Augustan period until the first decades of the 1st century AD, though they could appear slightly earlier in Faro. As these forms of platters and lids are absent in Loulé Velho, a site where imports start mainly from the middle of the 1st century AD onwards, we can assume that their importation to southern *Lusitania* must have decreased or come to a complete stop by the mid 1st century AD.

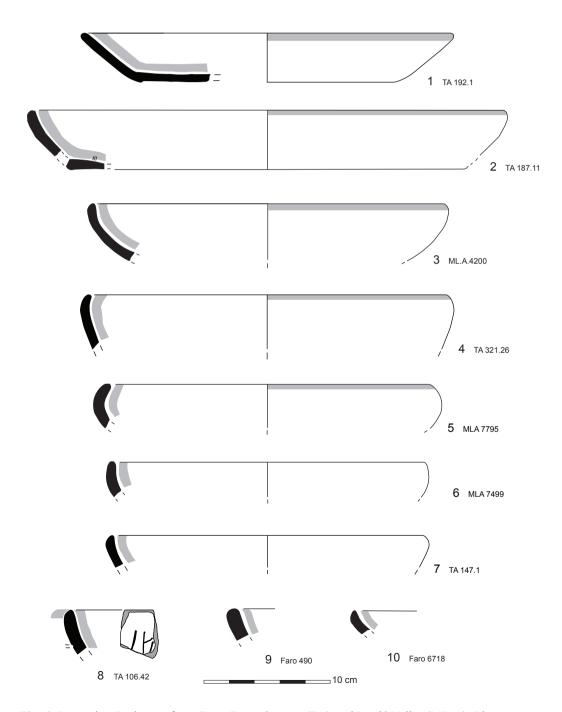


Fig. 4. Pompeian-Red ware from Faro, Torre de Ares (TA) and Loulé Velho (ML.A). Platters.

Besides the unslipped common ware from Campania, the characteristic Pompeian-Red ware from the Vesuvian region was also identified. Pompeian-Red ware platters from the Republican period (such as Luni 1 and 2/4 forms, Aguarod 3 and 4) are quite rare in southern *Lusitania* contexts, but one piece was identified in Monte Molião (Sousa and Arruda 2014: 77). Examples of these earlier forms were recovered elsewhere in Alentejo region, at Castelo da Lousa (Mourão), a site whose chronology spans the second half of the 2nd century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD (Pinto and Schmitt 2010: 308) and in the Tagus Valley in *Scallabis* (Santarém) (Arruda and Viegas 2002).

Most of the Pompeian-Red ware platters recovered in the Algarve belong to the Luni 5 form (Aguarod 6 form, R-POMP 15) (Aguarod 1991: 74; Olcese 2012: 344, Tav 3 XLIV; Passelac 1993); this is a platter with a simple rim, a slightly curved wall and a large flat base, sometimes with small concentric grooves (**fig. 4, 2-10**). Its characteristic fabric and slip show their origin was the Campanian region (Aguarod fabric 2). As this is a cooking ware, some of the pieces bear signs of having been exposed to fire, but equally some fragments argue once again that these were also used as tableware. One fragment from a platter in *Balsa* has an incomplete and unfortunately unreadable *graffito* (**fig. 4, 8**). Only one piece could be related to the Luni 3 form (Aguarod 5 form) (**fig. 4, 1**).

Without precise stratigraphic coordinates that help to frame the *Balsa* specimens chronologically, it is here assumed that they will be after the time of Augustus, when the site developed.

Identified in Milreu (Teichner 2008), and thus in addition to the other Algarve region, Pompeian-Red ware platters are well represented in *Hispania*, in the *Tarraconensis* and *Baetica* (Aguarod 1990, 1995; Sanchéz 1995). As mentioned before, a Campanian origin for these Pompeian–Red ware platters and common ware platters 'orlo bifido' and lids 'orlo ingrossato' is proposed based on the fabrics. These very forms are attested in Cuma workshop (Olcese 2012: 344, Tav. 3 XLIV; Di Giovanni 1996). The production of cooking wares in this site took place from the second half of the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD.

The imitation by local potters of the Pompeian-Red ware platters is quite common in all the southern *Lusitania* in the Alentejo region, as in the *villae* of S. Cucufate (Pinto 2003). But for some reason that we cannot fathom, it is not so common in the Algarve. Even so, we have detected some platters that show a fabric, slip and morphological details very close to the original Italian examples, but that were produced with local clays (**fig. 5, 1-3**). One of a number of possible explanations for this lack of imitations of Pompeian-Red wares in the Algarve may be that other local/regional products would be used for the same purpose and function, as is the case of the local platters/casseroles in grey granular ware (Vegas type 14A 'plato con borde escalonado') (Vegas 1973; Viegas 2012b). The abundance of African cooking wares in Algarve sites is another likely contributing factor.

Most of the *mortaria* in the Algarve region, be they in the Republican or the early Empire period, have their origin in the *Ulterior*/Baetican region, (the Guadalquivir valley or the coast of Gadir) and local production of *mortaria* is always very rare. Despite this, the *mortarium* Dramont D2 originated in central Italy is present in the Algarve in several sites as in Faro, *Balsa* and Loulé Velho (**fig. 6**), though always represented by just a few pieces.

The general distribution of Dramont D2 *mortaria* is quite vast not only in the Iberian Peninsula but also in the western and central Mediterranean as Aguarod has shown (1991: 140, Fig. 45), even reaching the northern provinces.

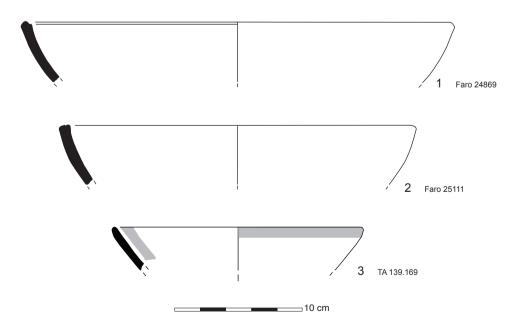


Fig. 5. Local imitations of Italian coarse ware and Pompeian-Red ware from Faro and Torre de Ares (TA). Platters.

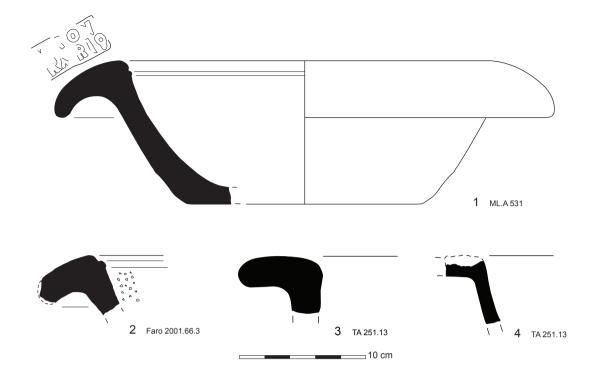


Fig. 6. Dramont D2 mortaria from Loulé Velho (ML.A), Faro and Torre de Ares (TA).

The *mortarium* from Loulé Velho has a stamp where few characters could be read but unfortunately not the whole name/s (Viegas 2017) (**fig. 6, 1**). It is a two-line stamp with characters in relief, that are very badly preserved; the proposed reading is: | [---] POV / RN?RI Q or symbol? |.

According to the variants of the form proposed by Aguarod for the *Tarraconensis* (1991: 140-141, Fig. VIII), the piece from Loulé Velho could be integrated into the phase 3, that was dated from the end Claudius, through the Flavian and into the early Antonine period (**fig. 6, 1**). The *mortarium* from Faro (**fig. 6, 2**) could be similarly placed, but the ones from Torre de Ares belong in the later phase 4, that of the Antonine period (**fig. 6, 3-4**) (Aguarod 1991: 141).

As common ware from the Algarve hasn't been the subject of many publications so far, it is not easy to comprehend the distribution map of the Italian imports in southern *Lusitania*, but one should expect an identical framework to be repeated throughout the region, in urban centres as well as in *villae* or artisanal sites (such as fish salting units). As mentioned before Italian coarse ware (both unslipped ware and Pompeian-Red ware platters, and *mortaria*) is well represented in *Hispania* in the *Tarraconensis* and *Baetica* (Aguarod 1991, 1995; Sanchéz 1995) and the Algarve examples show its distribution reached into the westernmost region of *Hispania*.

3.1. Common ware from Syracuse

A rare example of common ware from Syracuse was recovered in *Balsa* (fig. 7). A few fragments could be identified with the common ware that was designated '*ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano*' that we had been able to observe during the pottery display organized during 2012 RCRF conference in the Archaeological Museum in Syracuse (Malfitana et al. 2014: 557-572). The distinctive features of the fabric had already attracted our attention to this type of pottery while we were processing and cataloguing the common ware from *Balsa* in the National Archaeology Museum in Lisbon.

According to D. Malfitana and his team, this ware is a local production from the artisan quarters of Roman Syracuse where two production contexts were identified (in Via Mauceri and Santa Lucia) (Malfitana et al. 2014: 564). The most common forms are jugs with quite diversified morphology, with simple, moulded or trilobate rim, globular or elongated body shape and one handle.

The fragments of '*ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano*' in *Balsa* are all part of jugs that seem to be quite common in this production (**fig. 7, 1-3**). The fragments recovered from *Balsa* are part of the rim, neck, handle and body fragments of this fine tableware (one with trilobate rim, **fig. 7, 3**).

As the authors point out, the fabric of this ware is compact, showing fine inclusions and is characterized by an intense orange colour. Concerning the inclusions they are formed by quartz, limestone and microfossils (Malfitana et al. 2014). Another distinctive feature of this ware is the almost white colour of the surface that should not be confused with a slip: '(...) La superficie presenta uno schiarimento superficiale di colore avorio, molto sottile, e che si uniforma gradatamente ai toni di colore del corpo ceramico. Tra gli esemplari qui esaminati sono presenti casi in cui lo schiarimento è parziale e le sfumature cromatiche tendono all'arancio chiaro, a causa forse dall'eccessiva vicinanza ad altre forme ceramiche durante la fase di cottura (...)'(Malfitana et al. 2014: 564).

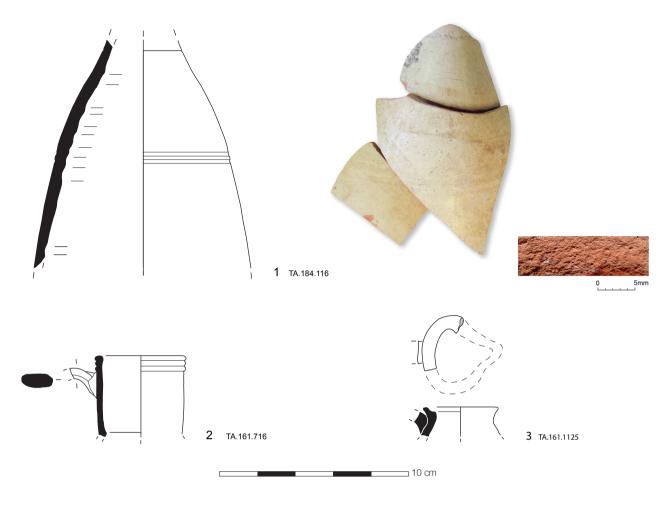


Fig. 7. Syracusan common ware 'ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano' from Torre de Ares (TA).

The chronological framework proposed, from the 1^{st} century BC until the first half of the 2^{nd} century AD, is compatible with the context where these fragments were recovered, where the pottery assemblage overall points to a date situated in the second half of the 1^{st} century AD.

4. Concluding remarks

Although Italian common ware is quite rare in southern *Lusitania* it is represented at several contexts in the Algarve, in the coastal sites as Loulé Velho (possible *villa* or a *vicus*), in urban centres such as Faro, *Balsa* and *Baesuri*, but also *villae* as in Milreu show the penetration into inland areas.

Although a few examples of non slipped Italian coarse ware platters and lids turn up in Republican context as in Monte Molião (Sousa and Arruda 2014) and Castro Marim (Viegas 2011), most of the Italian imports, including also the Pompeian-Red ware must have been imported to southern *Lusitania* during the Early Empire (during the Augustan period and the 1st century AD). These imports had their origin in the Campanian workshops in the bay of Naples, but the central Italy *mortarium* Dramont D2 is also represented. However, in the Roman Republican period and the Early Empire most of the common ware in southern *Lusitania* has its provenience in the *Ulterior/Baetica* (mostly the Gaditan area and also the Guadalquivir valley). Nonetheless, these Baetican calcareous clays are not resistant to fire exposure and so cooking vessels are unknown in these fabrics. Local regional cooking wares would have fulfilled that function at first, and then from the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century onward, the African Cooking wares became dominant in the Algarve towns, ensuring the supply of casseroles and platters.

These Italian common ware imports follow the same pattern as the ones already reported in the Guadalquivir valley and the *Tarraconensis*: a testimony to their wide circulation in the Mediterranean area (Aguarod 1991, 1995; Sanchéz 1995; Olcese 2003) and beyond, reaching the westernmost province of the Empire and the Atlantic coast. More data will surely become available in future years, but from what has been seen to date, the supply of different Italian common ware pieces (like Pompeian-Red platters and central Italy *mortaria*) went beyond the coastal urban sphere to reach both inland as in the Roman *villa* in Milreu and coastal sites like Loulé Velho (a possible *villa* with *cetariae*).

One aspect that should be stressed in the assemblage from the Algarve region is that there are only a few examples of pieces imitating the Italian coarse wares (Pompeian-Red ware platters and the unslipped coarse wares). In other regions in southern *Lusitania* (as in Alentejo) these imitations are more frequent as I. V. Pinto has shown in the study of the common ware from the *villae* at S. Cucufate (Pinto 2002: 163). It should also be pointed out that in the Algarve region, the function of these platters as cooking pans must have been performed, at least in part, by the local/regional form of the double rim casserole in a granular grey fabric (Viegas 2012b), as well as by the African cooking ware. One should note that both these wares were specially resistant to fire. Finally, the presence of some fragments of the common ware from Syracuse ('*ceramica comune tipo San Giuliano*') shows that this ware was not only destined for local consumption but rather was also integrated into the commercial route connecting the central Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast in southern *Lusitania*. The role of Sicily in the trade of North African products, such as ARS A or African cooking ware should be mentioned here too.

> Catarina Viegas Centre for Archaeology (UNIARQ), School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon *c.viegas@letras.ulisboa.pt*

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