



## Trade in Pottery within the Lower Adriatic in the 2nd century BCE<sup>1</sup>

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Material culture represents one of the tangible traces to attest to the extensive network of contacts and activities that blossomed over the distinct historical ages among peoples and populations residing in different geographical areas.

The encounter and the continuous exchange, material, human and cultural, between the civilizations settled along the two Adriatic shores are well documented from the Bronze Age to the present day. In the southernmost sector of the Adriatic *kolpos*, where the Ionian and Adriatic Seas meet, the two shores are opposite indeed but, and above all, interfaced too. On the Italian coasts, the site for the Pre-Roman phase, which best reflects such a situation, is Otranto<sup>2</sup>, epicentre of interactions and exchanges within the southern Adriatic, as well as port of trade, namely the seat for a unit of foreign extraction, that, living in the Messapic community, managed the commercial trading and acted as intermediary between the two different geographical worlds.

This situation changes starting from the 2nd century BCE, when the trading axis shifts further north gravitating towards the Latin colony of Brindisi, which becomes the new centre, where goods as well as business and cultural-political-military networks between the Roman-Adriatic and Aegean worlds converge to be then redistributed.

An important testimony to the goods circulating in the Adriatic Sea in the late Republican period is offered by the shipwrecks discovered along the coasts of Salento<sup>3</sup> (**fig. 1**). The study of the cargo vessel that sank in the waters of Torre Santa Sabina<sup>4</sup> allows us to analyze different types of ceramics.

The Torre Santa Sabina wreck<sup>5</sup> (TSS4) therefore shows the kind of goods, which landed, or rather, possibly passed through the southern Adriatic coast. For the most part, its cargo consists of imports from the southern Aegean area, however does not lack products originating

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<sup>2</sup> Especially from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period: MASTRONUZZI 2009, 80–94.

<sup>3</sup> On the ›Romanization‹ of Salento see DE MITRI 2010. For the study of underwater archaeology in Salento see AURIEMMA 2004a and 2004b.

<sup>4</sup> For the Torre Santa Sabina wreck see AURIEMMA – SILVESTRELLI 2013, 445–447.

<sup>5</sup> AURIEMMA 2014.

from the Ionian-Illyrian and Peloponnesian areas whose presence in Salento is little attested, even though fairly consistent throughout antiquity<sup>6</sup>.

Most likely the growing number of routes towards the Aegean Sea also contributed to the exchanges between the opposite shores of the Ionian-Adriatic corridor, given that the course across the Italic and Greek-Albanian ports represented an extension of longer journeys, with the free ports of the Aegean Sea, like Delos, above all, and Rhodes, as starting points for commercial trading. This is where a new material *koine* was created with the provision of cargos, in which Levantine and Egyptian wares converged together with Greek and Italic ones. Then from this way, so reassembled, those cargos continued their journey again, enriching themselves along the route with new products circulating within shorter range.

The cargo of the wreck, sunk in the waters of Torre Santa Sabina, north of Brindisi, pictures exactly such a situation. Some questions about the origin of the vessel still remain open: whether it was a boat, that, coming from the Aegean Sea, cut through the Ionian Sea and, after calling in Brindisi, moved upwards along the Adriatic coasts, or whether it was a new vessel, that, equipped in Brindisi with a load of goods arriving from different areas, left from Brindisi towards the central and northern Adriatic.

The cargo consisted of miscellaneous material that included different ceramic groups:

- household ware, mostly cooking ware, and in smaller numbers coarse ware,
- containers for bulk transport, among them medium sized containers, mostly eastern Aegean and Calabrian-Salentinian amphorae for transport and small-sized containers for transport, above all *lagynoi* with primary function to hold shipping goods,
- fine tableware, including the distinguished the black gloss ware, produced both in the southern Aegean and Italic areas, such as Campana A; various classes of red slip ware, such as colour-coated ware and Eastern Sigillata A ware (ESA). Beside these, there were other classes of pottery: grey slip ware, thin-walled ware and, finally, a large part of the cargo consisted of moldmade ware.

### 1. Household ware (fig. 2)

A large portion of cooking wares is also found in the household ware group<sup>7</sup>. The 'forked rim' pan of Hellenistic tradition provides the largest number of specimens (fig. 2, 2). This is followed by Italic-Latial vessels characterized by an orlo bifido rim (fig. 2, 3), or by a pseudo-almond rim (fig. 2, 4). The second most documented shape is the pot, especially the type characterized by a globular body with vertical grooved rim, generally rounded, with a vertical handle and two lateral grips (fig. 2, 7); this pot seems to be derived from Hellenistic prototypes, found in the Salento and Aegean regions<sup>8</sup>. Few specimens of pots of Asia Minor production, probably from Knidos, or produced in the Phocaea region<sup>9</sup>, are morphologically similar to those described above (fig. 2, 5). They are commonly found within the destruction layers of the late 2nd – early 1st centuries BCE in Delos<sup>10</sup>; even less common are the pots of Italic-Latial tradition with flat base and almond rim (fig. 2, 8). Two types of lids are attested, one with a truncated, conical body (fig. 2, 1), the other with a pseudo-hemispheric body (fig. 2, 6).

<sup>6</sup> DE MITRI 2012.

<sup>7</sup> DE MITRI 2016a.

<sup>8</sup> For this type see YNTEMA 2001, 293, subtype N04c, from late 3rd to mid 2nd century BCE. For types attested in the Aegean area see ROTROFF 2006, 174–175 (with references for the remaining sites).

<sup>9</sup> For the Phocaean production see AMICONE ET AL. 2014, 14 no. 22; 19 fig. 2, 4.

<sup>10</sup> For the presence of this form in Delos see BRUNEAU 1970, 259 D217; SIEBERT 1987, 633–635 fig. 11; PEIGNARD-GIROS 2012, 267 fig. 6.

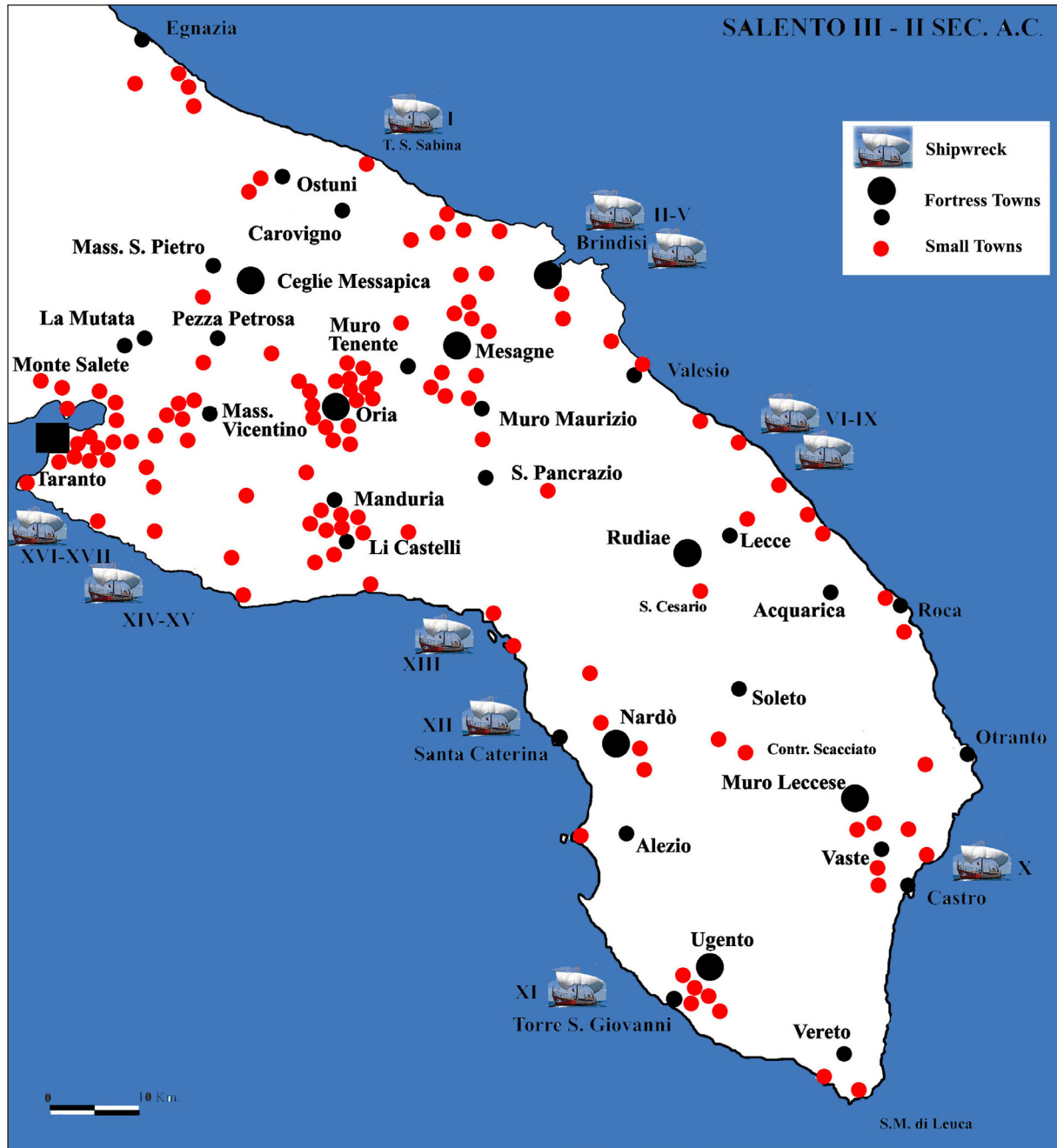


Fig. 1: The Salento Peninsula in 3rd–2nd centuries BCE: towns and shipwrecks: – I. Torre S. Sabina (Br); – II. Pedagne (Br); – III. Punta Penne (Br); – IV. Punta della Contessa (Br); – V. Capo di Torre Cavallo (Br); – VI. Casalabate (Le); – VII. Torre Rinalda (Le); – VIII. Torre Chianca (Le); – IX. Frigole (Le); – X. Porto Badisco (Le); – XI. Ugento (Le); – XII. Santa Caterina (Le); – XIII. Torre Chianca (Le); – XIV-XV. Saturo (Ta); – XVI. Isola di S. Pietro (Ta); – XVII. San Vito (Ta).

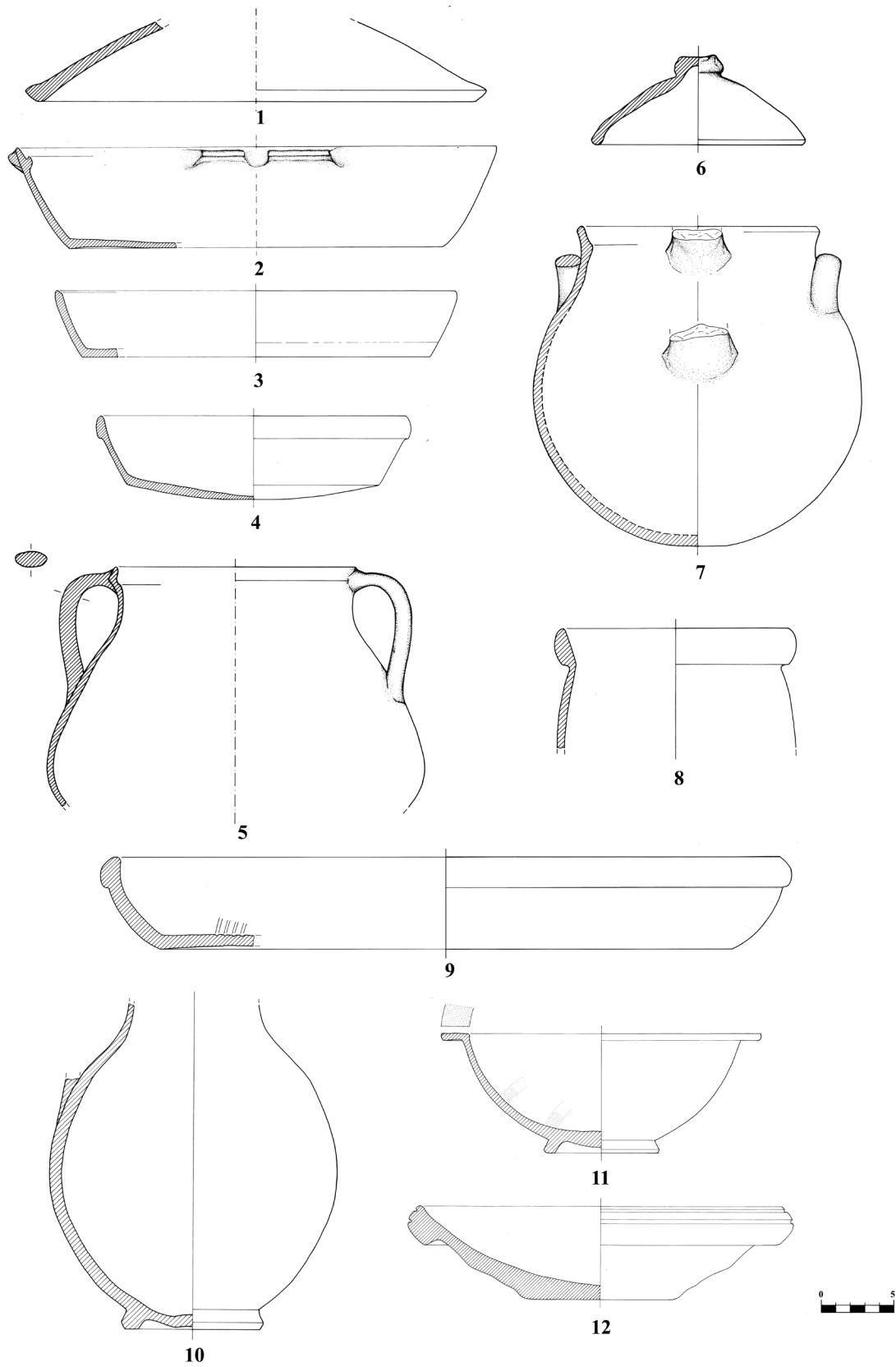


Fig. 2: Torre Santa Sabina wreck. Selection of household ware.

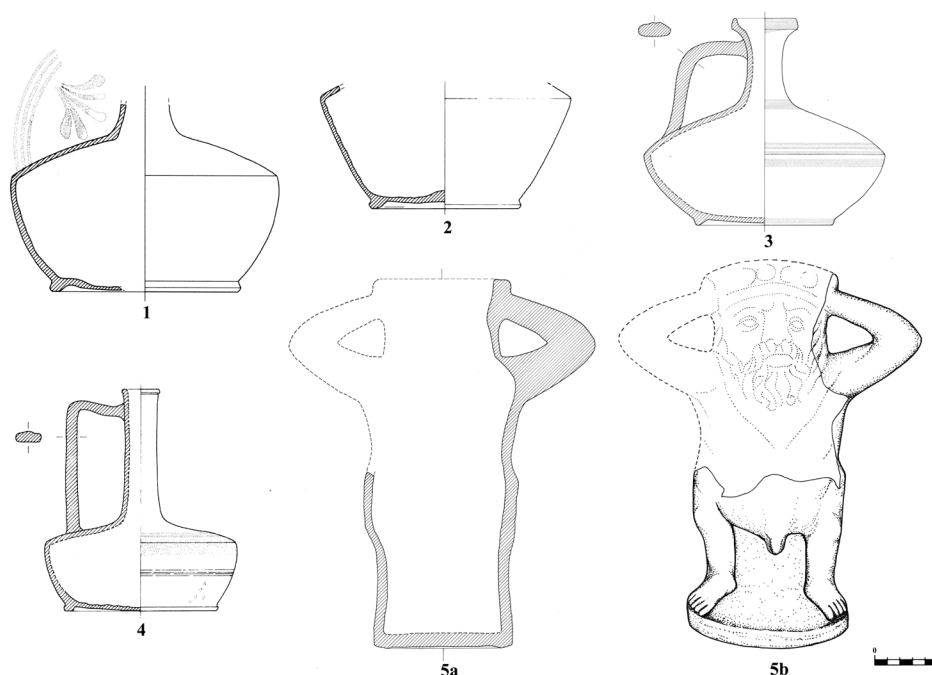


Fig. 3: Torre Santa Sabina wreck. Selection of *lagynoi* and *Magenta* ware.

A Pompeian Red ware large plate could be from the same cargo vessel (fig. 2, 9), which can be assigned to the type Leotta 2<sup>11</sup>. The geographical distribution of this class of pottery shows that it circulated in the Aegean and eastern areas between the last quarter of the 2nd century BCE and the first quarter of the 1st century BCE, together with orlo bifido pans<sup>12</sup>. Such containers are little documented in Apulia<sup>13</sup>, and in Salento they appear mostly in contexts of the Imperial period<sup>14</sup>, although early specimens have been found in Taranto as part of the funerary assemblage for cremated remains dating to the late 2nd century BCE<sup>15</sup>, and in a domestic context from the interior of the Apulo-Lucanian region, at Gravina<sup>16</sup>.

In the plain and coarse wares the most attested shape is the jug with disk or ring foot (fig. 2, 10); in some cases banded decorations are present, especially for the trefoil jug. Among the open shapes there are predominantly basins, these also with a banded decoration (fig. 2, 11). In both cases the artifacts show similarities with the material manufactured in the *Ager Brundisium*<sup>17</sup>; the morphological features are referable to products circulating in the Salento region already in Hellenistic times. Finally, among the few specimens of mortars was an almost intact one: it recalls those of Corinthian production, widespread in Classical and Hellenistic times (fig. 2, 12).

<sup>11</sup> The classification used is that proposed by LEOTTA 2005.

<sup>12</sup> For data referring to the Aegean and Oriental areas see PEIGNARD-GIROS 2000, 213–214, PEIGNARD-GIROS 2012, 272 and LUND 2004.

<sup>13</sup> For a recent distribution map in Apulia see DI STEFANO 2008, 68 fig. 8.

<sup>14</sup> In Salento, some specimens have been found in rural sites in the interior near Oria (YNTEMA 1993, 95–103, 117–118), Brindisi (unpublished data), Valesio (BOERSMA 1995, 285), Lecce (DE MITRI 2012, fig. 10, 23), San Foca (AURIEMMA 2004b, 183 fig. 137, 23), Otranto (SEMERARO 1992, 42–44), Castro (DE MITRI 2009, 180 figs. 47, 172) Santa Maria di Leuca (GIARDINO 1978, 157).

<sup>15</sup> The grave is from phase E3 (HEMPEL 2001, 118).

<sup>16</sup> COTTON 1992, 162 no. 1156 fig. 53.

<sup>17</sup> MANACORDA – PALLECCHI 2012.



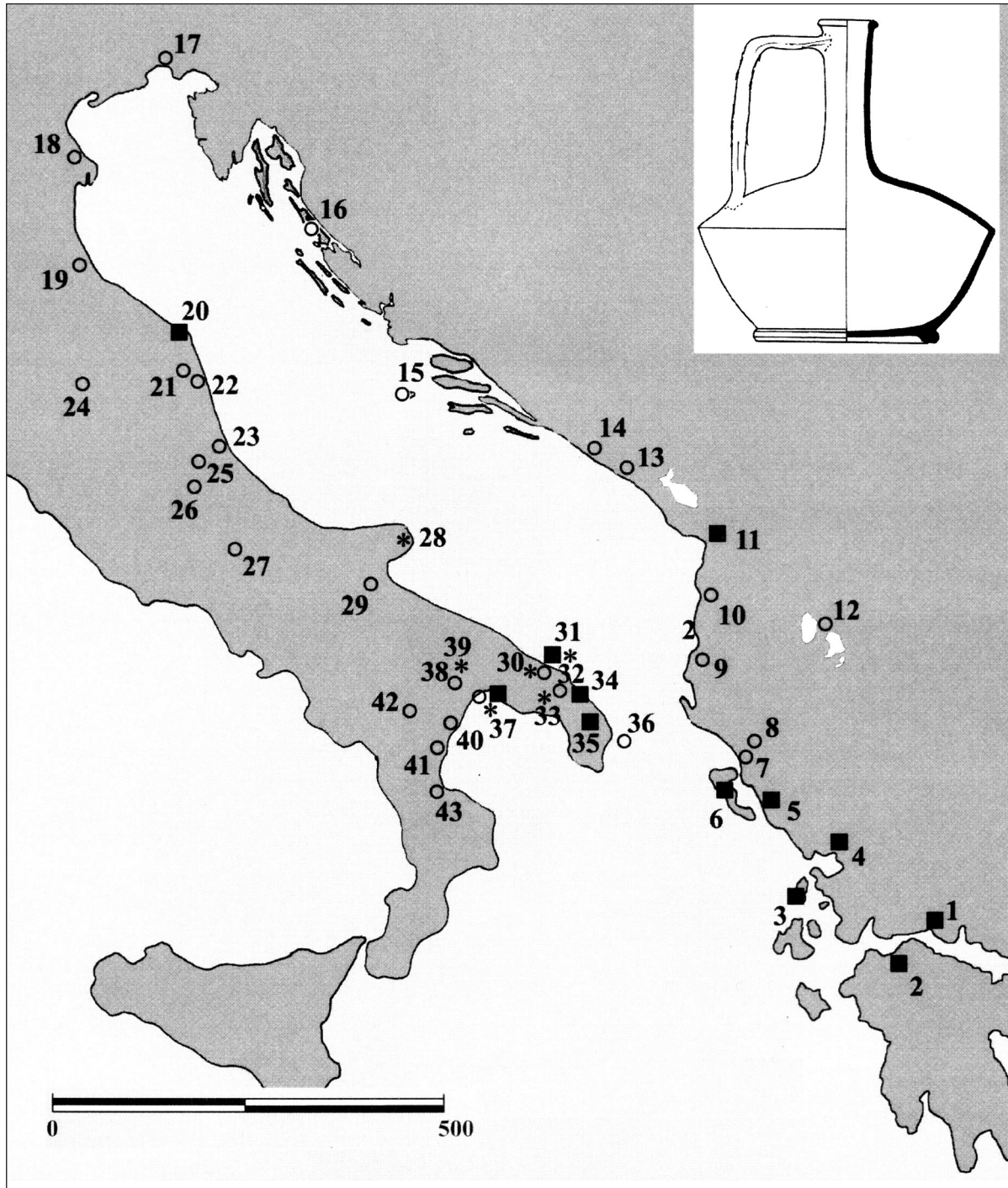


Fig. 4: Distribution of lagynoi in the Ionian-Adriatic area. – ■ lagynoi in the white-ground ware; – \* lagynoi of generic Eastern-Aegean production; – ○ lagynoi of non-determined production: 1. Naupacto; 2. Patraso; 3. Leukade; 4. Ambracia; 5. Igoumenitza; 6. Corfù; 7. Butrinto; 8. Phoenike; 9. Apollonia; 10. Durazzo; 11. Lissos; 12. Lychnidos; 13. Budva; 14. Risan; 15. Vis; 16. Pag; 17. Aquileia; 18. Adria; 19. Russi-Ravenna; 20. Ancona; 21. Castelfidardo; 22. Portorecanati; 23. San Benedetto del Tronto; 24. Perugia; 25. Basciano; 26. Fossa; 27. Monte Vairano; 28. Vieste; 29. Arpi; 30. Egnazia; 31. Torre Santa Sabina; 32. Mesagne; 33. Oria; 34. Valesio; 35. San Cesario di Lecce; 36. Porto Badisco; 37. Taranto; 38. Gravina; 39. Monte Irsi; 40. Metaponto; 41. Heraclea; 42. Grumento; 43. Sibari.

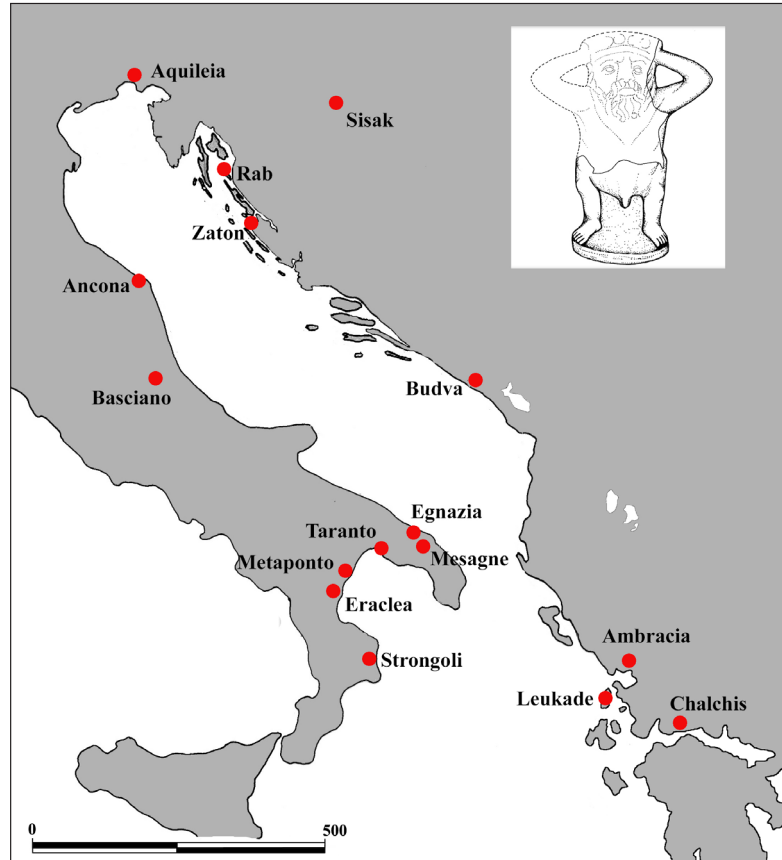


Fig. 5:  
Distribution of *Magenta* ware  
in the Ionian-Adriatic area.

## 2. Containers for bulk transport (fig. 3)

Besides the amphorae<sup>18</sup>, mostly of the ovoid type, whether produced in the area of Salento or also in the north of the Peloponnese and imported from the Aegean, a group of artifacts has been isolated and suggested to be included among the small-sized containers for bulk transport. This is basically about lagynoi, containers, with a main biconical body and the high cylindrical neck, pertaining to various classes referable to Aegean and eastern imports<sup>19</sup> (fig. 3, 1–4). The presence of many specimens with inner walls coated in pitch, likely obtained from pine resin, leads to the conclusion that this shape was used, as primary function, for transporting liquids. The limited capacity of such containers, less than a liter, could imply that the stored product was a particular aromatic balm, an aqueous solution made by distillation or rather a real perfume. These bottles, once emptied of their contents, were reused as household ware or, quite often, as grave goods with a broad market within the Adriatic and the whole Mediterranean<sup>20</sup> (fig. 4).

The review of materials kept in the storerooms at the Museum F. Ribezzo of Brindisi has led to ›rediscover‹ a specific container, similar in function and use to the previous group: a plastic vase that falls into the category of the *Magenta* ware<sup>21</sup>. The specimen, significantly incomplete, represents a figure squatting with the hands on the head and, in spite of the decay from the action of the seawater it is possible to recognize, in some points, on the outer walls

<sup>18</sup> For the amphorae in the Torre Santa Sabina wreck see AURIEMMA 2015; for the ovoid type produced in the north of the Peloponnese see FILIS 2016.

<sup>19</sup> DE MITRI 2016b.

<sup>20</sup> DE MITRI 2014.

<sup>21</sup> GRANATA 2012.

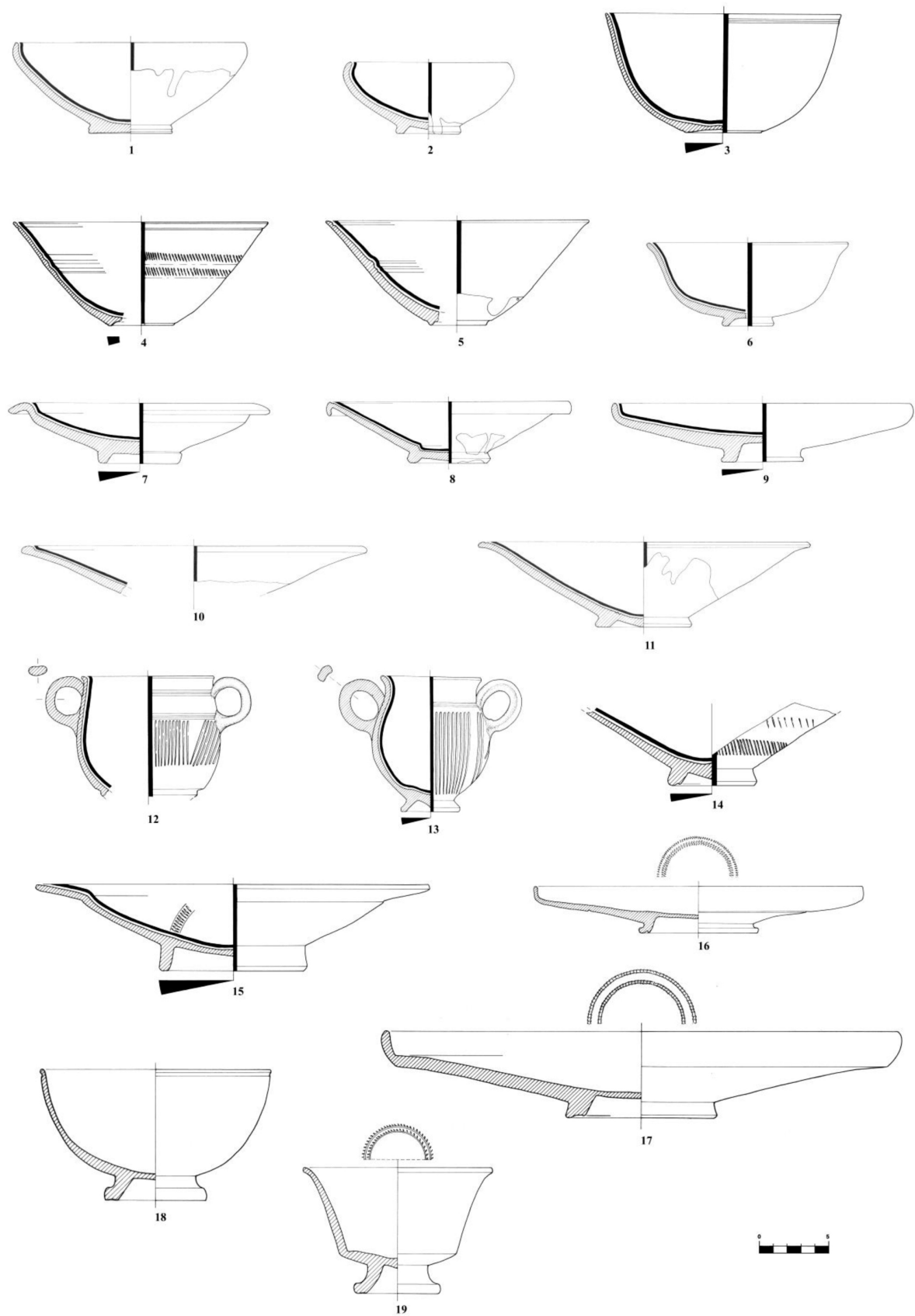


Fig. 6: Torre Santa Sabina wreck. Selection of fine ware.



Fig. 7:  
Distribution of *Illyrian Kantharos*  
in the Ionian-Adriatic area.



the presence of a brownish gloss. The inside of this container, too, shows traces of a resinous coating.

By virtue of comparison with a specimen kept in the Archaeological Museum of Naples<sup>22</sup> and coming, but not with certainty, from Egnazia, a bearded man is recognizable, squatting, big-bellied, with his arms, raised over his head, to shape the handles (fig. 3, 5 a–b).

The specimen falls within the series of vases with figuration of ›Egyptian‹ taste, a vogue spreading from Alexandria to the Aegean world, whose dominant iconography is the squatting Bes or other characters, such as Numidians, Satyrs or Komasts, in the same posture<sup>23</sup>. The Magenta ware is attested in the Ionian-Adriatic area especially in funerary contexts<sup>24</sup> (fig. 5).

### 3. Fine tableware

A large portion of the cargo consisted of fine wares which according to technical specifications can be divided into five subgroups: thin-walled, moldmade, black gloss, grey slip and red slip wares.

The thin-walled ware and, within the black gloss ware, the Campana A, the Campana B and B-*oide* must be related to the Tyrrhenian area. Except for the grey slip wares and for some shapes of the black gloss ware referable to a local repertoire, the majority is of Aegean and eastern<sup>25</sup>, partially, Ionian production. Within the moldmade ware<sup>26</sup> it is possible for instance to identify productions which, for the most part, refer to Ephesus, and another production

<sup>22</sup> BORRIELLO 1996, 164 fig. 15, 15.

<sup>23</sup> BARRETT 2011.

<sup>24</sup> For the first maps of distribution of Magenta ware see KRSTIĆ 2001; for the others attestations: MESSINEO 1997, 191–193; COLIVICCHI 2002, 236–237; SPADEA 2015, 682.

<sup>25</sup> See LIPPOLIS 2015 for the pottery importation in the South Italy.

<sup>26</sup> ANTONAZZO 2014.

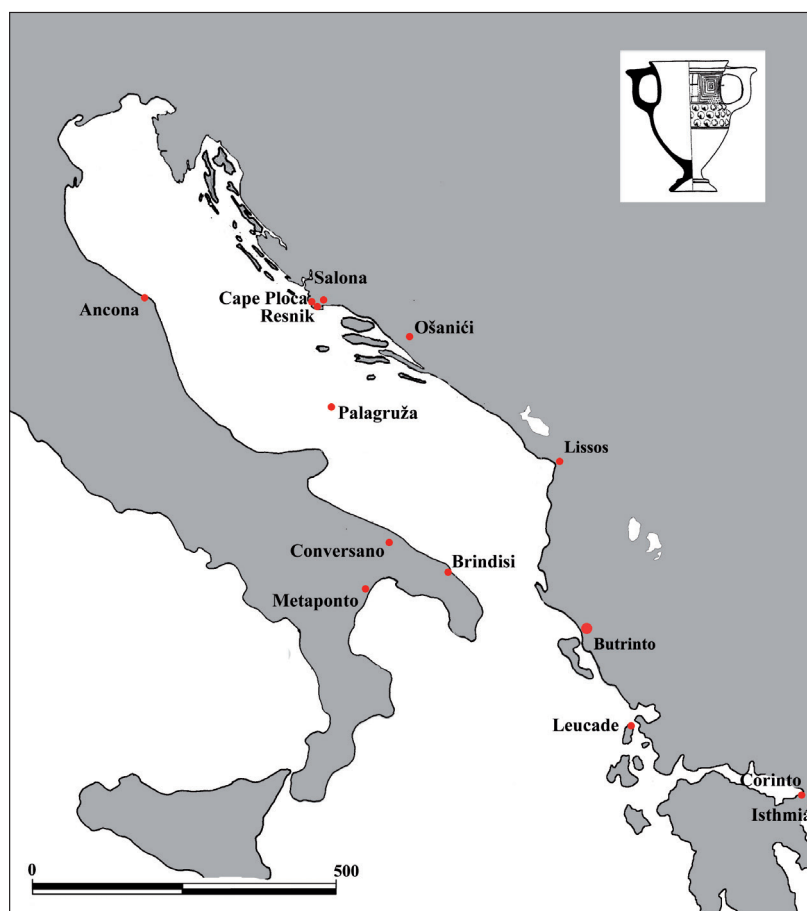


Fig. 8:  
Distribution of *Thorn*  
*Kantharos* in the Ionian-  
Adriatic area.

connected to that area, or to Peloponnesian ateliers or to workshops operating in the area of Durazzo<sup>27</sup>.

Shapes and types of Aegean production are recognizable especially within the black gloss ware<sup>28</sup>: the *echinus* bowl is prevalent and within this generic family two types have been distinguished: the former ends with a ring foot, type Morel F2763; 2982 = Yntema K25 (fig. 6, 2), the latter has instead a raised base (fig. 6, 1). The shape is widely documented in late Hellenistic Mediterranean contexts and does not seem to be the exclusive production of specific ceramic ateliers, rather something commonly manufactured over the Mediterranean, in the Apulian area too. Both types appear also in a minor size, such as the saltcellar. Another bowl well documented is the *mastos*, characterized by a parabolic profile. In this case as well, two types are distinguished: one also common to other classes of pottery, type Morel F2150 = Yntema K45a (fig. 6, 4), another with a deep groove in its middle (fig. 6, 5). In smaller numbers there are hemispherical cups, type Morel F2120 = Yntema K45b (fig. 6, 3) and bowls with outturned rim, type Morel F2614 (fig. 6, 6).

A second shape comprises plates of different types: the saucer characterized by a projecting rim, type Morel F1534 = Yntema K3c/d (fig. 6, 7) in a large number of variations, the fish-plate, type Morel F1121 (fig. 6, 8), the plate with upturned rim, type Morel F2283 = Yntema K5 (fig. 6, 9) and the plate with rolled rim. Of the latter two types occur: the first is close to a later mainstream production, type Morel F2233 = Yntema K3f (fig. 6, 10), the other has more significant analogies with specimens produced in small regional workshops, whose trade seems to be limited to the surrounding area or to the opposite shore (fig. 6, 11).

<sup>27</sup> ŠEŠELJ 2008.

<sup>28</sup> For the Aegean production of black gloss ware see ROTROFF 1997.

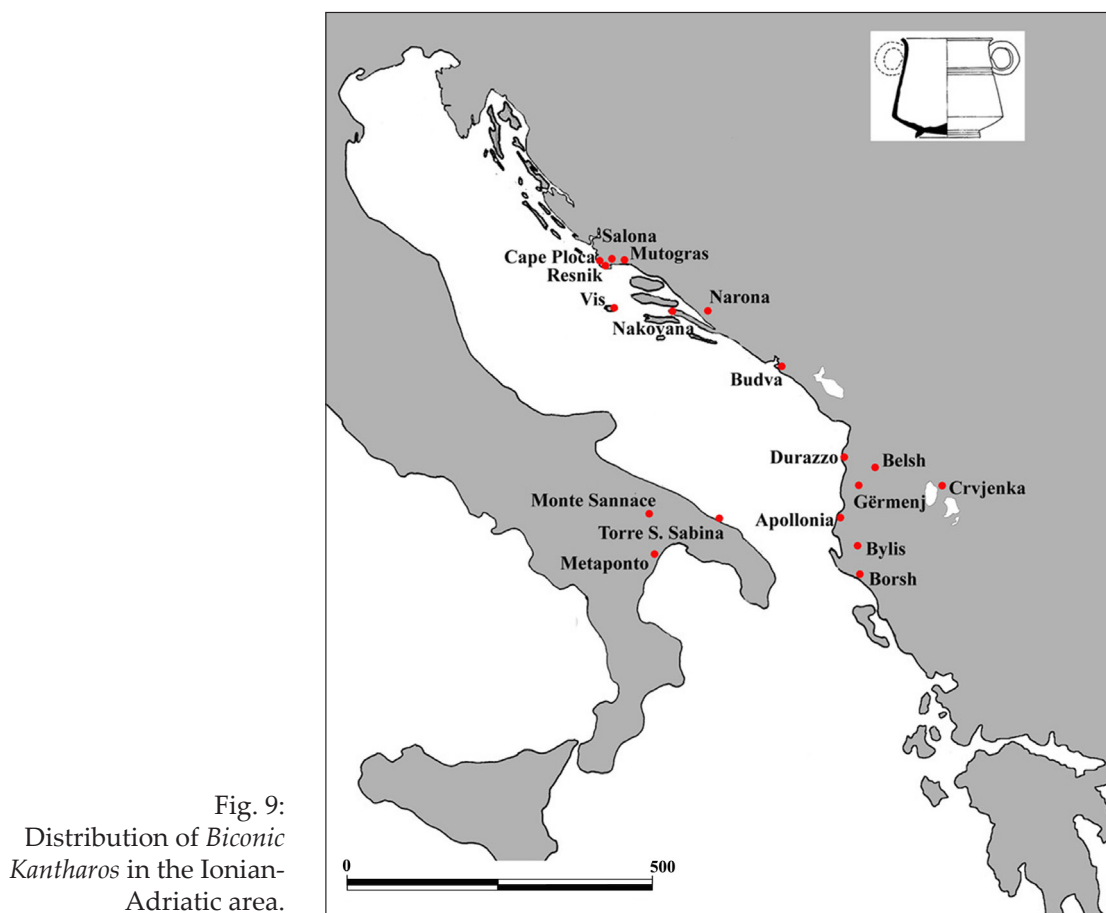


Fig. 9:  
Distribution of *Biconic*  
*Kantharos* in the Ionian-  
Adriatic area.

Referring to the Illyrian area, there are some kantharoi characterized by a ›bell-shaped‹ body with a vertical striped decoration, engraved on the outer walls (fig. 6, 12–13); the distribution map highlights how the attestations of the *Illyrian Kantharos*<sup>29</sup> are concentrated mostly on the Illyrian-Epirote and the Peloponnesian coasts (fig. 7).

The success of the kantharos is confirmed by its presence in various classes of pottery. Within the West Slope ware the *Thorn Kantharos* is included: likely of Ionian or Peloponnesian production, its circulation is basically limited to the Adriatic basin. Except for some reported finds in Athens and in Egypt, the distribution map highlights three main areas of interest: the Dalmatian, the Ionian-Adriatic region and Corinth; specimens from Ancona and Lissos<sup>30</sup> have recently been added to (fig. 8).

Another type circulating in this phase is the *Biconic Kantharos*, attested in the Torre Santa Sabina wreck in grey slip and red slip ware. In this case, too, the distribution map (fig. 9) highlights a more consistent presence of this shape in the eastern Adriatic and, above all, in the Dalmatian area, where also the production has been set<sup>31</sup>.

Beside the *Biconic Kantharos*, within the red slip wares, there are mostly the *echinus* bowls in different forms, together with other types of cups and plates, which often represent the corresponding version in ›red‹ of other shapes in black gloss<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> For the definition see KÖGLER 2011. Specimens of Thorn Kantharos and Illyrian Kantharos at Butrinto are attested in the Temple of Asklepios (BUDINA 1971, 334 Taf. 29).

<sup>30</sup> For Ancona FRAPICCINI 2015, for Lissos *ex inf.* Patricia Kögler.

<sup>31</sup> See MIŠE – ŠEŠELJ 2008, ŠEŠELJ 2008 and ŠEGVIĆ ET AL. 2012.

<sup>32</sup> DE MITRI – MAURO 2015.

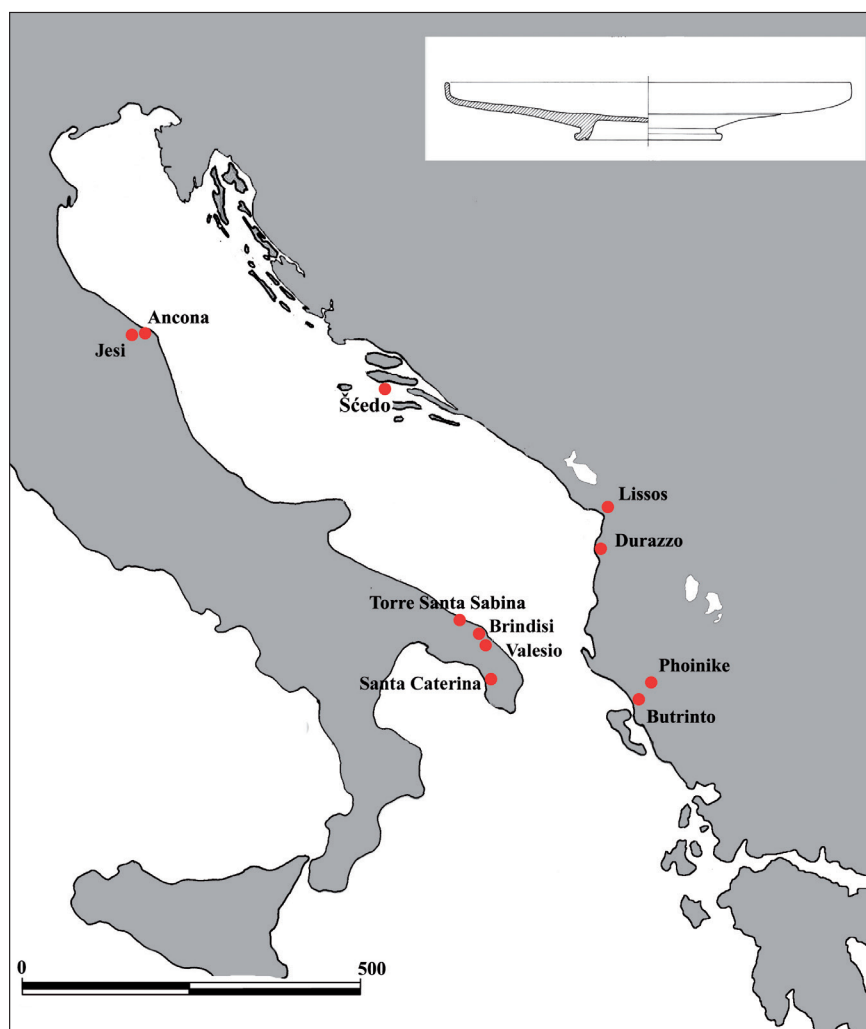


Fig. 10:  
Distribution of ESA  
in the 2nd century BCE  
in the Ionian-Adriatic  
area.

The production centers for red slip wares in the late Hellenistic Mediterranean are now well known and, among them, workshops are located in Epirus and, going up north, in Illyria and in Liburnia<sup>33</sup>.

Among the other eastern Mediterranean products Levantine ones appear. In the shipwreck a ten or so specimens of the ›Black-Slip Predecessor‹ (BSP) have been identified; this class includes pottery produced in the same workshops of the eastern slip ware, especially of the ESA, and with the same shapes, even though manufactured in black gloss. There are two BSP shapes: the *mastos* Hayes Form 17B (fig. 6, 14), a shape well documented also in other classes, and the plate with offset rim Hayes Form 6 (fig. 6, 15).

Outside the Levant and Asia Minor the attestations are rather modest, some specimens are known in Athens and in Delos and in the Salento area, in Valesio; at the current state of knowledge, they are almost non-existent in the West.

Along with different red slip wares and bound to monopolize the market of the red gloss production during the 1st century BCE, Eastern Sigillata A ware (ESA) also emerges<sup>34</sup>.

In the Torre Santa Sabina wreck about twenty specimens have been identified; the prevailing shape is the plate, in particular the Hayes Form 2A variation (fig. 6, 16), which represents the red gloss ware transposition of a famed type, well attested in the morphological repertoire of the Hellenistic black gloss ware. Beside this, there is also the plate Hayes Form 3

<sup>33</sup> See now SHEHI 2014.

<sup>34</sup> ROTROFF 2014, for the Salento area see DE MITRI 2012, for Dalmatia see JURIŠIĆ 2000, 28.



(fig. 6, 17), a shape including a new formal repertoire, typical of the ESA and characterized by a foot getting lower, squarer and heavier. Furthermore, the set is completed by two other shapes: the bowl of Hayes Form 5B, the cup Hayes Form 22A (fig. 6, 18), and, in smaller numbers, Hayes Form 23 (fig. 6, 19).

Such findings confirm the existent circulation of ESA between the third and the last quarter of the 2nd century BCE in the Adriatic area (fig. 10), the end of a trade flow that, coming from the Aegean world, as documented in Delos, in Athens and in Corinth, affected the Ionian-Adriatic area, as shown by the findings of these shapes on the Albanian shore, on the coast of Salento and, further north in Ancona and the hinterland<sup>35</sup>.

### Conclusions

The distribution maps, relating to specific artifacts, mostly found in the cargo of the Torre Santa Sabina wreck and little documented in the contexts of land areas, seem to highlight the presence of a system of routes which, instead of a cabotage for long stretches of coast, created what we can call a 'flipper commerce'.

In other words, a cross link between the main ports located on the opposite shores, that started from the mouth of the Adriatic, *l'os vadi* profiled by the Salento Peninsula in the west and by the Greek-Albanian coast in the east, proceeded to the mid-Adriatic sector, *l'omphalos* with the promontory of Ancona and with the Croatian islands, up to the *mychos*, that is the closure of the Basin with the Gulf of Aquileia, representing the entrance door to Noricum and Europe.

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<sup>35</sup> For the attestations on Aegean sites see SHEHI 2014; for the Salento Peninsula see DE MITRI 2012, 204, CONTE 2012, 115 and MASTRONUZZI 1995; for Ancona and the hinterland BRECCIAROLI TABORELLI 1998, 187–189 and GIULIODORI 2012.

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