

THE BLACK GLOSS AND BLACK COATED POTTERY IN AQUILEIA [\[1\]](#) FABRICS, FORMS AND CHRONOLOGY

Introduction

A large assemblage of black gloss pottery was recently unearthed in excavations conducted at the site of the *domus* so-called of *Titus Macer* located on the south-eastern district of Aquileia, in the area known as the former Cossar property [\[2\]](#). The researches aim to reconsider the development of the house during the centuries and its correlation with the area nearby. Initial analysis of the pottery typology, coin and glass vessels, together with stratigraphy and dendrochronology indicates that the house was in use between the beginning of the 1st century BC (around 90 BC) until the first half of the 6th century AD (most likely about 540 AD) [\[3\]](#). The possibility to examine more than 1000 shards of black gloss and black coated pottery offered the opportunity to carry out an in-depth analysis on fabrics, forms and chronology. As a result, a variety of production groups have been distinguished, the majority probably related to some local and regional manufacture centres. In order to examine the development of the vessels repertoire and to reconstruct the relationship between locally produced black coated and imported black gloss pottery a quantitative, morphological and chronological analysis has been performed [\[4\]](#).

Quantitative Analyses

The present assemblage includes 1001 black gloss and black coated fragments - a significant quantity that provides the opportunity to conduct meaningful quantitative analyses of the data. From the total amount of black gloss shards recovered about 801 have been taken into consideration from production, morphological and chronological point of view, the rest was difficult to examine because preserved very badly. From a basic classification of the fabrics made macroscopically it becomes clear that the local and the regional production makes up the majority (ca. 69%) of the black gloss and coated pottery, followed by the Campana B (attested with 19%) and Adriatic productions (9%). The rest of the finds are mainly of North Italic origin (2%) or in smaller portion are related to the Campana C (1%).

The majority of forms represented are referred to open shapes: more than a half of the vessels can be attributed to plates (51%) and 41% to bowls, while closed shapes are present with small number of individuals, only 8% of the total amount of

estimated vessels. This regards mostly *pyxis* and in smaller portion pots, jugs (*oinochoai?*) and *askoi*.

The better known plate type is the *patera* Lamboglia 5 (*espèce* Morel 2250) that covers 43% of the plates found, mostly represented by the ancient variant with a rounded carination dated to the end of the 2nd and the first half of the 1st century BC. This phenomenon is linked to the growth of the latest types of Lamboglia 5 characterised with edged carination and with the appearance of other forms that represent its evolution, as Lamboglia 5/7 and 7/16 type, common for Augustan times. The presence of Lamboglia 5 is important also because it testifies a big variety of production centres. One of the most common is the Campana B group with an important role of the northern Etruscan *ateliers*. In fact, the earliest presence of Lamboglia 5 specimens at Aquileia refers to the beginning of the 2nd century BC. The rest of the plates is mainly attributed to Lamboglia 6 (Morel 1400) attested with 31% and to Lamboglia 36 (Morel 1300): to this form are referred 8% of the vessels, so as Lamboglia 4 (Morel 1415) present with small number of individuals, just 5% of the total amount of estimated vessels.

As for the bowls present in the black gloss and coated ware assemblages, in almost all chronological phases Lamboglia 28 (*espèce* Morel 2650) are the most frequent. This trend is common to most of the North Italic deposits [5]. The percentage of the shape reached 66% of the total amount of presented bowls and is mainly of local and regional origin. Some few other forms integrate this scenario: Lamboglia 8 (10%), Lamboglia 27 (7%) and Lamboglia 31 (5%).

Chronology

From a chronological point of view, the black gloss and black coated pottery found in the *domus* so-called of *Titus Macer* is generally dated to the 2nd and 1st century BC. The earliest deposits show the presence of a plate referred to the Volterra production, dated to the first half of the 2nd century BC. Imports from this area in North Italy gradually decreased from the mid 2nd century BC, mainly related to the growing number of Arezzo productions [6] which however are attested here with only 0,9% of the total amount of fragments. The imports of Campana B group also reached Aquileia in the 2nd century BC but they seem to have played a considerable role also during the end of the 2nd and the beginning of 1st century BC (this regards especially for example Lamboglia 6, 5, 28 and Lamboglia 3). This chronological phase

is enriched by a big variety of vessel repertoire. Considering the 1st century BC deposits the analysed vessels allow to register the rather low number of Etruscan imports, represent by late variants of Lamboglia 28, 5 and 5/7, in contrast to the high percentage of local and regional products, mostly represented by *ateliers* located in the upper Adriatic area, as in the *ager* of Aquileia. In this period increase the indexes of the black gloss ware found in the deposits but meanwhile reduce the variety of forms and shapes attested. The latest variants dated to the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of 1st century AD are relatively few in the examined contexts and generally testify the decline of the black gloss pottery manufacture. The overall situation of the first decades of the 1st century AD provided limited presence of black gloss pottery still in Tiberian deposits but the phenomenon is registered with very few rare specimens [7] compared to other regional realities [8].

A Focus on the Local and Regional Productions. Fabrics, Forms, Chronology

The possibility to examine domestic contexts, offered the opportunity to carry out an in-depth analysis of the black coated ware of local and regional production. The aim is to examine the correlation between imports and locally manufactured vessels in order to provide a valuable marker for the reconstruction of trade networks and, as much as possible, to consider the role that black gloss pottery played as a cultural transfer in ancient times.

As we have already seen the majority of the black coated ware is to be of local and regional production. To this group mostly referred three types of fabrics. The first one is floury and powder very pale yellow fabric (2.5YR 8/2, 10YR 7/3, 10 YR 8/3) which has irregular aspect on fresh broken samples. Black to brownish black, opaque, thin and often diluted slip. This is usually consider to be a product of the *ager* of Aquileia, closed to the fabrics of the table common ware of the same origin [9]. 13% of the total number of black coated fragments discovered in the *domus* has this fabric. The second one is soft floury light grey fabric (2.5YR 7/1) and black opaque thin slip that cover badly and strip easily the vessel's surface. It is generally consider to be of regional production, somewhere located in the Croatian coast [10], attested here with 8%. The third group is the most frequent one, registered with 48% of the total black gloss wares. Most are identified here with a soft floury very pale brown to pink fabric (10YR 7/4, 10YR 7/3, 10YR 6/3, 5YR 7/4, 7.5YR 8/4, 7.5YR 7/4) which has been burned brown by the circle sign of the pile. It presents also reddish fingerprints on the joint point between the base and the exterior side of the vessel. Fresh broken

samples have irregular aspect but there are still some few specimens with harder porous fabric with mica inclusions. Black to brownish black and greyish black slip with some metallic lustre for some high quality products are known and more often thin not lustrous irregular slip with brown shades for low quality products. The slip strips easily and peel away frequently forming little craters. This fabric is related to the Upper Adriatic area, not yet precisely located, but some of the fabric characteristics are common to those of the production of Adria [\[11\]](#).

A closer view on the vessel repertoire reveals some trends regarding the Upper Adriatic productions. In fact, most of the forms attested in the house can be attributed to some local/regional manufacture centres except for the *pyxis* and the plates with a high ring foot which are in Campana B and related *ateliers*. A striking feature of the vessels shapes in local/regional fabric is the high number of *paterae* Lamboglia 5 and 6 and of bowls Lamboglia 28. The plate Lamboglia 6 is frequent generally related to both *ager* of Aquileia fabric and to the northern Adriatic one while seem documented in lower percentage in regional grey fabric of Croatian production. Anyway, the presence indexes of the bowl Lamboglia 28 is considerably high in all three fabric groups if compared to the few other imported samples, mostly from North Etruscan origin. This phenomenon is strongly influenced by the chronology of the form, mostly typical for the second half of the 2nd and the first half of the 1st century BC. In fact, one third of the Lamboglia 28 found in the deposits is characterised by variants with rounded carination basically dated to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC. This form is widely distributed in other sectors of Aquileia and also in the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia where is attested in a wide large territory included the Alpine arch zone, the lower Friuli plain to the coastal area reaching also *Histria* [\[12\]](#). Regarding the published data, the presence of Lamboglia 28 testifies the beginning of the distribution of this form already in the end of the 2nd century BC becoming most frequent in the 1st century BC deposits [\[13\]](#). But what make this form particularly suitable for the local taste? And why it reveals one of the most common shape not only in local and regional production but also in the vessel repertoire of the manufacture centres of northern Italy in general? The success of the shape could be explained because it is easily producible, may be not so expensive and multifunctional. Above all, the bowls were already part of the pre-Roman gastronomic material culture, and as known the diet and food practices sphere is one of the least innovative and tends, on the contrary, to preserve and pass cooking traditions over time [\[14\]](#).

From a quick view on the evidences of the black coated pottery of local and regional origin it becomes evident that in the 2nd century BC in the deposits are already present local examples, confirmed by a number of vessels attributed to Lamboglia 27, 31, 33 and 36. This testifies the early existence of local production in line with the data related to the Republican *macellum* and the contemporaneous sector of the city [15]. The group is most frequent in the deposits dated to 1st century BC and is still present in Augustan times but just with few forms (Lamboglia 5/7 and 7/16), attested in limited number of individuals. Finally, late variants of local black coated pottery seem to be frequent in the region but not so often distributed in Aquileia itself where terra sigillata finds are gradually increasing from the beginning of the 1st century AD. As Aquileia was an important emporium in northern Adriatic terra sigillata appears quite early and is easily adopted [16], testifying the adaptation of local eating behaviours to the new fashion manufactory processes and styles.

Conclusions

Coming to a conclusion of the analysis presented here, it seems appropriate to end with a more general comment on the circulation of black gloss pottery, on its role as cultural transfer in Cisalpine Gaul and on its links with the phenomenon of globalisation and revival of local traditions. The composition of the black gloss and black coated assemblages, with the constant presence of imported products, highlights the integration of the city of Aquileia into the trade patterns of Mediterranean. However, the arrival over the centuries of important quantities of local and regional black coated ware cannot be related only to economic reason. The low cost and good quality alone would not have justified the use of unsuitable vessels that do not meet local taste and eating behaviours. Fully and rapidly accepted in the local manufacture centres some forms (as the case of the plates Lamboglia 5 and 6 and the bowl Lamboglia 28) can be linked to the gastronomic pre-Roman cuisine culture. It appears obvious that pottery workshops may be used to trace cultural interaction which was not always limited to the distribution of pottery but can be also important during the manufacturing stage. In fact, the adoption of novel techniques and the adaptation of other already existed demonstrate both the ability to assimilate new elements and to preserve traditional ones. The black gloss assemblages composed of different fabrics and forms, and coming from different areas of Italic peninsula, often prove this scenario.

- [1] For the definition of the black gloss and the black coated pottery from technological point of view, see Daszkiewicz, Schneider, Kögler [here](#).
- [2] The archaeological researches took place between 2009 and 2015. The excavations were directed by Prof. J. Bonetto and Prof. A.R. Ghiotto on the behalf of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Padua and in collaboration with the Soprintendenza dei Beni Archeologici del Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Foundation Aquileia. The excavation team included Mrs V. Centola, PhD G. Furlan, PhD E. Madrigali and PhD C. Previato (as sectors supervisors), PhD D. Dobрева and PhD A. Stella (as pottery and coin specialists) and Mr S. Berto (as surveying and drafting specialist).
- [3] Typological and functional analyses of the pottery are conducted by the author and by Mr A. Bosetti, PhD T. Cividini, Mr M. De Re, Mrs A.M. Griggio, PhD C. Magrini, PhD V. Mantovani, PhD S. Mazzocchin, Mrs A. Riccato, Mrs M. Sutto, Mrs M. Trivini Bellini. The coins are studied by Prof. M. Asolati and PhD A. Stella. PhD G. Cesarin, Mrs M. Colusso and PhD A. Marcante are studying the assemblage of glass vessels; the post-excavation procession of the stratigraphic data is due to Prof. J. Bonetto, Mrs V. Centola, PhD G. Furlan, Prof. A.R. Ghiotto, PhD E. Madrigali and PhD C. Previato. I wish to thank them for sharing their preliminary conclusions with me.
- [4] Some results of the analyses conducted on the black gloss and black coated pottery of Aquileia Cossar have been already published in: D. Dobрева - A.M. Griggio, La ceramica a vernice nera dai fondi ex Cossar ad Aquileia: problematiche e prospettive di ricerca, in «Quaderni Friulani di Archeologia», 21/2011 (2012), 77-100. The present paper aims up to date these results mainly by reconsidering the quantitative analyses. For full morphological and chronological in-depth analysis of all black gloss pottery shards found in Aquileia, see A.M. Griggio, La ceramica a vernice nera, in J. Bonetto, D. Dobрева (eds.), Aquileia. Fondi Cossar. III. I materiali (Roma in press).
- [5] Some regional distribution trends are given in T. Cividini, Presenze romane nel territorio del medio Friuli. 1. Sedegliano (Tavagnacco, UD 1997), in part. 32.
- [6] M.T. Grassi, La ceramica a vernice nera di Calvatone-Bedriacum (Flos Italiae, Documenti di archeologia della Cisalpina Romana, 7) (Firenze 2008), in part. 127-128.
- [7] Latest variants of black gloss and black coated pottery (as Lamboglia 5/7 and 7/16) seem to be registered in Aquileia mainly in Augustan times. Some evidences from the time of Tiberius are extremely rare and have to be reconsidered. See recent analysis in P. Donat, Ceramica a vernice nera nel Friuli Venezia Giulia. L'edito. Prima parte: la diffusione, Quaderni Friulani di Archeologia», 21/2011 (2012), 17-39, in part. 36.
- [8] See for instance, Cremona and Milan: Grassi *op.cit.* (fn. 6) 101.
- [9] This production group was firstly defined in L. Mandruzzato - F. Maselli Scotti, Provenienza della ceramica a vernice nera di Aquileia, Aquileia Nostra 74, 2003, 377-394.
- [10] See also Ugarković; - Šegvić; in these proceedings.
- [11] For the production of Adria see E. Mangani, Adria (Rovigo). Necropoli in loc. Ca' Garzoni. Prima campagna di scavo, 1966, Notizie Scavi 36, 1982, 9-107, in part. 100-101; U. Dallemulle - E. Marzola, Una tomba di II sec. a.C. da Adria: la 45 Ca' Cima, Padusa 13, 1977, 3-53, in part. 34-35. I thank A. Gaucci for confirming this hypothesis.
- [12] Dobрева – Griggio *op.cit.* (fn. 4) 83-85.
- [13] This phenomenon seems to be correlated to the development of the local and regional manufacture of black coated ware which during 1st century BC became more relevant, cfr. P. Maggi - R. Merlatti, L'evoluzione delle importazioni ad Aquileia. II. Produzioni italiche e orientali: la ceramica, Antichità AltoAdriatiche, 65, 2007, 547-573, in part. 548-550.
- [14] See also the discussion in D. Dobрева - A. Riccato - M. Trivini Bellini, Globalised diet patterns in Mediterranean: the evidence of the cooking wares from Aquileia (UD), Italy, in: *ReiCretActa* 45 (in press).
- [15] Mandruzzato - Maselli Scotti *op.cit.* (fn. 9) 379-380.
- [16] As testified by the products of *S. Petronius Rasinius*, *C. Sertorius Ocella* and *A. Titius*; F. Maselli Scotti, Ceramica a vernice nera in Aquileia, Antichità AltoAdriatiche 37, 1991, 303-309, in part. 309, dated still in the second half of the 1st century BC; M. Daszkiewicz, Ancient pottery in the laboratory – principles of archaeological investigations of provenance and technology, *Novensia* 25 (Warszawa 2014) 177-197.

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