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Indice

Fine wares in late Roman Apulia: the coastal and inland evidence*

*Carlo De Mitri**, Roberto Goffredo****

The numerous studies that have focused on the analysis of the trade of imported Mediterranean ceramics in Late Antique Apulia now make it possible to provide an up-to-date picture of the demand for imported fine pottery, particularly African Red Slip Ware and Phocean Red Slip Ware, and its circulation in Apulia. Despite the limitations of using quantitative data that is not always homogeneous, this work aims to highlight the similarities or specific characteristics found both between rural and urban markets and between the different areas of the region.

Introduction

Since at least the early Nineties, numerous studies have focused on analysing the trade of imported Mediterranean finewares within Late Antique *Apulia et Calabria*, shedding light on their penetration, distribution and circulation processes[1].

Particular attention has been paid to understand:

1) which wares came both from the Western and Eastern Mediterranean and were therefore available in rural and urban markets;

2) the factors influencing the export and demand of finewares (aesthetic or functional choices, changing dining habits, transport facilities);

3) how intensively *Apulia et Calabria* were involved in Late Roman ceramic exchange with North Africa and the East between the 4th and the early 7th centuries CE;

4) what connections were established between imported finewares and the contemporary, pervasive local/regional productions of table and coarse wares.

At a wider scale, scholarly debate on Late Roman fine tablewares has long since initiated a critical reflection on quantifications[2]; this debate has been recently enriched by some interesting theoretical and contextual contributes which emphasize the need for a more anthropological and less quantitative approach to their study[3].

Furthermore, an important reflection has been initiated on the combined use of excavation data and survey data: this is recognised as the way to achieve a deeper understanding of the relationships between human behaviour and the dynamics of acquisition, use and disposal of these artefacts. The main objective is to better define the "economic", "cultural" and "social" value of imported ceramic products and, above all, to support a more aware use of this material evidence as a

* This paper was presented at the Workshop "Production and distribution of Fine Wares in the Adriatic Region from 3rd to 7th century", held in Monaco in May 2017. Thanks to M. Mackensen and E. Cirelli the organisers and to P. Reynolds, the first reader of this paper.

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1 Volpe 1999; Volpe *et alii* 2007; Volpe *et alii* 2010; Leone, Turchiano 2002; Annese 2000; Ead. 2006; Annese, Disantarosa 2013; Arthur *et alii* 2007; Cassano *et alii* 2008; *Ceramica romana*; De Mitri 2018.

2 Fentress, Perkins 1988; Fentress *et alii* 2004; Bes, Poblome 2008; Willet 2012; Id. 2014; Bes 2015. See also *LRFW 1*.

3 E.g. Zanini 2009; Id. 2010; Zanini, Costa 2011. In general, see Alcock 1993: 49 about the necessity of an "*archaeological source criticism*" of contexts from which ceramic assemblages are recovered, in order to assess how well they might communicate patterns of everyday use and discard.

diagnostic tool for interpreting and dating stratigraphic sequences.

Moving on from these studies, and with the limitations of using non-homogeneous data, this paper aims to provide an up-to-date overview of the demand for imported finewares[4] (in particular, African Red Slip Ware and Phocean Red Slip Ware, henceforth ARS and PRS) and their circulation in *Apulia* during the Late Antique period, trying to provide fresh data and critical points to what is already known and, if possible, to analyse pottery in close relation with places and people.

R.G., C.D.M.

Study cases

This paper will use data deriving from both urban and rural settlements whose phases of life/occupation/change/abandonment fall within the chronological range under discussion.

As for the cities, this analysis has taken into account assemblages from the excavated contexts of the coastal centres of *Sipontum*/Siponto (D'Aloia 1999a), *Salapia* (De Venuto, Goffredo, Totten 2021), *Barium*/Bari (Rubino 2015; Airò 2015), *Egnatia* (Fioriello *et alii* 2013; Conte *et alii* 2017), *Hydruntum*/Otranto (*Otranto II*; De Mitri 2004; Id. 2016), *Tarentum*/Taranto (D'Andria, Mastronuzzi 1998; Biffino, Pace 2012) and *Callipolis*/Gallipoli (De Santis, Congedo 2003)[5]. In the inland, all the available data from *Herdonia*/Ordona (Annese 2000; Rizzitelli 2000; Turchiano 2000), *Canusium*/Canosa (Cassano *et alii* 1985; Pensabene, D'Alessio 2009), *Lupiae*/Lecce (De Mitri 2007), *Rudiae* (Polito 2012), *Basta*/Vaste (D'Andria, Mastronuzzi, Melissano 2006; Mastronuzzi, Melissano 2012; Mastronuzzi, Melissano 2015; Mastronuzzi *et alii* 2019), *Aletium*/Alezio (Giannotta 1981; Robinson 2003), *Neretum*/Nardò (De Mitri c.s.a) have been recorded (fig. 1).

For rural settlements (fig. 2), a dataset derives from the sample of small, medium and large-size sites identified during the systematic field-survey conducted along the Cervaro, Carapelle and Ofanto river valleys in Northern Apulia[6]; along the route of the *via Appia* between Gravina di Puglia and Taranto (Piepoli 2016); within the *Ager Brundisinus* and the Salento peninsula[7]. Another important body of evidence has also been produced by the excavations at the villa of Agnuli near Mattinata on the Northern Adriatic coast (D'Aloia 1999b), the farm of Posta Crusta (Leone 2000) near *Herdonia*, the *vici* of Trani (Lombardi *et alii* 2015), Vagnari (Small 2011) and Seppannibale (Bertelli, Lepore 2011), the villa of Saturo near Taranto (D'Auria, Jacovazzo 2006).

Although it may seem that a huge amount of data is available to support a reconsideration of trade and consumption of imported Late Roman pottery in *Apulia*, some relevant critical issues clearly emerge.

The Gargano district, a wide part of the Northern Tavoliere, the Daunian Mountains, the central and hilly part of Apulia and many areas of the Salento are still largely unexplored or only marginally covered by archaeological research.

Many excavated sites are only known from preliminary reports, with no quantitative information regarding found materials. Among the cities, for the purpose of this paper, the lack of data for *Luceria* and, above all, *Brundisium* stands out while *Canusium*, *Sipontum*, *Barium*, *Tarentum*, *Lupiae* are evidently under-represented because not only have there been few urban excavations over time but even fewer have been published.

A similar sampling problem affects rural settlements: analytical recording of surface materials is available only for the sites identified by recent, systematic field-walking surveys; other surface sites are mere dots on the archaeological maps.

Archaeological excavations can also present data issues: even important and substantially excavated settlements like the Late Roman villa of Faragola near Ascoli Satriano, the *vici* of San Giusto near Lucera and Vagnari in the Murgia district are still awaiting a definitive edition with a complete typological-chronological seriation of artifacts[8].

[4] Stimulating thoughts on the concept of "fine tableware" in Zanini, Costa 2011: 33.

[5] Many thanks are due to F. Coppola for the data on Gallipoli from his dissertation.

[6] Ofanto valley: Goffredo 2011. Cervaro valley: Romano, Volpe 2015; Volpe 2020. Carapelle valley: Goffredo, Ficco 2009. Many thanks are due to V. Volpe and V. Ficco for sharing still unpublished data with the authors of this paper.

[7] *Ager Brundisinus*: Aprosio 2008. Salento, area between Brindisi and Taranto: Fornaro 1973; Yntema 1993; Boersma 1995; Burgers 1998; Cera 2015. South Salento: Giannotta 1990; Melissano 1990; Belotti 1994; Belotti 1997; Melissano 2004; Valchera, Zampolini Faustini 1997; De Mitri 2009; Id. 2010; Id. 2017; Mastronuzzi *et alii* 2018.

[8] Concerning the site of Faragola, see *Faragola 1*; Volpe, Turchiano 2012; Volpe *et alii* 2012. About San Giusto, see Volpe 1998; Volpe *et alii* 2013 and Gliozzo *et alii* 2019. Imported finewares from San Giusto and Faragola have been studied by C. Annese as part of her PhD research project.

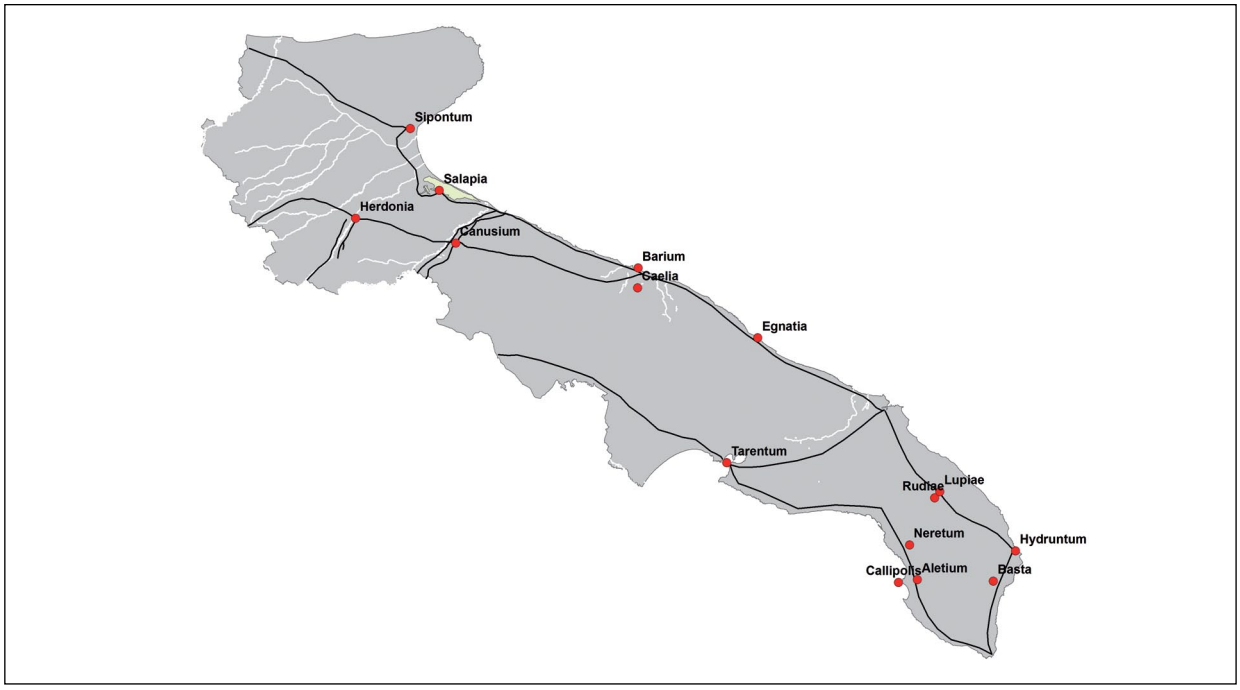

Fig. 1. Map of the coastal and inland cities which have been taken into account for the present study.

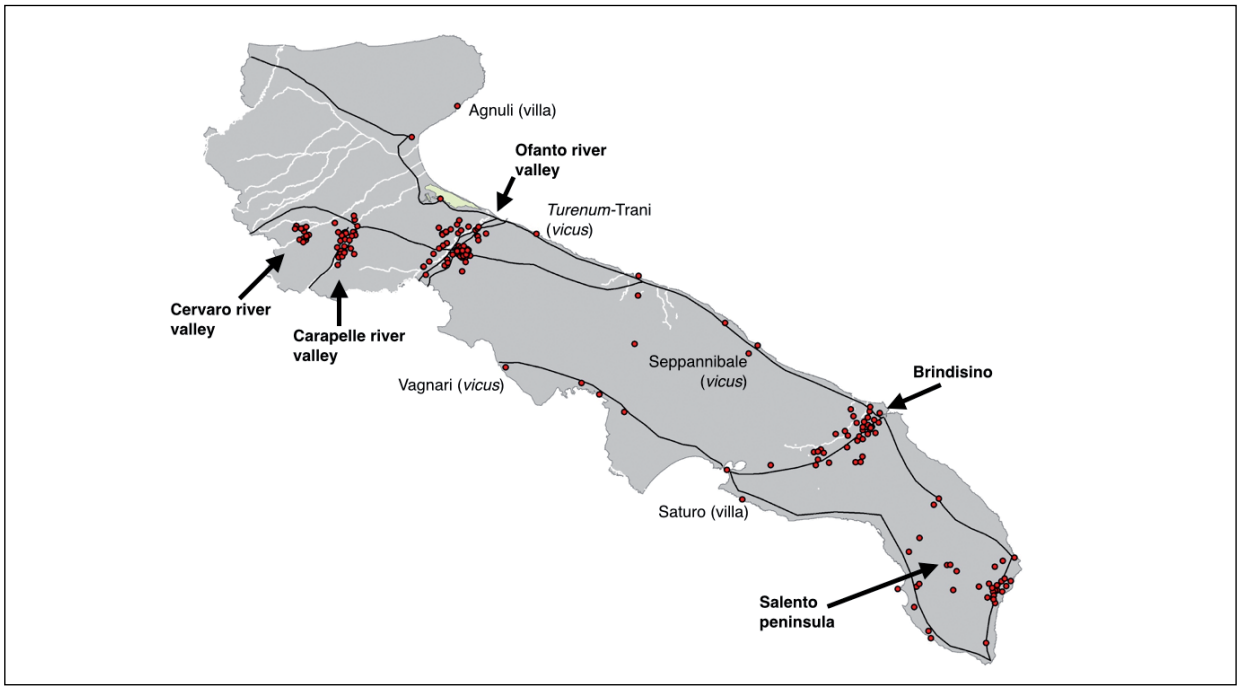

Fig. 2. Map of the rural sites which have been taken into account for the present study.

For the aims of this study, we considered published data, combining survey and excavation data to draw some cautious conclusions[9]. Of course, we are fully aware that great caution is required when using surface materials for quantitative analysis unless they have been collected and processed using identical methods.

An additional difficulty arises in quantifying imported finewares and comparing values across sites. Quantification counts naturally depend on

[9] Similar problems have been tackled by other authors: most notably Poblome *et alii* 2012; Willet 2012: 10-58; Bes 2015: 1-10.

several values and sampling issues, which differ from site to site: for example, the extent of the investigated area or the type of excavated context (residential, productive, religious, public places).

Considering these caveats, the quantitative data considered in this paper, such as the number of sherds or the minimum number of individuals, are purely indicative, a small step towards considering the question of spatial distribution, the quantity of vessels available for consumption in antiquity. We proceed to attempt such imperfect comparisons only to stimulate a debate about the numerous questions at hand in considering the factors that influenced the consumption and circulation of finewares in this south Adriatic province.

C.D.M., R.G.

Regional availability of ARS and PRS: general trends

So first, let us question the geographical availability of ARS and PRS in Late Antique *Apulia et Calabria*: how widespread were these wares?

The analysis of ARS and PRS distribution at urban and rural sites (fig. 3 and 4) confirms the long-held suggestions of a wide circulation and availability of these wares both in coastal and inland areas. In Northern Apulia, ARS C and D and PRS are documented at the urban centres of *Sipontum* and *Salapia* and at the coastal landings of Agnuli and *Turenum*-Trani. Other examples are also represented inland, at *Herdonia*, *Canusium* and in the sites identified by surface reconnaissance along the Cervaro, Carapelle and Ofanto river valleys. Although data on materials is still scarce and lacks quantification, fragments of African and Phocean fine tablewares have also been collected from scatters of Late Roman surface sites in the hinterland of *Luceria* and around the Daunian mountains (Marchi *et alii* 2018).

The area of central Apulia, with its articulated geomorphological components (Fossa Bradanica to the West, Murge Tableland in the central part, pedemurgiana and coastal areas to the East), has not been as intensively explored and documented as the north of the province. However, where work has been done, at *Barium, Egnatia* and the *vicus* of Seppannibale, it demonstrates the coastline's permeability to the reception of sea-traded foodstuffs and artifacts, in contrast to the absence of data for internal regions. Unfortunately, research coverage in the interior of this region is sparser and precludes definitive conclusions. In the cases in which we do have reliable data, we also see hints of this same permeability of circulation. The recent excavations at the *vicus* of Vagnari and the field survey conducted along the route of the *via Appia* between Gravina di Puglia and Taranto, draw a different picture: even in this "peripheral" region, far from urban centres, traditionally dedicated to animal breeding and extensive cereal cultivations, ARS and PRS fragments appear as part of the collected ceramic assemblages.

As for the Brindisi area, the absence of *Brundisium* within the distribution map presented in this paper is caused by the non-availability of published data about the material culture found during the archaeological excavations, which have been held in the city over the years. However, the presence of imported finewares also in this important town is undeniable: ARS and PRS vessels are documented in its hinterland whereas, in the Salento peninsula, rural sites' excavations providing ceramic types seem to be located mainly near the coast, with a particular concentration in the proximity of Otranto on the Adriatic shore and Ugento-Gallipoli on the Ionian shore. Little data comes from inland, as it is still too under-explored, with the exception of *Lupiae* and *Rudiae*.

Of course, it is necessary to keep in mind that the distribution map is conditioned both by the current state of studies on Late Roman pottery within regional archaeological contexts and by the position of field research conducted so far. The differences found between the coast and the interior or between the North, Mid and South of Apulia are necessary provisional and subject to future changes.

In order to nuance the discussion of geographical distribution, it is necessary to consider the quantitative availability of imported ceramics in Late Roman Apulia. Despite the wide geographical spread of ARS and PRS, we should verify at how many sites and in what quantities these wares are documented among all the settlements datable between the 4th and the 6th century CE.

The so far illustrated data comes from well-investigated areas and therefore may be considered reliable as far as survey data are concerned. For example, in the Ofanto valley, only 13 sites of the 103 Late Roman settlements yielded ARS C sherds and 65 yielded ARS D sherds: with due caution, this may mean that at 37% of the documented sites no ARS was consumed. Phocean Red Slip is attested only in 10 sites, corresponding to 9% of all the Late Antique sites detected until now along the investigated valley.

Conversely in the investigated sample area of the Cervaro valley, which is located in a more peripheral and hilly part of Northern Apulia, seem-

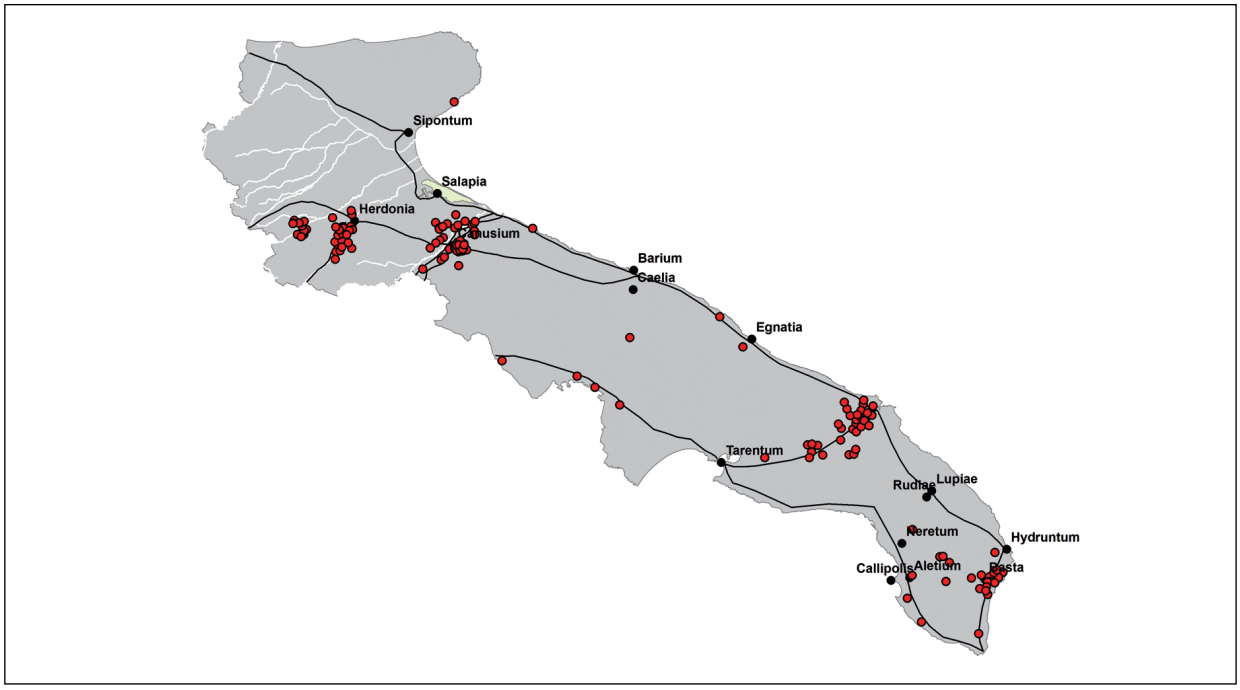

Fig. 3. ARS distribution map at urban and rural sites.

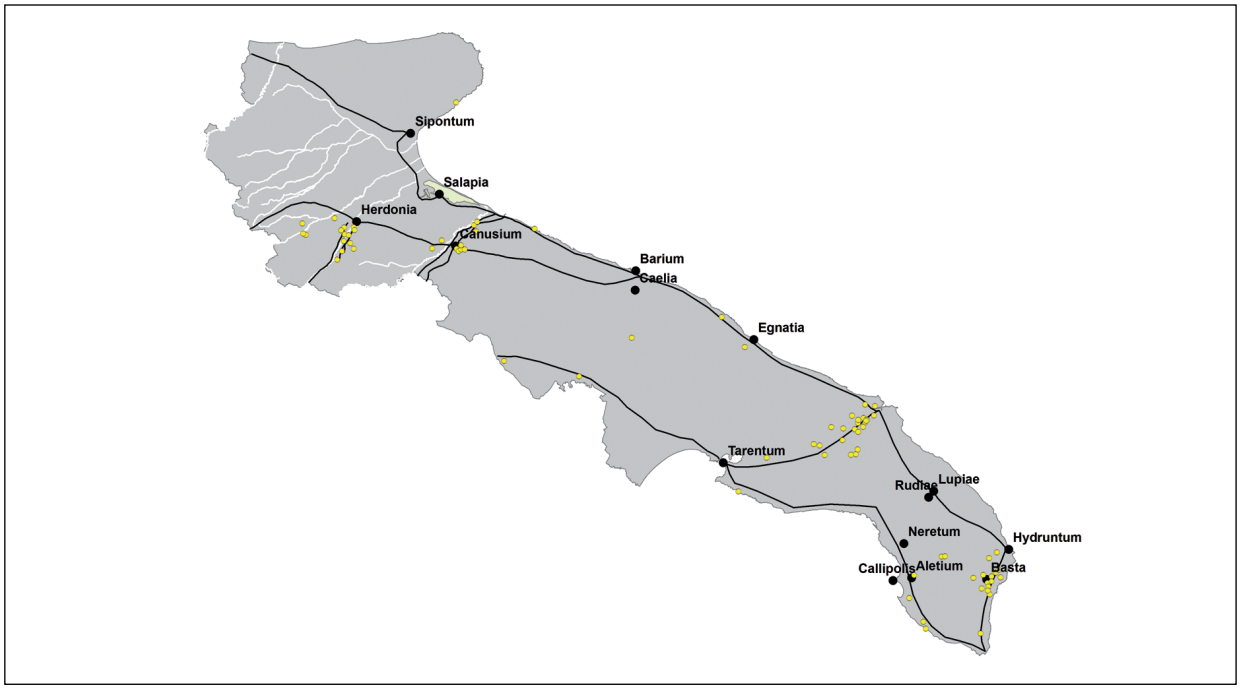

Fig. 4. PRS distribution map at urban and rural sites.

ingly less connected than the Ofanto river valley from a geographical standpoint, the results run counter to what we would expect for the presence of imported wares, at least as far as African productions were concerned. ARS was missing only in 11% of the discovered sites. However, much in line with the Ofanto data, 82% of sites have not yielded PRS sherds.

Looking South, in the surveyed part of the *ager Brundisinus*, ARS was available in almost every Late Antique site (22/24), while PRS productions have been documented only in 29% of the total.

For the Salento peninsula, our data is not as ample or fine-tuned to propose a similar comparative evaluation. What is actually known gives us the impression that all sites identified thus far have attestations of imported finewares, both ARS and PRS, without discrepancies between the two products.

The given data suggest that the geographically widespread circulation of imported ceramics was not a feature of every landscape, nor was the distribution of all available imported finewares the same. The case of PRS is therefore informative. On the one hand, the available data-set shows that these vessels had not only a coastal circulation but were also traded inland. On the other hand, these ceramics quantitatively had an inferior representation when compared to ARS, especially outside the Brindisi and Salento areas, which may represent different patterns of consumption and use within the broader provincial boundaries of *Apulia et Calabria*.

To further refine the overall patterns within the province, we also added data from urban contexts: among the 15 urban centres surveyed, only 7 have returned more than 50 fragments of ARS, only 2 towns more than 500 fragments and only 1 centre (*Egnatia*) over 1000 sherds (fig. 5 and 6). The presence of Phocean sigillata also appears quantitatively inferior to that of ARS, much as we have established for the rural ambit: only 4 cities out of the 15 surveyed have evidence of more than 20 sherds, only 3 of more than 100 sherds; *Egnatia* appears to be an outlier, with more than 150 fragments quantified.

The case of *Egnatia* is obviously particular. Excavations have been taking place at this site since 2001 and many hectares of the town have been explored, among them many different spatial contexts: from the Acropolis to the public baths, from the nucleus of private *domus* to the commercial area near the route of the *via Traiana*[10]. These conditions are not shared by the other surveyed urban centres, which therefore are under-represented.

Again, reasoning on the number of sherds is obviously risky and can be misleading but a general impression of a quantitatively limited availability of African and Phocean pottery[11], of course

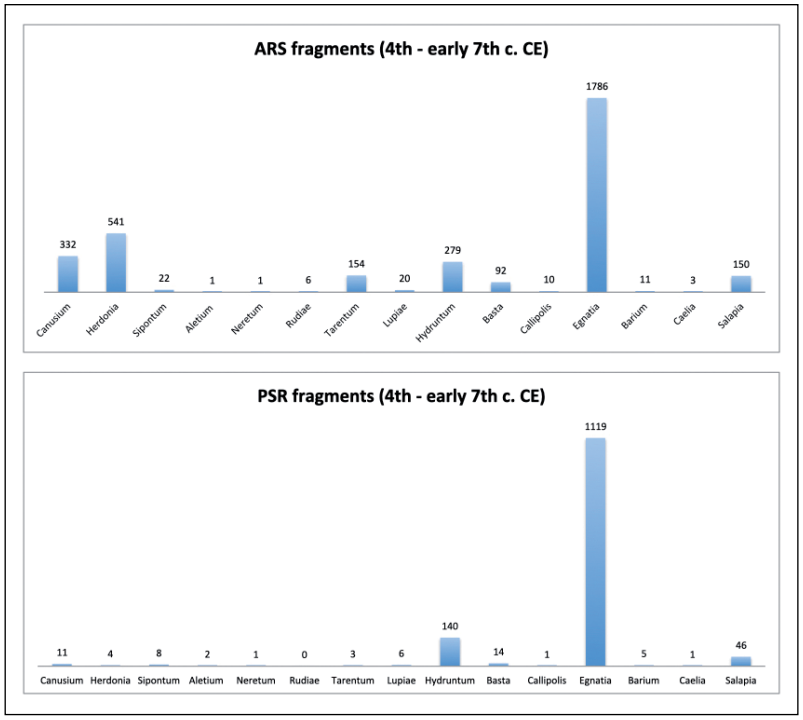

Fig. 5. Total number of ARS and PRS fragments recovered and dated between the 4th and the early 7th century CE among the 15 urban centres surveyed.

[10] Cassano *et alii* 2004; Cassano *et alii* 2007; Cassano, Mastrocinque 2016.

[11] This estimate is to be considered in relation to other contemporary productions.

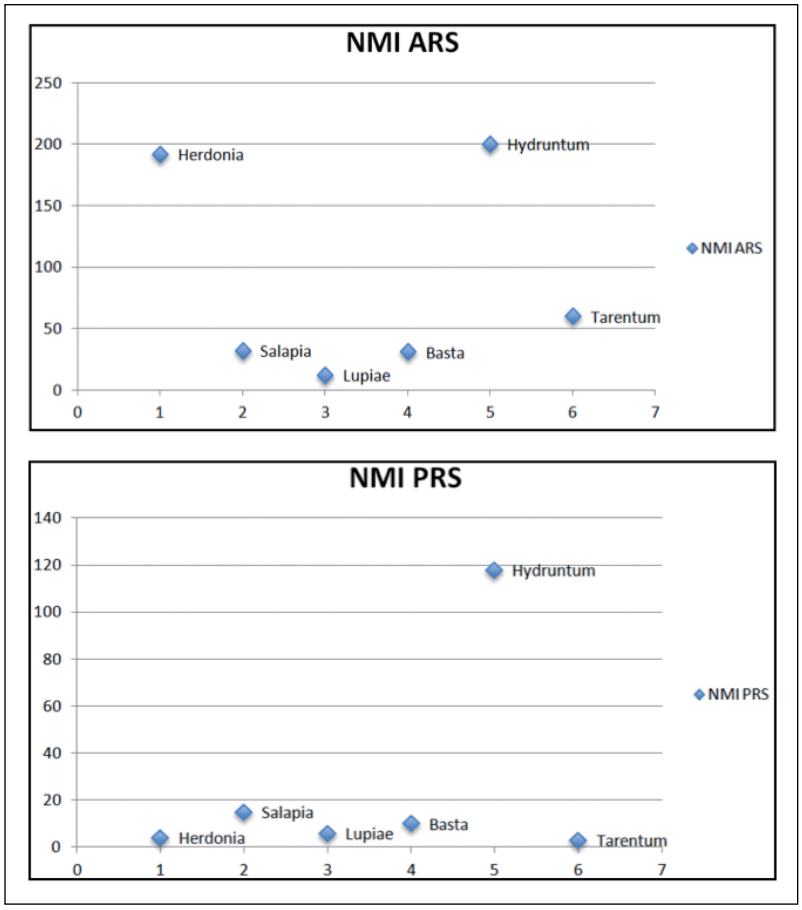

Fig. 6. Number of identifiable ARS and PRS vessels: a comparison between the surveyed urban centres.

with some exceptions, seems to be confirmed if we look at the number of identifiable ARS and PRS vessels.

Salapia, *Herdonia*, *Hydruntum* and *Tarentum* are suitable sample sites for a weighted comparison (fig. 7). As for *Salapia*, the considered data comes 1) from the stratigraphy of a *domus* of the imperial period with phases of initial occupation, deconstruction, re-occupation and final abandonment dated between the 4th and the late 6th century; 3) from the stratigraphy of a home-workshop (*casa-taberna* of the *insula XVI*) built in the 4th century and destroyed by fire at the end of the 5th century; 3) from two middens that were created in the *domus* area in the early 6th c., in use until the end of the same century (De Mitri c.s.c; Totten c.s.a; Loprieno c.s.).

For *Herdonia* (Annese 2000; Rizzitelli 2000; Turchiano 2000), the data is provided by the stratigraphy of the use and abandonment of *domus* A and B and from a cistern of the *domus* B, that was used as a midden between the end of the 4th and half of the 5th century.

The considered contexts of *Hydruntum* (De Mitri 2016) are related to the use and the abandonment of four home-stores found near the port and in use between the 5th and the beginning of 7th century.

Finally, as far as Taranto is concerned, the analysed data is from the Late Antique stratigraphy of the use and abandonment of an urban *domus*, recently excavated near the Peripato Gardens (Biffino, Pace 2012), with chronologies between the second half the 2nd and the beginning of 7th century.

The considerable availability of imported finewares recorded at *Hydruntum* (200 ARS identifiable vessels and 118 PRS) is not surprising given the increasing role that this centre had as a southern Adriatic port since the 4th century and, increasingly, during the 5th and 6th century, when Otranto was in direct connection with Ravenna and Constantinople[12].

[12] In particular, see data from the house-storage of Cantiere 2 for the phase D3 (5th c.-early 7th c.) in De Mitri 2016,

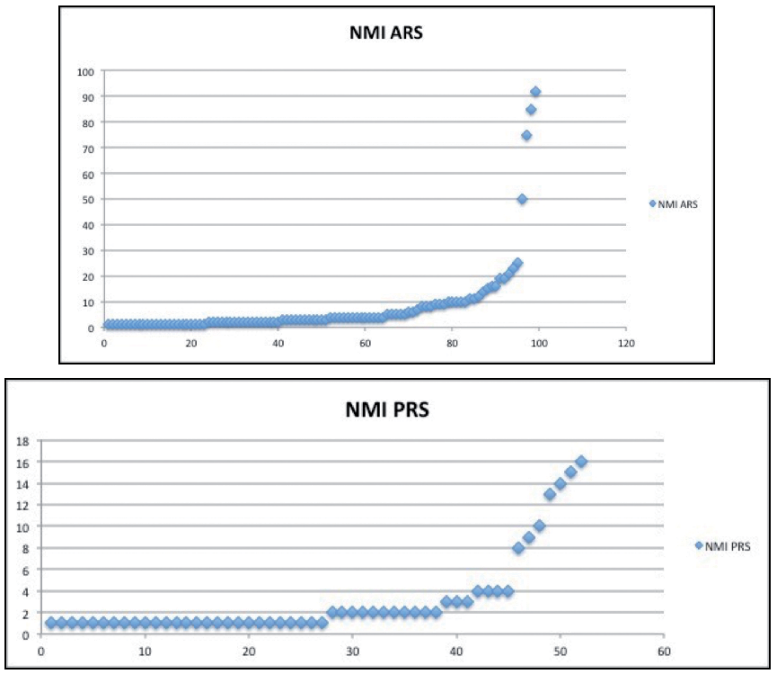

Fig. 7. Number of identifiable ARS and PRS vessels: a comparison between the surveyed rural sites.

Apart from this exception, a very small number of identifiable vessels, especially Phocaean, are documented in all the other surveyed centres: at *Salapia*, *Herdonia* or *Tarentum*, the latter slightly exceeds ten units.

Data from *Salapia* requires a special consideration: despite its port function, the presence of imported pottery is modest (32 ARS identifiable vessels and 15 PRS); imported amphorae are also very scarce[13]. Some may argue that the examined contexts of *Salapia* are household sites and not port warehouses as in the case of Otranto. That might be true, but it is necessary to note that the Late Roman stratigraphies of the two excavated *domus* of *Herdonia* have returned a much higher number of ARS identifiable vessels: 192[14].

If we extend the analysis also to the rural areas (fig. 8), the picture does not look different from what emerged from the comparison between cities. Of the sample of 101 examined rural surface sites (selected on the basis of the availability of quantitative information and distributed in the investigated areas of the Carapelle and Ofanto valley, the *ager Brundisinus* and the Salento peninsula), 73% have between 1 and 5 ARS identifiable vessels, 13% between 6 and 10 vessels, 11% from 11 to 25 vessels, only 3% between 50 and 92 vessels. Looking at the geographical distribution, the few sites with more African ceramics are located near *Herdonia*, *Brundisium* and the Salento peninsula.

Within the same sample of sites, among the 52 settlements with PRS attestations, 92% have between 1 and 10 identifiable vessels, only 8% have between 11 and 16 vessels; no sites have a mini-

tab. 5. On a total of 236 ceramic vessels recognized, the 93% consists of imported ware (23% ARS, 14% PRS, 9% African amphoras, 11% eastern amphoras, 6% African cooking ware/tableware, 17% Aegean cooking ware) and only 17% is represented by local ware.

[13] Interesting and detailed data from the *casa/taberna* of block XVI, presumably built in the 4th c. CE and abandoned at the end of the 5th c. after a fire. This context allows us to know which manufacts were in use inside the building immediately before its demise (see Totten 2021b, tab. 3). On a total of 65 identified ceramic vessels, 12.1% is represented by imported fine ware (with ARS vessels dominating over PRS), 20.7% by African and eastern amphoras, 43.1% by local tableware and storing ware, 15.5% by local cooking ware. Detailed data from two 6th c. urban middens are also significant (see Totten 2021b, tab. 2): indeed also in this case, on a total of 211 identified vessels, 67% of the ware is represented by local productions for food preparation/cooking and tableware. Fineware is represented only by the 9.4% of wares and African and eastern amphoras by the 9%.

[14] See Annese 2000; Rizzitelli 2000; Turchiano 2000. In general, the analysis of late antique pottery from the two *domus* of *Herdonia* has shown a predominance of local tableware, storing ware, and cooking ware.

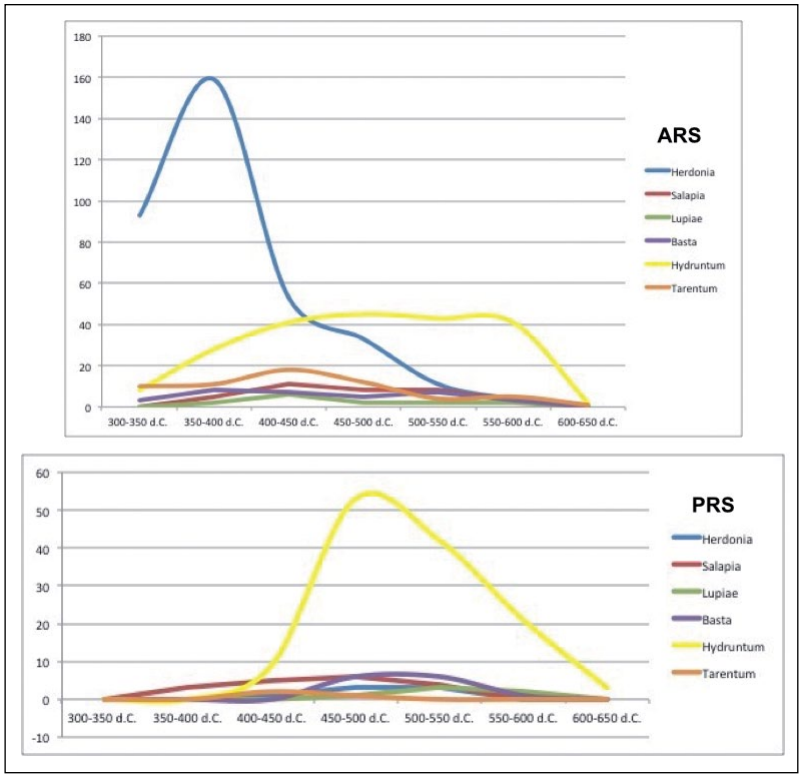

Fig. 8. Availability of imported finewares between the 4th and the early 7th century CE: urban centres.

mum number of individuals higher than 16 vessels. Looking at the geographical distribution, sites with more attestations are mainly located in the Brindisi area and in the Salento peninsula.

Added to the spatial distribution and the quantitative data, we have tried to evaluate also the "chronology factor", in order to understand changes in circulation and distribution over time (fig. 9).

For the above mentioned sample of urban and rural sites, we have tried to calculate the availability of imported finewares between the beginning of the 4th century and the beginning of the 7th century[15].

The analysis of ARS availability at *Hydruntum* shows an upward trend until the end of the 5th century. This phase of progressive growth seems to have been followed by a stasis that covers the entire 6th century and, then, a collapse in the first half of the 7th century. Instead PRS attestations demonstrate a positive peak during the second half of the 5th century and then a gradual decline until the end of the 6th century. However, among the surveyed centres, Otranto is the only city with

[15] Where possible we quantified the number of individuals per typology/variation in relation to every urban and/or rural site under examination, so as to trace a preliminary overview on the availability of imported finewares in *Apulia et Calabria*. Later, every sherd has been assigned a 'lifespan' chronology, that is the entire time span ranging from its date of production to its absorption in the archaeological stratigraphy (Schindler Kaudelka, Zabehlicky-Scheffenegger 2007; Zanini, Costa 2011: 35). Hayes's (1972; 1980) and Bonifay's (2004) works have been used for typo-chronological dates but, at the same time, the chronologies have been calibrated according to surveys conducted in the region until this day (at the site level, whether urban or rural). In particular, in relation to each shape's 'appearance' and 'disappearance' time, we took into consideration the 'lateness' and life continuity (use and reuse) of a single sherd after its production time. The phenomenon, now well-known (Zanini, Costa 2011: 37-39) has been also documented in *Salapia* not only in relation to fine tableware: see De Mitri c.s.c; Totten c.s.a; Loprieno c.s.; Gargiulo c.s. (for coin finds); Giannetti c.s. (for the glassware). For what concerns methods for diachronic data distribution applied in Roman pottery studies, see now Willet 2014 (with the previous bibliography) for a recent review. We chose to adopt the method proposed in the 1980s by E. Fentress and Ph. Perkins, which distributes the data in a linear way over time-intervals: so, equal weight given to a vessel throughout its dating range of regional availability (Fentress, Perkins 1988: 207-208; Fentress *et alii* 2004; Bes, Poblome 2008: 506-507).

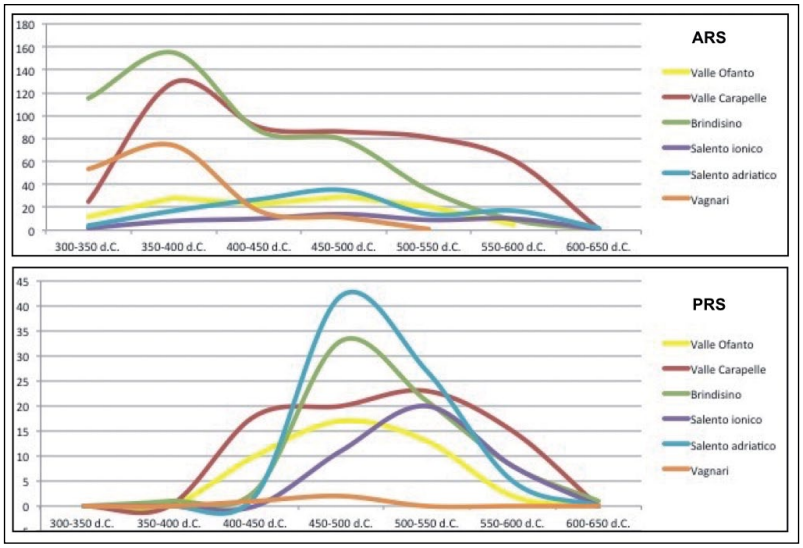

Fig. 9. Availability of imported finewares between the 4th and the early 7th century (MNI): rural settlements.

evidence of imported products still in the 7th century.

The distribution of ARS and PRS in the same periods in the rural sites of the Salento peninsula reveals more similarities than differences with the Otranto trend. Only the area around Brindisi shows a countertrend: after the peak of ARS availability during the full 4th century, at the start of the 5th century we see a drop that becomes a notable collapse during the second half of the 6th century. During the 5th century, this decline in ARS is only partly replaced by the accessibility of Phocaean productions, whose presence becomes in any case more rarefied in the mid-6th century.

It is hard to avoid the early conclusion that these data reflect the different fates of the two main ports of Southern Apulia and their surroundings: the progressive marginalization of Brindisi (Aprosio 2008: 151-153) and, on the contrary, the consolidation of the political and economic role of Otranto (De Mitri 2016).

Also in Northern Apulia, at *Herdonia*, *Salapia* and in the surveyed rural sites of the Ofanto and Carapelle valleys, we recognize an upward trend in ARS availability that covers the entire 4th century and declines in the first half of the 5th century: at *Herdonia* and *Salapia* ARS shrinks dramatically, and nearly disappears in the middle of the 6th century. However, this phenomenon is not recorded in the Carapelle valley (which in part belonged to the territory of *Herdonia*) and in the Ofanto valley: here in fact, after a slight decline during the first half of the 5th century, ARS attestations remain constant until the middle of the 6th century.

The presence of PRS at *Herdonia* is quantitatively almost zero during the entire period between the 5th and the early 6th century. At *Salapia* and in the surveyed rural areas it is possible to recognize a more perceptible and constant receptivity towards Phocaean ceramics between the beginnings of the 4th and the first half of the 6th century.

R.G.

A focus on some selected contexts: on-site trends

The study of some significant urban and rural contexts allows us to define *on-site* trends on the availability and circulation of imported finewares within Late Antique *Apulia et Calabria*. Starting from the southern sector of the province, the data from *Hydruntum* illustrates the situation in the south of the Salento peninsula and shows how these goods were easily available and largely widespread.

At *Hydruntum*, the overall amount of ARS and PRS (based on MNI – minimum number of individuals, as distinguished in the excavation finds) shows that out of 430 specimens, 65% consists of ARS against 35% of PRS.

Analyzing each context, we find that: in Cantiere 1 (*Otranto II*), Phase III (second half of the 4th - beginning of the 7th century), probably a site for shops, the ratio of ARS and PRS is almost the same (out of about 30 specimens, 55% are ARS and 45% are PRS).

The excavations at the Cantiere 2 (De Mitri 2016) have allowed archaeologists to study the ves-

sels from house/warehouse contexts, closely connected to the nearby port and dated between the 5th and the beginning of the 7th century.

Looking at the data of Otranto, we infer that imported pottery is predominant, not only within the functional group of table wares, but also within the group of cooking wares (with *Late Micaceous Aegean Cooking* pots and, in smaller number, with *African Cooking Ware*) and within the group of vessels for food preparing (with *African Coarse Ware* mortars and basins).

In the inland of the Salento peninsula, many different settlements (cities, *vici* and farms) have been documented, all with a common characteristic: a predominant amount of imported goods within the different classes of pottery.

It is likely that these settlements received quite easily not only fine wares but also household wares, thanks to their own equidistance from harbours and landings, located both on the Adriatic shore and the Ionian arc.

Further North, along the Adriatic coast, a considerable amount of imported pottery has been recognized within the assemblages found in different areas of the town of *Egnatia*; in addition, plain and painted wares are well documented, whose forms/shapes have different functional purposes. Some common scenarios emerge in all the analyzed contexts (Conte *et alii* 2017): during the first half of 5th century, we can see a consistent increase of African goods, which was followed by a drop between the mid-5th and the 6th century at the advantage of PRS, widely attested within the assemblages of this period. Moreover, the archaeological contexts of *Egnatia* provide us with data regarding also the full 7th century: besides the presence of the dish Hayes 109 in ARS (the only certain attestation of this form in *Apulia et Calabria* until now) and the dish Hayes 10B in PRS, local artisanal workshops and kilns were active in producing cooking and broad line wares.

Moving forward along the Adriatic shores, at the port site of *Salapia* (De Mitri c.s.c), recent archeological investigations showed how, during Late Antiquity, the town was moderately receptive to imported goods: although imported ceramics and amphorae are not attested in large quantities, their presence itself is an important point.

Pottery evidence from *Salapia* demonstrates:

1) During the 6th century, together with common shapes of this phase, such as the dish Hayes 87A, 104 and 91, there are more ancient forms: dish Hayes 61B in ARSD and dish 84 (and variant form Fulford 27), in ARSC. These forms are residual or perhaps these are the result of a delay of distribution, on the local and peripheral market, of forms already abandoned in the production workshops.

2) The marked prevalence of Eastern imports in PRS with the form Hayes 3. This is not surprising for a coastal site, as shown by the villa of Agnuli or the contexts from Egnazia and Otranto.

3) The predominance of Late Roman Painted and Unpainted Common Ware (Totten 2021a), a local production often imitating forms of ceramic imports, which is quantitatively more substantial within the inland centres.

Geographical features surely influenced the circulation of foreign wares: for instance, the distance from the coast may explain the contracted presence of such imported goods in the inland of Northern and Central Apulia and the parallel development of pottery wares imitating the most *in vogue* forms. In many settlements of Northern Apulia, such as the luxurious villa of Faragola, the villa-*vicus* of San Giusto and the "capital" town of *Canusium*, the presence of imported fine wares is attested but not in significant amounts; on the contrary, many rural sites of the Salento peninsula, even if marginal and peripheral, benefitted from a wider availability of imported pottery.

In conclusion, from the Mid-Late Imperial period, fine table wares from North Africa[16] (ARS) saturated the regional markets with their massive presence. The archaeological evidence shows how specimens of this class reached all the different settlement typologies: towns as well as villas, villages and farms. This trend is detectable up to the 5th century; starting from the half of this century, the only other class of pottery with a great attestation is PRS, competitor of ARS.

During the second half of the 5th century, it is possible to notice the presence of vessels from North Tunisian production sites, especially the workshop of El Mahrine, including the dish Hayes 50B/Bonifay 65 and the dish Hayes 61B, whose use continued during the whole 6th century together with the plates Hayes 87A, the bowls Hayes 80, 81, 99 and the plates Hayes 103, 104, 105; the latter are attested also at the beginnings of the 7th century. A more contracted availability regarded the ARS C4-5 forms produced in Central Tunisia (fig. 10).

PRS[17] data highlights a widespread distribution from the end of the 5th to the beginning of the 6th century with the form Hayes 3 and its variants

[16] For the sites production: Mackensen 1998; Bonifay 2004; Bonifay 2016.

[17] For the PRS production: Martin 1998; Quaresma 2019.

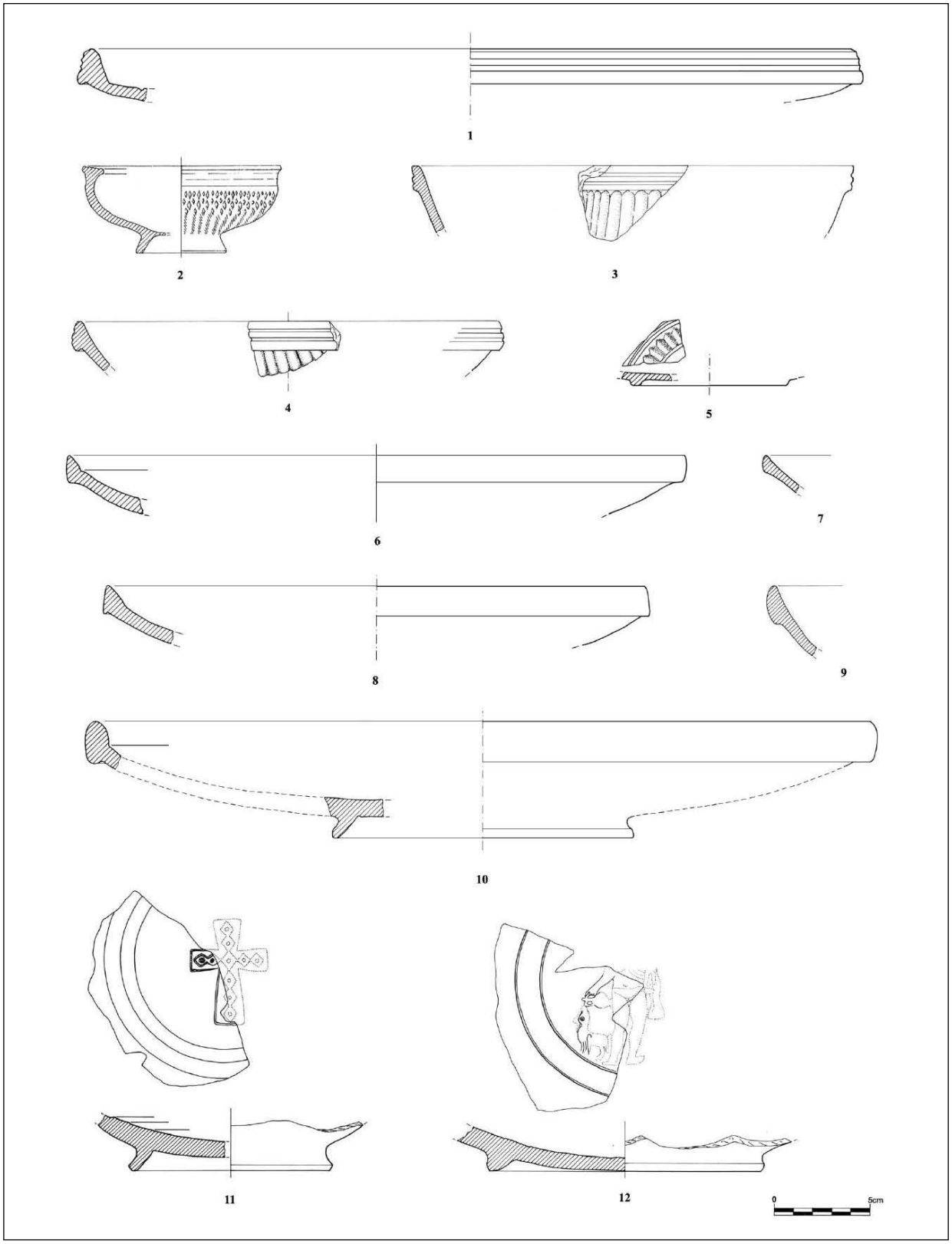

Fig. 10. ARS in Late Antique Apulia et Calabria. Workshop of Sidi Marzouk Tounsi: 1. H. 82B (from rural site of Carapelle valley); 2. H. 85A (from Lecce); 3. H. 84/variant Fulford 27 (from Otranto); 4. H. 84 (from Salapia); 5. H. 84/variant Fulford 27 (from Salapia). Workshop of El Mahrine: 6. H. 61B, 7. H. 50B/Bonifay 65; 8. H. 87A (from Salapia); Workshop of Oudna: 9.H. 99A (from Otranto). Workshop of Atelier X (?): 10. H. 104A (from Salapia); 11-12. H. 104 B/C (from Otranto).

3F and 3H. The attestation of the plate Hayes 10, documented also at the beginning of the 7th century, is episodic: up to now, it has been recognized only at Otranto, at the rural site of La Politica in the inland territory of Brindisi along the *via istmica*, at *Egnatia*, at the *vicus* of Seppannibale and, in Northern Apulia, at the maritime villa of Agnuli (fig. 11)[18].

C.D.M.

Conclusions

Let us try to draw some overall and final considerations on the basis of the data so far illustrated.

If we evaluate the amount of ARS and PRS attestations documented within the examined urban and rural sites, integrating also this information with the preliminary data coming from Apulian sites not even considered for this study, the first emerging pattern is the "small" volume of the imported finewares available on both urban and rural, coastal or inland markets of Late Antique *Apulia*.

This datum can be recognized already from the period between the 4th and the half of the 5th century although during this phase, in almost all surveyed sites, attestations of African artifacts reach their greatest quantitative presence. The contraction of ARS regional circulation is even more evident for the period between the second half of the 5th century and the end of the 6th century, although, in reference to this phase, the parallel and generalized phenomenon of the progressive reduction of Mediterranean trade should be kept under consideration.

Is it likely that this extreme southern end of the Italian peninsula, bordered by the Adriatic Sea, imported few goods from abroad?

Apulia et Calabria, from a geo-economic point of view, was one of the peripheries of the Western Mediterranean whose "commercial" heart gravitated along the route between Rome and North Africa[19]: ports and docks of this province were far from intercepting directly the consistent flows of foodstuffs and artifacts aimed to satisfy both the *annona* and – above all – the requests of the wide free market of the *Urbs*.

Similarly, Puglia was at the edges of the Eastern Mediterranean main trade flows that moved between Constantinople, the Aegean islands and coasts and, at least until the Vandal conquest, North Africa[20]. Undoubtedly, the renewed centrality of the Adriatic area, gained after the emergence of Ravenna first as capital of the Western Empire, then as capital of the Gothic Kingdom and, finally, as the seat of the Byzantine government in the West, contributed to reincorporation of the region into a wider geo-political and commercial networks and, from the age of Justinian onward, to situate it within the connective routes between the Byzantine settlements in Italy, Constantinople and the Levant. These 'new' assets were not, however, matched by quantitatively consistent evidence of imports of foodstuffs and ceramics although, for this phase, scholars have demonstrated clear evidence of movements of other types of goods between Apulia, Constantinople and the East: for example craftsmen, architectural decorations, marbles, glass vessels and panels for *sectilia* decoration[21].

In this analysis, we also cannot underestimate the internal and local economic resources of *Apulia et Calabria* during this period. Both written sources and archaeological data paint the picture, at least until the end of the 5th century, of a prosperous region, economically vibrant, with multiple productive strategies: extensive cereal cultivation and sheep farming, but also specialized production of vines and olive trees, whose cultivation for centuries was deeply rooted especially in the central-southern *Apulian* countryside[22].

There is no reason to doubt that this territory was able to produce wine and olive oil in sufficient quantities for local consumption and for marketing at a regional or inter-regional scale.

From this point of view, it is certainly necessary to further study the transport containers, even with a more systematic archaeometric approach, in order to better identify and characterise the probable local productions, which are still fading. Certainly, we can not exclude that local wine or oil could have circulated using other types of containers such as, for example, wooden

[18] Thanks to Fabiola Malinconico for the pottery drawings in figs. 10-11.

[19] Panella 1993; Reynolds 1995; Uggeri 1998; McCormick 2001; Wickham 2005: 708-759; Spanu, Zucca 2009; Vera 2010; Volpe *et alii* 2015.

[20] Arthur 1998; Reynolds 2010.

[21] E.g. see Marano 2016; 2019 about the circulation of marble artifacts within the Adriatic basin; Gliozzo *et alii* 2010 for a detailed analysis about composition and provenance of the *sectilia* panels of Faragola; Gliozzo *et alii* 2016 for the presence of glass vessels from the Levant and the North African coast at Faragola.

[22] Volpe 1996; Vera 2005; Buglione *et alii* 2015.

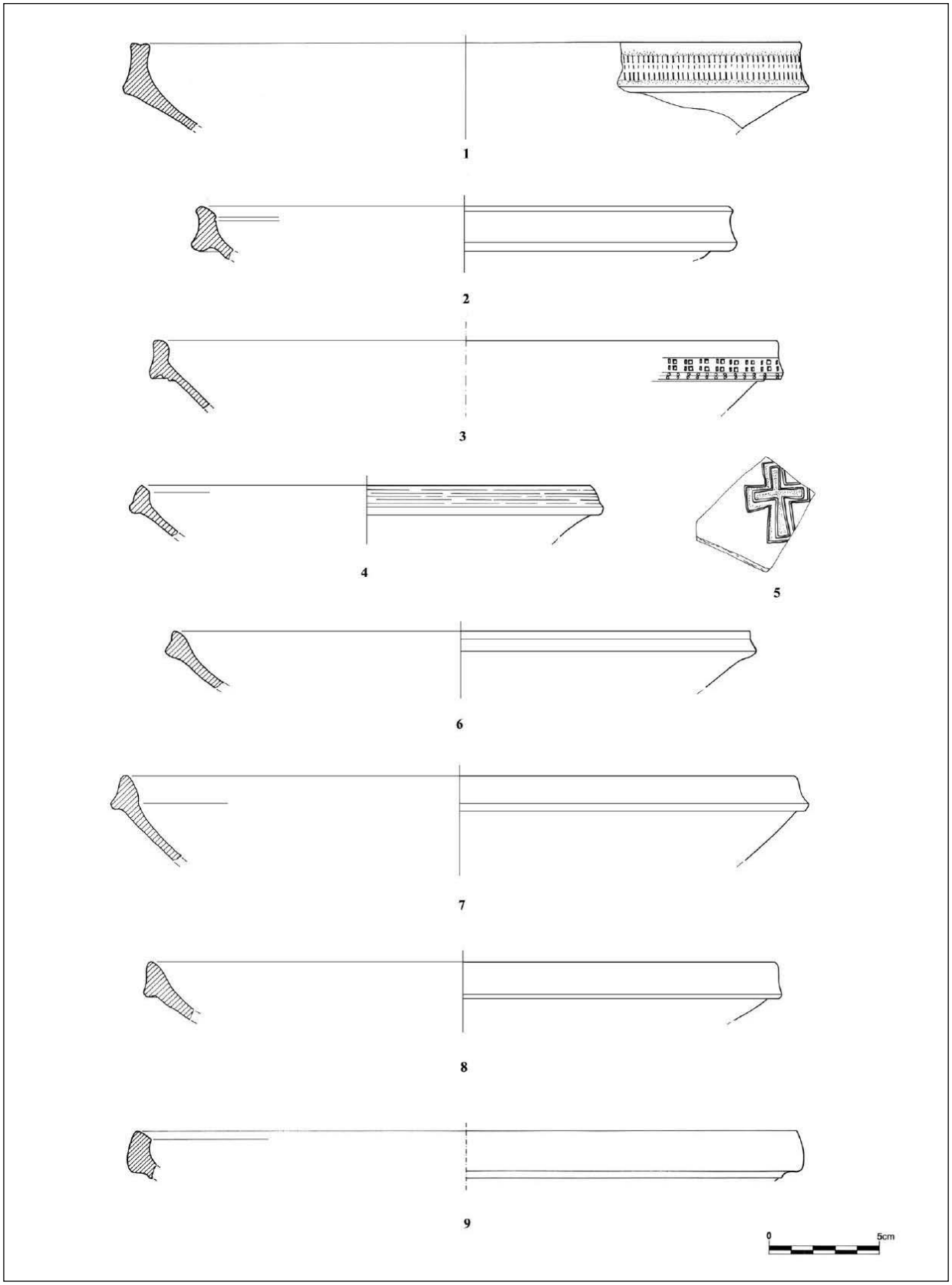

Fig. 11. PRS Late Antique Apulia et Calabria. 1. H. 3 var. B (from Otranto); 2. H. 3 var. D; 3. H. 3 var. F; 4. H. 3 var. F; 5. Decoration type H. 71d; 6. H. 3 var. non id./H.4; 7-8. H. 3 var. H (from Salapia); 9. H. 3G/10 (from Otranto).

barrels or even the so-called *anforette* in common ware, a kind of multi-functional container that is well-documented within urban and rural contexts from the 5th century into the 7th and possibly 8th centuries[23]. Analyses of organic residues carried out on some late antique and early medieval contexts (such as San Giusto and Faragola) have in fact documented a significant attestation of oil in these types of containers (Giannotta *et alii* 2018).

Thinking about the demand and the consumption of ceramics for domestic needs, it is also important to consider spread and vitality, at least in the main urban and rural centers of the province, of *ateliers* specialized in the production of coarse and cooking wares, whose presence within the local ceramic assemblages from the 4th century onward is far more quantitatively numerous than other productions, as evidenced by multiple studies over the last 20 years[24].

Therefore, the availability of imported foodstuffs and finewares, recorded within the urban and rural centers of the region, on the one hand, has the characteristics of a secondary and peripheral redistribution of goods circulating along the main trade routes of the Mediterranean. On the other hand, it reflects a local, targeted, selective demand (esteemed wines, oils, vessels, sauces, olives) which was subject to real needs, tastes or habits and (not completely) dependent on the socio-economic *status* of the potential consumers[25].

The second feature that emerges from the analysis of the here-illustrated graphics and maps is represented by the spread of imported fine wares.

Although not in large quantities, once African or Phocaean ceramics reached *Apulia et Calabria* by land or sea, they knew a wide circulation, not only limited to the coast but also extended to the inland areas[26].

However, it is not easy to reconstruct which processes or mechanisms enabled that wide availability: which paths did the imported artifacts follow from the moment of their arrival until the moment of their use on the purchaser's table?

In general, we can assume that an active role was played by the main port cities of the region both as preferential destinations for receiving the largest loads of imported goods and as starting points for an internal redistribution that could follow riverine or land routes.

One of the main regional ports of Northern Apulia was definitely *Sipontum*.

The *Itinerarium maritimum* recalls its direct connections with *Salona*[27], on the opposite Adriatic coast, but the not-just-Adriatic importance of this city is well evidenced by written sources[28]. Siponto, which still remained a relevant Byzantine *presidio* during the age of the first contact between the Lombards and *Apulia*, maintained also direct relations with Constantinople and its port was counted by Giorgio Ciprio among the principal ones in the whole Italian peninsula[29].

The *Itinerarium* also mentions the existence of direct links between Brindisi, Otranto and Durres, Apollonia, Aulona and Corfu[30]. Despite its persistence as a commercial and transit port for people and goods, it is likely that the role of Brindisi was however more and more subordinate to that of Otranto, a strategic hub for connections between Ravenna and Constantinople from the age of the Greek-Gothic Wars onward.

Instead, it is more difficult to determine what was the role and the port capacity of the other cities of the Adriatic coast such as *Salapia*, *Barium* or *Egnatia* although, in this latter case, archaeological evidence sheds light on the importance of this port along the coastal routes. As regards the Ionian coast, a certain vitality of Gallipoli and Taranto, especially during the Byzantine period, is attested by literary sources.

A complex network of secondary, smaller landings, in development since the Imperial Roman period, formed the backbone of the Apulian coastal infrastructure and guaranteed the management, the local redistribution and perhaps the sale of goods transported from the region to be incorporated into maritime commercial networks.

These coastal settlements, probably suitable for temporary docking of small boats, were often in close connection with the urban and rural sites

[23] E.g. Annese 2000: 301-328, tav. IX and XIV; Turchiano 2000: 347-359, tav. III-IV-V; Leone 2000: 395-414.

[24] For a synthesis, see Favia *et alii* 2015: 521-533.

[25] For a reflection on the use of these categories of artefacts as indicators of economic status or high social prestige and on the limits of interpretation of these types of artefacts, limits linked to the 'polysemantic' character of these archaeological 'sources' see Zanini 2007.

[26] See also ARS and PRS distribution patterns in the eastern Adriatic shore: Shkodra-Rrugia 2019 for Dürres; Reynolds 2019 for Butrint and Reynolds, Pavlidis 2014 for Nicopolis. For a general overview of the development of the ceramic trade in the Ionian-Adriatic basin in Late Antiquity, see now De Mitri c.s.b.

[27] *Itin. Marit.* 497.8.

[28] Volpe 1996: 121-124; Lavermicocca 1999; Nuzzo 2011.

[29] *Descriptio orbis romani*, ed. H. Gelzer, Lipsiae 1890: 28.

[30] *Itin. Marit.* 497.4-5. See Leone, Turchiano 2017 for the connections between *Apulia* and the Albanian shores.

of the interior and with the landings located along the course of the main regional rivers, such as the Fortore, the Carapelle or the Ofanto. The discrete quantities of imported finewares and amphorae uncovered in the Late Antique stratigraphy of the maritime villa of Agnuli, at the foot of the Gargano, or from the few contexts so far investigated at the *vicus* of *Turenum*-Trani, reflect the capacity of these "minor" centres to attract small flows of imported goods.

The redistribution of foodstuffs and ceramics inward could count on the articulation of an efficient land, river and also the road system. As expected, the analysis of the distribution maps of imported finewares clearly shows a very close relationship between the availability of these artifacts and the road axes which crossed the region.

In northern Apulia, beyond the *via Traiana* and *via Litoranea*, a fundamental role in linking the Irpinia, the Subappennino area and the Adriatic coast was played by the paths which ran along the river valleys; these paths were also followed by road tracks such as the *via Aecae-Luceria-Sipontum*, the *via Aurelia Aeclanensis* or the *via Venusia-Canusium-Bardulos* (Volpe 1996).

For central Apulia, the attestations of imported fine ceramics from the Late Roman sites recently identified around the town of Terlizzi (Campese *et alii* 2015), from the city of *Caelia* (Mangiatordi 2011: 260-262) or, proceeding towards Brindisi, from the *vicus* of Seppannibale (Bertelli, Lepore 2011) need to be read in relation both to the path followed by the *via Traiana* and to the articulation of the capillary network of *lame*, the karst incisions of fluvial origin which from Murgia branched off in the direction of the sea.

The excavations at the *vicus* of Vagnari and the field survey conducted along the *via Appia* between Gravina and Taranto also highlight the persistent vitality of this road: not coincidentally, ARS attestations seem to follow this line of penetration toward a territory undoubtedly internal and devoid of nearby urban markets. The *via Appia* played a key role in the inland redistribution of the products that reached the ports of Taranto and Brindisi[31].

However, it would be misleading to imagine that imported foodstuffs and ceramics moved in a direct and fast way from one settlement to another, from city to city. It is perhaps more realistic to think of a slow and segmented journey, with many deviations and intermediate stops, also aimed at intercepting the broad demand of rural communities.

From this point of view, some insights are offered by the graph (fig. 12) that shows the trend of ARS and PRS availability during the period between the 4th and the beginning of the 7th century within our sample of rural sites. It is interesting to note the high receptivity of *vici* where the highest indices of presence are recorded during the entire chronological span considered.

This is not surprising: the archaeological interpretation of aggregate settlements has shown how these settlements, though variable in size, organization and importance, were centres of production and consumption, places of storage of goods and, above all, ideal locations for markets and fairs[32].

The renowned excavated sites of San Giusto and Vagnari are examples of villages with managerial and organizational functions within extensive private or imperial estates and, at the same time, supply centres of services, foodstuffs, local-made or "external" artefacts for the neighbouring rural settlements. In particular, the significant availability of imported goods documented in these two sites, as well as in the *vicus* of Seppannibale, helps to reinforce the picture of the role of these settlements as nodes of regional commercial and redistribution networks.

These reflections on redistribution dynamics of imported ceramics stimulate many other questions that, on this occasion, will just be mentioned:

1) Who was directly engaged and involved in the management of the redistribution processes of imported goods? An interesting funerary inscription from Siponto (Nuzzo 2011), dated to the full 5th century CE, attests the presence in the city of the Syrian *Aurelios Kassianós*. The document does not provide details on his business interests but he is likely to have been a merchant, probably engaged in the trafficking of goods between the port of Siponto, Constantinople and the East. Can we assume that foreign merchants were present in the major port cities of the region to coordinate at least the first stages of arrival and marketing of imported goods? At the same time we have to broaden our perspective and consider also all the other possible figures who were responsible of the more or less widespread circulation of these goods: for example local merchants, sailors, artisans, itinerant craftsmen or, during the Justinian age and the Byzantine period, local civil and

[31] Yntema 1993; Burgers 1998; Favia 2014; Piepoli 2016.

[32] de Ligt 1993; Goffredo, Volpe 2015.

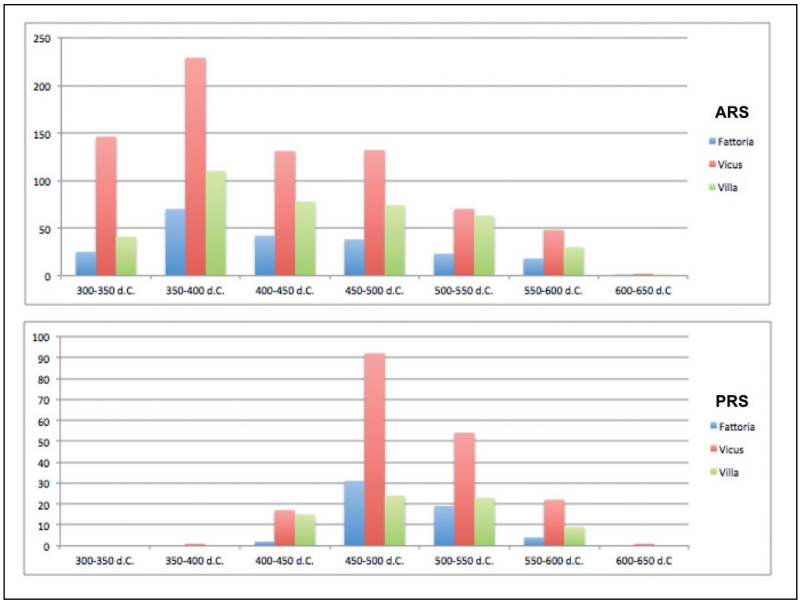

Fig. 12. Trend of ARS and PRS availability during the period between the 4th and the beginning of the 7th century within the selected sample of rural sites.

military authorities responsible for the redistribution of "public supplies".

2) Why did PRS productions experience less "success" than the ARS in the markets of *Apulia et Calabria*? Some scholars have previously argued that the trade of these vessels was connected to the marketing of the Phocean alum, a mineral useful in producing textile crafts and leather goods. This argument probably is not sufficient to explain the geographical distribution of this pottery: Northern Apulia, which was traditionally involved in farming practices, transhumance and textile crafts, appears to be particularly poor in attestations of PRS, with the exception of the maritime villa of Agnuli[33]. Conversely it is necessary to better reflect on the special relationship between the southern part of the region and the Eastern markets or, even, on other aspects more difficult to explore such as the cost of PRS vessels or matters of taste.

3) How much time did pass between the arrival of an African or Phocaean vessel, its circulation on the regional markets, its sale and, finally, its use and its disposal? This is an extremely important theme with direct implications on the dating of these artifacts. How many years or decades could a vessel remain in circulation and use after its production?

4) To whom were these imported productions addressed? Who were the potential purchasers?

It is not easy to identify who consumed imported finewares, since sherds of these vessels (especially the African ones) are found, both at urban and rural level, at different sites representing different socio-economic contexts. At least during the periods of wider availability and circulation, ARS vessels seem to have reached a broad range of consumer types.

The above-mentioned graph that illustrates the trend of ARS and PRS availability during the period between the 4th and the 6th century, still offers some useful points for reflection. Beyond the already emphasized high and protracted receptivity of *vici*, it is possible to observe a predictable, high representation of villas, capable of feeding a discrete demand for imported ceramics that seems to have remained constant over time until the end of the 6th century CE.

However, farms also appear to have been places of use and consumption of imported pottery, and this pattern deserves particular attention. The term "farm" is conventionally used to define any residential and productive building not attributable to a privileged social group.

This is not the place to go into the problem of an architectural and social characterization of these types of "minor" settlements[34]. Here it is important to observe how the presence of im-

[33] See also Bes 2015 about the striking predominance of ARS even within the Eastern Mediterranean.

[34] Goffredo 2018; for this matter, also see the important results of *The Roman Peasant Project* in Bowes 2020.

ported finewares (although for few vessels within ceramic assemblages dominated by local wares) is documented also in these "minor" settlements which were the contexts of a rural peasant society composed of small landowners, farmers, *coloni*, *servi quasi coloni* etc.

The case of the rural farm-house of Lamiozza (Corrente, Cioce 2014), in the Carapelle valley, is emblematic. The building was constructed between the 4th and the 5th century, and it had only two rooms: one for a residential use, paved with a beaten earth floor and a fireplace; the other room had a multifunctional character and it was used as a stable and a space for craft activities. The material culture testifies to the availability - although restricted – of imported pottery (ARS C and D), of metal and glass artifacts and of a varied typological repertoire of cooking and coarse wares. The most common consumer goods of the "globalized" economy of late imperial Mediterranean were therefore accessible to the peasant inhabitants of one of the many small rural houses in the territory of the Late antique Apulia.

R.G., C.D.M.

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