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Pottery Production in the Northern Sector of the Bay of Salerno: the Fabrics of Pontecagnano and Fratte

Introductory remarks

The project “Ceramic Production in the plain of Paestum”¹ allowed us for the first time to define fabrics for the pottery production of the area north of the Sele River with the important Etruscan-Italic settlements of Pontecagnano and Fratte, today both situated in the periphery of the modern town of Salerno. At the actual state of research it was only possible to attribute fabrics to the region, but not to a specific site. We therefore have chosen the code SAL-REG-x for the fabrics, referring to the region of the modern town Salerno.

Coarse Ware: The fabrics

The project provided us with twelve samples classified as common ware, which stem from materials found in different sites in the area of Pontecagnano, and from pottery classified as *impasto grezzo* from the residential area in Negri. We were able to distinguish three different fabrics for coarse ware, which belong most likely to a local production situated in the area of modern Pontecagnano respectively Salerno.

The fabrics share common attributes of the matrix and its temper and are denominated SAL-REG-C-1, SAL-REG-C-1, SAL-REG-C-3, the latter being attested only once.

The analysed samples from Fratte² comprise five samples classified as common ware (*ceramica comune*) and six samples classified as cooking ware (M247/1-12; M247/14), which stem from different sites within the ancient settlement in modern Fratte (Salerno). It was possible to distinguish two fabrics, which show common characteristics in containing more or less carbonates, volcanic crystals and black (volcanic) inclusions. A local production in the area of modern Fratte (Salerno) is very likely.

SAL-REG-C-1

M241/1 (ref. sample Pontecagnano)

M241/6, M241/7; M241/13 (variant: finer) (Pontecagnano)

The fabric is brown to gray (7.5YR 5/3 - 7.5YR 5/1), its fracture surface is irregular. With the naked eye numerous fine white and dark inclusions as well as some large gray inclusions are visible.

Voids are frequent (estimated at 7.5%) and of characteristic channel shape, with a length up to 1.2 mm. Carbonate pseudomorph moulds are rare; white and dark mica is frequent.

Temper: Inclusions are frequent (estimated to 20%) and moderately sorted, with a grain size up to 1 mm. The temper is dominated by small black particles and rusty brown, partly large, spherical to subspherical, rounded particles (up to 1 mm). White spherical rounded carbonate-particles are

¹ See De Bonis and Gassner 2018 in this edition.

² See the article by Scafuro and Serritella 2018 in this edition.

rare. Sporadic, but characteristic are very angular transparent particles of different colours, mostly clear, sometimes brown and green, identifiable as crystals of volcanic origin.

SAL-REG-C-2

M241/4 (ref. sample, Pontecagnano)

M241/2, M241/5 (Pontecagnano)

The brown fabric 5YR 5/4, is hard, its fracture irregular, with naked eye numerous white, reddish brown and black inclusions are visible. Voids are frequent (estimated at 15%) and mostly channel – shaped, as observed with the previous fabric.

Temper: Inclusions are very frequent (estimated at 25%), with a grain size of the measured particles up to 1.5 mm). The temper is dominated by spherical and angular white and clear quartz particles, frequent and characteristic are black subspherical angular particles and large reddish brown rounded subspherical particles (iron oxide concretions), with a grain size measured up to 1.5 mm. Sporadic, but characteristic are very angular transparent crystals of volcanic origin.

SAL-REG-C-3

M247/1 (ref. sample, Fratte)

M247/11 (Fratte)

The fabric is red (2.5YR 4/6-5/6), its edges reddish brown (2.5YR 4/3), the fracture surface is irregular. Voids are frequent (estimated at 7.5%) and lengthy (channel shaped). White mica is frequent.

Temper: Inclusions are very frequent (estimated at 20%) the grain size of the measured particles is up to 1.5 mm. The sorting is bimodal and consists of poorly sorted sand in well sorted silt. The temper is dominated by partly large white spherical to subspherical, rounded carbonate-particles. Most characteristic are black particles and frequent clear and green transparent, very angular crystals of volcanic origin. Sporadic are reddish brown subspherical, rounded particles (iron oxide concretions).

SAL-REG-C-4

M247/4 (ref. sample, Fratte)

M247/6, M247/9, M247/14 (Fratte)

The fabric resembles in colour (red 2.5YR 5/6-4/6) the previous fabric, the fracture surface is irregular. Voids are rare (estimated to 5%) and mostly lengthy (channel – shaped). Carbonate pseudomorph moulds are very frequent and appear in the matrix partly as white very elongate and rounded rings. White and dark mica is rarely visible.

Temper: Inclusions are frequent (estimated at 15%) and bimodal sorted with a grain size of singular particles up to 1 mm. The temper is dominated by mostly clear and white spherical, angular quartz particles. Characteristic and very frequent are spherical to subspherical black

particles and very angular, spherical to elongate, mainly clear crystals of volcanic origin. White spherical and rounded carbonate particles and reddish brown particles are rare.

SAL-REG-C-5

M247/7 (ref. sample, Fratte)

M247/10; M247/12 (Fratte)

The fabric is light red (5YR 6/4) on the inner edge to pink (7.5YR 7/4) and hard, its fracture surface is irregular. Voids are rare (estimated at 5%) and mostly lengthy (channel shaped). Secondary deposited carbonate pseudomorphs appear as lengthy white rimmed pores, with a length up to 2mm. White and dark mica are frequent.

Temper: Inclusions are frequent (estimated at 15%) and bimodal sorted, with a grain size of the particles up to 1.5 mm. The temper is dominated by white and clear spherical to subspherical angular quartz particles and white rounded, spherical to subspherical carbonate particles. Also characteristic and very frequent are black angular, spherical to subelongate particles and very angular transparent clear or brown crystals of volcanic origin. Frequent in this fabric are also reddish brown to orange rounded, partly large particles, with a grain size up to 1 mm.

Glazed Ware: The Fabrics

The analysed samples from Pontecagnano stem from material of the Archaic to Hellenistic periods found in the excavations in the *chiesa* context of Pontecagnano and the *Proprietà Baldi*, comprising different ware groups like *Ionian Cups*, fine banded ware, partially glazed ware and plain black glaze ware.

Among the samples from Pontecagnano it was possible to identify by comparison to our reference sample collection a great amount of Paestan imports, in particular in the Archaic material we could identify the black glaze fabrics PAE-G-2, PAE-G-5, and PAE-REG-G-1³. For some samples also an Attic origin was attested.

For only three of the analysed samples a production in the area of Salerno can be proposed. They belong to two different fabrics of black glaze ware (SAL-REG-G-1 and SAL-REG-G-2), while the samples from Fratte, consisting in three fragments of red figured pottery, attributed to the *Fratte Painter*⁴ and five samples of black glaze ware with a chronology from the 5th to the early 3rd c. BC. allowed the definition of the fabric SAL-REG-G-3.

Common characteristic of the very fine grained fabrics is a high amount of dark mica. The identification of the fabrics SAL-REG-G-1 and SAL-REG-G-3 with decorated vessels, attributed to the Fratte-painter, make the attribution to the local production very probable, though it has to be noted that the very limited number of samples makes this classification only preliminary.

³ See FACEM 2011, for PAE-REG-G-1 also Trapichler and Sauer 2015.

⁴ For the Fratte-Painter see Trendall 1964.

SAL-REG-G-1

M240/1 (ref. sample Pontecagnano)

M240/6 (Pontecagnano)

M244/2, M244/3 (Fratte), M245/2 (attributed to the Fratte-Painter, Fratte)

The fabric is light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) or pink (7.5YR 7/4), the fracture surface is fine grained and smooth. Voids are rare and irregular in shape (“vughy”) or channel shaped, the later up to 0.5 mm. The matrix is riddled with dark mica, and contains also frequent white mica.

Inclusions are generally rare (estimated to 2.5 – 5%). Most characteristic and very frequent are small black, spherical and rounded particles, with a grain size up to 0.12 mm. Frequently represented are also spherical and rounded reddish brown particles (grain size up to 0.12). Sporadic are mostly white or yellowish very spherical and well-rounded carbonate particles.

SAL-REG-G-2

M240/2 (ref. sample Pontecagnano)

The fabric is brown (10YR 5/3), its fracture surface fine grained and smooth. Voids are rare (estimated to 2.5-5%) and irregular in shape or channel shaped. In contrast to the previous fabric (SAL-REG-G-1), the matrix is riddled with carbonate-pseudomorph moulds, with a size up to 0.12 mm. Dark and white mica is also very frequent.

Inclusions are not frequent (estimated to 2.5%) and small, they range in size between 0.025 to 0.12 mm. White spherical rounded carbonate particles and reddish brown spherical rounded iron-oxide-concretion- particles are rare. Sporadic are orange rounded subspherical particles.

SAL-REG-G-3

M245/3 (ref. sample, Fratte painter, Fratte)

The fabric is pinkish gray (7.5YR 7/2), the fracture fine grained and smooth. Voids are rare and irregular in shape or channel shaped (estimated at 1 – 2.5%). It contains a high amount of dark mica, visible as very elongate thin stripes (up to 0.12 mm) within the matrix. Inclusions are fine and rare 2.5%. Most frequent and characteristic are spherical to subspherical black particles (up to 0.15 mm). Sporadic are reddish brown spherical to subspherical rounded particles (up to 0.2 mm, iron oxide concretions) and yellowish white well rounded carbonate inclusions.

References

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