

MARIA TRAPICHLER

Fabrics of Himera

Introductory Note

34 samples of pottery and tiles from the Necropolis of Himera (excavation 2009) were selected by Stefano Vasallo in order to define the local production. The material consisted of glazed wares, coarse wares, opus doliare and ceramic building material. Examination under the stereoscopic microscope led to the distinction of two main types of fabrics within all ware groups: The first and larger one showed a calcareous matrix,¹ the second is characterized by a non calcareous matrix.² These distinct groups stem from at least two different raw material groups, which are to be searched for in the region of Himera and along the river. In the absence of archaeometrical investigations and of raw materials for comparison, it is not possible to decide if one or the other or both belong to the local production of the town of Himera. Therefore we decided to name the fabrics of both groups preliminary with HIM-REG-x (Himera Region).

Glazed Wares

Four samples of glazed wares were examined. Three of them show a matrix that is riddled with carbonate-pseudomorphoses. These samples include two examples of so called *coppe imerese*, therefore they might probably be regarded as local.

FABRIC DESCRIPTION

HIM-REG-G-1 (M 110/1-2) is characterized by a brown to grayish brown matrix, which is riddled by fine carbonate-pseudomorphoses; white calcareous inclusions occur occasionally.

HIM-REG-G-2 differs only by color, which is reddish yellow, and in addition contains some clear quartz particles.

In contrast, **HIM-REG-G-3** (M 110/3) shows a reddish yellow very fine grained matrix and shows no visible carbonate particles or carbonate-pseudomorphoses, it contains some dark mica, and very small red and black inclusions.

Coarse Wares

FABRIC DESCRIPTION

HIM-REG-C-1 (M 111/8.10.11.13.16. 24.) The color of the freshly broken section is brown to grayish brown and riddled with clearly visible, white or yellowish white carbonate-pseudomorphoses, its texture and the sort of its inclusions the fabric is very near to the black glaze fabric HIM-G-1, it can probably be regarded as a local production.

¹ HIM-REG-G-1 and HIM-REG-G-2; HIM-REG-C-1 to 4; HIM-REG-OD-1 to 4; HIM-REG-CBM-1.

² HIM-REG-G-3; HIM-REG-C-5 to 8; HIM-REG-CBM-1.

HIM-REG-C-2 (M 111/6) differs from HIM-REG-C-1 by the larger size of the carbonate-pseudomorphoses and calcareous particles.

HIM-REG-C-3 (M 111/14) shows in addition, prominent large dark gray inclusions (iron-oxide concretions), together with large clear quartz particles.

HIM-REG-C-4 (M 111/5.16.17.26) is characterized by a reddish yellow matrix, riddled with carbonate-pseudomorphoses, in addition some white or yellowish white calcareous inclusions may occur, as well as clear quartz particles. The fabric is very similar to HIM-G-2 (see above, Glazed Wares).

The fabrics HIM-C-1 to HIM-C-4 are observed with shapes of domestic pottery like jugs, bowls and dishes.

HIM-REG-C-5 (M 111/4) shows a non-calcareous reddish yellow matrix.

The fabrics HIM-REG-C-6 to HIM-C-8 contain a higher amount of above all quartz particles and some dark, partly large, gray inclusions. **HIM-C-6** (M 111/1.2) differs by its grayish brown color from **HIM-C-7**, which is reddish yellow and shows large calcareous inclusions among its temper, **HIM-C-8** is characterized by its partly very large reddish brown inclusions (similar to opus doliare, see below).

Opus Doliare

The examination under the microscope of six samples from Pithoi led to the distinction of four fabrics, which are all characterized by a carbonate-pseudomorphoses riddled matrix and a partly very coarse temper.

HIM-REG-OD-1 (M 111/22.23) is characterized by a yellowish red matrix, which is riddled by carbonate-pseudomorphoses, the temper contains particles of burnt clay particles and quartz of irregular size.

HIM-REG-OD-2 (M 111/21) differs by its temper, which contains particles of irregular size of white, light gray stone particles and small quartz.

HIM-REG-OD-3 (M 111/20) The fine grained matrix is riddled by carbonate-pseudomorphoses, it differs by its more prominent large white to yellowish white calcareous inclusions.

HIM-REG-OD-4 (M 111/19) is characterized by a veined matrix riddled by carbonate-pseudomorphoses, the temper contains large brick colored inclusions and clear quartz.

Ceramic Building Materials

The examination of 5 samples of roof tiles led to the distinction of two fabrics, which are likely to be of a local or regional production:

HIM-REG-CBM-1 (M 112/2.3.5.6) The matrix is riddled with small carbonate-pseudomorphoses, it contains large dark grey inclusions.

HIM-REG-CBM-2 (M 112/4) The fine-grained matrix of HIM-REG-CBM-3 (M 112/4) shows no visible calcareous inclusions or carbonate-pseudomorphoses and thus fits well to fabrics observed with coarse wares HIM-REG-C-5 or glazed ware HIM-REG-G-3.

This article should be cited as: M. Trapichler, "Fabrics of Himera". In **FACEM** (version 06/06/2011)
(<http://www.facem.at/project-papers.php>)