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Unidentified Amphorae Production in NW-Lucania

Sampling Strategy

The classification of these fabrics is based upon the macroscopic analysis of all diagnostic fragments of the material of studied contexts of the Austrian excavations at Velia¹. The provenance of the established fabrics has been confirmed by archaeometric analysis (thin section and heavy mineral analysis) conducted by Roman Sauer, who compared the pottery samples with local raw materials (see below). He distinguished two variants, called RVA002a (NW-LUC-A-1) and RVA002b (NW-LUC-A-2), both displaying very similar features.

Fabrics

NW-LUC-A-1 This fabric is characterized by a reddish yellow (5YR 6/6), granular matrix that presents medium sized to large white, grey and colorless inclusions, among which quartz is clearly recognizable. In a very low percentage we see also fragments of carbonate or carbonate-pseudomorphoses. Most characteristic is the bimodal sorting, characteristic for the intentional adding of temper.

NW-LUC-A-2 The fabric is distinguished from NW-LUC-A-1 in that it contains a higher percentage of carbonate.

Typological repertoire: The morphology of this production is very simple and restricted to Western Greek amphorae of Gassner's rim type 3.² The fabric has been identified in contexts of the early fifth century B.C.E.³ so that we can assume a beginning of this production at least in the first quarter of the fifth century B.C.E.⁴ The fabric appears always with rim 3 also in contexts of the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. among the finds of the fortifications in the Lower Town,⁵ while finds in period 2 (fourth century B.C.E.) are rare and might rather be assumed as heirloom pieces, as they do not follow the contemporaneous development of amphorae.

References

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¹ Gassner 2003. The amphora repertoire from the large foundation trench of the Roman building has been studied in the unpublished thesis of H. Liko (Liko 1997).

² Gassner 2003, 181, fig. 91.

³ Gassner 2003, I b.45, I b.46, pl. 8.

⁴ We must take into consideration however, that the context of the mud brick houses in the Lower town of Velia from the first half of the sixth century B.C.E. is the earliest context at Velia studied yet (Gassner 2003). For Poseidonia the published vessels have not been classified according to their fabric and in particular we are still waiting for a detailed study of amphorae of the Archaic phase. So it might be possible that the production started earlier.

⁵ Phases 1.2.B and 1.3.Z, Gassner – Sokolicek – Trapichler (in preparation).

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