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Fabrics of Velia

Introductory Note

The classification of fabrics is based upon the macroscopic analysis of all diagnostic fragments of the material of studied contexts of the Austrian excavations. These comprise a context of the Early Classical period in the Lower town of Velia,¹ an area in the Eastern town of Velia and in particular contexts from the excavation of the fortifications in the Lower town.²

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.

Glazed Wares

DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVED FABRICS

The four distinguished fabrics (**VEL-G-1** to **VEL-G-4**) are arranged from fine to coarse. Their color is reddish yellow, with slight differences in color shades. **VEL-C-1** and its reduced variety **VEL-G-2** show no visible inclusions except occasionally some white mica. The fresh breaks of the coarser fabrics **VEL-G-3** and **G-4** shows a more granular appearance occasionally with some tiny white or dark particles visible to the naked eye. **VEL-G-4** is sometimes observed with a more or less marked gray core.

Wares and surface treatment: The distinguished fabrics are observed with black glaze ware, partly glazed wares as well as Red figured pottery. In addition to black glazes, red to orange brown glazes appear from the fifth century B.C.E. onwards. In the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. they are usually dark gray to black.³

Shapes and function: Black glaze table ware are found in the tradition shapes of Attic typology like skyphoi, cup skyphoi, bowls with a plain rim and small bowls and salt cellars. From the mid fifth century B.C.E., and especially during the fourth century B.C.E. to the first half of the third century, special shapes were developed like the bowl with a plain rim and high ring foot⁴ and a derivation of the Attic cup skyphos *light wall*.⁵ Also produced in the Attic tradition of black glaze were toilet vessels like Lekythoi and Pyxides. The partly glazed wares are generally limited to the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. and comprise to the greater degree one or two handled bowls (cf. M2/49; “*Henkelschalen*”)⁶ as well as small jugs.

¹ Mud-brick houses beneath the Roman Insula II: 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 The amphora repertoire from the large foundation trench of the Roman building has been studied in the unpublished thesis of H. Liko (Liko 1997). The finds from a trench in front of the Insula II have been examined in the unpublished thesis of M. Trapichler, see preliminarily Trapichler 2003b.

² Fine wares and coarse wares of these sites have been studied by M. Trapichler in her unpublished dissertation, amphorae by V. Gassner. For the present see Gassner 2006; Gassner and Trapichler 2010; Gassner et al. (in preparation).

³ Trapichler 2003a; Trapichler 2003b; Gassner and Trapichler 2010.

⁴ Trapichler 2003a; Trapichler 2003b.

⁵ Gassner and Trapichler 2010.

⁶ Gassner 2003, 71.

Chronology: The production of black glaze pottery in Velia has been proven in contexts of the mid fifth century B.C.E. on hand from the fabrics occurring up to Hellenistic times.⁷

Coarse Wares

DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVED FABRICS

The six distinguished fabrics (**VEL-C-1** to **VEL-C-6**) are arranged in order from fine to coarse. All fabrics are based on the same raw material type, which showed four variants (RVGK 1a-d). The distinction was made due to differences in the texture of the fresh break (smooth to irregular), size and frequency of inclusions, and observed colors.⁸

VEL-C-1 to **VEL-C-4** are of reddish yellow color and occasionally show a gray core, which appears more frequent with fabric **VEL-C-3**. White quartz particles are visible to the naked eye, as well as occasionally large brownish red and gray inclusions, which prove to be clay lumps under the microscope. **VEL-C-4** to **VEL-C-6** show a higher degree of quartz temper, **VEL-C-5** shows a dark brown, **VEL-C-6** a reddish brown to black color.

Observed shapes and function: The finest variety (**VEL-C-1**) was primarily used for coarse table wares, also with banded decoration, later for jugs and lekanai and kitchen ware which was not for exposure to fire. The coarser tempered fabrics **VEL-C-2** and **C-3** were used for all kinds of kitchen- and cooking wares, **VEL-C-4** to **VEL-C-6** go more often together with cooking wares, but not exclusively.

Chronology: The analyzed samples stem from material of the fifth century B.C.E.⁹ but the established fabrics were observed in contexts of all chronological phases up to Roman times.¹⁰
(M.T.)

Transport Amphorae

The amphora production of Velia can be followed from the second quarter of the fifth to the second centuries B.C.E. and follows the usual development of Western Greek amphorae.¹¹ As with all fabrics from Velia, they are characterized by the lack of carbonate. They are arranged from fine grained fabrics to coarser ones.

VEL-A-1 is a hard and rather fine red fabric (2.5YR–5/8). The inclusions, mainly quartz, are small; to a minor degree we can observe red spots. It has been observed for Western Greek amphorae of the early fifth century B.C.E. as well as on examples with Gassner's rim type 7 and in a context of the end of the third/beginning of the second centuries B.C.E.

VEL-A-2 The matrix is hard and red (2.5YR–5/8) like **VEL-A-1**, but the frequent quartz particles as well as the white inclusions are much bigger than in **VEL-A-1**. Chronologically, **VEL-A-2** occurs from the fifth century B.C.E. until the appearance of Graeco-Italic amphorae.

VEL-A-3 is very similar to **VEL-A-2**, but temper, in particular the white particles, are more frequent. It has been observed from the fifth until the beginning of the second centuries B.C.E.

⁷ Trapichler 2003a; Trapichler 2003b; Gassner and Trapichler 2010; Trapichler (forthcoming).

⁸ Previously published in Gassner 2003, 73.

⁹ See Gassner 2003.

¹⁰ Liko 2001a; Liko 2001b; Liko 2001c; Trapichler 2009.

¹¹ See in general Van der Mersch 1994; Spagnolo 2002; Gassner 2003; Savelli 2009 with the previous bibliography. The contexts mentioned in this text will be published in Gassner et al. (in preparation).

VEL-A-4 This fabric shows the same color as VEL-A-3, but the size of the inclusions ranges from very small to big, some of the red spots may be rather large. VEL-A-4 is a rather frequent fabric and was produced from the fifth to the second centuries B.C.E.

VEL-A-5 The fabric differs from the others by the color of the matrix (yellow red, 5YR5/5). It is tempered mainly by colorless and gray quartz grains as well as white particles. Normally it was not fired as hard as the previous fabrics so that the structure of the break is crumbly. It has not been identified for amphorae of the fifth century B.C.E., but occurs at the end of the fourth century B.C.E. for Western Greek amphorae with Gassner's rim 7 and in particular for amphorae with Echinus rims. It is still used for Graeco-Italic types as well.

VEL-A-6 is similar in color to VEL-A-5 and in the strong tempering, mainly by quartz grains with a predominance of brown and gray particles. The size of these particles differs, however, much more and their distribution is irregular. Like VEL-A-5 it has not been found for amphorae of the fifth century B.C.E. until now, but appears only in the middle of the fourth century B.C.E. for amphorae of Gassner's rim 7 and for amphorae with echinus rim.

(V. G.)

Ceramic Building Materials

DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVED FABRICS

The five types distinguished by microscopic analysis are based upon one petrographical-mineralogical type (RVZ-1). The transitions between the distinguished fabrics are smooth, all fabrics show the characteristics generally observed with all Velinian fabrics, the lack of any carbonatic inclusions or carbonate- pseudomorphoses, quartz and red iron oxide concretions. **VEL-CBM-1** to **VEL-CBM-3** are hard fired and show a reddish yellow color, they differ in the different content and sorting temper. The most common fabric **VEL-CBM-1** is characterized by a very inhomogeneous size of the contained particles, ranging from very small to large, most important being all sorts of quartz and a certain amount of iron-oxide-concretions, visible as rust colored or dark gray particles; **VEL-CBM-2**: differs in its better "sorting" of particles, **VEL-CBM-3** shows a finer grained yellowish red matrix together with a lower degree of temper. The different appearance of **VEL-CBM-4**, is due to very hard firing, while the light brown color of the rather soft burnt fabric **VEL-CBM-5** is a result of under firing.

Observed shapes and function: Roof tiles of the Western Greek type¹²

Chronology: Late Archaic to Classical contexts¹³

(M. T.)

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¹² see Gassner 2003, 147.

¹³ See Gassner 2003.

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