

Archer Martin

CONSIDERATIONS ON HISPANIC SIGILLATA IN ITALY

This paper collects published and unpublished Hispanic Sigillata found in Italy. Most of it comes from Ostia, although the ware is attested also at Rome and Ancona and has been reported from Elba. It consists largely of decorated vessels, for the most part Dragendorff 37 (with simple or almond rims). Alongside the dominant products from the Rioja, some pieces from Andújar are attested. Hispanic Sigillata is more than an anecdotal presence at Ostia – it belongs to a series of minor fine wares attested there in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries. It is also noteworthy that a fragment has been identified at Ancona.

Hispanic Sigillata is a ware with a rich history of study.¹ Its distribution appears to have concerned mostly the Iberian Peninsula itself and the neighboring regions of southern Gaul and *Mauretania Tingitana*, while finds farther afield are unusual.² An isolated example was attested at Stockstadt, a military site on the Main in Germany.³ More recently, two fragments and possibly a third have been recognized in Britain,⁴ and a fragment from *Aquincum* in Hungary was reported at the RCRF congress in 2016. Italy, however, is considered to be the major outlet for this ware away from its main area of distribution.

Hispanic Sigillata has been known in Italy since 1963, when Francisca Pallarés published 16 examples from the antiquarium of Ostia.⁵ Since then, the ware has been registered on various occasions in Italy. Here the aim is to gather together the evidence for Hispanic Sigillata's presence in Italy and to characterize it.

Of the Italian sites that have provided Hispanic Sigillata (fig. 1), Ostia is by far the most important, with as many as 56 vessels attested.

- The 16 pieces published by Pallarés have only a generic Ostian provenience. Two are attributed to Dragendorff 29 and fourteen to Dragendorff 37 (the latter made up of one with a plain rim, eight with rims with an almond-shaped section and five with no rim preserved).⁶ They have been attributed to the workshops of the Rioja.⁷
- At the Terme del Nuotatore, Hispanic Sigillata was found in the Area SO: a body fragment in Layer VA1 (probably Dragendorff 37) and nine fragments of a single Dragendorff 37 with an almond rim in Layers IV.⁸ The former dates to the third quarter of the 1st century AD and the latter to the first half of the 2nd century AD.⁹
- While checking sigillata from the Area SO and Ambiente VI years ago, I was able to identify further fragments of Hispanic Sigillata: three unidentified body sherds without decoration from Area SO, Taglio A, Strato I B2; a simple Dragendorff 37 rim sherd from Area SO, Taglio A, Strato III B2; a Dragendorff 37 body sherd from Ambiente VI, Strati II e III; a rim sherd and a body sherd from a Dragendorff 37 with an almond rim and another Dragendorff 37 body sherd from Ambiente VI, Strato III B4.
- Another fragment of Dragendorff 37 in Hispanic Sigillata has been published from a disturbed, superficial layer at the Terme del Nuotatore.¹⁰
- The Area NE in the same complex also gave a certain quantity of Hispanic Sigillata, which I studied several

¹ See M. V. ROMERO CARNICERO, Más de cincuenta años de investigaciones sobre la sigillata hispánica altoimperial. In: M. I. Fernández García/P. Ruiz Montes/M. V. Peinado Espinosa (eds.), *Terra Sigillata Hispánica. 50 años de investigaciones* (Roma 2015) 15–37 and SÁENZ PRECIADO 2014, 147–148.

² In general, see M. A. MEZQUÍRIZ, *Terra sigillata iberica*. In: G. PUGLIESE-CARRATELLI (ed.), *Atlante delle Forme Ceramiche II. Ceramica Fine Romana nel Bacino Mediterraneo (Tardo Ellenismo e Primo Impero)*. EAA (Roma 1985) 111, and ROMERO CARNICERO/RUIZ MONTES 2005, 187. For *Mauretania Tingitana*, see J. BOUBE, *La terra sigillata hispanique en Maurétanie Tingitane I. Les marques de potiers. Études et Travaux Arch. Marocaine* 1 (Rabat 1965) and M. BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ, *El comercio de Terra Sigillata altoimperial en el Círculo del estrecho. Balance historiográfico y líneas de investigación*. BAR Internat. Ser. 2148 (Oxford 2010) 146–153. – For southern Gaul, see T. MARTIN, *Périphe aquitaine. Commerce transpyrénéen et diffusion atlantique des céramiques sigillées de Montans en direction des marchés du Nord et du Nord-Ouest de la Péninsule ibérique*. In: X. Nieto/M. Roca Roumens/A. Vernhet/P. Sciau (eds.), *La difusió de la terra sigillata sudgàlica al nord de Hispania*. Mus. Arqu. Catalunya Monogr. 6 (Barcelona 2005) 38–39.

³ BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2013, 257, and BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2015, 263, with references to earlier literature.

⁴ BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2013; BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2015.

⁵ PALLARÉS 1963.

⁶ PALLARÉS 1963.

⁷ GARABITO GÓMEZ 1978, 577.

⁸ G. PUCCI, *Terra sigillata iberica*. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, *Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII*. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 325.

⁹ A. CARANDINI/C. PANELLA, *Datazione degli strati e delle fasi edilizie del Saggio nell'Area SO*. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, *Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII*. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 655–656.

¹⁰ C. PANELLA/D. MANACORDA, *Riassunto della stratigrafia e dei materiali delle fasi di abbandono e di distruzione (Strati I)*. In: L. Anselmino/A. Carandini/C. Panella, *Ostia IV. Le terme del nuotatore. Scavo dell'ambiente XVI e dell'area XXV*. Stud. Miscellanei 23 (Roma 1977) 322 fig. 594.



Fig. 1. Map of the find spots of Hispanic Sigillata in Italy.

decades ago for inclusion in a never published volume of the excavation reports.¹¹ Four fragments belonging to two examples of Dragendorff 37 with almond-shaped rims were found in the Hadrianic layers. In the Antonine layers, 37 fragments belonging to a maximum of four Dragendorff 37 vessels were found – two with an almond rim, one with an ordinary rim and one that does not preserve the rim. Two more examples of Dragendorff 37 with an almond rim (four fragments) come from later levels. Modern and unstratified layers gave 46 more fragments that belong to a maximum of 11 vessels – one Dragendorff 37 with an almond rim, two Dragendorff 37 with ordinary rims, four unspecified Dragendorff 37, four unidentifiable vessels. They are overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, to be attributed to the workshops of the Rioja.

- A rim sherd of Hispanic Sigillata, considered to belong to Dragendorff 29,¹² was found in the Domus dei Pesci in a context of Period 2, which dates to the last two decades of the 1st century AD.¹³
- The excavations conducted by the DAI and AAR, which I am preparing for publication, produced some Hispanic Sigillata: six body sherds from a single Dragendorff 37 vessel (US 3402), two Dragendorff 37 base sherds (US 2326 and US 3402) and two undecorated body sherds (US 8 in Andújar fabric and US 9).¹⁴
- Among the material from the Palazzo Imperiale, which I am also preparing for publication, there is a sporadic find from 2014 of a Dragendorff 37 body sherd from Andújar.¹⁵
- There is an unpublished example of Mezquíriz 13 from the Caseggiato delle Taberne Finestrate (Inv. n. RA 33937).

¹¹ PANELLA 1991, 284, 290, 294 Fig. 9; MARTIN 1992; C. PANELLA, *Periodizzazione e cronologia*. In: C. Panella/G. Rizzo, Ostia VI. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Stud. Miscellanei 38 (Roma 2014) 31; S. NAPOLITANI, *La ceramica africana*. In: C. Panella/G. Rizzo, Ostia VI. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Stud. Miscellanei 38 (Roma 2014) 54.

¹² Zevi et al. 2004–2005, 82.

¹³ Zevi et al. 2004–2005, 69.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Joey Williams for the identification of the piece from Andújar.

¹⁵ Once again, I am grateful to Joey Williams for the identification of the Andújar fabric.

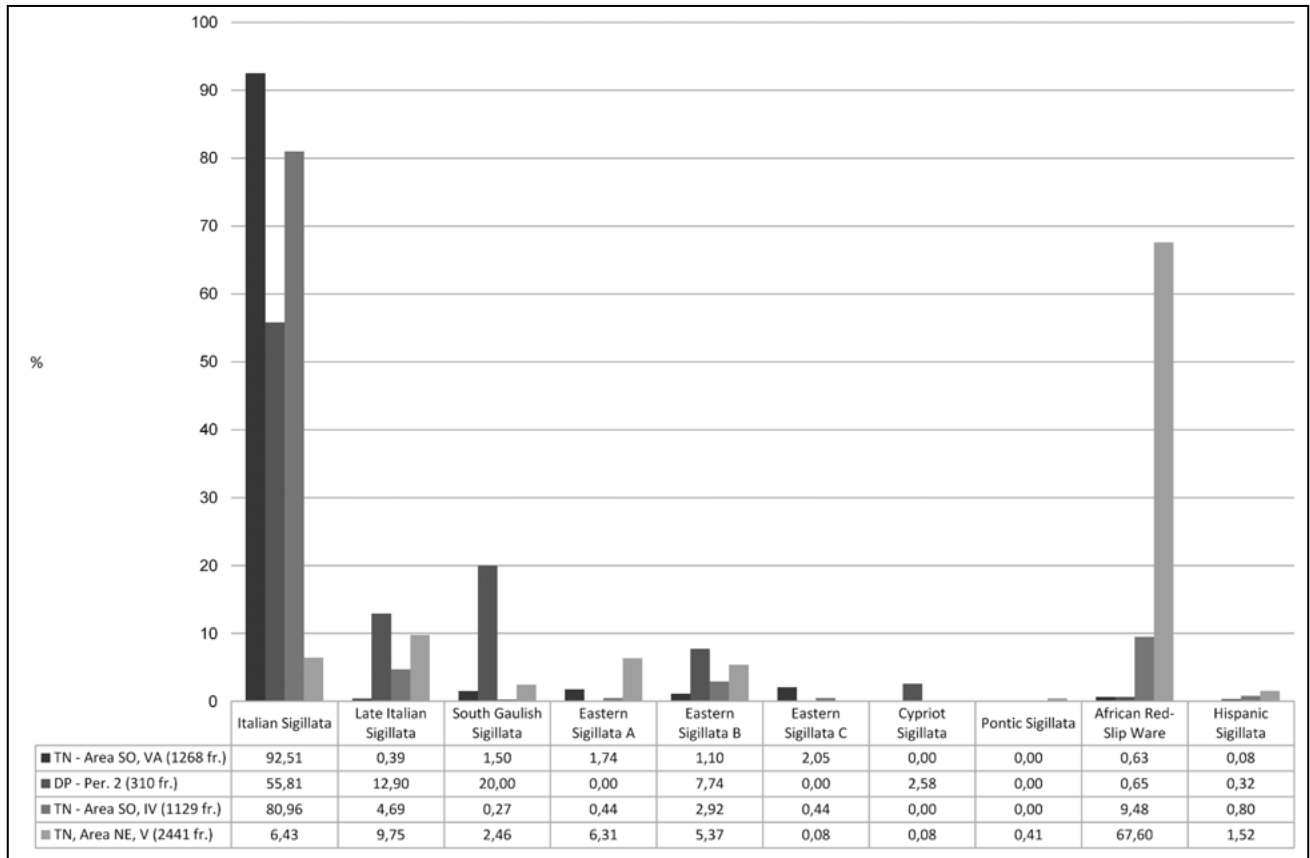


Fig. 2. Percentages of Fine Wares at Ostia.

- Among the material from the Via di Felicissimo, I saw years ago a fragment of a Dragendorff 37 with an almond rim (Taglio I, Strato I) and a probable Dragendorff 37 body sherd (Zona Cisterna, Taglio III, Strato I + humus).
- A Dragendorff 29 base fragment from the Casa delle Pareti Gialle attributed to either Late Italian Decorated Sigillata or Hispanic Sigillata¹⁶ turned out, upon checking, to be South Gaulish.

Hispanic Sigillata has been found at Rome as well, although much less frequently, with one piece from an excavation there and perhaps four more with an uncertain provenience.

- At the *Aqua Marcia*, a fragment of Dragendorff 27 was a residual find in a context of the middle of the 2nd century.¹⁷
- The presence of some fragments of Hispanic Sigillata in the antiquarium of the Museo Nazionale Romano has been mentioned.¹⁸ These may be the same as four that I noted while doing inventory work in the MNR many years ago, which were recorded as having entered the Museum through a confiscation at Velletri in 1945 (Inv. n. 261378–261381). There is, of course, no indication of their find spot, although it was presumably somewhere in Rome or its surroundings.

- To judge by the drawing, a base fragment found during excavations for the metro station at Piazza della Repubblica and attributed with some doubt to Dragendorff 15/17 in Hispanic Sigillata can only be Italian Sigillata.¹⁹

Outside Ostia and Rome, Hispanic Sigillata is scarcely known in Italy. A Dragendorff 37 body sherd was found at Ancona among the material from the excavations of the Lungomare Vanvitelli.²⁰ The discovery of a fragment each of Dragendorff 29 and Dragendorff 37 on the island of Elba, is mentioned without any supporting illustration.²¹

Even at Ostia, the percentages of Hispanic Sigillata are low where it is possible to calculate them among the fine wares overall (fig. 2).²² In the Area SO, Layer VA of the Terme

¹⁶ I. POHL, Ostia (Roma). Casa delle Pareti Gialle. Salone centrale. Scavo sotto il pavimento a mosaico II. Materiali rinvenuti. In: F. Zevi/I. Pohl, Ostia. Saggi di Scavo. Not. Scavi Ant. 24 Suppl. 1 (Roma 1970) 191.

¹⁷ A. MARTIN, Altre sigillate. In: R. Volpe, *Aqua Marcia*. Lo scavo di un tratto urbano (Firenze 1996).

¹⁸ LISSI CARONNA 1976, 259 note 65.

¹⁹ LISSI CARONNA 1976, 259 Fig. 41.4.

²⁰ I am grateful to Marzia Giuliodori, who will publish the sigillata, for showing it to me.

²¹ M. ZECCHINI, Relitti romani dell'isola d'Elba (Lucca 1982) 107.

²² Terme del Nuotatore, Area SO: G. PUCCI, Terra sigillata italica. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 315; G. PUCCI, Terra sigillata tardo-italica decorata. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 319; G. PUCCI, Terre sigillate orientali. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 326; C. AMPOLO, Terra sigillata chiara africana. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 334; A. Carandini/C. Panella, Datazione degli strati e delle fasi edilizie del saggio nell'area SO. In: A. Carandini/C. Ampolo, Ostia III. Le Terme del Nuotatore. Scavo degli ambienti II, VI, VII. Stud. Miscellanei 21 (Roma 1973) 654–656. – Terme del Nuotatore, Area NE: PANELLA 1991, 294 Fig. 9. – Domus dei Pesci: Zevi et al. 2004–2005, 72–73; 75; 77; 82.

del Nuotatore, dated to AD 90 approximately, it makes up 0.08 %. In Period 2 in the Domus dei Pesci, dating to the last two decades of the 1st century AD, it accounts for 0.32 %. The Trajanic-Hadrianic Layer IV of the Area SO in the Terme del Nuotatore presents Hispanic Sigillata at 0.80 %. It comes to 1.52% in Layer V of the Area NE in the Terme del Nuotatore of Antonine date. These scores are comparable to those for the other sigillatas of secondary importance at Ostia at that time and indeed are higher in some cases.

The sort of Hispanic Sigillata attested in Italy may give at least a partial explanation of the reason for its importation. Although Hispanic Sigillata presents a wide range of mold-made and plain vessels, almost all the examples of the ware registered in Italy belong to the former. The time when these vessels were imported corresponds to what was long considered a hiatus in the production of classic decorated Italian Sigillata and still must be seen as a decline.²³ This period saw first an increase in the importation of South Gaulish Sigillata, also largely decorated,²⁴ and then the creation of decorated Late Italian Sigillata.²⁵ Evidently, there was a certain demand for sigillata with mold-made decoration that Hispanic Sigillata was able to fill in part.

Products from the Rioja dominate the supply of Hispanic Sigillata at Ostia. This corresponds to what is to be expected from the literature on the subject, which sees a dichotomy, for reasons that are still debated, between the Rioja and Andújar.²⁶ The products of the Rioja are to be found throughout the Iberian Peninsula, in Aquitania, southern France and North Africa, as well as occasionally in Britain, along the *limes* and at Ostia, while those of Andújar are mostly limited to Baetica. Therefore, the identification of some pieces from Andújar among the material at Ostia is noteworthy.

While other models of distribution can be envisioned for Hispanic Sigillata within its core area, there can be no doubt that Hispanic Sigillata arrived at Ostia as the complement of other cargoes.²⁷ This raises the question of the main merchandise it accompanied. The dominance of the Rioja could suggest that the Hispanic Sigillata found at Ostia accompanied wine from the Tarraconense, while the location of Andújar in inland Baetica calls to mind the great traffic in oil from the Guadalquivir Valley. Given that there were trade routes leading to Ostia from southern Spain with possible stops

all along the Spanish Mediterranean coast, it is, however, probably not necessary to tie the arrival of Hispanic Sigillata at Ostia to the products of a particular part of the Iberian Peninsula. It would have sufficed for Hispanic Sigillata to reach some port with onward trade to Ostia. Thus, sigillata from the Rioja could well have been loaded onto ships that already had a cargo of oil from *Baetica*.

For a ware that is little attested outside the Iberian Peninsula and its immediately neighboring regions, even a limited concentration such as Ostia presents is worthy of note. Hispanic Sigillata appears to represent a real, although minor, presence at Ostia rather than the occasional piece carried in travelers' baggage, which may account for the Hispanic Sigillata in Britain, for instance.²⁸ It has been suggested that a nucleus of Hispanic residents of Ostia wished to procure the ware with which they were familiar in their homeland,²⁹ but that idea supposes more awareness of the differences between sigillatas and a greater ability to distinguish them than probably existed among ancient consumers. Hispanic Sigillata is less attested at Rome than at Ostia undoubtedly because of the barrier constituted by the need to transship it at Ostia. Elba, on the other hand, is located along a possible approach route to Ostia. In the larger picture of the supply of sigillata, Hispanic Sigillata is one of a number of sigillatas that appeared on the market of Ostia and Rome between the mid 1st century, when there was a certain decline in Italian Sigillata (which however remained the main ware), and the mid 2nd century, when African Red-Slip Ware took over completely.³⁰

The attestation at Ancona represents a different case. Although one must be cautious in making hypotheses on the basis of two sherds, the fragments found at Ancona and *Aquincum* indicate the possibility of some importation of Hispanic Sigillata to the Adriatic with further redistribution, undoubtedly by way of Aquileia.

As Hispanic Sigillata reaches a more than sporadic attestation at Ostia in Tyrrhenian central Italy and now has also been shown to penetrate the Adriatic and beyond, scholars working in the regions concerned must bear in mind that unusual pieces of sigillata may be Hispanic. This ware was undoubtedly never important in the supply of sigillata to Italy, but there may prove nevertheless to be more of it there than has been suspected.

archer.martin@alice.it

²³ C. TROSO, Introduzione. In: M. Bergamini (a cura di), *Scoppio IV/1. I materiali. Terra sigillata decorata a rilievo* (Roma 2014) 19–20; G. PUCCI, Presentazione. In: M. Bergamini (a cura di), *Scoppio IV/1. I materiali. Terra sigillata decorata a rilievo* (Roma 2014) 9–10.

²⁴ A. MARTIN, South Gaulish Sigillata in Italy. *Opus* 5, 1985, 125–139; A. MARTIN, Nouvelles observations sur la sigillée sud-gauloise en Italie. *SFECAG Actes Congrès Millau 1994* (Marseille 1994) 115–126.

²⁵ M. MEDRI, Terra sigillata tardo italica decorate. *Stud. Arch.* 60 (Roma 1992) 27–30.

²⁶ See in particular SÁENZ PRECIADO 2014, 156–157, and also ROMERO CARNICERO/RUIZ MONTES 2005, 187.

²⁷ SÁENZ PRECIADO 2014, 153.

²⁸ BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2013, 260; BUSTAMANTE ÁLVAREZ/BIRD 2015, 263.

²⁹ GARABITO GÓMEZ 1978, 604.

³⁰ MARTIN 1992; A. MARTIN, Sigillata and Red-Slip Ware at Ostia. The Supply to a Consumption Center. In: S. Menchelli/M. Pasquinucci (a cura di), *Territorio e produzioni ceramiche. Paesaggi, economia e società in età romana. Atti del Convegno Internazionale*, Pisa 20–22 ottobre 2005. *Instrumenta* 2 (Pisa 2006) 381–384.

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