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**PRO ITU ET PRO REDITU:****THE POTTERY OFFERED IN THE SANCTUARIES ALONG THE MOUNTAIN PASSES**

*The Roman pottery of imperial date found in the sanctuary active from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD at Great Saint Bernard (2473 a.s.l.) is compared to the pottery found in the sanctuary above Col de Tende and to that of Roman Imperial period found in the sanctuary on the Sella of Valoria above Cisa Valico.*

*Most of the pottery, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, concerns common ware ('olle ovoidi', with evident cultural function), while only 37% is fine ware, particularly South Gaulish terra sigillata and thin-walled ware (above all gobelets with water leaves à la barbotine).*

*Of the common ware - a dataset that can also be compared with that of the sanctuary at the Sella of Valoria- 'ovoids ollae' predominate, which were used as containers for offerings, and are often found in votive pits. In the sanctuary at Sella of Valoria the terra sigillata is absent, while the black gloss ware is represented by rare and minute fragments, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The element that alloys the sanctuaries is the fact that there are few amphorae (Lamboglia 2), so these were not an object of devotion but are indicators of the passage of commercial loads.*

Votive pottery – mountain passes – *iactatio* – ovoid *ollae* – thin-walled ware

The Romans, for military, political and commercial purposes, began the construction of a large road network, which involved necessarily, especially starting from 225 BC, the alpine passes.

After the conquest, the Romans proceeded to build the roads, such as the *Via Postumia*, Roman consular road, which was built only in 148 BC by the Roman consul *Postumius Albinus* in the territories of Gallia Cisalpina for predominantly military purposes, followed by the *Via Domitia* designed by the proconsul *Gnaeus Domitius Enobarbus*, first governor of Gallia Narbonensis between 121 BC and 117 BC. The latter was also built for military purposes in order to reach the Roman colonies of southern Gaul more easily.

For the Romans who crossed the passes, the dangers were notable especially the fear of being attacked by brigands, and along the streets there were often sanctuaries as in the *Regio Aemilia* where a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of Minerva was recently found in Montegibbio near Sassuolo (Modena) along the *Via Aemilia*.<sup>1</sup> Also in Valcamonica in 1996 a sanctuary was discovered in Borno consisting of a large rectangular room facing south towards the valley, with a pavement of *cocciopesto* and fresco-painted walls, qualified in its function by votive epigraphs dedicated to Minerva found in the area. The place of worship, which stood on a terrace along the coast (900 a.s.l.), in a sector rich in natural springs, was along the axis that connected the valley floor of Cividate to the Val of Scalve. The Roman building replicated the functions of an older Camuno cult complex, built along the main routes of penetration into the southern plain and from the outpost of Cividate Camuno towards the Alpine passes and connecting tracks with the adjacent valleys (Rossi 2004: 37-47, particularly 40, 41 and fig. 7).

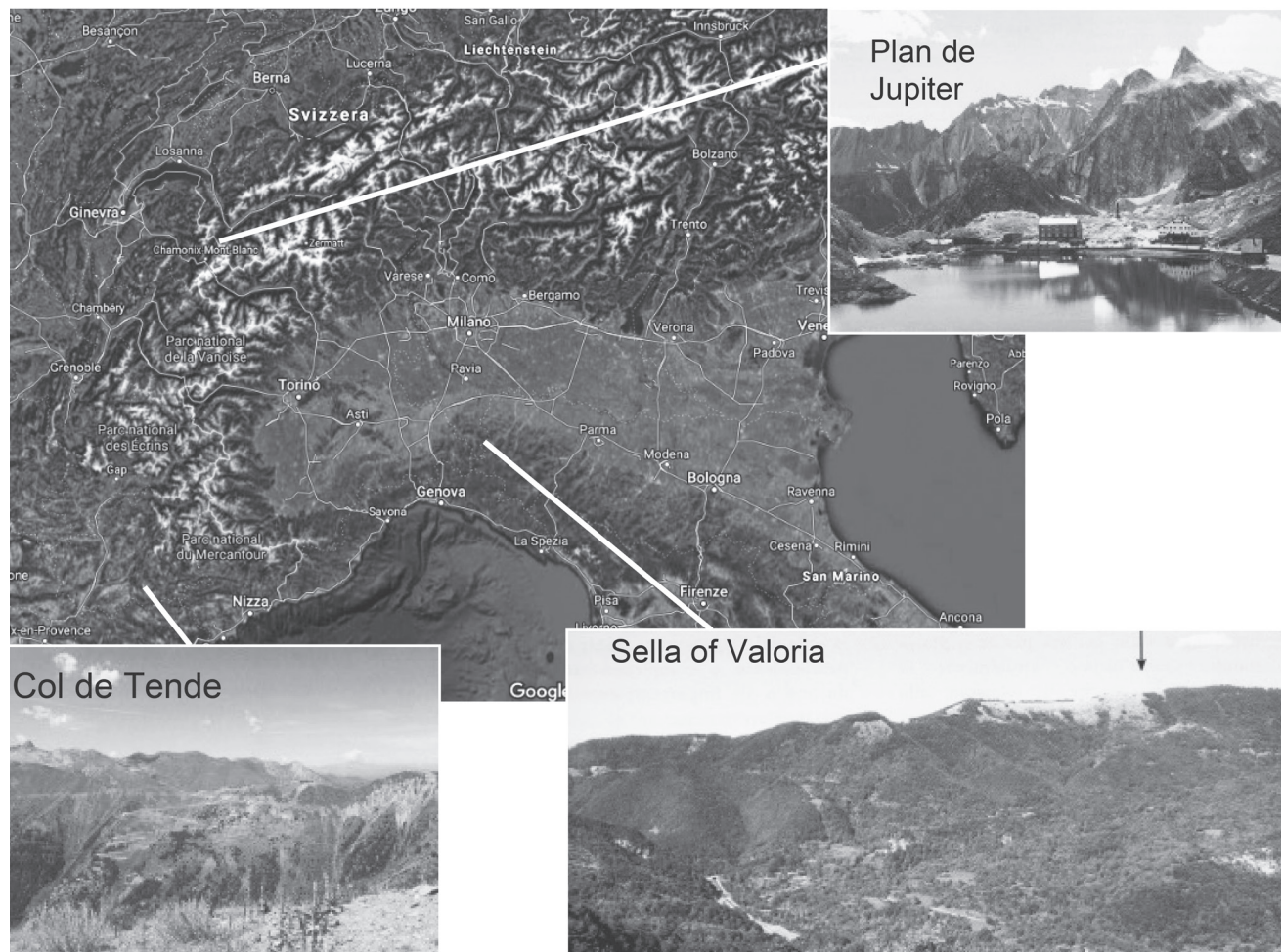
Finally, the *Via Valeriana*, an ancient route that ran through the entire Camonica Valley, from Pisagne to the north of Lake Iseo, up to Edolo, where it bifurcated, to continue on one side to the Aprica, on the other up to the Tonale Pass, was probably built by proconsul *Gaius Publius Licinius Valerius* who, being in AD 253 in Rezia, an ancient region that embraced parts of Switzerland, Austria, Trentino Alto Adige and Lombardia, needed a route that would allow a quick shift from Italy to the basins of the Rhine and the Danube to gather the Roman troops.

Another sanctuary located at an Alpine pass is in Cadore in the locality of Lagole di Calalzo (Belluno), where a ex-voto in bronze representing a warrior has been found (Fogolari e Gambacurta 2001).

The coins abundantly found at the three sites examined in this contribution (Plan de Jupiter, Col de Tende and Sella of Valoria – **fig. 1, 1**) give us the picture of the people and the trades that since ancient times faced the passage through the Alps and the Apennines.

In the Roman period, in the resting place after the ascent to the Great Saint Bernard Pass, the god of the mountain peaks Penn, called *Iuppiter Poeninus*, was venerated by the Romans: to the god Penn travelers offered coins at the foot of a sacred cliff, during the stop in the crossing of the *Via Alpina Poenina* (an important road of communication between northern Europe and the Mediterranean area), in order to propitiate the journey (Bosio 1992; Framarin, Tonelli e Viazzo 2006). According to Pliny the Elder the ancient name of the Hill of *Summus Poeninus* (a tradition already considered erroneous by Titus Livius) back to the brilliant passage of Hannibal (*Poenus*) through the Alps (218 BC). On the ex-voto, bronze *tabula ansata* tablets, dedicated to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus*, to whom in his hypostasis *Poeninus* interprets the original *numen* of the mountain, see F. Cenerini (1992: 91-107).

<sup>1</sup> Mostra Sassuolo Galleria Paggeriarte, Piazzale della Rosa, 18 settembre-18 ottobre 2015.



**Fig. 1.** Location of the three sites examined (Google maps).



**Fig. 2.** Colle of St. Bernard. Bronze votive tablet (11.8 cm), votive offer of Lucius Licinius Se[-]rus, knight of the Fourth Macedonian legion who, with other troops, crossed the hill between March-April of AD 69 (after Framarin 2006).



**Fig. 3.** The ancient road cut into the rock, at the beginning of the street on the Plan de Jupiter, from the west, from where the wagons passed with goods (Photo P. Puppo).

Titus Livius, History of Rome, Book XXI, 38: *Taurini Galli proxima gens erat in Italiam degresso. Id cum inter omnes constet, eo magis miror ambigi, quam Alpes transierit, et volgo credere Poenino – atque inde nomen ei iugo Alpium inditum – transgressum, Coelum per Cremonis iugum dicere transisse; qui ambo saltus eum non in Taurinos sed per Salassos Montanos*

*ad Libuos Gallos deduxissent. Nec veri simile est ea tum ad Galliam patuisse itinera; utique quae ad Poeninum ferunt obsaepta gentibus Semigermanis fuissent. Neque hercule montibus his, si quem forte id movet, ab transitu Poenorum ullo Seduni Veragri, incolae iugi eius, nomen norint inditum, sed ab eo quem in summo sacratum vertice Poeninum montani appellant.*





Fig. 4. Col de Tende, excavations 2010-2012 (after Sandrone and Strangi 2013).

“The Taurine Gauls were the first people encountered on descending into Italy. Since all are agreed on this point, I am the more astonished at the difference of opinion in regard to his route over the Alps, and that it should be commonly held that he crossed by the Poenine Pass (the Great St. Bernard) and that from this circumstance that ridge of the Alps derived its name – and that *Coelius* should state that he crossed by the ridge of Cremo (the Little St. Bernard); for both these passes would have brought him down, not amongst the Taurini but through the Salassi Montani to the Libuan Gauls. Neither is it probable that these routes to Gaul were open at that time; those leading to the Poenine Pass, at any rate, would have been blocked by tribes of half-German stock. Nor for that matter – if anyone happens to consider this point of consequence – do the Seduni Veragri, who inhabit those mountains, know of their having been named from any passage of the Phoenicians (or *Poeni*) but from that deity whose sanctuary is established on their very summit and whom the mountaineers call *Poeninus*.”

Probably from the Julio-Claudian era, namely from the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, as documented by the stamps on the fragments of tiles found in the excavations, in this place today called Plan de Jupiter (or Plan de Joux), in front of the sacred cliff was erected a small votive temple dedicated to *Iuppiter Poeninus*.

In the same period two *mansiones* were probably built, where travelers could refresh, sleep, iron horses and engrave votive plates to hang on the temple walls as an offering to the *Summus Poeninus* (fig. 2).

Probably the emperor Claudius (AD 41-54), who was aiming to conquer Britain, transformed the path that crossed the hill into an easy and practicable road for carts, almost completely carved into the rock (fig. 3).

At the Col de Tende between 2010 and 2012 (fig. 4) excavations have brought to light a structure referable to as an indigenous sanctuary, a geographical reference point not only for a north-south axis but perhaps also east-west, along the Roja river at the border of *Regio IX Augustea*. The site had therefore, as those examined here, a cult value as place of a sanctuary but it was also a stop for those who passed the hill

and could therefore deposit a modest offering to thank the gods for travel made smoothly.

The *iactatio*, namely the payment of a symbolic tribute with silver offerings, is undoubtedly one of the best known propitiatory rites: ritual meals, offers of milk, olive oil and *favus* attested in the sanctuary on the hill on the Tende testify the existence of a cult to a god, certainly already by the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Not having found certain elements (unlike the sites of Plan de Jupiter and Sella of Valoria, as we shall see later) it is assumed that the propitiatory rites were dedicated to the god *Terminus*, *id est* the god of the borders. *Siculus Flaccus* in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD maintains that it in use to consecrate to the god *Terminus* honey and wine were used in specially constructed pits in which there were also remains of coal and ashes (Sumera et al. 2013: 99-100).

Sumera et al. (2013) thought that the sanctuary could also be dedicated to Mars, the god venerated in the Cisalpine not only as a god of war, but also of pastoralism and afferent to the agricultural sphere. Traces of wax have been found, which – as evidenced by Varro (*De Re Rustica* 3, 16, 5) – lay on the altars. Even the milk, employed in the same way, constituted a recurring offering for the chthonic divinities like *Terminus*. Honey and dairy products refer both to the typical economy of the pastoral peoples who lived near the hill and to the cultic practices of the travelers who were passing through the Pass. For the identification of the road layout, see P. Puppo (2018: 220-240).

The discovery of a spearhead in a tank inside a votive pit reinforces the fact that it is a sacred place. In fact, offerings of weapons are very rare in the sanctuaries of the south-east of Gaul.

The silver offerings (*stipes*) gradually make their appearance in the indigenous shrine of Tende during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, after a period of circulation that was quite long considering the strong signs of wear of the objects. Deposits continue until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The modest nature of the money offerings shows that the completed gesture (the money supply) had a symbolic value, not a pecuniary one.

The transport of goods took place on the back of a mule, as also documented by the funerary monument of Igel (near Trier) – fig. 5 – dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, depicting a mountain

pass, with a city at both starting points and a temple on the top, and two conductors of beasts regularly loaded on the back with bales of goods, one that goes up and one that goes down.

As for the site of Sella di Valoria (1224 a.s.l), 2 km east of Cisa (1041 a.s.l), on the maximum Apennine ridge between Parma and Lunigiana, the excavation highlighted a sacred area characterized by a set of small votive pits (exactly as in the case of the Col de Tende) containing the money to be offered to the god *pro itu et reditu*, thus gratifying the successful outcome of the return journey. Some of these pits (the pits 1 and 2) have pole holes on the bottom: probably two poles were placed to support an *aedicula* containing images of the gods venerated by those who passed; one of these could be Hercules, as evidenced by a small bronze find, dated to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. (**fig. 6**). Hercules, as it is known, has a rather wide sphere of influence: protector of traders and craftsmen, of breeding and transhumance, and later of the armies. The Hercules promachos with *leonté* often recurs in the inherent sites of mountain passes: a specimen was found, as an ex-voto, in the sanctuary of the Great St. Bernard (Plan de Jupiter). As *Diodorus Siculus* (IV, 19.3-4 and IV, 22.2) attests, Hercules is a traveler who, for the greater profit of man, discovers, opens and builds roads, in order to better spread the exercise of civil life, and also ensures the safety of mountain passes, while at the same time defeating a hostile nature and the phenomenon of brigandage aimed at killing men and looting animals during their passage in the period of transhumance.

The discovery of the bronze votive hand (**fig. 7**), usually referable to the Thracian god *Sabatius*, linked to the military world and assimilated to Jupiter, has led to the hypothesis of the existence of a cult to Jupiter, then of a *locus sacer in Alpe Pennino* (Cavaliere 2017: 69-80).

The pottery found at Plan de Jupiter includes several thousand fragments relating mainly to common ware, while the proportion of fine ware is smaller (Framarin, S. Galloro and C. Joris 2007: 23-36).

The Italic *terra sigillata* counts to about twenty fragments including plates Consp. 18.2 dated between 10 BC and AD 30 and a cup of Consp. 34 produced between AD 40 and the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

The North Italic *terra sigillata* is represented by 84 fragments of at least thirty vases, including plates Consp. 14, Consp. 19.3, Consp. 20, a cup of Consp. 22 dated between the Augustan age and the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The forms of the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD are represented by a series of plates and cups (Consp. 3, Consp. 32, Consp. 34 or 36) – **fig. 8** –, shapes that are equally attested in the *terra sigillata* of Helvetic and Gaulish production. The forms of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD are less attested, such as a plate of Consp. 47 and a cup of Consp. 43.

As regards the South Gaulish *terra sigillata*, the largest percentage is attributable to the productions of Southeast Gaul with a total of 193 fragments for 44 individuals. The Haltern cup 14, dated between 15 BC and 30 AD, is the oldest testimony (GBSR n° 21). The other vessels belong to the end of Tiberius' reign (plates Dragendorff 15/17 and Dragendorff 18 or at the latest until the reign of Vespasian (bowls Dragendorff 35 and service D).

Less is the quantity of the *terra sigillata* produced in Central Gaul (Lezoux) attested only by 25 fragments for a total of 9 individuals, and therefore can be considered marginal in the context of the Great St. Bernard (Gabucci 2018): a plate Walters 79/80, a cup of Dragendorff 38 and a *gobelet* Dèchelette 72 are the most significant forms of this production. Also decorated bowls of Dragendorff 37 have been found in the excavations of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Crogiez-Pétrequin 2006: 131-141).

As regards the thin-walled ware, there are productions with grey fabric and productions with beige fabric and brown engobe in the case of the Lyonese productions, and brown red in the case of the Iberian ones. There are cups Marabini XII (Ricci 1/159), cups Ricci 1/364, Ricci 2/231, Ricci 2/408, Ricci 2/232, beakers Marabini LIV Ricci 2/248, Marabini LIV (Ricci 2/347) Marabini LXI LXII LXVI, for the Lyon production beakers Grataloup XXV, Grataloup XXVII-XXX, Grataloup XXXIII b, Mayet XXXVII.

Among the common pottery (about 452 fragments), the jugs are poorly represented (1,7%), in favor of bowls, cups and goblets. Also in the kitchen ware the *ollae* are well represented by the pots with tripod foot.

At the sanctuary excavated on the Col de Tende, the common ware is more abundant, recording 62% of the total (1497 fragments found) against 38% for fine pottery. The amphorae are practically absent, except for an handle in red fabric with mica and black inclusions of Campanian origin.

The non-turned common pottery is represented by the characteristic productions of internal Liguria during the end of the Iron Age. These are vessels for storing food with thick walls, in particular situliform flat-bottomed urns; the decorations are made on the shoulder with engravings (wolf's teeth, simple or double zig-zag) attributable to phase III A (475-375 BC) and III C (250-125 BC). Most of the fragments date to the most recent period (**fig. 9**).

Among the fine red pottery there are small ovoid beakers, flat-bottomed, frequent regional productions from between the Ligurian coast and the Po plain, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, which have comparisons with the ovoid *ollae* presented in the votive deposit of Caprauna (Cuneo, Italy) (Gandolfi e Gervasini 1983: 92-130). Some of these vases were to be used for offerings to the god of the sanctuary (**fig. 10**). The thin-walled wares are represented by a few fragments of beakers with a 'barbotine' decoration and with water leaves. The *terra sigillata* includes mainly bowls Dragendorff 37 and Dragendorff 29 of South-Gaulish production (Sumera et al. 2013: 103) (**fig. 11**).

Regarding the pottery emerging from the excavation of the Sella di Valoria, the fragments of the Roman period are quite limited: three *ollae* with almond rim (inv. R186, R452, R449), datable to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, for the conservation of food (Marchi 2012: 92-101); an olpe with flat bottom (inv. R527); two fragments of beaker (inv. R348); a little olla with flat bottom (inv. R120), - **fig. 12** - a flat bottom of olla (inv. R323), an olla with expanded short-bodied rim and globular body (inv. R339), a rim of olla in kitchen ware (for cooking of food, inv. R552), a rim and three fragments of bowl in kitchen ware (inv. R631, R634), six frag. of rounded rim of bowl (inv. R579, R606, R611); a bottom of cup with ring base





Fig. 5. Funerary monument of Igel (near Trier) (after Mollo Mezzana 1995).



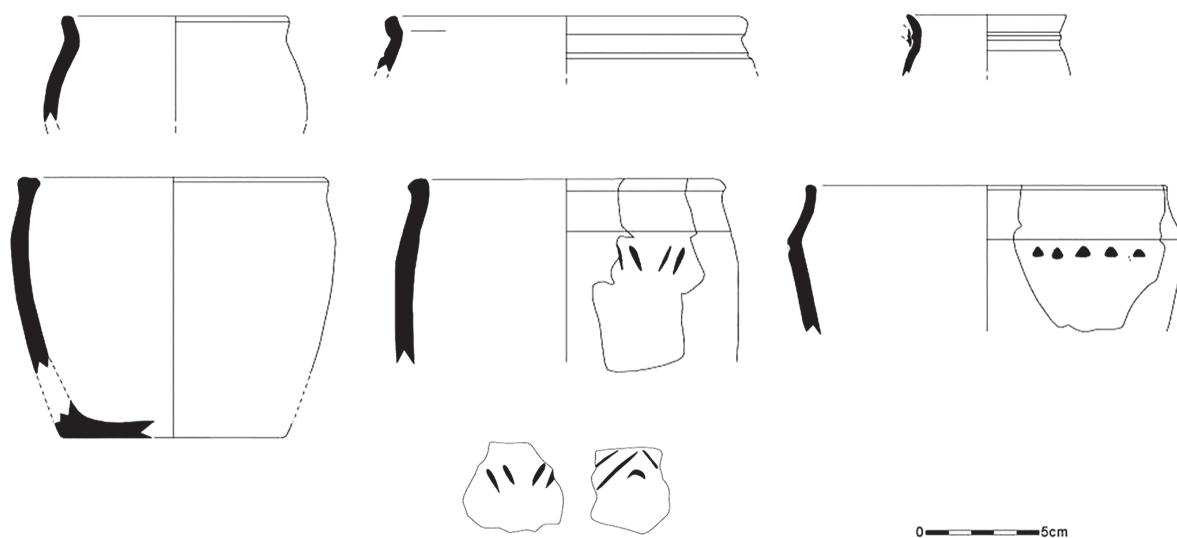
Fig. 6. Sella of Valoria. Statuette of Hercules (7,1 cm high; 4,6 cm width) (after Ghidetti 2017).



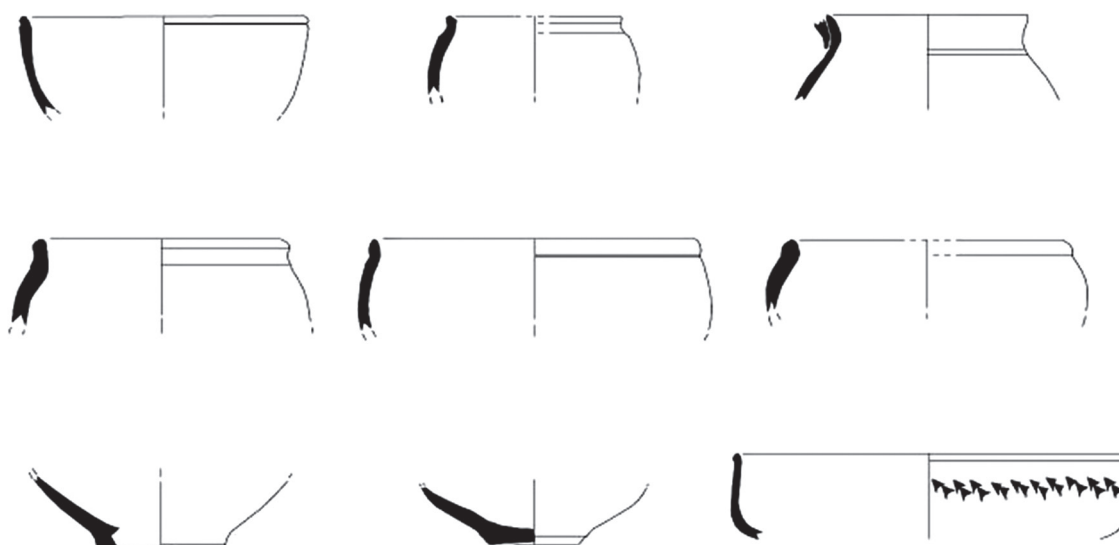
Fig. 7. Sella of Valoria. Votive hand (4,4 cm high) (after Ghidetti 2017).



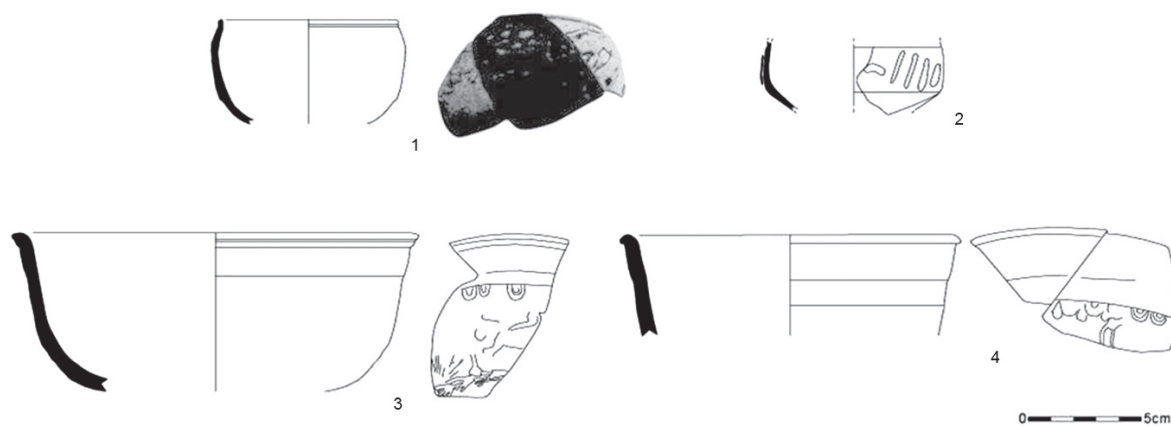
Fig. 8. Plan de Jupiter, fine ware : 1) Conspectus 34 in Nord-Italic TS; 2) Bowl Drag. 22 imitation *terra sigillata* (Helvetic production with grey surface); 3) Bowl Drag. 22 *terra sigillata* imitation (Helvetic production with red surface); 4) Bowl Drag. 30 South Gaulish *terra sigillata*; 5-6) Saint Grand Bernard Museum: decorated Drag. 37 bowls of South Gaulish *terra sigillata* (scale 1:2, except n. 4 with no scale).



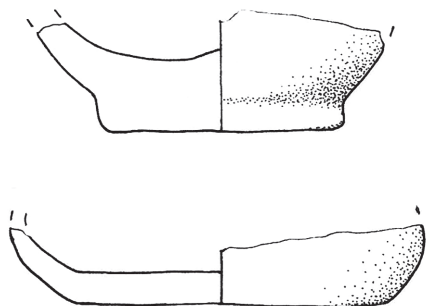
**Fig. 9.** Col de Tende, ovoids *ollae* in common ware (after Sumera et al. 2013).



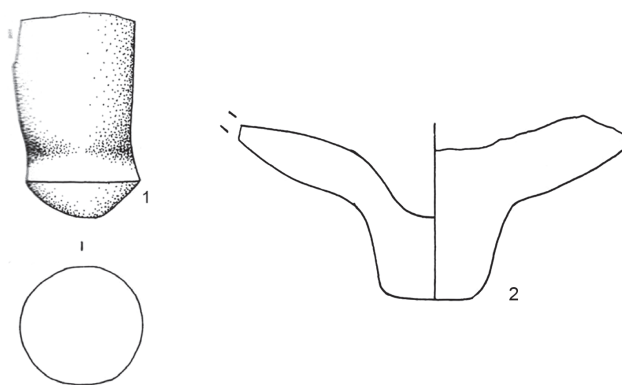
**Fig. 10.** Col de Tende, ovoids *ollae* in common ware (after Sumera et al. 2013).



**Fig. 11.** Col de Tende, thin walled ware and terra sigillata (after Sumera et al. 2013).



**Fig. 12.** Sella of Valoria: common ware (after Ghidetti 2017).



**Fig. 13.** a) bottom of amphora (after Ghidetti 2017);  
b) bottom of oil amphora (after Ghidetti 2017).

(inv. R587, diam. 6,6 cm); a base of a cup with ring foot (inv. R644, diam. 4,5 cm), a handle of jar decorated with oblique grooves on the edge (inv. R482, cm 7,5x3); a fragment of a mortar (inv. R528, 6,3x4,2x1,8 cm).

The black gloss ware is represented by rare and minute fragments: of Iron Age date a fragment of black gloss ware (inv. R 551), part of a closed form generically ascribable to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, perhaps an Etruscan-Volterra production, providing interesting testimony of the use of the pass in this period; the rim of a plate Morel 2225, on the other hand, is of Republican date (inv. R654).

*Terra sigillata* as well as thin-walled pottery are completely absent.

There are rare fragments of amphorae, including a pointed bottom (inv. R 144) attributable to an amphora Lamboglia 2A, datable to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. (**fig. 13a**), the bottom of an oil amphora (inv. R 257, width 6,7 cm) (**fig. 13b**), an amphora lid cut from the wall (inv. R85, diameter 6.3 cm).

The vascular common pottery, well attested in the late Iron Age, lasted until the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC, a period which can be attributed to several fragments found, including a fragment of a vessel for offerings (inv. R443), inserted in a small votive pit together with a coin (inv. R208), a fractional axis of the late-republican, and a handle of a jug with circular section (inv. R305).

Regarding lamps, two relevant fragments of the base of a lamp (inv. R106), and a fragment of a reservoir (inv. R111) (Ghiretti 2017: 113-116).

The amount of coins found at the three sites examined (476 at Col de Tende, 496 at Plan de Jupiter, 301 at Sella of Valoria) (Barone 2000: 72-76) provides in percentage terms a fairly equal value, showing that the intrinsic and sacred meaning of the pass and the cult offerings to a patron deity of the pass by travelers, according to the Roman formula *pro itu et pro reditu*, were similar and fundamental.

Also, the reference to divine cults (to Jupiter, to Hercules, to Mercury) through the finding of votive bronzes is similar.

If we consider instead the pottery, the low percentage present in the Sella of Valoria is evident.

How to explain this datum? In the first case it is an Apennine pass, easier to cross than the other two sites (Great St. Bernard and the Col de Tende), so it did not require that their travelers would stop for a long period of time waiting for a meteorological improvement in order to continue the journey, as is the case both of Plan de Jupiter (m 2473 a.s.l) and of Col de Tende (m 1904 a.s.l), which are more difficult passes to cross and subject to snow cover for 6 months in the year. In these impervious places there had to be shelter facilities (*hospitalia*) which also included the use of pottery greater than the necessities of the Passo of Sella of Valoria.

The element that links the three sanctuaries is the fact that there are few amphorae (above all Lamboglia 2), so these were not an object of devotion but are indicators of the passage of commercial loads.

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