

Luca Arioli

## AFRICAN RED SLIP WARE IN TARQUINIA AND IN THE *AGER TARQUINIENSIS* IN LATE ANTIQUITY

*Tarquinia was among the largest cities of South Etruria. Excavations by the University of Verona in the so-called domus “of the Mithraeum” and in the forum are providing the first data on the city in Roman and Late antique times, as well as on its pottery. This paper aims at analysing the consumption of African Red Slip Ware in the city and its territory by providing a preliminary presentation of the finds from the domus. These data are compared with a survey of published ARS finds from the sites of the ager Tarquiniensis to evaluate their potential for the reconstruction of local consumption and distribution patterns during Late Antiquity and their significance for the evaluation of the continuity of settlement in the area. ARS supply continues during the 5th century and the central decades of the 6th but decreases after the Gothic War and ceases after the Lombard conquest.*

Italy – South Etruria – Tarquinia – African Red Slip Ware – Trade networks

### 1. Introduction

Tarquinia (Italy, Viterbo) was by far the richest Etruscan city. In Roman times, it was one of the largest cities of South Etruria, but not much is known of its Imperial or Late Antique stages. This paper presents the finds of African Red Slip Ware (ARS) from Tarquinia, analyses them in relation to the published ARS finds from its *ager* and discusses their relevance for the understanding of the economic life of the city and its territory. Firstly, a short historical and archaeological background for the city of Tarquinia is provided. Secondly, the excavation context of the so-called domus “of the Mithraeum” is presented together with its ARS finds and an attempt to define a trend of ARS consumption in the site. Then, after a survey of the evidence from the *ager Tarquiniensis*, the ARS consumption patterns of the city and its *ager* during Late Antiquity are preliminarily defined and compared with general trends and other regional case-studies. This analysis will provide the first insight into the economy of the area which is still unexplored despite its historical relevance.

### 2. Tarquinia: an Etruscan city in Roman times

In Etruscan times, Tarquinia was the most relevant among the cities which contended with Rome during its early history, and two of Rome’s kings were also Tarquinian. After its conquest in Republican times, Tarquinia remained one of the largest cities in South Etruria. Little is known of the Imperial and Late Antique periods. For this reason, Tarquinia has never been properly considered in archaeological studies on Roman South Etruria and its relevance has never been explored. In the 5th century AD, the city had a bishop attending

to some councils but, during the 6th century AD, the city seems to have lost its bishopric seat to Tuscania, suggesting a possible decline. However, an inscription of 503-4 AD recording the restoration of a bath testifies the vitality of the city and the continuity of civic life and evergetism into the 6th century AD. It is reputed that Tarquinia lost its status of *civitas* after the Lombard conquest, but it continued being inhabited until the 13th century, when its last settlement was destroyed (Casocavallo and Maggiore 2018: 133-135). The ancient city is located on a plateau near to the modern settlement and covers an area of circa 140 ha (**fig. 1**). Previous and ongoing archaeological investigations focused on the Etruscan or Medieval periods, leaving the Roman and Late Antique phases unexplored. Since 2016, the University of Verona has been carrying out the first research project aimed at investigating Roman Tarquinia (Mastrocinque 2020). Five campaigns have explored the large complex known as the so-called domus “of the Mithraeum” and a large-scale gradiometric survey, currently close to its completion, started in the years 2019-2020 to fully understand the urban planning of the city. In 2021, a new excavation area was opened in the forum, firstly discovered through the analysis of data from the survey. The excavations proved that the Roman forum had been built in the Augustan period over an area previously occupied by private houses. In 2022, the excavation area was further expanded, leading to the discovery of a monumental fountain, a paved road and part of the porch. These contexts provide the first relevant information for Imperial and Late Antique Tarquinia and finally allow to compare the city to the better-known neighbouring centres. It is now possible to ascertain that, despite the scarcity of sources and standing monumental evidence, Tarquinia was a rich Roman city, which remained quite prosperous into Late Antiquity.

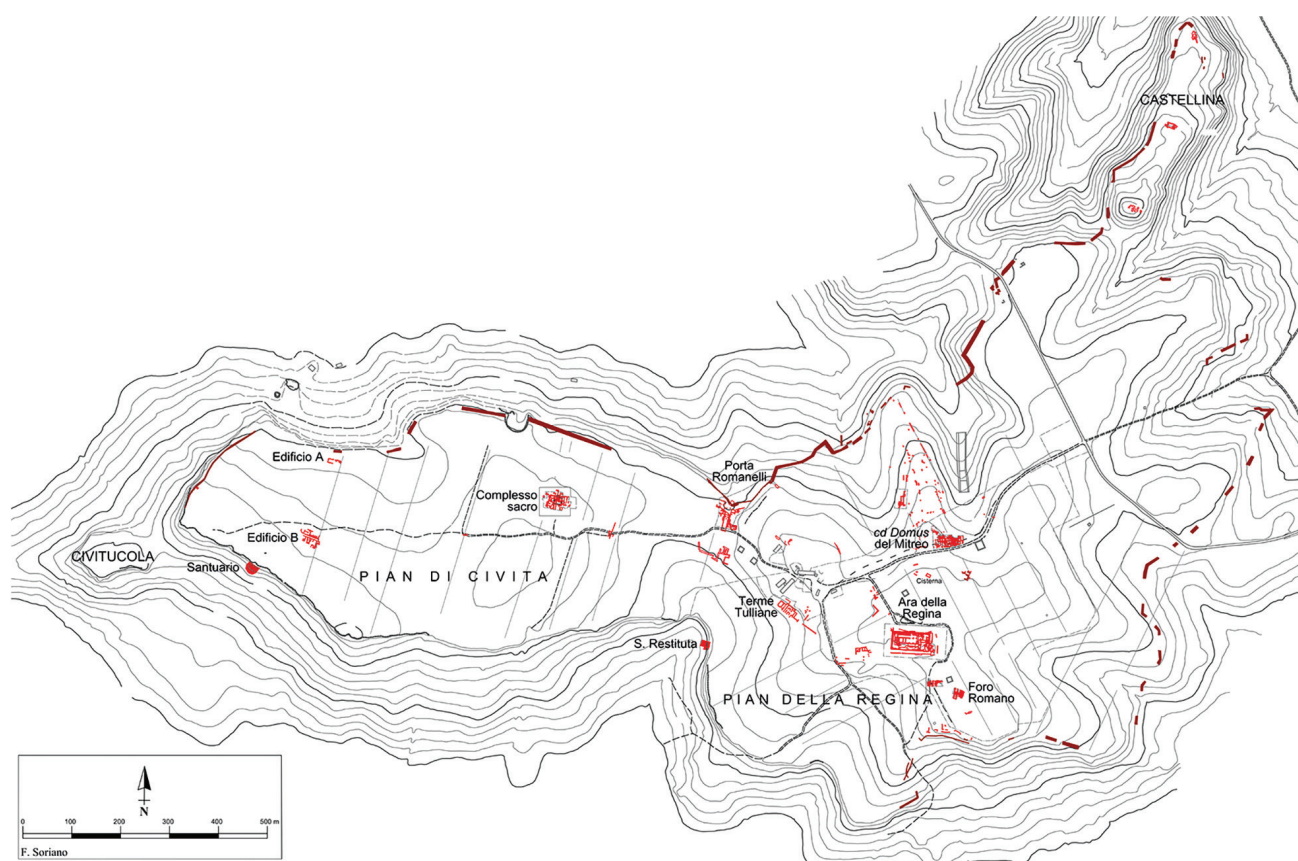


Fig. 1. Map of Tarquinia with the city walls and the main monuments and excavation areas (elaboration by F. Soriano).

### 3. Excavations in the so-called domus “of the Mithraeum”

The so-called domus “of the Mithraeum” lies in the centre of Tarquinia on a sloping area not far from the “Ara della Regina” temple, the most prominent monument in the city. The archaeological exploration of the complex began after the recovery of a looted statue of Mithra, allegedly originating from there. Despite the Mithra-related name, no actual evidence of Mithraic cult has yet been found. The so-called domus is a large residential complex extending over 3.500 sqm and articulating over seven terraces and more than forty rooms, whose limits and orientation have not yet been fully identified. In every terrace both functional (e.g., courtyards with *dolia*) and representative (e.g., *triclinium* and *lararium*) rooms were found (fig. 2). Many water-related infrastructures were also found, notably six well-cisterns for rain catchment, a monumental fountain and some minor water pipes made of lead and tile. The stratigraphic sequence ranges from Etruscan times up to the late 6th/early 7th century AD. The area was monumentalised in early Imperial times as a large complex, but it also retained many of its earlier features. The data from the ARS-bearing part of the sequence will be summarized. By the late 1st century AD the domus was fully monumentalised (Period IV, Phase 2). Between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, minor transformations occurred, and some areas were destined to productive activities (Period V). During the Late Antique period, a traumatic event, most

likely an earthquake hit the area and provoked the collapse or deformation of many floors and cisterns. Subsequently, by the early 5th, most of the spaces were filled by heavy dumps to raise the walking levels (Period VI, Phase 1) and new floors, usually made of broken tiles, were put in place and used between the mid-5th and mid-6th century AD (Period VI, Phase 2) before the area was abandoned by the late 6th/early 7th century AD (Period VI, Phase 3). Between the 5th and 6th century AD, a large underground well-cistern (Cistern H) was used as a garbage dump by the community living in the domus and provided a substantial ceramic assemblage testifying the vitality of the site. Its use ceased in the mid-to late 6th century AD and the entrance of the cistern was closed by a stone, which was in turn covered by a deposit dating to the late 6th–early 7th century AD. No later evidence was found, as the higher layers were destroyed by ploughing in the past decades. The exact function of the complex is yet to be defined, but it is possible that, besides having a residential purpose, this area may have also been used for productive or commercial activities during the Imperial period (Soriano 2020).

### 4. ARS from the domus “of the Mithraeum” and ARS consumption in Tarquinia

ARS was by far one of the most diffused fine wares in the Roman world, and its fortune has been explained with its role of accompanying product travelling together with other



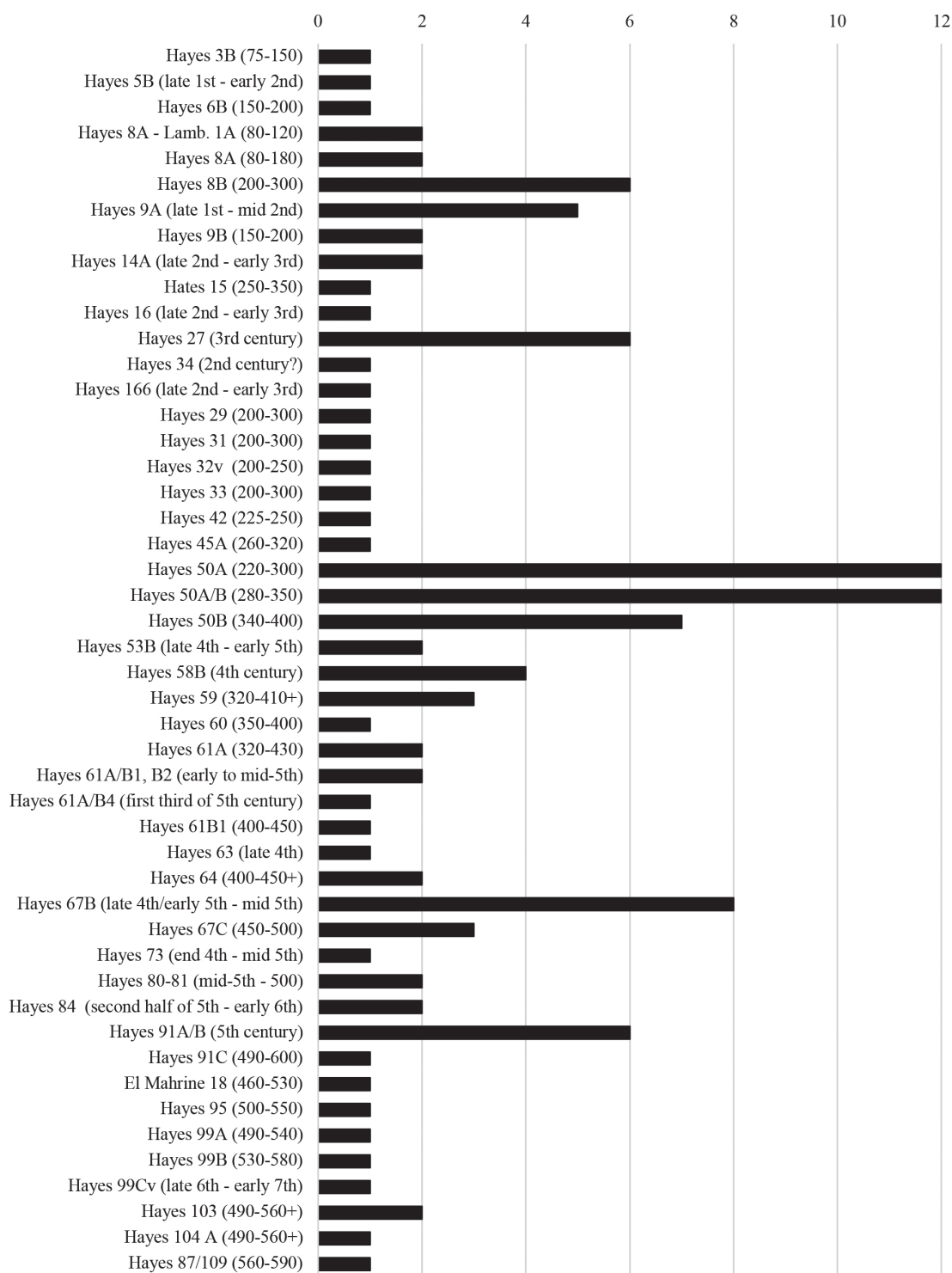
**Fig. 2.** Plan of the so-called domus “of the Mithraeum” (elaboration by F. Soriano).

African products. Earlier studies assumed that in Imperial times African tableware travelled with oil amphorae, whilst more recent research has pointed out that the differences in their distribution patterns suggest that ARS accompanied grain rather than oil. Some shifts in ARS distribution have been observed during Late Antiquity. Since the early 5th century, a drop in ARS supplies has been observed throughout the Mediterranean since the early 5th century, followed by a revival in the 6th: both shifts are not directly related to the arrival of the Vandals and to the subsequent reconquest of the province, and later distribution patterns do not reflect the border of the Byzantine provinces, thus suggesting that ARS was not exclusively accompanying grain supplies (Bonifay 2018: 335-338). According to recent studies focusing on the definition of the trade routes of African pottery, Rome and Thyrrhenian Italy were reached by both cargoes coming directly from Africa and headed to Rome itself as well as by heterogeneous cargoes carrying both Spanish and African products (Bonifay and Tchernia 2012; Bonifay 2018: 338-341). Tarquinia was a major city of South Etruria and, although it was not directly facing the sea, it was close to the coast and served by the port of *Graviscae*, which in turn was close to the main ports of central Italy serving Rome and along the sea route between Rome and Arles. When coming to the access to seaborne trade, we may note that Tarquinia had a quite favourable position. Aside from benefitting from

the re-distribution of cargoes directed to Rome, the city could be reached by ships coming from Spain or Gaul, as well as by homogeneous cargoes directly coming from Africa. The assemblage of the Trincere wreck, just off the Tarquinian coast, was only partly explored but, according to published data, is composed almost entirely of African products, mostly amphorae and cooking wares dating to the 3rd century AD and possibly coming from Salakta (Pontacolone and Incitti 1991; Bonifay and Tchernia 2012: tab. 16.2). In this frame, ARS imports from Tarquinia offer one of the first glimpses of the consumption of African goods in a relevant consumption centre north of Rome and Ostia, thus providing a relevant case-study for central Italy. The 2016-2018 campaigns in the domus provided 635 sherds and further 111 sherds are from the assemblage of Cistern H (Zentilini 2020: 102-105 provided a preliminary presentation of selected finds from the earlier campaigns). The 2021-22 campaigns provided some further hundreds of sherds, mostly from the domus, whose study is still ongoing, and which are not considered here. Rather than anticipating in full the typological analysis which will be provided in the forthcoming pottery reports (the typological references and chronologies used in the text and charts are based on Hayes 1972; Hayes 1980; Atlante I; Bonifay 2004; Bonifay 2016), this paper will focus on the potential of ARS for the definition of local consumption trends and distribution patterns. The distribution of these finds in

the stratigraphic sequence is rather uneven as they are found mainly in the Late Antique dumps or redeposited in later layers, plus 32 sherds from trenches or clearings. The earliest occurrence of ARS is in Period IV, Phase 2. The finds (**fig. 3**) consist of three sherds of fabric A, and the sole identifiable is an early Hayes 8A – Lamb. 1A bowl, dating to the late 1st – early 2nd century AD (Bonifay 2016: 555, n. 91; **fig. 4,4**). Finds of Period V amount to 19 total sherds, and the sole

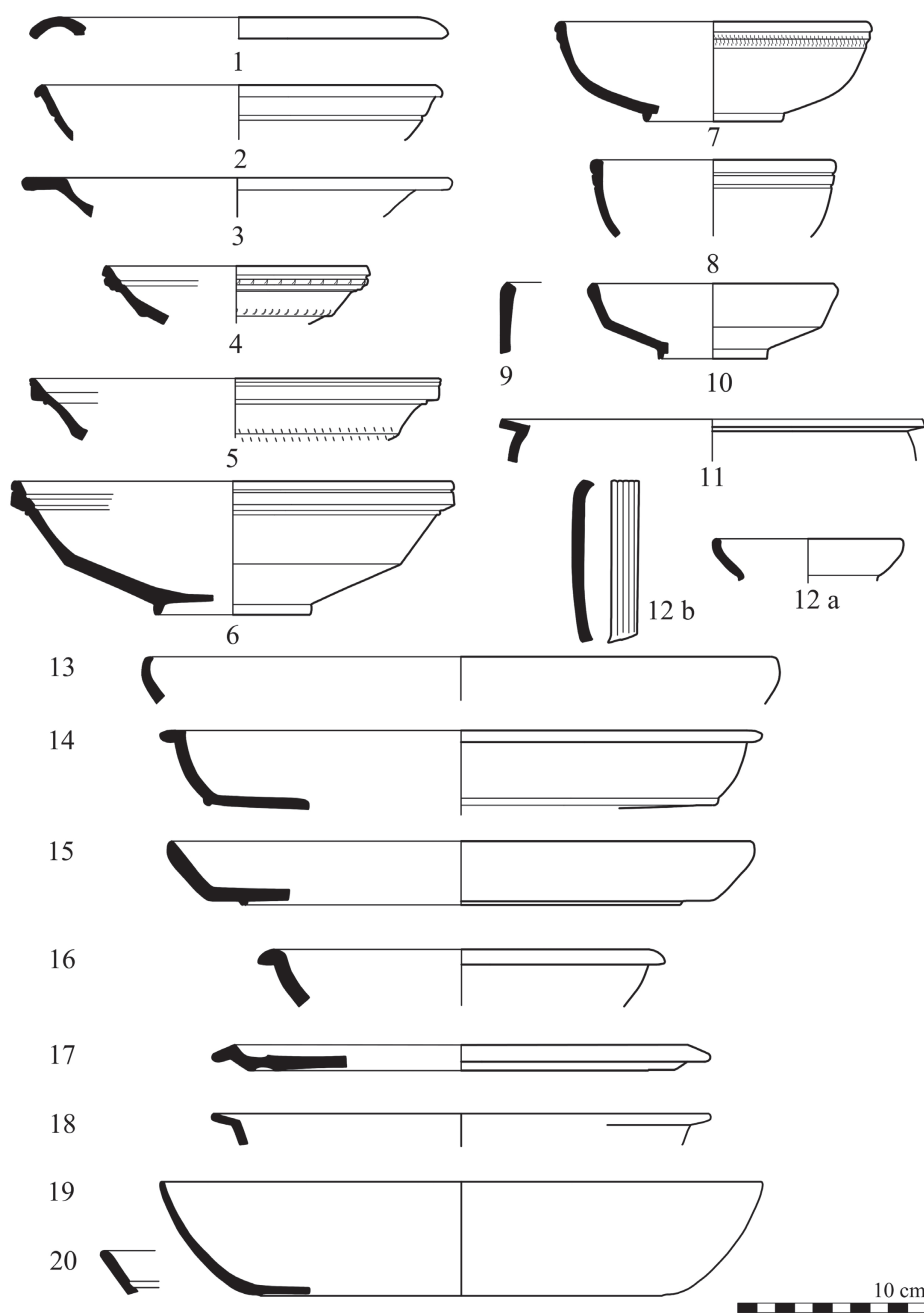
diagnostic specimens are some Hayes 8A (Bonifay 2016: 555, 93) and 9B (Hayes 1972: 35-36) bowls together with the dishes Hayes 27 (Bonifay 2004: 159) and 50A (Bonifay 2016: 556, n. 104). They come from the layers related to different activities taking place between the late 2nd and 3rd centuries. Most of the domus finds come from the dumps used to raise the floors in Late Antiquity and from later occupation of the area. They provided 255 sherds of ARS of fabric A, A/D, C



**Fig. 3.** ARS forms present in the domus, including finds from Cistern H.

and D dating between the late 1st and the 4th century AD. Some early forms as Hayes 3B (Bonifay 2004: 156; **fig. 4,1**), Hayes 5 (Hayes 1972: 26-29; **fig. 4,2**) and Hayes 6 (Hayes 1972: 29-31; **fig. 4,3**) count a specimen each, whilst later types usually have a much higher count. Forms Hayes 8A (**fig. 4,5**) and 8B (Bonifay 2004: 156; **fig. 4,6**), Hayes 9A (**fig. 4,7**) and 9B (**fig. 4,8**), Hayes 14 (Bonifay 2004: 157-159), Hayes 15 (Bonifay 2016: 555, n. 95; **fig. 4,9**), Hayes 16 (Bonifay 2004: 157-159; **fig. 4,10**), Hayes 27 (**fig. 4,13**), Hayes 29 (Atlante I: 55; Bonifay 2016: 523 extends the chronology of ARS A/D to the whole 3rd century; **fig. 4,14**), Hayes 31 (Atlante I: 54; **fig. 4,15**), Hayes 32 var (Bonifay 2004: 172; **fig. 3,16**), Hayes 33 (Atlante I: 54; **Fig. 4,17**), Hayes 42 (Hayes 1972: 60-61; **fig. 4,18**) Hayes 45A (Atlante I,

63-64); Hayes 50A (**fig. 4,19**), A/B (Bonifay 2016: 555, n. 105) and B (Bonifay 2016: 555, n. 106), Hayes 53B of fabric C and possibly F (Bonifay 2004: 197; **fig. 4, 20**), Hayes 58B (Atlante I: 81-82; **fig. 5,1**), Hayes 59 (Atlante I: 82-83; **fig. 5,2**), Hayes 61A (Bonifay 2016: 557, n. 118) were also present and dating between the late 1st / 2nd and the late 4th / early 5th century AD. The most peculiar elements comprised in this assemblage are two sherds from the rim and handle of the same Hayes 166 vessel in ARS A2 (Hayes 1980: 498-99, fig. 94; **fig. 4,12 a-b**) and a casserole with a fine fabric and a lustrous A1 slip only on the outer side of the wall, to which pertain some non-joining wall fragments with a carination marked by two grooves (**fig. 4,11**). These features recall those of the Hayes 34 cup (Atlante I: 29), even if some similar shapes

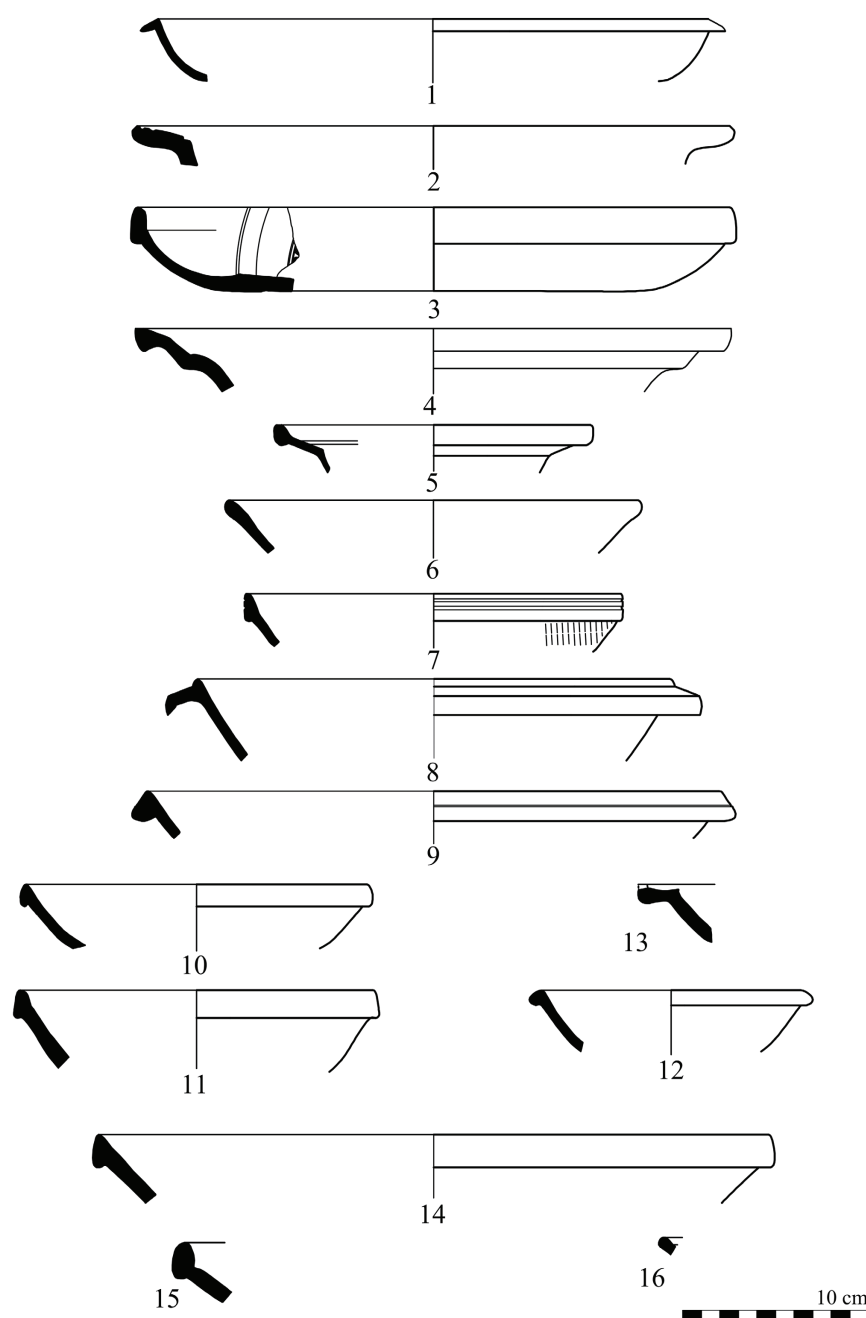


**Fig. 4.** African Red Slip Ware from the domus. Selection of types of fabrics A, A/D, C.

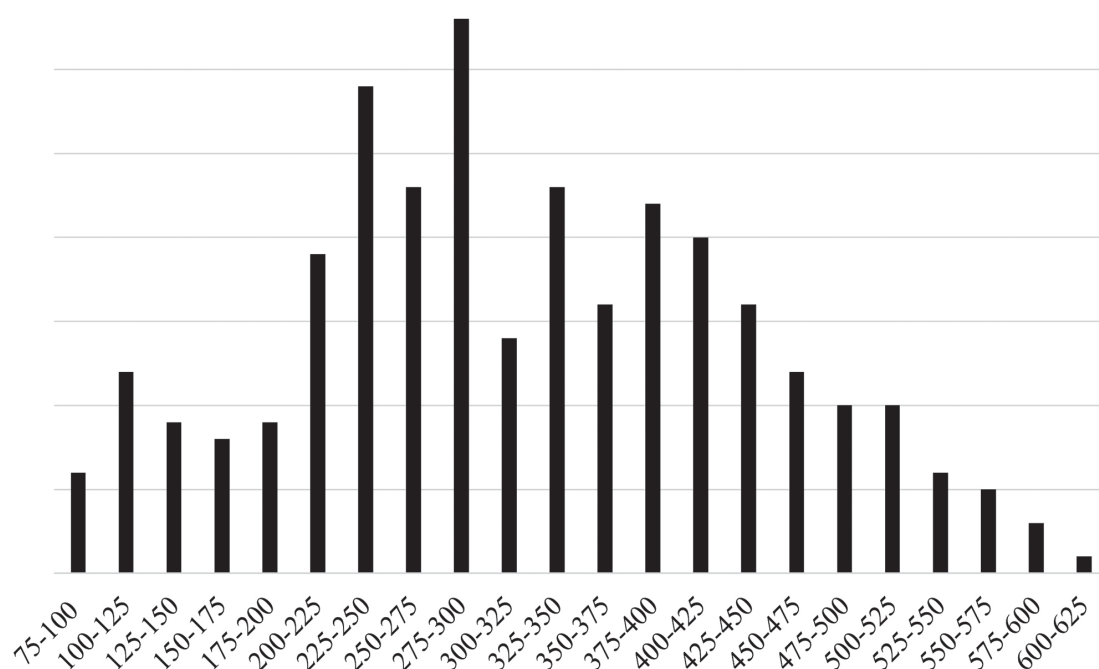
are reported also for the forms Hayes 35, 36 and 38 in ARS A with applied decoration (Atlante I: 146-147, tav. LXXII, 7-9; Bonifay 2004: 162, types 20, 21, 22), although in our case no applied decoration is visible.

Later layers of Period 6, Phase 2 (197 sherds) and Phase 3 (130 sherds) provided few or single specimens of forms Hayes 64 (Hayes 1972: 109-111), Hayes 80 (Bonifay 2004: 173), Hayes 91 A/B (Bonifay 2004: 178-181), Hayes 103 (Hayes 1972: 157-159), Hayes 104 (Bonifay 2004: 181-183; **fig. 5, 15**), Hayes 99B (Bonifay 2016: 558, n. 128; **fig. 5, 11**) and 99C var (**fig. 5, 12**), as well as many residual specimens of the previously mentioned types. Cistern H provided a varied assemblage mostly consisting of 5th–6th century types, as Hayes 61 A/B (Bonifay 2004: 167-171), Hayes 61 B

(**fig. 5, 3**), Hayes 67 (Bonifay 2004; **fig. 5, 4**), Hayes 73 (**fig. 5, 5**), Hayes 80 (**fig. 5, 6**), Hayes 84 (1972: 132-133; **fig. 5, 7**), Hayes 91 A/B (**fig. 5, 8**) and C, El Mahrine 18 (Bonifay 2016: 558, n. 121; **fig. 5, 9**), Hayes 95 (Hayes 1972: 149; **fig. 5, 13**), Hayes 99A (**fig. 5, 10**), Hayes 103, variant Sidi Khalifa (Bonifay 2004: 203-205; **fig. 5, 14**), Hayes 87/109 (Bonifay 2016: 560; **fig. 5, 16**). Most of the finds consist of rather small sherds, but some specimens from the dumps were completely reconstructed or had a full profile, implying that some of them were dumped as complete specimens. The finds stick to the current typologies with no significant variants except for the Hayes 99C bowl with rolled rim, a variant probably dating to the late 6th / early 7th century AD (Fernández 2014: 186-192).



**Fig. 5.** African Red Slip Ware from the domus. Selection of types of Fabrics D, F.



**Fig. 6.** Consumption of ARS in the domus 75-620 AD (vessels/year).

Besides the domus and the forum, the only ARS occurrence in the city is an unpublished Hayes 91 C bowl recovered together with some other fabric D sherds at the “ara della Regina” mentioned by Casocavallo (Casocavallo et al. 2015: 527). A full frame of material culture of Roman and Late Antique Tarquinia will be defined only through the full publication of all the finds from the domus as well as – in the future – from the forum or other areas of the city. Nevertheless, since ARS is an excellent proxy for tracing consumption dynamics and trade relations in the area, these finds undoubtedly contribute to define for the first time the status of Tarquinia as a consuming centre during the Imperial and Late Antique period.

Many studies aiming at reconstructing the transformation of trade networks and their volumes over time have attempted to consider ARS as a proxy for settlement, trade relations, economic production, and consumption of goods (e.g., Fentress and Perkins 1988; Zanini 1996; Fentress et al. 2004). These studies aimed at a large-scale understanding of the topic and relied on a specific methodological frame to evaluate the chronological and spatial distribution of fine wares and their relation to settlement patterns by mapping the date range of forms in calendar years. Some of them considered as valid source of information only the finds from large-scale, regional surveys to reach this goal, correctly assuming that the finds from a single building or complex do not reflect general data on ARS trade in a whole city but instead they largely depend on the history and life of the context itself. An attempt to define a preliminary curve of ARS imports in the city (**fig. 6**) proves that this assumption is once again correct. According to the curve of Tarquinia, ARS imports began by the late 1st century AD. A slight but non-constant increase can be observed for the 2nd century AD, and the peak seems to

occur in the 3rd century AD, when most case-studies register instead a drop and a reprise. Later, high figures can still be observed for the 4th century imports, whilst a slow decrease takes place since the 5th century AD, further decreasing to a low but constant flux for the 6th century and ceasing by the late 6th / early 7th century AD.

These data significantly diverge from both the general large-scale trends described in literature and regional case-studies. This depends on the site’s history, which determined the nature of the finds, as the majority of ARS finds consists of material from the dumps, which was often re-deposited in later layers. Residual types from the 2nd and 3rd / 4th century AD outnumber those from other periods and from occupation layers and alter the general outline of ARS presence in the site. The peaks in the consumption curve are the final outcomes in ARS frequency of the action of raising the site’s floors with pottery-rich dumps. So, the domus provides a good example of how these data can be largely influenced and biased by a site’s life. Despite this evident limit, it is nevertheless possible to compare the curve of Tarquinia with regional case-studies as those related to the South Etruria Survey or to neighbouring cities as Veii and Cosa, reflecting on a qualitative rather than quantitative ground. The city of Cosa is close to Tarquinia and due to its position had direct access to seaborne trade. Its ARS consumption curve (Fentress 2005: 69-71) is marked by an abrupt drop by the 3rd century AD, which has been interpreted as the proxy of a crisis in urban life and a partial abandonment of the settlement. If compared to Cosa, Tarquinia, at least from the point of view offered by the domus, seems to remain a more stable and vital city. ARS finds from the survey of Veii (Fontana 2012: fig. 5.78) provide another South Etrurian example of a city with high figures of ARS consumption

during the 2nd century, with a gradual decrease during the 3rd and 4th centuries, and extremely low figures from the mid-4th century onwards, until the end of imports by the early 7th century.

Although they do not reflect the “normal” consumption trend of an urban house, ARS data from the so-called domus point out that Tarquinia was a vital consuming centre over a long period and it seems to have remained quite more prosperous than its neighbours during the Late Antiquity. However, being aware of the biased nature of these observations, it is to be expected that future research may correct or refine them by expanding the dataset of ARS finds from Tarquinia with information from new finds or other contexts besides the domus.

## 5. ARS in the *ager Tarquiniensis*: a survey of the evidence

In Roman times, Tarquinia controlled a vast *ager* bordered by the rivers Arrone and Mignone and expanding inland as far as the lake of Bolsena, the Selva Cimina area and the river Tibur. This area included also other lesser cities, once subordinated to Tarquinia, such as *Musarna*, *Ferentum*, *Tuscania* and other centres, as well as the Roman-founded colony of *Gravisca* (fig. 7A), which also was the port serving Tarquinia. All these cities enjoyed some degree of municipal autonomy, but none of them was a *colonia* and their inhabitants were inscribed to the same tribe of Tarquinia (Jolivet 2009). The area is extremely rich in archaeological finds but, as noted by Jolivet (2009), few studies have been dedicated to Imperial or Late Antique sites, and even less have been fully published with pottery reports. Data on ARS finds from the whole *ager* do not allow to arrange a proper survey of the evidence, let alone to draw valid conclusions. The coastal and inland areas significantly differ for the degree of available data. ARS finds are known in the inland centres of *Tuscania* (Gianfrotta and Potter 1980: 449; Tizi 2021: 325), *Ferentum* (De Minicis et al. 2015: 502, 507) and *Musarna* (Jolivet 2009: fig 12; Batigne-Vallet 2015: 517), but the published data consist of few sherds each, sometimes just mentioned but neither identified or illustrated<sup>1</sup>. Full pottery reports are available for the rural settlements of Paliano (Barbieri 1992-3: 33-35, 36-39) and Contrada Asinello (Barbieri 1989: 85-88, types from the 2nd to mid-6th century AD) but they only offer isolated evidence, not directly comparable to major settlements, in a large region, which remains almost unexplored.

The situation is rather different for the coastal area closer to the city, where a wider dataset is available from the city of *Gravisca*, the port/station of the *Quintiana positio* near Cazzanello along the via Aurelia and some villas from surveys carried out in the coastal region of the *ager Tarquiniensis*. This grouping provides valuable data coming from a limited but cohesive area and from a variety of sites covering the spectrum of local archaeological settlement forms.

The finds from *Gravisca* were recovered from the upper

layers of the excavations carried out in the ancient city and provide a general frame of ARS consumption in its later stages. Their recent analysis (Casocavallo et al. 2015: 529-530) pointed out that after the Visigothic sack of 408 AD the city continued its existence in the following centuries. Finds consist of 9 sherds of Hayes 67B type, 26 from Hayes 67 of undetermined variant, 5 of Hayes 84, 14 of Hayes 91A, 14 of Hayes 91B, 12 of Hayes 99A, 5 of Hayes 91C, 3 of Hayes 104A, 5 of Hayes 104B and 5 of Hayes 99C. As *Gravisca* was the port from which ARS arrived by sea and transited to Tarquinia, it is significant that the two centres provided comparable data pointing into the very same direction. In both cities, ARS was diffused in the 5th century, and still present – although with lesser numbers – during the 6th. ARS imports seem to cease completely by the late 6th / early 7th century AD.

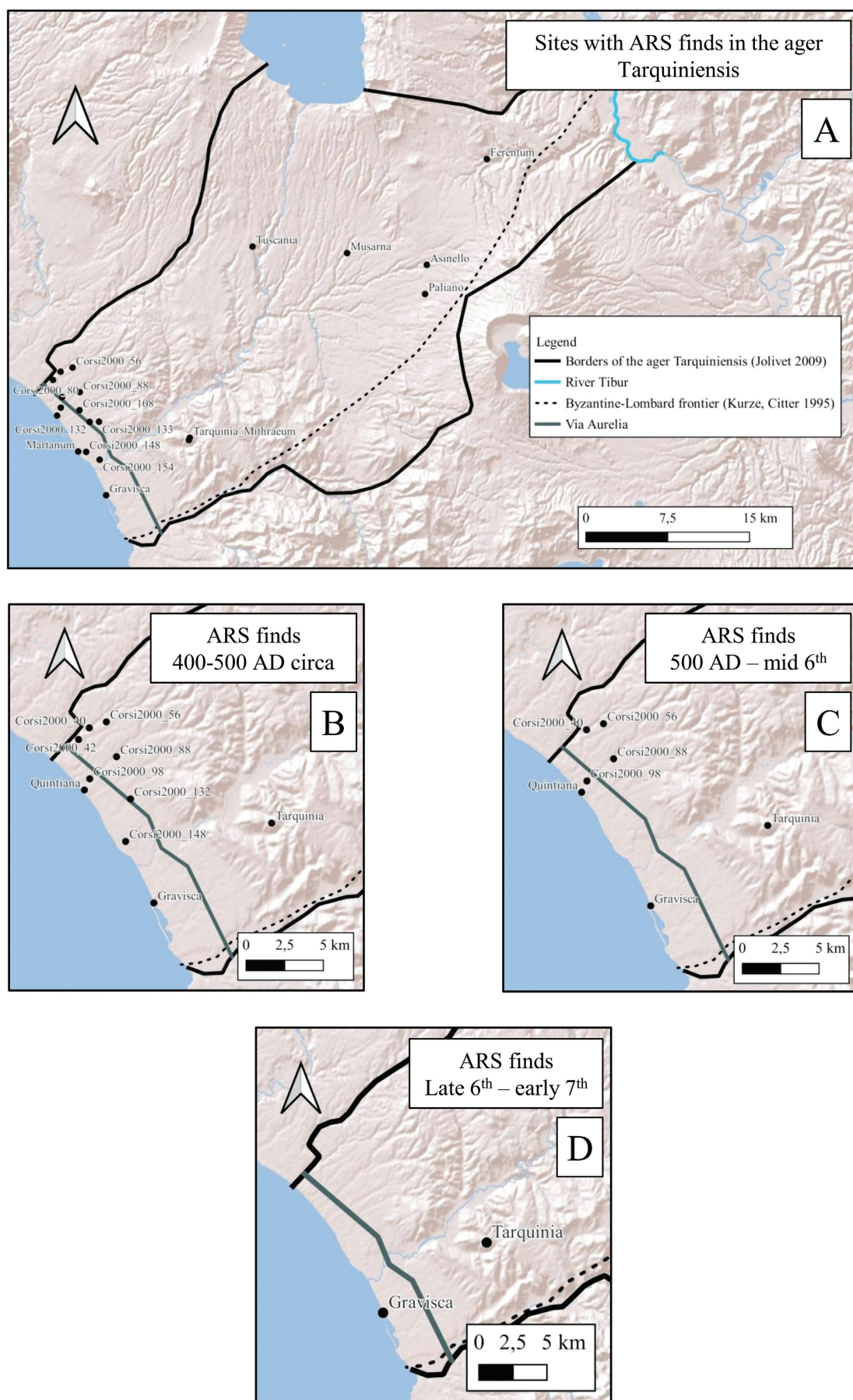
The villa of *Quintiana* / Cazzanello is the largest excavated site in the area, as well as one of the most relevant villas in the region. This site provided a varied ARS assemblage, with some forms overlapping with those reported in the city and the survey, and others reported only there<sup>2</sup>. ARS consumption begins in the late 1st / early 2nd century AD (Hayes 3B) and most of the latest types (Hayes 91C; Hayes 96; Hayes 103) date to the 6th century AD. A Hayes 99D bowl, dating to the second half of the 7th century AD (Bonifay 2004: 181), is also reported, being the latest ARS vessel in the whole *ager Tarquiniensis*. Mid-Imperial and Late Antique types are also present, and decorated dishes dating to the 4th – 5th century AD are quite common (Aoyagi 1995; 1996; 1997; Aoyagi, Angelelli and Imai Fujiwara 2002-2003).

The survey by M. Corsi covered an area between the *agri* of Tarquinia and Vulci, gathering data from more than 150 sites dating between Republican and Late Antique times (Corsi 1998). Among them, fourteen sites of the *ager Tarquiniensis*, mostly identified as villas or generic surfaces scatters, provided ARS finds (Corsi 2000)<sup>3</sup>. The identified types range from the late 1st / 2nd century AD (Hayes 8 A) to the mid-to-late 6th century AD (Hayes 99A; Hayes 103B; Hayes 91C). A relevant number of specimens can be referred to types dating to the 4th and 5th century AD, notably to the forms Hayes 61A, 80 and 91. 6th century types are present and far from rare, but no form dating to the late 6th century and beyond is reported. Apparently, the flux of ARS was constant over the course of 5th century AD and went off over the course of the 6th. Finally, some unpublished archive

<sup>2</sup> Hayes 3B, 8A (4 specimens), Hayes 9A (7 sp.), Hayes 52, Hayes 53B (3 sp.), Hayes 59, Hayes 61A, Hayes 63, Hayes 70 (3 sp.), Hayes 73, Hayes 76, Hayes 80-81 (2 sp.), Hayes 82, Hayes 91A-B (4 sp.), Hayes 91 C (2 sp.), Hayes 94, Hayes 96 (2 sp.); Hayes 103; Hayes 99D (80B/99).

<sup>3</sup> The forms are identified only by form number and not illustrated, sometimes omitting relevant variants. Site 40: sherds of fabric A, C, D and forms Hayes 50 A, 61 A, 91 A/B, 93 B, 103 B. Site 42: sherds of fabric A, C, D and forms Hayes 67, 80, 91. Site 56: sherds of fabric A, C, D and forms Hayes 50 A/B, 59, 61 A, 61 B, 80, 91, 99 A. Site 80: sherds of fabric A, form Hayes 8. Site 88: sherds of fabric A, C, D, forms Hayes 9A, 44 (2 sp.), 52 A, 60, 61 A, 91 C. Site 98: sherds of fabric C and D, Hayes 91. Site 108: sherds of fabric C. Site 132: sherds of fabric A, C, D, form Hayes 8. Site 133: sherds of fabric A and C, forms Hayes 8 A and 50 A. Site 148: sherds of fabric A, C, D. Site 154: sherds of fabric A, forms Hayes 8 A and 9 A. Sherd number is never stated. Unspecified and unquantified ARS finds are also reported for the landing of *Martanum*.

<sup>1</sup> *Tuscania*: unspecified fragments; *Ferentum*: sherds of fabric A, C, D, with forms Hayes 8 and 80; *Musarna*: Jolivet illustrates selected specimens of form Hayes 8, Hayes 27, Hayes 73, Bonifay sigillée type 62 jug; Batigne-Vallet mentions a Hayes 99 bowl.



**Fig. 7.** ARS in the *ager Tarquiniensis*. A) Sites with ARS in the *ager*. B-C-D) Transformations of the distribution patterns over time.

data on ARS finds from surveys between Gravisca and the Mignone river are reported by Maggiore (2022: 67, fig. 18, sites 20, 21 and 22)<sup>4</sup>.

## 6. ARS distribution during the Late Antiquity

Data from the city of Tarquinia and its *ager* allow to preliminarily define the local ARS circulation patterns in Late Antiquity, and to consider them in the light of large-scale distribution trends and to the major historical events involving the region. It is likely that most of the ARS landed in local ports, as *Graviscae*, or minor landings, such as the *Quintiana positio* or *Martanum*, all recorded by the *Itinerarium Maritimum*, which have all provided ARS finds. From there, ARS was distributed in the interior along the local road system and reached consuming sites as Tarquinia, the coastal rural settlements or the minor cities of the inland area. All these areas have provided ARS dating to the 5th century AD, and 6th century types are also quite diffused. A second directory was probably the one depending on riverine trade along the Tiber (Zuddas 2014). ARS and amphorae from Seripola near Orte (VT) testify the activity of this port, but the latest forms reported there are dated to the 5th century AD (Colelli and Lupi 2006).

6th century types are reported in Tarquinia, *Gravisca*, *Quintiana*, *Musarna* and in the rural sites of Asinello and of the Corsi survey. Apparently, apart from quantitative issues, the local ARS distribution network remained quite stable under Gothic rule, until the war of 535-553 AD. Even if the neighbour city of *Centumcellae* was besieged and taken many times, the sources do not mention any major event involving Tarquinia and its territory. However, most of the 6th century ARS from the *ager* consists of forms dating to the first half of the century or its central decades, pointing to the fact that ARS circulation became gradually rarer after the war, contextually with the decay of villas. Soon after the end of the war, the Lombards invaded Italy in 568 AD. Tarquinia was not immediately conquered but, even if by the late 6th century the area was organised as a well-defended frontier, it was eventually captured by the Lombards. The treaty of 592-3AD between pope Gregorius and king Agilulfus set the Byzantine-Lombard frontier on the river Mignone (Kurze and Citter 1995: 167-169).

On a local scale (fig. 7 B-C-D), we can observe that ARS was common during the first half and the central years of the 6th century, but types typical of the second half of the 6th / early 7th centuries are currently reported only in *Gravisca* and Tarquinia (Hayes 87/109 and Hayes 99C), and later in Cazzanello/*Quintiana* (Hayes 99D). Even though the presence of some Hayes 91C bowls in rural settlements could mitigate this conclusion, it seems that, before coming to an end chronologically close to the Lombard conquest, ARS imports were restricted to the most relevant urban sites. 7th century ARS is completely absent in Tarquinia and *Gravisca*

and, besides the Hayes 99D bowl from Cazzanello, it is rare in the whole *Tuscia Langobardorum*.

Relating historical facts, ceramic data and commercial trends is always venturing on a perilous ground. Previous studies (Tortorella 1998; Zanini 1998) agree that these events, combined with the ongoing transformations of settlement patterns, had an evident impact on large-scale trade networks, leading to the progressive exclusion or marginalisation of Lombard-controlled areas from Mediterranean markets, whilst more recent developments of the research suggest that political border had a limited influence on the distribution of goods due to the existence of a free market and to the continuity of trade relations even after the Lombard conquest of many regions (Vera 2010; Bernal and Bonifay 2010: 61-62). Coming to local data, ARS types dating to the 7th century are reported in Civitavecchia, south of the Mignone frontier. Excavations in the Forte Michelangelo near the Roman port of *Centumcellae* provided a significant ARS assemblage including 7th century types such as Hayes 105, 109 and 99D (Caruso and Vaudo 2006: 118-119), and a Hayes 109 dish is also reported in the settlement on the Castellina hill (Dominguez Arranz 2011: 749, fig. 167). By this date, Tarquinia and *Graviscae* were apparently no longer supplied with ARS, whilst the isolated 7th century presence in Cazzanello suggests that, after this date, local ARS circulation networks were completely redefined, and the circulation of the ware was restricted to few coastal or relevant sites (Vaccaro 2011).

## 7. Conclusions

The finds from the domus “of the Mithraeum” in Tarquinia provided the very first data about ARS consumption in one of the major cities of South Etruria. They were analysed together with those from other sites of its *ager*, providing a survey of the evidence from both the city and its territory. Available data allow to focus on a smaller area with a significant concentration of published finds. Some final remarks are to be pointed out:

- The domus provided a significant amount of ARS vessels. According to this evidence, ARS imports seem to begin by the late 1st century AD, with high numbers between the 2nd and the 4th century AD. From the 5th century AD, the presence of ARS begins to drop and remains low but stable during the 6th century AD, until imports cease by the end of the century or the early 7th century AD. Though the consumption trends of the domus are largely biased by the ways of formation of the richest ARS-bearing layers, these finds define Tarquinia as a vital city.

- An insight on ARS distribution in the *ager Tarquiniensis* is possible only for the coastal region. Both Tarquinia and *Gravisca* had a continuous ARS supply until imports ended by the late 6th – early 7th century. ARS is common in the coastal rural sites as well as in the inland ones until the mid-6th century, disappearing afterwards. It seems that, although the early-to-mid 6th century ARS supply was low in numbers, it still had a good distribution.

<sup>4</sup> Site 20: Hayes 91A, 99B; Site 21: Hayes 73A, 91A, 94; Site 22: Hayes 67, 91, 99B.

-ARS imports show that both the cities of Tarquinia and *Gravisca* were consuming centres connected to the Mediterranean trade network until the Lombard conquest. Many archaeological aspects of this period are still to be cleared, and evidence from other pottery classes to be considered, but these new data offer some hints for further reflection. On one hand, ARS data somehow counterbalance the information provided by 5th and 6th century historical sources suggesting the decadence of both centres by pointing out their vitality

and their role as consuming centres. On the other hand, the decrease and the end of ARS imports seems to be coincident with the aftermath of the Gothic War and the Lombard conquest of the region, which led to the slow reshaping of the city to a lesser settlement in the early Middle Ages.

Luca Arioli

University of Verona, PhD student

a.luca02@hotmail.it

## Bibliography

- Aoyagi, M. (ed.) 1995. *Preliminary report of the 1994 excavations in the villa of Cazzanello (Tarquinia)*. Tokyo, Institute of Cultural Exchange.
- Aoyagi, M. (ed.) 1996. *Preliminary report of the 1995 excavations in the villa of Cazzanello (Tarquinia)*. Tokyo, Institute of Cultural Exchange.
- Aoyagi, M. (ed.) 1997. *Preliminary report of the 1996 excavations in the villa of Cazzanello (Tarquinia)*. Tokyo, Institute of Cultural Exchange.
- Aoyagi, M., Angelelli, C. and Imai Fujisawa, S. 2002-2003. Lo scavo della villa romana in loc. Cazzanello presso Tarquinia. Nota preliminare. *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* s. III 75, 187-244.
- Atlante delle forme ceramiche. I. Ceramica fine romana nel bacino del Mediterraneo (medio e tardo Impero)*, *Supplemento all'Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica*. Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.
- Barbieri, G. 1989. Ceramica romana da un insediamento rustico nei pressi di Viterbo. *Rivista di Studi Liguri* 55, 79-121.
- Barbieri, G. 1992-3. Viterbo. Località Paliano. Saggio di scavo presso le terme romane dette "le masse di San Sisto". *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* s. IX 3-4, 5-66.
- Batigne-Vallet, C. 2015. La Domus de l'Ilot de Musarna: les céramiques communes des niveaux de fréquentation tardive. In Cirelli E., Diosono F. and Patterson H. (eds.), *Le forme della crisi. Produzioni ceramiche e commerci nell'Italia centrale tra Romani e Longobardi (III-VIII sec. d.C.)*, 517-526. Bologna, Ante Quem.
- Bernal Casasola, D. and Bonifay, M. 2010. Importaciones y consumo alimenticio en las ciudades tardo romanas del mediterráneo nor-occidental (ss. VI-VIII d.c.): la aportación de las ánforas. In A. Garcia (ed.), *Espacios urbanos en el occidente Mediterráneo (s. VI-VIII)*, 45-64. Toledo, Toletum Visigodo.
- Bonifay, M. 2004. *Études sur la céramique romaine tardive d'Afrique* (BAR International Series 1301). Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Bonifay, M. 2016. Éléments de typologie des céramiques de l'Afrique romaine. In D. Malfitana and M. Bonifay (eds.), *La ceramica africana nella Sicilia Romana, Tomo II* (Monografie dell'Istituto per i Beni Archeologici e Monumentali C.N.R. 12): 507-573. Catania, CNR IBAM.
- Bonifay, M. 2018. The Distribution of African Pottery under the Roman Empire: Evidence versus interpretation. In A. Wilson and A. Bowman (eds.), *Trade, commerce and the State in Roman World* (Oxford Studies in the Roman Economy): 327-351. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Bonifay, M. and Tchernia, A. 2012. Les reseaux de la céramique africaine (I<sup>er</sup>-V<sup>e</sup> siècles). In S. Keay (ed.), *Rome, Portus and the Mediterranean* (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 21): 315-333. London, The British School at Rome.
- Caruso, I. and Vaudo, C. 2006. Centumcellae-Civitavecchia e il suo territorio: nuove acquisizioni dalle ricerche archeologiche. *Temporis Signa. Archeologia della tarda antichità e del medioevo* 1, 97-127.
- Casocavallo, B., Maggiore, G., Spaccini, V. and Andreacci, S. 2015. Il territorio tarquiniese tra tardoantico e altomedioevo: i ritrovamenti archeologici. In E. Cirelli, F. Diosono H. and Patterson (eds.), *Le forme della crisi. Produzioni ceramiche e commerci nell'Italia centrale tra Romani e Longobardi (III-VIII sec. d.C.)*, 527-534. Bologna, Ante Quem.
- Casocavallo, B. and Maggiore, G. 2018. Dalla Civitas Tarquiniensium al Castrum Tarquini. Revisione dei dati storici e archeologici. In G. Bagnasco Gianni (ed.), *Mura tarquinesi. Riflessioni in margine alla città* (Aristonothos. Scritti per il Mediterraneo antico 14): 133-157. Milano, Ledizioni.
- Colelli, C. and Lupi, A. 2006. I materiali dagli scavi del porto di Seripola. La ceramica. In P. Aureli, M. A. De Lucia Broili and S. Del Lungo (eds.), *Orte (Viterbo) e il suo territorio. Scavi e ricerche in Etruria Meridionale fra Antichità e Medioevo* (BAR International Series 1545): 207-228. Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Corsi, M. 1998. L'insediamento rurale di età romana e tardoantica nel territorio tra Tarquinia e Vulci. *Rivista di Topografia Antica* 8, 223-255.
- Corsi, M. 2000. L'insediamento rurale di età romana e tardoantica nel territorio tra Tarquinia e Vulci. II parte. *Rivista di Topografia Antica* 10, 205-275.
- De Minicis, E., Leone, T., Paoletti, D., Patilli, T. and Villari, A. 2015. Produzione e distribuzione della ceramica nel Lazio settentrionale: il caso di Ferento. In Cirelli E., Diosono F. and Patterson H. (eds.), *Le forme della crisi. Produzioni ceramiche e commerci nell'Italia centrale tra Romani e Longobardi (III-VIII sec. d.C.)*, 499-515. Bologna, Ante Quem.
- Domínguez Arranz, A. 2011. Ceramica romana. In J. Gran-Aymerich and A. Domínguez Arranz (eds.), *La Castellina a sud di Civitavecchia: origini ed eredità. Origines protohistoriques et évolution d'un habitat étrusque* (Bibliotheca Archaeologica 47): 686-732. Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider.

- Fentress, E. 2005. *Cosa V: an Intermittent Town* (Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary volume II). Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press.
- Fentress, E. and Perkins, P. 1988. Counting African Red Slip Ware. In A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa romana, Atti del V Convegno di Studio*, 205-214. Sassari, Gallizzi.
- Fentress, E., Fontana S., Bruce Hitchner, R. B. and Perkins, P. 2004. Accounting for ARS: Fineware and Sites in Sicily and Africa. In S. Alcock and J. F. Cherry (eds.), *Side-by-side survey: comparative regional studies in the Mediterranean world*, 147-162. Oxford, Oxbow.
- Fernández Fernández, A. 2014. *El comercio tardoantiguo (ss. IV-VII) en el Noreste peninsular a través del registro cerámico de la Ria de Vigo* (Roman and Late Antique Mediterranean Pottery 5). Oxford, Archaeopress.
- Fontana, S. 2012. La sigillata africana. In R. Cascino, H. Di Giuseppe and H. Patterson (eds), *Veii. The historical topography of the ancient city*, 274-279. London, The British School at Rome.
- Gianfrotta, P. A. and Potter, T. W. 1980. Tuscania 1974. Scavi sul colle di San Pietro: una prima lettura. *Archeologia Medievale* 7, 437-456.
- Hawthorne, J. 2000. Vessel volume as a factor in ceramic quantification: the case of African Red Slip ware. In K. Lockyear, T. J. T. Sly and V. Mihailescu-Bîrliaba (eds.), *CAA 96: Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* (British Archaeological Reports International Series 845): 19-24. Oxford, Bar Publishing.
- Hayes, J. W. 1972. *Late Roman Pottery*. London, The British School at Rome.
- Hayes, J. W. 1980. *Supplement to Late Roman Pottery*. London, The British School at Rome.
- Jolivet, V. 2009. Musarna et l'ager Tarquiniensis à l'époque imperiale. In E. Rebillard (ed.), *Musarna 3. La nécropole imperiale*, 7-36. Rome, École Française.
- Kurze, W. and Citter, C. 1995. La Toscana. In G. P. Brogiolo (ed.), *Città, castelli e campagne nei territori di frontiera (secoli VI-VII)*, 159-186. Mantova, Società Archeologica Padana.
- Maggiore, G. 2022. *Medioevo altolaziale: la valle del Marta* (Percorsi, Strumenti, Temi di Archeologia, 11). Roma, Quasar.
- Mastrocinque, A. (ed.) 2020. *La domus del Mitreo a Tarquinia. Ricerche dell'Università di Verona a Tarquinia. Volume I* (BAR International Series 2986). Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Pontacolone, L. and Incitti, M. 1991. Un relitto con carico di merci africane di età imperiale alle Trincere (Tarquinia). In A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa Romana* 8, 543-70. Sassari, Gallizzi.
- Soriano, F. 2020. "Domus del Mitreo" of Tarquinia. Data from the 2016-18 excavations. With an appendix by Chiara Maria Marchetti, Vittoria Canciani, Luca Arioli. In A. Mastrocinque, F. Soriano and C. M. Marchetti (eds.), *La domus del Mitreo a Tarquinia. Ricerche dell'Università di Verona a Tarquinia. Volume I* (BAR International Series 2986): 1-40. Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Tizi, A. 2021. La Felix Temporum Reparatio a Tuscania. In A. Bellotti, L. Luppino, M. Messineo and M. Scarcella (eds.), *Spring Archaeology: Atti del Convegno, Siena, 15-17 maggio 2020*, 325-326. Oxford, Archaeopress.
- Tortorella, S. 1998. La sigillata africana in Italia nel VI e nel VII secolo d.C.: problemi di cronologia e distribuzione. In L. Sagui (ed.), *Ceramica in Italia: VI-VII secolo* (Biblioteca di Archeologia Medievale 14): 41-69. Firenze, All'Insegna del Giglio.
- Vaccaro, E. 2011. *Sites and pots. Settlement and economic patterns in Southern Tuscany (300-900 AD)* (BAR International Series 2191). Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Vera, D. 2010. Fisco, annona, commercio nel Mediterraneo tardoantico: destini incrociati o vite parallele?. In S. Menchelli, S. Santoro, M. Pasquinucci and G. Guiducci (eds.), *LRCW3. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean. Archaeology and archaeometry. Comparison between western and eastern Mediterranean*. Vol. I (Bar International Series 2185, ): 1-18. Oxford, Bar Publishing.
- Zanini, E. 1996. Ricontando la terra sigillata africana. *Archeologia Medievale* 23, 677-688.
- Zanini, E. 1998. *Le Italie bizantine. Territorio, insediamenti ed economia nella provincia bizantina d'Italia (V-VIII secolo)* (Munera, 10). Bari, Edipuglia.
- Zentilini, E. 2020. La terra sigillata italica, ceramica corinzia decorata a rilievo, la sigillata e la comune africana: dati dagli scavi 2016-2017. In A. Mastrocinque, F. Soriano and C. M. Marchetti (eds.), *La domus del Mitreo a Tarquinia. Ricerche dell'Università di Verona a Tarquinia. Vol. I* (BAR International Series 2986): 99-108. Oxford, BAR Publishing.
- Zuddas, E. 2014. L'Umbria dei porti. In C. Zaccaria (ed.), *L'epigrafia dei porti* (Antichità Altoadriatiche 79): 137-150. Trieste, Editreg.