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SOME POTTERY PRODUCTIONS FROM THE KILNS OF VINGONE IN SCANDICCI (FLORENCE/ITALY)

The Vingone kilns area, working during the Early Imperial period, was brought to light by the Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici della Toscana in the eighties of the 20th century under a large building site in the country near Scandicci, south-west of the city of Florence, in Tuscany (**fig. 1**)¹. Besides bricks and amphoras, the kilns produced a considerable amount of different kinds of vessels: thin-walled pottery, grey ware and a wide range of common ware and coarse ware including objects to be referred to domestic or cult furnishing. A complete study concerning the kilns and their productions has recently been published². This article will discuss some of the most remarkable ceramic vessels the current writer was appointed to study: thin-walled pottery, common ware, coarse ware and objects to be referred to domestic or cult furnishing.

Thin-walled pottery

Thin-walled drinking vessels constitute one of the most important ceramic productions of the kilns of Vingone (15% of the whole production of vessels). A lot of different shapes were produced: cylindrical and conical beakers with plain or everted lip, with or without handles (Ricci 1/166, 1/173, 1/378, 1/379),³ necked beakers with low rim (Ricci 1/102, 1/120, 1/194, 1/339), bulb-beakers, some of them having peculiar shapes (Beaker type 1, Ricci 1/186, 1/205), showing strong links with the North Italian production, double-handled cups (Ricci 2/385), simple cups (Ricci 2/230, 2/412, 2/408).

The Vingone kilns produced also thin-walled shapes in common ware fabrics (Ricci 2/385, 1/194, 1/339). About two-thirds of the pottery are plain or have a light rouletting decoration; a few examples have barbotine decoration (beakers Ricci 1/102, cups Ricci 2/235) and colour-coating (Ricci 1/102, 1/186). The fabric is reddish-yellow, soft and micaceous with white and brownish inclusions; the clay is of local origin. Most of the Vingone thin-walled vessels date between the beginning of the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD; cups Ricci 2/235 were produced till the 2nd century AD, beakers Ricci 1/378 and 1/173 (one decorated with rouletting) till the 3rd century AD.

Cylindrical and conical beakers

Two examples of the double-handled beaker Ricci 1/166



Fig. 1. The site of Vingone in Scandicci, Tuscany (Italy).

(**fig. 2,1–2**) of Augustan-Tiberian date have been found. The production was thought to be located in Central Italy⁴: the Vingone kilns are the first known production workshop for this shape.

The beakers forms Ricci 1/173 and 1/378 (**fig. 2,3**), common in all the Mediterranean from the Augustan period till the whole of the 2nd century AD, with rouletting instead of the usual moulded decoration (one of the Vingone sherds has a series of little rouletted triangles, type Ricci 5m), represent the cheaper version of the “Aco” beakers⁵. Beaker form Ricci 1/379 (**fig. 2,4**), a rejected item, produced between 20 and 10 BC, finds rare comparisons with Magdalensberg examples decorated with little rouletted triangles or lozenges⁶.

Necked beakers with low rim

A couple of beakers form Ricci 1/102 (**fig. 2,5**), produced from the late Augustan period till the early 2nd century AD have been found at Vingone. Due to the lack of colour-

¹ I am grateful to the Editors, particularly to Dr. Elizabeth Jane Shepherd, and to the Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici della Toscana (Dr. Fulvia Lo Schiavo, Soprintendente; Dr. Anna Rastrelli, Functionary of the area) for allowing me to study some classes of the ceramic material from this site and to participate in the Poster session of the 26th Congress of RCRF in Cadiz, Spain. The line drawings are by Fabio Mosca except fig. 1; the graphic editor is Michele Giugni.

² CAPECCHI ET AL. 2006.

³ Ricci forms refer to RICCI 1985.

⁴ RICCI 1985, 275–276; FABBRI 2006, 68 fig. 62,1–2.

⁵ RICCI 1985, 276–277; FABBRI 2006, 71–72 fig. 63,2–3.

⁶ RICCI 1985 277 tav. 89,9; 316–317.

coating, they should belong to the earlier production that was replaced by the colour-coated one during the 1st century BC. Their barbotine decoration type Ricci 226, with pine-cones in relief regularly positioned on the surface, points to date them between 70 and 40 BC⁷. Beaker form Ricci 1/20 (**fig. 2,6**) was produced between the early 1st century BC and the beginning of the Augustan period by Central Italian workshops; from the middle of the century it was produced also in Northern Italy (Aquileia and Adria) and in Sicily (Syracuse)⁸.

Two examples of a globular beaker form Ricci 1/194 in coarse ware (**fig. 2,7**) usually documented in Hiberia and the Balearic Islands prove once more that they were effectively produced in Italy⁹. An example of beaker form Ricci 1/339 seems to have a handle not elsewhere documented¹⁰.

Bulb-beakers

The Vingone kilns produced a beaker attested for the first time in *Etruria*, and a few shapes not common in Italy. The double-handled Beaker type 1 (**fig. 2,8**) has a shallow carinated body and a very tall rim of a preponderant size compared with the whole form. Considered as a whole, the morphology of this beaker shows it to belong to the North-Italian tradition of the thin-walled “bulb-beakers”, produced mostly in the western part of the Po-Valley from the first half of the 1st century BC. The Vingone beaker, however, exceeds those in the accentuation of its morphology: the body is compressed to the maximum, the rim, covered with rouletting, is very tall, the ribbed handles are tall and thin¹¹. The best comparisons, dated between the 2nd century BC and the beginning of the Roman period, are found in the Po-Valley (Adria in Polesine country; Mirandola-Mantova¹²). No parallels have been found in Roman *Etruria*. The Vingone Beaker type 1, therefore, proves an Etruscan morphologic revision of the “bulb-beakers”, till now regarded as an exclusive North Italian production.

Two examples of “bulb-beaker” form Ricci 1/186 (**fig. 2,9**), with globular body, tall rim and brown colour-coating show strong links with the Northern Italy Po-Valley pottery productions from the first half of the 1st century BC till the middle of the 1st century AD. This form is regarded as a witness of the persistence of a Celtic substrate in the pottery production of Roman Northern Italy¹³. The best comparisons are found in Bologna, among the Augustan *Hilario* workshop production¹⁴, in a 1st century AD dump in Adria of Polesine¹⁵ and from the 3rd–2nd century Bargellino boundary in *Faesulae*¹⁶. No other examples of this beaker have been recorded in *Etruria* apart from those at *Faesulae* and Vingone.

Maybe five examples belong to the beaker Ricci 1/205 with globular body, produced in the western Po-Valley from the Augustan to the Tiberian period, usually with brown/black colour-coating limited to the rim in the Augustan period but extended over the whole body in

the Tiberian period. The lack of colour-coating on the Vingone examples could indicate that they belong to the early production¹⁷.

Other handled beakers

A rod-shaped handle with a volute modelled in the round on one of the tips (**fig. 2,10**) finds a unique comparison in those of the beaker Ricci 1985 tav. 114,7–11 from *Pompeii*, which the Vingone handle has been hypothetically made to resemble. The beaker seems to derive inspiration from an Etruscan production of the 1st century BC¹⁸. The Vingone fabric is very fine, with a flaming red colour proved to be local by chemical analysis: therefore it seems to prove for the first time that these rare handled vessels were also produced outside *Pompeii*¹⁹.

Double handled cups

Two very fine examples of the double-handled cup Ricci 2/385 (**fig. 2,11**), with convex rim with a groove on the outside and very flattened carinated body, without colour-coating, prove their Central-Italian origin from the first half of the 1st century BC. The cups spread from here to the whole Mediterranean, both the Western (Hiberia, Gallia) and Eastern (Athens, Antikythera), followed by many imitations in shape and decorations; the production had a sharp decrease in the Augustan period. The Vingone examples could maybe prove that the cup continued to be produced after the Augustan period²⁰. In to their Italic or Hiberian origin, the cups had different types of decorations; cups without decorations, as the Vingone ones, are not common. Both the Vingone examples show a red band on the outside due to a lack of firing.

⁷ RICCI 1985, 329 tav. 107,15; FABBRI 2006, 69 fig. 62,4.

⁸ RICCI 1985, 248; TONIOLO 1986, 216–217 tav. 4,35–38; TASSINARI 1998, 45 tav. 21,10–13; FABBRI 2006, 70–71 fig. 63,1.

⁹ RICCI 1985, 279 tav. 90, 8; FABBRI 2006, 77–78 fig. 65,1–2.

¹⁰ RICCI 1985, 280, 90; 14; FABBRI 2006, 78 fig. 65,3.

¹¹ RICCI 1985, 278; FABBRI 2006, 67–68 fig. 61.

¹² L. SALZANI, La necropoli di Mirandola. In: Id., La necropoli gallica e romana di S. Maria Zevio (VR) (Mantova 1996) 26–27; 34–35 tab. 6 tav. 8; 31; tab. 18, tav. 12,2; 70–71 tab. 106 tav. 49,2 (the most similar example, in grey ware).

¹³ RICCI 1985, 278; 348; TASSINARI 1998, 42.

¹⁴ M. C. GUALANDI GENITO, Una fabbrica di fittili nella Bononia augustea: l'officina di Hilario. Atti e Mem. Deputazione Storia Patria Prov. Romagna n. s. 24, 1973, 285 n. 16 fig. 3.

¹⁵ TONIOLO 1986, 217 n. 44 tav. 4.

¹⁶ E. GALLI, Fiesole. Scoperta di sepolcri a camera in via del Bargellino. Not. Scavi Ant. 1, 1913, 333; F. BRIGHI ET AL. (a cura di), Scavi Museo Archeologico di Fiesole (Fiesole 1978) 82–85; Fiesole archeologica (Milano 1990) 82–83 n. 63. – I thank Marco de Marco of Fiesole Archaeological Museum for having allowed me to examine this example.

¹⁷ RICCI 1985, 126; PUCCI/MASCIONE 2003, 164.

¹⁸ RICCI 1985, 347 tav. 104,7–11.

¹⁹ FABBRI 2006, 73–73 fig. 63,5.

²⁰ RICCI 1985, 298 tav. 96,2.

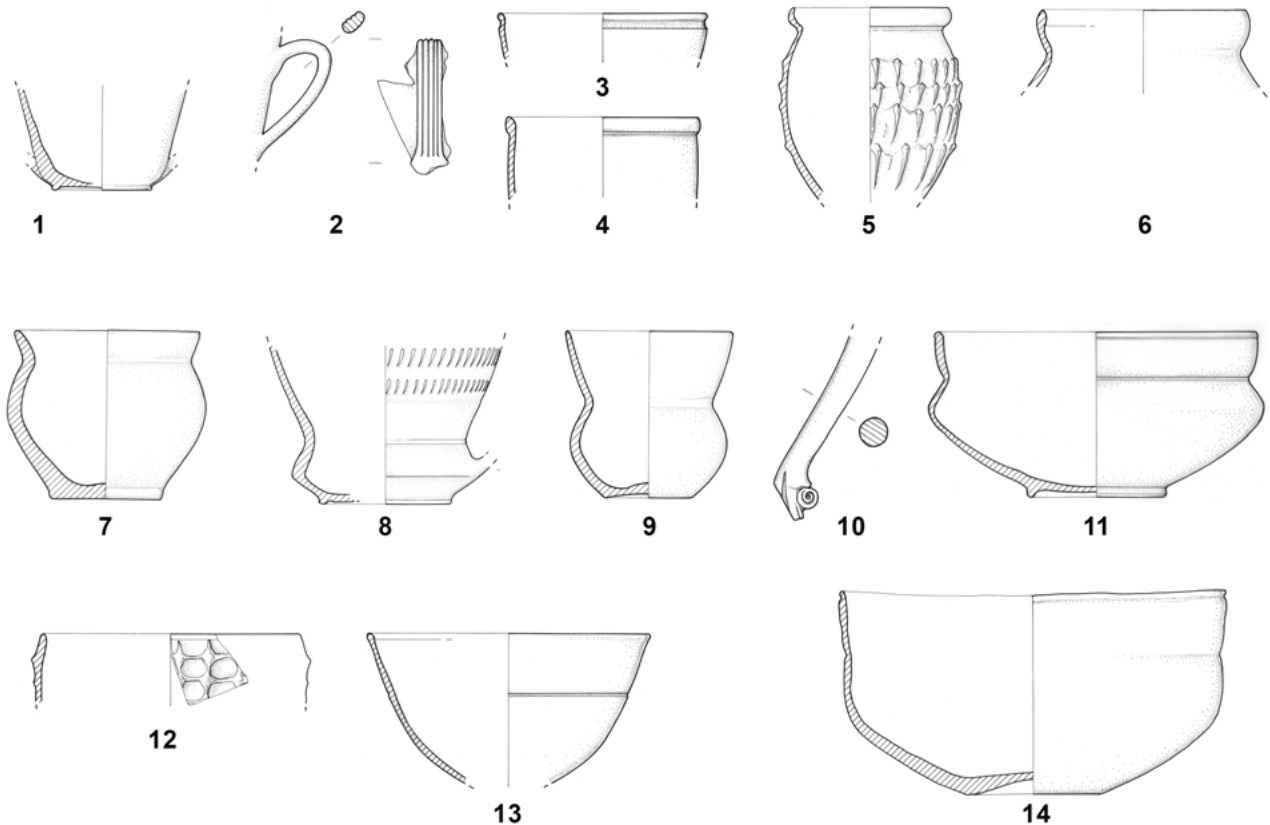


Fig. 2. 1–14 Vingone. Thin-walled pottery. Scale 1:3.

About ten examples belong to the thin-walled shapes in common ware fabric production, with thicker walls and a soft, dusty fabric. Comparisons can be found in six examples without decoration from Pistoia²¹. This double kind of pottery production (same shapes produced both in thin-walled and in common and coarse ware) is proved to be a feature of Roman Northern Etruria²².

Cups

Dated between the Tiberian and Claudian periods, the cup Ricci 2/235-MAYET 1975 tav. 39,319 (fig. 2,12) with carinated body and vertical rim with grooves on the outside is proved in the whole Mediterranean, having the most important workshops in Lyon, together with those in the Lower Rhine, Baetica and maybe Cisalpina. The Vingone examples, without colour-coating, have a barbotine sand “spider-web” decoration, a typical Lyonnaise decoration spreading during the Augustan period to the Alpine and Central-North Italian areas²³.

At least two examples belong to the cup Ricci 2/412 (fig. 2,13) with vertical walls, rim thickened on the inside and marked by a groove on the outside, produced in the Augustan period; one of them has an obliquely applied red colour-coating that finds comparison in a thin-walled beaker from the 1st century layers of the *villa* of Settefinestre near Cosa²⁴. Attested in Hiberia, this cup is rare in Italy except in Cosa. The Vingone example seems to be the only other example attested in Italy.

The cup Ricci 2/230 with thinned vertical rim, has a light rouletted decoration generically assimilable to Ricci 5 with oblique parallel lines, documented from the Augustan period both in Central Italy and in the camps of Oberaden and Vetera, beginning in Magdalensberg from 20–25 AD²⁵.

A reject item of the cup Ricci 2/408 (fig. 2, 14), produced from the Augustan period till the end of the 1st century AD in Southern Gallia and in other unknown production centres supposed to be in Central Italy²⁶, testifies for the first time that the cup was also produced in Roman Northern Etruria.

Common ware

Here will be presented part of the common ware produced at Vingone: small bottles, jugs, *ollae*, cups, plates, *pelves*.

²¹ G. VANNINI (a cura di), *L'antico Palazzo dei Vescovi a Pistoia*. II.2.1. I documenti archeologici (Firenze 1987) 687–688, nn. 3902–3907 (G. Capeccchi); FABBRI 2006, 78–79.

²² S. MENCHELLI, *Le produzioni ceramiche della bassa valle dell'Arno, in Ceramica romana e archeometria. Lo stato degli studi* (Firenze 1995) 209; PUCI/MASCIONE 2003, 161.

²³ RICCI 1985, 320, 93, 2; FABBRI 2006, 74 fig. 64, 2.

²⁴ A. RICCI (a cura di), *Settefinestre. Una villa schiavistica nell'Etruria romana. III. La villa e i suoi reperti* (Modena 1985) 171 tab. 45.2 = Ricci 1/59 (R. Camaiera).

²⁵ RICCI 1985, 292 tav. 93,7; 316 tav. 102,1.

²⁶ RICCI 1985, 189 tav. 102,9; K. GREENE, *The Pre-Flavian Fine Wares. Reports on the Excavations at Usk 1965–1976* (Cardiff 1979) 50; FABBRI 2006, 75–76 fig. 64,7 tav. 2 f.

Small bottles

Three types of small bottles were produced at Vingone: bottles types 6–8, (**fig. 3,1**), one of them entirely reconstructed. They have pear-shaped body, tall cylindrical neck marked with a series of two, three or more horizontal parallel cordons (a *Vingone* decorative motif), one vertical handle, plain or ring-foot. A few of them have a flaking red colour-coat, showing they belong to the Red-Coated common ware, produced in Central-Northern Italy between the Hellenistic and the Early Imperial periods²⁷. The shapes are very close to the T.S.I. bottles of the Tiberian period found in *Pompeii*. The comparison proves once more both that common ware derived its shapes from the elegant table ware prototypes, and that it belonged to a morphological pottery *koinè* extending to a large part of the Italic peninsula between the first half of 1st century BC and the Early Imperial period. The complex of small bottles dates from the first half of the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD: many comparisons in Northern Italy date to the 2nd century AD²⁸.

Jugs

The most prominent example is the jug type 1 (one is a rejected item) with languet on the rim imitating metal vessels (**fig. 3,2**) that finds parallels among the shipwreck of Diano Marina and was very common in Liguria during the 1st century AD²⁹.

Ollae

Ollae represent 16,5% of the whole ceramic production, with a wide range of shapes.

Double-handled *ollae* types 1, 2 and 3, covered by a thick and quite shiny red colour-coating have been found, one of them entirely reconstructed (type 1: **fig. 3,3**). They have a high convex everted rim marked with the *Vingone* decorative motif of two, three or more horizontal parallel cordons (also marking the shoulders of the vases), ovoid body and ring-foot. Many reject items have been found. They belong to the late Red Colour-coated vessels which are common in Northern Etruria and in the Po-Valley and well-known in Fiesole by local production of the 2nd–1st centuries BC³⁰. Comparisons in Northern and Central Italy, from Liguria and Lombardia as far as Ostia, show that the *Vingone ollae* belonged to a large productive *koinè* uniting the Italian common wares between the end of the Republican and the Early Imperial period³¹.

Globular *olla* type 4 (**fig. 3,4**) of a peculiar shape, with vertical rim and horizontal rod-shaped handles, finds a comparison in a series of grey ware *ollae* produced in Northern Etruria, well known in *Faesulae* during the late Republican and the Early Imperial period³². It seems to be worthy of notice that at least two shapes of Vingone pottery imitated Faesulan grey ware (*olla* type 4 and basin type 2).

The big *olla* type 12 (**fig. 3,5**) with everted rim stepped at the shoulder and globular body, finds parallels among

some *ollae* in *céramique grise gallo-romaine* from Vaison-la-Romaine, dated between the 1st century BC and the Early Imperial period³³. As well as for coarse ware, this proves the strong links between the *Vingone* pottery and the contemporary Gallo-Roman pottery productions.

Cups

The most prominent examples are a series of cups (cup type 1, **fig. 3,6**) derived from the black-glazed ware³⁴ dated between the 4th/3rd and the middle of the 1st centuries BC. They are not common in Etruria³⁵.

Coarse ware

Represented by *ollae* and pots, Vingone coarse ware amounts to 26% of the production. Fabrics are of local clay, with a kind of clay rich in inclusions added to enable the vessels to be used on the fire without breaking, possibly extracted from the nearby pits of Impruneta or Figline di Prato. *Ollae* types 1–5 have the internal surface intentionally blackened, maybe a particular preventive proofing treatment of the walls obtained by burning in the interior embers together with cinders and grease, in order to seal the pores. We show here two decorated *ollae*: *olla* type 1 (**fig. 4,1**) with two little knobs, maybe a standard of measurement, and *olla* type 3 (**fig. 4,2**) decorated with a goat protome moulded on the shoulder: there is a parallel in some T.S.I. bottles dated between the Tiberian and Neronian-Flavian periods³⁶. The walls of *ollae* types 1–3 are modelled with “hollows”, maybe derived from Gallo-Roman “folded” vessels dated between the end of the Republic and the 1st century AD³⁷.

Four types of pots with flat brimmed rim (e.g. pot type 1; **fig. 4,3**) and three types of saucepans with vertical rim (e.g. saucepan type 3; **fig. 4,4**) were also produced at Vingone.

Objects to be referred to domestic or cult furnishing

Thymiateria

Two examples of large stemmed *thymiateria* (h. 60 cm.) have been found, one of which is a reject item, reassembled

²⁷ FIESOLE 1990, 114–115 (L. Palermo).

²⁸ FABBRI 2006, 95–97 fig. 73,1–4.

²⁹ PALLARÉS 1983, 105–106 figg. 112–113; FABBRI 2008a, 98–99 fig. 74,2 tav. 4,c.

³⁰ FIESOLE 1990, 114–122 (L. Palermo);

³¹ FABBRI 2006, 100–102 fig. 74,1.3–4.

³² FABBRI 2006, 102–103 fig. 75,1.

³³ GOUDINEAU 1977, 157 Form 2, var. 2a; FABBRI 2006, 106 fig. 77.

³⁴ J.-P. MOREL, *Céramique campanienne: les formes*. Bibl. Ecoles françaises Athènes et Rome 244 (Roma 1981) 185–186 tav. 56,2560 types 2562a1–2565b1.

³⁵ FABBRI 2006, 107–109 fig. 78,4–5.

³⁶ G. PUCCI, *Terra sigillata italica*, in *Atlante delle forme ceramiche II. Ceramica fine romana nel bacino mediterraneo (tardo ellenismo e primo impero)*. EAA (Roma 1985) 398 tav. 133, 6 (bottle form 45, var. 2); RENDINI/FIRMATI 2002, 125 n. 163633.

³⁷ GOUDINEAU 1977, 168–169; FABBRI 2006, 125–128 fig. 90, 1–2 tav. 6,a fig. 91 tav. 6,c.

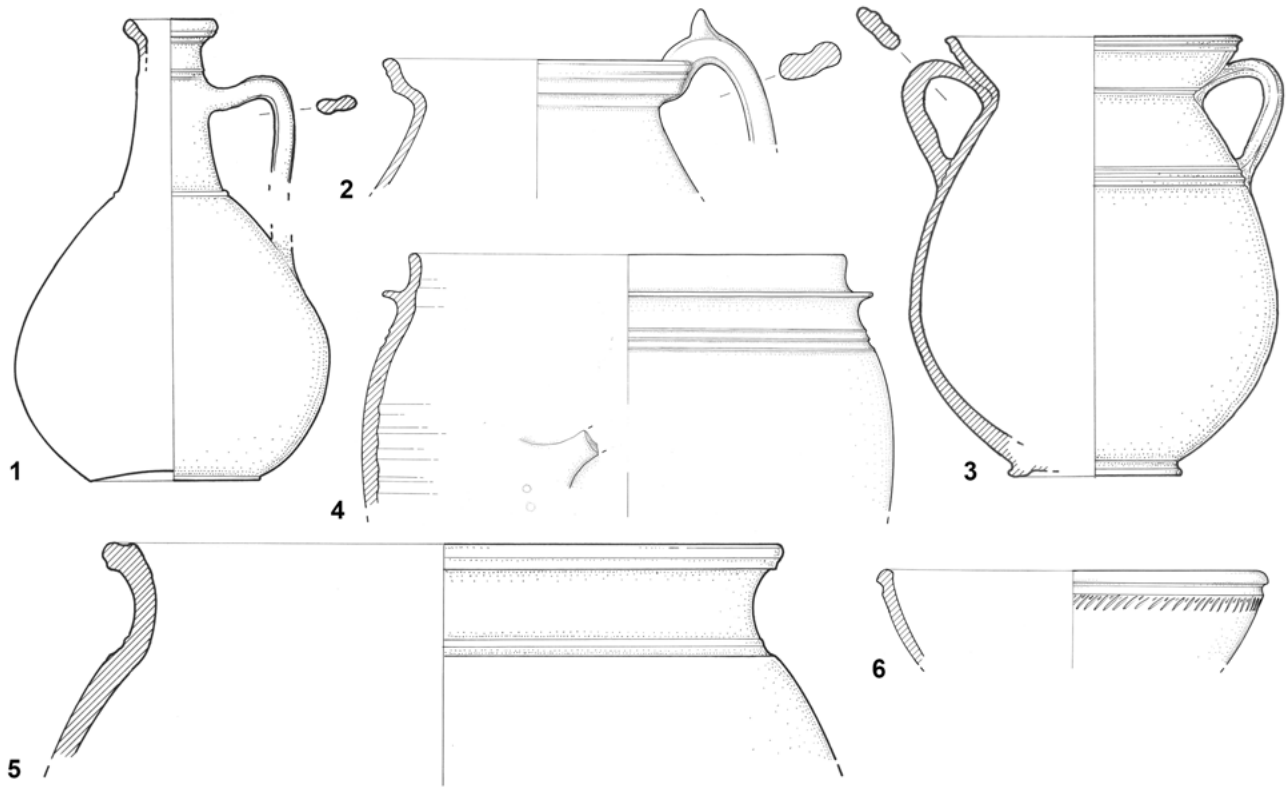


Fig. 3. 1–5 Vingone. Common ware. Scale 1:3.

in its entirety: Type 1 *thymiateria*, (fig. 5,1) have a large bowl decorated with four horizontal fillets with finger-impressions, a tall cylindrical stem and a base in the shape of a truncated cone. Rare comparisons have been found: a stemmed basin with removable upper bowl employed in the household, maybe for washing, in the Hellenistic Etruscan site of Ghiaccio Forte³⁸. Unlike this parallel, the Vingone examples have a fixed bowl: they were probably employed in containing dried items instead of liquids, maybe resins or essences to be burnt, like similar examples from the Etruscan votive deposit by the Porta Nord sanctuary in Vulci, dated between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD³⁹. Together with their large size and shape, this tends to confirm that the Vingone *thymiateria* were probably employed in religious ceremonies, maybe in the contemporary expanding Augustan *colonia* of *Florentia*. Vingone bricks stamped *Volasennae*, (*S*)*aenii*⁴⁰ could point to some links with the presence of Etruscan *gentes* attached to their religious traditions, e.g. *Volusenii* at *Sestinum*⁴¹.

A small *thymiaterion* (type 3, fig. 5,2) with parallels dated between the end of Republican period and the 1st–2nd centuries AD was also discovered⁴².

Basins

A series of seven types of large basins (diameters from 30 to 48,2 cm.) some of them with horizontal handles, maybe with ring-foot, were produced at Vingone (Basins types 1–7, the first two with some variants); part of them will be here presented.

Basin type 1 (fig. 5,3) very large, with straight rim, finds comparisons in the Hellenistic Etruscan site of Poggio Carlotta (Castelfiorentino - AR)⁴³;

Basin type 2 (fig. 5,4) with everted rim, lip composed of two convex mouldings, the top one jutting out, divided from each other by one or two grooves, carinated body, rod-shaped handles. This has parallels among Hellenistic basins in the Aegean, north-eastern Europe and the Balkans, and in two basins in grey ware from Pistoia, dated between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC and attributed to the production of *Faesulae*⁴⁴.

The Vingone pottery production proves to be strongly linked to the North-Italian and Gallo-Roman ceramic traditions, throwing a new light on pottery production in Roman *Etruria* in the Early Imperial period.

³⁸ RENDINI/FIRMATI 2002, 84–85 nn. 104048; 104059.

³⁹ A. PAUTASSO, Il deposito votivo presso la Porta Nord a Vulci (Roma 1994) 100 tav. 49 (M22).

⁴⁰ J. SHEPHERD, Prosopografia doliare. In: CAPECCHI ET AL. 2006, 251–261.

⁴¹ W. MONACCHI, Note sui materiali ceramici di Sestinum (campagne di scavo 1971 e 1973). In: Sestinum. Comunità antiche dell'Appennino tra Etruria ed Adriatico. Atti del convegno tenuto a Sestino (Arezzo). 18–19 Settembre 1983 (Rimini 1989); FABBRI 2006, 111–114 fig. 81.

⁴² Ibid. 115, fig. 83.

⁴³ L. ALDERIGHI/M. MENDERA, L'insediamento etrusco di Poggio Carlotta (Castelfiorentino): scavi 1986–1989. *Miscellanea Storica Valdelsa* 100/1–2 (Castelfiorentino 1994) 120, n. 74 fig. 13.

⁴⁴ For this type reference is made to FABBRI 2006, 117–120 fig. 84, 1–3; 85, 1–3.

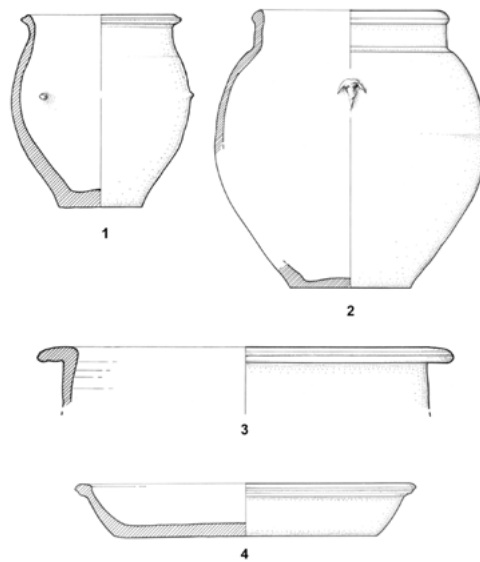


Fig. 4. 1–4 Vingone. Coarse ware. Scale 1:3.

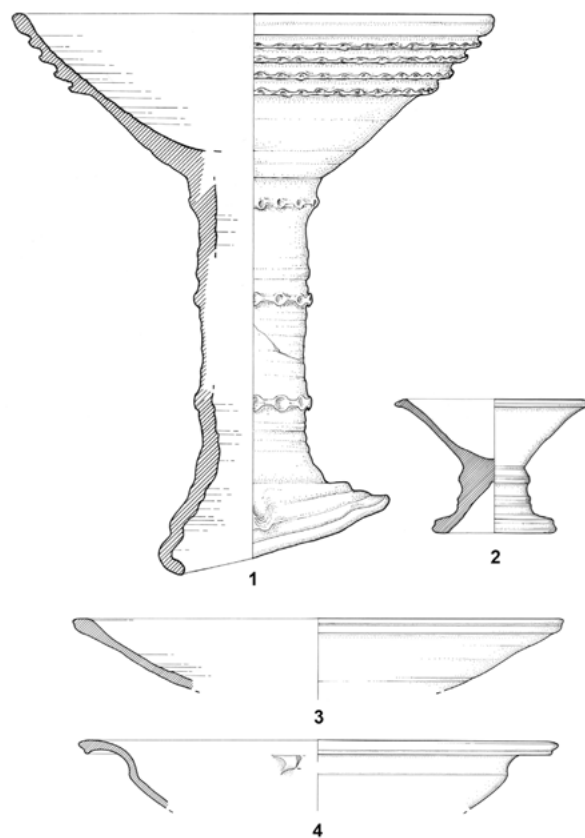


Fig. 5. 1–2 Vingone. Objects to be referred to domestic or cult furnishing: 1–2 *Thymiateria* type 1 and 3; 3–4 Basins type 1 and 2. Scale 1:5.

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