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FROM THE SARONIC GULF TO THE ADRIATIC SEE.
GREEK INSCRIPTIONS ON POTTERY
FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ADRIA

This work is the result of a 3-years-long search – funded by the Department of Humanities of Ca' Foscari University of Venice and by the private Foundation 'Nobile Carlo Bocchi' of Adria – aiming to sort the effective amount of the Greek inscriptions from Adria and to produce an overall study of them. For this purpose, thanks to the permission of the Director of the National Archaeological Museum – where all the finds ascribable to Adria are preserved –, it was possible to make the autopsy of every inscribed ceramic fragment and look through the genuine documentation concerning the history of the archaeological searches led in Adria since the 18th century.

The first part of the work is dedicated to the particular genesis of the archaeological and epigraphical collection preserved in the Museum: its historical core comes from a family from Adria, the Bocchi, who during the 18th and 19th centuries did important archaeological searches in the residential area of Adria and collected the ancient finds (in particular fragments of Greek vases made of Attic pottery) in the Museum (the so-called "Domestico Museo") that the family established. It is important to highlight how meaningful was the collecting and cataloguing work made by the members of this family, especially Francesco Girolamo and Francesco Antonio, who foresaw the significance of preserving every single fragment no matter its size and its visible value.

The second part is the actual *corpus* of the Greek inscriptions of Adria, that collects 270 texts: 136 vase inscriptions on Attic pottery (8 on Black-figured one, 128 on Red-figured one), 10 graffiti (3 proprietary marks, 6 dedications, 1 undetermined, all of them found near the Church of Santa Maria della Tomba) and 134 trademarks incised on Attic and Corinthian pottery. Besides, it was possible to index also 36 fragments – now lost – thanks to the consultation of three handwritten Catalogues of the "Domestico Museo" edited by F.A. Bocchi – fortunately they are complete with reliable drawings of the graffiti –. The fragments collected in the catalogue were found mainly during the researches led by the Bocchi in Adria: ac-

tually, some of them come from the digging that the regional board of the Ministry did 1983 in San Basilio – an hamlet of Ariano Polesine 12 Km from Adria –, where they found ancient ruins and traces of a settlement founded at the same time of Adria or earlier. It also included the fragments found in S. Basilio among the inscriptions of the catalogue because it's quite probably that this site functioned as port of call of Adria, so we can consider it as belonging to the Adrian *chora*. The new catalogue of the inscriptions from Adria offers some new interesting elements: the first complete *corpus* of Attic vase inscriptions (mainly on red-figured pottery) and of trademarks; some new graffiti.

As in the rest of Mediterranean world, we can see that also in the Attic vase inscriptions from Adria prevails the formula *ho pais kalos* attested in different versions (*kalos ho pais* or name combined with *kalos*, etc.): it's quite interesting the rich list of *Lieblingsnamen*, where we find names of painters and potters but also of historical personalities (i.e. *Laispodias*, name of a well-known general who took part in the Peloponnesian War); we register also the existence of a peculiar merchant's formula (χαῖρε καὶ πρῖό με) depicted on one of the few fragments of black-figured pottery.

Between the graffiti, the most revealing under an historical point of view, we have three new dedications (one of them lost) and a new proprietary mark: most likely they were written by people who did not come from Aegina, contrary to the already known graffiti, like for example the dedications of *Thychon* and *So* and the proprietary mark of *Soleios*. However there is no question about the significant role played by the Aeginetans inside the Greek community settled in Adria, it is important to point out that also other Greeks (Athenians and perhaps Eretrians) frequented the site, urged by the ambition to enhance the trade flow bound for the Delta's area.

Anyway, it is the mass of the trademarks that is impressive. As a matter of fact there are a lot of questions connected to the nature of this kind of inscriptions: no doubt trademarks are tied to traders of Attic pottery, who started to use them systematically thanks to the diffusion of red-figured and black-glazed pottery. The thorough study of Adria's trademarks casts a new light on their function, distribution and on the dynamics of the trade routes in Adriatic Sea, highlighting what were the main differences between the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian trade flows. We know now 6 inedited types: in addition we have 32 types already catalogued (see *Trademarks on Greek Vases* and its *Addenda*, by A. Johnston), and within these types we can isolate some odd graphic forms that we could define as local variants.

The presence of the same trademarks on Corinthian and Attic pottery is worth to be highlighted. The Corinthian fragments are only two, belonging to different vases, that have the same particular shape, the *kotyle*; they can be dated to the end of the VI cent. BC. They are marked by two types quite common in Adria, 2B Johnston (*alpha*, *hyp-silon* in ligature) and 16A Johnston (*py*, *hyp-silon* in ligature): they represent the most ancient exemplars of trademarks attested in Adria. For this reason

they bring forth some interesting observations: the indistinct use of the same mark on pottery made in different Greek countries suggests that the first traders who came to Delta's area were not Corinthians nor Athenians and everyone used to sell all the kind of fashionable vases. The disappearance of the Corinthian pottery just at the beginning of the V century and the wider diffusion of the Attic one (especially the red-figured one and the black-glazed one) shows us the turn-over of the traders: a flock of powerful and enterprising merchants, enticed by the special requests put forward by the Delta's people, take the unspecific traders' place.

The most important peculiarity of the Adriatic route bound for Adria is the massive demand of black-glazed pottery: a cross-check between the marks and the kind of the marked pottery has shown that half of the fragments incised has to be traced back to the black-glazed ceramic technique. On the other side, only few fragments can be counted as black- or red-figured pottery (that actually is very well attested in Adria): all the rest cannot be classified. Even if it were possible to demonstrate that the undetermined pottery is figured, the substantial extent of the black-glazed pottery would not change, because it constitutes the 50% of the entire amount of the engraved ceramic fragments. This is an important data, because it distinguishes Adria from the other Mediterranean *emporìa*, where trademarks quite always connote figured Attic pottery.

In several cases two different marks coexist on the same vase: they attest that the vase was bought at Athenian Ceramic by a trader, who took it to a particular *emporium*, where it was bought by another merchant, who carried it to Adria. This way we can explain why the trademarks with a different level of diffusion are combined together. For example, under the feet of two vases coexist two trademarks, type 6A Johnston combined in one case with 9B Johnston and in another one with 7D Johnston. The type 6A Johnston presents 2 variants attested in Adria but with local differences (EΠ instead of normal one EΠΙ): although this trademark is not very widespread in the Mediterranean area, here in Adria it is well attested (7 fragments) and it seems to reveal a trader who dealt only with Adria and worked in a limited area. All of the three types (6A, 9B, 7D) are attested both in Vulci and Capua: they could be the *emporìa* where the first trader – marked by types 7D or 9B – took the entire lot of vases from Greece and where the trader EΠ bought some of the vases belonging to that lot in order to take them to Adria.

A cross-check between the destinations of the vases that have the same trademarks attested at Adria shows some similarities with Etruria (especially Vulci and *Volsinii Veteres*) and Campania (Cuma, Capua and Nola): however, Adria stands out because of the massive request of black-glazed pottery. Furthermore we know that some of the most enterprising merchants came to Adria, like 9E Johnston (*alpha/rho*) who was so powerful that probably employed some Etruscans as his middlemen, who marked the vase on his behalf using the same trademark but writing it in Etruscan alphabet.

Vulci and *Volsinii Veteres* are some of the Etruscan sites from where came the Etruscan settlers of Adria at the middle of VI century BC. They welcomed the Greeks - mainly Aeginetans, but not only -, who came to live there and with them shared spaces, habits and rituals. Between the middle of VI and the end of the V century Adria was the main destination of the Upper Adriatic route: it was largely thanks to its particular requests, clearly distinguished from the Ionic and Tyrrhenian *emporia*, that a lot of traders decided to develop marks used only for its goods. Adria's trademarks emphasize how Spina and the other Adriatic *emporia* took advantage of the commercial reputation of Adria, taking its place between V and IV century BC.