

D. Tsiafakis, “The East Greek and East Greek-style Pottery”

in

F. van der Wielen-van Ommeren & L. De Lachenal eds., La dea di Sibari e il santuario ritrovato. Studi sui rinvenimenti dal Timpone Motta di Francavilla Marittima.

II.2: Ceramiche di importazione, di produzione coloniale e indigena, Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali Bollettino d'arte Volume speciale, 2008, 7-56.

Summary

The J. Paul Getty Museum and the University in Bern, had in their collections a group of vases and vase fragments, that apparently come from the sanctuary of Athena in Francavilla Marittima. Although fragmentary in the extreme, this collection provides a glimpse of the import trade in Magna Grecia during the Archaic period.

One of the major problems faced in this part of the volume, was choosing the objects. The group of fragments catalogued here represents in general the pottery related to East Greek production. Here I refer to East Greek imports as well as to “East Greek-style” or “type” pottery, terms that require a further explanation. In addition to the imports from the East Greek region, East Greek pottery was imitated by potters at a number of sites in South Italy, especially the area of Sybaris and Metapontion, giving rise to locally produced styles, with the most characteristic example the case of the Ionian cups. The distinction between the imports and the local imitation is not always clear. Local imitations can be distinguished in: a) exact copies of East Greek vases made locally, and b) East Greek influence on local pottery motives, and shapes. The second group may be divided into two sub-categories: b1) vases with East Greek influence, b2) vases with a combination of influences from various workshops.

The subject of local copies or adaptations of imported vases is an interesting problem, one beset with many difficulties of interpretation as well as with a simple lack of knowledge. In many cases, the specific attribution of a particular object to a production center must be tentative at best, due to the fragmentary nature of the material, the difficulties of attribution on the basis of fabric, and the lack of clear understanding of the production and distribution patterns of each center.

Despite these inherent weaknesses and taken under consideration all the above, it was decided to publish the following fragments in this part of the catalogue. By far the greatest percentage of fragments can be classified as East Greek or derived from East Greek prototypes. A conservative approach has been taken, grouping the material into broad categories representing well-known types produced in East Greek region. It is certain that many of our objects are imports on the evidence of their fabric and the close similarity in the details of shape and decoration with vessels found in the East Greek region. Others, however, should be seen as local products, with 'local' meaning the broader area of Magna Grecia. Their distinction is not clear and to insist on the identification of their origin in the majority of cases would be premature. Scientific analysis may clarify the situation and resolve the problem in the future. Therefore in the current stage of knowledge, it was chosen in presenting the group below as "East Greek" and "East Greek-style".

Although the material in this group is sporadic and therefore cannot be considered representative, the quantity of the East Greek pottery is relatively small comparatively to the Corinthian vases of the group. Worth of note is that similar percentage appears to the excavated material from the site. The largest group among our East Greek and East Greek-style fragments belong to the type of the 'Ionian cup'. Significant is also the number of the plastic vases followed by the gray wares. The 'Wild goat' group and the late Geometric oinochoai occur in smaller quantities, while the presence of the 'bird bowls' and Chian pottery is very limited. Of interest is the extreme rarity of decorated East Greek pottery -decorated, that is, more than simple bands of paint. With the exception of the graves, where "Ionian cups" or "Ionian type cups" are found in large quantities, the East Greek material is limited in the area of the sanctuary in Timpone della Motta. It is worth of note that most of the East Greek findings come from the deposits. For a number of reasons related to the categories of pottery, date, and joining pieces -all explained further below-, there is no doubt that the majority of the material in this chapter comes from the area of Francavilla Marittima. There is also a strong probability based on joining pieces as well as on the similarity of the material that the majority of the pieces in our group come from 'Stipe I'.

The earliest in date fragments of our group belong to late Geometric oinochoai dated in the late 8th – early 7th c. B.C. The latest East Greek wares presented here, date in the second half of the sixth century B.C. A similar chronological range occurs

in the East Greek finds excavated from the Timpone della Motta in Francavilla. Furthermore the distribution of East Greek and East Greek-style pottery in South Italy is impressive, with similar East Greek wares dated from the late 8th – 6th centuries B.C., to be found not only in the area of Sybaris, but in Sicily, in Magna Grecia and in Etruria generally. In particular for the region of Sybaris, it appears that there were contacts with Ionians.

The pieces catalogued in this chapter are arranged according to date and shape, and they are divided in eight parts, each identified with a capital letter of the alphabet (A, B, C etc). The individual objects are numbered with the letter of the part they belong and an Arabic number in ascending order. Regarding the objects in parts A-G, there is no reason to doubt that they must come from Francavilla Marittima. The last part (H), however, entitled “Miscellaneous” includes a selection of objects that their origin is not securely identifiable and an East Greek influence can be traced in a number of them.