LATE-REPUBLICAN GREY WARE FROM BASILICATA AND APULIA (SOUTHERN ITALY, 2ND – 1ST CENTURY BC)

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The Grey Ware is a late-Republican ceramic production attested in many South Italian settlements dated from 3rd to 1st century BC. Previously known as "Campana C", it is characterized by a typical grey to black "glaze" and shows homogeneous formal features (mainly open plates and cups). This study provides the first petrographical, mineralogical (PXRD), and chemical (XRF, FeO titration, SEM/EDS) inter-sites characterization of 89 Grey Ware samples from four different late Republican settlements of Difesa San Biagio (Montescaglioso), Piano della Civita (Tricarico) and Matera in Basilicata and Iesce (Altamura) in Apulia. The aim of the archaeometric analyses is to verify the hypothesis of a local production of this ware in many inland settlements of Basilicata and Apulia. Twelve samples from the clay deposits of "Argille subappennine" and three of "Argille varicolori" cropping out in the proximities of the sites have been compared to the pottery samples.

Two petrographical groups ("A" and "B") with different grain-size distribution and composition have been distinguished. Both groups share calcareous matrix and relatively high content of Fe-oxides. Group B can be distinguished from Group A for a coarser texture and for the occurrence of calcite and fossils as non plastic inclusions. The two groups show high chemical homogeneity.

"Argille subappennine" are calcareous clayey silts with prevalent illite as clay mineral. The "Argille varicolori" smectitic clays have suitable iron content because of pyrite, but they are not calcareous. Although "Argille subappennine" are geochemically consistent with the grey paste samples, their Fe_2O_{3tot} content is lower than that of the ceramics. Chemical and mineralogical analyses conducted on the fine fraction (< 2 μm) of Argille subappennine showed that Fe_2O_{3tot} content increases and CaO decreases compared to the bulk sample. This may prove that elutriated "Argille subappennine" were used to make the ceramics of Group A, whereas bulk

clay samples with much calcareous sand and fossils were used for the ceramics of Group B. Chemical homogeneity and good match of Group B with “Argille subappennine” clays from Tricarico, point to this as common production site in Basilicata.

Grey paste was obtained with reducing firing atmosphere. The mineral assemblage points to firing temperature range between 850 and 1,050 °C. Black slip is well vitrified and homogeneous (SEM/EDS).