

# **DOES LOW QUALITY RELATE NECESSARILY TO LOCAL PRODUCTIONS AND LIMITED TRADE? THE TERRA SIGILLATA “A PRODUCTION” FROM THE NAPLES BAY**

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Recent archaeometric research on sites on the Catalan coast, in the western Mediterranean, has shown the large presence of the terra sigillata “A Production” from the Naples bay. The archaeological information enables to identify the consumption of this pottery dating back from the beginning of Augustan period to the first half of the first century AD. From the typological point of view, their shapes are the same as those exhibited by the products of Italian *sigillata*. However, they clearly differ from Italian *sigillata* on the grounds of their visual appearance. As a consequence, it is always considered local and it is never included in the provenance studies as a veritable Italian *sigillata*, even if its presence allows dating strata and establishing trade networks between Italian Peninsula and several archaeological sites.

The analytical study of this group of pottery included chemical and mineralogical characterization by means of X-Ray Fluorescence and X-Ray Diffraction as well as study of microstructure by Scanning Electron Microscopy. The data enabled us to locate the provenance of this group, by comparing with reference material, to the Naples bay. At the same time, the SEM and XRD results combined revealed low firing temperatures for all A Production members.

These results highlight the phenomenon related to sigillata produced in convection kilns, as opposed to the high temperature ones, fired in radiation kilns. The widespread distribution of this A Production and the fact it comes from Naples bay does not fit with the general assumption of local imitations for sigillata produced in such convection kilns.