

THE OBJECT OF THE SEASON

AUTUMN

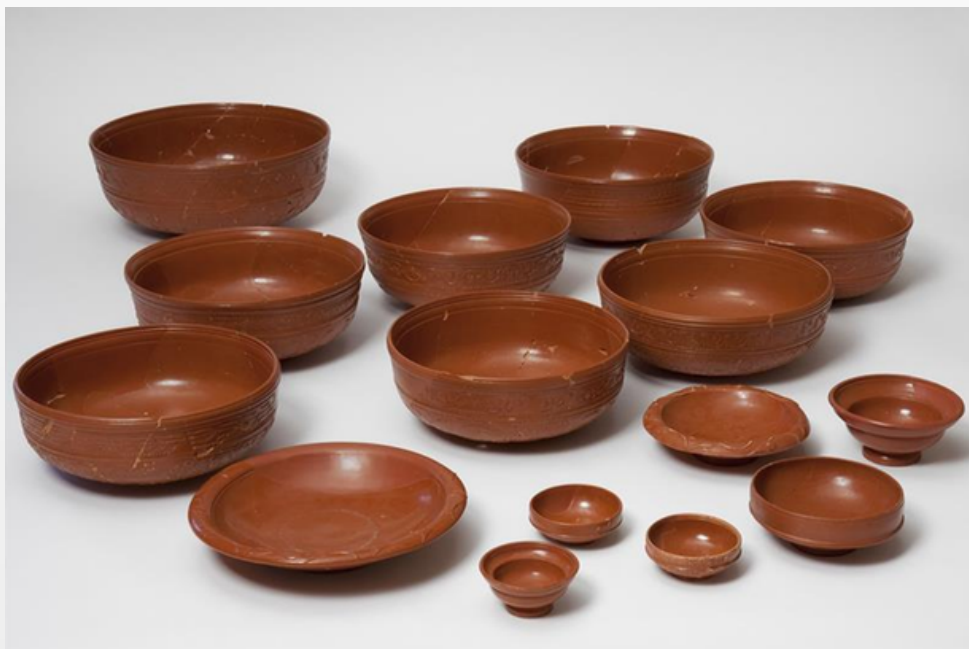


TERRA SIGILLATA

Terra sigillata, also known as Samian ware, or red slip ware, is a type of Roman pottery that was the most popular from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. It is characterized by its red or orange color, fine smooth texture, and often decorated with relief patterns and applied ornaments. *Terra sigillata* was widely used for tableware and decorative items in the Roman Empire and is considered a significant archaeological find for understanding Roman culture and trade. It is a true index fossil whose mere presence denotes the more or less intense degree of Romanisation of a region. It was produced in various regions of the Roman Empire, with different styles and designs, such as Arretine and Padan (North Italy), South Gaulish and East Gaulish, as well as not so much known *sigillata* produced in Pannonia, Hispania, North Africa etc.

ALÉSIA

A *terra sigillata* ceramic service at Alesia. In 1906, a house in the Gallo-Roman town of Alesia was excavated, later to be known as the "House of Silenus" after the discovery of a bronze bust of this character. On the 22nd of May, Victor Pernet and his teams found a rather impressive collection of several hundreds of *terra sigillata* shards: eight large bowls (22 to 30 cm in diameter), two small bowls (8 and 12 cm in diameter) and five goblets (8 to 20 cm in diameter).



Set of Terra Sigillata from La Graufesenque. (Aveyron, France)

The set has been identified as coming from the La Graufesenque workshops (Aveyron, France) and dating from the second quarter of the 1st century BC, thanks to its shape, decoration and, above all, the workshop signatures found on some pieces: "Scottius", "Firmo fec(it)" and "Salvetu(s)". This is the only complete service preserved from this period in all of eastern Gaul. Recent research has shown that this type of pottery was not used for cooking or eating, but for serving and presenting food. It could also be a merchant's stock. This collection gives us an exceptional insight into the table of a well-off family in Alesia at the beginning of the common era. This service was produced in Gaul, notably by Scottius, Firmo, Salvetus and the workers in their workshops, who exported their wares from the UK to Pompeii! It allows us to imagine the eventful life of these ceramics, from the potter's wheel to our museum!



RUTA VÍA DE LA PLATA

Terra sigillata is undoubtedly the most widespread and universal type of archaeological artefact found at sites occupied in Roman times in the whole Empire. It is therefore often found at the different archaeological sites along the Ruta Vía de la Plata, which was a route of communication during that period.



Its presence was maintained over time, although the origin of the objects varied, from the first Italic products to the later African ware, including products from Gaul and, naturally, Hispania.

The three examples presented here, from places that are distant from one another, are a demonstration of that variety in their origin and the peculiarity that they are sometimes stamped with the name of the workshop or potter, which is the reason for the name given to this type of ware. Some of them also demonstrate one of the complementary functions of these vessels: the transmission of new ideas through their decoration.

Hispanic terra sigillata in the 'emperor busts' series, from Medina de las Torres.

This example comes from a site linked to the oldest levels of an artisans' insula in the Baetic town of *Contributa Iulia Ugultunia* (in Medina de las Torres, Badajoz) and appeared in a layer dated in the late first century AD.

The fabric is salmon-coloured with small white inclusions. The slip is thick and deeply cracked in the hollows of the decoration. Three busts were shaped with the same awl, representing Emperor Domitian.

This was the first example of this type of representation to be documented in the Province of Baetica, and is the southernmost place in which this kind of product from Tritium Magallum has been found. However, the greatest interest of the vessel is that the composition had not been documented before.



Body sherd of Hisp. 37 with representation of Bustos of Domiciano

Fine table ware made in ceramic forms a large part of the vessels that are found in archaeological excavations in the ancient Legio, in León.



Terra sigillata. Shape: Dragendorff 27.

Hispanic terra sigillata vessel. Pottery: Tritium Magallum (Rioja)

This is a fragment of the body of a hemispherical Hispanic *terra sigillata* vessel, possibly of Form 37B. The moulded decoration was very likely to have formed two friezes, of which only part of the metope field of the lower one has been preserved. Several figures are represented. The most complete square displays two figures similar to the goddess Fortune, separated by a vertical line of angles on which a bird appears. Below them, separated by two lines of angles, two animal figures, a dog and a hare or rabbit, are running. On the right, another metope contains a very incomplete human figure that might represent Neptune.

Terra sigillata vessel

A cup in the Dragendorff 27 form of Samian ware, found at the site of Campa Torres in Gijón (Spain).

This was made in the second half of the first century AD in the Montans workshop in the south of Gaul, from where it probably reached Gijón by a maritime route. A stamp on the inside of the base shows the name (IVLVS) of the potter who made it. His products have been found at other sites in the region, such as the hillforts of Pencia and Coaña.



Terra sigillata found at Campa Torres (Gijón). Shape: Dragendorff 27.

SIRMIUM

The territory, which includes the borders of the former province of Lower Pannonia with Sirmium as its center, was during the Roman period a transit area for imports from the north and west to the east and south. The earliest products of *terra sigillata* pottery arrived from the Italic and Southern Gallic areas, along the river routes of the Sava and Drava, towards the middle and lower reaches of the Danube. The later Central and Eastern Gallic t.s. was distributed from the Danube-Rhine area to the south and east.

Local - Pannonian workshops, which were attested during archaeological research, are dated at the second half of the 2nd and the beginig of 3rd century. These t. s. products of the workshops so-called: "Siscia", "Pacatus" and "X", appear in the form of the bowl Drag. 37 with stylized relief ornaments.

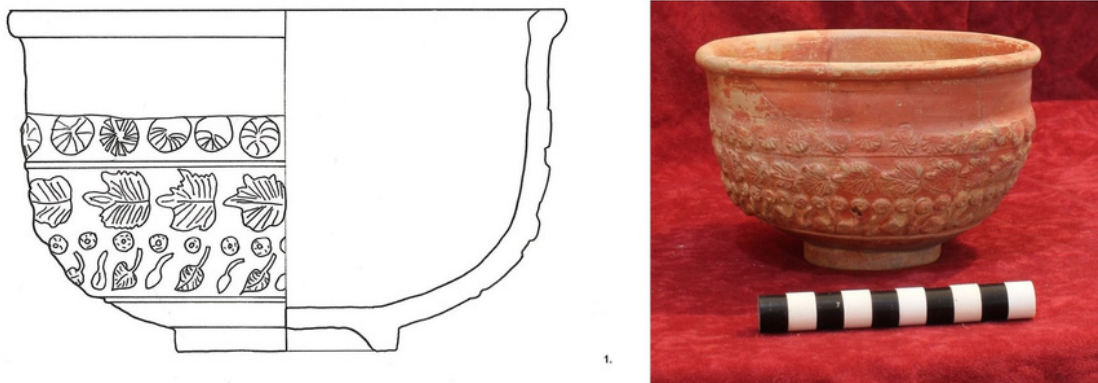


Fig. 1, Local terra sigillata bowl in the form of Drag. 37, Sirmium, Castellum aque site, 2nd century A.D.

At the latest appears the African Red Slip Ware ware which can be found in the late Roman cultural layers of Sirmium. However, there are very rare examples of t. s. pottery from North African workshops. Their import occurs at the time of the greatest prosperity of ancient Sirmium, i.e. from the middle of the third to the middle of the mid fifth century A.D. That corresponds to the greatest production of the North African *terra sigillata* which was from A.D. 240-250 to A.D. 450.

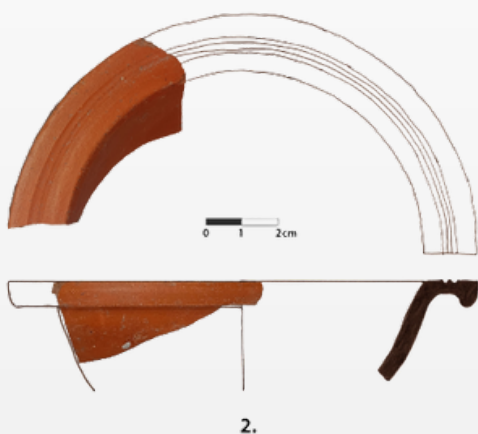


Fig. 2, The African Red Slip bowl in the form of Hayes 70, Sirmium, Decumanus site, first half of 5th century A.D. (and possibly a little earlier)

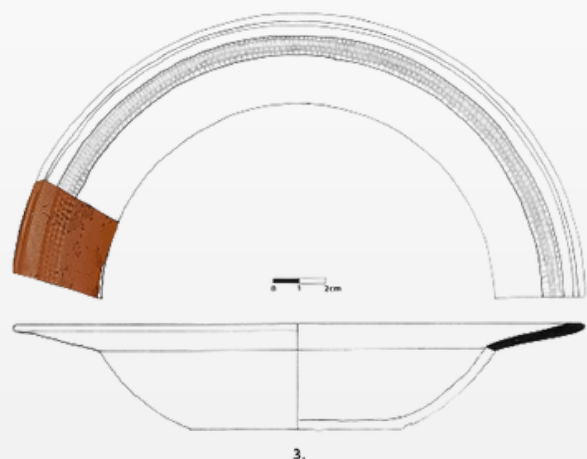
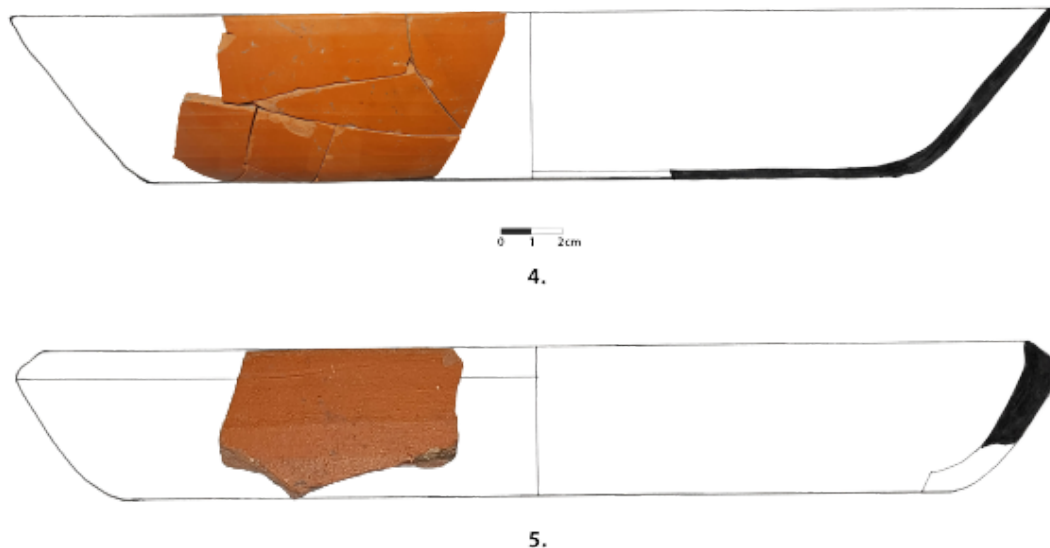


Fig. 3, The African Red Slip dish from central Tunisia in the form of Hayes 45A, Sirmium, Decumanus site, A.D. 230/240 to A.D. 325



Figs. 4 and 5, The African Red Slip plates from central and northern Tunisia in the form of Hayes 50A and Hayes 61 A, Sirmium, Decumanus site, dated (4.) A.D. 230/240 to A.D. 325 and (5.) A.D. 325 to A.D. 400/420

The African Red Slip Ware differ from Italian and Gaulish t. s. wares primarily in fabric: the clay is generally coarser and lighter in colour and does not, usually, have the high gloss surface of the earlier wares.



Fig. 6, A common finding of terra sigillata bowl in the form of Drag. 33, Hrtkovci, Gomolava - necropolis site, grave good from 2nd-3rd centuries