

# A meticulous study of N African pottery from Augsburg (*Raetia*)

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FERDINAND HEIMERL, *NORDAFRIKANISCHE SIGILLATA, KÜCHENKERAMIK UND LAMPEN AUS AUGUSTA VINDELICUM/AUGSBURG* (Münchner Beiträge zur provinzialrömischen Archäologie Band 6; Reichert Verlag. Wiesbaden 2014). Pp. 184, 4 farb. Abb., 32 s/w Abb., 17 Taf. ISBN 978-3-95490-028-2. EUR 39.

The publication under review presents and discusses N African fine wares, cooking ware and lamps found in Augsburg (*Augusta Vindelicum*), capital of the Roman province of *Raetia* (after the early 4th c. A.D., of *Raetia secunda*). The results are assessed in the context of the totality of African Red Slip (ARS) Ware and lamps found in the province. It is a revised version of F. Heimerl's "Magisterhausarbeit", which was supervised by M. Mackensen, who also edited the present volume and contributed its preface (7-8).

Heimerl follows the Italian, French and German tradition of calling the ceramics in question "sigillata". In the English-speaking world, such vessels are commonly referred to as ARS, a name proposed in 1972 by J. W. Hayes in his landmark *Late Roman pottery*.<sup>1</sup> The term originally comprised both fine wares and cooking ware, but the latter are now usually treated separately.<sup>2</sup> Hayes noted that the clay of ARS is "generally coarser and lighter in colour" than that of Italian and Gaulish terra sigillata, only rarely attaining the "high surface gloss of the earlier wares".<sup>3</sup> Still, the distinction between "sigillata" and "ARS" reflects different research traditions rather than fabric variations. More than 450 fragments of ARS ware have been found at Augsburg (21 n.93), but these represent a smaller number of individual vessels. Heimerl's catalogue comprises 384 individual entries, in addition to 7 examples of cooking ware and 20 lamps.

The book has 5 parts of unequal length (9-91), the longer ones being divided into subsections. It is rounded off by summaries in German, English and Italian (93-98), followed by a catalogue (99-131), various tables and lists (133-45), bibliographical references (147-55), 17 plates with instructive drawings of most of the discussed pottery and lamps, and 2 colour plates.

Part 1 (9-12) assesses the potential of the analysis of N African pottery for enhancing our knowledge of the trade and settlement history of *Augusta Vindelicum*. Part 2 (13-14) gives a succinct overview of the "Stand der Forschung" of N African pottery and lamps from Augsburg. Their number has increased sevenfold since 1985, when L. Bakker published the first survey of such finds,<sup>4</sup> already expanded upon by Mackensen in 2007.<sup>5</sup> In Part 3 (15-19), Heimerl reviews the state of research on African Red Slip Ware. He begins by addressing the terminology of the fabrics, largely adopting (16 n.51) the system defined by A. Carandini and his collaborators in 1981.<sup>6</sup> He then presents an overview of the major production centres and the less familiar,

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1 J. W. Hayes, *Late Roman pottery* (London 1972) 13. The name is preserved in an ongoing review of the typology and dating evidence for late-antique fine wares: cf. M. Á. Cau, P. Reynolds and M. Bonifay (edd.), *LRFW 1. Late Roman Fine Wares. Solving problems of typology and chronology: a review of the evidence, debate and new contexts* (Oxford 2011).

2 See J. P. Ikäheimo, *Late Roman African cookware of the Palatine East Excavations, Rome. A holistic approach* (BAR S1143; Oxford 2003) 3; V. Leitch, "Reconstructing history through pottery: the contribution of Roman N African cookwares," *JRA* 26 (2013) 169-95.

3 Hayes (supra n.1).

4 L. Bakker, "Ausgewählte Gefäßkeramik der frühen und späten Kaiserzeit aus Augusta Vindelicum-Augsburg," *Forschungen zur provinzialrömischen Archäologie in Bayerisch-Schwaben* (Augsburg 1985) 45-77.

5 M. Mackensen, "Nordafrikanische Sigillata der mittleren Kaiserzeit aus Augsburg," *BayVgBl* 72 (2007) 341-53.

6 EAA. *Atlante delle forme ceramiche I. Ceramica fine romana nel bacino mediterraneo. Medio e tardo impero* (Rome 1985).

presumably mainly minor, kiln sites, which did not play a rôle in long-distance trade (16 n.53; 19 n.91). This is followed by a careful presentation of the available archaeometric analyses. Heimerl notes (19) that one of the unresolved issues is the location of the workshops producing the fabrics A1 and A2; he leans towards identifying N Tunisia, perhaps the region of Carthage, as a likely candidate (19 nn. 84-86; 49 n. 463).<sup>7</sup>

The core is Part 4 (21-61), Heimerl's analysis of the ARS fine, cooking ware and lamps found at Augsburg. It is largely based on his personal inspection of the material, supplemented by scientific clay analyses of selected examples (Table 1), which led to the identification of vessels from the kiln sites at Sidi Khalifa (Hayes 50B, 58B, 61B, 61 transitional, 91), Oudna (Hayes 50B, 61), El Mahrine (Hayes 52B, 61A/B, 91A/B, 91A/B/E1) and Henchir el Guellal (Hayes 58A). The finds are reviewed, beginning with those of fabric A1, continuing with the N Tunisian fabrics D1 and D2, and concluding with the Central Tunisian fabrics C1, C2 and C3/4.<sup>8</sup> The date range of each form represented in the material is assessed in depth.<sup>9</sup> As the contexts of the finds at Augsburg were mostly disturbed or could not be taken into account for other reasons (66 n.627), the suggested dates are based on chronological evidence from elsewhere, on which the author is remarkably well informed. He proceeds to a similar discussion of the typology and chronology of the N African cooking ware (47-51)<sup>10</sup> and lamps (51-61) from Augsburg. Most of the latter belong to Hayes IA/B (*Atlante* VIII A1 and A2), dated (possibly a little late) to the first half of the 5th c. The most interesting of these is a lamp with a *menorah* as discus motif, one of the few finds from *Raetia secunda* with clear Jewish connotations.<sup>11</sup> The material also comprises a lamp of a transitional *Atlante* VIII, "Lampen mit durchlochtem Griffzapfen" and two examples of Hayes II (*Atlante* X), at times referred to as Christian.<sup>12</sup>

Part 5 (63-91) comprises Heimerl's archaeological and historical evaluation of his findings. He concludes that the earliest occurrences of ARS in Augsburg go back to the late 1st or early 2nd c. A.D. Their number increased from the second quarter of the 3rd c. (and particularly in the 4th c.) to the first half of the 5th. Finds originating from workshops in Central Tunisia constituted the majority at first, but N Tunisian products played a dominating rôle from the middle of the 4th into the 5th c. However, N African fine wares, cooking ware and terracotta lamps datable to the second half of the 5th c. have not been found at Augsburg (74). Heimerl regards some of the earliest examples (e.g., inkwells of the rare Hayes 124) as likely to be personal possessions of travellers, but, following Mackensen's lead, he considers the fine wares from the second quarter of the 3rd c. on to be objects of trade, with the possible exception of the relatively few occurrences of African cooking ware. Since contemporaneous N African transport amphorae are rarely found in *Raetia* (72), it seems unlikely that the fine ware, cooking ware and lamps reached Augsburg by riding 'piggy-back' on other commodities (or at least those transported in amphora). Incidentally, it is not easy to find support for the 'piggy-back' theory

7 As suggested by Hayes (supra n.1) 298.

8 The distinction between N, Central and S Tunisia was originally suggested by Hayes (supra n.1) 296-99. For an assessment of the fineware production away from the Tunisian coast, see M. Bonifay, "Africa: patterns of consumption in coastal regions versus inland regions: the ceramic evidence (300-700 A.D.)," in L. Lavan (ed.), *Local economies? Production and exchange of inland regions in late antiquity* (LAA 10; Leiden 2013) 540-47.

9 Fabric A1: Hayes Forms 8A, 14A and 124; fabrics C1 and C2: Hayes 45A, 48A, 50A; fabric C3/4: Hayes 50B, 58A, 72B; fabric D1 and D2: variants of Hayes 50B and 52B, 58B, 59A/B, 61A, 61B, 67, variants of Hayes 67, an unclassified plate, stamped base fragments of Hayes 59/61/67, Hayes 67/71, unclassified small bowls, Hayes 91 A/B and variants of Hayes 91.

10 Two are classified as Bonifay's *Culinaire* A (Hayes 23B) and 5 as Bonifay's *Culinaire* B (Hayes 181 with variants of this, and 182).

11 For N African lamps with this motif, see J. Lund, "A synagogue at Carthage? Menorah-lamps from the Danish excavations," *JRA* 8 (1995) 245-62.

12 To the references concerning this category may now be added J. Bussière and J. C. Rivel, *Répertoire de fleurons sur bandeaux de lampes africaines type Hayes II* (Oxford 2015).

in archaeological material from elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> Heimerl demonstrates (66-69) that the finds — in particular those from the second quarter of the 3rd to the early 4th c. — are pretty evenly distributed in the area of Roman Augsburg and he shows (74-81) that the same pattern is evident in late antiquity.<sup>14</sup> He notes that the chronological and spatial distribution accords well with those of coins, *fibulae* and belt fittings from the late 3rd to the first half of the 5th c.<sup>15</sup> Like the N African imports, these categories cease by the middle of the 5th c. Accordingly, a discussion of possible settlement continuity in Augsburg after that date must be based on other kinds of evidence (82-83).

Finally, Heimerl discusses the outcome of his analysis against the background of corresponding finds from the province of *Raetia* (in late antiquity, *Raetia prima* and *secunda*) as a whole. He concludes that the find patterns are consistent, even if relatively few examples of fine wares, cooking ware and lamps from N Africa reached the province from the 1st to the early 4th c. Their number increased markedly from the middle of the 4th c. onwards, but they had all but disappeared from the N part of *Raetia secunda* by the middle of the 5th c. The reasons for the contraction are not evident. Heimerl views it in the context of a general reduction in exports of N African ceramics to the Adriatic region and beyond after the middle of the 5th c., pointing to a number of possible reasons for this, including the Vandal conquest of N Africa in A.D. 439. He is aware of the disputed nature of this suggestion (90 n.789), which, indeed, seems to be contradicted by archaeological evidence both from N Africa and elsewhere in the Mediterranean.<sup>16</sup>

In sum: Heimerl's carefully researched and fully up-to-date study bears testimony to how far our knowledge of African Red Slip, cooking ware and lamps has progressed over recent decades.<sup>17</sup> In addition, it contributes in no small way to knowledge of the settlement history and external relations of *Augusta Vindelicum* and the province of *Raetia* as a whole. The young scholar has successfully fulfilled the task set before him with an impressive first publication. Much may be expected from him in the future.

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13 See J. Lund, *A study of the circulation of pottery in Cyprus from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD* (Copenhagen 2015) 213-14.

14 A few finds were brought to light outside the city walls.

15 M. Paul, *Fibeln und Gürtelzubehör der späten römischen Kaiserzeit aus Augusta Vindelicum / Augsburg* (Münchener Beiträge zur provinzialrömischen Archäologie 3; Wiesbaden 2014), with a review by M. Buora, at *JRA* 27 (2014) 726-30.

16 Cf. A. Seifert, "Tafelgeschirr aus Nordafrika. Exportschlager der Spätantike," in C. Hattler (ed.), *Das Königreich der Vandalen: Erben des Imperiums in Nordafrika* (Mainz 2009) 262-66; L. Dossey, *Peasant and empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, CA 2010) 23-24. For the E Mediterranean, see now P. Bes, *Once upon a time in the East: the chronological and geographical distribution of terra Sigillata and Red Slip Ware in the Roman East* (Oxford 2015) 92.

17 See also M. Fulford, "Introduction: Bonifay's *Etudes*," in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Studies on Roman pottery of the provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Byzacena (Tunisia)* (*JRA* Suppl. 76, 2009) 9.