

## GALLO-ROMAN *SIGILLATA* IN THE LIGURIAN REGION

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Gallo-Roman *sigillata* is well attested in the region of Liguria. From a scarce presence in the late-Tiberian age, due to strong competition from middle-Italic workshops, it became more plentiful under the reign of Claudius, to reach the highest peak of import in the period between Nero and the first decade of the Flavian period. Later, from the time of Domitian up to the Hadrianic period, in the context of the restarting of activities in the late-Italic workshops and the beginning of the massive importation of *sigillata* from Northern Africa, the presence of Gallo-Roman *sigillata* suffered

a slow decline in the Ligurian markets. This later production turns out to be technically less competent, with a lower and lower fall in quality, evidenced by the use of worn moulds. Considering all the pottery imported to the Ligurian region, most of it consists of decorated *sigillata*, with a large percentage of marbled ware among the plain *sigillata*.

These pots were loaded, as goods accompanying different types of foodstuff, on little boats, which dealers used to reach the Ligurian coast, arriving at various sites featuring even small harbours or landing

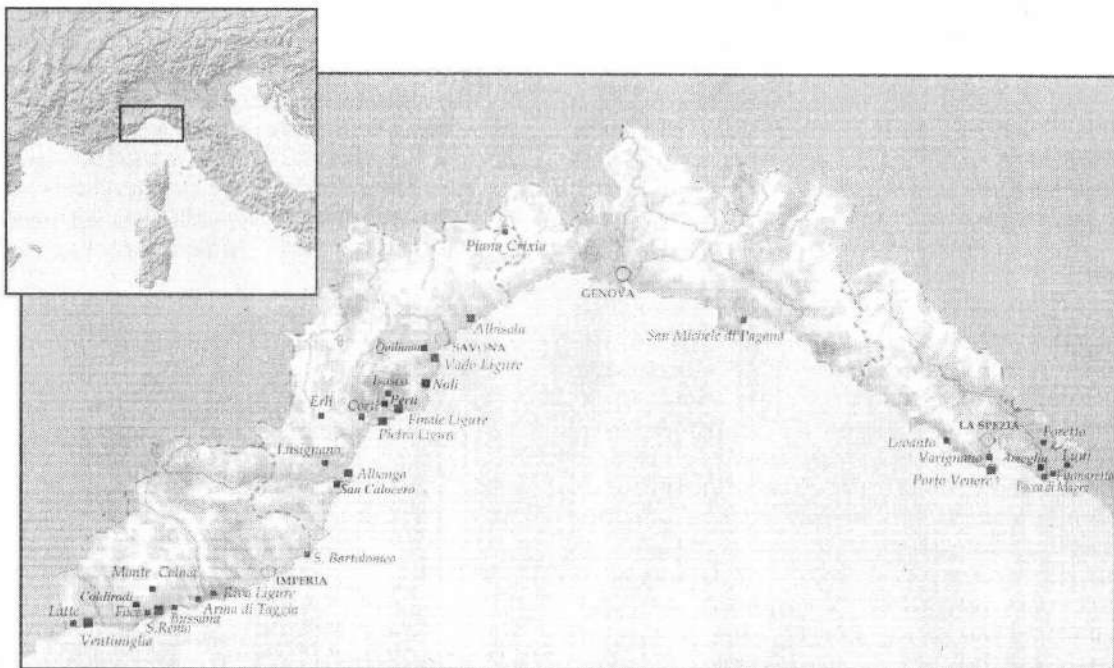


Fig. 18.1. Sites with Gallo-Roman *sigillata* in Liguria.

places. Evidence of this activity is seen particularly on the western coast, an area rich in river mouths and harbours, near the towns of Ventimiglia, Albenga, Vado Ligure, Noli but also on the eastern coast at Genoa in the Tigullio area and finally in the different coves of the Gulf of La Spezia (Fig. 18.1). In addition to the evidence of Gallo-Roman *sigillata*, Gaulish amphorae, mostly of type Gauloise 4 (but also types 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 as well as other types such as imitations of Drag. 7/11 and Pascual 1), which were used as containers for wine or, with more limited quantities, for *garum* from *Gallia Narbonensis* are also found at various sites in Liguria.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest proportion of Gaulish *sigillata* discovered in the Ligurian region came from the large manufacturing centre of La Graufesenque. Some decorated fragments can be attributed to other workshops sited in Southern Gaul, for example Montans and Le Rozier, as is confirmed by the presence of potters' stamps. Some bowls (Drag. 37) found at Ventimiglia and Albenga, on which short messages of greetings and convivial expressions are impressed in capital letters (VALE, SALVE, etc.), originated from Banassac workshops. Particularly interesting is a small cup Drag. 37, probably from Montans or perhaps from La Graufesenque, with two panels of decoration: on the upper is 'CIRVS' written in retrograde,<sup>2</sup> and on the lower a hunting scene (Fig. 18.2).

Although the fragments of vessels produced at the Lezoux workshops in the central region of Gaul – one of the most important pottery manufacturing centres in the Roman world, in particular during the 2nd century AD – are few in number, some potters' stamps in the Ligurian region confirm the presence of pots produced at this centre (e.g. ANTIQVVS, MENTVS, FIRMVS).

The quality of the vessels varies: the ones from La Graufesenque, belonging to the period from Claudius to Nero, generally show a fine and compact clay and a hard-fired slip, very glossy and lighter than the one – generally defined as the classic finish – that was used in the following period. The artefacts from the 60s, and still more the ones after the 80s, are characterised by a softer and more powdery clay composition, with a

matt and poorly adhering slip covering the low relief decoration. In contrast, the few sherds of Central Gaulish wares show a lighter and matt-coloured clay and slip.

Among the different sites where Gallo-Roman *sigillata* has been found in the west of Liguria are Latte, Ventimiglia,<sup>3</sup> San Remo,<sup>4</sup> Bussana, Taggia, Imperia, San Bartolomeo, Albenga, Lusignano (Albenga),<sup>5</sup> S. Calocero al Monte (Albenga), Noli, Vado Ligure, Savona, Finale Ligure, Quiliano and Albisola, as well as sites located in the interior of the region such as Monte Colma (San Remo), Corti (Pietra Ligure), Isasco (Finale Ligure), Erli (Castelvecchio di Barbena) and Piana Crixia (Fig. 18.3). The most significant evidence is represented by the town of Ventimiglia, which is also, so far, the most excavated centre (Barocelli 1919; 1923, coll. 6–146; Lamboglia 1949, 163–82; 1950). Among the plain forms, the most common plates/bowls are Drag. 15/17 and 18/31 and the very widespread Drag. 36, featuring both plain and decorated rims with *feuilles d'eau* applied à la *barbotine*. The other forms of plates are Drag. 16, 17, 18, 19 and 22. Among the cups, the most attested forms are Drag. 24/25, 27, 33 and 35, which were decorated on the rim in the same way as Drag. 36, as well as Ritt. 5, 8, 9 and 12, Drag. 4/32 and 43, Hermet 24 and Vernhet B4. In considering these finds, it appears that the decorated pots exceed the number of plain vessels, and that they mainly comprise the forms Hermet 5, Drag. 29 and 37, while fragments of the cylindrical bowl Drag. 30 are somewhat scarce.

The Drag. 29 bowl, bearing the stamp OF SABINI (Bertino & Martino 2010, 420–1), discovered in a grave at Ventimiglia and the Déch. 63 flask (Maiorano 2013) and Drag. 37 bowl from Noli are of great significance. The bowl from a rich grave at Noli shows a new type of Triton (Bertino 2007, 100). In addition, a Déch. 67 cup, with floral decoration (Leale Anfossi 1987, 433–4), was discovered in a grave at Erli. In various sites of western Liguria (e.g. Ventimiglia, Corti), there is a rather good presence of marbled *sigillata*, plain and decorated forms, with a marked predominance of Ritt. 8 and Drag. 35 cups and Drag. 36 plates in varied sizes.

Although the sites investigated so far in the eastern part of the Ligurian region are few in number (beyond Genoa, one may recall the wreck at San Michele di Pagana, Levanto and then Luni and the Roman villas at Varignano and Bocca di Magra (which were subject to large excavations), Fiumaretta (Ameglia) and Foretto (Castelnuovo Magra),<sup>6</sup> the percentages of finds show that Gallo-Roman *sigillata* trading was developed with some difficulty, since the markets were strongly influenced by competition from Italic and late-Italic producers. Plain *terra sigillata* is poorly represented compared with decorated vessels, for which there was probably stronger demand, since the production of late-Italic *sigillata* had not yet started. Due to its geographical position, Luna was supplied principally from the nearby



Fig. 18.2. Cup found at Ventimiglia showing a hunting scene.

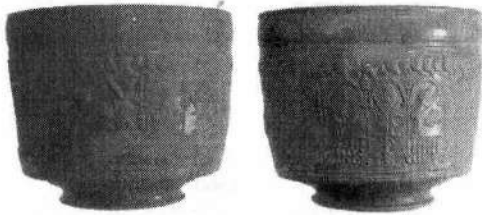




1. Varignano- OF MODEST



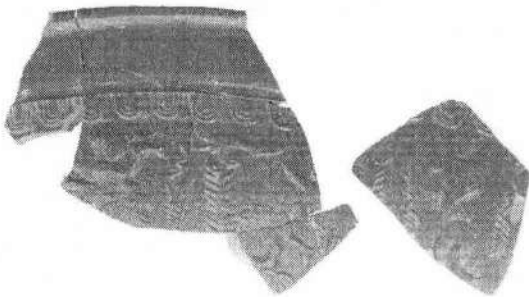
2. Ventimiglia SABINVS



3. Varignano



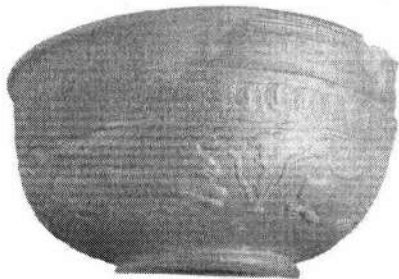
4. San Michele di Pagana



5. Ventimiglia- GERMANIF



6. Ventimiglia



7. Ventimiglia



8. Noli

Fig. 18.3. South Gaulish *sigillata* from sites in Liguria.

markets of Arezzo and, later, Pisa. The finds of South Gaulish *sigillata* (1.5 per cent) are few when compared with that of the Italic *sigillata*, and of these finds a large percentage of marbled ware is present, the equivalent of which was lacking in Italy (Lavizzari Pedrazzini 1979, 136–69). Among the finds, in particular decorated bowls of type Drag. 29 and 37 and rare fragments of Drag. 30 cylindrical cups are noted. Noteworthy is a marbled Drag. 37 bowl decorated with a hunt scene. Within the decoration, under a running hare, is the mark *extrinsecus* and retrograde of SEVERI (Bertino 1972, 160–76). A cup with the same motifs and bearing the same stamp is among the materials exhibited at the National Museum of Terme in Rome.<sup>7</sup> There are few plain vessels, among which are the cups Drag. 24/25, 27 and 35, and the plates/bowls Drag. 18/31 and 36 with marbled ware vessels predominant. We may also note a small plate, probably of rectangular form Hermet 20,<sup>8</sup> and a fragment of a moulded handle of a probably oval-shaped tray (Drag. 49). These last two pieces are of high quality. There is also a small cup of form Hermet 9.

Several fragments of decorated South Gaulish vessels were discovered in the rich villa *maritima* of Varignano, a centre of a large hilly and maritime *fundus*. This villa, with its north-eastern facade fitted with a mooring post (*navigabilis piscina*) for small boats, is located at the end of the port cove of Varignano (Bertino 1990), was probably directly supplied by the Narbonese traders, who used to travel along the coastal trade routes between Gaul and Rome. These contacts are also confirmed by the presence of fragments of Gallic amphorae and a *semis* of *Nemausus* (Bertino 1987, 262–3). There are several bowls of type Drag. 29, and single examples of bowl forms Drag. 30 and 37. Among the plain ware, the plate Drag. 36 and a marbled Drag. 43 bowl are to be noted. The South Gaulish *sigillata* discovered at Varignano makes up only 5 per cent of all *sigillata*, in contrast to the numerous Italic and late-Italic earthenwares, coming from Arezzo, *Puteoli* and above of all from Pisa (Bertino 2010, 397–409).

Also at the Roman villa situated at Bocca di Magra, near Luni, various fragments of decorated South Gaulish *sigillata* are present, among which is a Drag. 37 bowl of marbled ware with a MOM stamp of the potter *Momms*. Many fragments of decorated South Gaulish vessels, including Drag. 29, marbled, and Drag. 37, have also been discovered at Fiumaretta on the estuary of the River Magra. Finally, on a rural farm near Foretto, in the *ager lunensis* (Castelnuovo Magra), a fragment of plate/bowl Drag. 18/31 of marbled *sigillata* has been found (Gambaro 2010, 75–6).

In the Ligurian region, 174 potters' stamps are present, of which 98 are identifiable and 35 unidentified (Appendix 18.1). Stamps observed on decorated vessels are few in number: L.COSI (San Remo-Monte Colma and Vado Ligure); FIRMO (Ventimiglia); GERMANI F (Ventimiglia and Albisola); OF MODEST (Varignano); MOMMO (Bocca di Magra); SABINVS F (Ventimiglia); SENOMAN (Luni); SEVERI (Luni). Among all of these, only L.COSI, GERMANI and SEVERI (written in retrograde) are set within the decoration.

## Notes

- 1 Gauloise amphorae are recorded mainly on these Ligurian sites: Latte, Ventimiglia, Sanremo, Imperia and a few inland sites within its district, Albenga, Caprauna, Corti, Vado Ligure, Noli, Genova, S. Michele di Pagana, Varignano and Luni. Thanks to Dr. Eliana Piccardi who kindly put at my disposal the up-to-date collected data on her poster *Antore di produzione gallica in Liguria. Primo bilancio sullo stato degli studi. Attestazioni e prospettive* at the SFEACG Congrès at Arles, June 2011.
- 2 Sanchez *et al.* 2011, 171–201. It is mentioned a similar *legenda*: ALBANVS.
- 3 I am grateful to Dr. Gian Piero Martino who allowed me to study unpublished material from Ventimiglia-Nervia.
- 4 Thanks to Luigi Gambaro who allowed me to study and publish data on original material from Imperia (town and Roman villa of the Foce) and San Remo (Monte Colma).
- 5 I particularly wish to thank Dr. Bruno Massabò, Chief of the Surintendance for the Archaeological Goods of Liguria, who kindly put at my disposal the South Gaulish finds from his excavation at the Villa of Lusignano (Albenga), and to Dr. Francesca Bulgarelli, Director of the archaeological areas of Savona district, for helping me research the finds.
- 6 Thanks to Dr. Lucia Gervasini, director of the archaeological areas of La Spezia district and of the National Archaeological Museum of Luni, for putting at my disposal the unpublished material from Luni and Fiumaretta and to Dr. Emanuela Paribeni, director of the archaeological areas of Lucca-Massa Carrara-Pisa, for allowing access to the finds kept in the Remedi's Collection from Luni, now in the Archaeological Museum of Florence. Also to Dr. Annalisa Majorano who very kindly informed me of the still unpublished results from the excavations from the Basilica of Luni.
- 7 Thanks to Dott. Rosanna Friggeri, Director of the National Museum of Terme – Rome, for having made available the images of the cup SEVERI, inv.72248.
- 8 Because of the rectangular form cf. complete plate, discovered in 1976 by Alain Vernhet, of Hermet form 20, with typical Germanus decoration (Vernhet 1976, 60–80). It has been published (with drawing by A.Vernhet) by Michel Labrousse (1976, 465 and fig. 3).



## Appendix 18.1 Find sites of potters' stamps from Liguria

	Potters	Production	Date	Sites
1	ABITVS	LG	50-70/80	Isasco
2	ACVTVS	MO	10 a.C.-70	Imperia
3	AMANDVS 1	LG	40/50-80	Ventimiglia, Albisola
4	ANGIVS	LG	70/80-110	Ventimiglia
5	ANNIVS	LG	15-30/40	Luni
6	ANTIQVVS	LG	115-160	Ventimiglia
7	APER	LG; BA	50-110	Ventimiglia (2)
8	ARDACVS	LG	10 a.C.-70	Ventimiglia, Imperia
9	AVITVS	LG; LR	60/70-110	Taggia; Riva Ligure
10	BASSVS	LG	15-80	Ventimiglia; Monte Colma
11	BIRAGILLVS	BA	67-117	Ventimiglia (6)
12	CAIVS	MO	70/80-110	Ventimiglia (3)
13	CAMIVS	LG	1-30/40	Ventimiglia
14	CARVS	LG	30/40-100	Ventimiglia
15	CARVINVS	Sud Gall.	0-100	Ventimiglia
16	CASTVS	LG	40-70/80	Ventimiglia (6), Vado Ligure, Isasco (2)
17	CATVS	LG	15-30	Ventimiglia
18	CELADVS	LG	40-80	Corti; Varignano
19	CELERVS	LG; MO	15-70	Ventimiglia
20	CHRESTVS	LG	50-100	Ventimiglia (2); Varignano
21	C.CINGIVS SENOVIR	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia
22	CL.GEMMA	LG	70/80-150	San Calocero
23	CN. CELSIVS	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia
24	L.COSIVS	LG	70/80-150	Monte Colma, Vado Ligure
25	COTTO	LG	50-100	Imperia
26	CRESTIO	LG	50/60-150	Ventimiglia (4)
27	CRVCVRO	LG	70/80-110	Luni
28	FELICENTE	LG	60-80	Varignano
29	FIRMO 2	LG	70-100	Ventimiglia
30	FIRMVS	LE	70-95?	Foce
31	FRONTINVS	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia (2); Monte Colma; Vado Ligure
32	FVSCVS 1	LG	15-50	Ventimiglia
33	GALLICANVS 2	LG	40/50-70	Ventimiglia
34	GALLVS	LG	50-110	Ventimiglia, Imperia
35	GEMINVS	LG	40-60/70	San Calocero
36	GERMANIF	LG	70-150	Ventimiglia; Albisola
37	GERMANVS	LG	70-150	Ventimiglia (2)
38	C.IVLIVS VASSILIVS	Sud Gall.	70-100	Noli
39	IVNIVS 2	LG, BA	40-100	Ventimiglia
40	IVSTVS	LG	50-90	Ventimiglia
41	LABIO 1	LG	30/40-70	Ventimiglia
42	LICINVS	LG	50-110	Ventimiglia (3), Imperia
43	LOGIRNVS	LG	70/80-150	Imperia
44	M	LG	15-75	Ventimiglia
45	MACCARVS	LG	15/10-70	Ventimiglia
46	MACER	LG	15/10-70	Varignano
47	MAESVS	BA	0-100	Imperia
48	MAMIVS	LG	15-40/50	Ventimiglia
49	MAPONVS	LG	40/50-70	San Remo; Lussignano
50	MARINVS	LG	50-150	Riva Ligure
51	MARSVS	LG; LE	50-70/80	Imperia

	Potters	Production	Date	Sites
52	MASCVLVS	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia (2)
53	MATERNVS	LG; LE	70/80-150	Ventimiglia (2)
54	MATVGENVS 1	LG; MO	50-100?	Isasco
55	MENTVS	LF	120-150	Varignano
56	MODESTVS	LG	30-70/80	Savona, Varignano
57	MOMMO	LG	60/70-110	Ventimiglia (4); Imperia; Eri; Luni; Bocca Magra
58	MVRRANVS	LG	30/40-80	Monte Colma, Varignano; Luni
59	NE CVRES	LG	70/80-110	Ventimiglia
60	NICE	LG; MO	15-40	Ventimiglia; Luni (3)
61	NIGER	LG; BA	50/60-100	Ventimiglia (3); Monte Colma; Luni (2)
62	PASSIENVS	LG	50/60-110	Noli
63	PATRICIVS	LG	70/80-110	Ventimiglia; Albenga
64	PRIMVLVS 1	LG	60/70-150	Ventimiglia
65	PRIMVLVS 2	LG	100-140	Ventimiglia
66	PRIMVS	LG	15-70	Ventimiglia; Foce
67	PRIVATVS	LG	40/50-70	Ventimiglia; Luni
68	RASINVS 2	SG	40-55	Ventimiglia
69	ROMANVS 1	LG	50-100?	Ventimiglia
70	ROPPVS	LG; LR	60/70-110	Monte Colma
71	RVFIVS 2	LG; BA	60/70-110	Ventimiglia (2)
72	SABINVS 1	LG; LR	50-100	Ventimiglia; Albenga
73	SABINVS 2	LG; LR	55-95	Ventimiglia (2)
74	SABINVS 3	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia
75	L.S. SABINVS	LG; LR	55-95	Ventimiglia
76	SALVIVS	MO	55-80	Ventimiglia
77	SASMONOS	LG	70-80	Varignano
78	SATTO 1	LG	70/80 120	Ventimiglia (2)
79	SECVNDVS 1	LG	15-70	Ventimiglia; San Calocero, Albenga
80	SECVNDVS 2	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia
81	SENECIO	LG; LR	15-60/70	Savona
82	SENOMANTVS	LG	50-70	Luni
83	SEVERVS	LG	55-80	Luni
84	SILVANVS	LG	15/30-110	Ventimiglia (4); Imperia
85	SILVINVS	LG	30-70	Ventimiglia; Albenga
86	SILVVS C.	LG	70/80-150	Ventimiglia; Imperia
87	SUCCESSVS	LG	50-80/90	Savona
88	SVLPICIVS	LG	70/80-150	Imperia; San Bartolomeo
89	TERTIVS SECVNDVS L.	LG; LE	70/80-150	Ventimiglia (3)
90	TETIVS	LG; MO	50-70	Luni
91	VALE	LG	15/30-40	Ventimiglia
92	VALERIVS	MO	40/70	Luni
93	VANDERIVS & TAPVRIVS	LG	65/100	Varignano
94	VEBRVS	LG	0-100	Imperia
95	VILLIVS	SG	15-55	Ventimiglia
96	VINIVS	LG	100-150	Imperia
97	VITALIS	LG	50/60-150	Ventimiglia (5); Albenga; Corti; Varignano; Luni (3)
98	VOLVS	LG	20/30-60	Ventimiglia
99	Rosette à 9 pétales			Ventimiglia
100	Rosette à ? pétales			Ventimiglia