

Abstract

The present thesis examines two ceramic assemblages from the villa baths at Pollena Trocchia, Italy. The private bath complex was likely part of the Roman villa built at the beginning of the 2nd century AD and buried under the volcanoclastic debris of the AD 472 eruption which provided an important *terminus ante quem*. The previous studies demonstrated that in the 5th century AD the bath complex became a pottery dump and cemetery. Nevertheless, a different picture was drawn from the excavation of the underground cistern in the north-western part of the baths. In order to better understand the purpose of the cistern prior to the eruption, which sealed most of the site, the pottery assemblage from the cistern was compared to the assemblage from one of the bathrooms identified as the *laconicum*. In fact, the cistern uncovered rather low number of individuals compared to the rest of the baths and the ratio of attested pottery classes was limited. While the African imports were almost absent, there was a great number of local products. Most of the shapes consisted of locally produced jugs of big volume, which could be associated with the water-supply system. When possible, the individuals were dated to the second half of the 5th century. Therefore, it is likely that the cistern was still in use a long after the baths were dismantled and turned into a rubbish deposit. Judged by the presence of considerable number of sherds and animal bones, the water-supply system ceased to be used prior to the eruption, probably after the second half of the 5th century AD.