

The exact chronology and context of the appearance of lead-glazed pottery in the Roman world remain debated. To clarify how this type of ware came about, this article presents new archaeological data and archaeometric results of pottery provenance and glazing technology obtained from 87 pottery fragments from Athens, Ostia and Mytilene. In combination with a critical review of published data, the results allow us to reconstruct the gradual emergence of this type of ware, which most probably occurred before the arrival of the Romans in the East and is rooted in Hellenistic stylistic and technological traditions. Also, the diffusion of lead-glazed pottery in the Roman West results from the local appropriation of a global practice.