The pottery production of Punic Carthage
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The archaeological research conducted over the last thirty years has given clear evidence for the existence of a local pottery production at Carthage from its earliest occupation period onwards, that is to say from the second half of the 8th century BC. As an excellent example of the presence of high percentages of locally produced ceramics (Handmade Ware, Plain Ware, Red Slip-and Bichrome Ware and amphorae) already in deposits of the second half of the 8th century BC one might mention a stratified archaeological sequence yielded by the recent excavations of the University of Ghent/INP in trench 4 of Bir Messaouda.

As a part of the ‘industrial belt’ of Early Punic Carthage, the pottery quarter has been identified in the southern edges of the settlement, near the ancient coast line and below the Roman cardo IX, while kilns active during the Late Punic period have been excavated at Carthage-Dermech and Carthage-Douimes. Consequently, it can be considered as a matter of a fact that the overwhelming majority of the impressive volumes of pottery which characterise the whole of the settlement deposits of Punic Carthage has been produced by local workshops. This holds for almost all ceramic classes attested to within the large span of time from the second half of the 8th to the middle of the 2nd century BC:

1. The table wares, that is to say the Red Slip- Bichrome and Smoothened Wares of the Early Punic and Early Punic/Middle Punic period (760-480 BC), the Painted Ware of the Middle Punic period (480-300 BC) and the Black Glaze Ware of the Late Punic period (300-146 BC).
2. The Plain Wares of the whole Punic period.
3. The Transport Amphorae of the whole Punic period.
4. The Handmade Pottery

Archaeological levels dating to the second half of the 8th-early 7th century have been identified in several areas of the ancient settlement, for a recent overview see Docter 2007b, 43-49, contexts 1-79.

Docter et alii 2008.

For the localization of this area in respect to the rest of the settlement see Docter 2007b, 38, fig. 1, no. 2. Rakob 1989, 164-166, 190-192, fig. 5 A9.15.18.19. For the pottery dump related to the activities of one of the kilns of the ceramic quarter see Vegas 1990.

Vegas 1990, 34 with references.


For the revised period system developed from the deposits excavated on the Bir Messaouda see now Bechtold 2010, 4-6.

For a recent discussion of the class and previous references see Bechtold 2007a, esp. 328-332. Ultimately see Bechtold 2010, §§ 2.3, 2.6.

For a detailed description of the macroscopic characteristics of the presumably local fabrics and references to the excavation of the ‘dépotoir’ of La Rabta, near Carthage, consisting in misfired Black Glaze ware, see ultimately B. Bechtold 2007, 561-566, 575-586. For a recent discussion of the morphological repertoire of the local Black Glaze series see Bechtold 2010, §§ 3.1.1., 3.2.1 and Bechtold forthcoming, § 4.

For a detailed description of the macroscopic characteristics of the local fabrics and the typological occurrence of this class see Bechtold 2007a with earlier references; Bechtold 2010, §§ 2.3, 2.6., 3.1.2, 3.2.3.

For the Early Punic and Early Punic/Middle Punic period see Docter 1997 and Docter 2007a. For the Middle Punic period see Bechtold 2008, for the Late Punic period see Bechtold 2010, §§ 3.1.5, 3.2.6, all with earlier references.

Mansel 2007 with further references.
Nevertheless, archaeometric analysis suggesting a local origin\textsuperscript{12} are available only for some of these classes basically of the Early Punic period, and more specifically for the amphorae\textsuperscript{13} and the Red Slip- and Bichrome Ware\textsuperscript{14}.

In particular, the detailed study of this latter class undertaken by A. Peserico has shown that almost 90\% of the 1750 fragments selected for this research, based on a macroscopic examination of the potteries, belong to a fabric labelled 'K', the remaining 10\% is splitted over more five fabrics.\textsuperscript{15} Fabric 'K' is characterised by a reddish yellow or yellowish red clay (5 YR 6/6 – 5/6), tempered with numerous rounded grains of quartz, less common white particles, clay inclusions (chamotte), varying in size, in addition to regularly sorted voids of round shape. This kind of fabric corresponds to what for the Hamburg excavations below the Decumanus Maximus has been defined as 'KTS', that is to say 'Karthago Ton Struktur'.\textsuperscript{16} The strong macroscopic similarity between the archaeometrically investigated Early Punic fabrics and the ones of the Middle and Late Punic series indicate, however, a great continuity of pottery tradition.

The archaeometric analyses undertaken by Amadori and Fabbri (1998) on selected Red Slip samples of presumably local fabric have identified two different clays, L1 and L2, distinguished on the basis of the granulometry of the inclusions. The authors suggest to explain this result with a change of the raw material which seems to have taken place during the second half of the 7th century BC, given that the samples defining the finer clay L2 seem to date generally to within the late 8th and the middle of the 7th century BC, while group L1 is composed by items dating from 650 BC onwards c.\textsuperscript{17}

Very recently B. Maraoui Telmini\textsuperscript{18} has made a first effort to localise some of the possible ancient sources of the raw materials used for the Carthaginian pottery production. Consequently, samples from the natural clay deposits of 1. the area called 'Amilcar', situated on the slopes of the Sidi Bou Said hill; 2. the area called 'Ghar Ettfal' near El Maalga; and 3. the mountain called 'Jebel El Khaoui' at Gamarth were collected and submitted to analysis (XRF and XRD) which remain, however, still unpublished. The archaeometric analysis undertaken by the Tunisian team focus also on the differences between the pottery production of Carthage and the c. 40 km. distant Punic Utica on the northern coast of Tunisia.

In conclusion, up to now the pottery production of Early Punic Carthage has been sufficiently characterised by archaeometric analyses, which are still outstanding, however, for the Middle and Late Punic series. Notwithstanding this handicap, the exhaustive documentation, within the FACEM database, of nearly 80 samples dating from the Early Punic II (7th-6th century BC) period to the Late Punic II (2nd century BC), but mainly to the Middle Punic period (5th-
4th century BC) gives clear evidence for the very homogeneous appearance of the Carthaginian series all over nearly six centuries.
References


Bechtold B., forthcoming, Le imitazioni locali di forme ceramiche alogene a Cartagine (V-II sec. a.C.), in: The problem of ‘imitations’ throughout the protohistory and classic period in the central and occidental Mediterranean: between the concept and the example (Iberia Archaeologica series).


Docter R.F., 2007b, Published Settlement Contexts of Punic Carthage, Carthage Studies 1, 37-76.


