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Fabrics of Punic amphorae of unknown provenience

Introductory note

Punic amphorae show a great variety of fabrics. For some of those fabrics identified at Velia we have not been able to determine the center or region of origin. We therefore decided to classify them as "Ignota", but with the supplement "Punic Amphorae" = IG-PUN-A-x. For some of them we can make suggestions for their possible origin according to their morphological type. These hypotheses have to be proven however, in the future by archaeometric analysis. All the samples belong to a time span from the fifth to second centuries B.C.E.

Fabric description

IG-PUN-A-1 Fabric IG-PUN-A-1 shows a light brown matrix, densely tempered with tiny quartz particles. Sporadically we find carbonates and red and light grey inclusions. The sample M67/6 belongs to the type Ramon T. 1.4.4.1, an amphora type of the fifth century B.C.E., which has been attributed to Sardinia, without excluding a provenience from the central Punic region¹. The hypothesis of a Sardinian origin of the present fabric could now be strengthened by certain similarities with fabrics that have been identified in the material of the Riu Mannu survey by P. van Dommelen (W-SARD-A-5), but further research has to be carried out to confirm this.

IG-PUN-A-2 The fabric is characterized by a brown, porous matrix with clearly visible, but not too frequent carbonate-pseudomorphoses that are poorly sorted. Typical is the sporadic occurrence of dark red particles. The fabric occurs with amphorae of the type Ramon T-6.1.1.3. that have been attributed to production centers in Tunisia by Ramon². At the present state of research, the origin of IG-PUN-A-2 cannot yet be determined.

IG-PUN-A-3 The fabric is similar to IG-PUN-A-2, but the carbonate particles and the carbonate pseudomorphoses are much larger and appear together with equally large dark inclusions and a certain percentage of small quartz grains. The fabric occurs with amphorae of the type Ramon T-7.4.2.1. that have been classified as North Tunisian³. A very similar fabric has been observed in the material from the excavations of the fortifications in the Lower town of Velia with an amphora of the type Ramon 1.4.2.1. which is normally attributed to the Tunisian production areas as well⁴.

IG-PUN-A-4 This fabric is riddled with carbonate pseudomorphoses and sometimes its color shifts from brown to yellow. Very small grains of quartz and some dark inclusions are also present. IG-PUN-A-4 shows some similarities to IG-PUN-A-3 with a much higher percentage of carbonate and possibly a higher temperature of firing.

¹ Ramon 1995, 175-6.

² Ramon 1995, 201.

³ Ramon 1995, 209-10.

⁴ Inv. 531/97-91, Phase C1; Ramon 1995, 174.

The sample M10/49 was taken from an amphorae of the type Ramon T-7.4.2.1., found at the Insula II excavations in secondary (Roman) context. This type was one of the most common amphorae types of Tunisia in the first half of the second century B.C.E.⁵

IG-PUN-A-5 This fabric is easily recognized by the very dense tempering with carbonate pseudomorphoses that are regularly distributed. It has been used for the type Ramon T. 7.1.2.1 in the forth and at the beginning of the third century B.C.E. The type is generally attributed to Tunisia as well as to Sicily.⁶

Within the framework of the research on Punic amphorae fabrics from western Sicily published in the forth release of FACEM, fabric IG-PUN-A-5 has now been identified as fabric LIL-A-1 of Lilybaion.⁷

IG-PUN-A-6 The fabric is a very characteristic fabric with a light brown matrix and peculiar black, lustrous inclusions. It has been used for amphorae of the type Ramon T. 6.1.1.1. that are normally attributed to the central Mediterranean.⁸

References

Ramon Torres, J. 1995. "Las ánforas fenicio-púnicas del Mediterráneo central y occidental." Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona.

Schmidt, K. 2015. "Amphorae and Coarse Ware Fabrics of Lilybaion." In FACEM (version 06/06/2015), (<http://www.facem.at/project-papers.php>).

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⁵ Ramon 1995, 209-10.

⁶ Ramon 1995, 205.

⁷ FACEM – <http://facem.at/m-10-32> (by K. Schmidt and B. Bechtold, April 2015). For the amphorae fabrics of Lilybaion, see in detail Schmidt 2015.

⁸ Ramon 1995, 199-200.