

PUNIC PAINTED WARE POTTERY FROM UZITA (TUNISIA)

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To the memory of
Jan Willem Salomonson (1925-2017)

Abstract: The Punic Painted Ware pottery stemming from the Dutch-Tunisian excavations of Jan Willem Salomonson (1970-1972; Utrecht University) in Uzita is presented and discussed. The site of Uzita (or Uzitta) was an urban settlement within the Roman Imperial province of Byzacena and the excavations focused upon the stratigraphies below the (mosaic) floors of three Roman domus. A decade after the excavations, Jaap van der Werff was the first to draw attention to finds that witnessed a preceding Punic phase. The present contribution elaborates upon the material from this phase, all found in residual position, showing a broad spectrum of Punic Painted Ware vessels dating to the (second half of the) 5th and 4th centuries BCE. Half the sample can be attributed to Carthaginian productions, the other half may stem from other Tunisian workshops, both from the immediate area of Uzita and beyond.

Keywords: Uzita, Henchir el Makrceba; Sahel; Punic; Painted Ware; Salomonson.

1. THE SITE

The urban settlement of Uzita or Uzitta (Henchir el Makrceba) is located in the fertile Sahel region, corresponding roughly to the Roman Imperial province of Byzacena (FIG. 1).¹ The site's environment consists of a broad and shallow valley delimited by the salt flats of Sabkha Sidi el Hani to the south-west and the Sabkha Sahline to the north-east. The Oued el Melah stream, which flows in the Sabkha Sahline, is an important though seasonal water source for part of the valley. Uzita is strategically positioned on a hill on the right bank of the stream, controlling the traffic directed to the coastline, which is just 7 km away. The capital of Roman Byzacena, ancient Hadrumetum (modern Sousse), is 17 km to the north-west, while Ruspina (modern Henchir Tennir, at the southern outskirts of Monastir), is less than 10 km to the coast.

2. THE EXCAVATIONS AND RESULTS

In three campaigns between 1970 and 1972, a Dutch-Tunisian team directed by Jan Willem Salomonson of Utrecht University excavated part of the site of Uzita (FIG. 2). The excavations were intended to shed light on the dating of Roman mosaics discovered within three Roman *domus* in the course of Tunisian excavations from 1961 on: the House of the Tauri (House 3), the House with the Fish Mosaic (House 2) and the House with the Peristyle Mosaic (House 1).² The Tunisian authorities had issued these excavations, after a chance discovery of a mosaic in 1955, in order to create some employment in the area, but nothing was published,

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1 Perugini forthcoming.

2 van der Werff 1982b, pp. 17-18; Feije 1994; van der Vin 1971; Perugini forthcoming.

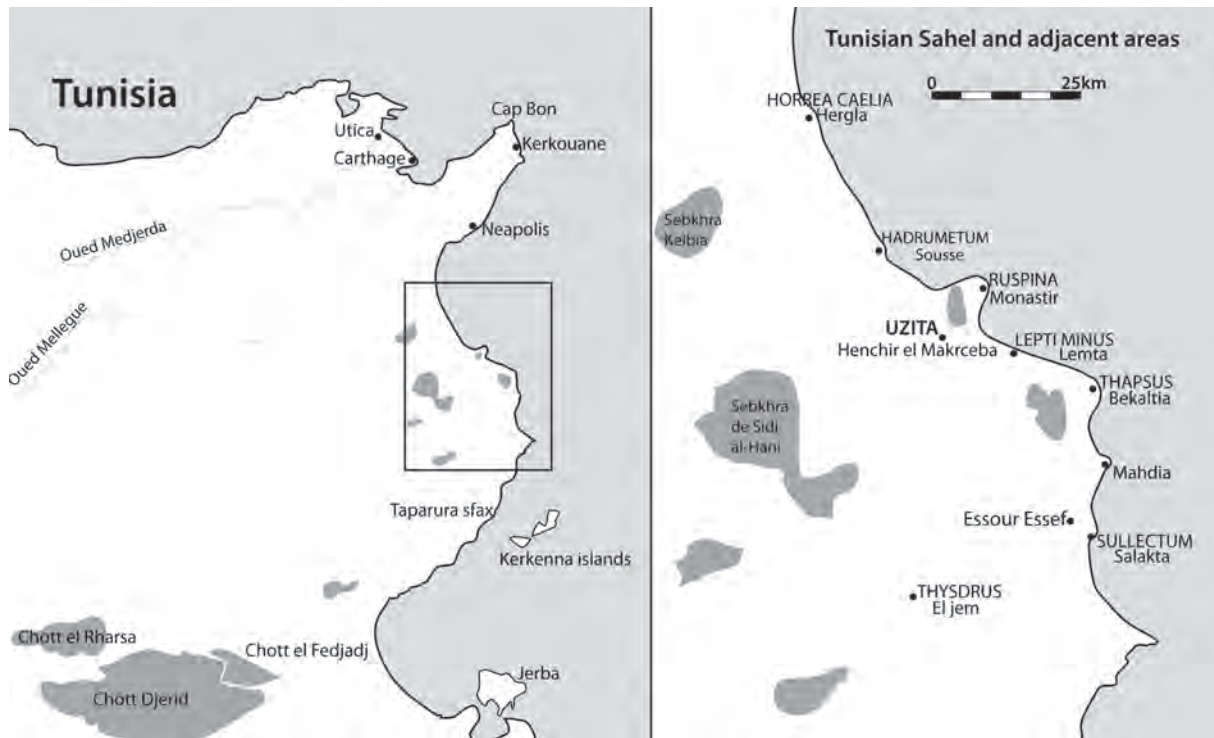


FIG. 1: Map of Tunisia and the Tunisian Sahel and adjacent areas with indication of Uzita (prepared by Joris Angenon, Ghent University).

except for the most important mosaics.³ The Dutch-Tunisian excavations consisted of a series of trenches below the floors within the limits of these *domus*. Publications on these excavations were limited in number and mostly only written in Dutch.⁴ Only the House with the Peristyle Mosaic received a full discussion in the PhD thesis of Jaap van der Werff (1982b). A full discussion of the House of the Tauri by Karen Ryckbosch is forthcoming and several articles on the contents of a 3rd-century CE well,⁵ the glass finds,⁶ and the Black Glaze pottery⁷ are in preparation. Karim Mata studied the Roman architecture of the *domus* in the frame of two Master theses but these have remained unpublished.⁸ The bulk of the finds made during these excavations had been transferred to Utrecht University for study reasons and with a view of final publication, an obligation taken over by the Department of Archaeology of Ghent University.

Salomonson identified three main phases in the chronology of the Roman buildings with the most recent being a well that had been filled with pottery and other remains around 250 CE; the second phase was a surface levelling (Level I) upon which the House with the Peristyle Mosaic had been built around 190 CE; and the third phase consisted of the remains of the earliest structure, lying 60 to 80 cm lower, that had been established around 80 CE (Level II).

3 Salomonson 1963; 1964; Dunbabin 1978; Ben Abed Ben Khader 1990.

4 van der Vin 1971; 1971-1972; 1996.

5 Vanaenrode 2016.

6 Verbercht 2016.

7 Van Hecke 2011.

8 Mata 2000; 2009.



FIG. 2: Ground plan of Uzita with the three houses excavated between 1970 and 1972: House 1 = House with the Peristyle Mosaic, House 2 = House with the Fish Mosaic, House 3 = House of the Tauri (based upon a general map in the excavation archives, re-worked by Karen Ryckbosch; digitized by Andrea Perugini and Joris Angenon).

An even earlier, Punic phase of the site's occupation is coming to the surface thanks to more recent studies of excavated material. In residual position within the contexts belonging to Levels I and II a considerable number of finds were made that traced the first occupation of Uzita back to the 4th century BCE. For these Middle and Late Punic phases of occupation, the artefacts testify to a broad network of connections and variety of consumption, ranging from Black Glaze drinking vessels of Attica and Magna Graecia⁹ to transport amphorae produced in Corfu, Calabria/Lucania area, Sardinia and Ibiza,¹⁰ as well as a Carthaginian coin of 221-201 BCE.¹¹ Punic Painted Ware pottery from Northern Tunisia also belongs to this phase of the site's occupation and is published here as a tribute to Jan Willem Salomonson who passed away on March 5th 2017 at the blessed age of 91. Few years ago, B. D'Andrea published the suggestion that archaeological remains found at a distance of 2 km north-west in the village of Menzel Harb may in fact have belonged to the larger site of Uzita.¹² In 1955, L. Foucher excavated here part of a Punic sanctuary and discovered several urns containing burnt animal bones besides three Punic stelae. These dated from the 2nd century BCE to within the 1st century CE and have led to the interpretation of the sanctuary as a tophet.

3. THE PUNIC PAINTED WARES

Fragments of 26 different residual vessels are discussed in the following section. They share the fact that they are executed in the Painted Ware. This category of Punic pottery production has been discussed in 2007 by Babette Bechtold on the basis of the stratified material from the Hamburg University excavations below the Decumanus Maximus in Carthage.¹³ Starting in the years around 700 BCE, the decoration technique is par-

9 van der Werff 1982b, pp. 49-58, 223-224, tab. 3-4, pls. 27.3, 34.1; Van Hecke 2011.

10 Hast 2009; Perugini – Ryckbosch 2015; Perugini 2016.

11 van der Werff 1982b, pp. 29-30, pl. 54.1.

12 D'Andrea 2014, pp. 109-111.

13 Bechtold 2007a, pp. 328-333, figg. 147-152.

ticularly frequent in Phase VII (425-250 BCE) in the Hamburg University chronological scheme, although it becomes rare from c. 300 BCE on. Half of the sample (13 out of 26) can be attributed to Carthage and its area; 4 are attributed to unknown Punic productions, probably from North Africa (but see Cat. 21, FIG. 5), and the fabric of 9 pieces is clearly homogeneous and differs from what we know from local productions of the Punic period at Carthage. It seems that we are dealing with local or regional productions. It is definitely worthwhile to have these fragments subjected to scientific provenance analyses in the future, like the analyses in the Sahel region farther to the South at Salakta and Ksour Esf (FIG. 1) in the excellent recent book by Jihen Nacef (2015) or the older ones by van der Werff.¹⁴

Contextwise, it is interesting to note that out of the 23 pieces of which a provenance is known within the excavated area no less than 18 (78%) have been found in the area of House 2 (the House with the Fish Mosaic); the remainder in House 1 (the House with the Peristyle Mosaic), and none in House 3 (the House of the Tauri). This may probably be accidental and caused by the varying measures of interference with the (Punic) subsoil during Roman times.

3.1. *Catalogue and discussion*

1. Inv. 074-9. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 074.

Carination fragment of plate. Internal diam. at carination 7 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

Imported (?) Punic production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8 (red). Bands: 10R 3/2 (dusky red). Grayish white scum to both sides. Inclusions: some silver mica (0.1-0.3 mm) and rare quartz particles (0.4-0.5 mm).

The Middle Punic plates with painted concentric lines are mostly provided with wide lips. Unfortunately, the present fragment is too small to establish the full profile of rim and base, so that a chronology for the piece with more precision than the end of the 6th to 4th century BCE cannot be offered. In view of the general chronology of the other pieces in the Uzita assemblage, a date in the second half of the 5th or 4th century BCE for the present fragment seems likely. The type has been discussed by M. Vegas as her Form 1.3.¹⁵ Similar plates decorated with concentric painted lines or bands were often encountered in Carthaginian funerary contexts as the supports of double spouted lamps in the Painted Ware.¹⁶

2. Inv. 075-9. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Rim fragment of carinated bowl. Diam. rim 20 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

Imported (?) Punic production. Fabric: 10R 5/8 (red). External slip: 2.5Y 8/3 (pale brown). Lines and bands: 7.5R 5/6 (red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.3 mm), quartz (0.2-0.5 mm) and voids (0.1-0.4 mm); rare brown particles (0.4 mm).

The shape occurs with a Plain Ware version in the typology of M. Vegas as her Form 5, with a similar diameter of 19.5 cm.¹⁷ A Painted Ware version with grey-violet painted zones on the exterior rim occurs in a Middle Punic II (MP II.1) context in the Hamburg excavations below the Decumanus Maximus at Carthage, dated to the period 430-400 BCE.¹⁸

3. Inv. 0131-1. No context information (cardboard box III, in envelope).

Rim fragment of carinated bowl. Diam. rim 20 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

14 Nacef 2015; van der Werff 1977-1978; 1982b, pp. 415-438, pls. 75-76.

15 Vegas 1999, pp. 138-139, fig. 26; see now also Bechtold 2007a, pp. 355-357, fig. 172.

16 Deneauve 1969, p. 26, pls. XXIV-XXVI.

17 Vegas 1999, p. 144, fig. 35.2.

18 Bechtold 2007a, pp. 351-352, fig. 169, esp. Cat. 2090 for the shape; see Docter – Bechtold forthcoming, fig. 5.1.

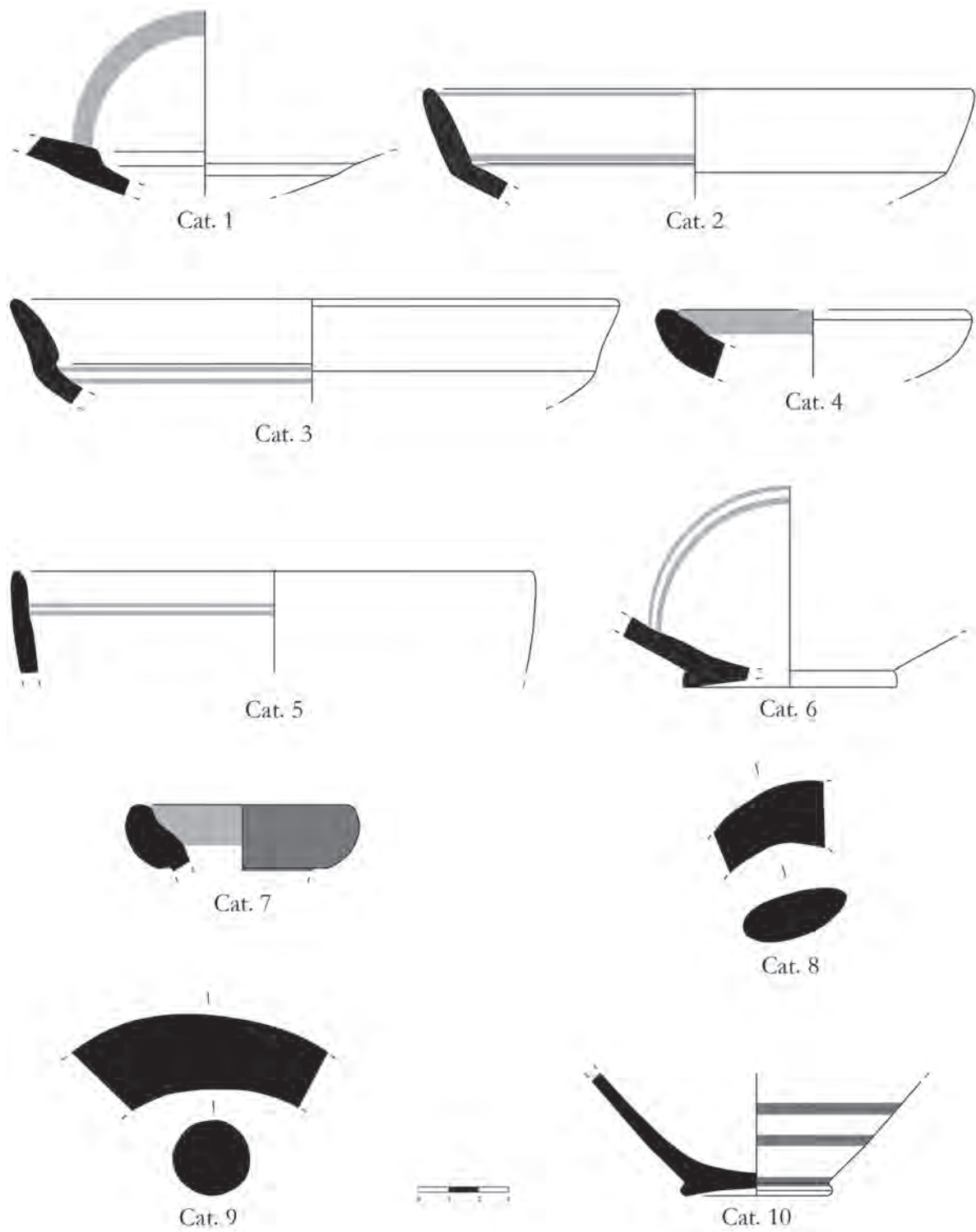


FIG. 3: Uzita: Section drawings of Punic Painted Ware pottery Cat. 1-10 (drawings and digitization by Andrea Perugini).

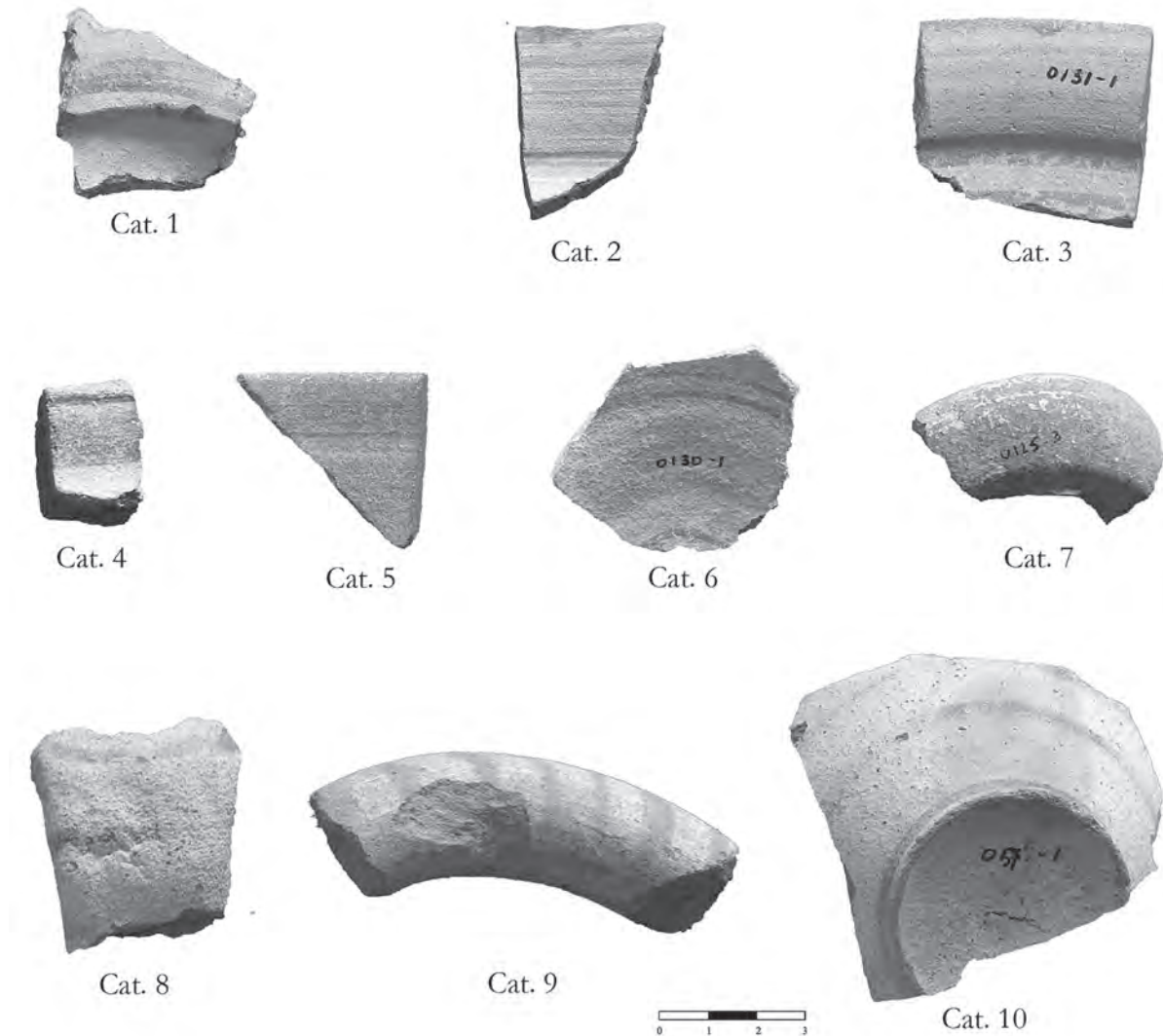


FIG. 4: Uzita: Pictures of Punic Painted pottery Cat. 1-10 (photographs by Andrea Perugini).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). Lines: 10R 5/6 (red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.4 mm) and rare quartz particles (0.1-0.2 mm).

This rim fragment is particularly interesting since it probably shows the adaptation in the Punic Painted Ware repertoire of the well-known Attic drinking cup of the “Stemless cup – inset lip” type, also known as “Castulo Cup” on the basis of their occurrence in the South of Spain and particularly on the site of Castulo.¹⁹ It is not to be considered an exact imitation since the presence of handles and the shape of the base are unknown, but on the basis of the particular inset rim shape, we are faced with an adaptation and at the same time a morphological variation of the carinated bowl Cat. 2 (FIGG. 3-4). The rim diameter is larger than those of

¹⁹ Shefton 1996; 1997; both with full references.

the Attic originals, though. These Attic versions are particularly well-attested in non-Greek, Punic contexts and in areas with strong Punic influence, probably on the basis of their sturdy shape and the practical inset lip that prevented the wine from spilling over the rim too easily. In North-Africa,²⁰ Attic originals have been attested at Carthage, Leptis Magna, Sabratha, Gouraya, Thapsus, Kerkouane, as well as Ghizène (Jerba).²¹ The c. 800 fragments of Black Glaze Ware pottery that have been found in residual position in the excavations of Uzita are currently being prepared for publication,²² but amongst them are no fragments of “Castulo cups”. Already the discussion of the class in the Carthaginian settlement by B. Bechtold²³ showed that these vessels are not that uncommon as previously thought based upon the studies of B.B. Shefton. Moreover, they seem to occur in Carthage earlier than in the South of Spain. They have been found in stratigraphical layers of 480-425 and 425-350 BCE. The latter date range, however, may be suggested for the present Punic adaptation. The typology of Punic pottery of M. Vegas does not list this particular shape, although a Plain Ware bowl with an equally larger diameter of 24 cm and found in a context of the 3rd century BCE is comparable.²⁴

4. Inv. 075-10. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Rim fragment of bowl. Diam. unknown (FIGG. 3-4).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 5YR 5/1 (gray) in core, 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). External slip: 10YR 8/2 (very pale brown). Band: 10R 4/4 (weak red). Inclusions: some quartz particles (0.4-0.8 mm) and low frequency of voids (0.2-0.6 mm).

The thick rim fragment of a bowl, painted on the upper inside, may be compared to a fragment found in the French excavations on the Byrsa Hill, which is equally painted on the inside.²⁵ It comes from a homogeneous context of the 4th century BCE.

5. Inv. 075-11. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Rim fragment of deep bowl. Diam. rim 17 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 6/8 (light red). Lines: 10R 5/8 (red) and 10R 3/1 (dark reddish gray). Inclusions: high frequency of quartz (very fine-0.4 mm).

The deep bowl, painted with a double line on the inside, may be attributed to Form 2.2 in the typology of M. Vegas (“Kalottenförmige Schalen mit Streifenbemalung”),²⁶ although the decoration is commonly confined to the outside. In Carthage, it is one of the most common shapes in the Painted Ware. In B. Bechtold’s more recent typology, the shape and decoration scheme may best be compared to the “kalottenförmige Tassen” of her type C.²⁷ These painted ones seem to date to the late 6th and 5th century BCE, continuing well into the 4th.²⁸

6. Inv. 0130-1. House 2, Room 28, sondage 21, context 0130.

Base fragment of bowl. Diam. base 7 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

20 Shefton 1996, p. 182; 1997, pp. 94-95.

21 Schmitz – Docter – Ben Tahar 2007, pp. 67-69, fig. 1b.

22 van der Werff 1982b, pp. 49-58, pp. 223-224, tab 3-4; Van Hecke 2011.

23 Bechtold 2007b, pp. 508-509, fig. 271, 4314-4318.

24 Vegas 1999, pp. 146-147, fig. 40,2.

25 Thuillier 1982, p. 256, fig. 329,19.

26 Vegas 1999, pp. 139-140, fig. 28.

27 Bechtold 2007a, pp. 347-351, fig. 168, esp. cat. 2082.

28 Lancel 1979, pp. 80-81, 92, figg. 29, 24-26, 53,5; Lancel 1982, pp. 223, 228, 237, 240, figg. 289,5, 304,3; Vegas 1984, pp. 218-219, fig. 1,4-6; Vegas 1987, pp. 402-405, fig. 11,198.

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 6/8 (light red). External slip: 10YR 8/2 (very pale brown). Lines: 10R 4/4 (weak red). Inclusions: rare calcite (very fine) and quartz particles (very fine).

The base belongs to a shape that has been already attested in the 7th century BCE, occurring as Peserico's base type B2.II.²⁹ The painted decoration on the inside, however, would place the base clearly into the second half of the 5th and the 4th centuries BCE.

7. Inv. 0125-3. House 2, Room 30, sondage 27, context 0125.

Rim fragment of jar. Internal diam. rim 7 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 5YR 4/4 (reddish brown). In&out scum: 2.5Y 7/2 (light gray). Band: 2.5YR 4/2 (weak red) and 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). Inclusions: rare quartz particles (0.3-0.6 mm).

The rim of a painted jar would belong to M. Vegas' heterogeneous Form 34 of painted jugs and jars ("be-malte Kannen")³⁰ dating to the late 5th and 4th centuries BCE; morphologically, however, a Plain Ware rim of her Form 26 is close.³¹ That one is dated to the late 7th till the middle of the 6th century BCE.

8. Inv. 042-357. House 2, Room 28, sondage 21, context 042.

Upper strap handle fragment of jug (FIGG. 3-4).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). In&out scum: 2.5YR 8/3 (pale brown). Lines: 2.5YR 3/4 (dark reddish brown). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.5 mm), rare quartz particles (0.1-0.2 mm) and voids (0.4 mm).

The strap handle with painted stripes on top may have belonged to a variety of jug shapes. On the basis of the decoration the piece may be assigned a chronology of the second half of the 5th and the 4th centuries BCE.

9. Inv. 0110-192. House 2, Room 30, sondage 27, context 0110.

Large round (horizontal?) handle (FIGG. 3-4).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 5YR 4/6 (yellowish red). Stripes: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.6 mm) and gray particles (0.3-0.8 mm); rare quartz (very fine-0.2 mm).

The thick handle fragment, decorated with a series of painted stripes is most likely to be interpreted as a horizontal one. If correct, one may attribute it to a large storage vessel or pithos. It is only in the transitional Early Punic/Middle Punic period (EP/MP: 530-480 BCE) that for the first time we see few fragments of larger storage vessels in Carthaginian settlement contexts, all in the Plain Ware.³² The painted decoration of Cat. 9 would rather suggest a chronology in the 5th or 4th century BCE.

10. Inv. 057-1. House 2, Room 28, sondage 21, context 057.

Base fragment of closed vessel (?). Diam. base 5 cm (FIGG. 3-4).

Carthaginian production. Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). External scum: 2.5Y 8/3 (pale brown). Internal scum: 7.5YR 8/3 (pink). Lines: 2.5YR 4/4 (reddish brown). Inclusions: some quartz (0.4-2.1 mm) and low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.4 mm) and voids (0.1-0.3 mm).

11. Inv. 13-3. House 1, sondage 5 and 7, context 0147.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

29 Peserico 2002, pp. 53-56, pl. 11a.

30 Vegas 1999, pp. 167-168, fig. 69.

31 Vegas 1999, p. 162, fig. 60,1.

32 Docter – Bechtold forthcoming, fig. 4,12, dated to the Middle Punic I period, 480-430 BCE.

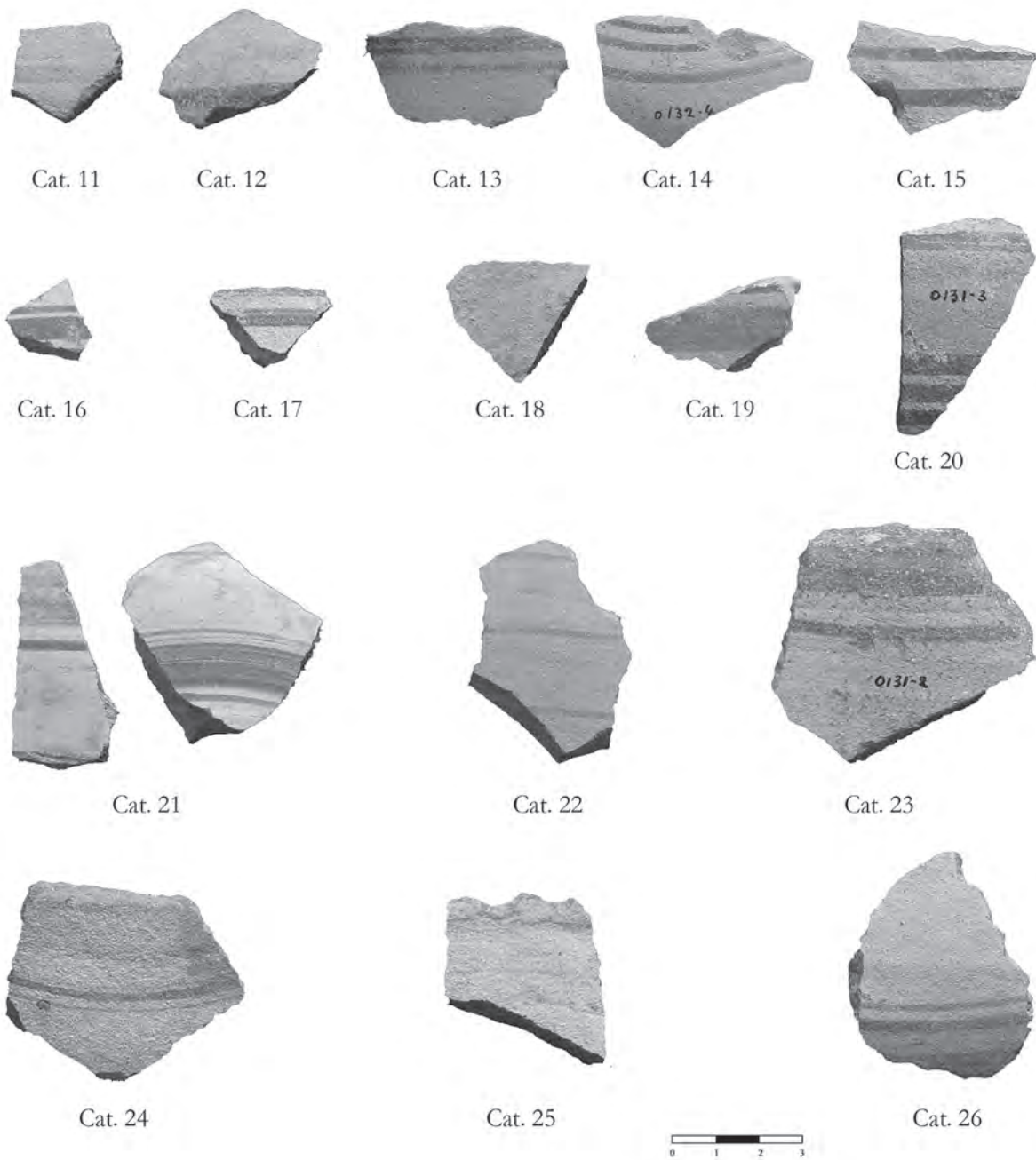


FIG. 5: Uzita: Pictures of Punic Painted pottery Cat. 11-26 (photographs by Andrea Perugini).

Imported (?) Punic production. Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). Line: 10R 4/3 (weak red). Inclusions: rare calcite particles (0.2-0.4 mm) and voids (0.1-0.3 mm).

12. Inv. 010-248. House 1, sondage 15-3, context 010.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8 (red). External scum: 10YR 8/3 (very pale brown). Band and lines: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: rare calcite (0.2-0.4 mm) and quartz particles (0.1-0.4 mm).

13. Inv. 083-160. House 1, sondage 25, context 083.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8 (red). In&out scum: 2.5Y 8/3 (pale brown). Bands and lines: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: some calcite particles (0.2-0.5 mm) and rare quartz (0.2-0.3 mm).

14. Inv. 032-4. House 2, Room 28, sondage 21, context 0132-0131.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 5YR 5/1 (gray) and 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). External scum: 10YR 8/2 (very pale brown). Band: 10R 4/4 (weak red). Inclusions: some quartz particles (0.4-0.8 mm) and low frequency of voids (0.2-0.6 mm).

15. Inv. 0120-16. House 2, sondage "Kees".

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6 (red). External scum: 10YR 8/2 (very pale brown). Lines: 10R 6/4 (pale red). Inclusions: some quartz particles (0.3-0.9 mm) and low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.5 mm).

16. Inv. 080-23. House 2, Space 1c, sondage 28, context 080.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 5YR 5/8 (yellowish red). Lines: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: low frequency of quartz (0.4-0.8 mm) and rare calcite particles (0.2-0.3 mm).

17. Inv. 05-122. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 05.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 7/8 (light red). In&out scum: 2.5Y 8/3 (pale brown). Painting: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: rare calcite (0.2-0.4 mm) and quartz particles (0.2-0.4 mm).

18. Inv. 075-13. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/2 (weak red) and 2.5YR 5/8 (red). Band: 10R 4/4 (weak red). Inclusions: rare calcite (0.1-0.3 mm) and quartz particles (very fine).

19. Inv. 065-37. No context information (box 22).

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). Lines: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: some quartz (0.3-0.5 mm) and low frequency of calcite particles (0.2-0.5 mm).

20. Inv. 0131-3. No context information (cardboard box III, in envelope).

Wall fragment of closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8 (red). Bands: 10R 3/2 (dusky red). Inclusions: some silver mica (0.1-0.3 mm) and rare quartz particles (0.4-0.5 mm).

Ten wall fragments (Cat. 11-20) may have belonged to different closed vessels, jugs, jars, etc., executed in the painted Ware and probably to be dated to the second half of the 5th and the 4th centuries BCE. The base fragment Cat. 10 may equally have belonged to such closed vessels, although a large hemispherical bowl (as Cat. 6, FIGG. 3-4) is not to be excluded, especially since the interior is covered with scum as well, suggesting a more open shape, and the base shape is similar to that of Cat. 6.

21. Inv. 5-230 and 5-231. House 1, Room 7, sondage 10, context 5.

2 not-joining wall fragments of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Unknown Punic (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8 (red). External scum: 2.5Y 7/3 (pale brown), highly smoothed. Lines: 10R 4/3 (weak red). Inclusions: some calcite particles (0.5-1.2 mm) and low frequency of quartz (0.3-0.5 mm). The extremely smooth surface of the piece in combination with the fabric may also be compared to banded Cypriot (?) lagynoi of the 2nd or 1st century BCE.³³

22. Inv. 19-41. House 1, sondage 12, context 19.

Wall fragment of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 10R 5/8 (red). External scum: 2.5YR 8/3 (pale brown). Bands: 10R 4/3 (weak red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.1-0.3 mm) and gray particles (0.2-0.5 mm).

23. Inv. 0131-2. House 2, sondage "Kees".

Wall fragment of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). External scum: 2.5Y 8/3 (pale brown). Bands and lines: 10R 4/3 (weak red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.1-0.4 mm); rare quartz particles (0.2-0.3 mm) and voids (0.5-0.7 mm).

24. Inv. 042-267. House 2, sondage "Kees".

Wall fragment of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Local or regional production. Fabric: 2.5YR 4/2 (weak red) and 2.5YR 4/8 (red). External scum: 10YR 8/2 (very pale brown). Lines: 10R 3/2 (dusky red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.3-0.8 mm).

25. Inv. 075-12. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Wall fragment of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8 (red). In&out scum: 2.5Y 8/2 (pale brown). Lines: 10R 5/4 (weak red). Inclusions: low frequency of calcite (0.2-0.7 mm) and rare quartz particles (0.1-0.3 mm).

26. Inv. 075-14. House 2, Room 23, sondage 18, context 075.

Wall fragment of large closed vessel (FIG. 5).

Carthaginian (?) production. Fabric: 2.5YR 3/1 (dark reddish gray). External scum: 2.5Y 8/2 (pale brown). Line: 2.5YR 5/2 (weak red). Inclusions: some calcite (0.3-0.8 mm) and low frequency of quartz particles (0.2-0.5 mm).

Cat. 21-26 are wall fragments of different large closed vessels executed in the painted Ware and probably to be dated to the second half of the 5th and the 4th century BCE.

³³ Rotroff 1997, pp. 393-394, cat. 1527-1532, pl. 117.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The present contribution adds a broad spectrum of Punic Painted Ware vessels to the pre-Roman occupational history of Uzita: plates, (carinated) bowls, jars, jugs, closed vessels and larger storage vessels (FIGG. 3-5). Of particular interest is the fact that for the first time a Punic adaptation of the so-called “Castulo Cup” is attested, supplementing the number of known Greek and Italic shapes that were imitated or adapted in the potteries during the Middle and Late Punic periods.³⁴ This functional spectrum of Punic pottery at Uzita, hence, complements the picture already established on the basis of the transport amphorae of the Middle and Late Punic periods.³⁵ The chronological range of these “new” Punic finds, in residual position, may be suggested to have started already in the (second half of the) 5th century BCE, rather than in the 4th. These finds concentrate in the area of the Roman House 2 (House with the Fish Mosaic) and to a lesser degree in that of House 1 (House with the Peristyle Mosaic). This may be accidental and explained by the measure in which the inhabitants of Roman Uzita interfered with Punic layers while digging for new foundations and cisterns. In any case, Punic Uzita, lying buried in the underground of the “Tell”, seems to hold a huge potential for further investigations.

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