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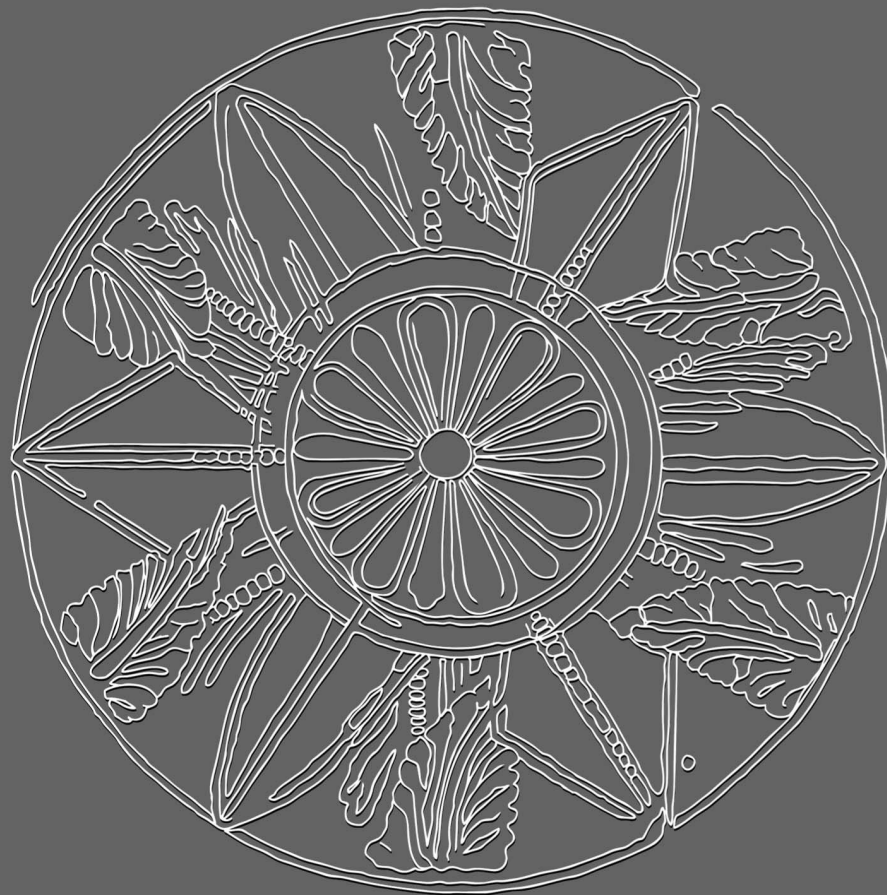
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Exploring the Neighborhood

The Role of Ceramics in Understanding Place in the
Hellenistic World

Edited by Ivanka Kamenjarin and Marina Ugarković

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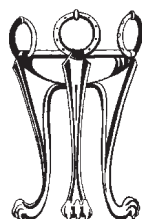
EXPLORING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

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The Ramon T-7433/Maña C2b amphorae from the Strait of Gibraltar area (2nd–1st centuries B. C.). An updated snapshot

Antonio Sáez Romero – Max Luaces

Abstract

The T-7433 amphora type is a seemingly well-known series manufactured in several workshops of the Strait of Gibraltar region. These workshops were located in former Phoenician and Punic settlements, both in Iberia and Mauritania. The type shows morphological features linked with coeval Carthaginian amphora repertoires. However, with their production chronology dating to the period between 150 and 50 B. C., this group of transport vessels was solely produced in Roman times, and it was a “late Punic” production characteristic for the Strait of Gibraltar area. As such, this item can be considered a key indicator for the study of cultural and economic transformations in the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C., which are generally referred to as “Romanization”. A growing set of archaeological data are available regarding the manufacture patterns and economic importance of the T-7433 type. However, recent discoveries have provided new evidence and greatly modified the previous typological and historical picture drawn for this ancient container. This contribution aims to present and discuss fresh data, while engaging in a renewed vision on this specific transport amphora series. In particular, we focus on the existence of several regional typological variants of this amphora – illustrated by distinct local features – and the connection of these micro-regional types with the transformations of local economic strategies and ceramic infrastructures connected with the region’s gradual integration into the Roman world.

1. Introduction

The questions addressed in this work transcend traditional approaches in amphorae studies. Nowadays, amphorae are mostly appreciated for their typological categorization and their chronological contribution to understanding sites and ancient economies. Although these aspects are a part of the basis of our argument, our work also aims to present some historical thoughts concerning the socio-cultural milieu. Our paper focuses on a particular series of amphorae produced at multiple sites on both shores of the Strait of Gibraltar (Iberia and Mauretania) during the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C.: the so-called T-7433 or Mañá C2b type¹. The Strait of Gibraltar area was first colonized by the Phoenicians and during the late Classical and Hellenistic periods was also under the influence of Carthage. However, the T-7433 type was exclusively produced in this region after it became part of the Roman Republic.

North and south, both shores of the Strait of Gibraltar were assembled, during the Archaic and Classical periods, into a homogenous cultural and economic sphere, conceptualized by modern historiography under the concept of the “Circle of the Strait”² (fig. 1). Phoenician colonization of the west had a decisive, but not exclusive influence on the formation of the Circle. This influence must be underlined in the study of the T-7433 amphora, a container related to Punic (Carthaginian) artisanal traditions and styles, although the series was produced long after the integration of the Strait of Gibraltar into the Roman world³. The study of these amphorae has also revealed a relatively comprehensive set of epigraphic stamps, written both in Punic and Latin, connected to the culturally mixed environment in which they were produced⁴. The widespread

¹ RAMÓN TORRES 1995, 210f.

² TARRADELL 1960; BERNAL CASASOLA 2016; CALLEGARIN 2016.

³ SÁEZ ROMERO 2008, 647.

⁴ SÁEZ ROMERO ET AL. 2012.

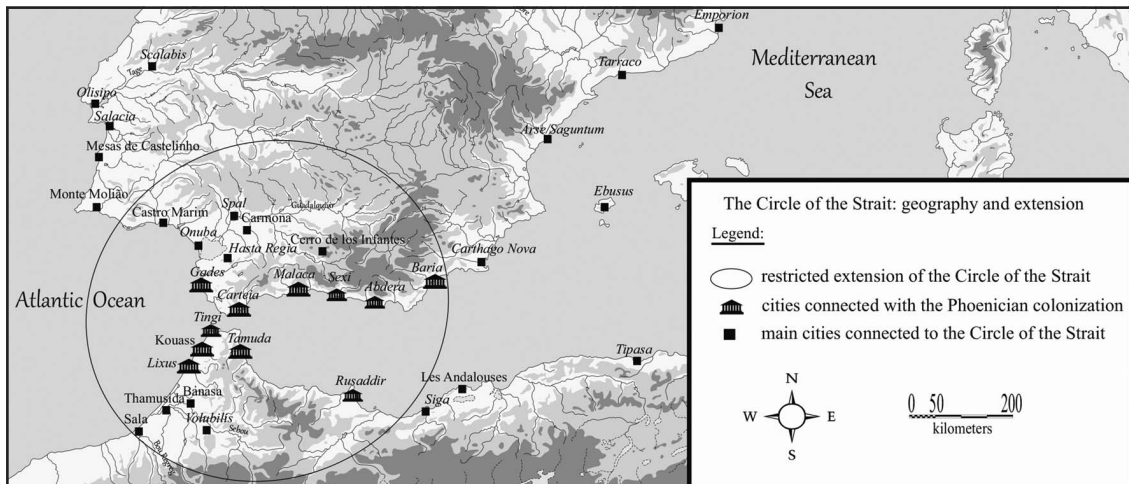


Fig. 1: Map of the Circle of the Strait and the main cities in the area.

distribution of this container, its occurrence in a growing number of wrecks and its connection with the economic and socio-cultural changes that occurred in the Western Mediterranean during the 2nd–1st centuries B. C., turn this amphora into an “index fossil” of seminal importance⁵.

A remarkable amount of information related to the manufacture of this amphora is currently available. However, we seek to provide fresh data and a renewed vision of these containers, increasing their utility as a tool for historical analysis. First, we will present a brief overview of the typological features of this amphora group. Then, we would like to address the study of the production facilities of the T-7433 type on both shores of the Strait of Gibraltar and discuss the existence of several micro-regional typological variants as markers of socio-economic diversity in the region.

2. A brief typological introduction.

The production of T-7433 amphorae started during the second half of the 2nd century B. C. It was probably an evolution of a previous type from the Circle of the Strait, the T-7432 amphora, which seems to appear in this area around 150–140 B. C.⁶ However, the morphology of both types (T-7433 and T-7432) was not developed by coastal communities of the Strait of Gibraltar. Both variants were indeed western versions of previous Carthaginian series, manufactured between the end of the 3rd and the 2nd century B. C. (fig. 2)⁷. In fact, the T-7433 type shares many features with its typological predecessors from the Punic central Mediterranean.

T-7433 individuals have a maximum length of proximately 100 and 120 cm, and their transport capacity is estimated at between 23–27 liters. The body is cylindrical, with a long and narrow toe and a relatively developed neck. The rims usually range in diameter from 23–29 centimeters (measurable at the outer bevel) and include a wide variety of grooved or hanging edges. This part of the amphora is a significant feature of the type, and the resulting profile is often described as a shape of “horse’s head”, but it presents a very remarkable variability. Rims of early generations of T-7433’s are generally similar to those belonging to previous Carthaginian types from Tunisia and the central Mediterranean. Later on, the type evolved to completely different forms, and its later examples are characterized by a shape that slightly hangs towards the neck and the body, with one or more projected grooves with a rounded profile. The minimal diameter, measuring between 10 and 14 centimeters, is placed in the middle of the neck. The toe is typically quite long, hollow and massive. Such a shape is peculiar, as it could instead be linked to Greco-Roman artisanal traditions.

⁵ LUACES 2017, 666–670.

⁶ SÁEZ ROMERO ET AL. 2012.

⁷ RAMÓN TORRES 1995, 210–213.

The T-7433 is conventionally considered a transport vessel for fish products, such as Roman fish sauces (*garum*) and salted fish (*salsamenta*). Some archaeological data confirm this interpretation⁸, and most T-7433s from Cadiz Bay or Malaga may have been used for this content. However, other commodities were probably also transported inside these amphorae, particularly wine⁹. Consequently, we must consider this type a multi-purpose group linked to diverse contents, but mostly to fish products.

3. The production sites of the T-7433 type in the Strait of Gibraltar.

A significant dataset supports the great economic importance of the T-7433 amphora during the Republican period. Nevertheless, these records are not homogeneous in quantity and quality, both north-south and east-west. The manufacture of this type of amphora is indeed much better documented in contexts from the modern cities of Cadiz and Malaga than in other coastal towns of the region. This situation seems to be a reflection of the differences that characterize the asymmetric development of regional salvage archaeology, as well as the political dissimilarities that existed among the cities of the Circle of the Strait during the Late Republican era. In sum, a very diverse set of archaeological sources have to be considered in order to characterize the production sites from the Circle connected with this amphora.

3.1. Cadiz Bay: evidence for the manufacture of T-7433 amphorae.

Up to now, the Bay of Cadiz and its coastal countryside (in particular, the territory of the modern municipality of Cadiz, where Punic *Gadir*, i. e. Roman *Gades* was located), have provided the majority of data concerning the production of the T-7433 container. A copious historiography supplies a solid basis regarding this city's economic connection with the ocean¹⁰. Many works have focused more specifically on the production of pottery. Altogether they support a dense typological and chronological framework for studying of the local pottery, mainly for Roman imperial times¹¹.

Seventeen ceramic workshops can be linked to the manufacture of the T-7433 type in the surroundings of *Gades*. These kiln sites have been dated between the middle of 2nd century and the second half of the 1st century B. C. It must be emphasized that the incorporation of this amphora into the local repertoire was associated with a transformation of Gaditan artisanal landscape. Such changes must be attached to the use of innovative technologies, appearance of new production infrastructures, reorganization of the production geography and the use of new epigraphic stamps on the amphorae, in both written in Latin and Punic¹². The study of the ceramic workshops found at Avenida de Portugal, which produced T-7433 and Dressel 1 amphorae, allowed us to identify the use of a portable portion of a holed floor belonging to a kiln's fire cham-

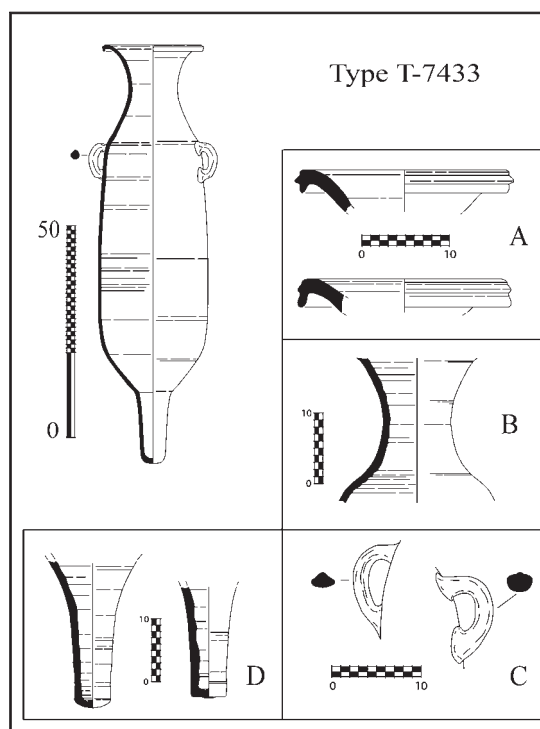


Fig. 2: General overview of typological features of the T-7433 type, with the details of the main part of this amphora (A: rim; B: neck; C: handles; D: foot) (drawings by Max Luaces).

8 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2007, 355–374.

9 GARCÍA VARGAS 1998, 65–68.

10 GARCÍA VARGAS – FERRER ABELDA 2001; SÁEZ RO-

MERO 2010; NIVEAU DE VILLEDARY Y MARIÑAS 2015.

11 LAGÓSTENA BARRIOS 1996; DÍAZ RODRÍGUEZ 2014.

12 SÁEZ ROMERO ET AL. 2016, 51–67.

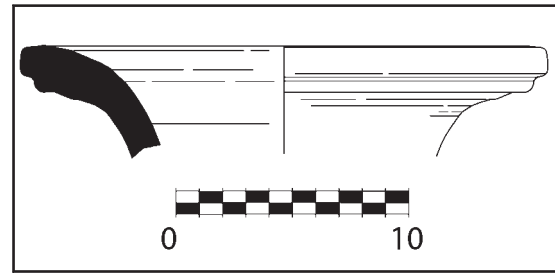
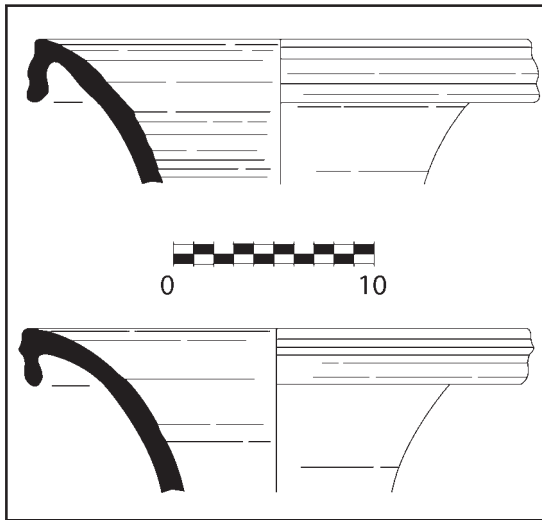


Fig. 4: Details of the T-7433 variant produced in the ancient coast of Malaga (drawings by Max Luaces).

Fig. 3: Details of the T-7433 variant from ancient Cadiz Bay. The presented examples have been identified during joint studies (drawings by Max Luaces).

ber, a technical element that was not use in the Cadiz Bay before the Roman conquest¹³. The data from the Gregorio Marañón area also verify the development of major changes connected to the creation of the T-7433 type. Different economic activities were probably developed in the area (salting, purple dyeing, pottery production, port storage, etc.) during the 2nd–1st centuries B. C., a different pattern compared to the Punic Era setting¹⁴. The archaeological data brought to light all around Cadiz Bay suggest a link between the development of the T-7433 series and a major transformation of the local economic infrastructures and strategies, following a ‘Romanized’ technological and territorial model of the production areas of early *Gades*¹⁵ (fig. 3).

3.1.1. Some specific typological features of T-7433 amphorae from Cadiz Bay

Several T-7433 individuals discovered in Cadiz Bay show significant peculiarities connected to their general shape and some specific morphologic features¹⁶. Therefore, the local variants of T-7433 attested in the workshops excavated around the bay could be identified as a distinguishable profile for ancient *Gades*. The development and commercial peak of this variant in the local amphorae repertoire could be dated between the end of the 2nd and the early decades of the 1st century B. C. From a morphological point of view, these Gaditan T-7433s can be recognized by their longer neck and larger body diameter (fig. 3). The rim (and particularly the shape of the hanging flaps) is perhaps the most noticeable difference, as they show a more vertical and developed hanging variation of the rim.

The petrographic examination of some fragments of the Gaditan T-7433 variant indicates that this series was not only manufactured in the workshops of *Gades*, as illustrated by some data from ancient Malaga. Nevertheless, it is in the kiln sites of the Cadiz Bay where this variant has been most frequently attested. This fact suggests that the Gaditan variant was a very successful one, as Gaditan products (salted fish, wine or any other) were consumed in a wide variety of markets, from the Atlantic coast of northern Hispania to the southern cities of Atlantic Mauritania and the ports of the central Mediterranean¹⁷.

3.2. The production of T-7433 on the coast of Malaga.

So far, general characteristics of the T-7433 manufactured in *Malaga* have remained poorly recognized, in contrast to those in Cadiz Bay. The main features of amphora production at the beginning of the Roman era, both in regard to kiln sites and types, are still only barely identified and

¹³ BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2004.

¹⁴ BLANCO JIMÉNEZ 1991.

¹⁵ SÁEZ ROMERO 2010, 901–907; LUACES 2017,

230–237.

¹⁶ SÁEZ ROMERO ET AL. 2012.

¹⁷ RAMÓN TORRES 1995.

studied for the area of Malaga compared to *Gades*. However, several recent discoveries, mainly the sites of “Calle Granada” and “Avenida Juan XXIII”, have contributed fresh archaeological evidence that make it possible to outline an improved view of T-7433 amphora production¹⁸.

These two workshops produced T-7433 amphorae between the second half of the 2nd century and the first half of the 1st century B. C. This series represented the majority of the amphora production during this period, but local versions of Dr. 1 and Dr. 21/22 were also produced. Although the archaeological data are less substantial for the case of *Malaca*, the available information suggest that the production of these maritime ceramic containers can be connected to a breakage with the pre-Roman economic pattern and a ‘Romanization’ of the infrastructures (in technological terms), in a similar way as what we have proposed for *Gades*. The location of the workshops of Calle Granada and Avenida Juan XXIII, among others, indeed shows a transformation of the urban and economic settlement model of *Malaca*, from at least the mid-2nd century B. C. The city was then transformed with deep changes in its topography, with the installation of new pottery workshops in its suburban belt happening between the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 1st century B. C.¹⁹. During the end of the Republican era, this trend crystallized and the maritime-based economic activity of *Malaca* expanded²⁰ in connection with the production of T-7433s, but mostly with the production of Dr. 14 amphorae (from the late 1st century B. C. to imperial times). This expansion seems to have gone hand in hand with the growth of fish-processing and the construction of large production facilities, according to ‘Romanized’ models that may have been first developed in *Gades* (which was the most important coastal hub at that time). Both cities played a major role in distributing T-7433s (and also western versions of Dr. 1) towards Mauritania and out of the regional routes.

3.2.1. *The specific features of the T-7433 amphorae from Malaca.*

The examination of T-7433s from Late Republican *Malaca* has made it possible to identify some significant differences in comparison to those from *Gades*. The study of the fabric of these local versions confirms their manufacture in the region of Malaga, specifically in workshops such as Avenida Juan XXIII (where many misfired fragments were found). The T-7433 variant from *Malaca* can be recognized thanks to a relatively narrow neck, which seems to be common in the examples of this amphora examined (fig. 3). The rim also presents differences compared with the Gaditan versions, as it rarely has a hanging flap and regularly shows a horizontal grooved and massive profile. Several examples of this variant from the *Malaca* area have been observed in southern Gaul²¹.

3.3. *Other variants of the T-7433 from Hispania Ulterior ?*

The cities of *Gades* and *Malaca* led the coastal settlements of the ‘Circle of the Strait’, but many other cities with a Phoenician past were important ports in the region. Some of them must be mentioned here, as they could have been connected with manufacturing T-7433 amphorae, such as *Carteia* (Algeciras Bay), *Baria* (modern Villaricos) or *Sexi* (present-day Almuñécar) (fig. 1).

Many uncertainties still remain concerning the amphora production of most of these cities during Roman rule, and even before²². A set of archaeological and literary data certifies that these towns continued to manufacture amphorae, wine, and fish products after the Roman conquest²³. At *Carteia*, recent discoveries have verified the presence of intramural pottery workshops that produced amphorae during the 3rd and 2nd centuries B. C. Some of the published

18 ARANCIBIA ROMÁN ET AL. 2012; PÉREZ-MALUMBRES 2012; MATEO CORREDOR 2015. CHACÓN ET AL. forthcoming.

19 SERRANO RAMOS 2004, 172–188.

20 MAYORGA MAYORGA ET AL. 2005, 146–152.

21 LUACES 2017, 586–588.

22 As has been pointed out for *Baria*; see LÓPEZ CASTRO – MARTÍNEZ HAHNMÜLLER 2012, 337–340.

23 BERNAL CASASOLA – JIMÉNEZ CAMINO 2004; LÓPEZ CASTRO ET AL. 2007, 24; BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2010, 67–73.

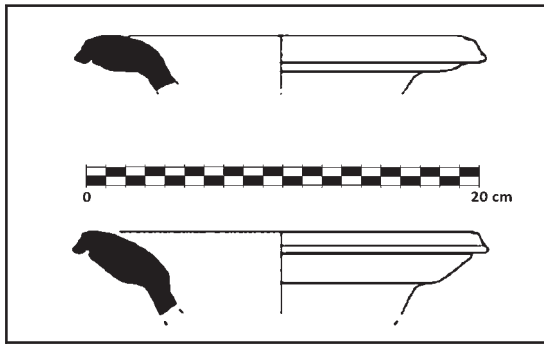


Fig. 5: Some examples of a distinct T-7433 variant, presumably produced in the Guadalquivir valley (from García Vargas et al. 2011, 199f., drawings by Max Luaces).

of olive oil production. Some T-7433 fragments have similar fabrics to those observed in other local types (ovoid series) of the Lower Guadalquivir valley²⁶. The published rims show distinctive profiles that are different from those recorded in the contexts of *Gades* and *Malaca* (fig. 5). However, the possible production of T-7433 amphorae in the Guadalquivir valley needs further archaeological support, given that no workshops have been identified in this area so far.

3.4. The manufacture of the T-7433 in northern Morocco.

Our study was focused on the Iberian cities of the ‘Circle of the Strait’ until now, but this geo-historical sector also included the southern shore of the Strait of Gibraltar. Phoenician or Punic communities founded some cities on the coast of present-day Morocco, and these coastal hubs had a close relation with other Punic cities of the Mediterranean²⁷. In this regard, we must highlight the cases of *Tingi* (Tangier), *Lixus* (near Larache), and Kouass for the Atlantic coastline, and Ceuta, Emsà, Sidi Abdselam del Behar and *Tamuda* (River Martil Valley, Tetouan) for the Mediterranean coast of Mauritania. Consequently, our study of the T-7433 amphora has to take into account data from Western Mauritania, which provides relevant archaeological evidence.

Hispania Ulterior and Western Mauritania were in different situations during the Late Republican period. On one hand, former Phoenician cities on the Iberian shore were politically integrated into the Roman Republic after the end of the Second Punic War (206 B. C.). But, on the other hand, the ‘Punic’ coastal towns of Mauritania only became Roman, from a political and military perspective, during Emperor Claudius’s reign (A. D. 40–42). In turn, this significant political disparity seems to have generated differences between not only the economic and cultural spheres of Mauritania and *Hispania Ulterior*, but also regarding the relationship that both regions developed with Rome. This also affected the Mediterranean trade routes of the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C.

Beyond these major divergences, the current state of the archaeological research is also asymmetric between both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, and many uncertainties persist concerning the history of former Phoenician communities after the Second Punic War²⁸. Mostly, some scholars think that these towns were incorporated into a unified Mauritanian Kingdom during the 3rd century B. C., while other authors have proposed that some could have remained autonomous cities during the Late Republican period²⁹. In any case, several sites of northwestern Mauritania have provided archaeological evidence regarding the production of amphorae linked with the regional Punic repertoires, in particular with the T-7433 amphora³⁰, showing connections with the northern shore of the ‘Circle of the Strait’.

24 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2010.

25 MORENO MEGÍAS 2016.

26 GARCÍA VARGAS ET AL. 2011, 199f.

27 LÓPEZ PARDO 2002.

28 AMELA VALVERDE 2012; PAPI 2014.

29 COLTELLONI-TRANNOY 1997, 123–125.

30 ARANEGUI ET AL. 2004.

3.4.1. *Kouass and the study of the T-7433 in modern Morocco.*

The site of Kouass is located on a headland of the Atlantic coast of Morocco, halfway between modern Larache and Tangier. The first excavations were carried out by Michel Ponsich during the 1960s, and they brought to light part of a coastal town associated pottery kilns, a diverse Roman harbor and fish-processing facilities³¹. The pottery workshops were seemingly in activity between the 6th and the end of the 1st century B. C.³². The typologies, as well as urban features, connect Kouass with the settlement pattern and economic development observed in the rest of the Circle of the Strait, particularly with *Gadir/Gades*³³.

Additional archaeological evidence, such as discarded vitrified fragments, suggest a local manufacture of T-7433 amphorae at Kouass³⁴, while other contexts have verified local consumption of T-7433 amphorae³⁵. Only a few fragmentary examples have been published so far. Therefore, for the moment, it is not possible to verify either the existence of any local variant of this transport container or the chronology of its production at this site. Nevertheless, the published information suggests that its appearance in the local contexts did not occur before the second half of the 2nd century B. C.³⁶. In spite of the remaining uncertainties, the contexts of Kouass confirm the importance of the T-7433 amphora and the regional dimension of its manufacture, even in the absence of a direct Roman political control.

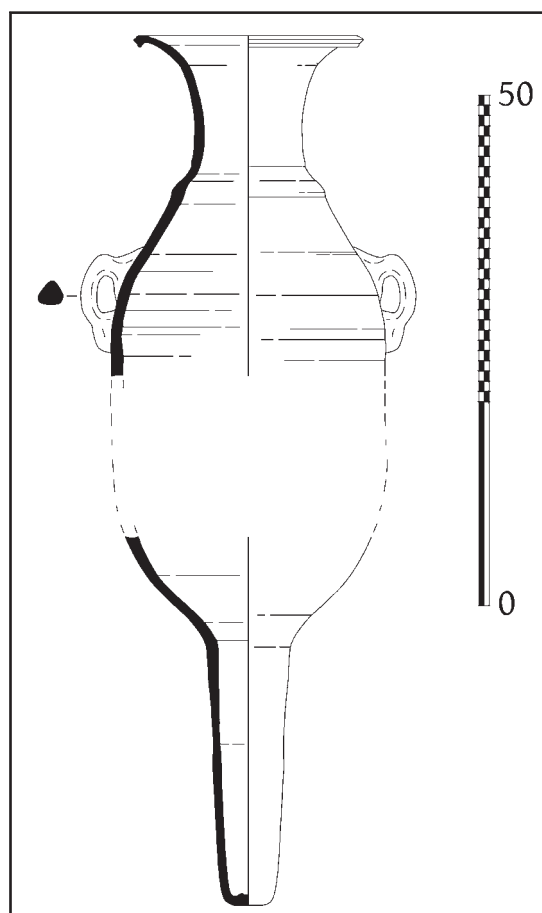


Fig. 6: Details of a T-7433 with some specific morphological features, a possible variant of this type found at Lixus (from BONET ROSADO ET AL. 2005, 118–120, drawings by Max Luaces).

3.4.2. *The archaeological data from Lixus.*

Old and recent excavations have documented remains of *Lixus*' urbanism from the 8th century B. C. to the Late Antiquity, showing a connection with the arrival and settlement of the Phoenicians in the region³⁷. In spite of this recent progress, the political, economic and socio-cultural situation of *Lixus* during the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C. is still unclear. The characteristics of the local amphorae represent just one of the aspects that need to be clarified. Nevertheless, several archaeological contexts attest to the extensive presence of T-7433 amphorae in strata dating to the 1st century B. C. At that time, it is quantitatively the second most represented group among transport vessels³⁸. Not a single kiln site has been discovered at *Lixus* or its territory for the moment, although the local manufacture of T-7433 amphorae has been proposed by recent stu-

31 PONSICH 1968.

32 KBIRI ALAOUI 2007, 46f.; BRIDOUX 2008, 374f.; BRIDOUX ET AL. 2015.

33 NIVEAU DE VILLEDARY Y MARIÑAS 2000, 178–183.

34 KBIRI ALAOUI 2007, 345–346.

35 BRIDOUX ET AL. 2010.

36 KBIRI ALAOUI 2007.

37 ALVAREZ GARCÍA ET AL. 2001, 73–78.

38 CARUANA CLEMENTE ET AL. 2001, 182.

dies³⁹. Some T-7433 fragments have been found in contexts of the Early Imperial period, a period when, theoretically, the type was not in production in Hispania Ulterior. These fragments have a much longer toe and a narrower neck, a significant difference from other individuals found in contexts of the late 2nd and the 1st century B. C. Regardless, the form of the rims and the cylindrical profile of the bodies suggest that this group could be classified as a later evolution of the T-7433 series (fig. 6). Further excavations, detailed typological and archaeometric studies are needed to confirm if there was a specific variant from *Lixus*.

3.5. *The valley of River Martil and the Mediterranean coast of Mauritania.*

The Phoenicians founded several colonies between the 8th and the 6th centuries B. C. on the northeastern coast of Mauritania, in geostrategic coastal sites such as Ceuta, Sidi Abdselam del Behar (Tetouan), Emsà, Sidi Driss (Nador) and Melilla. Some of them were abandoned, but most of them evolved into prosperous cities during the second half of the 1st millennium B. C. One of the most important areas for this Phoenician settlement was the valley of River Martil. Along the course of this river, two other urban communities were settled between the 7th and 6th centuries B. C.: Kitane in the middle Martil and *Tamuda* in the Upper Martil. Excavations carried out since the early 20th century have mainly focused on the latter site, and only a few trenches have been dug in Kitane and Sidi Abdselam. As a result, both sites are still poorly known⁴⁰.

The evolution of *Tamuda* during the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C. is relatively well known today, but the features of the pre-Roman phases still need to be defined⁴¹. The first phase, connected with the presence of populations from the Circle of the Strait, was dated between the 6th and 4th centuries B. C.⁴². During the early 2nd century B. C. *Tamuda* went through an important transformation of its urban design and not only turned into a ‘Hellenistic’ city with a pseudo-Hippodamian grid plan, but also became a flourishing town open to Mediterranean imports. A Roman military fort occupied the higher area of the city after the abandonment, probably subsequent to the Claudian conquest (A. D. 40–42).

Recent excavations conducted in the northeastern quarters of the city have yielded more detailed information regarding local amphorae. A vitrified fragment of a T-7433 amphora found in the old excavations suggests the manufacture of this series at *Tamuda*⁴³. However, its chronology is still uncertain, as it could have been an import fired during one of the destruction phases that the site suffered.

The most recent excavations have revealed some evidence regarding the local production of amphorae, particularly of a form similar to the T-7433 type. On one hand, a pottery kiln was excavated in the northeastern quarter of the city, dating to the late 2nd and/or early 1st century B. C. and probably connected with the production of amphorae. On the other hand, some fragments and complete vessels recorded in several contexts of the same area present a particular morphology⁴⁴. Two variants specific to the production of this region have been differentiated (Western Mauritanian I and II), although the fragments published so far present a high typological variability suggesting diverse origins for this set of amphorae, which may be associated with a possible destruction of the city at the beginning of the 1st century B. C. Overall, their features⁴⁵ are closer to ones observed in other transport vessels manufactured in Tunisia and Tripolitania during the 2nd–1st centuries B. C. (fig. 7). The fabrics of the fragments can be linked to local geology, so it seems very likely that both variants of the T-7400 series identified in the most recent excavations could have been locally produced in the sites of *Tamuda*, Kitane and Sidi Abdselam. In any case, further research will be necessary to verify this hypothesis, and above all to

39 BONET ROSADO ET AL. 2005, 116–120.

40 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2016.

41 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2013.

42 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2012, 2452f.

43 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2014, 467.

44 SÁEZ ROMERO ET AL. 2013, 161–182.

45 BERNAL CASASOLA ET AL. 2019, 170–179.

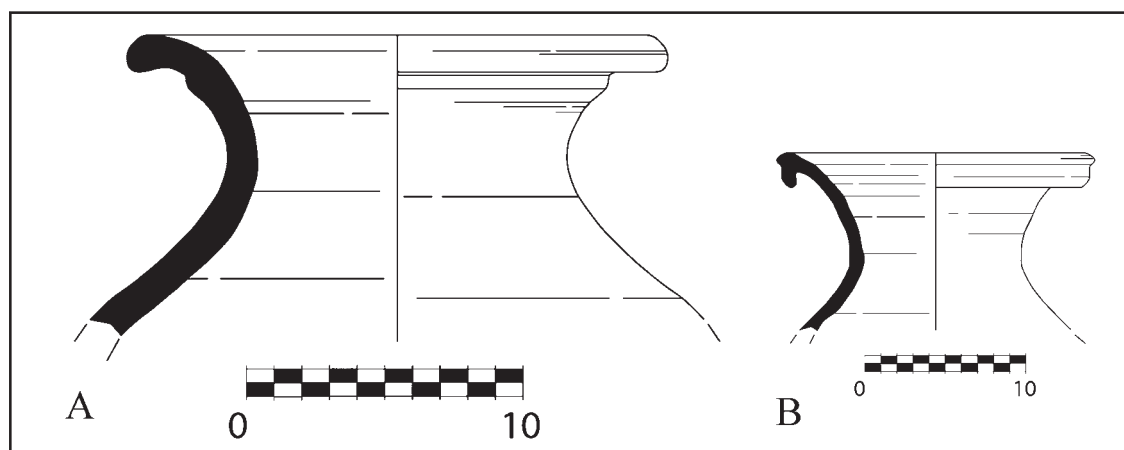


Fig. 7: Example of a T-7433 amphora with an original shape, a likely specific variant of this type from Tamuda (A). We can see its similarities with the Punic production of the Roman period from the central Mediterranean, by comparison to an example of the T-7511 type from Tunisia (B) (drawings by Max Luaces).

evaluate the commercial distribution and role of these containers in the regional and Mediterranean maritime routes.

4. T-7433 amphorae variants as a reflection of identities in the Circle of the Strait ?

The archaeological data presented in the previous sections confirm the existence of significant local particularities and substantial differences between the Hispanic and the Mauretanian versions of the T-7433 amphora. It is beyond doubt that this ‘typological scheme’ was quickly embraced by most coastal cities of the ‘Circle of the Strait’ since the beginning of its production, and these local distinctive features could have been a result of separate artisanal traditions as well as reflections of local economic and cultural identity. Each variant indeed exemplifies a particular appropriation of this amphora type. Such scenario suggests that even in the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C. there were clear visual indicators that allowed identifying the origin of some amphorae at a first sight, at least within the regional or local milieu. Such a level of precision is generally difficult to achieve for the study of the ceramic material, a feature that strengthens the historical significance of the T-7433 amphora group.

An assortment of questions can be raised concerning the state of the social, economic and cultural setting of the Strait of Gibraltar after the Second Punic War⁴⁶. However, we have to emphasize that amphorae, like other items in the archaeological record, should not be set apart from the socio-cultural background in which they were manufactured and used. In fact, amphorae not only bring up information regarding the economic situation of their time, since their distinctive typological and technical features, but they also provide evidence of the identity and mindsets of their manufacturers⁴⁷.

The morphology of the T-7433 was initially connected to the late Carthaginian amphora repertoire, and at the same time it was completely unrelated with the amphorae series produced by the formerly Punic cities of the Strait during the 3rd and the first half of the 2nd century B. C. The production of this type in the West only started long after the Roman conquest (perhaps not earlier than the destruction of Carthage in 146 B. C.). That scenario, connected to the introduction of other ‘Carthaginizing’ pottery types in western workshops, lays out many questions regarding the identity of the populations of the Strait of Gibraltar and the mobility of artisans and other groups from the central Mediterranean. It is still unclear if its production could have been just a pragmatic commercial strategy in order to soak up the commercial reputation of Carthage after it was destroyed by Rome, or even if it had something to do with the (ideological) persis-

46 LÓPEZ CASTRO 1995, 197–216; BERNARD 2018.

47 LUACES 2018, 41–45.

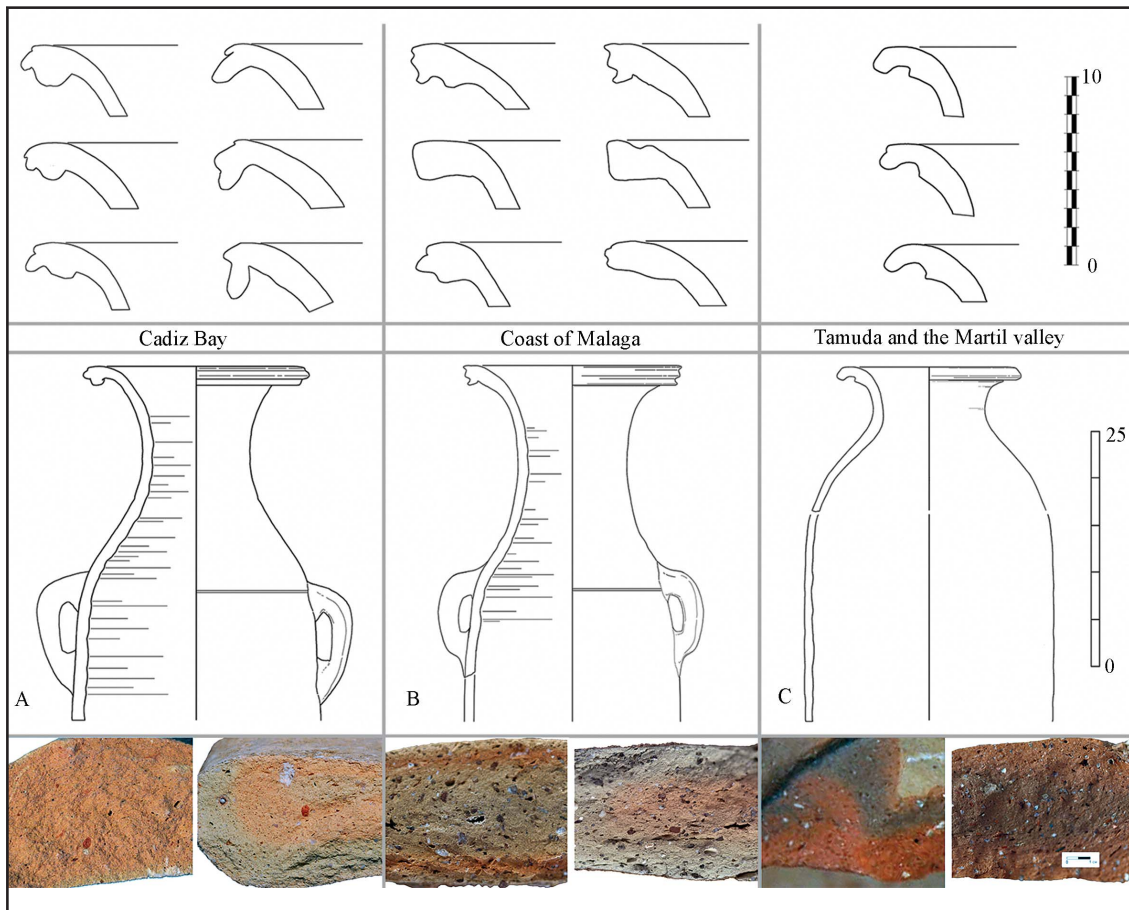


Fig. 8: Overview of several likely civic variants of the T-7433 type from the Cadiz Bay area (A), the coast of Malaga (B) and the Martil Valley around Tamuda. We present different examples of rims and the diverse fabrics identified for each variant (pictures in color) (drawings and photographs by Antonio Sáez).

tence of the ‘Punic identity’, as counterweight to the growing Roman influence. A joint result of both phenomena should be considered.

As instrumental elements of commercial activity, amphorae could have been used to distinguish provenance in the Strait of Gibraltar region during the first centuries of Roman rule, perhaps showing a domestic competition that transcended the economic sphere. We could then consider the presence of a specific visual identity for each of these cities during the Republican stage as archaeological indicators of the commercial struggles among regional elites to increase their profits and their political influence in Rome. In this regard, the significant growth of the western production of Greco-Italic and Dr. 1 versions (mostly manufactured in the same workshops that produced T-7433) could also be considered a sizeable index of the ‘Romanization’ of the western economies and elites, and the desire of the leading groups to become more integrated into Roman maritime routes and market (increasingly monetized) economies.

The situation of western Mauritania was slightly different, but the Mediterranean products and ideas had been arriving fluently to this area at least since the late 3rd century B. C. Literary and archaeological data suggest the existence of a complex political situation in Mauritania during the 3rd century B. C., with semi-autonomous towns⁴⁸ and a more homogeneous kingdom administration during the 2nd–1st centuries B. C. The manufacture of the T-7433 type and other variants, such as those identified in the Martil Valley, could be an expressive archaeological indi-

⁴⁸ RHORFI 2008.

cator of the internal complexity and of the degree of influence that *Gades*, *Malaca* and other southern Hispanic cities may have played on Mauritanian coastal economies.

Many uncertainties remain unsolved regarding the production and distribution of T-7433 amphorae. Nevertheless, we have presented enough information to further examine their key role for the study of the history of the region in Antiquity (fig. 8). In this particular case, it is worth emphasizing the massive scale of the production of this type, since evidence of its manufacture have been discovered in the main cities on both shores of the Strait of Gibraltar. The large number of vessels – mainly from *Gades* and *Malaca* – identified overseas also demonstrate the critical role that these containers played in the maritime commerce of this area during the Republican times. The variants defined for the case of the Martil Valley and the eastern coast of Mauritania also suggest that the former Punic sphere of the central Mediterranean was a direct source of inspiration for western potters, which could also be an indicator of a community of artisans coming from Tunisia in the area.

In any case, the ethnic and political diversity of the ‘Circle of the Strait’ throughout the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C., an aspect that has not been studied deeply enough, should be considered as the main support for the historical interpretations concerning the production of these micro-regional (or local) typologies. Although several questions remain unanswered, the T-7433 amphora group reflects a heterogeneous background for the Republican period in the West and certifies that the archaeological record can provide useful data to explore key historical issues. Our ongoing research on these transport vessels intends to improve their usefulness for the investigation of this critical period of Antiquity, and further results will be published in the near future.

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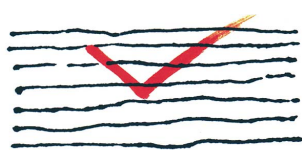
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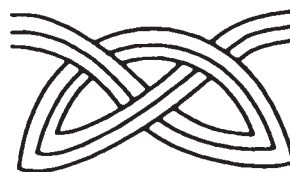
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