

EARLY PHOENICIAN RED SLIP WARE AT MOTYA: FROM LEVANTINE PROTOTYPES TO WESTERN STYLES

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Red Slip (RSW) is a specialized ware exported by Phoenician seafarers from the Levant throughout the Mediterranean during the first half of the 1st millennium BC. RSW characterizes the ceramic repertoire of the earliest phases of the Phoenician settlements of Central and Western Mediterranean during the late 9th-6th centuries BC. During this time span, the RSW repertoire underwent some important transformations that we can consider to be the outcome of the new Western Phoenician culture.

Keywords: Motya; Phoenician; Red Slip Ware; Iron Age; Mediterranean exchanges

1. INTRODUCTION

The Red Slip Ware (RSW) is a useful marker for the reconstruction of the earliest phases of Phoenician colonies in the West and, at Motya, it is a common ware during the two centuries of changes from the first Phoenician settlement to the flourishing harbour city (8th-7th century BC).¹

In these two centuries, types and decorations of RSW undergo several transformations that show a gradual process from the specifically Levantine models in favour of the common styles that developed and widespread in the Central-Southern Mediterranean.² These styles are the result of the contact and hybridisation of Levantine culture with other Mediterranean realities started in the late 9th century BC and continued in the following centuries.³

Changes and specific features in the ceramic repertoire require to distinguish Phoenician and Levantine RSW from that of the Central and Western Mediterranean, henceforth named Western Phoenician RSW.⁴

The review of archaeological data collected so far and the recent discoveries from Motya by «La Sapienza» University of Rome provide new information within this scenario and help to understand the development of the Western Phoenician styles and culture.⁵

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¹ Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 44; Nigro 2022a;

² Cappella 2022, 18; 2023, 280-281.

³ About this kind of phenomena in the Phoenician West-world, see for example: Delgado - Ferrer 2007; van Dommelen 2005; 2006; 2012; 2017; Botto 2012; Guirguis 2012, 49-51; Zucca 2017.

⁴ The repertoire of the Western territories, in fact, has autonomous characters despite the connection to Eastern models. The definition of "Western Phoenician RSW" could be useful in distinguishing the western repertoire from that of Phoenicia.

⁵ About the archaeological excavations in Motya carried out by La Sapienza University of Rome see i.e.: Nigro ed. 2004; 2007; 2011; Nigro 2012; 2013a; 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2016a; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2022b; Nigro - Spagnoli 2012; 2017.

2. THE RSW REPERTOIRE OF THE EARLY 8TH CENTURY BC

The most relevant period to document and understand the changes in the RSW repertoire is the most archaic one, Motya IVA₂ (800-750 BC).⁶ The genesis of the Western repertoire and the earliest evidence of Western Phoenician RSW in fact start and can already be appreciated from this time.

The earliest archaeological evidence of the RSW at Motya dates to the first half of the 8th century BC. Most of the finds come from the southern part of the island from the so-called Fondaco (Area C-South). Here, next to the dwelling quarters, the two temples and the springs of fresh water, was a public structure intended also for storage, Building C8.⁷

Building C8 has yielded a truly exceptional harvest of ceramic artefacts (Motya IVA₂, Phase 9).⁸ The repertoire is mainly composed of three ceramic classes:

- 1) hand-made vessels of indigenous tradition (Impasto Ware).
- 2) RSW wheel-made tableware.⁹
- 3) Storage-ware / transport amphorae.¹⁰

Alongside the RSW evidence from Building C8, some finds from other archaeological areas of the island contribute to give a clearer picture of the earliest Phoenician settlement of Motya IVA₂.

2.1. *RSW of Phoenician tradition*

Carrying on with the analysis of the Phoenician RSW repertoire, coating and surface treatment appear to be the firsts distinguishing features.

In the early stages, the coating is typically dense, dark red in colour, and it is uniformly spread over the surface of the vessels.¹¹ Among the Phoenician RSW, the regular wheel burnishing surface treatment prevails. A few finds are hand-burnished or testify to a mixed technique.

The earliest decorative repertoire is basic. Engraved decoration is sometimes attested while is seldom used Reserved Red Slip and black painted linear decorations. The latter will be more common in the following Motya IVB period (750-675 BC).¹²

During the Motya IVA₂ period, the slip is applied to the entire surface of the vessels but in some cases portions of the vases can be left uncoated: i.e., the lower half of the open shapes, mainly plates and bowls, is usually reserved inside.

⁶ About the first Phoenician settlement of Motya see: Nigro 2013b; 2014c; 2016b, 356-359; 2020b, 101-103; Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 4-70.

⁷ About the Building C8 see: Nigro 2013b; Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 10-23; Spagnoli 2020.

⁸ Nigro 2013b.

⁹ About the social role of pottery and the banquet: Spagnoli 2020.

¹⁰ F. Cappella - F. Spagnoli: "Phoenician amphorae in Motya between the late 9th and 7th century BCE", webinar *Levantine and Phoenician Commercial Amphorae between East and West: patterns of innovation (16th-7th centuries BCE)*, M. Botto - T. Pedrazzi (a cura di), 12th-13th may 2022.

¹¹ About the technological features of RSW of Motya see: Fabrizi *et al.* 2020. More in general, Fabrizi 2019; Cappella - Fabrizi in this volume (B.1.1.).

¹² Spagnoli 2019, 49-52.

Despite their state of preservation, closed shapes, especially jugs, document a similar trend. The coating is usually spread over the entire outer surface, but sometimes the base is left uncoated.¹³

Almost all the RSW types documented at Motya in this period are strongly related to Eastern Phoenician morphological prototypes, with some of them showing original features.

Motya IVA₂ RSW repertoire consists mainly of tableware open shapes. Shallow plates, rounded hemispheric cups, and carinated bowls are the most representative ones.

Shallow plates at Motya (fig. 1:1) have a characteristic short and convex brim (less than 3 cm wide), the rim is usually natural or tapered¹⁴, and the base is flat or disc-shaped (LRS-P1 Motya type).¹⁵ Such plates are well documented in the earliest Phoenician settlements in the West, from the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula¹⁶ and Morocco¹⁷ to Malta,¹⁸ and the most striking comparisons are with the repertoire of Carthage (Phase I¹⁹ - Form 1.1 Vegas²⁰ / type P1 Peserico²¹), Utica (Phases II)²² and Sulky²³. Motya plates, and more generally those of the Phoenician West, are different in shape from the plates of the Lebanese coast (fig. 1:2) which usually have a straight or concave brim, a thickened or squared rim and, sometimes, a convex base.²⁴

The morphological prototype is clearly that of Phoenicia (Plate 7 of Tyre²⁵ / Plate CP 4 of Al-Bass²⁶ / X-17 of Sarepta²⁷) but the plates with a short convex brim found in Motya are a Western elaboration resulting from the craftsmanship experimentation of the late

¹³ A similar trend can also be recognised for some neck-ridge jugs from Sulky (Bernardini 2008, 556, fig. 13:1; Bartoloni 2014, 13-14, fig. 2: SAB153) and Ayamonte (García Teyssandier *et al.* 2016, 511, fig. 11, 5; fig. 12, 1).

¹⁴ Only the plate MC.06.1592/25 documents the bifid rim (Nigro 2010, 12, fig. 10:1).

¹⁵ Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 25, plate type LRS-P1.

¹⁶ See, just for some examples, the recent finds from the Teatro Cómico de Cádiz (Torres Ortiz *et al.* 2014, 56-58, fig. 4; 2020, fig. 9) and from Huelva (González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* 2017, 7-10, Pl. I, types 2, 3, 7, with previous bibliography; González de Canales Cerisola - Llompart Gómez 2020).

¹⁷ See the finds from Lixus: Habibi 1992, 147-150, fig. 2; Bélen *et al.* 1996, 352, fig. 8; Aranegui Gascó - López-Bertran - Vives-Ferrándiz 2011, 303-304.

¹⁸ Short-brimmed dishes are currently found among the oldest Phoenician levels at Tas-Silg (Ciasca 1999, 75, fig. 6) and at Mellieħa, in a funerary context (Sagona 2014, 357-367, fig. 1:7).

¹⁹ For RSW repertoire of the Phase I of Carthage see: Jendoubi 2024.

²⁰ Vegas 1999, 135-136, fig. 24.

²¹ Peserico 2007, 272-275, fig. 108.

²² Ben Jerbania 2020, 39, fig. 14:5-6; For RSW repertoire of the Phase II of Utica see also: Jendoubi 2024.

²³ Guirguis 2019, with previous bibliography.

²⁴ About the differences between the Western and Eastern plates see: Núñez Calvo 2017. However, plates with a short convex brim are not completely foreign to the repertoire of both Phoenicia and Cyprus. In Tyre Common Ware plates of such type are documented in Stratum III and have been defined by P.M. Bikai as “miscellaneous plates” (i.e. Bikai 1978, 26, fn. 35, pl. X:8-10). In Cyprus these are documented in the Kition Horizon (Bikai 1987, 56-57, and 37, pl. XVII:451).

²⁵ Bikai 1978, 24, pl. XCI:7. See also the more recent types documented in Tyre, Plates 3 and 4: Bikai 1978, 22-23, pl. XCI:3-4.

²⁶ Núñez Calvo 2008, 213-220.

²⁷ Anderson 1988, 154-155, 656, pl. 47:X-17.

9th/early 8th century BC.²⁸ When it comes to the decorative manner, often the lower half of plates of Motya appears uncoated inside. Although the decoration is not foreign to Phoenicia²⁹, it is a typical trend of the Central-Southern Mediterranean RSW repertoire.

Shape and decoration of the early Motya plates are a distinctive product of the Western Phoenician culture.

However, the re-elaboration of Levantine morphological prototypes does not only concern plates. This phenomenon involves bowls with sharp carination, wide vertical rim, and thin walls too (fig. 1:7-8). Such vessels are (wrongly)³⁰ called “Samaria ware”³¹ bowls, a diagnostic Iron Age II type of the Levant and one of the most widespread examples of Phoenician Fine Ware in the Mediterranean.³²

Regarding Motya, some examples suggest a local reinterpretation of the Levantine model and the best comparison can be tracked once again with the ceramic repertoire of the Western Phoenician centres (Form 4.3 Vegas³³ / type CCr2 Peserico³⁴).

Except for a few vessels,³⁵ carinated bowls of Motya slightly differ from those of the motherland (Fine Ware 2 of Tyre³⁶ / Bowl Cp F1 of Al-Bass³⁷ / F-1a of Sarepta³⁸). Findings dated to the 8th century BC from Phoenicia and Cyprus,³⁹ are usually characterized by eggshell-thin walls, a fine well fired pink or “golden” paste, and a convex or flat base; Reserved Red Slip is a common decoration of the period.

Conversely, the bowls of Motya usually have a disc base and are characterized by a typical local sandy fabric and by thicker walls (LRS-CB1 Motya type).⁴⁰ From a decorative and technological point of view, carinated bowls of such type are usually burnished and are characterized by a slip applied only on the interior surface. Less commonly, the slip covers the exterior upper half of the vessel up until the carination point.⁴¹

²⁸ Núñez Calvo 2017, 29-30; Guirguis 2019. In this period the Phoenician West is in fact involved in a broad phenomenon of craftsmanship experimentation that will provide the basis for the development of the future Phoenician Western culture. A similar phenomenon has also been recognised for Phoenicia: Bikai 1978, 26.

²⁹ A RSW plate from Tyre (Stratum III) of the miscellaneous type shows the same decoration (Bikai 1978, pl. X:12). The use of leaving the lower half of the tub uncoated is documented even for the Bichrome Ware plates of the previous periods (i.e., Tyre, Stratum IX: Bikai 1978, pl. XXI:5).

³⁰ «In later years, the expression Phoenician Fine Ware (or Red Slip Fine Ware), is mostly employed, rightly stressing on material features and cultural meanings, rather than on its so uncertain origin» (Giacosa 2016, 24).

³¹ Wright 1959, 23-24.

³² About the Phoenician Fine Wares see: Giacosa 2016.

³³ Vegas 1999, 144, fig. 34.

³⁴ Peserico 2007, 289, fig. 121.

³⁵ Some uncommon finds show strict comparison with the eastern prototypes, and they could probably be imported from the Levant (Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 25, “Levantine Red Slip Ware”).

³⁶ Bikai 1978, 26-28, pl. XCI:FWP 2.

³⁷ Núñez Calvo 2008, 201-206, see in particular the subtype Cp F1c. At Al-Bass the shape is documented since the Period II but it is common in the following Periods III and IV (Núñez Calvo 2014, 325, fig. 3.99, type Cc1).

³⁸ Anderson 1988, 658, pl. 47:F-1a.

³⁹ For an overview of attestations: Giacosa 2016, 26-27, type FWB 4.

⁴⁰ Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 26.

⁴¹ Although this type of decoration is more common in the Central-Western Mediterranean, it is also well known in Phoenicia. At Al-Bass, for example, similar finds are documented during the Periods III and IV (Núñez Calvo 2014, 299, fig. 3.62:a; 325, fig. 3.99:b).

Other forms, such as the rounded hemispheric cups or the carinated bowls with everted rims, are more conservative.

Hemispheric cups are rounded in shape, the base is convex and the rim simple or slightly pointed. The slip commonly covers all the interior surface while the outer surface is slipped only on the upper half (fig. 1:3-4).

Both the shape and the decoration are well known in Phoenicia (Fine Ware Plate 4 of Tyre⁴² / Cp F2 of Al-Bass⁴³ / F-2A of Sarepta⁴⁴), at Cyprus and in the neighboring regions of the Levant. At Tyre, such bowls are a distinguish group of the ceramic repertoire of the Stratum III⁴⁵ and at the cemetery of Al-Bass they are present during the Period IV.⁴⁶ Out of Phoenicia, the type is known in Cyprus (Kition Horizon)⁴⁷ and at Hazor where it is one of the commonest of the repertoire of Strata VI-V.⁴⁸

The type is also well documented in the ceramic repertoire of the centres of the Phoenician West – i.e. from Huelva⁴⁹ to Sant’Imbenia⁵⁰ and Sulky,⁵¹ Utica (Phase II)⁵² and Carthage (Phase I)⁵³ –, and it corresponds to the Form 2.1 Vegas⁵⁴ / type CsC1 Peserico⁵⁵.

From the late Motya IVA₂ period, ca. 750 BC, a new tendency in coating hemispheric cups begin to spread: the slip now covers the exterior upper half of the vessels while the interior surface is characterized by a simple red band below the rim.⁵⁶ In the Levant, it is possible to distinguish a similar trend, and this kind of decoration on hemispherical cups is recognizable in an advanced stage of the RSW repertoire.⁵⁷

⁴² Bikai 1978, 28, pl. XCI:FWP 4.

⁴³ Núñez Calvo 2008, 206-209, see the subtype Cp F2a.

⁴⁴ Anderson 1988, 658, pl. 47:F-2a.

⁴⁵ Bikai 1978, pl. X:15, 21-22. The type is documented at Tyre since the Stratum IV, but it is more frequent in the following two strata: Bikai 1978, 28, tab. 4A, FWP4a-b.

⁴⁶ Núñez Calvo 2014, 327-328, fig. 3.100: e, g.

⁴⁷ Bikai 1987, 56-57, and 39, pl. XVII:490.

⁴⁸ The type is documented since the Stratum VIII (Ben-Ami - Sandhaus - Ben-Tor 2012, 438) but it continues to be attested since the Stratum III (Yadin *et al.* eds. 1958, pl. LXXVII:26). For some close comparisons with the hemispheric cups of Motya see: Yadin *et al.* eds. 1960, pl. LXXVII:27 (Area A, Stratum VI); pl. XCII:8 (Area B, Stratum Va). Similar cups are widespread in Galilee, see for example the finds from Megiddo IV-III (Lamon - Shipton 1939, 163-169, pl. 24:55).

⁴⁹ The type corresponds to the Huelva Fine Ware 3 (González de Canales Cerisola - Serrano Pichardo - Llompart Gómez 2004, 42; González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* 2017, 11).

⁵⁰ Phase II of the so-called “Capanna dei Ripostigli”: Oggiano 2000, 236-239, fig. 3:4.

⁵¹ Unali 2017, 113-114, fig. 3:3; Guirguis 2019, 115, fig. 11.4, US.3867.

⁵² Jendoubi 2024, fig. 8:6.

⁵³ Vegas 1999, 99, fig. 5:5 (Fundkomplex I); Jendoubi 2024, fig. 9:7.

⁵⁴ Vegas 1999, 139, fig. 27:2-3.

⁵⁵ Peserico 2007, 278-280, fig. 112:1618.

⁵⁶ This kind of decoration could be imported by the Greek world where is common the use of leaving a painted or reserved band on the lip of drinking cups such as *skyphoi* and *kotylai*. This style on the Greek potteries seems to be functional rather than decorative (Gimatidis 2017, 41) and a similar phenomenon must be assumed for the Phoenician cups.

⁵⁷ At Tyre, for example, the decorative pattern is documented in Strata II-I (Bikai 1978, pl. I:4) while at Hazor it appears since at least the Stratum VIII (Ben-Ami 2012, fig. 3.9:12) but it is frequent only in the repertoire of Strata V-IV (Sandhaus 2012, figs. 4.21:3, 4.30:5; Yadin *et al.* eds. 1961, pl. CCLIV:10).

Another important ceramic group in Motya is represented by bowls with low carination and triangular rim (LRS-DB3 Motya type)⁵⁸ which are one of the most widespread forms throughout the Mediterranean (fig. 1:9-10). The type is commonly attested in Phoenicia at least since the early 8th century BC (Fine Ware Plate 5 of Tyre⁵⁹ / Cp F12 of Al-Bass⁶⁰ / X-3A of Sarepta⁶¹) and it appears in Cyprus with the beginning of the Kition Horizon (ca 775 BC)⁶².

In the Phoenician West, the type is attested within the earliest layers of Western Mediterranean settlements. Considering the central region of the Mediterranean, it appears at Utica already within the earliest layer of the Phase I⁶³, wholesome examples are attested at Carthage since the Phase I (Form 4.1 Vegas⁶⁴ / type CCr5 Peserico⁶⁵). Similar in chronology are the oldest findings from Sulky.⁶⁶

In the westernmost Phoenician territories, the type is well documented in the Iberian Peninsula⁶⁷ and some examples are attested in Morocco too.⁶⁸

The oldest bowls from Motya are wide and deep, and the rim is straight rather than pendant. They are characterized by a large maximum diameter. The slip usually covers both the inner and outer surfaces which are finely wheel-burnished. Sometimes the lower half of the outer surface is uncoated below the carination point. The best comparisons are with Strata IV and III of Tyre where both shape and decoration are present.⁶⁹

Less frequent at Motya are wide bowls with a straight profile, high carination, and incised ridge on the outer edge of the rim (Fine Ware Plate 7 of Tyre⁷⁰ / Cc 3 of Al-Bass⁷¹ / X-10 of Sarepta⁷²) (fig. 1:11-12)⁷³. At Tyre, the type is documented as early as Layer V but grows in importance in the repertoire of Layers IV-III and it is residual in Layer II⁷⁴. The

⁵⁸ Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 29, in particular fig. 14.

⁵⁹ The type already appears in Tyre within the Stratum V, but it is common during the following period: Bikai 1978, 27-28, tab. 4A, pl. XCI, FWP 5.

⁶⁰ Núñez Calvo 2008, 228-229. The type is common at Al-Bass during the Period IV (Núñez Calvo 2014, 325, fig. 3.98:a).

⁶¹ Anderson 1988, 656, pl. 47:X-3A.

⁶² Bikai 1987, 56-57, and 35, pl. XVII:417.

⁶³ Jendoubi 2024, fig. 5:6.

⁶⁴ Vegas 1999, 100, fig. 5:9-19 (Fundkomplex I); 134, fig. 32:2-3.

⁶⁵ Peserico 2007, 291-294, fig. 123.

⁶⁶ See i.e. Guirguis 2019, fig. 11.4, US.3867.

⁶⁷ The type is documented at Cádiz (Teatro Cómico - Period II; Torres Ortiz *et al.* 2020, 385, fig. 9.a:UEA 738/11) and Castillo de Doña Blanca (Ruiz Mata - Pérez 2020, fig. 6:C-D). It corresponds to the type Huelva Bowl 3 (González de Canales Cerisola - Serrano Pichardo - Llompart Gómez 2004, 47; González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* 2017, 14, pl. IV:4-12).

⁶⁸ The type is known in the earliest layers of the Phoenician Lixus (Bélen *et al.* 1996, 352, fig. 8:112).

⁶⁹ Bikai 1978, 27-28, pl. XV:2, 5 (Stratum IV); pl. XVII:31-32 (Stratum III).

⁷⁰ Bikai 1978, 29, pl. XCI: Fine Ware Plate 7.

⁷¹ Núñez Calvo 2014, 299-300, fig. 3.62:b; 325, fig. 3.98:g, type Cc3.

⁷² Anderson 1988, 147, tav. 47, tipo X-10.

⁷³ For the Motya specimen see: Zielli 2021, 76-78, pl. XIII:MT.72.29/39.

⁷⁴ Bikai 1978, 27, tab. 4A.

attestations are concentrated in the Motherland and reach as far as Carthage (Phase I)⁷⁵, passing through Cyprus (Kition Horizon)⁷⁶.

Shallow plates with swollen rim and slightly convex walls (fig. 1:5-6) complete the panorama of the open vessels documented in the earliest layers of the Phoenician settlement of Motya.

The shape is distinctive of Phoenician culture and characterizes both the repertoire of Phoenicia (Plate 8/9 of Tyre⁷⁷ / Cp F10 of Al-Bass⁷⁸ / X-11A of Sarepta⁷⁹) and that of the most ancient centres of the West.⁸⁰

In the Phoenician West the type, which corresponds to Form 3.1/3.2 Vegas,⁸¹ is largely documented in strata dated to the late 9th-8th century BC.

The examples of Motya are plain or show a distinctive thin and shiny slip applied on the wheel-burnished interior surface⁸².

As regards to the closed shapes, the poor state of preservation severely compromises the reading of the archaeological data.

Trefoil rim jugs are common, but it is not possible to distinguish a specific type. The neck is usually narrow and cylindrical, and the body roughly globular in shape. Engraved parallel lines rarely decorate the shoulder of the vessels.⁸³ The slip covers the entire exterior surface which is burnished vertically on the neck and horizontally on the body.

The second most representative shape is the jug with the cylindrical ridged neck and the thickened rim (fig. 1:17-18). The slip, dense and thick, often covers the entire exterior surface rarely leaving the base uncoated. As for the trefoil jugs, the neck is usually burnished vertically, and the body horizontally. No engraved, painted, or applied decorations are documented on this type of jugs.

Although the morphological prototype is clearly to be found into the repertoire of Phoenicia,⁸⁴ the shape recurs in the pottery assemblage of the Central Mediterranean and has to be considered a product of the Western Phoenician culture.

RSW neck-ridge jugs with thickened rim appear since Phase I⁸⁵ of Carthage (Form 24.1 Vegas⁸⁶ / type Krug 1 Briese⁸⁷) and also in Sulky roughly in the same period.⁸⁸ Moreover,

⁷⁵ Jendoubi 2024, fig. 9:2-3.

⁷⁶ Bikai 1987, 35, pl. XVII:424; 2003, 242-243, pl. 3:22-25.

⁷⁷ The type appears in the Stratum XIII of Tyre but the peak incidence is in Strata V-IV (Bikai 1978, 23-24, tab. 3A, pl. XCI, Plate 8 and Plate 9).

⁷⁸ Núñez Calvo 2008, 224-227.

⁷⁹ Anderson 1988, 656, pl. 47:X-11A.

⁸⁰ The most distinctive example is the rich repertoire of Huelva (González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* 2017, 7-8, pl. I:10-13).

⁸¹ Vegas 1999, 140-141, figs. 29-30.

⁸² The use of slip is uncommon in Phoenician world. Plates of this type are in fact plain (Plate 8 from Tyre) or characterized by a red monochrome or bichrome decoration (Plate 9 of Tyre).

⁸³ The engrave decoration on the shoulder of the trefoil rim jugs is documented at Al-Bass since the Period III (Núñez Calvo 2014, 297, fig. 3.55) and in Cyprus starting from the early Kition Horizon (Bikai 1987, pl. 15:401-405). Similar finds come from the earliest layers of Utica (López Castro *et al.* 2020, 59-60, fig. 8:3-4).

⁸⁴ See i.e. the Plain Ware jug from the necropolis of Joya for a morphological comparison (fig. 1:17; Chapman 1972, 81, fig. 7:176). In the other regions of Levant, the shape is scarcely documented (Bartoloni 2014, 13): a reasonable comparison is from Hazor, Stratum VI but the red decoration covers just the upper part of the neck (Yadin *et al.* eds. 1960, pl. LXX:16).

the type is documented since the earliest layers of La Fonteta⁸⁹ and in the necropolis of Ayamonte⁹⁰ in the Iberian Peninsula.

At present, there is no firm evidence of RSW expanded rim jugs during the Motya IVA₂ period,⁹¹ but future discoveries may provide new data to the scenario outlined so far.

2.2. RSW of Levantine tradition

Besides the ceramic types mentioned, other shapes do not find precise comparisons in the repertoire of the motherland. The so-called “Sardo-Levantine” amphorae are the best-known example (fig. 1:15-16).⁹² Following T. Pedrazzi’s interpretation, the morphological prototype of these amphorae should be looked for into the repertoire of Galilee rather than Phoenicia.⁹³

Although the morphological prototype is clearly Levantine - maybe to be found in the repertoire of Hazor VII-V -⁹⁴ the “Sardo-Levantine” amphorae are a distinctive product of the new western Phoenician culture and one of the most emblematic examples of the early hybridization between the Levantine and indigenous repertoires.⁹⁵ In the Levant, on the other hand, the RSW amphorae are virtual absent and only a single example is found in Stratum V of Area B at Hazor (fig. 1:16).⁹⁶

Regarding Motya, the circulation of these transport vessels is now documented on the island during the first half of the 8th century BC. The amphorae are made with a mixed technique and the exterior surface is usually covered with a thin matt or hand-burnished red slip.

Along with the “Sardo-Levantine” amphorae, thin-wall bowls with short vertical rim and marked carination (fig. 1:13-14) do not find precise comparisons in the repertoire of the motherland. In Motya, a specimen of this type was found, probably an import from the Levant, characterized by a dark red slip applied on both the inner and outer surfaces and burnished irregularly.

Even though, the thickness of walls, the surface treatment and shape itself point to the Phoenician Fine Ware tradition of modelling pottery, the closest comparisons are to be found in Galilee, and more specifically at Hazor. The type, which already appears in the repertoire of the Stratum IX,⁹⁷ it is quite common into the repertoires of Strata VII-V.⁹⁸

⁸⁵ Jendoubi 2024, fig. 9:11.

⁸⁶ Vegas 1999, 159-160, fig. 56:5.

⁸⁷ Briese 2007, 317-318, fig. 140:1811-1822.

⁸⁸ See i.e. Bartoloni 1988, 168, fig. 4:H; 1990, fig. 7:125, 157, 160; 2014, 13-14, fig. 3:SAB153.

⁸⁹ González Prats ed. 2011, 628-631, figs. 60-62.

⁹⁰ García Teyssandier *et al.* 2016, 502, fig. 12:1.

⁹¹ One specimen dated to Motya IVA₂ period is Bichrome Ware: Cappella in this volume (A.5.1.).

⁹² These amphorae are defined in the archaeological literature with different denominations: Zentral Italische Amphoren (Docter *et al.* 1997), “Sant’Imbenia” type amphorae (Oggiano 2000), Nuragisch Amphoren (Docter 2007), “Sardo-Phoenician” amphorae (Botto 2013).

⁹³ Pedrazzi 2005, 466-469.

⁹⁴ Pedrazzi 2005, 466.

⁹⁵ Fundoni 2009, 15; Botto 2011, 40-41.

⁹⁶ Yadin *et al.* eds. 1960, pl. XCVI:13.

⁹⁷ Yadin *et al.* eds. 1961, pl. CLXXV, 14; pl. CLXXVIII, 31. See also the carinated bowl from Megiddo VA-IVB (Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.36:3).

A new fact emerges clearly today: not all RSW-related shapes are clearly Phoenician in origin. Although the findings are still limited, it seems possible to trace the prototypes of certain ceramic forms in the repertoire of other regions of the Levant, such as Galilee.

2.3. Local handmade RSW

The oldest ceramic contexts found at Motya have yielded a fair number of handmade potteries, some of them with a distinctive red coating. Open forms are the most common. The slip is usually thick, dark red / brown in colour, irregularly hand burnished or matt.

It is possible to make a preliminary distinction between two ceramic groups:

- 1) vessels imitating Phoenician shapes (fig. 2:1-2).
- 2) vessels of local tradition that assimilate the Levantine-Phoenician taste for red coating (fig. 2:3-4).

The most emblematic form of the first group are the open shapes with straight walls and an internally thickened rim imitating Plate 7 of Tyre (Fig. 2:1). These plates are already present in Utica since the late 9th century BC (Phase I),⁹⁹ and they are even documented in Carthage in the 8th century BC levels.¹⁰⁰

As regard to the second group, carinated bowls prevail in the repertoire. Two types of bowls are distinguishable: wide “cyma” profiled with short vertical rim, and deep bowls, - perhaps better called chalices -, with concave-convex profile. Although our knowledge of the indigenous repertoire of the early Iron Age in Western Sicily is still limited,¹⁰¹ today it seems possible to trace the morphological antecedents of these forms in the local protohistoric repertoire.

As the case of the “Sardo-Levantine” amphorae document, these kinds of potteries are hybrid products resulting from the encounter between local and eastern cultures.

3. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The study of the early RSW of Motya helps to define more lucidly some issues concerning the Phoenician expansion to the West, rethinking the role of Tyre and the cultural background of the early communities and of the ship crews.¹⁰²

In terms of relative chronology, the RSW repertoire of Motya IVA₂ is contemporary with Phase I of Carthage and Phase II of Utica. In the Levant, the closest comparisons both in shape and decoration are with the repertoire of Strata IV-III of Tyre, Period IV of Al-Bass and Strata VII-V of Hazor. Regarding Cyprus, no shapes of the Salamis Horizon are clearly detectable, and the comparisons point to the following Kition Horizon.¹⁰³

From a morphological point of view, the RSW repertoire of Motya IVA₂ documents two opposing development paths: on one hand, both traditional Levantine and Phoenician models persist and imports from the East are documented; on the other hand, original local

⁹⁸ See i.e., Yadin *et al.* eds. 1958, pl. LIV, 7 (Stratum V); Yadin *et al.* eds. 1960, pl. LXVII, 5 (Stratum VI); Ben-Tor - Bonfil eds. 1997, fig. III.30, 18 (Stratum VII).

⁹⁹ López Castro *et al.* 2016, 75, fig. 6:7.

¹⁰⁰ Mansel 2007, 437.

¹⁰¹ Tusa 2009, with previous bibliography; Filippi 2014, 58-78.

¹⁰² About the topic see: Orsingher 2016, 284.

¹⁰³ Bikai 1987, 53-58.

motifs and styles are developed. The latter result from the craftsmanship experimentation which involves the Central and Western Mediterranean in the late 9th/early 8th century BC.

In other words, the earliest RSW repertoire of Motya is already framed within the developing Phoenician Western material-culture,¹⁰⁴ and it shares common features with other Central Mediterranean realities such as Utica, Carthage, and Sulky.

In the final analysis - as William Culican wrote - «we should not expect to understand every type of West Phoenician pottery as derived from that of the Motherland».¹⁰⁵

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¹⁰⁴ Coherently, laboratory analyses suggest that the clays used to produce the early RSW of Motya are mainly local and only a few finds are certainly imported (Fabrizi *et al.* 2020).

¹⁰⁵ Culican 1982, 71.

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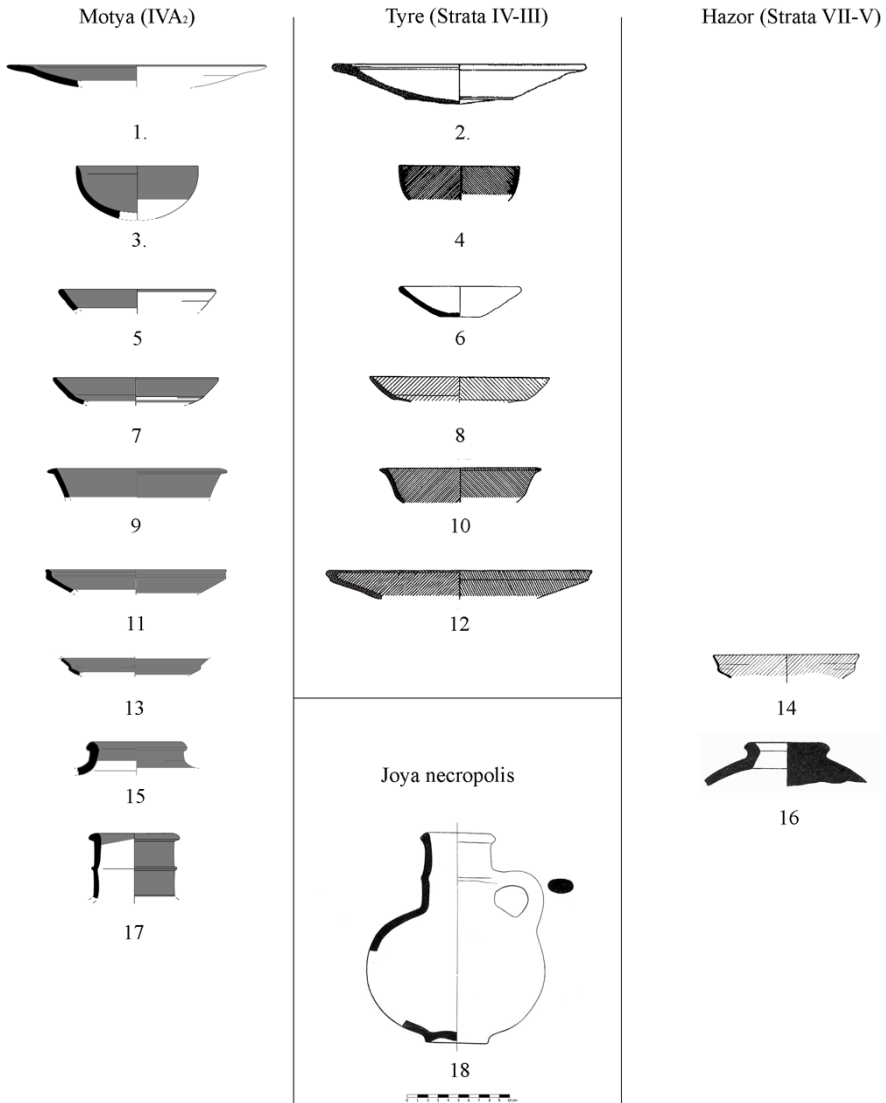


Fig. 1 - On the left: the earliest RSW of Motya IVA₂ (after Nigro - Spagnoli 2017); at centre, the ceramic repertoire of Tyre IV-III and Joya (after Bikai 1978; Chapman 1972); on the right, the comparisons with Hazor VI-V (after Yadin *et al.* eds. 1960).

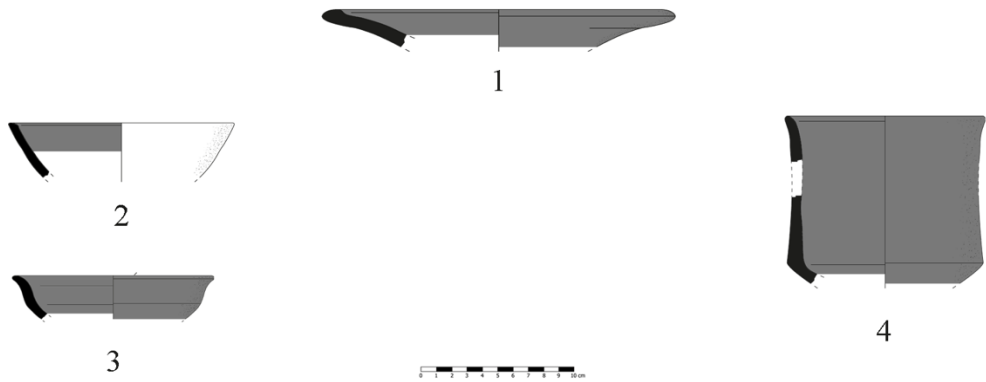


Fig. 2 - Local hand-made RSW of Motya IVA₂ period (800-750 BC).

Figure 1 - References

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| Fig. 1:1 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 25, pl. 1: MC.11.2491/17 | Fig. 1:2 | Bikai 1978, pl. IX:13 |
| Fig. 1:3 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 28-29, pl. 3: MC.12.2491/2 | Fig. 1:4 | Bikai 1978, pl. X:22 |
| Fig. 1:5 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 28, pl. 3: MC.07.1685/71 | Fig. 1:6 | Bikai 1978, pl. XVIIA:22 |
| Fig. 1:7 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 28, pl. 3: MD.16.1112/49 | Fig. 1:8 | Bikai 1978, pl. XIA:16 |
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| Fig. 1:13 | MD.18.7234/73 | Fig. 1:14 | Yadin <i>et al.</i> eds. tav. LXVII:5 |
| Fig. 1:15 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 85, pl. 3: MC.12.4427/23 | Fig. 1:16 | Yadin <i>et al.</i> eds. 1960, tav. XCVI:13 |
| Fig. 1:17 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 30, pl. 4: MD.07.2219/80 | Fig. 1:18 | Chapman 1972, 81, fig. 7:176. |

Figure 2 - References

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| Fig. 2:1 | MD.22.1115/15 | Fig. 2:12 | MC.12.2491/48 |
| Fig. 2:13 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 34m pl. 7: MC.11.2491/37 | Fig. 2:14 | Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 29, pl. 7: MC.12.2491/83 |