

AN AMPHORA WITH PAINTED PALMETTE MOTIF FROM AREA B AT MOTYA

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An amphora painted with a palmette motif dating from the 4th century BC was brought to light during the excavation of the Area B at Motya in 1989. The shape is a popular amphora type in the Punic ceramic repertoire, while the decoration, both in design and iconography, appear as an outcome of shared and hybridized motifs between the Phoenician and the Greek elements co-habiting in Motya during its latest phase of life.

Keywords: Motya, Area B; palmette; painted decoration; Punic amphora

1. INTRODUCTION

Area B, on the south-eastern slope of the Acropolis of Motya, was investigated in a series of excavation campaigns jointly carried out between the end of the '80ies and the beginning of the '90ies of the last century by the Superintendence of Trapani and Sapienza University of Rome. Field excavations were directed by Antonia Ciasca, in her latest work in the island. The find which is the object of this note was found in 1989.¹ Area B includes the southern border of a residential quarter, that in the 5th century BC extended all over the eastern slope of the Acropolis (fig. 1).² The gentle slope of this towards the west was then occupied also by an industrial and commercial zone down to the Sacred Area of the Kothon.

The area gave back many noteworthy finds: metals, weights,³ a distinguished series of terracottas⁴ - which may suggest the presence of a major cult place in the area - pottery vessels among which a painted Punic amphora (fig. 2),⁵ decorated with a frieze of palmette, an unique attestation at Motya for this decorative motif. The study of this vessel revealed that it was imported rather than manufactured on the island (§ 2.2). Furthermore, its presence at Motya in a post-Dionysian destruction layer⁶ testifies to the continuous importation of special ceramics also during the latest Punic occupation of the island.

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¹ Excavations in Area B were carried out by the Superintendence of Trapani and were directed by Antonia Ciasca on behalf of "La Sapienza" University of Rome, with the collaboration of Maurizio Necci, Pamela Toti and Maria Luisa Famà (Famà - Toti, 1997, 113, fn. 2; Famà ed. 2002, 28, fn. 17; Nigro ed. 2004, 27; 2012, 210).

² Along the northern side of the street, which divides the residencies from the commercial zone, Sapienza Archaeological Expedition to Motya identified a wealth patrician house called "The House of the square well": Nigro ed. 2012, 210. Results of previous excavations season are summarized in Famà 1990, 13; 1995, 424; 1997, 643-644.

³ Gallo 2018, 35-41.

⁴ Nigro ed. 2012, 210.

⁵ Spagnoli 2019, 43, fig. 3.35.

⁶ Nigro 2018, 254.

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCOVERY

Area B was occupied from the first Phoenician foundation of Motya, at the beginning of the 8th century BC⁷ to the fall of the city under the siege of Dionysius of Syracuse (397/6 BC).⁸ In its latest arrangement (5th century BC, Motya VII), Area B was crossed by a large *plateia* which divided the wealthy residencies, to the north, from the row of workshops and *ateliers* running along the southern side of the street (fig. 3). Both the furniture of the houses and imported items found into the commercial block, testify to the wealth of the inhabitants due to their intense commercial activities.⁹ After the conquest by Dionysius of Syracuse, many structures were re-used for industrial activities. Already existing buildings were often cut through and damaged by the excavations of wells and ovens.¹⁰

The amphora with palmette was found in filling US.24. This layer was affected by agricultural activities conducted in the 19th century and by the excavation of pits for vineyards which disturbed the layers of the 5th - 4th century BC.¹¹ The ceramic repertoire of US.24 (fig. 4) represents the twofold functional destinations of the area in the 4th century BC: residential and industrial, and basically includes Punic storage jars, Simple Ware (SW) and Attic pottery, as a fine cup with baccellation¹² (fig. 6).

Simple Ware (fig. 5) is mostly local manufactured.¹³ The uppermost functional class represented is tableware, as exemplified by three jugs dating from the 4th century BC¹⁴ (fig. 7) and two from the 5th century BC¹⁵ (fig. 7). A basin bowl¹⁶ (fig. 7), a miniature jar¹⁷ (fig. 6), both dated in the 4th century BC, and a bucket of 5th century BC¹⁸ (fig. 6) were also found. Transport jars are represented by a Lesbian amphora dated from the 5th century BC¹⁹ (fig. 6), one Punic amphora for storage²⁰ (fig. 6) and one Punic amphora for transport²¹ (fig. 6) of the 4th century BC, attesting the continuation of the commercial function of the area.

⁷ Famà 1990, 13; 1995, 424; 1997, 643-644; Nigro ed. 2010, 276-318; Nigro - Spagnoli 2017.

⁸ Tusa 1967, 85-95.

⁹ In general, about the contacts between Motya and the Greek culture: Bondi 1989, 165-173; Nigro ed. 2010, 1-48; Spagnoli 2019, 65; concerning the Greek ceramics in the Area B of Motya: Zielli 2016, *La ceramica della "Zona B" di Mozia. Catalogo preliminare della ceramica rinvenuta nello scavo di Antonia Ciasca, 1989*, defended on 26th September 2016, at "La Sapienza" University of Rome.

¹⁰ Ovens of Area E at Motya shows similar features, attributed to the phase between the 4th and the 3rd century BC (Famà - Toti 1997, 113-114; Famà ed. 2002, 48).

¹¹ Famà ed. 2002, 48.

¹² *Athenian Agora* XII, 279, fig. 6:612. This type is attested from 420 BC onwards.

¹³ The common ceramic is the 32% of the total (fig. 5).

¹⁴ MB.89.24/21 cf.: Nigro ed. 2004, 286, MD.02.216/47, pl. LXI. MB.89.24/9 cf.: Nigro ed. 2011, 332, MF.05.1294/20, pl. CI. MB.89.24/23 cf.: Nigro ed. 2011, 238, MF.05.1268a/104, pl. LIII.

¹⁵ MB.89.24/20 cf.: Nigro ed. 2007, 208, MD.03.1036/24, pl. XLIX. MB.89.24/26 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 314, MC.04.701/1, pl. XC.

¹⁶ MB.89.24/24 cf.: Vecchio 2002, 227, type 57, pl. 19:1.

¹⁷ MB.89.24/25 cf.: Nigro ed. 2007, 224, MD.03.1048/9, pl. LVII.

¹⁸ MB.89.24/22 cf.: Vecchio 2002, 262, type 158, n. 5, pl. 54.

¹⁹ MB.89.24/25 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 312, MC.04.715/15, pl. LXXXIX.

²⁰ MB.89.24/4 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 300, T35, MC.04.709/22, pl. LXXXIII.

²¹ MB.89.24/10 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 358, T20, MC.04.939/5, pl. CXII. This type isn't local, and it is spread over Area B.

2. THE AMPHORA WITH PALMETTE

The amphora with palmette, MB.89.24/3 (fig. 2), belongs to a late reformulation of the slightly “carinated shoulder” type, spreads over in the Center-Western Mediterranean, between the 5th and the 4th century BC.²²

2.1. Description

The painted amphora (fig. 2; fig. 8) has a pinkish fabric (2.5 YR 8/3 Pink) covered by whitish slip (10 YR 8/2 White). The fabric is characterized by frequent minerals, limestone and mica, of little dimensions. The vase was about 40 cm tall.²³ The rim is 16 cm wide. It has a raised lip slightly enlarged towards inside; shoulder is oblique with a rounded and slightly swollen shape. The profile of the body between the handles is straight. The vertical handles are ribbed with four shallow groves about 1 cm wide, forming a wavy profile, in an irregular ovoid section.²⁴ The edges of the handles are characterized by four plastic quadrangular decorations.

The body has an overall a torpedo shape with a ring base. The foot has a diameter of 15.6 cm, it has a raised, moulded and rounded profile; the bottom of 1 cm is flat. The form of its foot suggests both use for middle-short range trades or conservation.²⁵

The amphora can be compared with a similar vessel from Kerkouane (North Africa), held in the *Musée archéologique* of the site²⁶ (fig. 9), and with an amphora from Tharros (Sardinia) THT 77/146²⁷ (fig. 10), nowadays in the Archaeological Museum of Cabras Giovanni Marongiu. The most suitable comparison is with the carinated amphorae found in the Tophet of Carthage.²⁸

²² See Cintas 1950; Ciasca 1983, 617-622, fig. 1; Ramon Torres 1995, 242, T. 13.2.1.2, fig. 129; Docter 1997, 110-111, fig. 581 a-b; 135-139, fig. 581e; Toti 2002, 278, types 3, 5; 2003, 1205, pl. CCV:4.

²³ Vecchio 2015, 140, n. 129, pl. 15, fig. 15, inv. n. 1672; Harden 1937, 59-89; Cintas 1950.

²⁴ This detail recalls Spanish (Ramon Torres 1995, 374, T. 2.1.1.2, fig. 25; 414, T. 5.2.3.2, fig. 64) and oriental prototypes (Gitin ed. 2015, 357, pl. 3.3.4.4).

²⁵ “Carinated shoulder” amphorae with convex or pointed bottom, spread over Levant area in the 8th century BC, were used for long trade (Lamon - Shipton 1939, 166; Bikai 1978, pl. VII:2-3; 1987, 43-44, pl. XXI:567, 575; Lehmann 1996, 430-431, pl. 69:379; Docter 1997, 110-111, fig. 581 a-b; 135-139, fig. 581 e; Hadjisavvas 2000, 1024-1025, 1052, n. 2; Doumet-Serhal 2003, 45, fig. 6). Moreover, this kind of vessel resembles oriental types used for conservation, like a phoenician storage jar (Gitin ed. 2015, 657, pl. 6.11.11.1) or a jar krater from En Jedi (Gitin ed. 2015, 357, pl. 33.4.4).

²⁶ Cintas 1950, pl. XX:255. Motya and Kerkouane show some common features, such as their radial road system (Famà - Toti 1997, 113).

²⁷ This specimen was an urn in the Tophet of Tharros (Cotza 1999, 54; Acquaro 1975, 213-220; 1976, 197-203; 1999, 40, fig. 1:9).

²⁸ Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, c type 1.

2.2. The “carinated shoulder” amphorae in the central Mediterranean: chronology and distribution

Amphorae with “carinated shoulder” are attested from the 8th century BC, until the 146 BC at Carthage,²⁹ where they were used as urns in the Tophet³⁰ and in the necropolis.³¹

Since the 7th century BC, this kind of vase is also attested to other areas of North Africa³² and to Sardinia,³³ Sicily,³⁴ Cyprus,³⁵ and Iberian Peninsula,³⁶ with the same funerary or cult destination.

Amphorae with “carinated shoulder” across centuries changed from an ovoid to a piriform profile³⁷ with several variants³⁸ (fig. 11), according with the stylistic trend in Phoenician pottery of lengthen the shapes, as testified by the morphological changes of painted oinochoai.

Three classes (A, B, C) identified by Donald B. Harden, between the Punic amphorae of the Precint of Tanit at Salammbô, are attested to Motya (fig. 11). Classes A³⁹ and B,⁴⁰ both ovoid with flared and enlarged rim, are differentiated by the handles, vertical in the first case and horizontal in the second. Class C⁴¹ has a torpedo shape, with a flat rim, carinated shoulders, and vertical handles. This last type also occurs at Nora, Ibiza, Villaricos and

²⁹ Bechtold 2007, 345, n. 2059; Niemeyer *et al.* 2007, 345, ns. 2058-2059; Myres 1897, 159, fig. 12:14-15.

³⁰ Harden 1937, 59-89; Ciasca 1983, fig. 1.

³¹ Lancel (éd.) 1982, 277, n. A.190.5, figs. 383-384; 287, n. A.191.6, figs. 401-402; 291, n. A.192.2, figs. 418-419; 304, n. A.196.3, figs. 456-457; 311, n. A.183.5, figs. 480-481; Chelbi 1985, 99-100; Ciasca 1979, 215, n. 9, fig. 17.8, pl. LXXIV:6-7; Spanò Giammellaro 2000, 311, fig. 2.3; Bartoloni 2010, 65, figs. 72-73.

³² Gouraya (Cintas 1950, 137).

³³ Acquaro 1999, 15-16; Whitaker 1921, 256, figs. 38:295-296; 72:297; 73:301; 77; Taramelli 1912, coll. 53-54, 101, fig. 16:3; Bartoloni 1983, 46-47, fig. 4:c; 1985, 250, fig. 5:b; 1990, 53-54, 79, fig. 12; 2000a, 115, 161, figs. 33, 99; Harden 1937, 59-89; Botto 2009, 231-232. Tharros, in Sardinia, had a central role in the distribution of this kind of vessel assimilating Carthaginian features and spreading it over in the Western Mediterranean. “Carinated shoulder” amphorae of this city are divided in slender, ovoid and crushed (Acquaro 1999, 15-16).

³⁴ Bartoloni - Campanella 2000, 215; Bartolini 2010, 65; Spanò Giammellaro 2000, 311, 313, fig. 23; Ciasca 1983, 617-622, fig. 1; Spatafora 2010, 37, fig. 14.

³⁵ Myres 1897, 134-173, figs. 12, 13:2, 14-15; Karageorghis 1967, 293, fig. 39; 1968, 283, fig. 47; Hadjisavvas 2012, 12, ns. 2-4, fig. 5; 21, n. 2, fig. 10; 23, n. 7, fig. 11; 25-26, n. 13, fig. 12; 29, n. 1, fig. 14; 35, ns. 11, 18, fig. 16; 38, ns. 2-3, fig. 17; 40, n. 35, fig. 18; 64, 66, ns. 1-4, fig. 34; 69, n. 1; 71, n. 17, fig. 36; 75, n. 2, fig. 41; 80, ns. 8-9, fig. 43; 90, n. 2, fig. 47; 96, n. 7, fig. 53; 105, 106, 108, ns. 2, 7, 9, fig. 61; 117, n. 2, fig. 65; 125, ns. 1-2, fig. 71; 139, ns. 2-3, fig. 79; 158, n. 2, fig. 91; 161, 163, ns. 7, 15, fig. 95; 171, 173, ns. 5, 9-10, 21, fig. 99; 193, n. 5, fig. 113; 197, n. 7, fig. 116.

³⁶ Niemeyer-Schubart 1976; González Prats 1982, 377, fig. 376, P-6022; 1989; Rodero Riaza 1983, 874-875, fig. 2:11.1; Aubet 1986, 25, fig. 8, n. 547; Aubet *et al.* 1999, 181; Gomez Bellar 2000, 178, fig. 3:1-2; Martin Ruiz 2004, 109, fig. 130; Ramon Torres 2011, fig. 4:66.

³⁷ Cotza 1999, 49-50.

³⁸ Harden 1937, 59-89.

³⁹ Dated to the 8th century BC: Harden 1927, 307, fig. 15; Cintas 1950, pl. XVII, n. 211.

⁴⁰ Dated to the 8th century BC: Harden 1937, fig. 3, class B, f; Cintas 1950, pl. III:45; Whitaker 1921, 297, fig. 72.

⁴¹ Dated since the 7th to the 5th century BC: Harden 1937, fig. 3, class C, h; Cintas 1950, pl. III:230; VIII century B.C. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:e; Vecchio 2015, pl. 15, fig. 15, n. 129, inv. n. 1672; VII-VI century B.C. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:f; Whitaker 1921, 301, fig. 77; 297, fig. 72; Cintas 1950, pl. XVIII:235. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:h; Whitaker 1921, 256, fig. 38; Cintas 1950, pl. XVIII:236.

Cruz del Negro.⁴² These main classes are further subdivided in subtypes, based on shape variation, and are attested since 700/650 BC to 350/300 BC.⁴³

Amphora MB.89.24/3 from Motya can be included in class C, c type 1,⁴⁴ according to the shape of grooved handles with plastic decorations, and it is dated to the end of the 4th century BC, for its decoration, as we will see later in detail (§ 2.3).

C type 1 is usually painted in red⁴⁵ (7.5 YR 4/4 Light Red)⁴⁶ on a white/pale yellow slip,⁴⁷ and its decorative style belongs to the Red Monochrome Ware II (RMW II) style.⁴⁸ RMW II is attested on amphorae,⁴⁹ jugs,⁵⁰ oinochoai⁵¹ and gutti⁵² from the 6th onwards, with major attestations between the end of 5th and the 4th century BC. In this mature phase, vegetal friezes and floral motifs are some of the most recurrent themes.⁵³ In some cases they are polychrome.⁵⁴

Both the decorative motifs and the pictorial style recall the Phoenician painting style, such as the funerary wall paintings,⁵⁵ the stele⁵⁶ and the ostrich eggs.⁵⁷ As a general tendency, the Phoenician and Punic painted pottery shifts from the geometric patterns during the 8th to 6th century BC⁵⁸ to the phytomorphic motifs in late 5th-4th century BC.⁵⁹ Such change is also found in the amphorae with carinated shoulder at issue. The vegetable themes include

⁴² Harden 1937, 73.

⁴³ These amphorae are found in the Tophet of Carthage, in the strata Tanit II (700/650 BC-350/300 BC).

⁴⁴ Cintas 1950, pl. XIX:239.

⁴⁵ Probably the red color evoked the image of blood and consequently of life and death. So, it had a symbolic and apotropaic value, and for this reason it was utilized on vases destined to cult or funerary contexts (Charles-Picard 1954).

⁴⁶ Acquaro 1980, 173-179; Del Vais 2013, 3-64.

⁴⁷ Motya (Cintas 1950, 77, n. 45=Harden 1937, fig. 3, e, class B; 129, n. 211=Harden 1927, fig. 15; 133, n. 232=Harden 1937, fig. 3, i, class C; n. 233=Harden 1937, fig. 3, h, class C; n. 234=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:e; 135, n. 235=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:f; 236=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:h; n. 239=Harden 1937, Tanit II, fig. 4, 1; 137, n. 245=Harden 1937, Tanit III, fig. 6, c; Carthage (Cintas 1950, 77, n. 45=Harden 1937, fig. 3, f, class B; 129, n. 211=Harden 1937, fig. 3, b, class A; 133, ns. 230-231=Harden 1937, fig. 3, h, class C, a; 153, n. 325=Harden 1937, fig. 3, j); Sardinia (Cintas 1950, 129, n. 217=Harden 1937, fig. 4, c, class A); Gouraya (Cintas 1950, 137, n. 254=Harden 1937, fig. 5, i, class F).

⁴⁸ This style was radiated by Carthage, which borrowed the main plant motifs from coeval Greek ceramics and reused them in an original pictorial style: Nigro 2005, 727-737; Spagnoli 2019, 36-38.

⁴⁹ Cintas 1950, pls. XVI:199, 200; XVII:211-212, 214, 216-219; XVIII:230, 232-235, 238 *bis*; XIX:239, 243-245, 248; XX:251-252, 254-255 *quater*; XXVII:325 a-h; XXVIII:325 *bis*, 326-332; XXIX:341, 345, 352-353; Del Vais 2013, 53, 63, figs. 12-22:SA 336, SA 31.

⁵⁰ Cintas 1950, pl. VII:90-95, 97-98 *bis*. In addition, there are the specimens present in the Archaeological Collection of the Archiepiscopal Seminary of Oristano: Del Vais 2013, 45, 62, figs. 4-21:SA 194, SA 431, SA 191, SA 173, SA 171; 46, fig. 5: SA 184, SA 166, SA 163. Moreover, there is a globular flask (fig. 12:SA 285) of small size, that shows the same decoration.

⁵¹ Cintas 1950, pl. XIII:170-171; pl. XV-185-187, 189, 196.

⁵² Cintas 1950, pl. XXXIII:371, 373, 376.

⁵³ Together to the funerary parietal decoration and to the paintings on the handicrafts.

⁵⁴ Red is replaced with black (gray or blue) or brown matt colors: Cotza 2005, 975-981.

⁵⁵ As the tombs of Sidon, mostly decorated with vegetable motifs (Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 448).

⁵⁶ Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 448-455; Vento 2000.

⁵⁷ Savio 2004.

⁵⁸ 8th-7th century BC (Cotza 1999, 50-51; Acquaro 1999, 15-16) with an impoverishment of the decorations in the middle 7th century BC (Pisano 1996, 135-136).

⁵⁹ Cotza 1999, 49-57.

principally lotus flower, in frieze or at the center between two plants, myrtle leaves, ivy and fern, and palmette, as in the case of the amphora MB.89.24/3.⁶⁰

2.3. *The painted decoration*

The vase belongs to the RMW II pictorial phase. The painted decoration is displayed on the shoulders and in the upper part of the body, specifically on the band between the handles (figs. 12-13).

On the shoulder the decoration is almost vanished, nevertheless a floral pattern - sinuous raceme ending with a lobulated leaf resembling that one onto ostrich eggs⁶¹ - can be recognized (figs. 12-13, 14b).

The principal decoration between the handles is composed by a frieze of four palmette (two on each side) with sixteen petals (figs. 12-13, 14a),⁶² ending in two volutes and encircled by a raceme.

Three drops, perhaps a triglyph (figs. 14c, 15-16), are painted with the tip pointing downwards on the upper part of the handle. The foot and the bottom of the vase are not decorated.

The presence at Motya of RMW II is emphasized on pithos MF.04.1273/4, discovered during the excavations of 2004 carried out by Sapienza Archaeological Expedition to Motya in the Area F- 'the Western Fortress', in an accessory structure of the cult building, dedicated to Astarte.⁶³ It includes also two bowls: MC.12.4336/11 and N.12741 (159) 212, respectively from the Sacred Area of the Kothon and from the Sanctuary of Cappiddazzu. The latter was found during the excavations of 2017, and it is decorated with a line of drops, as those on handles of amphora MB.89.24/3. Another fragment of Punic amphora (MC.12.4428/6), from Area C South, shows a probable representation of stylized flowers.⁶⁴ At least, during the excavation of 2019, a portion probably of an amphora was found (US. 7057), again in the Sanctuary of Cappiddazzu, and it was decorated with a red painted palmette, quite similar to the amphora MB.89.24/3.

Outside of Motya, other examples of palmette decoration are on an amphora from Carthage,⁶⁵ showing a frieze of three vertical fern leaves. The vase from Kerkouane shows the same decorative syntax of the amphora from Motya. The main decoration is a frieze of heart-shaped leaves, probably ivy. Similarly, the "carinated shoulder" amphora from Tharros (THT 77/146), held in the Giovanni Marongiu Archaeological Museum of Cabras, can be compared with our amphora for its vegetal decoration depicted on the band between the handles.

The phytomorphic decoration recalls the parietal painting of the "Tomba dell'ureo" in the necropolis of Tuvixeddu (Cagliari) with the difference that in this case the palmette are circumscribed by a racemate terminating in a lotus flower.⁶⁶ The palmette motif is widely

⁶⁰ Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453; Cotza 1999, 49-57; 2005, 975-981.

⁶¹ Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453; Cotza 2005, 975-981.

⁶² Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453.

⁶³ Nigro 2005, 727-737.

⁶⁴ The decorative motif is like those adorning the pithos, found in 2004, in 'the Western Fortress' of Motya (Nigro 2005, 727-737).

⁶⁵ Cintas 1950, pl. XIX:239.

⁶⁶ Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 451; Canepa 1983, 133, fig. 3.

represented in Phoenician art, such as ivories, as exemplified by the ivories of Nimrud,⁶⁷ metallurgy⁶⁸ and stone relief.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it appears on Punic ceramic vases only at the end of the 5th century BC-beginning of the 4th century BC, probably under the influence of the Greek painting.⁷⁰

2.4. Chronology

Basing on the finding context, the style of decoration, and the comparisons previously treated, the amphora from Area B can be dated to the mid of 4th century BC. Its piriform profile, the rectilinear and moulded handles are characteristics of the late Phoenician-Punic production typical of this period. Vegetal decoration has its origin in the Phoenician decorative tradition. Nevertheless, iconographies of Punic painted pottery recall paintings on Greek vases of the 5th and 4th century BC,⁷¹ that influenced the Punic funerary parietal paintings and ostrich eggs spread over specially during those centuries.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The amphora with palmette decorative motif MB.89.24/3 from Motya stands out for its context of recovery and for the accurate painted frieze. Indeed, the vase was exceptionally found in a residential context, while usually similar specimens are discovered in cult or funerary contexts. Moreover, this kind of vase and this decorative style are quite rare in the island during the 4th century BC.

Its retrieval in a public and residential quarters, like Area B, suggests a not exclusive use of this such vase in funerary or cult activities, at Motya, different than the other finding contexts testimony.⁷² At the same time, the few attestations together with the finding in ritual contexts, in other sites, like Carthage or Tharros, profiles it as a precious or symbolic good for an élite.

As it concerns the possible place of origin of the amphora, it seems quite possible to locate the atelier of production in Carthage, or in its neighborhoods, in the 4th century BC, according to pictorial style. Indeed, in this period Carthage created a net of influences in the Center-Western Mediterranean. Western Sicily was included in this network. So, the contacts between the Sicilian city and the Punic city were prosperous and steady during the 4th century BC so as to allow the circulation of products and craftsmen, but also models, wealthy goods, and fashions.⁷³

In this way, MB.89.24/3 testifies the existence of a belated occupation of the island during the 4th century BC⁷⁴ and the inclusion of Motya in the Carthaginian trades. Moreover, the amphora provides additional information about the Phoenician high-status

⁶⁷ Uberti 1988, 406-408, 413, 418.

⁶⁸ Karageorghis 1988, 159.

⁶⁹ As shown by the stele from Carthage: see Alaoui 1954, CIS 4044, pl. XXX:4; D'Andrea 2018, pl. XIV.

⁷⁰ Ciasca 1983, 621-622; Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 451-453; Cotza 1999, 51.

⁷¹ As shown by Carthage's recovery of pictorial models from the Attic black-figure vases, from the urns of Alexandria's necropolis and from Hadra and Sciabti's *hydriae* (Guerrini 1964).

⁷² Cintas 1950; Vecchio 2015, 140, n. 129, pl. 15, fig. 15, inv. n. 1672; Whitaker 1921, 256, figs. 38:295-296; 72:297; 73:301; 77.

⁷³ Acquaro 1980, 173-179; Del Vais 2013, 3-64; Spagnoli 2019, 36-38.

⁷⁴ Tusa 1967, 85-95.

class, its mode and appreciation for precious goods from abroad and for Greek stylistic elements, included in own production.

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Fig. 1 - Map of Motya with the Area B highlighted in red.



Fig. 2 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora with painted palmette decorative motif from the Area B of Motya.



Fig. 3 - View of the Area B of Motya.

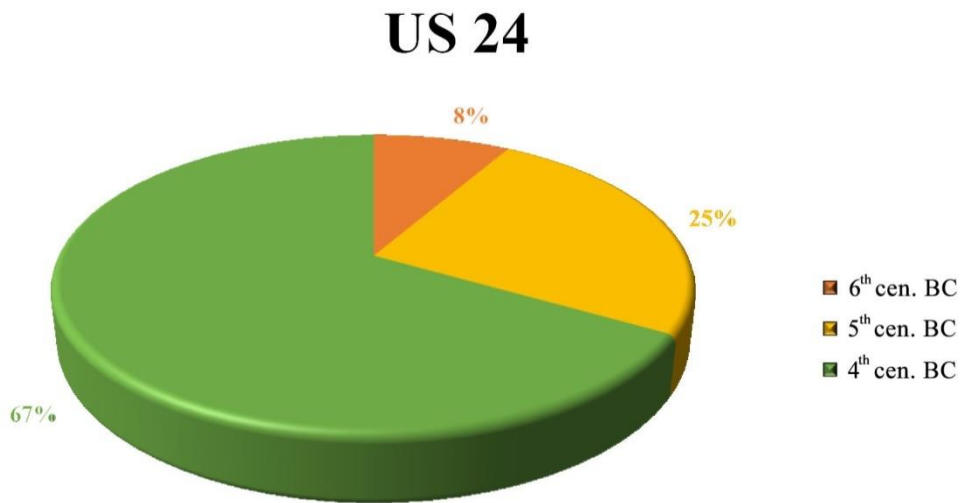


Fig. 4 - Pie chart of the ceramic classes in the repertoire of the Area B. The common Punic ceramic constitutes the majority.

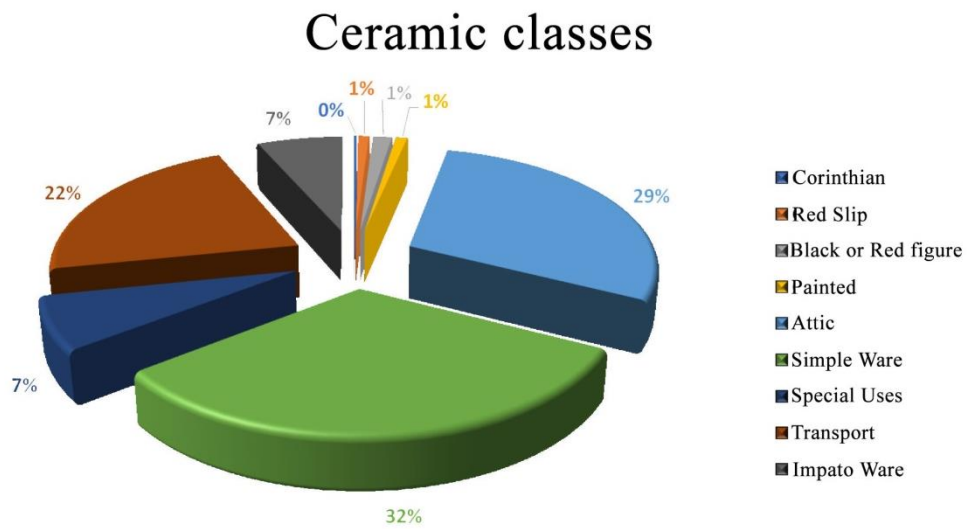


Fig. 5 - Pie chart of the ceramic classes of the US 24.

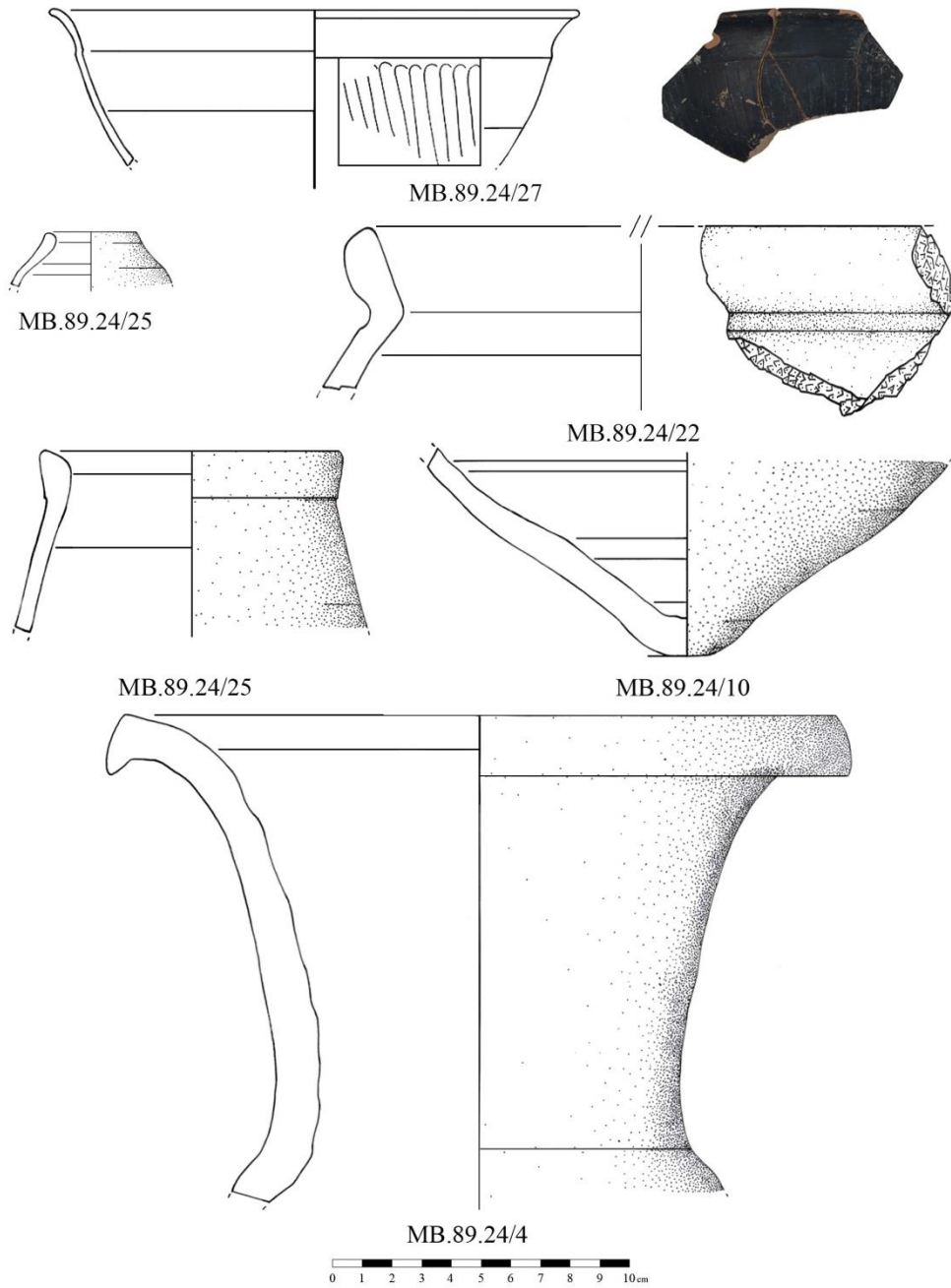


Fig. 6 - Attic pottery, special use pottery and the amphorae collected in US 24.

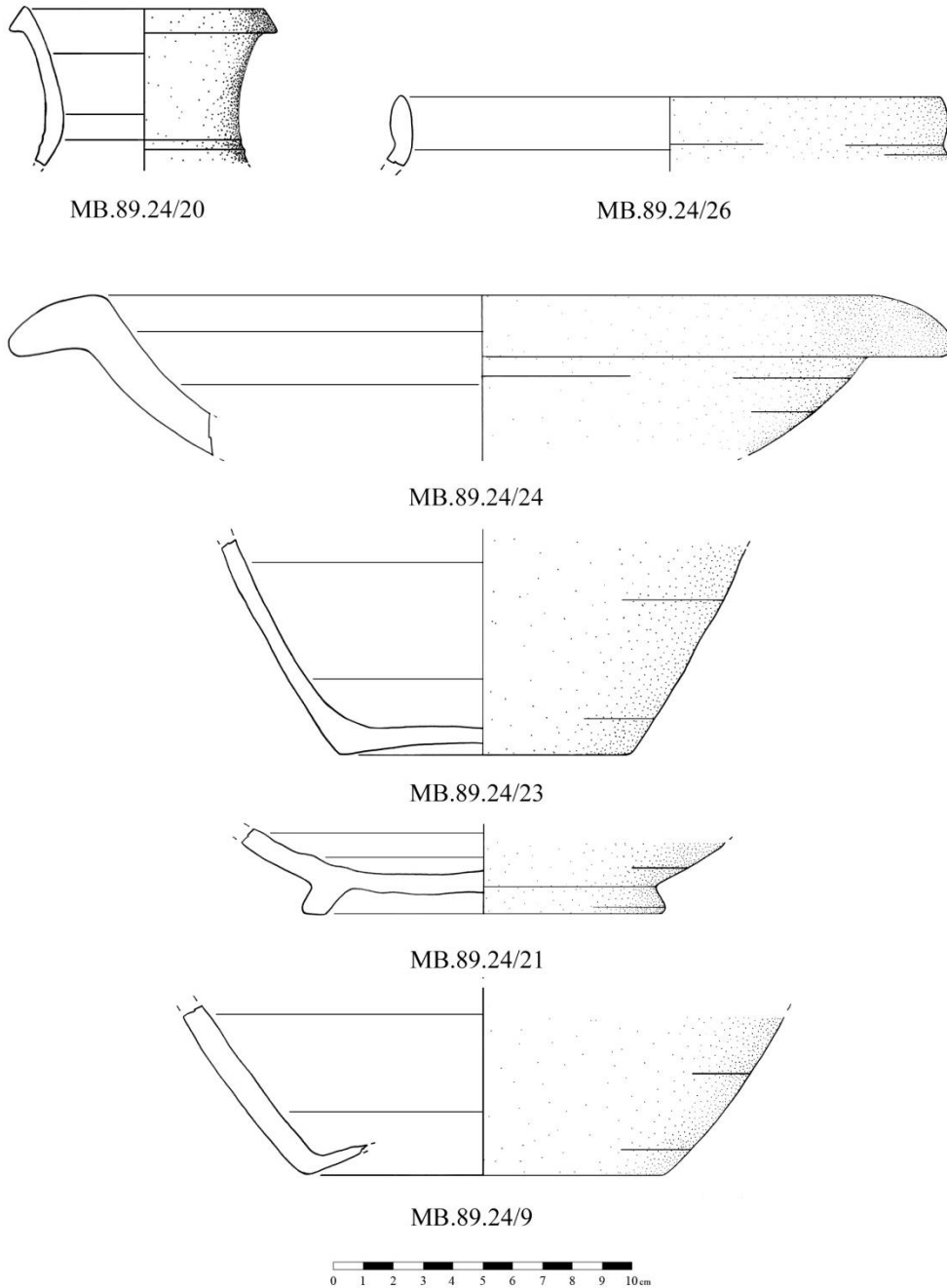


Fig. 7 - Simple Ware collected in US 24.

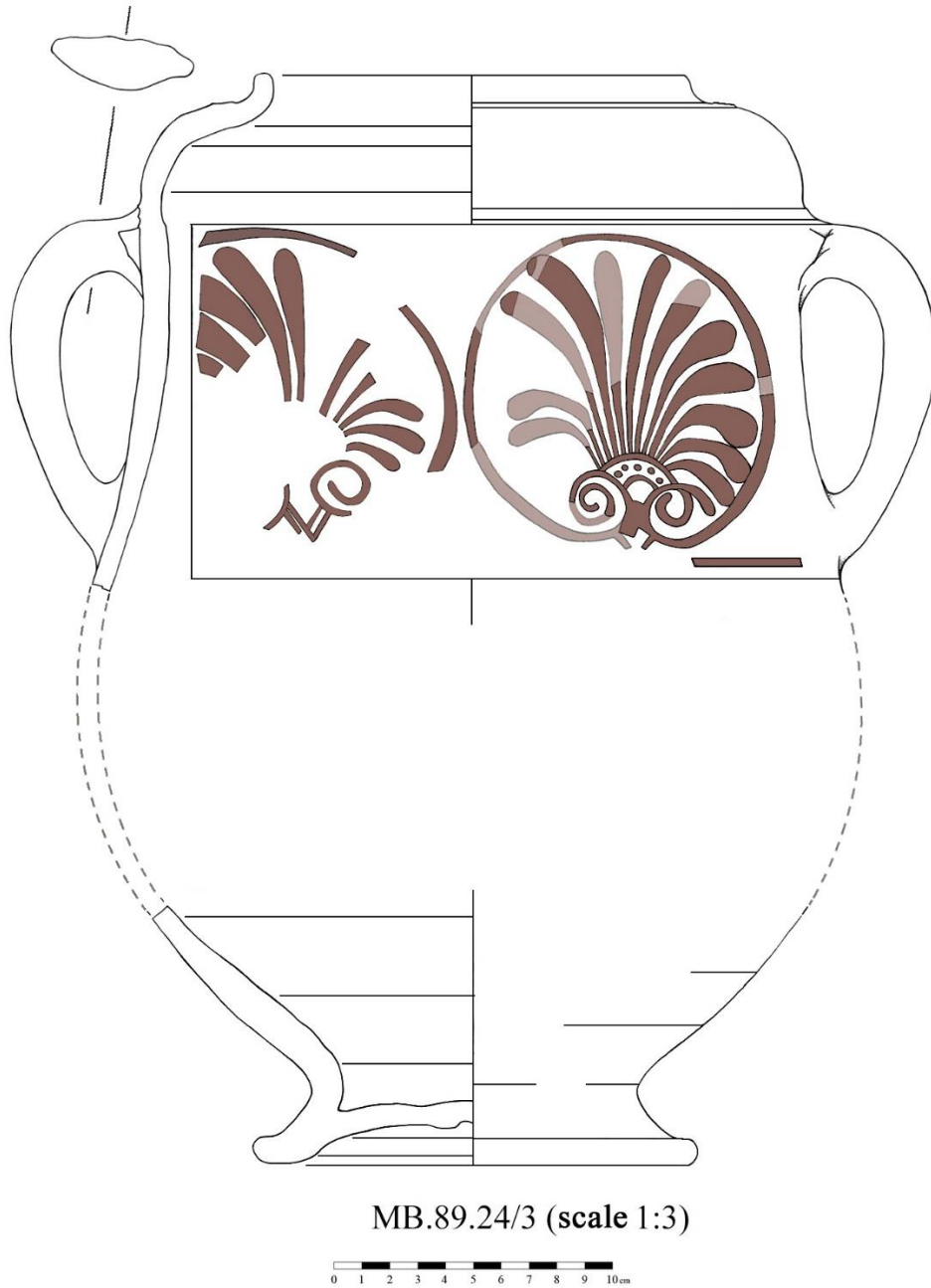


Fig. 8 - The amphora MB.89.24/3.



Fig. 9 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora of class C, from the *Musée archéologique de Kerkouane*, Tunisia.



Fig. 10 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora of class C, from the Archaeological Museum of Cabras Giovanni Marongiu, Sardinia.














	Class A	Class B	Class C
8 th cen. B.C.	 (Harden 1937, fig. 3, a)  (Harden 1927, 307, fig.15)	 (Harden 1937, fig. 3, f)  Highlighted in red the amphorae of the Class B (Whitaker 1921, 297, fig. 72)	 (Harden 1937, fig. 3, h)
7-6 th cen. B.C.			 (Harden 1937, fig. n, Ca.e)  (Vecchio 2015, pl.15, n.129, n. inv. 1672)
6 th cen. B.C.			 (Harden 1937, fig. 4, Ca.f)  (Whitaker 1921, 301, fig. 77)
6-5 th cen. B.C.			 (Harden 1937, fig. 4, Ca.h)
5 th cen. B.C.			 (Harden 1937, fig. 4, Cc.1)  MB.89.24/3 Amphora with palmette of the Area B 

Fig. 11 - Table showing different types of the “carinated shoulder” amphorae found at Motya, based on Harden’s classification.



Fig. 12 - Detail of the decoration of the amphora of the Area B.

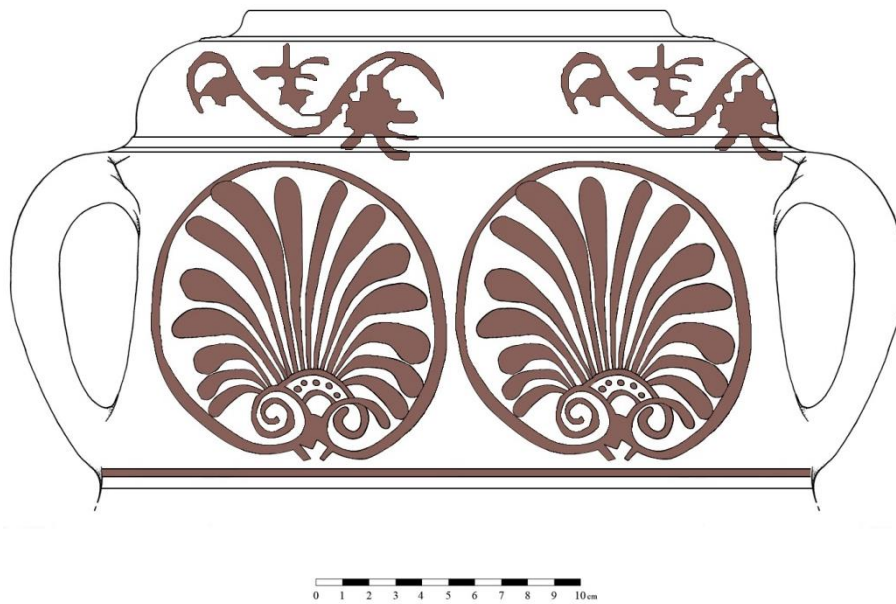


Fig. 13 - Reconstructive drawing of the central decoration of the amphora of the Area B.

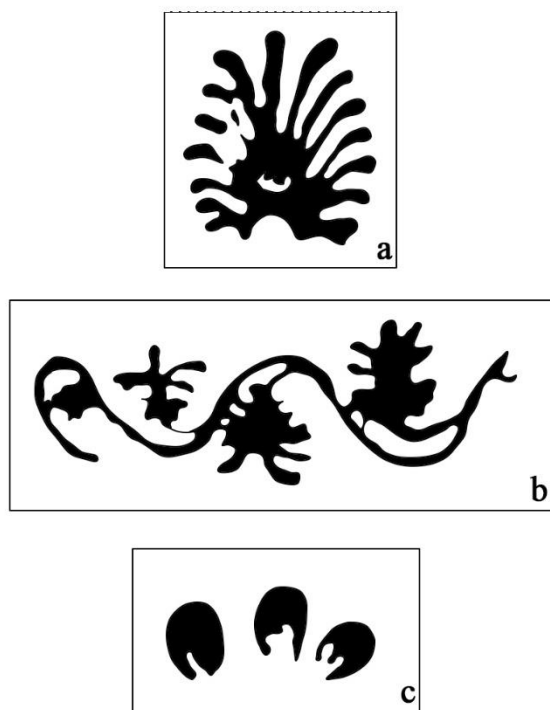


Fig. 14 - Typology of the painted decorative motifs on ostrich eggs (after Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453). Three elements are evidenced: a) the palmetta with sixteen petals, like the palmetta of MB.89.24/3; b) the raceme hypothesized like the decoration on the shoulders; c) the triglyph with three drops, similar to the decoration on the handle.



Fig. 15 - Detail of the decoration of the handle of the amphora of the Area B.

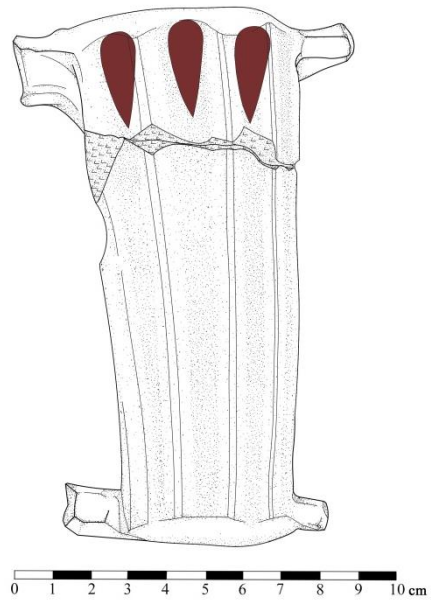


Fig. 16 - The reconstructive hypothesis of the handle of the amphora of the Area B.