

## LEVANTINE IMPORTS AT MOTYA

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*First contacts between Levantine sailors and the native peoples of Sicily do not begin with the arrival of the Phoenicians on the island. Although there is more evidence during the Iron Age, new archaeological data from Motya outline a different and more complex scenario: Levantine seamen, in fact, have sailed to the central Mediterranean since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. Some Levantine imported ceramic finds from Motya dated between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC are presented in the following pages.*

Keywords: Motya; Bronze Age; Iron Age; pottery; Levantine imports

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent excavations at Motya carried out by «La Sapienza» University of Rome in collaboration with the Superintendency BB.CC.AA of Trapani and the G. Whitaker Foundation<sup>1</sup> have made it possible to establish a stratigraphic sequence for the prehistoric, protohistoric, and historical phases of the island (tab. 1).

The complete archaeological periodization of Motya was achieved by cross-referencing stratigraphic data with sequenced archaeological finds and it was implemented by archaeometric and radiometric analyses.<sup>2</sup>

New archaeological data from the deepest layers of the acropolis of Motya (Zona D, Zona E and Zona L-West)<sup>3</sup> testify to a dynamic Mediterranean reality and an articulated process of ancient exchanges and interactions that began at least since the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

Despite the uneven nature of the archaeological documentation, the inclusion of Sicily in the routes from the Levant, Cyprus, and the Aegean to the central Mediterranean and, vice versa, from Sardinia to the Eastern Mediterranean is now clearer.<sup>4</sup>

This phenomenon possibly started around the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC when sailors from the Syro-Palestinian coast ventured into long-distance trade<sup>5</sup> opening sea routes to the West, that would later be retraced by Phoenician seamen.<sup>6</sup>

Looking at ceramic imports, following a diachronic line of research, these can be divided into two macro-groups: (1) Bronze Age Levantine imports and (2) Iron Age Levantine imports.

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<sup>1</sup> About the archaeological excavations in Motya carried out by «La Sapienza» University of Rome see, Nigro a cura di 2004; 2007; 2011; Nigro 2010; 2012; 2013a; 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2015; 2016a; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2022a; 2022b; Nigro - Spagnoli 2012; 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Nigro 2023, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Famà - Toti 2000; Spatafora 2000; Nigro 2016b; 2020b.

<sup>4</sup> See, i.e. the discovery of Nuragic cups in Motya and in the Mediterranean: Cappella in this volume (A.5.2.).

<sup>5</sup> Wachsmann 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Nigro 2016, 357-358.

PERIODS		CHRONOLOGY	IMPORTS AND/OR LOCAL PRODUCTIONS
ERUPTION OF THERA			
EBA	Motya IIC	1600-1450 BC	<b>Levantine Coarse Ware</b> (Canaanite transport jars type); Middle Cypriote White Painted - “Pendant Line Style”.
MBA	Motya IIIA	1450-1250 BC	<b>Levantine Line Painted Ware</b> ; Cypriot White Shaved; Late Cypriote White Painted; Base Ring Ware; pottery of LH IIIA2-IIIIB tradition; Aegean Matt Painted; Nuragic Gray Burnished; pottery of Borgġ in-Nadur tradition.
LBA	Motya IIIB	1250-1100 BC	Pottery of LH IIIC tradition; Nuragic Gray Burnished; pottery of Borgġ in-Nadur tradition.
FBA	Motya IIIC	1100-950 BC	Bichrome Philistine Ware (?); pottery of Sub-Mycenaean tradition.
LEVANTINE PROSPECTORS IN THE WEST			
EIA	Motya IVA <sub>1</sub>	950-800 BC	<b>Levantine Red Painted Ware</b> ; pottery of Torregalli type; pottery of Nuragic tradition.
FIRST PHOENICIAN SETTLEMENT IN MOTYA			
MIA	Motya IVA <sub>2</sub>	800-750 BC	<b>Levantine Bichrome, Red Slip and Common Wares; Levantine transport amphorae</b> ; Cypriot White Painted III and Bichrome Ware; Western Phoenician pottery of North African, Sardinian and Iberian tradition; pottery of Sardo-Nuragic tradition; MG II/LG I pottery.
	Motya IVB	750-675 BC	<b>Levantine transport amphorae</b> ; LG pottery; Proto-Corinthian pottery; Pithekoussai geometric pottery; Italo-Geometric Painted Ware; Elymian Gray and Painted Wares.
LIA	Motya VA	675-625 BC	<b>Levantine transport amphorae</b> ; Bucchero Ware; Elymian Painted Ware; Late Proto-Corinthian and Early Corinthian ware; East-Greek fine wares; East-Greek and Attic transport amphorae.

Tab. 1 - Synoptic table of the main imports and local imitations documented at Motya by the Archaeological Mission of «La Sapienza» University of Rome (after Nigro 2016b; 2020b; 2023).

## 2. LEVANTINE IMPORTS IN BRONZE AGE MOTYA

Sicily was involved in the Levantine routes since remote periods, starting at least from the Bronze Age. In the past years, some scholars such as S. Tusa<sup>7</sup> have postulated possible comparisons between the pottery of the Conca D’oro horizon<sup>8</sup> (Sicilian Eneolithic) and the Early Bronze Age (EBA) ceramic repertoire of the Syro-Palestinian area.<sup>9</sup> Following this

<sup>7</sup> Tusa 1999, 259-260.

<sup>8</sup> The Conca D’oro horizon is developed in the Palermo area and surrounding territories. Some evidence has also been documented in Marsala and Motya (Whitaker 1921, 263, fig. 42).

<sup>9</sup> See, i.e., the comparisons with the pottery repertoire of Jericho and Ay in: Tusa 1999, 260-262, fig. 14.

interpretation we should imagine that the first contacts with the Levant occurred as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.

However, the appearance of Levantine pottery type in Sicily, such as at Monte Grande (Agrigento), at Pietraperizia and at Mursia (Pantelleria),<sup>10</sup> is dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century BC onward. Similarly, at Motya, first Levantine imports occur during the Motya IIC period (1600-1450 BC) (tab. 1).<sup>11</sup>

The Motya IIC ceramic repertoire recalls the Sicilian Bronze Age culture of Rodi-Tindari-Valllunga<sup>12</sup> and it consists mainly of locally produced hand-made pottery characterized by coarse, dark-gray or red-brown, fabric. However, among the transport containers, it is possible to identify jars of medium-to-large size that are certainly not local. The macroscopic analysis of the fabric points to a possible provenience from the Levant (fig. 1:2). These finds can be preliminary included within the group of the so-called Canaanite storage jars.<sup>13</sup> The type developed and spread among the harbor centres of the Levant, Cyprus and Egypt during the 18<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century BC (fig. 1:1), and it was attested at Monte Grande and Mursia in Sicily,<sup>14</sup> and at Vivara in the Gulf of Naples (fig. 2:3-5).<sup>15</sup>

The finding of these imported jars at Motya and in the central Mediterranean testifies to a frequentation by Levantine sailors contemporaneous with the earliest presence of the Helladic culture in the West.

The major archaeological evidence at Motya, however, can be appreciated in the later periods, at the time of the development and spread of Thapsos-Milazzese culture (Sicilian Middle Bronze Age - 15<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century BC).<sup>16</sup> At that time, the transmarine connections between the Levant and Sicily appear fully established, possibly exploiting the North African route along which the site of Marsa Matruh in Egypt is located.<sup>17</sup>

In the historical scenario outlined so far, an Impasto Ware jug with engraved decorations (fig. 3) found in a LBA II context at Beirut together with Mycenaean LH IIIA2, Minoan LM IIIA and Cypriot LC II imports is an interesting complementary record.<sup>18</sup> The decoration is distinctive of the Milazzese style and the archaeometric analyses point to the use of Sicilian clays.<sup>19</sup> As suggested by M. Bettelli, the presence of a single imported vase from Sicily cannot be considered the evidence of goods exchange.<sup>20</sup> However, the increase of Levantine pottery types in Sicily and the data provided by the recent excavations at

<sup>10</sup> See Marazzi 2016, 135-143.

<sup>11</sup> Nigro 2023, 67-68, with previous references.

<sup>12</sup> Tusa 1999, 419-422; 2008, 71; Ardesia 2013-2014, 132.

<sup>13</sup> Although the poor state of preservation, some specimens from Motya (fig. 2) suggest the jars belong to the type with the ovoid body and the rounded shoulder (Pedrazzi 2007, 75-77, 87-90, Type 6; 2010, 53-54).

<sup>14</sup> Marazzi 2016, 135-143, fig. 4:b-c.

<sup>15</sup> Marazzi 2016, 135-143, fig. 4:a. Organic residue analysis on the Canaanite jar from Vivara detected the presence of wine flavoured with aromatic herbs (Marazzi - Pepe 2018, 14).

<sup>16</sup> Tusa 1999, 471-508; Castellana 2002; Voza 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Marazzi 2016, 140.

<sup>18</sup> Badre 1998, 76-77, fig. 4:a-b; Jung 2009, 134-136, fig. 3:3.

<sup>19</sup> Boileau *et al.* 2010, 1684-1686, tab. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Bettelli 2017, 375.

Motya, could offer new insights into this scenario, allowing for an innovative perspective for future research.<sup>21</sup>

In this period, in fact, the Mediterranean is touched by an important phenomenon of cultural interconnection that can easily be recognized at Motya as well: together with the finds from Aegean and Cyprus,<sup>22</sup> imports from Malta, Sardinia, and the Levant are now documented (tab. 1; Motya IIIA - 1450-1250 BC).<sup>23</sup>

The most noteworthy find is a painted Levantine tankard dated to the LBA IIA of the Levantine periodization (fig. 4:1).<sup>24</sup> The decorative pattern is geometric and metopal, the paint is black and matt. Similar decorations are frequently found among the LBA I-II repertoire of the Levant, and some close comparisons can be found in the repertoire of Tell el-Far'ah North<sup>25</sup> and Kamid el-Loz<sup>26</sup> (fig. 4:2-4).

From the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BC (Motya IIIB - 1250-1100 BC - Sicilian Recent Bronze Age), the prehistoric settlement of Motya undergoes an important contraction<sup>27</sup> and, concurrently, a reduction in Levantine imports is documented. This is possibly related to the crisis of the Aegean world<sup>28</sup> that had previously played a fundamental role in the development the coast of Sicily and its insular centres and it is contemporaneous with the crisis of the Levantine palatial system of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>29</sup>

New actors, Cyprus and Sardinia, appear on the Mediterranean chessboard. The relations between the two islands of metal intensifies in this period, as testified by the Nuragic pottery from Hala Sultan Tekke dating to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the recent discovery of Nuragic and Cypriot ceramics at Motya dating back to same chronological horizon document that Western Sicily was also involved in the metal trade route between the two major islands.<sup>31</sup>

However, contacts with the Levantine area were never interrupted. With the crisis of the Mycenaean system, the routes to the West, although dangerous due to the growing phenomenon of piracy, were available to eastern trade.<sup>32</sup> The shoulder of a Bichrome Ware jug from Motya<sup>33</sup> (Motya IIIC - 1100-950 BC - Sicilian Final Bronze Age), and a fragmentary closed vessel probably of Philistine production found at Sulky dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>34</sup> together with the “sub-Mycenaean” style vessels found in the Nuragic

<sup>21</sup> It is possible that Impasto Ware pottery of Italian/Sicilian production was circulating on the Levantine coasts as early as this period, since the late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 14<sup>th</sup> century BC (Jung 2009, 134).

<sup>22</sup> Nigro 2023, 70-71, figs. 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> Nigro 2016b; 2020b.

<sup>24</sup> Nigro 2016b, 350-351, fig. 14; 2020b, 98, fig. 5. The Levantine painted production is commonly an imitation of the Cypriot Chocolate on White (Doumet-Serhal 2008, 26, fig. 28).

<sup>25</sup> Amiran 1969, 147, pl. 47:1; 159, pl. 49:10.

<sup>26</sup> Metzger - Barthel 1993, pl. 116:1.

<sup>27</sup> Nigro 2023, 72-73, with previous references.

<sup>28</sup> Castellana 2021, 194, 222-223.

<sup>29</sup> Knapp - Manning 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Bürge - Fischer 2019; Gradoli *et al.* 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Cappella in this volume (A.5.2.).

<sup>32</sup> Bartoloni 2017, 32.

<sup>33</sup> The area of production of the jug (MC.13.4564/1) is debated and it could be Philistine (Nigro 2016b, 356, fig. 19) or Cypriote (Spagnoli 2014, 83, pl. IV: MC.13.4564/1).

<sup>34</sup> Bartoloni 2008, 1601, fig. 1.

complex of Antigori<sup>35</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century BC would confirm this scenario. These new Levantine traders could be the *Phoinikes* mentioned in classical sources, who arrived in the West around the late 12<sup>th</sup> century BC.

### 3. LEVANTINE IMPORTS IN IRON AGE MOTYA

New evidence of Levantine pottery is documented at Motya during the Early Iron Age (Motya IVA<sub>1</sub> - 950-800 BC) when Red Painted Ware vessels appear (fig. 5).

These vessels, possibly flasks intended to contain Asian spices,<sup>36</sup> are distinguished by thick walls and vertical concentric circles painted on the body. The paint is dark red to orange and matt. This class of ceramic, which occurs together with the more common Bichrome Ware group, is common in Phoenicia, Southern Levant and Cyprus between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Conspicuous Levantine imports will finally reappear at Motya during an advanced stage of the Iron Age with the arrival of new people on the island, the Phoenician seamen.

Imported pottery from the Levant figures in the Iron Age layers dated to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Motya IVA<sub>2</sub> - 800-750 BC). In that period new inhabitants settle on the southern coast of the island in the area of the so-called “Kothon”, close to a freshwater natural spring.<sup>37</sup>

The imported finds come mainly from Phoenicia<sup>38</sup> and the nearby regions of the Levant.<sup>39</sup> Four main classes are documented in the ceramic repertoire (fig. 6):

- 1) Bichrome Ware (BW);
- 2) Red Slip Ware (RSW);
- 3) Common Ware (CW);
- 4) transport amphorae.

BW finds are all related to tableware closed shapes (fig. 6:1-2). The linear decoration is made alternating red and black painted lines arranged on the shoulder and/or the neck of the vessels. Sometimes handles are decorated with horizontal irregular strokes.<sup>40</sup> The surface is smoothed, the paint washed and matt.

A small jug characterized by the narrow cylindrical ridged neck and the globular body is of particular interest (fig. 6:1). Neck-ridge jugs, in fact, are one of the most chronological distinctive shapes of the Phoenician repertoire.<sup>41</sup>

Although the rim is missing, the slight flared profile of the neck suggests the rim is open and direct. The simple bichrome decoration made of red bands framed by black lines covers

<sup>35</sup> Bettelli - Levi 2014, 411-413.

<sup>36</sup> Recent archaeometric analyses on the lipid content have identified the presence of cinnamon inside some the pilgrim-flasks from the Levant: Namdar *et al.* 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 6-7, with previous bibliography.

<sup>38</sup> The imports from Phoenicia are not necessarily from Tyre (Bartoloni 1990, 158-159; Nigro 2015, 228, fn. 8).

<sup>39</sup> Such as, possibly, Galilee: Cappella in this volume (A.5.2.).

<sup>40</sup> The irregular strokes on the handle are a frequent feature of jugs, decanters, and craters since the Late Bronze Age (Núñez Calvo 2008, 58). For some specimens from Motya see: Nigro 2013b, 47, fig. 13:2-3.

<sup>41</sup> About the neck-ridge jugs in Phoenicia see the typological study by F.J. Núñez Calvo (2013, 47-58). For a summary: Cappella 2022, 9-16.

the shoulder and the upper part of the neck. No metopal or geometric motifs are documented.

As regard the shape, the jug can prudentially be compared with the Ja F4 type of Núñez Calvo<sup>42</sup> which is well recorded in Tyre since Stratum IV (800-775 BC ca).<sup>43</sup> Some possible comparisons are with the repertoire of the Period II of the Teatro Cómico at Cadiz where similar jugs both in shape and decoration are documented.<sup>44</sup> The find from Motya could fit in the same high chronological horizon as the bichrome decoration would seem to suggest.<sup>45</sup>

Together with BW closed shapes, imported Common Ware jugs are documented in this period at Motya.<sup>46</sup> The open rim characterizes these vessels which are divided into two main types:

1) jugs with flared and slightly squared rim, narrow cylindrical ridged neck, globular body, and one ring-handle from the mid neck to the shoulder (fig. 6:6);

2) jugs with straight and slightly thickened rim, narrow cylindrical neck and the globular body (fig. 6:7).

As documented for the previous classes, the earliest archaeological evidence of Levantine RSW at Motya dates to the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>47</sup> In this early period, the coating is commonly dense, dark, or bright red, and it covers homogeneously the surface of the vessels.<sup>48</sup> The regular wheel burnishing technique prevails while a few finds are hand-burnished or with matt surfaces.

Motya IVA<sub>2</sub> RSW imports consists mainly of tableware open shapes (fig. 6:3-6). Almost all the vessels are introduced from Phoenicia, but some of them show original features that do not find precise comparisons in the repertoire of the motherland.<sup>49</sup> Eggshell-thin wall bowls with short vertical rim and outer marked carination are a clear example. The vessel found in Motya (fig. 6:3) is covered by a dark red slip and the surface is irregularly burnished. Although the surface treatment and the wall thickness are typical of the Phoenician Fine Ware tradition, the closest comparisons occur at Hazor where the type is widespread in the repertoire of the Strata VII-V.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Núñez Calvo 2008, 177-181.

<sup>43</sup> Bikai 1978, pl. XIV:6, Stratum IV; pl. VI: 6, Strata III-II.

<sup>44</sup> Torres Ortiz *et al.* 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Although the jug from Motya is certainly an imported product, as the macroscopic study of the paste suggests, it is difficult to identify the area of origin. Possibly comparisons are with a neck-ridge jug with the linear decoration from Sarepta, Substratum C2 (second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC; Anderson 1988, 632, pl. 36:8), and with two jugs from the cemeteries of Akhziv, Tomb ZI (Dayagi-Medels 2002, fig. 3.1:50) and tomb 17 (mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC) (Culican 1982, 67-68, fig. 10:d).

<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the state of preservation of the vessels makes it impossible to determine whether painted decorations were originally present.

<sup>47</sup> About the early RSW documented in Motya see: Cappella in this volume (A.5.2.), with reference bibliography.

<sup>48</sup> About the technological features of the RSW from Motya, see Fabrizi *et al.* 2020. More in general, Fabrizi 2019; Cappella - Fabrizi in this volume (B.1.1.).

<sup>49</sup> Cappella in this volume (A.5.2.).

<sup>50</sup> The type already appears at Hazor in the Strata X-IX and it is included among the so-called "Samaria bowl" of Phoenician and Phoenician related tradition (Ben-Ami - Ben-Tor 2012, 430, fig. 5.9:4). For some examples of

Differently, shallow plates with swollen rim and slightly convex walls (fig. 6:4),<sup>51</sup> bowls with low carination and triangular rim (fig. 6:5)<sup>52</sup> and plate with high carination and incised ridge on the outer edge of the rim (fig. 6:4)<sup>53</sup>, are clearly related to the repertoire of Phoenicia and they complete the panorama of the earliest RSW imports at Motya. Archaeometric analyses on the Red Slip Ware from Motya confirm the scenario outlined and suggest a non-local origin of these finds.<sup>54</sup>

Regards the amphorae, although the vessel is the transport container *par excellence*, Levantine imports into Phoenician settlements in the West are quite uncommon. A similar phenomenon can be also observed in Motya where local and central Mediterranean productions prevail already since this early period.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, transport amphorae of Levantine origin are not lacking. They are attested on the island during the first centuries of the Phoenician occupation (Motya IVA<sub>2</sub>-VB, 800-550 BC).

Imports are well recognisable both morphologically and technologically. The Levantine transport containers of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (fig. 6:9-11) are characterised by a reddish-yellow to yellowish-gray paste with frequent medium-sized white limestone inclusions. The vessels are wheel-made and sometimes have a thin beige or pale pink washed coating.

The most represented type, Motya LTA-1,<sup>56</sup> is the amphora with slightly flared and vertical rim, the cylindrical body with the curved carinated shoulder, and the rounded base (fig. 6:9-10). The shape, similar to the Sj 9 type of P.M. Bikai,<sup>57</sup> is widely spread in Phoenicia during the Iron Age and the closest comparisons are with the repertoire of Tyre, Stratum IV.<sup>58</sup>

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the type in the repertoire of the Strata VII-V see, i.e., Yadin *et al.* eds. 1958, pl. LIV, 7 (Stratum V); eds. 1960, pl. LXVII, 5 (Stratum VI).

<sup>51</sup> The shape is commonly attested in the repertoire of both Phoenicia and the most ancient centres of the West, and it corresponds to the types Plate 8/9 of Tyre (Bikai 1978, 23-24, tab. 3A, pl. XCI), Cp F10 of Al-Bass (Núñez Calvo 2008, 224-227) and X-11A of Sarepta (Anderson 1988, 656, pl. 47:X-11A).

<sup>52</sup> For the Motya specimen see: Zielli 2021, 76-78, pl. XIII:MT.72.29/39. The shape corresponds to the type FWP 7 of Tyre (Bikai 1978, 29, tab. 4A, pl. XCI: Fine Ware Plate 7) and it appears in Cyprus during the Kition Horizon (Bikai 1987, 35, pl. XVII:424). The closest comparisons are with the repertoire of Stratum III of Tyre where both shape and decoration recur.

<sup>53</sup> The shape, which corresponds to the type FWP 5 of Tyre (Bikai 1978, 27-28, tab. 4A, pl. XCI), is attested in Phoenicia since the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC and it appears in Cyprus during the Kition Horizon (Bikai 1987, 56-57, and 35, pl. XVII:417). The earliest finds from Motya (fig. 5:5) are wide and deep, and the rim is slightly pendant. The slip covers the entire surface leaving sometimes the outer lower half uncoated. The surface is finely wheel-burnished. The closest comparisons are with the repertoire of Strata IV-III of Tyre where both shape and decoration recur (Bikai 1978, 27-28, pl. XV:2,5; pl. XVII:31-32).

<sup>54</sup> Fabrizi *et al.* 2020. These finds are macroscopically recognisable since most of the finds from Motya IVA period are already produced using local clays.

<sup>55</sup> Transport amphorae attested in Motya IVA<sub>2</sub> period can be divided into three main groups: Levantine amphorae, the so-called “Sardo-Levantine” amphorae and the Phoenician amphorae of Central Mediterranean production: 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), 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> may 2022.

<sup>56</sup> According to the ceramic classification carried out at Motya: Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 31, fig. 21.

<sup>57</sup> Bikai 1978, 46.

<sup>58</sup> Bikai 1978, pl. XIV:13.

The second type, Motya LTA-2 (fig. 6:11),<sup>59</sup> is less frequently documented. The rim is thickened and convex, marked by an internal groove, the neck is short. The shape of rim can be roughly compared with the type SJ-10A of Sarepta (Substratum C2)<sup>60</sup> but the closest comparisons are with the repertoires of the main centres of the Galilee, such as Hazor<sup>61</sup> and Megiddo.<sup>62</sup>

Since the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC a new type is documented: the so-called “torpedo” amphora. The finds from Motya are characterised by a thickened rim and an elongated cylindrical body with a marked carinated shoulder (fig. 7:1). These amphorae correspond to the type SJ 5 of Tyre<sup>63</sup> and they are distinctive of late periods of the Phoenician settlement of Tyre (Strata III-I).

In the following 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Motya VA) imported amphorae are characterized by well finished and usually light reddish-yellow/pale pink paste. Some specimens document the light red or yellow wet coating. The most distinctive type is the one with short vertical rim and triangular section, curved shoulder with a sharp carination, cylindrical body and ogival base (fig. 7:2-5). These amphorae found close comparisons at Sarepta (Strata C2-B2, type Sj-8 of Pritchard),<sup>64</sup> Tell el-Burak (Phase D, Type A 2A)<sup>65</sup> and Tyre (Strata II-I, SJ-2 type).<sup>66</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The recent archaeological investigations at Motya carried out by «La Sapienza» University of Rome have radically changed the interpretation of the history of the island during prehistoric and protohistoric times. Archaeological data show that Motya has been at the centre of important maritime trade at least since the local Bronze Age. In fact, due to its strategic position along the Sicilian Channel, the little island is an important stop trade in the long-distance routes along the coast opened by Levantine sailors as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

Excavations have shown that Motya was inhabited since the Neolithic period onwards and remained occupied without interruption until the Iron Age. The Phoenicians did not land on a deserted island but came to a place that had already been frequented for many centuries using the sea routes already crossed by the first explorers of the central-western Mediterranean. The Levantine imports at Motya, therefore, although still limited, offer a privileged perspective to study and understand the history of the island and the relations of western Sicily with the other Mediterranean realities.

<sup>59</sup> Nigro - Spagnoli 2017, 32, fig. 24, type LTA 2.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson 1988, 662, pl. 49: SJ-10.

<sup>61</sup> At Hazor the type is documented in Strata VIII-V (Ben-Ami - Sandhaus - Ben-Tor 2012, 457-461, in particular fig. 3.16:11 and fig. 3.22:12).

<sup>62</sup> At Megiddo the closest comparisons are with some amphorae of the Stratum IVA (Zarzecki-Peleg 2016, 272, fig. 83: Sj RIB).

<sup>63</sup> Bikai 1978, 47, tab. 10A. The Sj 5 type appears at Tyre in Stratum III, but it is common in the following Stratum II.

<sup>64</sup> Pritchard 1975, fig. 24:4-5.

<sup>65</sup> Schmitt *et al.* 2018, 9, fig. 4:1.

<sup>66</sup> Bikai 1978, 47-48, pl. IV.



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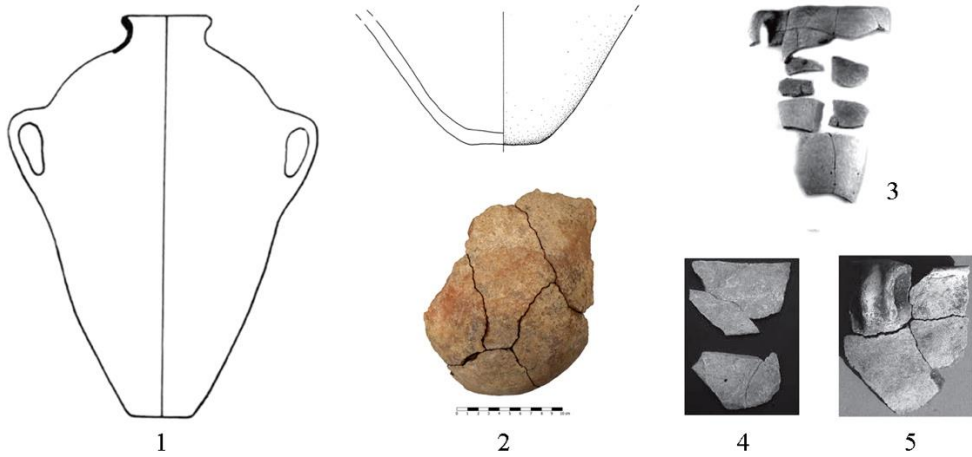


Fig. 1 - Examples of Canaanite storage jars from: 1) Lachish (Amiran 1969, 141-142, pl. 43:1); 2) Motya (Area D, US. 1405 - Motya IIC, 1600-1450 BC); 3-5) Monte Grande, Mursia, Vivara (Marazzi 2016, 135-143, fig. 4).



Fig. 2 - Distribution of the Canaanite storage jars in the Central Mediterranean.

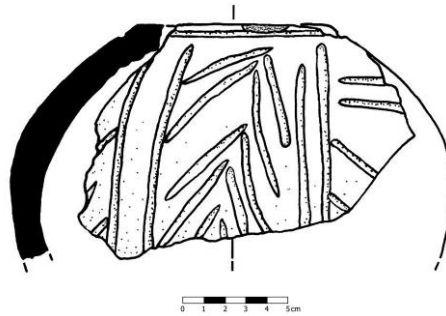
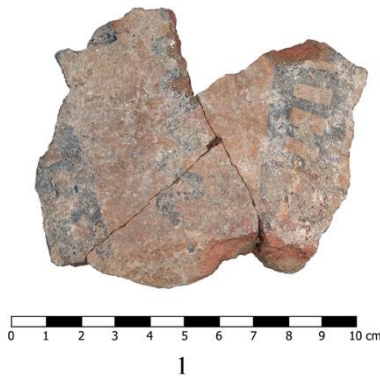
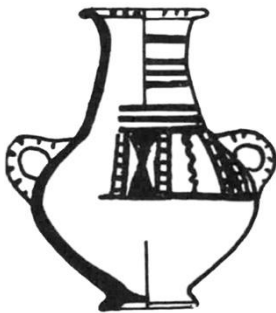


Fig. 3 - Sicilian bottle of the Milazzese style from Beirut, Lebanon (after Jung 2009, fig. 3:3).



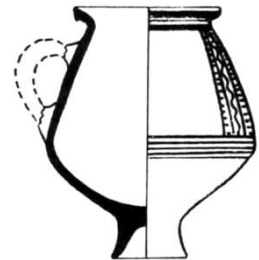
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2



3



4

Fig. 4 - 1) Motya IIIA (1450-1250 BC): imported LBA IIA Levantine Painted tankard (after Nigro 2016, 352, fig. 14); 2-4) examples of the same decorative motif on the Levantine pottery of the Late Bronze Age I-II, from Tell el-Farah (North) (nos. 2 and 4) and Khamid el-Loz (n. 3).





Fig. 5 - Cypro-Phoenician Red Painted Ware (Motya IVA<sub>1</sub>, 950-800 BC).

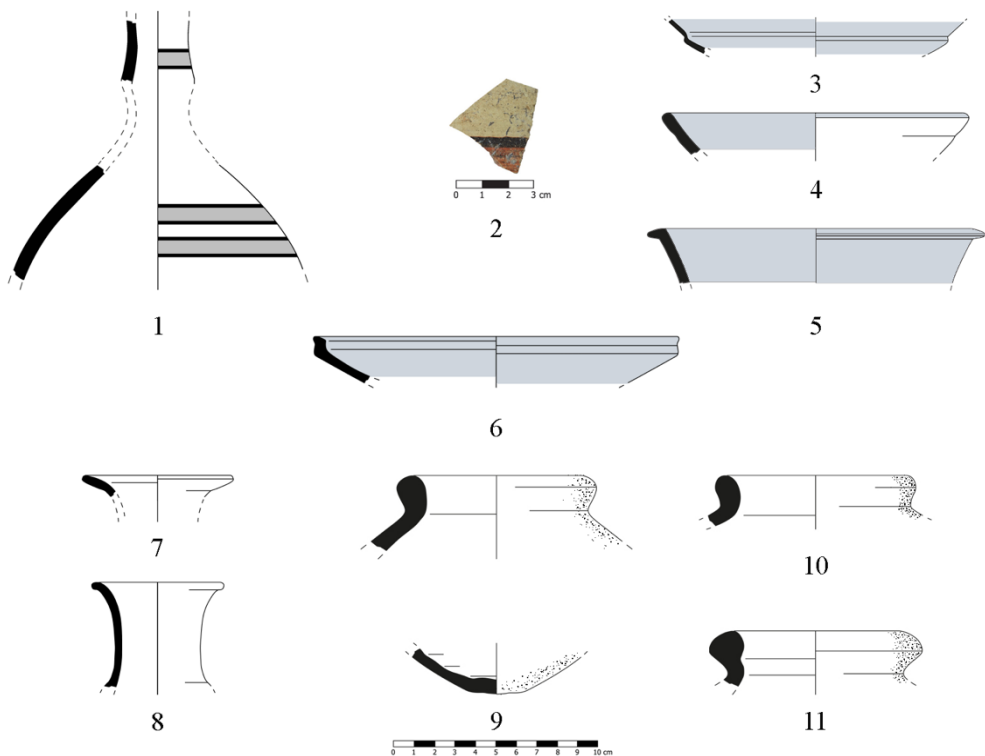


Fig. 6 - Mid 8<sup>th</sup> century BC Levantine imports: 1-2) Bichrome Ware; 3-5) Red Slip Ware; 6-7) Common Ware; 8-10) transport amphorae (Motya IVA<sub>2</sub>, 800-750 BC) (references in text).

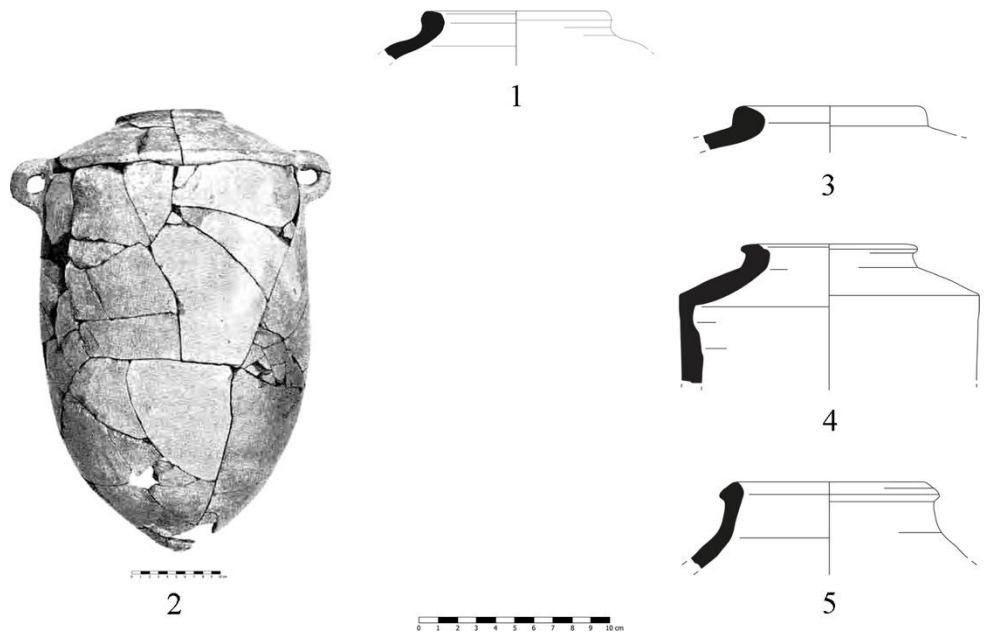


Fig. 7 - Levantine transport amphorae of the late 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Motya IVB-VA, 750-625 BC). (no. 2 is from Tomb 171 of the Archaic Necropolis of Motya: Ciasca 1979, pl. LXXIII:7).