

BEFORE THE GREEKS:  
THE EARLIEST PHOENICIAN SETTLEMENT IN MOTYA -  
RECENT DISCOVERIES BY ROME «LA SAPIENZA» EXPEDITION

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*I recenti scavi della Missione archeologica a Mozia della Sapienza nella Zona C hanno individuato il primo stanziamento fenicio, con una serie di pozzi e l'Edificio C8, i cui resti fotografano i momenti iniziali di vita della colonia fenicia nel secondo quarto dell'VIII secolo a.C.*

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1. PREMISE

Recent archaeological investigations carried out by Rome “La Sapienza” University in the area of the so-called “Kothon” (“Zona C”; fig. 1) at Motya reached in several spots the earliest occupational phases of the Phoenician settlement, dating back from the second quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>1</sup>

Earliest strata – lying in this area of the island directly over the virgin soil – yielding Phoenician material were uncovered in Sectors: C South, just inside the South Gate; C South-West, aside the southern side of the artificial basin called “Kothon” (actually a sacred pool erected as centre of the Sacred Area of Baal) and partly overlapping with the “South Gate Quarter” excavated by the British Expedition led by B.S.J. Isserlin;<sup>2</sup> C East (some 30 m inland), where a sacred place was erected, which soon became a major temple of the arising city, the so-called Temple of the Kothon (Temple C5 in Motya Periods IVB and V).<sup>3</sup>

Findings, stratigraphy as well as the paleo-environmental setting of the above mentioned archaeological contexts provided fresh evidence for the historical interpretation of the foundation of Motya.<sup>4</sup> “La Sapienza” excavations allowed to fix a firm stratigraphy for the Sacred Area of the Temple of Baal and the Kothon and made it possible to produce an overall periodization of the site, including all of major investigated areas (tab. 1).

In the final paragraph of this study the most peculiar features of Motya IVA depicting an example of Phoenician colonization are summarized.

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<sup>1</sup> This time elapse corresponds to central Iron IIB (800-750 BC) in terms of Levantine archaeological periodization; however, most of diagnostic ceramic indicators in Motya point to Levantine Late Iron IIA (920-850 BC). This chronological lag is possibly due to conservatism in the pottery repertoire of Tyre and the other coastal Phoenician centres. Actually, it is made striking because of the lower dating of Carthage to which Motya is also linked, and which is, however, not correlated with Tyre. This chronological shift is particularly interesting taking into account the chronological assessment, for instance, of site of Hazor (strongly connected with Tyre) which offers several good comparison to Motya IVA in strata VIII-VI.

<sup>2</sup> See below fns. 11, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Finds in Sector C East by the Temple of the Kothon have been thoroughly illustrated in two separate papers (Nigro forthcoming a; forthcoming b).

<sup>4</sup> A preliminary illustration of the stratigraphy with the main ceramological anchors is offered in Nigro 2010.

Motya Period	Abs. Dating	Area C - Temple of the Kothon	Temple of Cappiddazzu	Tophet	City-Walls
I	-	-	-	Virgin soil with remains of human frequentation	-
II	15 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> cent.	Phase 10 - Virgin soil - sporadic prehistoric frequentation	-	Remains of prehistoric burials	-
III	12 <sup>th</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup> cent.			-	
IVA	775-750	Phase 9 - early cult installations (pits) in the temple area; Wells; Erection of Building C8	-	Erection of the Tophet Southern limit: wall M.3267	-
IVB	750-675	Phase 8 - Refurbishing of Bld. C8 Erection of Temple C5 & C6	Phase 1 - Pits and other cult installations	1° use of the depositional field (Ciasca's stratum VII)	-
VA	675-625	Phase 7 - Reconstruction of Building C8 Refurbishing of Temple C5	Fase 2 - Archaic temple	2° use of the depositional field (Ciasca's stratum VI)	-
VB	580-576 Pentathlos of Knidos			Erection of the Square Shrine	
	625-550 Malco	Refurbishing Building C8		3° use of the dep. field (Ciasca's stratum V)	
	c. 550	Phase 6 - Destruction	Destruction	Destruction	
VIA	550-510	Phase 5 - Erection of Temple C1; Erection of the sacred pool (the so-called "Kothon"); Reconstruction of Shrine C4 (C6);	Phase 3 - First monumental Temple  Erection of the rectangular temenos	4° use of the depositional field (east extension) (Ciasca's stratum IV)	Erection of the City-Wall (Phase I)
	Dorieus 510 c. 510			Western extension of Sanctuary: Shrine A; Erection Wall T1	
VIB	510-470	Erection of Circular Temenos		5° use of the depositional field in the eastern extension (Ciasca's stratum III)	I Reconstruction of the City-Wall (Phase II)
VIIA	470-425	Phase 4 - Temple C2 (with the East Wing)  Refurbishing of Shrine C4	Phase 4 - Second Monumental Temple  Reconstruction of the temenos	6° use of the depositional field (Ciasca's stratum II) Erection of Building T7; 7° use of the dep. field (Ciasca's stratum I, 2)	II Reconstruction of the City-Wall (Phase III)
VIIB - VIIC	425-397/6	Reconstruction of the Circular Temenos		Raising of Wall T2 Reconstruction of Building T7;	III Reconstruction of the City-Wall (Phase IV)
	397/6	Destruction	Destruction	Destruction	Destruction
VIII	400-300	Phase 3 - Sanctuary C3	Phase 5 - Third Monumental Temple - Porch addition	8° use of the depositional field (Ciasca's stratum I, 1)	City-Walls used for industrial activities (pottery kilns)
	c. 300	Abandonment of the Circular Temenos		Abandonment of the Tophet Sanctuary	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> BC - 7 <sup>th</sup> AD	Use of the pool as fishing basin and salt-producing device	Re-use in Late Antiquity - Roman villa	Plundering	Plundering

Tab. 1 - Archaeological periodization and chronology of the main archaeological features of Motya.

## 2. PALEO-ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING OF THE SOUTH-WEST QUADRANT OF THE ISLAND OF MOTYA

Geomorphologists gave their precious help to the renewed investigations in the Area of the Kothon.<sup>5</sup> Some basic observations help in reconstructing the Motya paleo-environment: the sea level in antiquity (also during the time span of life of the Phoenician and Punic occupation of the island, i.e. 8<sup>th</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century BC) was 1-0.8 m lower than nowadays (as it is immediately demonstrated by the submerged causeway connecting Motya to the settlement of Birgi from the North Gate).<sup>6</sup> The ground soil of the island consists of clayish marl, with some limestone spurs arising to the east and on the northern edge up to + 6 m a.s.l. The marl imprisoned groundwater aquifer at a very short depth: around 6-8 m on the acropolis and around its flanks and in the northern sector of the island, where a limestone bedrock overlapped clayish marl, and almost 1-2 m deep in the area of the Kothon and in the lower city. Actually, in the south-western quadrant of Motya, although encapsulated inside hydro-repellent clayish marl, and, thus, protected from infiltrations by saline sea-waters, the phreatic aquifer formed a small pond, on the edges of which fresh water sprung out.<sup>7</sup> The presence of freshwater, which flowed into the lagoon some thirty meters away, deeply influenced local fauna and flora: swamp environment attracted birds, while fishes crowded where groundwater entered and merged with the extra-saline waters of the lagoon. Moreover, a wide sandy seashore constituted the southern side of the island, assuring an easy landing, just in front of the entrance from the open sea into the shallows of the Marsala Lagoon. Some meters inland, the clayish marl emerged forming a step 1.5 m high, which might be easily drilled to catch drinkable water.

An island not far away from the coast, a fairly protected lagoon near the mouth of a river (River Birgi, just north of the lagoon), freshwater springing up at the ground level, an easy landing/berthing coast-line were landscape features usually preferred by Phoenicians. Furthermore these favourable conditions were associated with a strategic position in respect of seafaring routes in the Mediterranean, and with the presence of a hospitable indigenous population living in the nearby countryside.<sup>8</sup> All these elements attracted Phoenicians to settle down on the southern shore of the island of Motya as early as the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The rise of the town very quickly modified the environment, in a way aiming at enhancing the productive capability of the land and to allow seafaring and fishing in the lagoon.<sup>9</sup> Actually, the following (Motya IVB and V) urban blow up also corroded primary resources which allowed the settlement: to catch drinkable water became more difficult and cultivable land was eroded by the expansion of dwelt up areas.

<sup>5</sup> An équipe of the *Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia* (INGV) lead by D. Di Mauro and L. Alfonsi carried on geomagnetic and geomorphological investigations at Motya in years 2010-2011.

<sup>6</sup> Tusa 2010, 450; Caltabiano 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Such an environment probably influenced also the Byzantine name of the island dedicated to Saint *Pantaleo*, from the Greek form *πάντα λεμιῶνα*, "all a luxuriant pond": Tusa 1985, 581.

<sup>8</sup> The relationships with Elyms has not yet been clarified by archaeological investigations at Motya and surely deserves a further commitment (Ampolo 2012, 29-30).

<sup>9</sup> The impact of urban rise on the environment has been recently studies in various cases of the homeland, see e.g. with previous bibliography: Kaniewski *et al.* 2013.

### 3. THE EARLIEST LANDING PLACE AND THE WELLS IN SECTOR C SOUTH-WEST

Archaeological remains of the earliest settlement (Phase 9, Motya IVA, 775-750 BC) in Sectors C South-West basically consisted of beaten earth pavements, thin walls made of riverbed stones, and a series of wells, with an average depth of around 2.5-3 m, excavated in the clayish marl bedrock.<sup>10</sup> They are lined with medium/small size unworked stones. From a bird's eye perspective, they were arrayed along the border between the marl stratum and the 20 m wide sandy seashore, which provided a suitable landing place for the first Phoenician inhabitants of Motya (fig. 2). The earliest dwellings were erected just aside the wells and the seashore on this gentle spur.<sup>11</sup>

Excavations have shown the peculiar stratigraphy of the area. The clayish marl ground soil was horizontally cut (L.1650) at elevation 0.02 m a.s.l. and, then, it was covered with a stratum of dark brown clayish silt (US.1659), up to 0.4 m thick.<sup>12</sup> In one single case (Well 1), the sack-shaped body of the well was built up from the bottom like a dome and then it was buried under the marl and the dark silt layers, which fully isolated it (fig. 3). The wells and some wooden posts holes were connected to simple dwellings made of mudbricks on a single course of stones foundation, obliterated by following occupation.<sup>13</sup> In the following phases, only wells mouths were at some instances refurbished and raised up with the floors of reconstructed structures, as it is the case of Wells 1, P.1660 and P.2927, which were kept in use until Phase 4 (Motya VII, 470-397 BC).<sup>14</sup> Since pavements associated with wells mouths were no more the original ones belonging to Period IVA<sup>15</sup> (they had been cut off by the following reconstructions, after the refurbishing of the sacred area at the mid of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC) but later floors ascribed to Period VII, evidence referable to the earliest utilization of the wells was obtained by digging inside them down to their bottoms, where ceramic material from the earliest Phoenician settlement were found.

#### 3.1. Phase 9 (Motya IVA) diagnostic ceramics from wells in Sector C South-West

Ceramic vessels from Well P.1673 illustrate some distinguished Phase 9/Motya IVA shapes, including Levantine wares and local *Impasto* Ware (see below for a more comprehensive discussion): a Red Slip plate with simple indented rim (fig. 4:1);<sup>16</sup> two Red Slip carinated bowls (fig. 4:2-3), one with a pair of black painted bands inside and one

<sup>10</sup> Nigro 2010, 8-14.

<sup>11</sup> The oldest structure excavated by the British Expedition in the southernmost portion of the area (rooms 23, 24, 25, 26) had a well (Well 3) too, again demonstrating that the edge of the island was in antiquity further south (Isserlin - du Plat Taylor 1974, 52-53, plan III).

<sup>12</sup> It seems plausible that this silt layer resulted from excavation activities carried out on the edges of the pond, probably aimed at the creation of a pool (the earliest "Kothon").

<sup>13</sup> Nigro 2010, 10, fn. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Isserlin 1970, 573-579; Isserlin - du Plat Taylor 1974, 63-65; Nigro - Spagnoli 2012, 34-35, 51.

<sup>15</sup> A layer of this phase was excavated not far away from Well W.2927, called US.2943. It yielded some Red Slip fragments (MC.10.2943/1, 2), a fragmentary neck of an archaic neck-ridge juglet (MC.10.2943/4), and the bottom of an *Impasto* Ware tray (MC.10.2943/3).

<sup>16</sup> A similar specimen was retrieved in Sounding A, inside Temple C5 (Nigro 2010, 12, fig. 10:MC.06.1592/25).

outside (fig. 4:3);<sup>17</sup> a carinated beaker (“tazza a calice”, fig. 4:4);<sup>18</sup> a hand-burnished piñata-pot (“pignatta”; fig. 5:3); a finger impressed mobile *taboun* (fig. 5:4); a Phoenician amphora with upright emboldened rim (fig. 5:1) made of a reddish distinct fabric;<sup>19</sup> two *pithoi* made of a brittle orange ware<sup>20</sup> coated with a thick whitish slip, one decorated by horizontal black painted bands on the trumpet-like neck (fig. 5:2).<sup>21</sup>

Another diagnostic indicator was found in Well P.2370, an archaic specimen of neck-ridge juglet made of a very fine light beige fabric,<sup>22</sup> with Red Slip and black painted decoration (fig. 4:5). This juglet has its prototype in Tyre al-Bass<sup>23</sup> and comparisons with the Carthago Tanit I repertoire,<sup>24</sup> both for the decoration<sup>25</sup> and the shape.<sup>26</sup>

Other Levantine Red Slip fragments were retrieved in Well P.2927, a shallow structure erected at a very low elevation (around 1 m a.s.l. in antiquity), which also exhibits a building technique characterized by the use of medium size unworked stones.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, within pit F.2962, several Phase 9 pottery sherds were also found, such as a black bands painted carinated cup (fig. 4:6),<sup>28</sup> a Red Slip plate (fig. 4:7), the rim of a Phoenician amphora,<sup>29</sup> showing a whitish wash or self-slip (fig. 4:8), and a fragmentary *taboun*.<sup>30</sup> These ceramic fragments are complementary to those from Building C8, which are thoroughly illustrate below (§ 6).

<sup>17</sup> This shape is kindred to the so-called “Samaria Ware” bowl (see below § 6), a type which reached its apogee in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Yadin *et al.* 1960, pl. LXVII:5, stratum VI “City of Jeroboam II” = 782-753 BC). This stratum provides a very firm chronological reference, since it was destroyed by an earthquake occurred in 760 BC: Finkelstein 1999, 63; Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.36:3; Tyre: Bikai 1978, pl. XIX:1, stratum VIII (second half 9<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> century BC); Hazor: Yadin *et al.* 1960, pl. CLXXXV:1.

<sup>18</sup> This type of chalice is attested to from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age (see Degli Esposti 1998, fig. 10:23, Tell Afis, Area E2, livello 2b, VIII BC). In the Motya repertoire it is attested to in the equipment of several archaic Tombs 69 (Tusa 1978, 21-22, pl. XII:4) and 125 (Tusa 1978, 48, pl. XXXIII:5) of the necropolis, as well as in Building C8 (see below).

<sup>19</sup> Levantine comparisons at Hazor and Sarepta date from the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (this type is instead absent in Tyre): Yadin *et al.* 1989, pl. CLXXXVI:3, stratum VI; Anderson 1988, pl. 36:2, stratum C2. Ramon Torres 1995, 180-182, type T-3.1.1.1./T-3.1.1.2.; about the diffusion of this type see Ramon Torres 1995, 274-275. Other examples in Motya: Toti 2002, 278, pl. 1:2.

<sup>20</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 10R5/8 Red.

<sup>21</sup> Nigro 2010, 8-9, fig. 7. Two more specimens were retrieved in the earliest strata on the acropolis in Area D: Caltabiano - Spagnoli 2010, 129, pl. IX, with previous references. Comparisons in the Levant are from Period II of the Tyre al-Bass necropolis (Núñez 2004, 354-356, fig. 243:4).

<sup>22</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 10YR7/4 Very Pale Brown.

<sup>23</sup> Núñez 2008-2009, fig. 6b.

<sup>24</sup> The provenance for quoted comparisons, retrieved in a secondary deposit, has been convincingly surmised from Tophet Tanit I stratum (Docter 2007, 56, n. 138a).

<sup>25</sup> Briese 2007, 316, n. 1786, fig. 138.

<sup>26</sup> Briese 2007, 316, n. 1795, fig. 138.

<sup>27</sup> This well was devoted to a specific religious function in Phase 4 (Motya VII, 470-397 BC), perhaps also thanks to its early origin (Nigro - Spagnoli 2012, 32-48).

<sup>28</sup> A good comparison is a specimen from Tell es-Safi/Gat, anchored in the late Iron IIA horizon (Maier - Fantalkin - Zukerman 2009, fig. 5:3).

<sup>29</sup> Also this specimen exhibits a reddish fabric: Munsell Soil Color Chart 10R5/8 Red. The type is that of wide-bodied storage jars: Núñez 2004, 302.

<sup>30</sup> MC.10.2962/17.

#### 4. BUILDING C 8 IN SECTOR C SOUTH (PHASES 9-8, MOTYA IV-V, 775-675 BC)

Some meters east of the marl bump cut through by the wells assuring a generous supply of freshwater to the early Phoenician settlement, a major edifice oriented NNE-SSW, called Building C8, was erected. This structure was founded in the lowest and southernmost strip of the clayish marl bed, up to the line where the latter is overlapped by the sandy stratum of the seashore, so that the southern façade of the building was around 20 m far away from the water's edge.

Unfortunately, the ruins of Building C8 were drastically razed when the area just inside the South Gate<sup>31</sup> was regularized for the erection of the Circular Temenos of the Sacred Area of the Kothon at the mid of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Motya VI, c. 550 BC). It had at least two constructional phases: the earliest building was erected in Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC), and lasted in use with new floors in Phase 8 (Motya IVB, 750-675 BC); it was reconstructed in Phase 7 (Motya V, 675-550 BC) with a slight change in orientation in its west wing.<sup>32</sup>

The remains of the building and its content came out after a meticulous excavation, which is still ongoing. Walls were 0.42-0.55 m wide: they were made of grayish-beige mudbricks<sup>33</sup> set upon a carefully laid stone foundation cut into the clayish-marl bedrock. Medium size stones were laid inside trenches 0.6 m wide and 0.3 m deep, with biggest stones used as stretchers to reinforce walls junctions, thresholds and lintels; small riverbed stones were carefully displaced upon this foundation to serve as a basis for mudbrick superstructures. In Phase 7 reconstruction, sandstone blocks and small pebbles are introduced among building material.

The plan of Building C8 consists of two rows of rooms: a front wing, with the entrance room (L.4436) and other subsidiary spaces to the east and the west, and, in the rear row, a series of at least three parallel long rooms (fig. 6), displaced transversally along the main axis NNE-SSW. Entrance room L.4436 introduced into a passage (L.4438) with two juxtaposed doors, opened towards the west (L.4417) and the east (L.4419);<sup>34</sup> the latter door still preserved a circular socket on a small limestone block. From vestibule L.4438, the westernmost of the three long rectangular rooms (L.4444) was entered. It was 6.72 m long and 1.8 m wide. Some stones found on the floor of the room suggested the presence of a small bench or supports for ceramic vessels. On the northern side of the room numerous amphorae fragments were indeed collected, unfortunately disturbed by a later pit (F.4407), suggesting that this part of the room served as a warehouse. On the eastern side of room L.4444, a 0.7 m wide door (L.4414) opened, with a shallow step marked by small stones, towards the adjacent room (L.4430) through wall W.4113. The latter was 0.55 m wide and

<sup>31</sup> The South Gate, as it is now preserved, belongs to the latest 5<sup>th</sup> century BC reconstruction of a complex defensive system erected for the first time at the mid of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Ciasca 1993) razing and burying pre-existing structures (basically Building C8).

<sup>32</sup> This second reconstruction of Building C8 (Phase 7, Motya VA, 675-550 BC) was partly excavated by the British Expedition directed by B.S.J. Isserlin, (Isserlin - du Plat Taylor 1974, 52-54, pl. III). Isserlin considered it a "counting house" like that of Toscanos - in Sicilian vernacular a "baglio" (Isserlin 1982, 114-116, figs. 1-2). For a preliminary re-examination see Nigro - Lisella 2004, 78-81, figs. 2-6.

<sup>33</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 10YR8/3 Very Pale Brown.

<sup>34</sup> A western wing existed, but it was significantly changed in Phase 7 - Period V, 675-550 BC.

it was made with medium and small size stones. At certain spots some mudbricks of the superstructure were still readable upon the foundation (their dimensions were around 0.32 m x 0.24 m).

The main room of this wing of the building was L.4430, measuring 6.82 m x 2.44 m wide (fig. 7). The floor level was slightly higher than in room L.4444, and it gently sloped from the north to the south. In the northern half of the room, the pavement was reinforced with small pebbles and pressed marl. In the south-western corner the tine of a red deer antler (fig. 8:1) was retrieved on the floor. Against the western wall, just north of door L.4414, there was a noticeable concentration of Red Slip open shapes (see below § 5).

Another door (L.4418), opened roughly at the centre of the east side of L.4430, connected it with the third parallel room (L.4450). Since L.4450 was also erected at a higher level (+ 0.2 m), there was a step made of small stones in the passage (0.74 m wide). The wall between L.4430 and L.4450, in its southern stretch, had been dismantled and its prosecution was, thus, detected thanks to the foundation trench. L.4450 had roughly the same dimensions of L.4430 (6.85 x 2.44 m), but it had been more drastically razed due to its higher elevation. A public function may be surmised for Building C8, due to the building technique and the number, dimensions, and layout of rooms.<sup>35</sup>

#### 5. SMALL FINDS FROM BUILDING C8 (PHASE 9, MOTYA IVA, 775-750 BC)

Finds from these rooms shed a thin ray of light on the earliest Phoenician settlement at Motya (fig. 8). Faunal remains basically belong to caprovines (*Ovis vel capra*), fishes (tuna, *Thunnus thunnus*), shellfish (Mollusca), crabs (*Brachyura*), and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*, fig. 8:1).<sup>36</sup> An exception is represented by the teeth of a killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), perhaps an exotic heirloom (fig. 8:2).<sup>37</sup> Seeds attest the presence of barley (from the East?) and legumes (lentils and chickpeas), while pollen diagrams are compatible with a freshwater landscape, as well as reed buds seen in the microscopic study of brick fragments, which depict a matched lacustrine and maritime ecosystem.

Obsidian (from Pantelleria) flakes (fig. 8:3), polished marble pebbles (fig. 8:4) and limestone net sinkers (fig. 8:5-6) are common tools of a fishing community, while a carefully worked and inlaid mother of pearl (fig. 8:7) and the rim of a fine calcite alabastron (fig. 9:1) hint at trade of precious items from the Levant. An Egyptian green serpentinite amphora dating from the Old Kingdom, was found by the British Expedition and remained unpublished (fig. 9:2). The latter item may be inscribed in the number of Egyptian vessels shipped by Phoenicians to the West during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The existence of public buildings in the Phoenician colonies as in the metropolises of the homeland has been questioned. Nonetheless, as already noticed after the discovery of Building C in Toscanos, such warehouses connected with trade activities were brought to light in several sites (Aubet 2006, 100).

<sup>36</sup> A local small size ungulate widely spread on the western cusp of Sicily since Prehistoric times and beyond.

<sup>37</sup> This porpoise is top of the marine animal hierarchy and its presence in the early faunal assemblage at Motya hint at long distance navigation. However, as *Orcinus orca* was deemed a netherworld animal, its connection with the cult of Baal 'Addir in his chthonian aspects performed in the nearby sacred area (Sector C East) may also be recalled. I am indebted to Francesca Alhaique, who is carrying on their study.

<sup>38</sup> I wish to thank G. Capriotti Vittozzi who studied this vessel and suggested a manufacture during the Old Kingdom - 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty (Capriotti Vittozzi forthcoming).

## 6. THE CERAMIC INVENTORY OF BUILDING C8 (PHASE 9, MOTYA IVA, 775-750 BC)

Pottery retrieved on the floors and in foundation layers of Building C8 illustrates more vividly the ceramic repertoire of Motya IVA already sketched out in § 3.1.

The inventory basically consisted of Red Slip Ware - Black Painted open shapes, hand-made *Impasto* Ware vessels (trays, pots, bowls and cups), amphorae, *pithoi*, and some painted and Red Slip neck-ridge juglets.

### 6.1. Red Slip and Black Bands Painted

Red Slip (henceforth RS) open shapes represent roughly 28% of total amount of pottery collected from Building C8, a somewhat high figure possibly related to a certain function of this structure. At least two thirds of these RS occurrences are of Levantine provenience. Common shapes are plates (coated inside and on the rim), carinated bowls (coated inside and outside - sometimes combined with blanked bands) and hemispherical cups/bowls (band coated across the rim, inside and outside).

Plates (fig. 10:1-3) have natural sometimes thinned horizontal rim and slightly concave central dish. Several comparisons may be found in the homeland dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>39</sup> as well as in the Phoenician expansion to the West.<sup>40</sup>

The bowl with slight carination (fig. 10:4) belongs to a very popular Palestinian type, dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards.<sup>41</sup> The rim is inverted and thickened inside and outside, with a flat or very slightly rounded top.

Carinated bowls belong to two main types: a deep one with high flaring rim (fig. 10:5-8),<sup>42</sup> and a shallow one, with flatten carination and slightly everted short rim (fig. 10:9-11).<sup>43</sup> The first type shows a thick stick-burnished red slip inside and outside in the upper part of the body above the ridged carination. In some cases, black painted bands 0.2-0.3 mm-wide (fig. 10:5) or blanked bands, alternated to red slip (fig. 10:7), highlight the shape design. The shallow type is polished and the red coating extends inside and outside over the keel.<sup>44</sup> Both types are kindred to the Samaria Ware bowl (one SW specimen is also present

<sup>39</sup> Comparisons were selected in the homeland from most reliable contexts (Arie 2013, 671), e.g., from Hazor strata X-IX (Yadin *et al.* 1989, pl. CCXII:10), dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. MC.11.2491/17 (fig. 10:2) can be also compared to specimen from Tyre stratum V (around 760 BC; Bikai 1978, pl. XVIII) MC.11.2491/2. In Carthage they may find several comparisons (e.g. Vegas 1999, fig. 5), even though such early layers have not yet been excavated (in the Juno mound it may be they are).

<sup>40</sup> For example in Toscanos: compare MC.12.4427/5 (fig. 10:1) with Ramon Torres 2008, fig. 3:9.

<sup>41</sup> Arie 2013, fig. 13.38:1, stratum H-6 (= VA-IVB), 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. See also: Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.36:11. The same type is well illustrated at Beth Shan (Mazar 2006, 328-329, fig. 12.1:BL52). As regards Tyre, a comparison is illustrated among pottery from stratum IX, dated to the time span 850-800 BC (Bikai 1978, XIX:26). Other exemplificative specimen are in the assemblage of Khirbet Qeiyafa: Kang - Garfinkel 2009, fig. 6.3:22.

<sup>42</sup> In the homeland this shape appears in Hazor stratum IXa (Yadin *et al.* 1960, pl. CLXXVIII:26-31) and reaches its maximum diffusion in stratum VI (Yadin *et al.* 1960, pl. CLXXXI:1-5); Carthage: Vegas 1999, 143-144, fig. 33, Form 4.2.

<sup>43</sup> Homeland prototypes for this shape are exhibited by the Megiddo 9<sup>th</sup> century BC (stratum VB) inventory: Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.23:14 (= Lamon - Shipton 1939, pl. 31:144), and Hazor stratum IXa: Yadin *et al.* 1960, CLXXVII, 5; at Carthage: Vegas 1999, 145-146, fig. 37, Form 7.

<sup>44</sup> The Red Slip shallow type is also present in earlier assemblages, as it is the case of 10<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> century BC Khirbet Qeiyafa (Kang - Garfinkel 2009, fig. 6.3:15-17).



in L.4430, fig. 10:14), which was widely spread over the Levant<sup>45</sup> and the Mediterranean in the 9<sup>th</sup> and in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, tagging the earliest Phoenician presence also in Cyprus,<sup>46</sup> in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>47</sup> and in North Africa (Utica and Carthage).<sup>48</sup>

Locally manufactured carinated bowls (fig. 10:12-13) are made of a reddish coarse fabric,<sup>49</sup> entirely coated by a patchy red slip (darker inside and lighter outside).<sup>50</sup> They have a somewhat thicker walls with a gentle carination.

Other common Red Slip open shapes in the Building C8 ceramic assemblage are hemispherical bowls (fig. 11:1-4), with a RS band on the rim (sometimes extending to the whole body), either an outer decoration consisting of a wavy band (fig. 11:5-6).<sup>51</sup>

A juglet with emboldened rim is characterized by a couple of horizontal black painted bands roughly at the mid of the neck, and a RS band on the rim top (fig. 13:1-2); the handle shows a series of horizontal black painted strokes.<sup>52</sup>

## 6.2. Plain Ware

Plain Ware is made of buff reddish fabric,<sup>53</sup> with small mineral inclusions. Its inventory includes bowls with straight or incurved walls, basins and mortars, and some open shapes descending from the same carinated prototypes dominating on Red Slip Ware (fig. 10:10-11).

Decorated Plain Ware bowls show straight walls, thinned or emboldened rim, and either vertical or horizontal painted bands (sometimes matching black and red bands; fig. 11:7-9). Such types belong to the same Levantine horizon of first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>54</sup>

A popular type of Plain Ware is the carinated cup or chalice (fig. 11:12-13), which, in successive developments,<sup>55</sup> will be decorated either with black painted or red slip bands. Earlier specimens are made of a somewhat coarse grayish fabric and have low keel and disk

<sup>45</sup> Comparisons from stratified assemblages providing reliable chronological references are Hazor strata VII-VI (Yadin *et al.* 1989, pl. CCXIV:9) and Tyre stratum VIII (Bikai 1978, pl. XIX:1), all dating *ante* 760 BC. Another reliable stratified comparison for MC.11.2491/40 is provided by Beth Shan, Area P, stratum P-8 ("early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC"; Mazar 2006, 202, 326-327, fig. 12.1:BL55, namely pl. 18:18-20).

<sup>46</sup> Karageorghis 2002, 145, fig. 307.

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. Toscanos (Aubert 2006, 100), Chorreras (Aubert - Maass-Lindemann - Schubart 1975, 171, fig. 6:34), Morro de Mezquitilla (Niemeyer - Schubart 1975, pls. 6:724, 7:340); Malta (Ciasca 1982, figs. 4-6).

<sup>48</sup> Both types will become very popular in Carthage in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. They have been named respectively type "CCc1" and type "CCc3": Peserico 2007, 284-285, fig. 117 and 286-287, fig. 119. They spread over also further to the West (Ramon Torres 2008, fig. 4:F-20971). As regards the "Samaria Ware" bowl, in Carthage the earliest specimen is illustrated by Peserico 2007, fig. 121:1647.

<sup>49</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 2.5YR6/6 Light Red.

<sup>50</sup> A specimen (MC.11.2491/37, fig. 10:12) was apparently refined on a slow wheel.

<sup>51</sup> This shape also occurs in 8<sup>th</sup> century BC in the Levantine homeland, e.g. at Tyre strata VIII-IX (Bikai 1978, pls. XVIII:A:7, XIX:25).

<sup>52</sup> Bikai 1987, pl. X:329; Núñez 2008-2009, fig. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 7.5YR8/4 Pink.

<sup>54</sup> This type is attested in strata VIII-VII at Hazor (Yadin *et al.* 1989, pl. CCXIV:10) and in stratum IX at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. XIX:23). For the shape of MC.11.2491/8 see Mazar 2006, 324-325, 442-443, fig. 12.1:BL51, pl. 28:19, dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>55</sup> See e.g. Carthage: type Bic (Peserico 2007, 381-382, fig. 114).

base. As stated above, also this type is deep enrooted in the Canaanite ceramic tradition, going back to the Late Bronze Age.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, this chalice gained a certain success in Phoenician sites of central and western Mediterranean. This apparently happened in Motya because of its familiarity with cups already affirmed in the indigenous ceramic assemblage, as a common shape of the household table inventory.

The chalice of a typical Levantine incense-burner (fig. 11:13) also provide a useful reference, belonging to a very popular and well-sequenced shape in Palestine.<sup>57</sup>

### 6.3. Impasto (“handmade”) Ware

*Impasto* Ware (henceforth IW) represents roughly 27% of the entire ceramic equipment retrieved in Building C8. It exhibits a burnished beige<sup>58</sup> surface (self-slip) with pinkish - sometimes light red - shadings and a light gray fabric, sometimes darker in the core,<sup>59</sup> due to the coarse inner texture including mineral and vegetal tempers. IW comprises a variety of open shapes basically connected with food processing and a series of small and medium-size jars with flat base, devoted to temporary storage.<sup>60</sup>

The noticeable quantity of IW in the assemblage of Phase 9 seems to be a distinguishing feature of the early settlement. Handmade burnished pottery, even though not often recognized as a proper production (like IW at Motya IV-V), was a common ceramic ware in the composite material culture horizon of Iron Age I-IIA Levant,<sup>61</sup> also widespread in the Aegean and central Mediterranean.<sup>62</sup>

The repertoire includes plates of different sizes; they made it possible to warm up viands before consumption. A small plate (fig. 12:1) possibly served for condiment, as like as a miniature piñata-pot (fig. 12:2) (a ritual use cannot be totally excluded for this miniature shapes).

Deep bowls with sinuous profile (fig. 12:3-4) have polished outer surface and a relatively thin walls thickness. They recall slipped and burnished shapes of the Levantine repertoire.<sup>63</sup> Hemispherical bowls (fig. 12:5-6) are coarser and sometimes have a rough flat base. They may have inner slip. Incised lines are a sort of decoration or a device aiming at

<sup>56</sup> Mullins 2007, 522-523, pl. 67:7.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., comparisons from Megiddo stratum H-6 (= VB, 9<sup>th</sup> century BC: Arie 2013, 689-690, fig. 13-39:1); Tell es-Safi (Maier [ed.] 2012, pl. 14.18:5); Khirbet Qeiyafa (Kang - Garfinkel 2009, fig. 6.8:1,3,6).

<sup>58</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 10YR7/6 Very Pale Brown.

<sup>59</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 5YR7/2 Pinkish Gray.

<sup>60</sup> A general summary about what was usually labeled “impasto” at Motya is offered by A. Orsingher (2013). One has, of course, to make a distinction between *Impasto* Ware, that is a peculiar ceramic production attested to in Periods Motya IV and V, and which encompasses cooking pots and other shapes, from generic handmade ware sometimes used for big containers (*pithoi* and storage jars). Coarser *Impasto* was also used for molding *taboun*, loom-weights and other items (e.g. crucibles and vats). On the role of cooking pots as vestiges of the Canaanite tradition in 1<sup>st</sup> millennium ceramic productions: Spagnoli 2010, 69-71.

<sup>61</sup> For example, at Iron IIA Khirbet Qeiyafa in Palestine (Kang - Garfinkel 2009, 144-145). In some cases, like at Tell Kazel in Iron I it was considered a cultural identifier (Badre 2003, 88).

<sup>62</sup> An overview is offered by V. Karageorghis (2011).

<sup>63</sup> This shape appears as the rough replica of a common 9<sup>th</sup> century BC Palestinian bowl type: e.g. Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.20:4, Megiddo stratum K-2 (= VA-IVB). Earlier comparisons are found in Tell ‘Arqa (Charaf 2008, 147-149, pl. 4:a-b).

an efficient absorption of direct contact heating. Huge dishes (“scodelloni”) (fig. 12:7-8), are a typical shape of table service: they could be heated on embers and served to wait on the main course with boiled cereals, vegetables and meat.

Pots and trays (“pignatta” and “teglia” fig. 12:9-12), of varying depths and diameters, were usually equipped with bar handles and a robust heating-resistant flat base. The natural rim is either inverted or everted, sometimes burnished with a tool. Bar handles may also serve to hang pots inside *taboun*, while trays were put directly on embers.

Small jars (fig. 13:8-10) for temporary food storage exhibit a simple everted rim. Sometimes the neck is refined on the wheel. They are polished on the outer slipped surface. Other larger containers may be also included among Preservation Ware *pithoi* (fig. 13:11-12), with a high flaring rim, which reminds the shape of a later class of local production.<sup>64</sup> *Impasto* Ware *pithoi* show a buff to pink - reddish<sup>65</sup> unrefined slip (a variety of colours were generated due to the scarce control over oxygenation while cooking such big vessels), with a sort of decoration resulting from trickling liquid clay on the body (fig. 13:13-14), as a result of neck application.

#### 6.4. Transport Amphorae

Several fragments of handles and bodies of Levantine Late Iron IIA amphorae were retrieved, usually showing a short upright rim (fig. 13:5-7) and a range of fabrics pointing to Tyre, but also Sidon, i.e. the Southern coast of Phoenicia as suitable provenance area.<sup>66</sup>

#### 6.5. Cypro-Phoenician Productions

The presence of Cypro-Phoenician wares - in Phases 9 and 8 - marks the strong link with the homeland, where these productions are a typical feature of the Phoenician repertoire in the 10<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Fragments of a decorated amphoroid crater were found in L.4430 (fig. 13:3-4). They belong to a specimen with wide cylindrical neck and tapering body characterized by the black painted decoration with horizontal strokes on the handles, and *metopae* subdividing spaces filled up with concentric circles on the shoulders.<sup>67</sup> It is a Phoenician imitation of a Cypriot White Painted Ware (or Bichrome Ware IV) amphora, as exemplified by

<sup>64</sup> Spagnoli 2007-2008, 332-333, fig. 3, *pithos* MM78/96/1 from Tomb T11 and T164. A. Ciasca (1979, 209, fn. 7) considered the latter an indigenous shape under Greek Geometric influence, that is later on attested elsewhere in Sicily (e.g. in Himera: Vassallo 2003, 1347, pl. CCXXIX:1). Actually this *pithos* may be more simply ascribed to the a coastal tradition in the homeland.

<sup>65</sup> Munsell Soil Color Chart 5YR7/6 Reddish Yellow.

<sup>66</sup> Albeit the rim shape, which is consistent with well-known types from Tyre (Bikai 1978, pls. XVIII:12, 14; XXI:11) and Hazor (Yadin *et al.* 1960, pl. CLXXIX:11), also fabrics are comparable with Levantine ones (Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.35:3). The inventory seems, thus, basically oriented on the homeland (Núñez 2004, 302-303), and, in some cases, also towards Sardinia and the “Circulo del Estrecho” (similarly at what observed for Carthage: Bechtold - Docter 2010, 91).

<sup>67</sup> Two amphoroid craters were found in the *Favissa* F.1680 by the spring of the Temple of the Kothon (Nigro 2010, 21, fig. 21).

comparison with specimens retrieved in the necropolis of Tyre al-Bass,<sup>68</sup> Tell Rachidiyeh,<sup>69</sup> Sidon,<sup>70</sup> and Khaldé.<sup>71</sup>

Other Cypriote fragments belong to a White Painted *skyphos* (fig. 13:15), which finds stratified counterparts at Hazor,<sup>72</sup> Beth Shan<sup>73</sup> and Megiddo<sup>74</sup> in early Iron IIB strata (end of 9<sup>th</sup> century BC).

#### 7. MOTYA IVA CERAMIC REPERTOIRE AND ITS CHRONOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Basing upon pottery analysis to draw out chronological conclusions or to put forward a dating may be a daring exercise. Nonetheless, this is - at the moment - the most widespread way of dating used in archaeology. Comparisons are risky, especially when we have moved to a completely different scenario, and it is indispensable to rely upon petrographical analyses of fabrics and to compare a whole inventory instead of single shapes. This becomes more difficult in a colonial *vs* homeland repertoire, being the former a composite and derivative one by definition.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, as provisional as it must be considered, the ceramic inventory of Building C8 - on the basis of the references enumerated above - can be anchored within the Levantine archaeological periodization in what is presently called Late Iron IIA (e.g. Megiddo strata VA-IVB), and can be dated (in Palestine) to the time elapse 920-850 BC. This makes it clear that Levantine chronology does not fit central Mediterranean (Carthage's) one, since Carthaginian comparisons (especially the RS carinated bowls) (again confining us to "ceramic history" - for what it may be valid) are usually placed into a considerably lower chronological time span (as early as 760 BC onwards). Is this due to the different timetable adopted by archaeologists in Carthage in respect of the Levant? Absolute dating across the Mediterranean is, thus, made more and more wanted by recent discoveries in Motya.

No Greek ceramics were found in Phase 9 strata. Phase 8 layers, conversely, yielded a fragment of a pendent semi-circle *skyphos*, of a bowl "à chevron", and end with a noticeable presence of early Proto-Corinthian pottery.<sup>76</sup> May the lack of Greek imports in Phase 9 depend on archaeological randomness? Either has this absence a historical-chronological meaning? Did the arrival of Phoenician settlers occur before the spreading over Western Sicily of early Greek ceramic material? How the latter datum can cope with the overwhelming comparisons to Late Iron IIA material of the Levant observed in the Motya IVA (Area C - Phase 9) pottery repertoire?

<sup>68</sup> Núñez 2004, (292-293, fig. 100:1, urn 49). All comparisons are ante 760 BC, according to the re-calibrated dating of Tyre al-Bass Period III end (Aubet - Núñez 2008, 99-100).

<sup>69</sup> Doumet-Serhal 2004, 76, figs. 10-11; nowadays in the National Museum, Beirut.

<sup>70</sup> Doumet-Serhal 2006, 23, fig. 35:1.

<sup>71</sup> Doumet-Serhal (ed.) 2008, 48, fig. 80.

<sup>72</sup> Yadin *et al.* 1960, CLXXXII:18.

<sup>73</sup> Smith 2006, 376-377, fig. 12.84:c.

<sup>74</sup> This vessel is called "deep rounded bowl" - stratum K2 (= VA-IVB, second half of 9<sup>th</sup> century BC); first publication: Finkelstein - Zimhoni - Kafri 2000, fig. 11.18:10; second publication: Arie 2013, 727, 810-811, figs. 13.30, 13.46:4.

<sup>75</sup> Bartoloni 1996, 85-86.

<sup>76</sup> Nigro forthcoming b.

The apparent chronological outcome of this evidence is that Motya IVA should be dated in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. However, in a preliminary assessment (tab. 2), in order to not lose the decisive connection with Carthage, I opted for Low Chronology in the Levant, setting Phase 9 in Area C and consequently Motya IVA in the second quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, Carthage dating remains still too low of at least a quarter of century (it might be hypothesized that the earliest strata there have not yet been excavated, but I would leave such questions to the archaeologists working there).

Motya Period Area C -Phases	Cypriot Ceramic Horizons (Bikai 1987)	Cyprus Periodization	Tyre al-Bass	Southern Levant	Carthage
IVA 775-750 BC Phase 9	Salamis Horizon 850-750 BC	Cypro-Geometric III 900-750 BC	Period III	Iron IIB 850-722/701 BC	Early Punic I 760-675 BC
IVB 750-675 BC Phase 8	Kition Horizon 750-700 BC	Cypro-Archaic I (750-600 BC)	Period IV	Iron IIC 722/701-587/6 BC	
	VA 675-625 BC Phase 7		Amathus Horizon 700-600 BC		Period V
VB c. 550 BC Phase 6 destruction and razing		Cypro-Archaic II (600-480 BC)			
VI Phase 5 Temple C1, Circular Temenos 550-470 BC				Iron IIIB Persian Period 535-333 BC	Early Punic/Middle Punic 530-480 BC

Tab. 2 - Comparative timetable with ceramic horizons between Motya, Cyprus and the Levant.

<sup>77</sup> Actually, as a Palestinian archaeologist, I would conversely follow A. Mazar's Modified Conventional Chronology (Mazar 2008, *passim*).

## 8. MOTYA IVA (775-750 BC): THE EARLIEST PHOENICIAN SETTLEMENT

Recent archaeological investigations by Rome “La Sapienza” University in the area of the so-called “Kothon” illustrated so far, as well as those carried out at the Tophet, and in Areas B, F and L,<sup>78</sup> allow to sketch out a tentative picture of the early Phoenician settlement on the island of Motya.

Motya was, from many respects, a settlement colony and, at the meantime, a trade colony - a strategic stop-over on the maritime route towards Sardinia<sup>79</sup> and the West.<sup>80</sup> Actually, its physiognomy rather eludes the traditional scholarly approaches to Phoenician colonization,<sup>81</sup> pointing towards a more integrated model, matching aspects of mercantile enterprise, population development, agricultural production, metal exchange, cultural assimilation of indigenous entities and, contemporarily, identity creation, as well as showing a peculiar relationship with the yet unknown metropolis (not necessarily Tyre),<sup>82</sup> the latter aspect marking a sensible difference in respect of Carthage.

### 8.1. *Settlement size and demography*

The earliest settlement started from the anchorage (“Μοτύη”),<sup>83</sup> identified by the southern shore of the island, and grew up on the adjacent marl bump and around the nearby springs, where the earliest sacred place was erected (Temple C5 of Motya IV and V [Area C - Phases 8-7, 750-550 BC]).<sup>84</sup> The sacred area and the mercantile and dwelling quarters aside supported a fast development of the town. From that point, the dwelt area spread over the acropolis (which had already hosted a huge prehistoric village), reaching the northern limestone reliefs and bringing the overall extension of the newborn town up to around 12 hectares (fig. 14). At least two thirds of the island were left free for agriculture. There were three main poles: the southern dwelling quarter with the nearby public buildings (Building C8 and Temple C5), the acropolis (where, with the urban consolidation of Motya V, other major buildings arose), and the northern quarter with docks and industrial areas linked to the facing Sicilian coast.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Nigro 2012, *passim*. The present article is a provisional report limited to Phase 9 remains in Sectors C South and C South-West (see below fn. 83).

<sup>79</sup> At least two Sardinian *askoi* were found at Motya, one in the earliest layers of the Temple of the Kothon (Nigro 2010, 13, fig. 11).

<sup>80</sup> Was the anchorage of Motya already known from the past? This seems probable, but, as far as it is presently known, there is not positive evidence supporting such an eventuality, except for the fact that the island hosted a flourishing prehistoric village during Italian Middle Bronze Age.

<sup>81</sup> Aubet 2006, 95-96; Gubel 2006, 88-89; about Phoenician colonization of Sicily are still valid V. Tusa's observations (Tusa 1982).

<sup>82</sup> Three main streams of Levantine colonizations were identified: from northern Phoenicia (Syria), from Sidon and from Tyre, presumably in a progressive chronological scansion from the north to the south (Bartoloni 1990, 158; Bartoloni 1998, 342-343).

<sup>83</sup> Amadasi Guzzo 2005; Guizzi 2011, 457.

<sup>84</sup> Phases 9-8 temple in Area C are thoroughly illustrated in Nigro 2010, 12-27; Nigro forthcoming b.

<sup>85</sup> The Sicilian coast east of the island, only 800 m far away, was swampy, while the coast to the north, around 1.5 km far away, was more suitable for a settlement: here the site of Birgi arose.

The necropolis, which originally extended over the not-dwelt region along the northern side of the island, apparently reflected a medium mercantile class with some warrior.<sup>86</sup> As regards the number of dead in the earliest stages of life of the town, it is impossible to calculate them. However, it has to be stressed that in several spots re-displaced burials were found,<sup>87</sup> due to changes in the necropolis organization and, successively, to the erection of the city-walls. Moreover, it cannot be excluded that a part of the population was buried elsewhere, presumably in the nearby site of Birgi, already at an early stage of life of the colony. Nonetheless, in spite of its huge extension, the number of inhabitants for hectare can be estimated in around 120/150 people. The earliest community of Motya IVA roughly gathered 1500 people, a number which is consistent with a self-sufficient community - based upon agriculture, fishing and caprovines fostering on the island itself.

### 8.2. *Architecture and urban layout*

Architectural remains belonging to Motya IVA were excavated in Area C and in Areas B, E and L. Domestic architecture is made of mudbricks upon foundations made of uneven stones. Dwellings are very simple one-to-three rectangular rooms with annexed shelters (supported by wooden posts) and yards, usually equipped of wells and mobile ovens, neatly different from major constructions, like Building C8, which seems inspired to Levantine prototypes, and which had at least two storeys.<sup>88</sup>

Plan, orientation, and limits of dwelt compounds depended on the street network, which basically consisted of a main north-south axis crossing the entire island, which circumvent the western foot of the acropolis, and concentric and radial streets descending from the latter, running towards south, west, north-west and east (fig. 14).

### 8.3. *Public Buildings*

Building C8 and the earliest Temple C5, which was included into a sacred precinct, as well as the earliest construction of the Temple of "Cappiddazzu" (erected in Motya IVB [750-675 BC] and transformed into a proper sacred building in Period Motya VA), are freely inspired to the Levantine architectural prototype of the Four Room Building.<sup>89</sup> The building technique consisted of solid stone foundations and two-three superimposed

<sup>86</sup> Spagnoli 2007-2008, 326-327, fns. 22-24. There are not monumental tombs except some huge sarcophagi in an unexplored area of the island, which may hint at the existence of upper class tombs not yet identified.

<sup>87</sup> Spagnoli 2007-2008.

<sup>88</sup> In this early stage of urbanization, dwellings must have had only one storey, as it is demonstrated by the absence of pillars within the walls, while this became a necessity in the following centuries.

<sup>89</sup> The so-called "Four-room Building" is a plan-scheme variously adopted in Levantine public and religious architecture during the Iron Age (Shiloh 1970; Ottosson 1980, 66-71; Wright 1985, 275-280; Nigro 1994, 203-291, 436-452; Sharon - Zarzecki-Peleg 2006), descending from a classic layout of Palestinian domestic architecture of this period, that of the so-called "Four-room House" (Braemer 1982), showing three parallel long rooms with a transversal room behind their short sides covering the entire width of the house. Levantine Iron II "Four-room Buildings", moreover, are often characterized by the adoption of the ashlar masonry typical of the Phoenician tradition with dressed blocks regularly displaced on alternated courses (Shiloh 1979, 50-69; Stern 1992, 302-304). The latter features could be difficultly accomplished in a colony. Recently J. Kamlah offered a different interpretation for this architecture and named the type "Tripartite Pillar Temple" (Kamlah [ed.] 2012). See also Nigro 2009; Nigro 2012.

courses of uneven stones supporting walls made by regular mudbricks sized on the 0.525 m royal cubit. The use of wooden pillars and fine plaster, the careful revetment of floors, and the fitting of passages with stone slabs, neatly distinguish such buildings from ordinary domestic dwellings and working or familiar storage devices, thus suggesting that a public institution had realized and maintained them.

#### 8.4. *Industrial installations and specialized activities*

Scarce evidence is available for the presence of productive activities, probably because Motya IVA layers were reached only in limited sectors of the island. However, bronze fragments and iron slag testify to the importation of bronzes and a limited local production of iron objects, as well as the presence of reed suggests the manufacture of ropes for rigging and fishing nets, necessary tools for sailors. Also pottery was, of course, locally produced, as it shown by Plain Ware, *Impasto* Ware, and Storage Ware fabrics. Nonetheless, the colony shows since the beginning the establishment of industrial activities, such as weaving and dyeing (spindle whorls and *murices* are found), the above mentioned pottery production (local transport amphorae) and fish treatment with salt, which will soon develop, giving fuel to the successive fast economic growth of Motya.

### 9. MOTYA AND THE PHOENICIAN EXPANSION TO THE WEST

Even if the reconstruction illustrated above still needs further in-depth analyses, it can be stated that Motya, at its early stage, shared almost the same elements of its material culture with the homeland, but, at the same time, it absorbed Cypriot influences and embraced indigenous cultural elements (the cultural sharing with Carthage will, instead, become more evident in the following Phase 8 - Motya IVB, 750-675 BC).

What seems more difficult is to set the foundation of Motya within the overall dynamics of Phoenician expansion, which – since the early definitions by S. Moscati<sup>90</sup> – are still widely debated.<sup>91</sup> Of the three major fluxes which can be recognized, the earliest one is the most elusive: it involved Phoenician centres of the northern coast of Levant (Arwad?) and presumably followed the battle of Qarqar (853 BC) in the third quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>92</sup> The second stream was instead headed by the main cities of the South, Sidon and Tyre, in the last decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, after the fall of the Omride dynasty in Israel. Finally, the third has Tyre as undisputed protagonist continuing its radiant expansion in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The foundation of Motya might be ascribed to the second flux and attributed either to Tyre – which, however, had just founded Carthage on the opposite side of the Sicilian Canal, or to Sidon – a centre which recent archaeological investigations are contributing to enlighten also for the Iron Age.

At the present stage of research, it seems that during the first generation of colonists in the second quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the town, its inner layout and the maritime space surrounding it, were skillfully organized through a wise displacement of functions and

<sup>90</sup> Moscati 1988, 46-49.

<sup>91</sup> I just mention the stimulating insights by P. Bernardini (2006). A reference text is M.E. Aubet's summary on Phoenician colonization in Iberia (Aubet 2006).

<sup>92</sup> Liverani 1988, 696.



structures (wells area, dwelling quarters, temples, channels, wharves, marketplace, necropolis, etc.), including farming and productive compounds. Such an efficient spatial organization might have favoured the reception of new Phoenician settlers arriving from Eastern Sicily as a consequence of Greeks colonization there (Thucydides VI, 2, 6) in the following period (Motya IVB, 750-675 BC). By that time, Motya witnessed an occupational and demographic boom, being almost completely built up, thus, becoming a major Phoenician colony of central Mediterranean together with Utica and Carthage.

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Fig. 1 - Aerial view of the Area of the “Kothon” (“Zona C”) at Motya, from west.



Fig. 2 - Wells and Building C8 of Phase 9 excavated in Sector C South-West at Motya.





Fig. 3 - Phase 9 wells in Sector C South-West at Motya: Well 1, marl L.1650 and dark silt US.1659 layers in foreground; the south-eastern corner of the Kothon in background; from south-east.

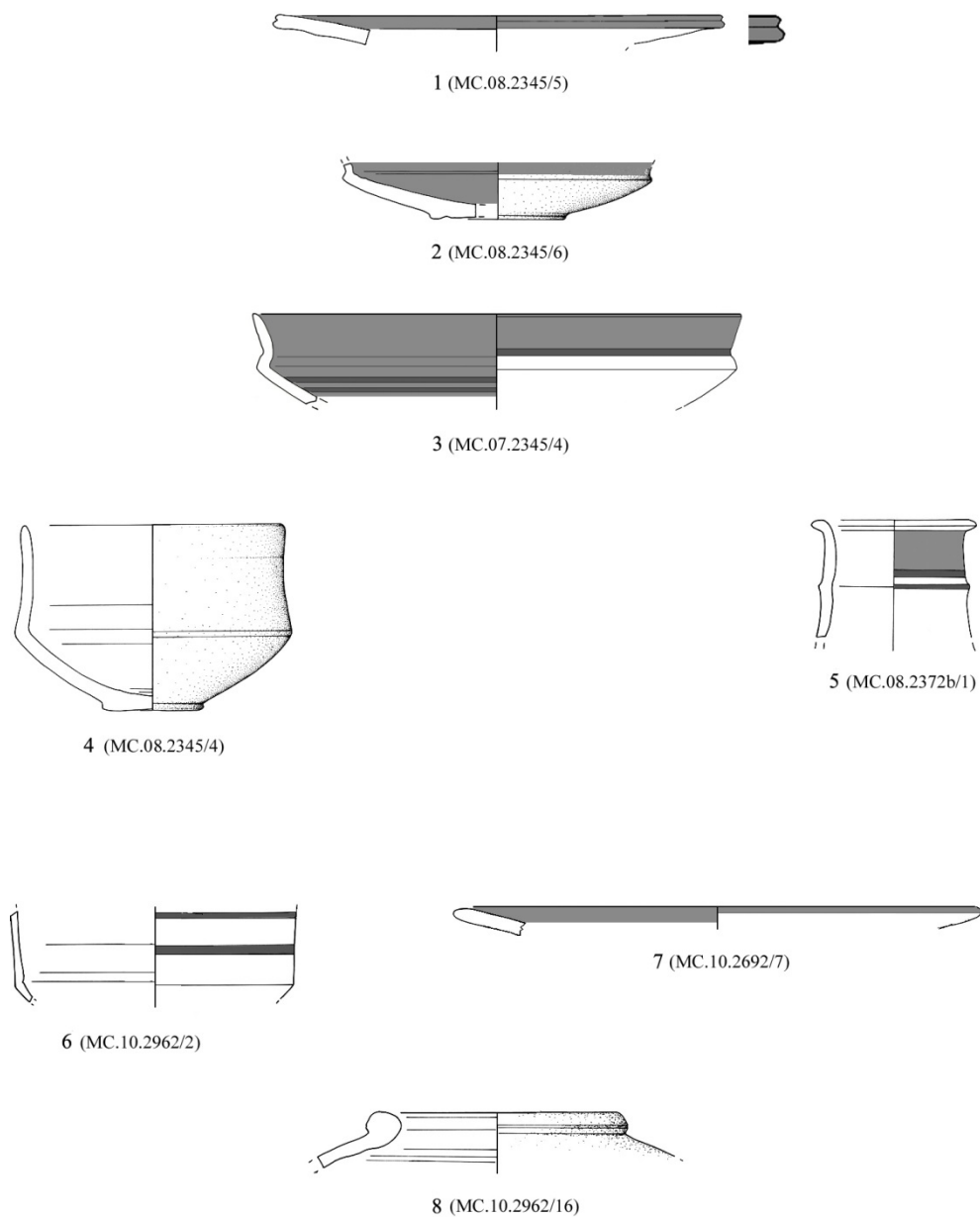


Fig. 4 - Pottery from Phase 9 wells in Sector C South-West (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC); ratio 1:4.

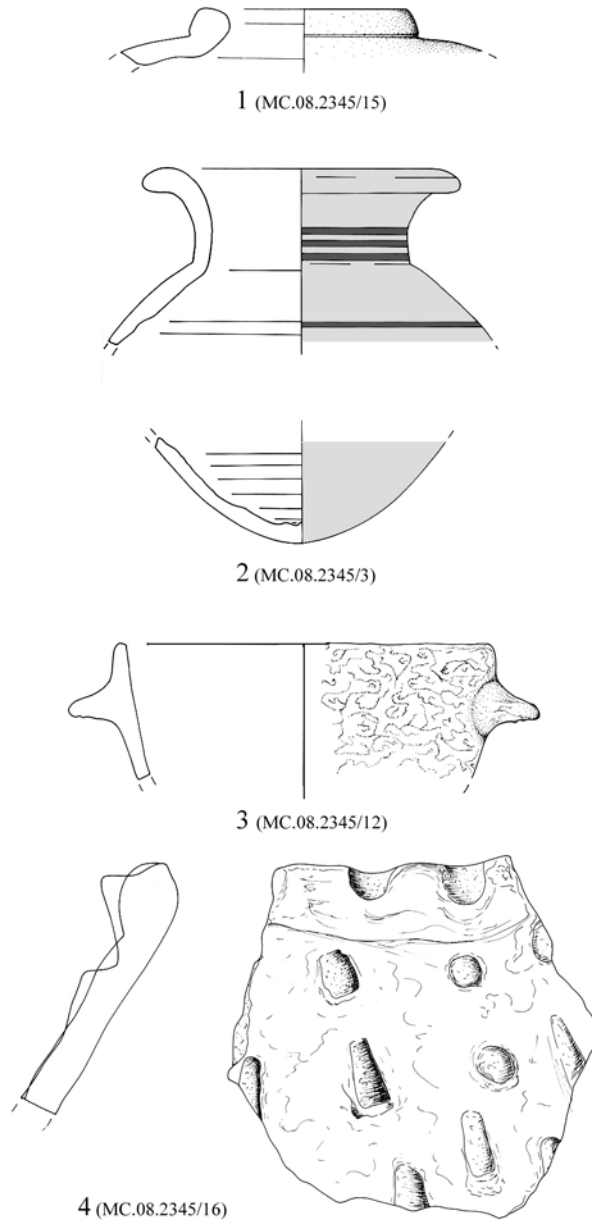


Fig. 5 - Pottery from Phase 9 wells in Sector C South-West (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC); ratio 1:4.

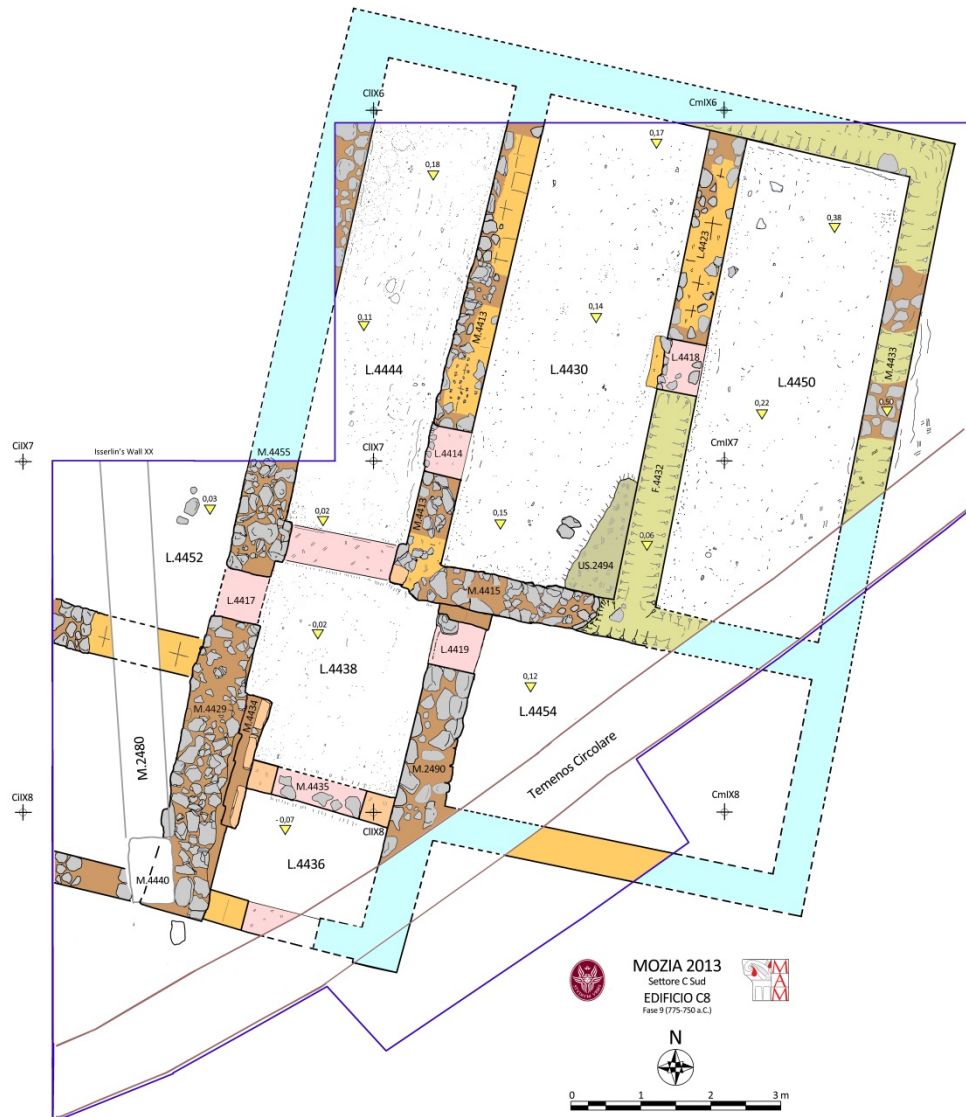


Fig. 6 - Plan of Building C8 of Phases 9-8 (Motya IV, 775-675 BC) in Sector C South.



Fig. 7 - 3D model view from the south and view from north of Building C8 of Phases 9-8 (Motya IV, 775-675 BC) in Sector C South.

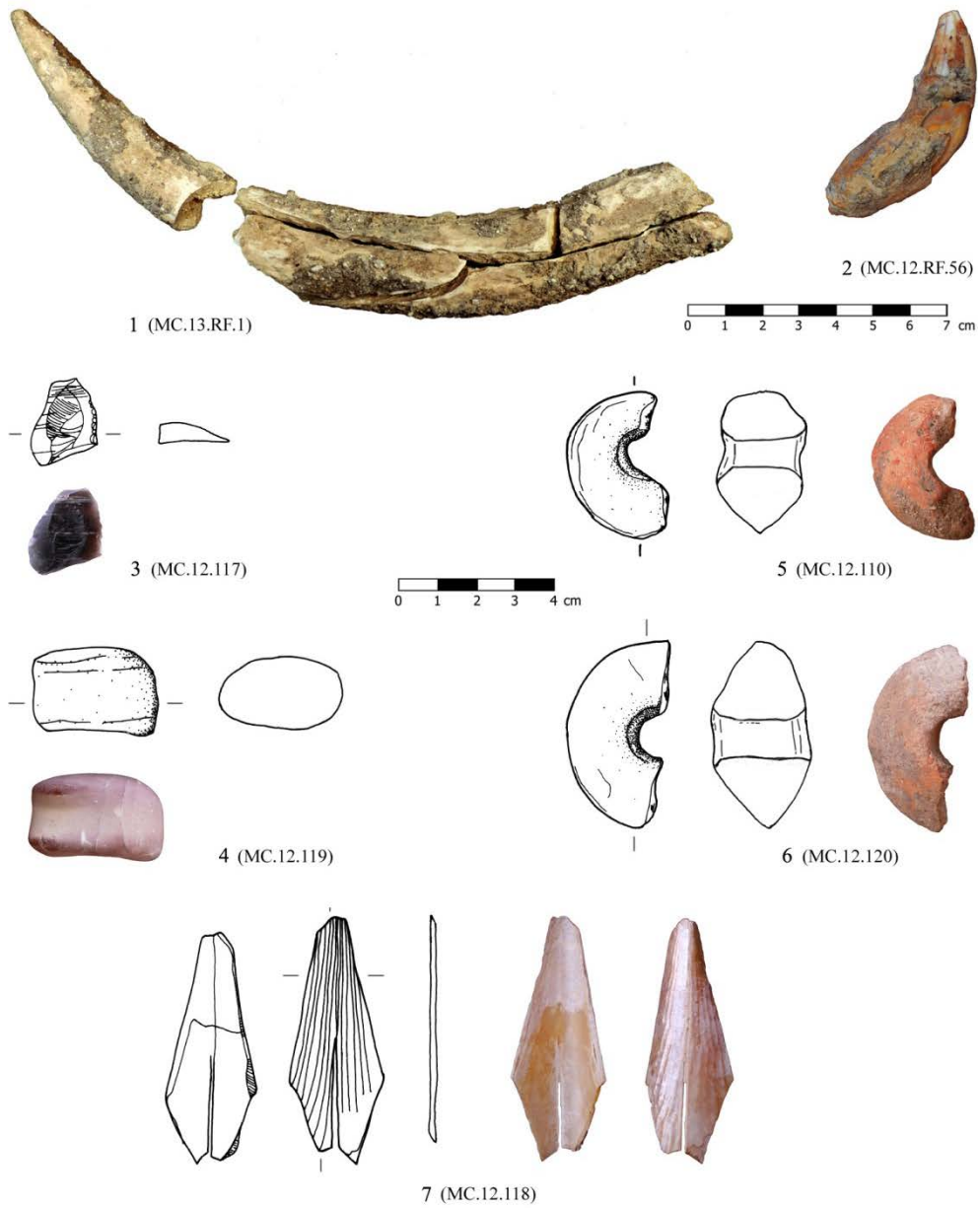


Fig. 8 - Small finds from Building C8 of Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC).



Fig. 9 - 1, Imported calcite *alabastron* from Building C8; 2, Pharaonic green serpentinite amphora from B.S.J. Isserlin's excavations in the South Gate area.

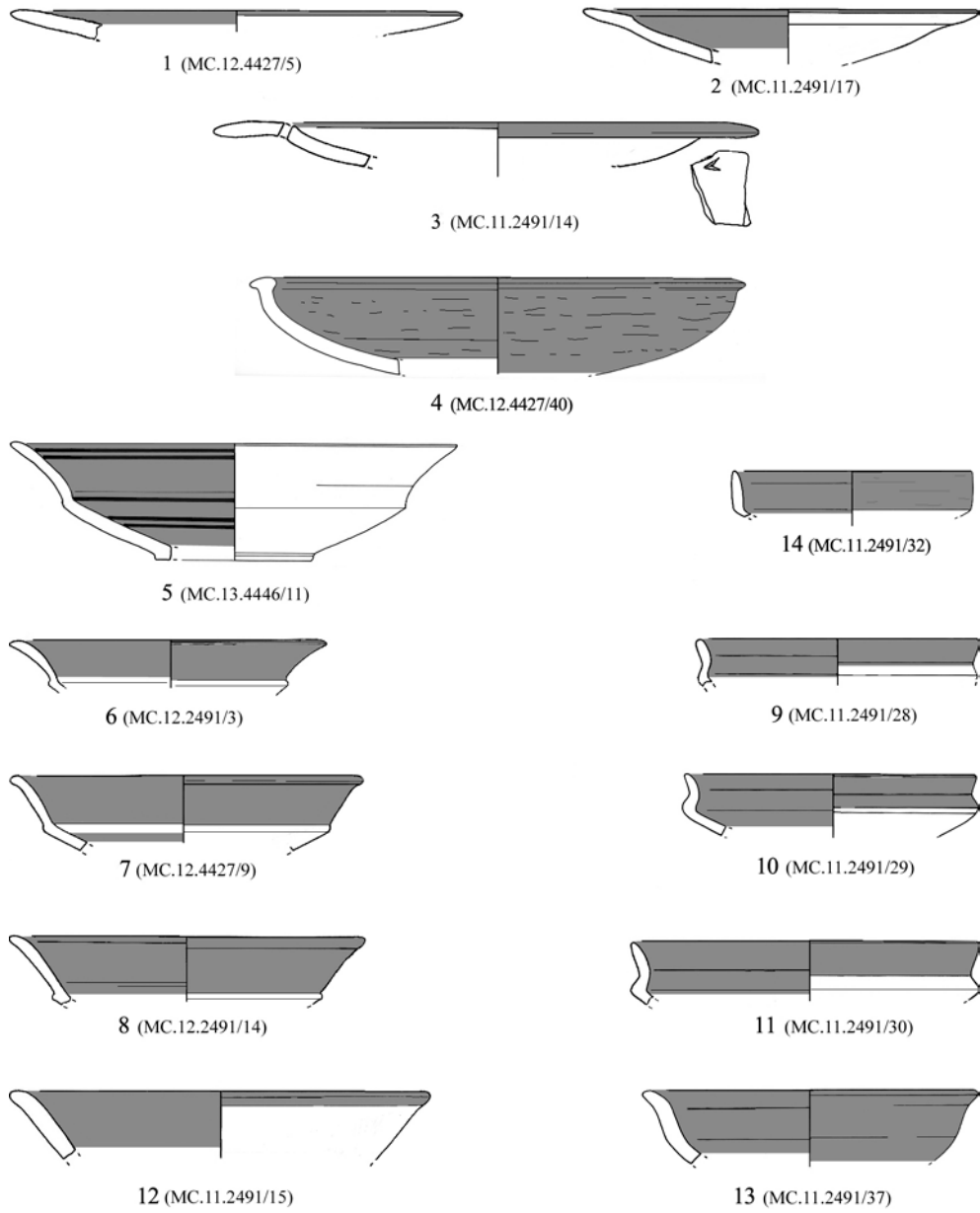


Fig. 10 - Red Slip and Black Bands Painted plates and carinated bowls from Building C8 of Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC); ratio 1:4.



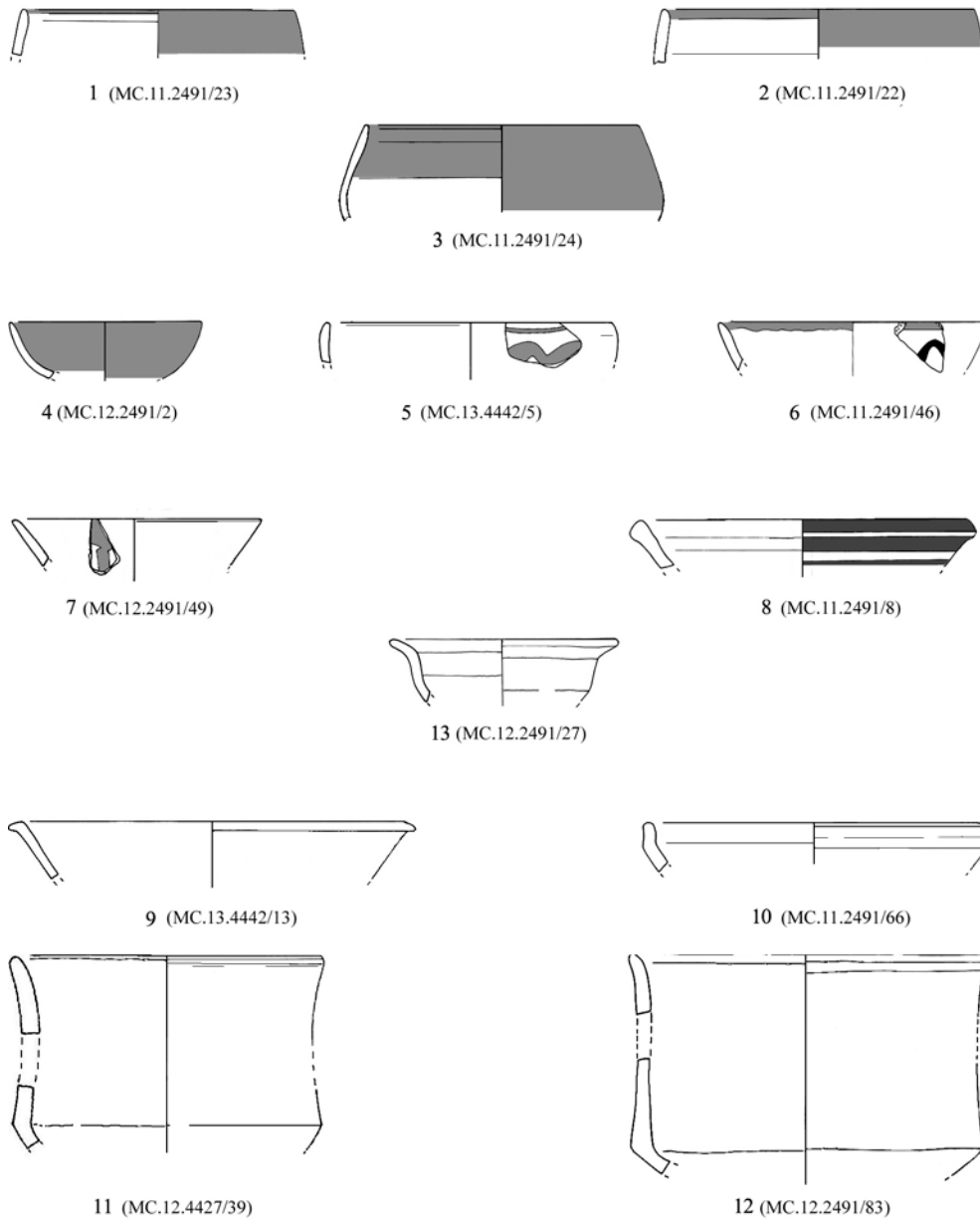


Fig. 11 - Red Slip hemispherical bowls and Plain Ware from Building C8 of Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC); ratio 1:4.

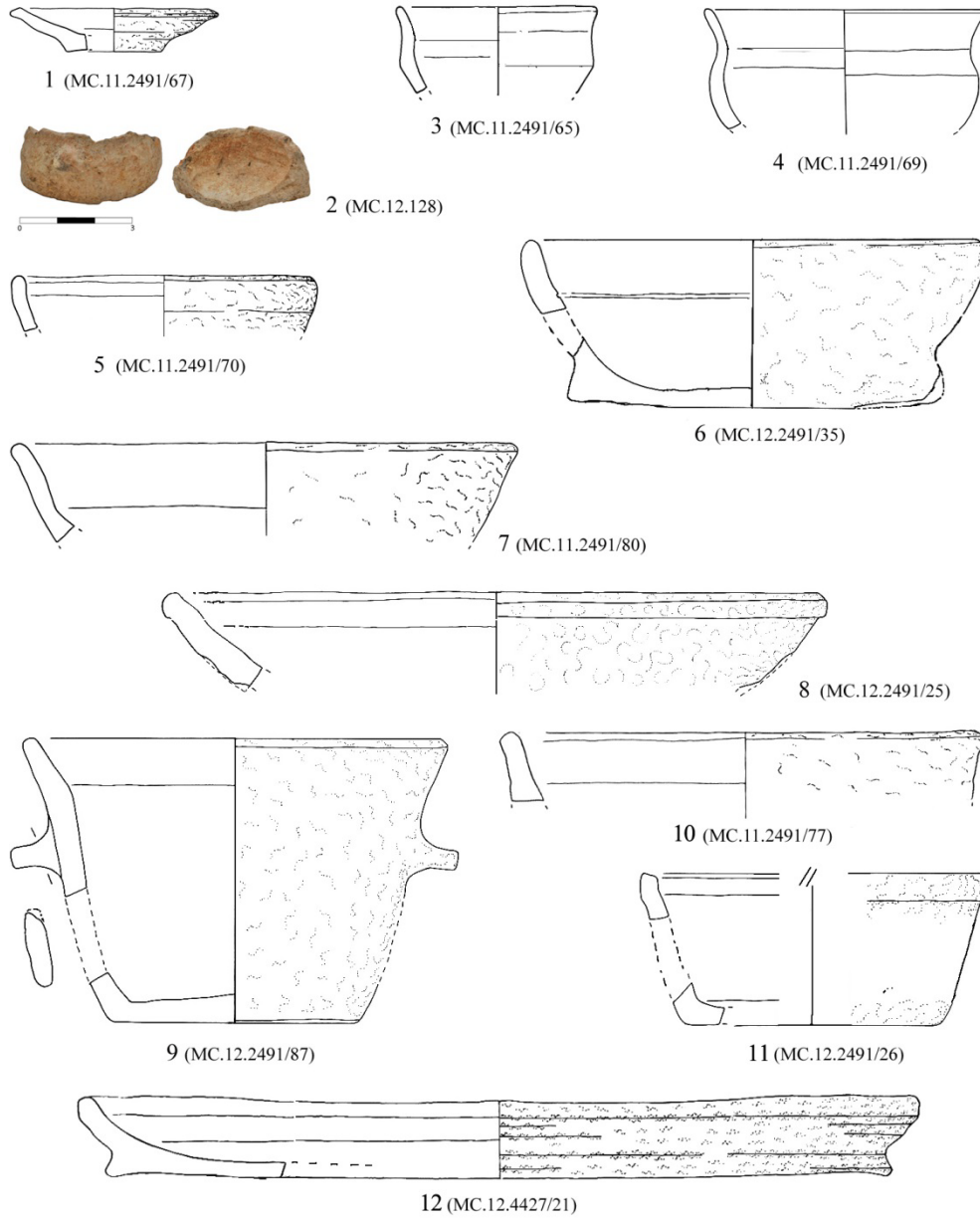


Fig. 12 - *Impasto* Ware from Building C8 of Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC); ratio 1:4.

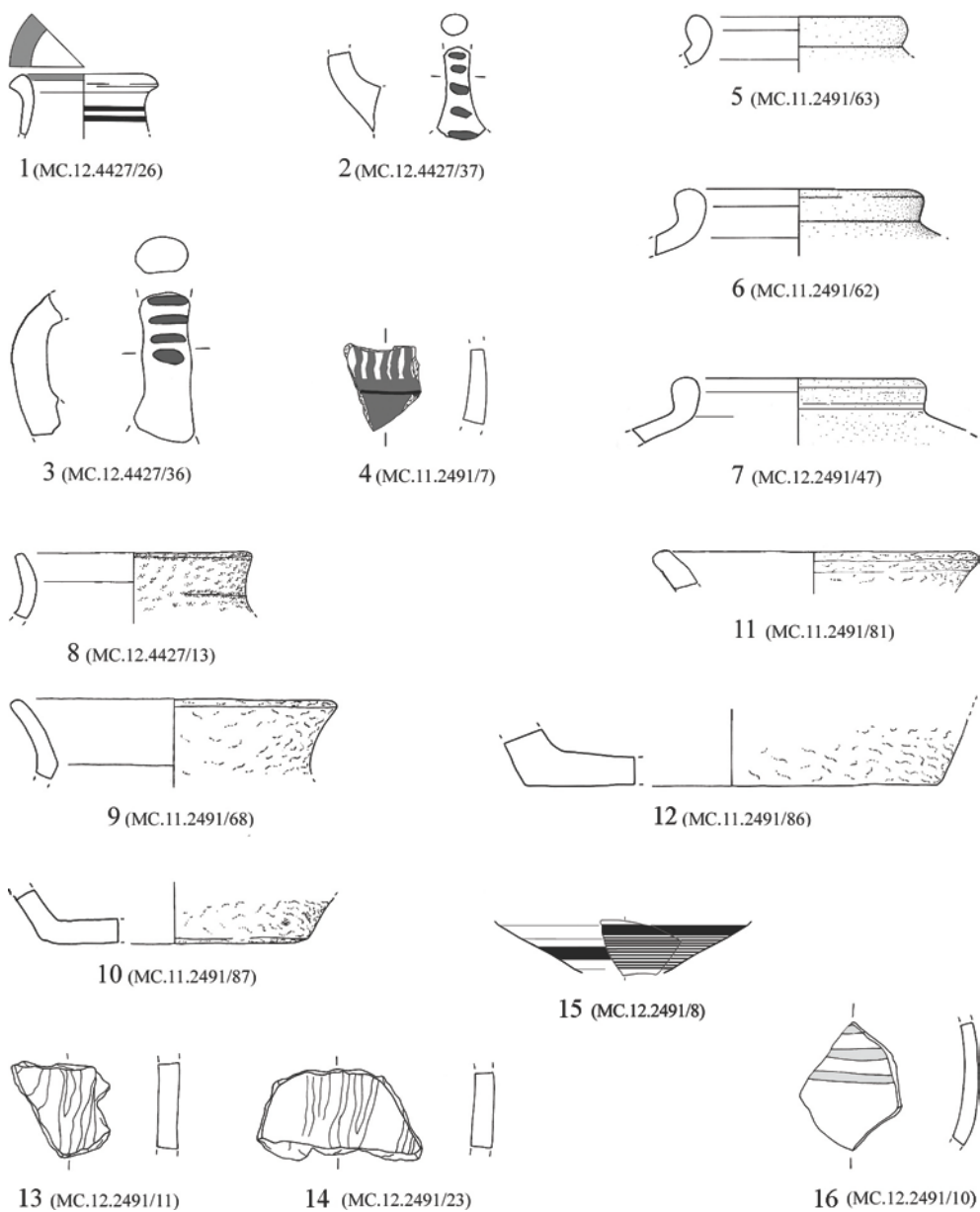


Fig. 13 - Pottery assemblage from Building C8 of Phase 9 (Motya IVA, 775-750 BC): RS Painted juglet (1-2); Cypro-Phoenician amphoroid crater (3-4, 16); Transport Amphorae (5-7); *Impasto* Ware small jars (8-10); *Impasto* Ware *pithoi* with a buff to pink - reddish fabric (11-14); Cypriote White Painted *skyphos* (15); ratio 1:4.

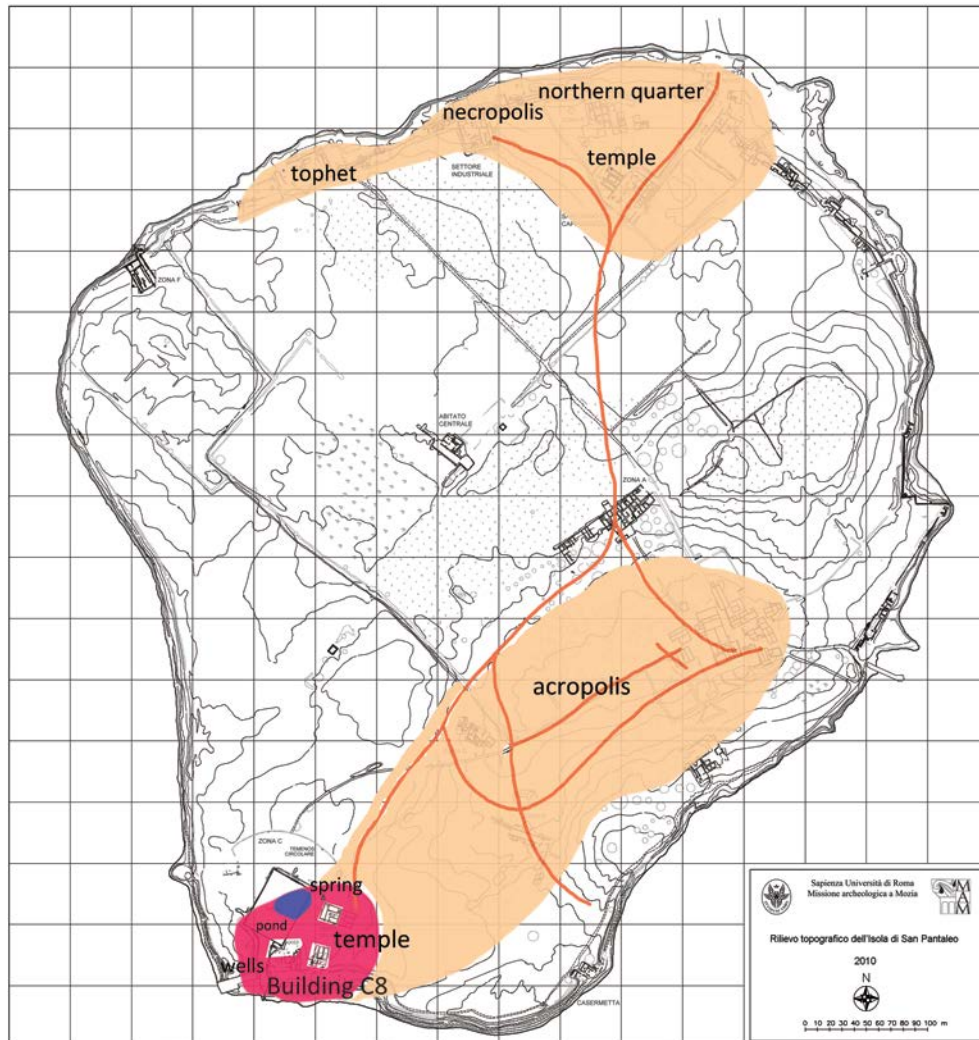


Fig. 14 - Urban layout of Motya IVA (775-750 BC), with the southern area with the wells, the temple and Building C8 highlighted.