



Phoenician ceramic tableware between East and West: some remarks on open forms and on their absolute chronology

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Introduction

Among the vessels used for serving and consuming beverages or food, open forms are generally characterized, from a geometrical point of view, by rim diameters exceeding or equaling the body diameters. Plates, bowls, goblets and Phoenician imitations of Greek *kotylai* and *skyphoi* meet these geometrical criteria. A variety of manufacturing techniques and shapes fall into the category of the tableware pottery, ranging from vessels for everyday use to the most finely wrought ones, for a lavishly decked table or, setting aside their primary function, for the grave goods in the necropolis.

In this paper, the focus will fall on the Iron Age documentation of the Syro-Palestinian coast (11th-6th centuries BC) and on the finds of a key area for the Phoenician westwards expansion, i.e. the Iberian Peninsula (9th-6th centuries BC). The purpose is to provide a chronological framework for the evolution of the open forms. Even though the research is based only on a part of the ceramic repertoire, the analysis of the contexts and the arrangement of material data in comparative stratigraphies, combined with absolute chronology, provided some clarification, not only on the sites of the Syro-Palestinian region, concerning the chronological debate that has been going on for several years in a complex situation for different reasons, but also on the western zone, about the chronology of the early stages of the Phoenician presence, even through the recent publications on archaeological researches carried out in Huelva¹ and Cádiz².

¹ González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2004).

² Botto [ed.] (2014).

This paper is based on my doctoral dissertation³ revised for publication purposes⁴. More than 3000 findings⁵ have been catalogued through a typological system that identifies the shapes in a hierarchical way by a label, using three numbers corresponding to: shape, type and subtype⁶. They are hence subdivided into five ceramic classes according to surface treatment or decoration⁷. In the scenario reconstructed by the ceramic finds of the two areas, Levantine and Iberian, nine large formal groups have been recognized on the basis of the main morphological characteristics: 1.0.0, plates; 2.0.0, small plates; 3.0.0: bowls; 4.0.0: handled bowls; 5.0.0, small bowls; 6.0.0, deep bowls; 7.0.0, goblets; 8.0.0, *skyphoi*; 9.0.0, *kotylai*.

Plates (1.0.0), with a more open and shallower profile, probably fit to the reception of solid foods⁸. Among the remaining shapes, usually showing a smaller diameter of the mouth and a greater depth, the only ones probably not having a drinking function are the small plates (2.0.0) and the small bowls (5.0.0): the lesser sizes, in fact, suggest a use for contain sauces and condiments in domestic contexts or unguents for funeral practices in funerary contexts⁹.

The vast majority of findings belong to the formal groups of plates (1.0.0) and bowls (3.0.0). The widespread dissemination of plates in the western area is opposed to the lack of samples in the eastern area. In the next paragraphs a summary of the stages of the development of these two types of vessels and their chronology will follow, starting from the Levantine attestations until their adaptation in the colonial sphere. Since the debate on the absolute Mediterranean Iron Age chronology (including the Levantine one) has not been resolved yet, and at the present state of knowledge it is impossible to determine an absolute and completely reliable chronology, the focus has been placed mainly on the evolution of the material culture itself. The elaboration of a typological sequence, from which a relative ceramic sequence was extracted, has been an indispensable prerequisite. Firstly, starting from the data provided in the original publications, the relationships of synchronicity and diachronicity of the evidences have been remarked. They are based on the observation of the variations of morphological and typological aspects as well as of the technical and decorative characteristics and also on the association with other ceramic shapes and on the interrelations with the evidences recorded in other sites that allow the stratigraphic concordances. The sequence so obtained allows a contextualization of the material evidences from a relative chronological perspective¹⁰. Crossing these relative data with other information (such as ¹⁴C dating, foreign references as ceramic imports, historical associations and known dates) it has been tried to located the evidences in a previously established chronology and to draw up a chronological

³ University of Rome, 2012.

⁴ Giardino (in press).

⁵ They come from: Ras el-Bassit, Tell Kazel, Khaldé, Sarepta, Tyre, Tyre al-Bass, Achziv, Hazor, Tell Keisan, Tel Dor (Syro-Palestinian coast); La Fonteta, Almuñécar (Sexí, Cerro de San Cristóbal - "Laurita" necropolis, Puente de Noy), Las Chorreras, Morro de Mezquitilla, Trayamar, Toscanos, Cerro del Villar, Castillo de Doña Blanca, Huelva (Iberian Peninsula). For bibliographical references cf.: Giardino (in press), § 2.4-2.4.

⁶ The morphological diagnostic elements are examined in order of importance for the purpose of identifying types and variants: for the plates are considered firstly the rim, secondly the basin profile and for the bowls primarily the basin profile and then the rim.

⁷ Plain Ware, Red Slip Ware, Red Painted Ware, Black Painted Ware, Bichrome Ware.

⁸ Anderson (1988), 43. For a detailed study on red slip plates from the Malaga coastline and their use to date pottery of other sites according to the system employed by H. Schubart (based on the increasing of the width of the rim through time) cf.: Schubart (1976); Schubart (2005).

⁹ Balzano (1999), 67; Botto (2009), 164 (for small bowls).

¹⁰ Núñez Calvo (2015), 79.

profile of the different stages of the typological evolution of open forms. Sometimes it was necessary to revise the dating advanced by scholars in the excavation reports¹¹.

I would like to point out the current limits of the chronological attributions: dating is an approximate procedure, the margin of error being greater for the most archaic phases, less important for the stages after 8th century¹². These limits are due to, inter alia, the problems posed by the chronology of Greek ceramics and the ¹⁴C dating techniques. Concerning the latter, one should keep in mind the limits of this method and of the resolution that have detected disagreements in the chronological interpretations, even if the determinations were obtained from short-lived organic samples, originating from deposits safely assigned stratigraphically, that by all standards should be considered reliable¹³. The clearest example is the Stratum IV of Tel Rehov (in the Beth-Shean valley) where the radiocarbon dates obtained from different organic samples examined by different laboratories have led to divergent interpretations¹⁴. The different readings of the ¹⁴C outcomes are used to date anew the Greek pottery associated to the examined organic samples and consequently impact the Greek Geometric chronology¹⁵. Coldstream's dates suggested in 1968 were based upon J.W. Crowfoot and K.M. Kenyon's low chronology for Samaria and depended only on a few sherds, most of which from dubious contexts, found in the Levant in the early years of archaeological research¹⁶. Nevertheless, the Low Chronology advocated by I. Finkelstein¹⁷, based upon ceramic observation and radiometric dating and which dates to the 10th century a number of destruction strata conventionally ascribed to the 11th century¹⁸, supports the Coldstream's Conventional Chronology. Notwithstanding all the problems enumerated above for these dates, according to the current state of the art, there are not sufficient data to revise Coldstream's Conventional Chronology, adopted, together with Finkelstein's Low Chronology, in this research.

This paper is divided into three main parts, each one featuring the related chronological issues: first I will explain the stages of the development of classified shapes in the Levantine sphere; then, I will examine the first evidences of the Phoenician presence in western area, namely from the archaic context of Huelva; and finally I will present the stages of the development of classified shapes in the Iberian Peninsula.

The beginnings: the Syro-Palestinian area

The study of the eastern documentation faces the ongoing difficulty to establish an accurate absolute chronology. That is the subject of a debate between those supporting a low chronology (following I. Finkelstein) and the exponents of the Biblical Archaeology. At the centre of the controversy lies the archaeological data from the Southern Levantine area, on

¹¹ Giardino (in press), Tab. 5.5-5.6.

¹² This applies especially to the absolute chronology of the Syro-Palestinian coast: a high degree of reliability is available only from the military campaigns of Tiglatpileser III (745-727 BC) when the correlations of archaeological contexts to documented historical events increase: Botto (2005), 589 (with note 38). In general, also for Western Mediterranean area, currently there are no valid absolute dates in the chronological sequence of the Greek Iron Age earlier than the second half of the eighth century BC: Fantalkin (2001), 122.

¹³ For a synthesis of the factors that complicate the use of ¹⁴C dating cf.: Núñez Calvo (2016a), 80.

¹⁴ Cf. A. Mazar in Coldstream, Mazar (2003) *contra* Finkelstein, Piasezky (2009).

¹⁵ Cf. below: § *The colonial ceramic production: the Iberian Peninsula* with notes 77-78.

¹⁶ Coldstream (1968).

¹⁷ Among the papers upon the topic cf.: Finkelstein (1998a); Finkelstein (1998b); Finkelstein, Silberman (2001).

¹⁸ Finkelstein (1999), 39.

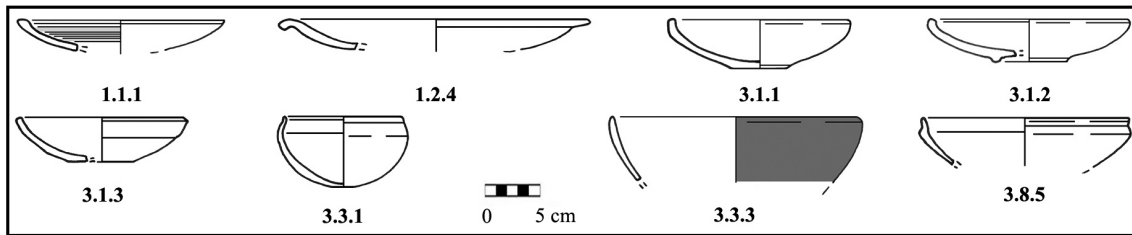


Fig. 1. Eastern Mediterranean I (M-OR I), 1100/1050 - 900 BC (1.1.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.3.3 = Tyre; 1.2.4 = Hazor; 3.1.3, 3.3.1, 3.8.5 = Tell Kazel).

which many discussions have been focused thus far, both for the many ongoing researches and for the use of ^{14}C dating techniques¹⁹.

Since in this framework I cannot address this issue in detail²⁰, I will concentrate on the stages of the evolution of the Levantine open forms and on their absolute chronology, whose determination has required a synchronization of artefactual (including those of regions such as Cyprus and Greece), stratigraphic and radiometric data.

From the study of the reconstructed chrono-typological sequence for the eastern zone it is possible to establish a few general observations. Within the envisioned long period, I identify three great chrono-typological horizons which correspond to the fundamental stages of the formal and stylistic evolution of the open forms. Among the Levantine sites being investigated²¹, the main ones used as reference are Tyre²² and Sarepta²³ since they provide fully continuous sequences across the Late Bronze and Iron ages.

The most archaic horizon concerns materials coming from layers following a transitional phase between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age. They have retained many characteristics of the previous phase in which the different regions of the Levantine coast shared a similar ceramic repertoire. A starting dating around 1100/1050 BC is suggested and the first chrono-typological horizon, called Eastern Mediterranean I (M-OR I, Fig. 1), continues until the end of the 10th century. It is characterized by local ceramics developed from late Bronze Age prototypes, mostly undecorated (Plain Ware)²⁴. The vessels in use in this period are generally bowls with a curved body wall²⁵ or globular bowls²⁶. The rare samples of plates have a narrow rim and curved wall²⁷.

The subsequent chrono-topological horizon, namely Eastern Mediterranean II (M-OR II, Fig. 2), starts around the beginning of the 9th century and finishes at the end of the same century²⁸. A significant change occurs: the use of red slip and bichrome decorative patterns,

¹⁹ Cf. on these issues: Levy, Higham [ed.] (2005), especially papers of A. Mazar and I. Finkelstein in the volume.

²⁰ For further information I refer to: Giardino (in press).

²¹ Cf. note 5.

²² Bikai (1978).

²³ Anderson (1988).

²⁴ The key contexts for this stage are: Tyre (XIII-XI), Sarepta (E1-D2, first part of D1), Tell Kazel (IA I), Hazor (XII-XI), Tell Keisan (9-8), Tel Dor (Ir1b - 1/2).

²⁵ Subtypes 3.1.1-3.1.3.

²⁶ Subtypes 3.3.1, 3.3.3.

²⁷ Type 1.1.0.

²⁸ The key contexts for this stage are: Tyre (X-VI), Tyre - al Bass (II), Sarepta (final part of D1 and first part C2), Tell Kazel (IA IIA, part of IIB), Achziv (T.C.4), Hazor (X-IX, first part of VIII), Tell Keisan (7-6), Tel Dor (Ir2a).

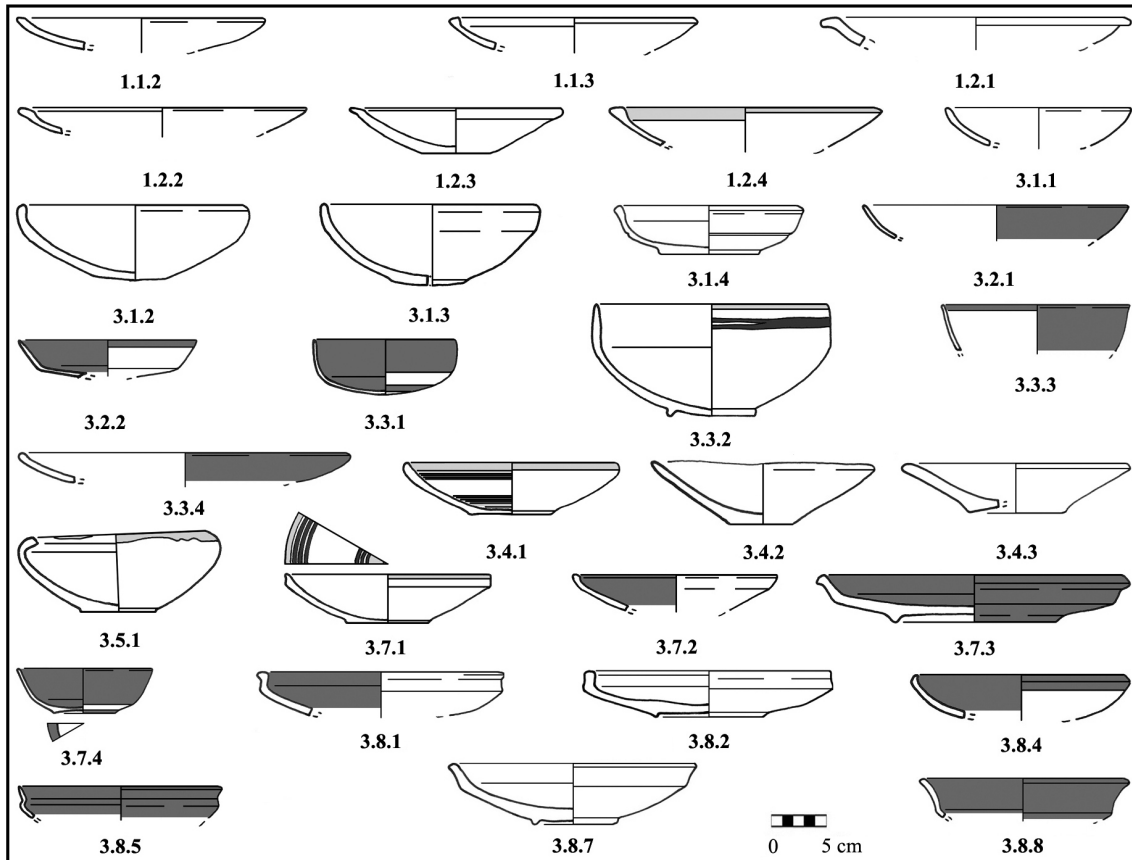


Fig. 2. Eastern Mediterranean II (M-OR II), 900-800 BC (1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.3, 3.7.2, 3.7.3, 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.8.3, 3.8.5, 3.8.7, 3.8.8 = Hazor; 1.2.3, 3.4.2, 3.7.4 = Achziv; 3.1.1, 3.2.1 = Tyre; 3.2.2, 3.3.1 = Tyre - al Bass; 3.3.2 = Tell Keisan; 3.5.1 = Khaldé; 3.7.1 = Sarepta).

with red and black stripes, becomes much more frequent, spreading at this stage from large containers to smaller vessels like, exactly, bowls and plates. The plates are yet sporadic, both with narrow²⁹ or simple³⁰ rim. In addition to bowls with a curved body wall³¹ or to globular bowls³², which continue in this period, new types spring with shallow basin and flaring rim³³, with plain straight-sided flaring profile³⁴, carinated with straight profile³⁵ or with curvilinear profile³⁶.

²⁹ Subtypes 1.1.2-1.1.3.

³⁰ Type 1.2.0.

³¹ Type 3.1.0.

³² Type 3.3.0.

³³ Subtypes 3.2.1-3.2.2.

³⁴ Subtypes 3.4.1-3.4.3.

³⁵ Type 3.7.0. It is interesting to note that the subtype 3.7.1, and especially one vessel from Sarepta (Stratum D1, 950 - 850/825, Anderson (1988), 625, pl. 33, 14 = Giardino (in press), n. 124, tav. XCV), has a parallel in the Bir Massouda context of Carthage (BMO4/4460, Docter *et al.* (2008), fig. 3, 4; cf. below notes 85, 96) and is seemingly non attested in any other western context.

³⁶ Subtypes 3.8.1-3.8.2, 3.8.4-3.8.5, 3.8.7.

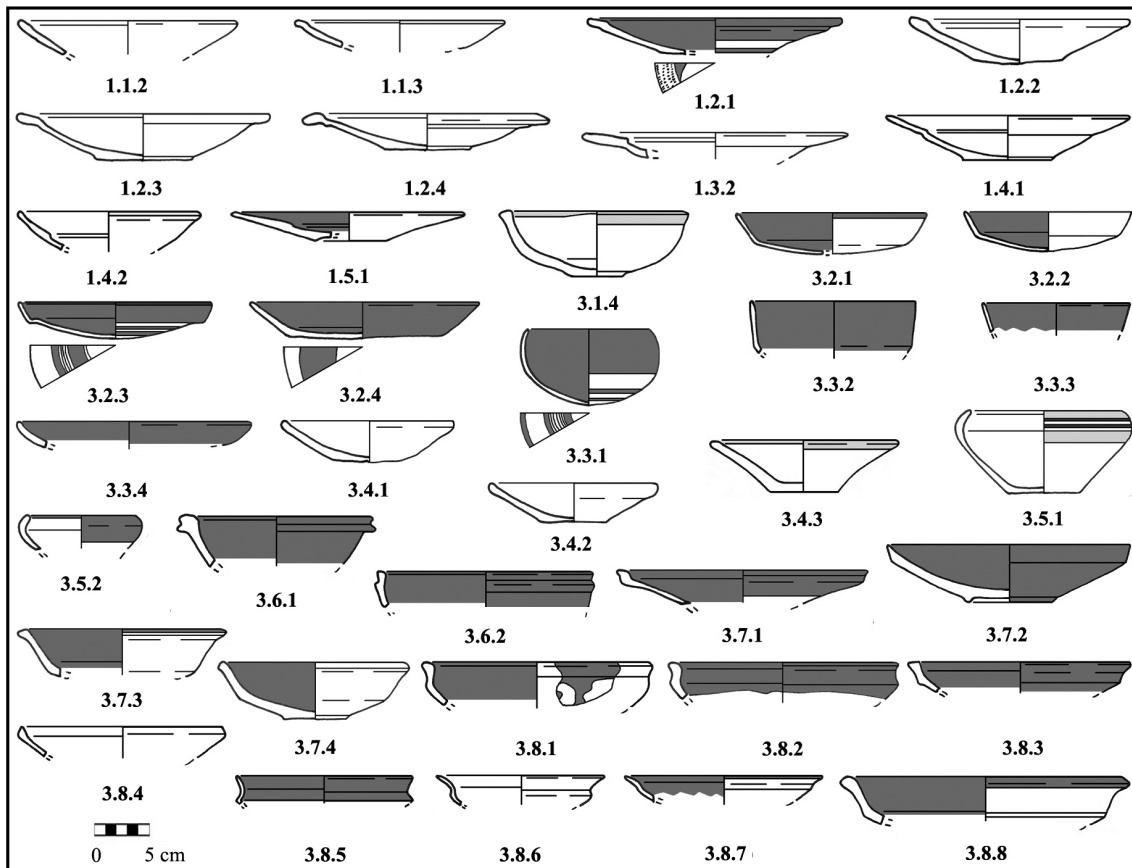


Fig. 3. Eastern Mediterranean III (M-OR III), 800 - 550/500 BC (1.1.2, 1.2.3, 3.2.1, 3.2.3, 3.3.1 = Tyre - al Bass; 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 1.3.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 3.7.1 = Tyre; 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.5.1, 3.8.6 = Tell Keisan; 3.1.4, 3.3.2, 3.3.4, 3.4.3, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.7.2, 3.7.3, 3.7.4, 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.8.3, 3.8.4, 3.8.8 = Hazor; 3.3.3, 3.8.5, 3.8.7 = Ras el-Bassit).

Finally, the third chrono-typological horizon identified, namely Eastern Mediterranean III (M-OR III, Fig. 3) covers the chronological range from the beginning of the 8th to the late 7th or middle/late 6th century³⁷. The layers included overlap with the Phoenician expansion in the West. Bichrome decorative patterns are progressively abandoned, replaced by the red slip, the dominant surface cover in the West. For all shapes a more complete documentation is available in this phase.

Concerning the plates, in the second half of the 8th century (M-OR IIIB) the type with narrow rim³⁸ disappears and is replaced by a characteristic central and meridional Levantine elaboration, i.e. the type with large rim with an interior ridge³⁹, or by sporadic appearances of the plate with large rim, slightly tilted inwards⁴⁰ or with very large rim, indistinct outwards, with concave walls⁴¹. Concerning the bowls, there still are types already known from the pre-

³⁷ The key contexts for this stage are: Tyre (V-I), Tyre - al Bass (III-V), Sarepta (final part of C2, C1-B), Tell Kazel (part of IA IIB, IA IIC-III), Khaldé (part of T.121), Achziv (T.A.73, ZRIV, ZRVI, ZRXXIX), Hazor (final part of VIII, VII-III), Tell Keisan (5-4).

³⁸ Type 1.1.0.

³⁹ Type 1.4.0.

⁴⁰ Subtype 1.3.2.

⁴¹ Subtype 1.5.1.

vious stage, including those with a curved body wall (of which only the variant with a distinct continuous rim⁴² remains), those with plain straight-sided flaring profile⁴³, those carinated with straight profile⁴⁴. For globular⁴⁵ or with shallow basin and flaring rim (with two new subtypes)⁴⁶ bowls, the reserved slip and incise decoration is also attested especially starting from the second half of the 8th century (M-OR IIIB-C). New elaborations are known: two variants of the curvilinear profile type, with high carination and divergent rim⁴⁷ or with curvilinear high carination and extended divergent rim⁴⁸ (both sporadically attested), and the types with plain incurving rim⁴⁹ and the hemispherical ones with a ridge⁵⁰.

The ceramic assemblage from Calle Méndez Núñez 7-13 / Plaza de las Monjas 12, Huelva

Moving to the Iberian Peninsula, at Huelva, in Calle Méndez Núñez 7-13 / Plaza de las Monjas 12, a large assemblage of materials was recovered during a rescue excavation. The pottery includes thousands of Phoenician, autochthonous, Greek, Sardinian, Cypriot and Villanovan potsherds⁵¹. The importance of this assemblage of materials lies in the fact that it testifies to a material culture that is not preserved in other archaeological contexts and that it records the existence of a ceramic level more archaic compared to those of the first known western establishments.

Accurate dating of this mixture of materials is hampered by the conditions of its extraction. After the first publication of the assemblage, which was not stratified but connected by the authors to a stage between 900 and 770 BC through typological analysis, other chronological reconstructions have been proposed. They do not lead to only one conclusion. Linked to the chronological issue on the early Phoenician presence in the West, these hypotheses have been almost constantly directed, mostly by scholars of the Iberian sphere, towards a raise of the chronologies⁵².

Because of the lack of any orderly stratigraphic context, in my opinion, it is impossible to organize the material in a reconstructed depositional stratigraphy and to know how many occupation levels the material represents⁵³ or whether the deposit took place on only one time or in the chronological range of several decades.

The 250 samples catalogued in my study are divided into three formal groups: plates (1.0.0), bowls (3.0.0) and deep bowls (6.0.0).

⁴² Subtype 3.1.4.

⁴³ Subtypes 3.4.1-3.4.3.

⁴⁴ Type 3.7.0.

⁴⁵ Type 3.3.0.

⁴⁶ Type 3.2.0.

⁴⁷ Subtype 3.8.3.

⁴⁸ Subtype 3.8.6.

⁴⁹ Subtypes 3.5.1-3.5.2.

⁵⁰ Type 3.6.0.

⁵¹ González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2004); González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2006).

⁵² It has been proposed, through the organization of the out of context material in a reconstructed depositional stratigraphy and through the use of radiocarbon dates, a dating to the full 10th century, if not before: Mederos Martín (2006); González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2006), 26-27. Among the other scholars that have dealt with this issue cf.: Torres Ortiz (2005); Nijboer, van der Plicht (2006); Gilboa *et al.* (2008), 168-173; Núñez Calvo (2008), 18-19; Torres Ortiz (2008a); Torres Ortiz (2008b); Gilboa (2013).

⁵³ Cf. the diverging thesis of A. Mederos Martín (2013).

Among the most archaic samples there would be two plates included in subtype 1.1.3 (with narrow rim, distinguished externally from the basin) close to Tyre's type 14⁵⁴, already recognized in Strata XVI and XV, but still existing in Stratum IX. They testify to the persistence of some morphological characteristics of the Bronze Age, but they may be dated, as well as the other examples of the subtype 1.1.3, to the 9th century or to the first half of the 8th century (M-OR II-III A). It is quite interesting to note that the other plates of the narrow rim type (1.1.0) of the context are comparable only with the repertoire of the motherland and not, for example, with the potsherds of the archaic phase of the Teatro Cómico of Cádiz⁵⁵ or of the pit 20017 of Utica⁵⁶. The bowls with a curved body wall corresponding to Tyre's types 11-13 are more profuse. The first subtype (3.1.1) is attested in Stratum XIII but one sample is still found in Stratum X, witnessing a usage, confirmed by the documentation of other sites of the Syro-Palestinian coast, starting from the early stages of the Iron Age until the first half of the 9th century (M-OR I-II A). The same dating can be attributed to the second subtype (3.1.2), which is, however, very common in Tyre during the entire time lapse represented by the Strata XIII-X and in the other Levantine sites between 11th-9th centuries (M-OR I-II). Also these two mentioned subtypes (3.1.1-3.1.2), as well as the plates of the narrow rim type (1.1.0), are missing in the other western sites, including Cádiz or Utica.

All the other analysed potsherds find their best comparisons in Strata X and IV (9th - first half 8th century, M-OR II-III A), with a particular concentration in the latter layer and in some cases in Strata III and II yet (second half 8th century, M-OR III B).

The review of some diagnostic elements⁵⁷ (Phoenician potsherds of other shapes⁵⁸, Euboean Subprotogeometric pottery⁵⁹, and radiometric data⁶⁰) and the remark of the absence of some typical late morphologies of Tyre (of Strata III-I)⁶¹ lead to reduce the time span indi-

⁵⁴ Due to the similarity to the pottery of Tyre "in combination with the historical prominence of the metropolis in the early expansion", the typology elaborated by P.M. Bikai has been applied by the authors to the Phoenician pottery of Huelva: Bikai (1978); González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2006), 15. The two mentioned plates are: González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2004), lám. III, 28-29 = Giardino (in press), tav. IV, cat. nn. 3372-3373.

⁵⁵ Periodo II: Torres Ortiz *et al.* (2014), 53-58, fig. 3-4 (820/800 - 760/750 BC).

⁵⁶ López Castro *et al.* (2016), 74, fig. 6.

⁵⁷ I will not include the palaeographic documents because of their uncertain chronological attribution. M.L. Heltzer has proposed a dating to the 11th-10th century for one graffito, n. 2, and to *circa* 800 BC or just before for the others: González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2004), 133-136. However, it should be pointed out that a dating so archaic such as that proposed for the graffito n. 2 is not in accordance with the chronology of the ceramic support, a handmade amphora of the Sant'Imbenia type: Botto (2004-2005), 22.

⁵⁸ Jugs types 9 e 11 (spouted jugs) e Storage jars type 12, as well as Plates 11-13, are very common in the early Iron Age and are not recorded after Stratum IX of Tyre (900-850 BC): Giardino (in press), 144-145.

⁵⁹ Five vases (two *kantharoi*, two *skyphoi*, a trefoil mouth jug) initially ascribed by the editors to the Attic Middle Geometric II (800-760 BC) have been identified as Euboean by A. Domínguez Monedero; two *skyphoi* and fifteen plates with pendent sernicircles from Euboea can be ascribed to Subprotogeometric I-III (900-750 BC): González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2006), 19; Domínguez Monedero (2013), 16.

⁶⁰ The combination of three radiometric dates issued by the analysis on cattle bones provide a dating range from 930 to 830 BC with a 94 % probability: Nijboer, van der Plicht (2006); Nijboer, van der Plicht (2008). This absolute chronology attests the Phoenician presence in Huelva in the first half of the 9th century "if nor before": Nijboer, van der Plicht (2006), 35. Nevertheless, since the dating comes from a secondary and mixed assemblage, it cannot be used to date any artefacts because it is not sure that artefacts and bones hail from the same ensemble or moment or if the dating can be related to the phase with greater presence of material: Gilboa (2013), 322.

⁶¹ E.g., Plates 1-5, corresponding to Types 1.2.0, 1.4.0, 2.1.0 and subtype 6.4.1, are often found in other western settlements: Giardino (in press), 145.

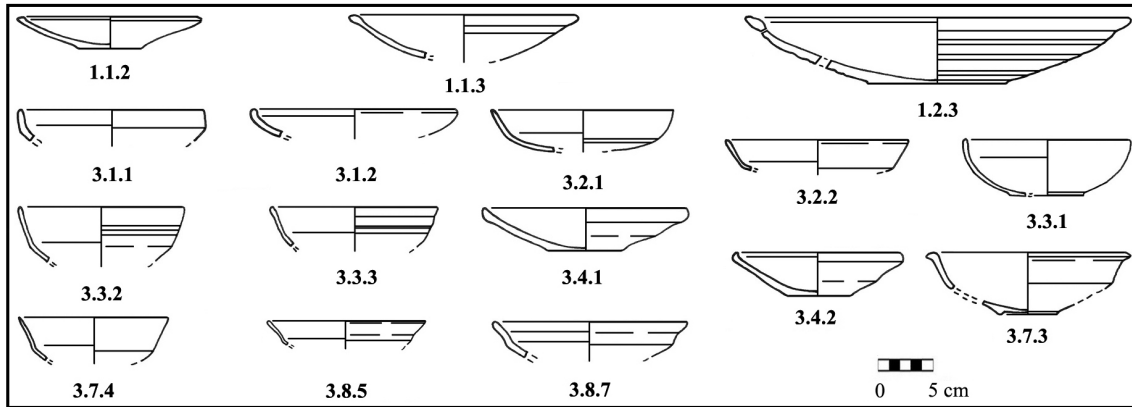


Fig. 4. Huelva, 900 - 775/760 BC.

cated by the potsherds compared with the Tyre stratigraphic sequence and to establish a more accurate chronological definition for the deposit.

By absolute chronology data from the examined archaeological evidences it comes to light that the archaic assemblage of Huelva is made up of materials dating to the early 9th century (or to the last quarter of the 10th century) up to 775/760 BC. This period corresponds to the horizons Eastern Mediterranean II and IIIA (M-OR II-III A, Fig. 4).

A situation partially similar to that of Huelva has occurred at Utica, according to the first published results of the Tunisian-Spanish research project⁶². The deposit recovered in the pit 20017⁶³ is composed by Phoenician, Greek Geometric, Sardinian, Libyan, Villanovan and Tartessian pottery. As stated by the authors' analysis, the Phoenician potsherds are in chronological and typological correspondence with the Period II of Tyre - al Bass. The end of the deposit is dated before the end of the 9th century, corresponding with Strata from X/IX to VI of Tyre. The ¹⁴C dating⁶⁴ and the Greek ceramics⁶⁵ complete the chronological framework provided by the Phoenician pottery.

Latest materials of the mixed assemblage of Huelva are comparable with the vessels of the first identified ceramic horizon found at Teatro Cómico of Cádiz (Periodo II)⁶⁶. In terms of relative chronology, the final moment of Huelva would overlap then with the initial stages of the context of Teatro Cómico of Cádiz and with the phase III of the settlement La Rebanadilla⁶⁷, near Malaga, the latter being a hypothesis at the present state of the research, because of the lack of published material. Parallels are also detectable with the beginning of the Morro de Mezquitilla sequence (B1a)⁶⁸ and with part of the recovered material of Calle Canovas del Castillo of Cádiz⁶⁹. For the shared ceramic horizon a final dating to around the first quarter or

⁶² López Castro *et al.* (2014); López Castro *et al.* (2015).

⁶³ López Castro *et al.* (2016). This paper enriches the knowledge about the archaic pottery of Utica provided by previous publications: Ben Jerbania (2013), 45-50; Ben Jerbania, Redissi (2014).

⁶⁴ The dating obtained from the seeds found in the pit's fill indicate a chronology around 925-900 cal BC: López Castro *et al.* (2016), 81-84.

⁶⁵ The Greek pottery falls substantially within the repertoire of the Middle Geometric II but there are some elements, such as a *skyphos* with crosshatched triangles and semi-circular bands, currently not attested in any other wester context: López Castro *et al.* (2016), 76-77.

⁶⁶ Cf. note 55.

⁶⁷ Sánchez Sánchez-Moreno *et al.* (2011); Sánchez Sánchez-Moreno *et al.* (2012).

⁶⁸ Maass Lindemann (1990); Maass Lindemann (2008).

⁶⁹ Córdoba Alonso, Ruiz Mata (2005).

the first third of the 8th century is suggested: a dating anchored to the conventional chronology of Greek Geometric and to the Stratum IV of Tyre (775 - 760/750 BC)⁷⁰.

Although the most recent evidences of the assemblage of Huelva would overlap chronologically with the most archaic vessels of the other contexts mentioned above, the deposit of Huelva is characterized by archaic ceramic types currently not present in any other Western Phoenician settlement. As stated above, a better clarification is impossible because of the conditions of the extraction but also because of the problems posed by the chronology of the Greek pottery. The kind of the assemblage, however, seems to be more clear. Unlike the evidence recently emerged in the archaeological investigations at the Teatro Cómico of Cádiz, at La Rebanadilla or at Utica, the assemblage of Huelva seems to represent a horizon not connected to substantial architectural elements and in which it is not documented, apparently⁷¹, a ceramic western Phoenician production.

Coming back to the above-mentioned problematics raised by the ¹⁴C dating and the chronology of the Greek ceramics, as explained by P. Bernardini, from Huelva as well as from El Carambolo, La Rebanadilla and Utica, currently the most archaic western contexts available with Phoenician evidences, the radiometric dating does not exclude a backdating for the earliest Phoenician presence in the Western Mediterranean. In spite of this, however, the organic samples used for the analysis are in constant association with the Greek Middle Geometric II and Subprotogeometric III potsherds and with Phoenician ceramics related to Tyre's Strata VIII-IV. This overall situation, notwithstanding any possible raising of the chronology of the Tyre's stratigraphy and of the Greek Geometric pottery (especially considering that in the latter case the proposition of revision has been considered with mistrust) recommends an extreme caution⁷².

The colonial ceramic production: the Iberian Peninsula

The active trade witnessed by the materials of the archaic phase of Huelva moves up and partly coincides with the beginning of a permanent Phoenician presence in the western Mediterranean area. That entails the activation of the local ceramic production and the progressive replacement of imported eastern pottery by colonial potters' products. As well as for the stage discussed in the last paragraph, the chronology of this initial phase is argued.

The ¹⁴C dating raises sometimes considerably the traditional chronology of the beginning of the Phoenician westward expansion. This chronological information has been used to redefine *ex novo* the whole issue. In fact, the evidence of radiocarbon dates suggests that the process must be dated to the 9th century, at least 50 years earlier than conventional chronology (i.e., traditional dating elaborated by the archaeologist based on stratigraphy, typological sequences of local Phoenician ceramics, Greek imports and historical considerations) suggests. The divergences of the outcomes of different dating methods (radiochronology, dendrochronology and conventional chrono-typological schemes) produced significant time gaps, for example when both conventional and radiometric dating systems were employed. At present various scholars deal with this issue, suggesting different solutions to the problem of chronological discrepancy and not coming to univocal conclusions: A. Mederos Martín⁷³

⁷⁰ Giardino (in press).

⁷¹ The hypothesis of the possible provenance from Tyre is based only on an optical similarity and not on archaeometric analysis: González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2006), 15-16.

⁷² Bernardini (2016), 4-6.

⁷³ Mederos Martín (2005).

dates the earlier foundation in Spain back in the second half of the 10th century, M.E. Aubet⁷⁴ to the 9th century, M. Torres Ortiz⁷⁵ to the beginning of the last quarter of the 9th century and P.V. Castro Martínez to *circa* 900 BC⁷⁶. Among those reckoning the outcomes of radiocarbon dating method reliable, some have evaluated the necessity of a re-examination of the absolute chronology of Greek Geometric pottery. Proposals to raise the dates of the Geometric style have been advanced⁷⁷. But regarding this suggestion, the doubts raised about some radiometric results make necessary to approach it with caution: the quality of some contexts at the present stage of archaeological knowledge would not permit to argue for a higher absolute Greek Geometric chronology. The case of Carthage represents one of the best examples of the issues discussed just above: the different dating methods of the radiochronology and of conventional chrono-typological schemes, to which the testimonies of ancient texts are added, are combined for the study of the site⁷⁸.

The on-going excavations keep on providing new evidences and some key sites of Phoenician expansion such as Carthage⁷⁹, Utica⁸⁰, Motya⁸¹, and Sulcis⁸² for the Central Mediterranean area and Cádiz (Teatro Cómico, Calle Ancha, Casa del Obispo)⁸³ for Spain already demonstrate a stable Phoenician presence towards the end of the 9th or the first quarter of the 8th century, according to the conventional dating. Even though the new discoveries raise the dating of the western foundations, the average time intervals obtained through radiocarbon dating is not always consistent with the outcome of dating based on the archaeological contexts; thus sometimes the ‘time gap’ persists⁸⁴. The latest evidences from Bir Massouda site at Carthage seem however to partially bridge the gap⁸⁵.

⁷⁴ Aubet (1994), 321-323.

⁷⁵ Torres Ortiz (2008a).

⁷⁶ Castro Martínez (1994), 144.

⁷⁷ Cf., for example, Mederos Martín (2005); Brandherm (2008); Nijboer, van der Plicht (2008); van der Plicht *et al.* (2009).

⁷⁸ The ¹⁴C determinations obtained from cattle bones of the lowest layers, Phases I and II, uncovered in the excavations of Hamburg University below the *Decumanus Maximus* have provided a dating to the second half of the 9th century. Notwithstanding that some of these analysed samples could not be associated to local or imported materials, certain scholars suggested a correction of the chronology of the Greek Geometric period: Nijboer, van der Plicht (2008). According to the authors of the analysis, the ¹⁴C dates of Carthage are consistent with its historical foundation, which is 814/813 BC, and together with radiocarbon dating contributions of other 8 sites (in Israel, Sinai - Egypt, Jordan, Spain, and Italy), they “support a “high chronology” for the Iron Age in each respective area of the Mediterranean region”. Furthermore, again quoting the authors, the “Huelva and Carthage ¹⁴C dates are a clear indication that Phoenician contacts with cultures in the western Mediterranean...start probably during the first half of the 9th century BCE”: van der Plicht *et al.* (2009). Concerning this radiometric data, nevertheless, the reliability is being challenged by the problems of contextualization because of their secondary stratigraphic position: Botto (2004-2005), 286-288.

⁷⁹ Vegas [ed.] (2002); Docter *et al.* (2008).

⁸⁰ López Castro *et al.* (2016).

⁸¹ Nigro (2013); Nigro (2016); Nigro, Spagnoli (2017).

⁸² Bartoloni (2005); Bartoloni (2008); Bartoloni (2010); Pompianu (2010); Guirguis (2012); Guirguis, Unali (2016).

⁸³ Botto [ed.] (2014) and, specifically, for the evidences of the Teatro Cómico: Gener Basallote *et al.* (2014a); Torres Ortiz *et al.* (2014); of the Calle Ancha: Ruiz Mata *et al.* (2014); of the Casa del Obispo: Gener Basallote *et al.* (2014b).

⁸⁴ This is the case, for example, of Lixus where the radiocarbon determinations (however suffering from the plateau effect) are in association with pottery conventionally dated to the second half of the 8th century: Álvarez, Gómez Bellard (2005); Torres Ortiz (2008a), 141.

⁸⁵ Recently the excavations have yielded new radiocarbon dates from the lowest layers that appear to be slightly younger than the radiocarbon results from the Hamburg excavations. Particularly relevant are the de-

Coming back to the analysis of the material culture, by an Iberian Peninsula overview on open forms of the Phoenician repertoire, different chrono-typological horizons are recognized: they mark the diachronic development from the early stages, in continuity with the eastern tradition, until the final outcomes of an independent and original colonial production.

Rare potsherds are part of the first chrono-typological horizon, namely Iberian Peninsula I (PEN-IB I, Fig. 5): they come from Morro de Mezquitilla and Castillo de Doña Blanca and include: plates with horizontal⁸⁶ or inclined inward and distinguished outside from the basin⁸⁷ or drooping⁸⁸ rim, some of which are shaped with a light carination under the rim and concave basin, no longer attested in the second half of the 8th century; two imported bowls with shallow basin and flaring rim, signally carinated⁸⁹; other bowls globular⁹⁰, with plain straight-sided flaring profile⁹¹, carinated with straight profile and triangular rim⁹² or with curvilinear profile⁹³. The framework of this archaic stage is now enriched by the more or less contemporary potsherds recently brought to light at the Teatro Cómico of Cádiz (Periodo II). They confirm the presence of the same ceramic types⁹⁴. In terms of relative chronology this phase corresponds to the beginning of the sequence of Morro de Mezquitilla (B1a), of Castillo de Doña Blanca (although for the latter site, published archaic materials are lacking) as well as to part of the phase II of the Teatro Cómico and, probably, of part of the sequences of Calle Canovas del Castillo of Cádiz and La Rebanadilla (III-II)⁹⁵. This pottery horizon compares favourably with the important Phoenician ceramics recovered in the lower layers of the Bir Massouda sequence, at Carthage, especially in the Strata BMO4/4461 and 4460⁹⁶. In terms of absolute chronology, it can be proposed for these materials a collocation between 800/775 and 760/750 BC, based on the comparison with eastern repertoires (M-OR IIIA)⁹⁷.

Other three chrono-typological horizons follow: the documentation in this case is more copious, the Phoenician foundations being more numerous.

The second chrono-typological horizon, namely Iberian Peninsula II (PEN-IB II, fig. 6), dates to the second half of the 8th century. The documentation is well reflected in the short stratigraphic sequence of Las Chorreras or by the evidences from Morro de Mezquitilla II / B1b1 and Castillo de Doña Blanca. Among the vessels in use in this period there are plates

terminations from the Trench 4, where local and imported ceramics are sometimes in association with ¹⁴C determinations. Apart from the oldest determination affecting the second half of the 9th century, obtained in the deepest layer (BMO4/4465 - GrA-28584), the others cover the 8th-6th centuries span, with a high probability for the second and third quarters of the 8th century. These determinations are consistent with the chronological indications provided by the Phoenician ceramics, most of all concerning the Strata BMO4/4461 - 4460: Docter *et al.* (2008); Núñez Calvo (2016b). Cf. below note 96.

⁸⁶ Subtype 1.2.1.

⁸⁷ Subtype 1.2.3.

⁸⁸ Subtype 1.2.4.

⁸⁹ Subtype 3.2.2.

⁹⁰ Subtypes 3.3.1-3.3.3.

⁹¹ Subtype 3.4.1.

⁹² Subtype 3.7.3.

⁹³ Subtypes 3.8.4, 3.8.6, 3.8.7.

⁹⁴ Cf. note 55.

⁹⁵ Cf. notes 55, 67-69.

⁹⁶ Docter *et al.* (2008). Cf. the recent analysis of F.J. Núñez Calvo on the assemblage of Strata BMO4/4461 - 4460: Núñez Calvo (2016b).

⁹⁷ According to the Iron Age chronology of the eastern sites adopted in my research: Giardino (in press).

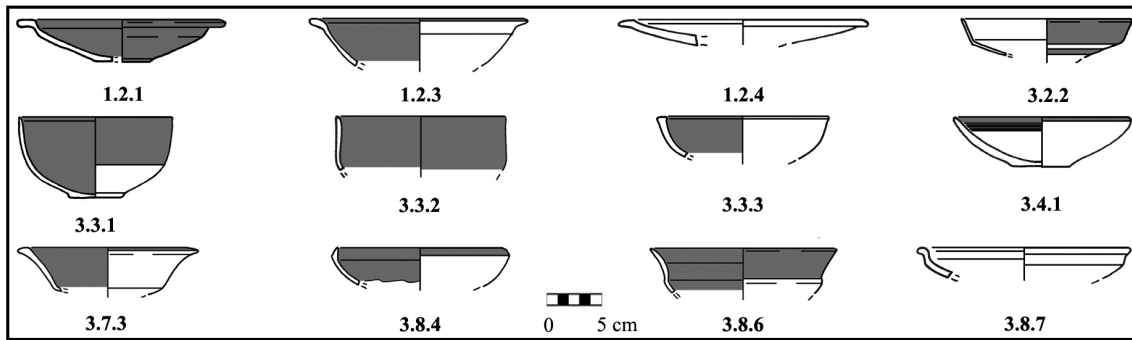


Fig. 5. Iberian Peninsula I (PEN-IB I), 800/775 - 760/750 BC (1.2.1, 1.2.3, 3.2.2, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.7.3, 3.8.4, 3.8.6 = Morro de Mezquitilla; 1.2.4, 3.4.1, 3.8.7 = Castillo de Doña Blanca).

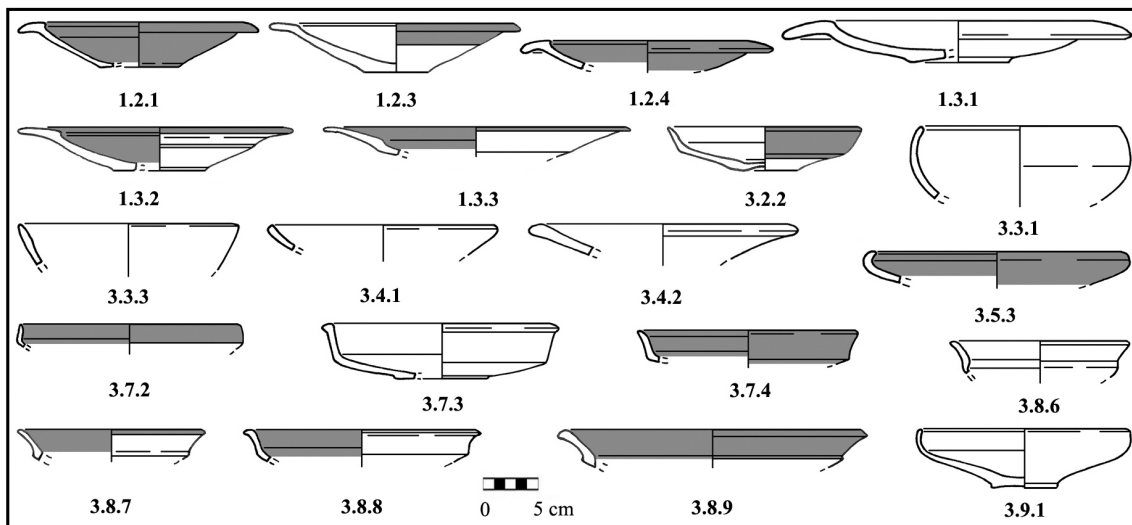


Fig. 6. Iberian Peninsula II (PEN-IB II), 750-700 BC (1.2.1, 1.2.4, 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.5.3, 3.7.4, 3.8.6, 3.8.8 = Las Chorreras; 1.2.3, 3.2.2 = Castillo de Doña Blanca; 1.3.1, 3.9.1 = Morro de Mezquitilla; 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 3.7.2, 3.8.7, 3.8.9 = La Fonteta; 3.7.3 = Toscanos).

with horizontal, inclined inward or drooping rim⁹⁸ together with the first attestations with large rim⁹⁹. Concerning the bowls the variants increase for the typologies already known in the earlier phase¹⁰⁰; some innovations are represented by the subtype with plain incurving rim¹⁰¹ or with curvilinear carination¹⁰².

The third horizon chrono-typological, namely Iberian Peninsula III (PEN-IB III, Fig. 7), can be dated to the first half of the 7th century. Its beginning corresponds to the abandonment of the settlement of Las Chorreras and the evidences are given now especially by the settlements of Cerro del Villar (VII-VI) and Toscanos (IV). To the variants already known still in

⁹⁸ Subtypes 1.2.1, 1.2.3-1.2.4.

⁹⁹ Subtypes 1.3.1-1.3.2.

¹⁰⁰ Subtypes 3.3.1-3.3.3, 3.4.1-3.4.2, 3.7.2-3.7.4, 3.8.4, 3.8.6, 3.8.8-3.8.9.

¹⁰¹ Subtype 3.5.3.

¹⁰² Subtype 3.9.1.

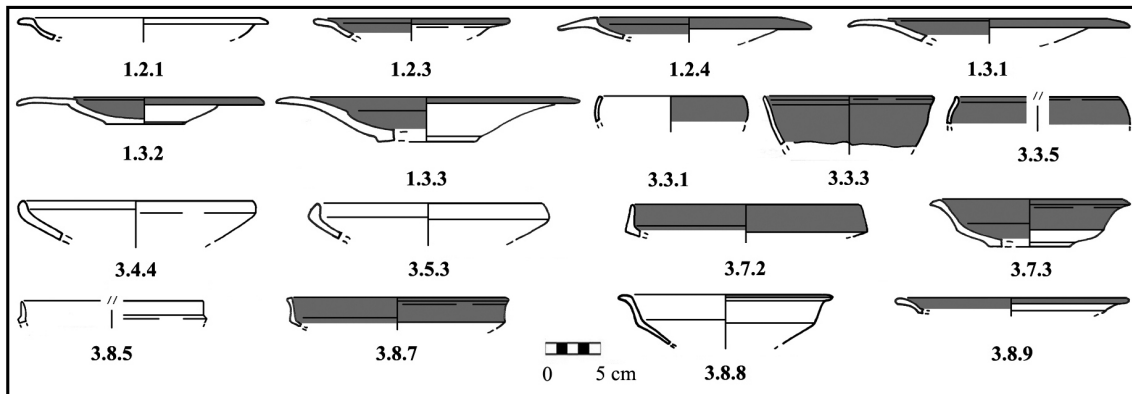


Fig. 7. Iberian Peninsula III (PEN-IB III), 700-650 BC (1.2.1, 1.2.4, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 3.3.3, 3.3.5, 3.7.2, 3.8.7, 3.8.8 = La Fonteta; 1.2.3, 3.7.3, 3.8.9 = Huelva; 3.3.1, 3.8.5 = Cerro del Villar; 3.4.4, 3.5.3 = Toscanos).

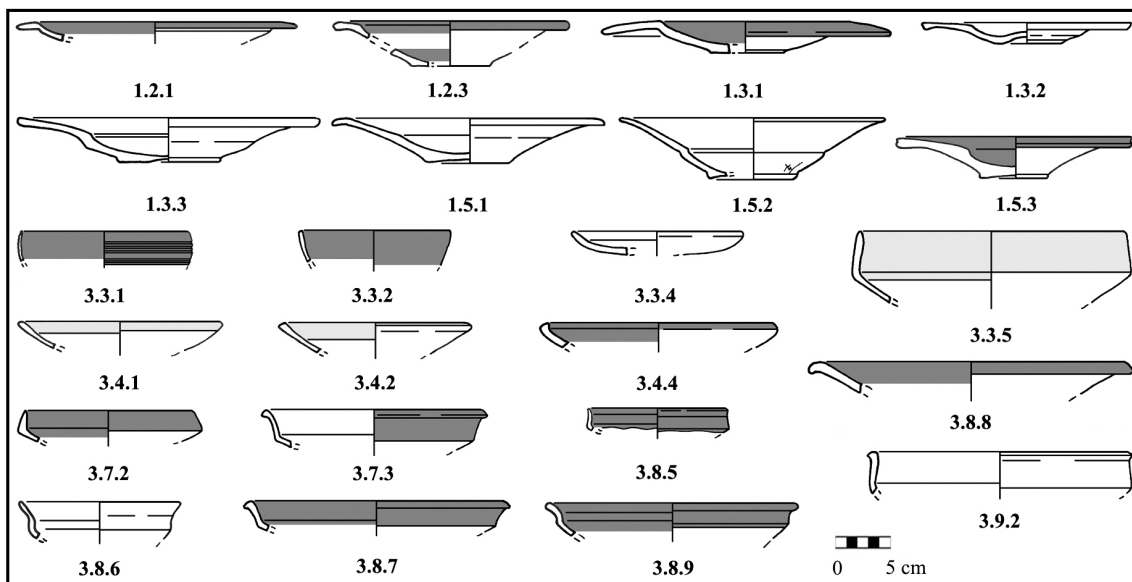


Fig. 8. Iberian Peninsula IV (PEN-IB IV), 650-500 BC (1.2.1, 1.2.3, 3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.8.9 = Huelva; 1.3.1, 1.5.3, 3.3.5, 3.7.3, 3.8.5, 3.8.7 = La Fonteta; 1.3.2, 1.3.3 = - Puente de Noy; 1.5.1, 1.5.2 = Almuñécar - Cerro de San Cristóbal; 3.3.2, 3.3.4 = Trayamar; 3.4.4 = Toscanos; 3.7.2, 3.8.6, 3.8.8, 3.9.2 = Cerro del Villar).

use¹⁰³ new ones are added concerning the plate with large rim¹⁰⁴ and the globular bowls¹⁰⁵, the bowls plain straight-sided flaring profile¹⁰⁶ and those carinated with curvilinear profile¹⁰⁷.

Between the second half of the 7th and the late 6th century the fourth and final chrono-typological horizon identified is enclosed, namely Iberian Peninsula IV (PEN-IB IV, Fig. 8). Trayamar fits among the key settlements for observing developments in the ceramic reper-

¹⁰³ Subtypes 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.4.2, 3.5.3, 3.7.2-3.7.4, 3.8.8-3.8.9.

¹⁰⁴ Subtype 1.3.3.

¹⁰⁵ Subtype 3.3.5.

¹⁰⁶ Subtype 3.4.4.

¹⁰⁷ Subtypes 3.8.5, 3.8.7.

toire. The plates with very large rim (1.5.0) are the most important innovation of this period¹⁰⁸; they gradually replace most of the preceding productions of Levantine tradition. For the bowls the appearance of the variants with hemispherical profile for the globular bowls¹⁰⁹ and with triangular rim for those with curvilinear carination¹¹⁰ occurs and many types continue to be attested¹¹¹.

Through the examination of the findings, a continuity with the production of the Phoenician motherland can be perceived in open forms of the ceramic tableware, even if already from the earliest stages of the Phoenician expansion in the West and, more precisely, from the third quarter or the last twenty-five years of the 8th century, the elaborations have been joined by elements of regional originality. One can detect this behaviour in the repertoires of other Phoenician settlements, such as, for example, Carthage: on one hand, the ceramic production is strongly linked to the Eastern tradition, on the other hand, it is receptive to the innovations of the local contexts of the western Mediterranean Sea. The remains of the Huelva assemblage stand out the resemblance with the pottery of Tyre, in particular of the Strata X-IV, so strong that many of them may have been imported from the Phoenician metropolis and not produced on place¹¹². The nature of the material seems to testify to the presence of a trade settlement¹¹³ well developed but distant from the following organization of the settlements. During the second half of the 8th century radical changes occurred altering the physiognomy of the oriental presence in the Iberian Peninsula, as in general in the Mediterranean Sea: a previous mostly commercial attendance is transformed into a stable presence of Phoenician population. The pottery production of the circuit of the foundations, that prosper quickly, introduces the original characters. The regional diversification of the repertoire is accentuated during the 7th century, creating a gap between the productions coming from the different areas of the Mediterranean basin achieved by the Phoenician expansion¹¹⁴.

¹⁰⁸ Types 1.2.0-1.3.0. For a detailed study on the new elaboration (1.5.0): Bartoloni (1996); Giardino (2013), 82, n. 37; Giardino (2015), 55, n. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Subtype 3.3.4.

¹¹⁰ Subtype 3.9.2.

¹¹¹ 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.3.5, 3.4.1-3.4.2, 3.4.4, 3.5.3, 3.7.2-3.7.3, 3.8.5-3.8.9.

¹¹² Cf. note 71.

¹¹³ González de Canales Cerisola *et al.* (2004), 208-210; Aubet (2012), 230-234.

¹¹⁴ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their suggestions and comments.

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Riassunto / *Abstract*

Riassunto: In questo contributo è delineato un quadro cronologico e tipologico dell'evoluzione delle forme aperte della ceramica fenicia da mensa, partendo dalla documentazione dell'Età del Ferro della costa siro-palestinese (XI-VI sec. a.C.) fino alle elaborazioni coloniali della Penisola Iberica (VIII-VI sec. a.C.). La definizione degli orizzonti crono-tipologici identificati nelle due aree è corredata di un'analisi delle problematiche riguardanti la cronologia assoluta dell'Età del Ferro nel Mediterraneo. L'attenzione è rivolta alle fasi iniziali della presenza fenicia in Occidente, dato il crescente numero di testimonianze arcaiche emerse principalmente a Huelva e a Cadice. L'analisi è effettuata anche attraverso il confronto con altri contesti arcaici recentemente affiorati, ad esempio, a Utica e Cartagine.

Abstract: In this paper a typological and chronological framework of the evolution of open forms of the Phoenician table pottery is outlined, starting from the Iron Age documentation of the Syro-Palestinian coast (11th-6th centuries BC) up to the colonial elaborations of the Iberian Peninsula (9th-6th centuries BC). The definition of the chrono-typological horizons identified in both areas is combined with an analysis of the issues affecting the absolute chronology of the Iron Age in the Mediterranean basin. The focus is on the early stages of the Phoenician presence in West, given the increasing number of archaic evidences emerged notably at Huelva and Cádiz. The analysis is also carried out through the comparison with other archaic contexts recently come to light, for example, at Utica and Carthage.

Parole chiave: Ceramica fenicia, cronologia, datazioni C14, costa siro-palestinese, Penisola Iberica

Keywords: Phoenician Pottery, chronology, 14C dating, Syro-Palestinian coast, Iberian Peninsula.

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