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tel. +39 051 2097700; fax +39 051 2097802; antonella.tonelli@unibo.it

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A TYPOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF PHOENICIAN FINE WARE BOWLS AND THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE IRON AGE MEDITERRANEAN

Gabriele Giacosa

Phoenician Fine Ware bowls provide important insights for reconstructing connections during late Iron Age I and Iron Age II (10th-8th centuries BC), throughout the southern Levant and between the Near East and the western Mediterranean. However, the debate on the origin of this ceramic class is open and many questions on its production are still unsolved. The aim of this paper is that of analysing the Fine Ware discovered at select Mediterranean sites, in order to better understand aspects of the Phoenician trade and colonization during the Iron Age. In the first place, a morphological analysis of Fine Ware features is proposed: analysis of fabric and surface treatment is combined with a typological classification of both Levantine and Mediterranean assemblages. On the basis of these analyses, some hypotheses about the role of Phoenician Fine Ware, its social meaning and connections during the Iron Age are proposed.

Defining Phoenician Fine Ware¹

Phoenician Fine Ware was identified, in the early 20th century, in the Israelite site of Samaria, for its different features from common red-slipped pottery (fig. 1): an extremely fine and carefully burnished fabric, often buff-coloured or reddish treated with a thin coat of bright red slip (on the whole shape or in some cases only on the inner face); then, the surface made smoother by a further hand-burnish (after Crowfoot et al. 1957: 155-157). The best examples show an outer reserved slip, incised concentric circles on the base, from to the middle of 8th century BC, or a black painted band below the rim, which appears during the second half of the same century (Schreiber 2003: 2-3). All these features let to consider Phoenician Fine Ware as a class of red-slipped vessels mainly addressed to a high-level social contexts.

However, a debate is still ongoing on its origin: the first archaeologists named the new discovered pottery “Samaria Ware”, from the only site where it was documented. This term was employed in many later excavation reports (as Hazor), until new finds in Lebanese centres, better in quantity and diversity, pushed scholars to suggest Phoenician coastal centres as the starting points for the



Fig. 1. Phoenician Fine Ware bowl (Zimhoni 1997: 16).

¹ I wish to express my gratitude to Nicolò Marchetti (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna) for his support during my research (both for my Bachelor's degree thesis and in editing this article) and his guidance on the field. Thanks are also due to Federico Zaina and Simone Mantellini (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna), for their critical comments and much advice on several methodological problems I had to deal with.

spread of the class, outdating the first name². More complications came from the same excavation reports of Samaria and Hazor, where other sherds were wrongly identified as “Samaria Ware” (Crowfoot et al. 1957: 95): their coarser fabric and less accurate burnish made them at least an earlier premise of the pottery under our consideration³. The result of all these problems is the presence of several identifying terms in excavation reports.

In later years, the expression Phoenician Fine Ware (or Red Slip Fine Ware), is mostly employed, rightly stressing on material features and cultural meanings, rather than on its so uncertain origin⁴.

Typological definition

This analysis of Phoenician Fine Ware in the Mediterranean allowed the identification of a list of shapes treated with the red-slipped coating particular of this class of ware, focusing on morphological features such as fabric, rim and base diameter, wall thickness and height. Detected types are arranged by finds frequency and size, starting with the most common shapes (Tav. I).

Even if the ware is attested archaeologically from Levant to the western Mediterranean, some contexts played a key role, thanks also to fundamental methodological works done on their ceramic assemblages. First, excavations at Tyre and its *al-Bass* necropolis, give a complete pottery sequence for the Iron Age coastal Levant. Studies done by P.M. Bikai (Bikai 1978) for city soundings and, later, by the Spanish team led by M.E. Aubet (Nuñez 2004) on the necropolis, allowed to connect the two pottery repertoires. Then, the work on Phoenician pottery from Cyprus (Bikai 1987) shows how deep is the political and economic connection between Tyre and the insular sites, in particular the port of Kition, as early as the 10th century BC. Third, the Syrian emporium of Al Mina owed its crucial role as meeting point be-

tween the Greek world and the Near East. The first investigation by C.L. Woolley showed how that site was a significant Iron Age port-of-trade and its pottery, with vessels from all the eastern Mediterranean, is remarkable in understanding the Iron Age chronology in the Levant (Lehmann 2006). Much difficulty comes from overseas contexts, where rapid reception and adoption of red slip and related shapes made very difficult the distinction between Levantine and colonial production. However, the earliest attestation of Fine Ware in *emporía* such as Huelva (southern Spain) and Sant’Imbenia (north-western Sardinia), are significant for this work.

FWB 1: Hazor (*Thin-walled bowl*); Megiddo (*Bowl type 57*); Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 6 with Base 6*); Tyre-al Bass (*CP 1a*); Sarepta (*F-1B*); Huelva (*Huelva Fine Ware Plate 1*);

According to many reports (Bikai 1978: 28; Anderson 1988: 162), it is one of the finest and most widespread example of Phoenician Fine Ware bowl. Its main features are the very thin walls, with a slight carination, and a straight, everted rim. The base can be flat or a shallow ring. The fabric is really fine and covered by burnished red slip, complete in the inner face while the outer one only below the rim. Incised concentric circles often decorate the shape. Its size is small: the rim diameter averages 19 cm, the base 5 cm, while its height is between 2.5 cm and 4 cm.

This type of ware was found in strata dated from the second part of the 9th century to the 8th centuries BC. Earlier examples come from *Pottery Period IV* of Samaria (Crowfoot et al. 1957, pl. 10.11; 18.6-8), *Strata VIII-VII (Area A-Pillared Building)* at Hazor (Yadin 1958, pl. XLIX.23) and Akhziv, from *Tomb N.1* in Northern Cemetery (Mazar 2004, fig. 1.15) and chamber tomb *T.C.4* in Southern one (Mazar 2001, fig. 7.23). In *Level IX* at Al Mina, this type was found in context with a red slipped globular jug with spout and strainer (Lehmann 2006, fig. 1.1).

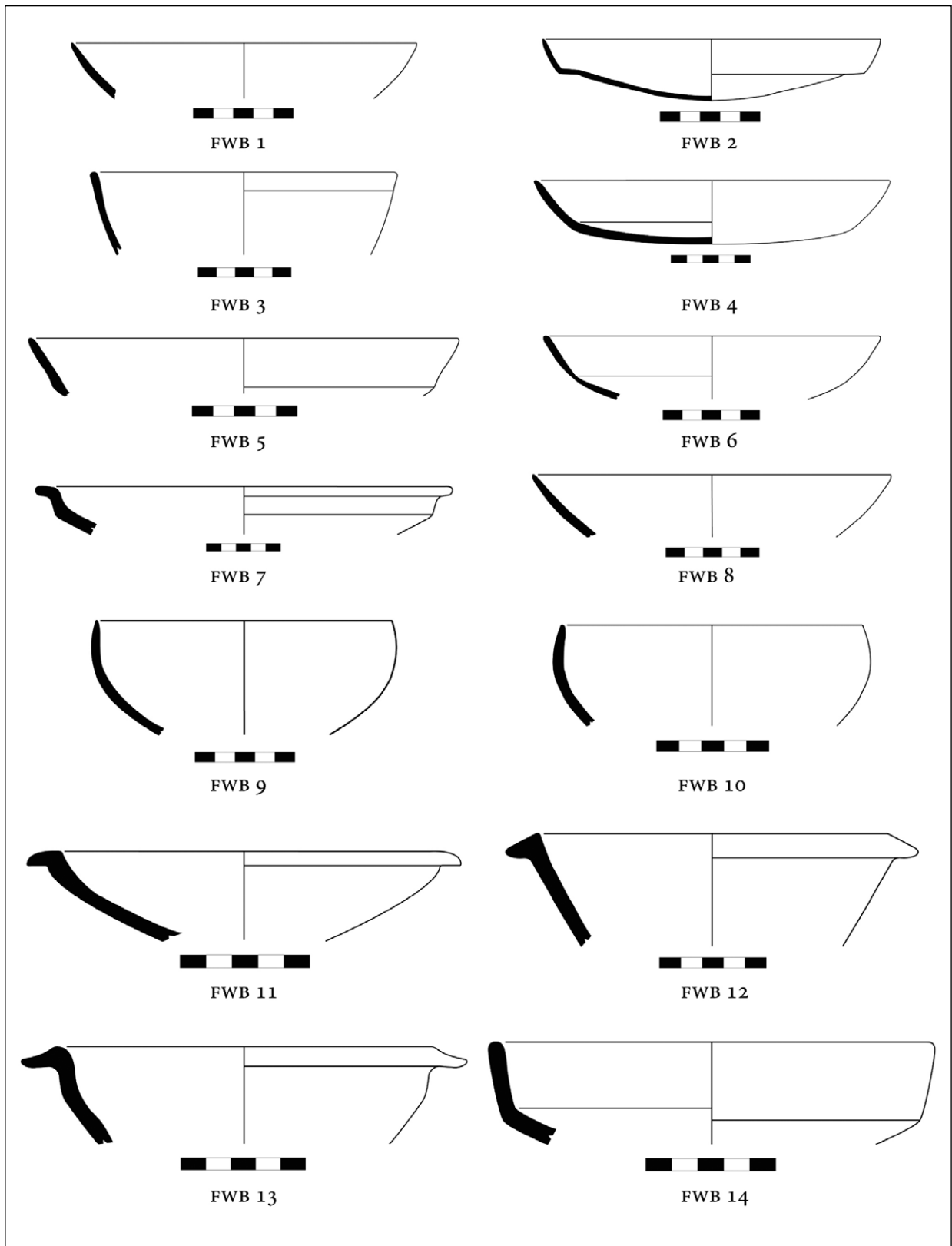
For the 8th century BC, finds come from *Stratum IV* at Megiddo (Lamon, Shipton 1939, pl. 25.57) and, among coastal cities, in huge quantity, from *Strata V-II* at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. XV.1,4,7,10,11), *al-Bass* cemetery (Nuñez 2004, fig. 191), *Strata C1-B* at Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 38.3,16; 47) and Khaldé (Saidah 1966, fig. 28), near Beirut. There, in collective *Tombe 121*, Fine Ware was in association with two big jars, used as urns, and many similar shapes (three little jars and some *oinochoes*).

At Cyprus, this type was detected at Kition, on the hill of *Kathari (Area II)*, Maroni (*Tomb 2*) and in

² Against the statements of the first archaeologists (Yadin 1958: 51), the fall of Samaria in 720 BC makes the term “Samaria” inappropriate for this *élite*-addressed ware still produced in 7th century: Samaria was in fact reconstructed but as provincial town, seat of the Assyrian governor.

³ Wright 1959: 23-24, attempted to solve the problem for Iron II sites in northern Palestine, distinguishing the coarser ware as “Samaria Ware A” and the finer one as “Samaria Ware B”.

⁴ In this work I choose to use the term Fine Ware, according to latest works and researches, even if “Samaria Ware” is how the class is most known.



Tav. I. Phoenician Fine Ware bowl types.

Salamina's *Tomb 1*, among a rich homogenous assemblage of Phoenician shapes, with red-slipped and bichrome jugs (Bikai 1987, nos. 461, 501-2, 504, 506-9).

Examples of this type also come *Kardo XIII - Sondage K4* at Carthage (Vegas 1999, Abb. 5.1) and Huelva (González-De Canalez et al. 2008, fig. 4.1-2,6) where it is indicated as the prevalent example of Fine Ware bowl.

FWB 2: Hazor (*Thin-walled bowl*); Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 6*); Tyre-al Bass (*CP 1b*); Sarepta (*F-1B* with *B-18*);

This type can be considered a variant of the above one: the fabric, wall thickness and rim shape are in fact similar. Only a deep carination breaks the outline and divides the straight rim from a very convex base. Surface treatment and decoration do not show any variation and the sizes are almost identical: maximum diameter averages 19 cm (16-17 cm at the level of carination) and height around 3 cm.

In excavation reports from soundings at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. XV.7) and Cyprus (Bikai 1987: 37), no distinction is made between the two types. They occur also in *Level VA* at Hazor (Yadin 1958, pl. LIV.6) and in *Stratum IV/Level H-3* at Megiddo (Finkelstein et al. 2000, fig. 11.43.3). In the latter, only a single fragment was found in a stratum sealed by a collapsed wall, which can be related to the Assyrian destruction of 732 BC. This chronological datum coincides completely with Tyre-al Bass finds (Nuñez 2004, fig. 193). Later evidence comes from *Strata CI-B* of Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 47; 52), where a different base is associated with the previous rim.

This type can be dated chronologically between the end of the 9th and the 8th centuries BC.

FWB 3: Sarepta (*F-3*);

This type, identified in *Strata F-D1* (middle 9th century BC) at Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 29.30; 32.15; 33.22,25-27), is here considered as the immediate predecessor of *FWB 1*: the fabric is darker and less fine, while there is little variation in the thickness of rim and wall from one site to another. Surface treatments are more varied but coarser, with hand-made burnish and partial red slip, applied only on the upper part of the vessel.

FWB 4: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 2/3* with *Base 3*); Tyre-al Bass (*CP 1c*); Sarepta (*F-1A*);

This type has a thicker and more rounded shape, but also a less pronounced carination and a flat base. In comparison with previous types, it

is little wider, with an average maximum diameter of 20-22 cm; the chronological horizon is almost the same, from the middle of the 9th to the end of the 7th centuries BC. Its geographical distribution is large: Samaria, referring to *Pottery Periods III-IV* (Crowfoot et al. 1957, fig. 9.2; 18.6-8), Hazor, in *Strata VIII-VA* (Yadin 1960, pl. LXXXII.4), and Tell Keisan, in *Niveau 5* (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 41) among inland sites; on the coast, Ras-el-Bassit, in *Ensemble C* (Braemer 1986, fig. 3.7), Sarepta, in *Substratum C1* (Anderson 1988, pl. 38.4), maybe Sidon (Contentau 1920, fig. 27), Tell Abu Hawam (Herrera-González, Gómez 1990, pl. 63.76,79,81), Tel Kabri (Lehmann 2002, fig. 9.2,6,14) and Akhziv, in *T.A. 68*, *T.A. 72* and *T.A. 73* (Mazar 2001, fig. 52.15; 64.18-19). Later evidence, dated to the 7th century BC, comes from Tell Sukas (Buhl 1983, pl. XII.184) and at Tyre, where a variant with thicker walls was also identified in *Strata III-II* (Bikai 1978, pl. XI.1-3; XII.12-16). At Tyre-al Bass, this type was part of the rich burial assemblage of *Tomb 8* (Nuñez 2004, fig. 195), remarkable for wealth and linked ritual meanings (Aubert 2006: 40-46).

This type showed a huge variation in decoration: 153 fragments from Tyre's excavations were divided between those having incised concentric grooves on feet and those without. Moreover, one third of burnished and red-slipped sherds have also a band of black paint on the rim and reserved red slip in the lower part of the shape.

The latter decoration, associated to this type, was present in many Cypriote sites, as Kition, at *Kathari* and in many tombs, as *T.162* at Amathus and *T.13*, *T.14* Ayia Irini (Bikai 1987, nos. 456, 462-9, 510, 513-4 with incised decoration; nos. 457-8, 470, 493-6, 511-2 without incised decoration). There, this type of Fine Ware bowl was found in context with a red-slipped trefoil-rim globular jug. All these contexts are dated to the second half of the 8th century BC.

Many evidences came from Mediterranean sites. At Motya (Sicily), this type was found in the 1975's *Sondaggio I*, where it refers to the later use of *Vano I* (Ciasca 1976, MM 75/16/5) and, recently, during excavations of *Zona D*, in *Edificio D4* (Caltabiano, Spagnoli 2010, MD.07.2246/6). In Sardinia, there were finds from the earlier levels of *Croniario's* area at Sulky (Pompianu 2010, fig. 7.7, fig. 12.1-2): an open shape was found in a stratum under *Vano III* northern wall, while two other sherds were in a near stratum full of metal wastes, again in association with a small trefoil-rim jug and a rare Iberian cooking pot (Pompianu 2010, fig. 13). Finally, excavation of phase *B1a* (8th century BC)

of Morro de Mezquitilla gave also some samples attributable to this type (Maass-Lindemann 1990, Mo 82/2286/1).

FWB 5: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 1*); Dor (*BL 47b*); Carthage (*Schale CCr2*);

This is a later and smaller variation of the previous one: with 20 cm of diameter, 4.5 cm of height and thanks also to thinner walls, this shape results slenderer than *FWB 4*. The outer surface is defined by a light carination. It is attested in the majority of sites considered here: Samaria, in *Pottery Periods III-IV* (Crowfoot et al. 1957, pl. 19), Hazor, in *Stratum VA* (Yadin 1960, pl. CCXXX.12), Megiddo, in *Strata VB-III* and in *Tomb 80C* (Finkelstein et al. 2000, fig. 11.23.21; Guy, Engberg 1938, pl. 75.8-9), Tell Keisan, in *Niveau V* (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 40.12); then Al Mina, in *Levels VIII-VII* (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.1-3), Tyre, in *Stratum I* (Bikai 1978, pl. I.1-2), Khaldé, in *Tombe 3* (Saidah 1966, fig. 10), Dor (Stern 1995, fig. 1.4.15), Akhziv, in *Tomb N.1* (Mazar 2004, fig. 1.16,18-9), together with some pilgrim flasks, Ashkelon on the coast; Kition-*Kathari* (Bikai 1987, nos. 471-3, 497-498) at Cyprus.

If on the Phoenician coast and in continental Israelite sites its presence is earlier (final 9th-8th centuries BC), at Dor, Ashkelon and Cyprus the finds date to the 7th century (at Ashkelon they were in the destruction level dated to 604 BC). This type has also been found in the 8th century strata at Carthage (Peserico 2002, Tafel 16.1) and Morro de Mezquitilla, in phase *B1a* (Maass-Lindemann 1990, Mo 82/2270/6-7), where many imitations were produced not before the 7th century BC.

FWB 6: Tyre-al Bass (*CP 1d*);

This type is the smallest and one of the later example of Phoenician Fine Ware bowl, with a diameter between 16-18 cm and an average height of 3.5 cm. On the inner side, a shallow carination marks the step between the rim and the convex base, making the upper wall section almost elliptical. In many cases the exterior is simply smoothed and burnished, while the interior appears completely red-slipped and burnished.

Chronologically, this type is typical of the late 8th century: it appears at Hazor in *Strata VA-IV* (Yadin 1960, pl. XXX.29; XCVIII.7; CCXXXI.17), at Megiddo in *Level H-2* (Finkelstein et al. 2000, fig. 11.59.1), in strata following the Assyrian plunder of 732 BC, and Tyre-al Bass (*Period III*), with an outstanding absence in Tyrian soundings, where it appears only after the middle of 8th century.

FWB 7: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 7* with *Base 4*); Sarepta (*Bowl X-10*);

A particular everted rim, with a projection on its outer edge, defines this type while the base is flat or slightly convex. The fabric is coarser but surface treatment and decoration are the same as previous types, also with reserved slip. This type is one of the biggest in size, with a diameter of 25-26 cm and an average height of 4.5 cm.

Significant quantities of this type were found, dating to the 8th century BC, at Hazor in *Stratum V* (Yadin 1960, pl. CLXXXIX.6); in *Niveau 5* at Tell Keisan (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 40.7c); in *Niveaux 6-9* at Tell Kazel (Badre et al. 1994, fig. 12b); in *Substratum C2* at Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 47); in *Tombe 4* at Khaldé (Saidah 1966, fig. 16) and in *Strata V-II* at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. XIA.18-19; XV.23). On the other hand, sherds from *Levels VIII-VI* at Al Mina (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.16,18), *Ensemble F* of Ras-el-Bassit (Braemer 1986, fig. 6.33), *Niveaux 10-9* at Tell 'Arqa (Thalman 1978, fig. 46.11-15), Tell Kabri (Lehmann 2002, fig. 5.71:14) and Kition-*Kathari* (Bikai 1987, nos. 423-4) have shown how this type was still produced in the middle of the 7th century BC. In *Tomb 36* at Akhziv, this type was part of a rich assemblage together with other Phoenician and Cypro-Phoenician shapes such as red-slip and Black-on-Red jugs (Culican 1982, Abb. 9.c).

FWB 8: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 8*); Dor (*BL 47a*);

This type, found in the Iron Age II earlier strata of many Levantine sites, is perhaps the older example of Fine Ware. Its fabric is bright yellow, nearly golden⁵, walls are really thin (average 0.3 cm) and its slip is dark red, almost violet. Shape and average size are similar to *FWB 5*, so that the later shape could be considered a derivation from this one. Its presence is recorded from the first half of the 9th century or even earlier in *Level IX* at Hazor (Yadin 1960, pl. CCVIII.24-25), in *Strata IX-VIII* at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. XIX.2-8; XXX.12) and in few Cypriote sites (Bikai 1987, no. 460). Then, evidences from *Ensemble B* of Ras-el-Bassit (Braemer 1986, fig. 2.4) and Dor (Stern 1995, fig. 1.1.11) showed that the type was still produced till the beginning of 7th century BC.

FWB 9: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 4*); Tyre-al Bass (*CP 2a*); Sarepta (*F-2B*); Dor (*BL 47c*);

⁵ It is even indicated as "gold-colored ware" in Bikai 1978: 29 and in Lehmann 2006: 3.

This is the earliest example of Fine Ware hemispherical bowl, with rounded thin walls and rounded base; the rim is straight, almost vertical, which makes the outline wider. With regard to sizes, the average diameter is 14 cm while height is between 4 and 4.5 cm. The black-painted band on the rim is the most attested decoration, more so than the reserved slip or incised circles on the base.

This type makes its first appearance in the Iron Age II earliest strata, as *Strata E-DI* at Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 31.13) and Dor (Stern 1995, fig. 1.1.10, 1.4.18-20), dated to early 9th century BC. Later, it is recorded in *Strata IV-III* at Tyre (Bikai 1978, pl. X.14.22) and at *al Bass* necropolis (Nuñez 2004, fig. 198), both related to 8th century. The latest evidence comes from *Tombe 1* at Tell 'Arqa (Thalman 1978, fig. 45.9). There, Fine Ware bowls (completely burnished with brilliant red-orange slip only in the inside) are part of a funerary assemblage together with a globular cooking pot, some rounded-body jars (one with a Phoenician inscription), which date the burial to the beginning of 7th century. Outside the Near East, this type was found, though in small numbers, at Carthage (Vegas 1999, Abb. 5.4) and in *Tomba 162* at Motya, associated with a trefoil-rim jug, a mushroom-rim jug and a cooking pot (Ciasca 1979, MM 76/155).

FWB 10: Hazor (*Thin-walled bowl*); Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 4a/b*); Tyre-*al Bass* (*CP 2b*); Sarepta (*F-2A*); Huelva (*Huelva Fine Ware Plate 3*);

This hemispherical bowl is different from the previous one for its rim, which is incurved on top, not straight any longer, making the shape less open. The diameter of the rim is similar (average 14 cm) but the shape is higher, about 5 cm.

Surface treatments and decorations are similar at Tyre and Sarepta: in the Phoenician metropolis, among 191 sherds referring to this type, most are burnished and red-slipped, while few have only burnished coating. In the second site, 40% of sherds have a band of black paint on the outer surface.

This hemispherical bowl is more widespread in place and time than *FWB 9*: it was found in many inland and coastal sites, in strata from the middle of the 9th until the end of the 8th centuries BC, where the largest quantity is concentrated. Hazor, in *Strata VIII-VII* (Yadin 1958, fig. 58.53; 77.26), Tell Keisan, in *Niveaux 5-4* (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 28.5; 41.7-8), Megiddo, in *Strata IV-III* (Lamon, Shipton 1939, pl. 24.55; 28.95), Akhziv with *T.A.68* (Mazar 2001, fig. 52.16), and Sarepta,

in *Strata DI-CI* (Anderson 1988, fig. 35.11; 38.2) showed an earlier presence, while this type appeared not before the second half of the 8th century at Tyre, in *Strata IV-II* (Bikai 1978, pl. I.4; X.14-16,20-22; XV.8) and at *al Bass* (Nuñez 2004, fig. 199). Some sherds were also found still in early 7th century strata at Al Mina, in *Levels VIII-VI* (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.4-5), and Kition-*Kathari* (Bikai 1987, nos. 487-90).

Excavations in the western Mediterranean showed the presence of Fine Ware at Carthage, in *Rue Ibn Chabâat* area (Vegas 1999, Abb. 5.5; 27.1-4), where 91% of fragments had a complete red slip, in *Puerto 6* area at Huelva (Jurado 1986: 216-217; González-De Canalez et al. 2008, fig. 4.4) and Sant'Imbenia (Oggiano 2000, fig. 6.3).

In particular, this type was associated at Tell 'Arqa, Huelva and Sant'Imbenia, with a typical Palestinian cooking pot (Amiran 1970, fig. 75.10), belonging to the Iron Age IIC; in the Sardinian site, Euboean *skyphoi* with "one bird" and "à chevrons" decorations and many fragments of Iberian, Nuragic and Levantine transport jars were also in context with it (Oggiano 2000: 244-247). These finds clearly testify, on one hand, the interaction between Phoenicia and southern Levant, as well as the degree of involvement of Phoenician Fine Ware in the Mediterranean trade network.

FWB 11: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 5*);

A particular rim, with an accentuated and out turned lip, identifies this type. The fabric, fine and soft, is usually red-orange. Its maximum diameter is about 15 cm and its height averages 4 cm.

The most important examples come from Tell Keisan, in *Niveau 5* (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 40.3), while only few samples were found at Tyre, in *Strata III-II* (Bikai 1978, pl. X.28,31-32; XVI.10-11). At Al Mina, in *Levels VIII-VI* (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.17), fragments dated to the end of the 8th century BC have a thick and well-burnished dark red slip. In the following century, the slip becomes thinner and washed out. At Cyprus, this type was found at Idalion in tomb *T.1* (Bikai 1987, no. 547), dated to the end of the 7th century BC, in association with a bichrome jug with mushroom rim. Outside the Near East, this type is attested only at Carthage (Vegas 1999, Abb. 5.23; 38.1-2).

FWB 12: Tyre (*Fine Ware Plate 5*); Sarepta (*Bowl X-3*); Dor (*BL 46a*); Huelva (*Huelva Bowl Type 4*); Carthage (*Form 4.1*);

This type has a less rounded outline than the previous one and it's also bigger, with a diameter of 17 cm and an average height of 4.2 cm. The

fabric, soft and fine, is usually light brown and a thick red slip covers the whole shape (only in few cases the foot has no surface treatment).

This type, dated to early 8th century, has been found in small quantities at Samaria, in *Pottery Period III* (Crowfoot et al. 1957, pl. 13.12-13), at Megiddo in *Strata V-IVA* (Finkelstein et al. 2000, fig. 11.52.6), preceding the Assyrian destruction of 732 BC, while at Tell 'Arqa (Thalman 1978, fig. 46.3,18-20) it is especially attested in levels dated to the end of the Iron Age II. In Tyre's excavation reports, this type is concentrated in *Stratum IV* (Bikai 1978, pl. XV.2,5) and it is not distinguishable from *FWB 11*.

On the coast, *Level VIII* at Al Mina (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.10,13,15), *Stratum C* at Sarepta (Anderson 1988, pl. 47), Dor (Stern 1995, fig. 1.4.14; 1.8.10), *Ensemble C* of Ras-al-Bassit (Braemer 1986, fig. 3.10) and *Tomb 20* at Akhziv (Culican 1982, Taf. 6h) gave some examples, as well as *Kition-Kathari* and *Ayia Irini (T.14)* in Cyprus (Bikai 1987, nos. 552,555).

Sherds of this type were also found at Carthage, in the areas of *Rue Ibn Chabâat*, *Rue Septime Sévère* and at the foot of *Byrsa* hill (Vegas 1999, Abb. 5.8; 32.1), at Sulky (Pompianu 2010, fig. 8.3) and in the Iberian site of Huelva (González-De Canalez et al. 2008, fig. 5.4).

FWB 13

This is one of the latest examples of Fine Ware: in comparison to the previous type, carination is nearer to the rim and the size is smaller (16 cm wide and 5 cm high). Levantine examples belong to the 8th-7th centuries BC: finds come from Samaria, in *Pottery Periods VII-VIII* (Crowfoot et al. 1957, fig. 32.68), Tell Keisan, in *Niveau 5* (Briend, Humbert 1980, pl. 40.2) and Al Mina, in *Levels VI-V* (Taylor 1959, fig. 6.24). In the latter, the presence of this type till the end of the 7th century BC shows the persisting of Levantine tradition against the growing Greek influence in the eastern ceramic repertoire (Lehmann 2006: 21).

FWB 14

This type, 20 cm wide and 7 cm high, has thicker walls and the rim is straight and everted with a rounded lip. It is rather rare: it was found only at Samaria, related to *Pottery Period V* (Crowfoot et al. 1957, fig. 10.4), in *Stratum VI* at Hazor (Yadin 1960, pl. LXVI.9) and in *Niveaux 10-9* at Tell 'Arqa (Thalman 1978, fig. 46.1-2,4), all dating to the middle 8th century BC. Surface treatment is good, with presence of outer burnished red slip up to the carination.

Phoenician Fine Ware in Iron Age Mediterranean

Despite its first site-based name, the precise origin of this ware is still uncertain and the variety of the terminology employed, together with the remarkable quantity and variety of sites involved, is not helpful too. However, the data presented here allow to put forward some new hypotheses on this subject. I will here complement the above-mentioned studies on the spread of Fine Ware bowls in the Near East (fig. 2) and the Mediterranean (fig. 3) by discussing in detail the ceramic data.

Starting with the material features described above, the surface coating suggests a clear connection with the common Iron Age II red-slipped pottery. The appearance of the technology of red-slipped coating marked the passage from Iron Age I to Iron Age II in the Near East: its spread from the Levantine coast to the Euphrates, coincided with «a gradual decrease of bichrome painted pottery and a passage to a much more standardized material culture, including homogenised common orange/red fabrics and an increased presence of open shapes» (Soldi 2013: 200).

However, while red-slipped pottery was discovered in the southern Levant at the beginning of the 9th century BC, in the Syrian inland its presence is recorded only a half-century later. Pottery sequences of many sites, as Tell Afis (Mazzoni, Cecchini 1998: 277), prove this later date.

In the Palestinian area, the appearance of the red-slipped pottery was deeply tied to the High/Low Chronology debate⁶ and, in particular, to the Iron Age strata of Megiddo, Hazor or Dor. Studying the 10th and 9th centuries BC (i.e. the passage between IA I and IA II) is really difficult, because samples from these early strata are few and nearly undetectable in the archaeological record. On the contrary, from the 8th century, Greek pottery repertoire represents a helpful chronological anchorage.

Beside these chronological problems, the intensive economic and cultural exchange between the Palestinian inland and the Levantine coast between the 10th and the 7th centuries BC is proven by both literal and archaeological sources. The

⁶ The question between High Chronology (Mazar 2008) and Low Chronology (Finkelstein 1999) has been long debated: the supporters of the former argue that Iron Age IIA in Palestine started little after 1000 BC, while the latter consider its beginning in the last quarter of the 10th century BC. In latest years, data coming from ¹⁴C (for example see Fantalkin, Finkelstein, Piasetzky 2015) confirmed the much more validity of Low Chronology.

Israelite United Monarchy (10th century BC) and, after it, the kingdom of Israel, had many treaties with Tyre: Solomon received material and skilled labour for the Temple from Hiram I, king of Tyre

(969-936 BC), to whom the Israelite king gave twenty villages in the country of Cabul, in Galilee (*I King* 9:11-13). In the excavation of the small fortress of Khirbet Rosh Zayit (Gal 1992) between

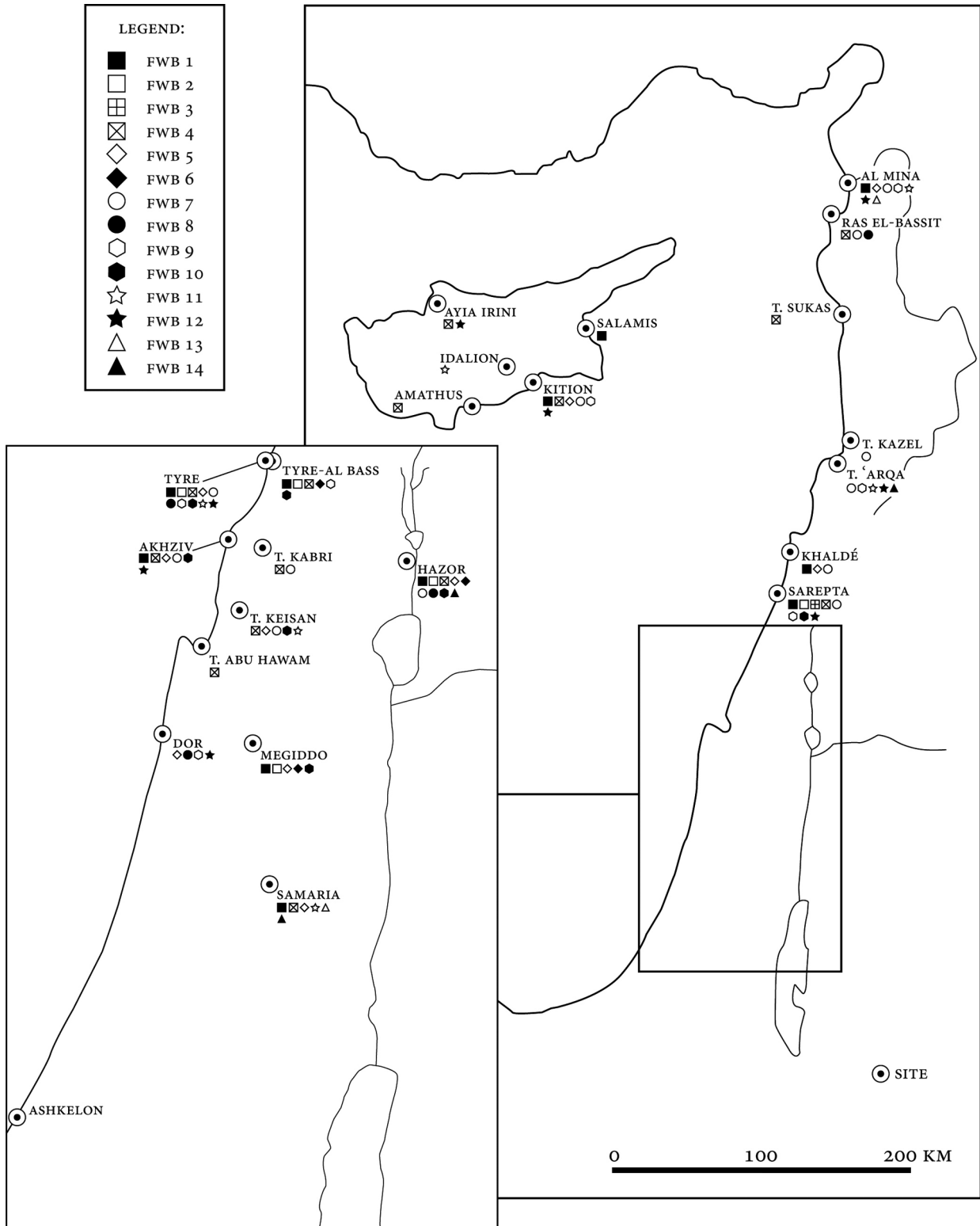


Fig. 2. Distribution of *FWB* in Eastern Mediterranean (based on Amiran 1970: 294).

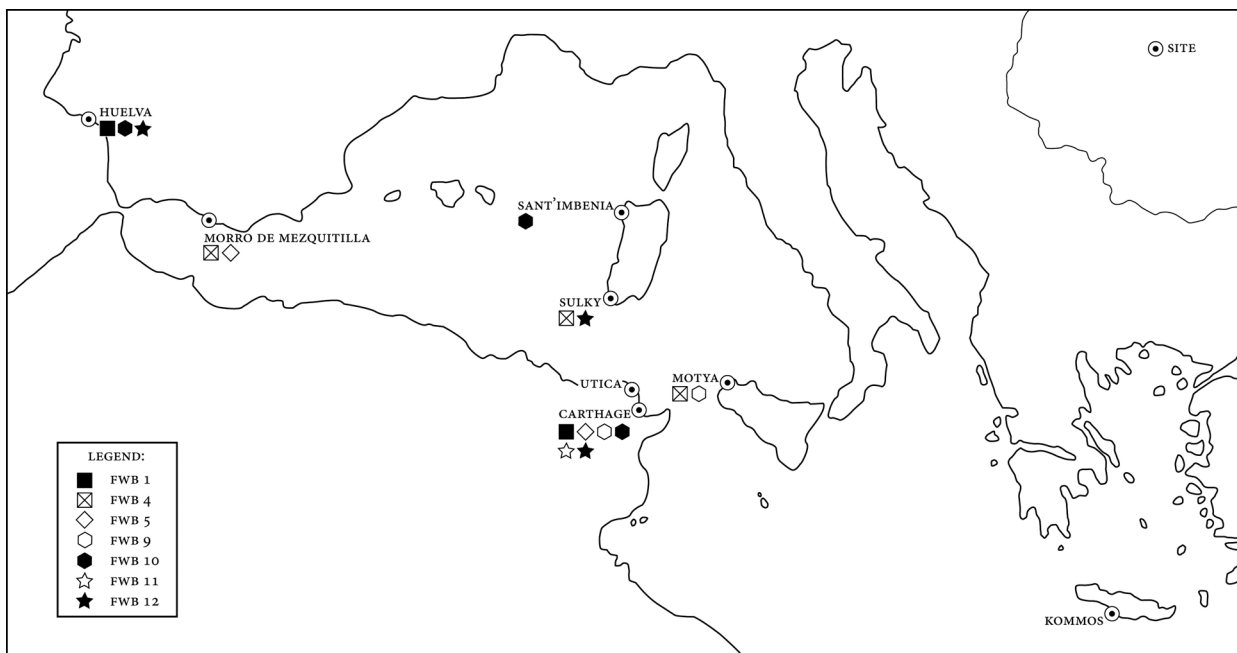


Fig. 3. Distribution of *FWB* in Central and Western Mediterranean (based on Sherratt 1993: fig. 3a).

Akko and Tell Keisan, in northern Galilee, a complete Phoenician pottery assemblage, and a sample of *FWB 6* was found. Tyre strongly held these Palestinian outposts on the coast (Dor, Akko, Tell Abu Hawam) and in the Galilean country, until the Assyrian military campaigns of the 8th-7th centuries (fig. 4).

These political ties soon turned into a cultural influence: in the 9th century BC Samarian *élites* were literally invaded by many kinds of Phoenician luxury goods, thanks also to the presence of Levantine craftsmen and architects in the main Israelite cities (Aubet 2009: 75). Ahab's ivories from the royal palace of Samaria especially prove this kind of "Phoenician acculturation", which persisted until the Assyrian conquest in 722 BC.

It's also enlightening that Fine Ware distribution follows the area under Phoenician direct commercial influence in southern Levant: the class is notably widespread in the main centres of the kingdom of Israel, as Samaria and Hazor, and only in small quantity in Judah⁷, except for the Philistine coast.

As it can be seen from fig. 2, Hazor shows a high concentration of Fine Ware and a quite similar repertoire with Tyre: its proximity to Phoenician heartland could make it a gate to the Israelite core inland. About Cyprus, the Phoenician harbour of Kition reveals its preminent position among other sites by its larger Fine Ware assemblage. Finally, in western Mediterranean, also Carthage confirms its role as major settlement in the West, with a remarkable presence of Fine Ware, while some samples were also detected in the earlier Phoenician levels of Utica, north of Carthage⁸.

Moreover, concerning to shape and technical features, many scholars point out a connection with the so-called Cypro-Phoenician metal bowls. Many examples were found both in the Near East, as in the North-West Palace of Nimrud (as a result of Assyrian plunders in the Levantine area) and in some Mediterranean contexts, as the Idean Cave in Crete or many Italic necropolis⁹. In particu-

⁷ In general, few Phoenician vessels were found only in the main cities of Judah (Lachish, Tel Beersheba), in strata dated to the late 8th century BC (IA IIB), while before it's almost absent. This evidence shows these goods reached the southern kingdom only when it was included in economic system of the Assyrian empire, in particular after to Sargon II's new economic policy in southern Levant and Egypt (Singer-Avitz 2010: 194-196).

⁸ During latest excavations at Utica (Monchambert 2014: 47), many fragments of Fine Ware were found in association with fragments of jars with carinated shoulder, dated to the second half of 8th century BC (type *Sagona-2*): the same situation was detected at Sant'Imbenia and Huelva. This assemblage, together with the Palestinian cooking pot belonging to IA IIC, can be considered as a "window" on the first stages of Levantine presence in western Mediterranean.

⁹ Many Levantine metal bowls were found in aristocratic

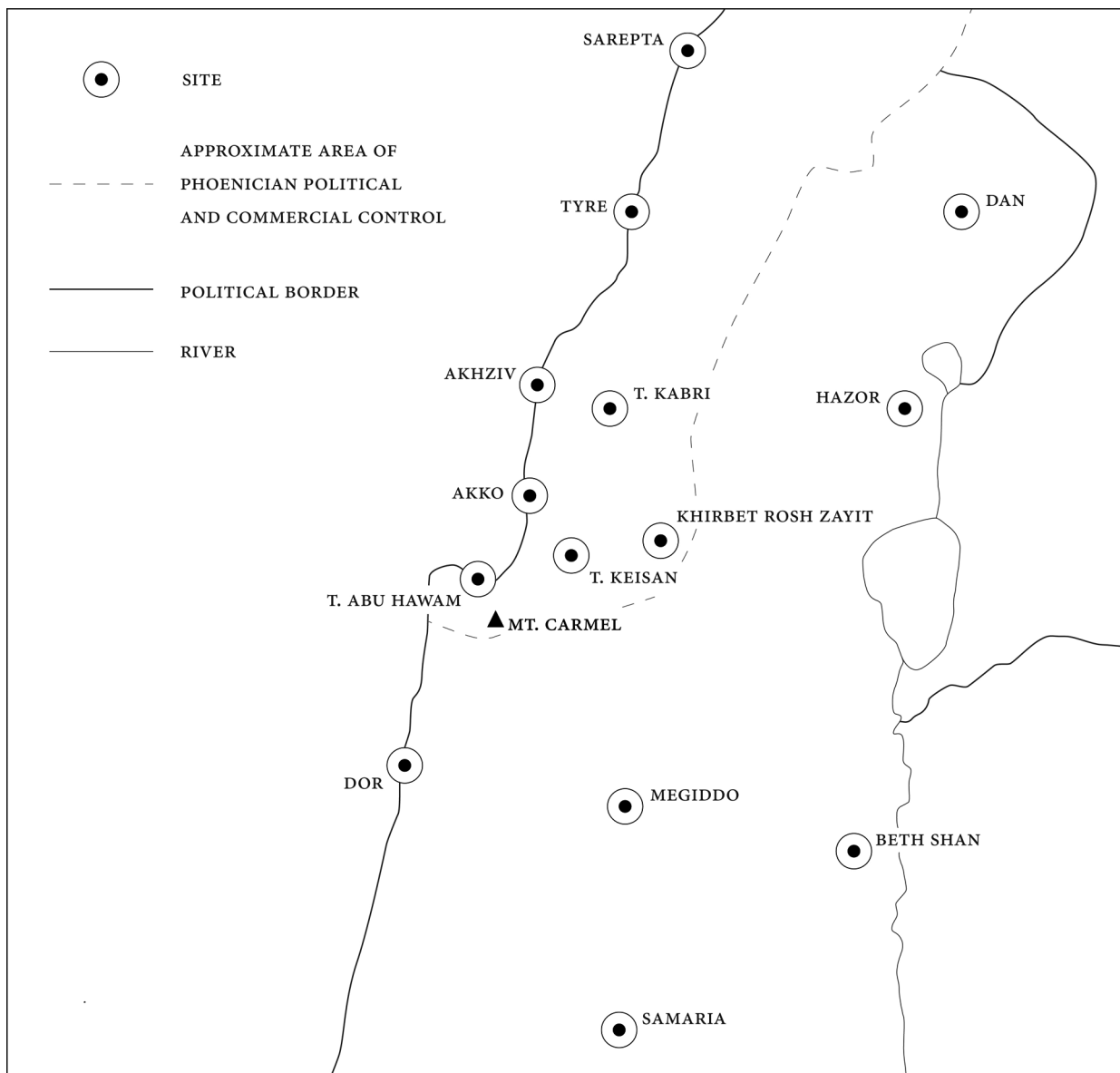


Fig. 4. The region around Mt. Carmel between the 9th and 8th centuries BC.

lar, studies on “star bowls” and “marsh pattern” groups from Nimrud (Barnett 1974: 21-23) highlighted many shape similarities with Phoenician Fine Ware shapes. From Italic funerary contexts, a silver plate in the burial assemblage of *Tomba 928* at Pontecagnano, dated to the Orientalising period (720-580 BC), has common features with *FWB 7* (Lehmann 2006: 6), as an hemispherical bronze bowl (fig. 5) from *Tomba Bernardini*, in the Etruscan

burials of Orientalising or Archaic periods in Etruria, Latium and Campania (Sciacca 2010a). They are clearly the result of recurring gifts or trade between eastern merchants and native people, which often modified them, according to their taste.

city of Veio, with *FWB 10* (Sciacca 2010b, fig. 24). The well-polished red-slipped surface treatment could be considered an attempt at imitating the shining bronze surface of metal bowls (Anderson 1988: 164), so popular among Italic and Iberian élites.

From these evidences, Phoenician Fine Ware bowls certainly played an important role in typical mechanisms of Levantine commercial strategy, which marked the improvement of political and trading deals among high-rank counterparts¹⁰: reciprocal gift exchange and aristocratic banquet.

¹⁰ The exchanged gifts could be raw materials or manufac-



Fig. 5. Bronze bowl from Veio (Sciaccà 2010: fig. 24).

This custom is deeply connected to the earlier Levantine presence in the western Mediterranean, in particular the pre-colonial problem (Moscati 1983: 1-7), a much-debated topic in scholarship. Phoenician use of gifts with Mediterranean indigenous upper classes is proven also by the pottery assemblages in *emporion* sites such as Kommos¹¹ or Huelva. There, a varied ceramic repertoire, including Fine Ware (*FWB 1*, *FWB 10*, *FWB 12*), is not only closely tied to Tyre (*Strata IX-VI*), but it also allowed scholars to identify the latest Levantine presence here to about 770-760 BC. For earliest times, vessels older than 940 BC are yet to be identified (González-De Canalez et al. 2008: 634, 643).

Together with the gift exchange, banquets were another way to seal agreements between aristocracies in the societies of the ancient world: drinking wine was a symbol of solidarity and cohesion within ruling *élites*, even if not belonging to the same cultural background. During their commercial expansion, Phoenicians and Euboeans spread their ceremonial forms where the consumption of wine with local aristocrats was helpful in building

tured products, with a value recognised both by Levantine travellers and indigenous noblemen: they played as medium of exchange but with a symbolic and social mean, not just an economic one. In this process, although the role of fine wares was remarkable, other items were much more significant in this practice: silver cauldrons, iron spits, golden jewellery, ivory furniture were found in several Orientalizing tombs from the Aegean to the Iberian Peninsula.

¹¹ Excavations at Kommos, on the southern coast of Crete, revealed the site to be an important *emporion* on the maritime route to the West, frequented since the early Iron Age by Levantine and Cypriote merchants. This connection is shown by the “tripillar shrine” in Temple B, of clear Syro-Palestinian derivation. For a summary of Phoenician presence at Crete, see Shaw 1989: 165-183.

commercial connections in their respective Mediterranean areas of influence¹².

Finally, recurring association of Attic or Euboean *skyphoi* with Phoenician Fine Ware bowls was attested not only at Carthage, Sant’Imbenia, Sulky and Huelva, but also in the Levant, at Tyre, Al Mina, Tell Abu Hawam and on Cyprus. This presence, together with both in the Near East and the western Mediterranean suggests that Levantine and indigenous *élites* employed vessels from different areas during their feasts (even if their way of drinking wine was different from that used in the Hellenic world), proving that Greek and Levantine bowls, were somehow interchangeable¹³.

All these hypotheses could have a decisive confirmation through the study of ceramic assemblages. Data from shapes found in context with Fine Ware bowls are essential in understanding its meaning. Above all, grave goods are representative, especially for Lebanese and Syrian contexts, where modern cities overlay the ancient ones and extensive excavations are almost impossible. The Phoenician necropolis of Tyre-al Bass, Khaldé (south of Beirut) and Akhziv, on the Palestinian coast, were selected for their degree of preservation and the wealth of their graves.

Excavations lead by M.E. Aubet in the Tyrian suburb of al Bass unearthed a huge cremation necropolis belonging to the Iron Age IIB (middle 9th-8th centuries BC) pottery horizon. *Tomb 8*, carefully studied for its wealth, owned the commonest ceramic assemblage (fig. 6), made up by two big closed shapes, used as urns, a trefoil-rim jug and a mushroom-rim one, some red-slipped open shapes (usually carinated or hemispheric bowls, here *FWB 4*), among which there was a Fine Ware bowl on the urn, witnessing the high rank of the deceased. Morphological and archaeometrical analysis made on vessels allowed the understanding of some complex rituals, tied to burial ceremonies: the trefoil-rim jug is func-

¹² In their western Mediterranean area, Phoenicians spread the Assyrian way of drinking wine: in Levantine feasts, flavourings were added to wine, which was blended in a big metal container; then it was given to banqueters. Finally, they consumed it mostly with carinated bowls, which were useful to collect sediments (Botto 2013: 118).

¹³ The Greek *skyphos* was early and enthusiastically adopted by Phoenician craftsmen and adapted for the Phoenician clientele of colonial settlements, without changing the original way of drinking wine. The study of these Greek drinking vessels or their imitations shows the degree of acceptance and adaptation by Levantine or Iberian communities and so, a possible existence of mixed Eastern, Hellenic and indigenous clientele within *emporion* (Docter 2014: 65-67).

tional for pouring liquids like water or wine, while organic remains found in a mushroom-rim jug revealed that it carried more viscous substances, possibly perfumed oils.

This ceramic set was common in Levantine coastal necropolis and it was found, with little additions, in the richest Iron Age tombs of *Niveau III* at Khaldé, at Akhziv, at Tell 'Arqa and in many Cypriote sites (Kition, Ayia Irini, Salamina, Idalion).

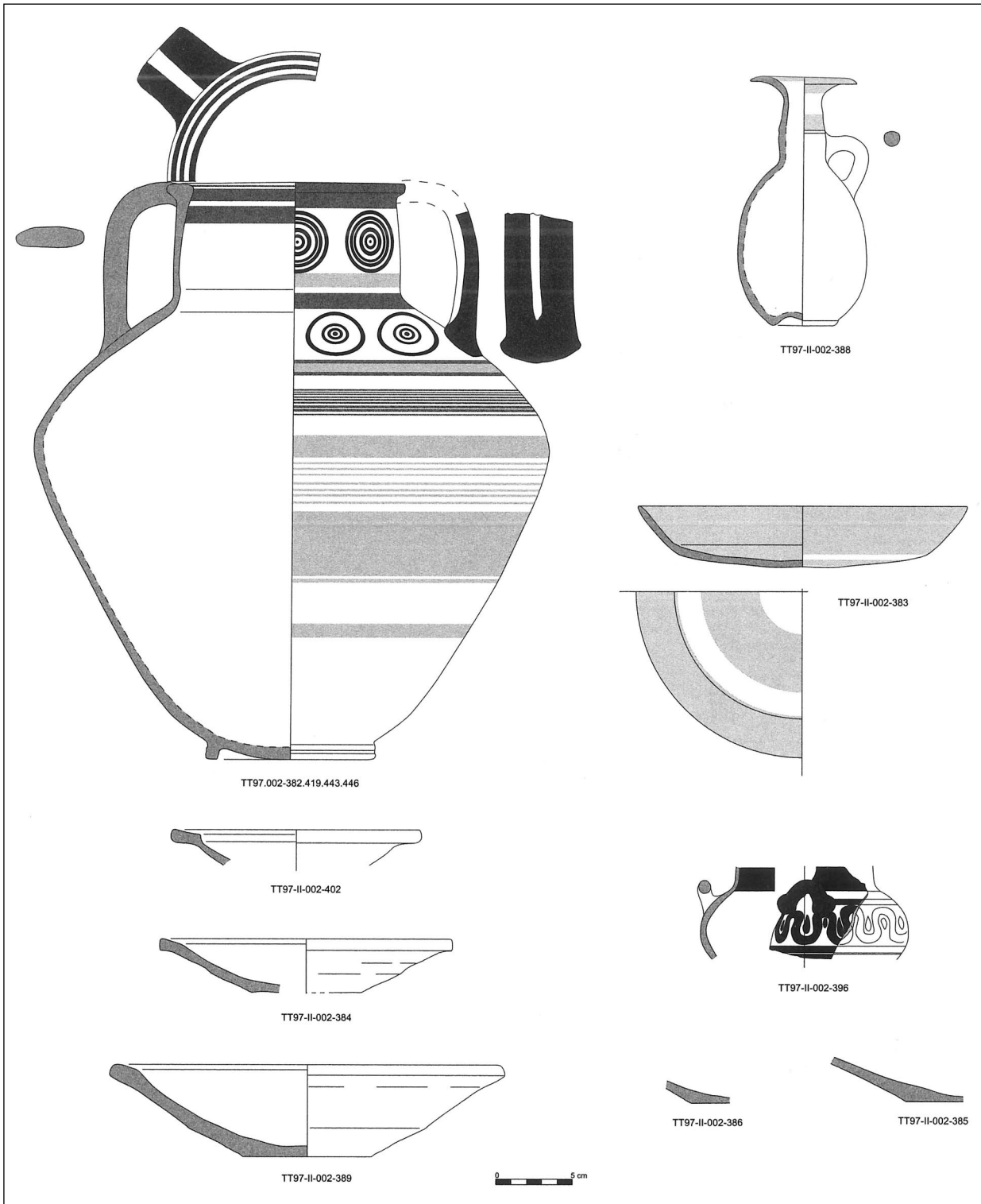


Fig. 6. Ceramic assemblage from *Tomb 8* at Tyre-al Bass (Nuñez 2004: fig. 58).

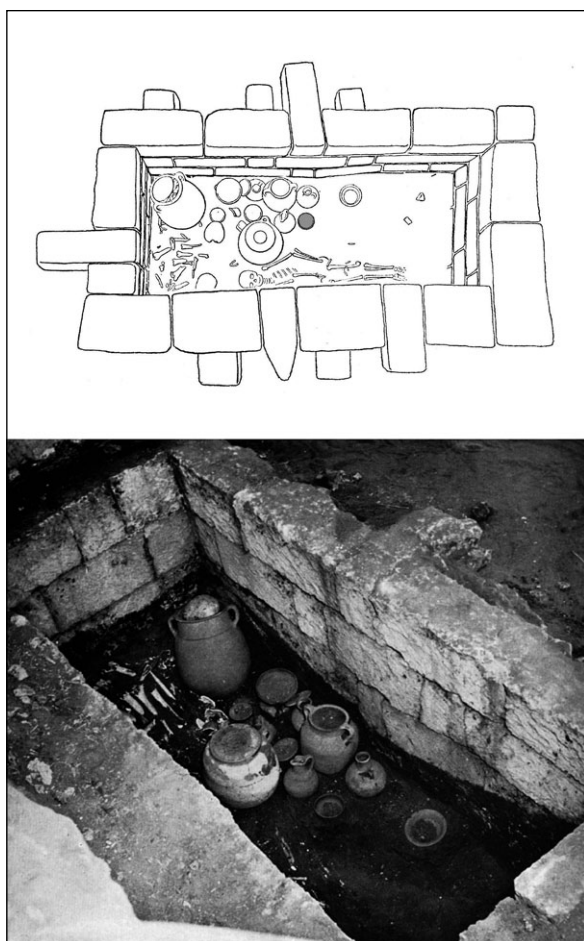


Fig. 7. *Tombe 121* from Khaldé, with *FWB 1* in grey (Aubet 2012: fig. 1).

Small variations in ceramic assemblage are present, even if the drinking function is always unmistakable. In *Tombe 4* at Khaldé, a Phoenician Fine Ware bowl was matched to a little jar, a bottle with a convex base and a so-called pilgrim flask, while collective *Tombe 121* (fig. 7) owned, among many other vessels, some painted *oinochoes*, typical Greek jugs to pour wine. In Akhziv's *Tomb N.1*, the assemblage was made up of six Fine Ware bowls (*FWB 1*, *FWB 5*), several pilgrim flasks, trefoil-rim and mushroom-rim jugs, a jar with carinated shoulder, many red-slipped shapes and some Cypriote imported jugs.

In the rest of the Mediterranean, ceramic repertoires changed but they kept their connection with drinking. The Greek *skyphoi*, the *askoi* together with the so-called necked vessels from Sardinia, as well as the "Sant'Imbenia" jars, again refer to wine consumption, preservation and transport. In the *emporion* sites of Huelva and Sant'Imbenia, Euboean "à chevrons" and pendant semi-circu-



Fig. 8. A pendant semi-circular *skyphos* from Sant'Imbenia (Botto 2013: fig. 16).

lar *skyphoi* (fig. 8), dated to 800-760 BC, with the aforementioned Nuragic pottery, were found displaying this diversity¹⁴.

Conclusions

This paper has aimed primarily at the creation of a preliminary typology for Phoenician Fine Ware bowls. Then, in an attempt to frame this pottery historically, it displayed how Fine Ware was present on the first ships which sailed West in the Mediterranean during the early Iron Age. Its role in basic social customs in the Near East, Greece, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula is no lesser than

¹⁴ Nuragic preservation and transport shapes revealed a deep connection between the two contexts: a dynamic wine production in Sardinia coincided to its commercialization in Iberian markets, mainly through Phoenician ships, which brought also Levantine-born vineyards in the western Mediterranean (Botto 2013: 121).

that of the Cypriote or Euboean shapes. Moreover, their combined presence showed the spread of these drinking habits in different cultural substrata, as the Israelite kingdom or Iberian chiefdoms. Outside of the Near East, Phoenician Fine Ware was mostly found in the earlier levels: we may presume that establishing good relations with indigenous powers was more beneficial to trade, in setting up a port of trade or *emporium*, rather than a proper settlement. More light could come from archaeometrical analyses: research on the physical and chemical composition of fabrics, type and size of inclusions and firing have been done recently on Levantine finds (Lehmann 2006: 23-24; Singer-Avitz 2010: 194-196), as well as Iberian and African ones (Behrendt, Mielke 2011; De Rosa 2013). They could supply additional indications on the origin, production and circulation dynamics of Fine Ware, potentially identifying also the precise centres of production. The end of production of the Phoenician Fine Ware was tied to the historical dynamics of the 7th century in the Near East. The crisis of Levantine workshops, due to the Assyrian policy of tributes, the mass deportations of skilled labour and general destructions resulted in a decrease in production and trade of many luxury goods, including red-slipped pottery (and Phoenician Fine Ware bowls). Finally, Babylonian plunders, in the early 6th century BC, gave the *coup de grâce* to the Levantine cities and, so, to their craftsmanship. Phoenician *emporion* and colonies in the West took advantage of this political and trading *vacuum* by becoming more autonomous (Aubet 2009: 275). In particular, the expansion policy of Carthage in the former Tyrian-controlled waters wiped out what remained of the previous Levantine commercial supremacy, starting a new cultural and economic *koiné*, clearly reflected in the archaeological (especially ceramic) evidence.

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