

# ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

SUPPLEMENT 36

## CERAMICS OF THE PHOENICIAN-PUNIC WORLD: COLLECTED ESSAYS

Edited by

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TYPOLOGICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL REMARKS  
UPON SOME VESSELS IN THE REPERTOIRE OF POTTERY  
IN PUNIC MALTA

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in Phoenician and Punic pottery of Malta<sup>1</sup> can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century and to the first three decades of the twentieth century, when Caruana, Mayr and Zammit published contributions on this subject. Although other material was published by Baldacchino in 1951–1953, considerable progress concerning our understanding of Phoenician and Punic pottery in Malta was made by the excavations of the Italian Mission to Malta in 1963; new pottery shapes and types were identified and a typology of the ceramics found in the sanctuary of Astarte in Tas-Silġ was proposed.<sup>2</sup> Antonia Ciasca, who focused her attention on the complex issues related to the Phoenician and Punic pottery in Malta, stressed in many papers<sup>3</sup> the distinctive feature of the Maltese repertoire in comparison with those of other Phoenician and Punic sites of the Western and Central Mediterranean area, such as Carthage and Mozia. In particular, she underlined that morphology and decoration of Punic pottery were closely related and that morphology often depended upon foreign (mainly Greek) models.

In the 1990s, a renewed interest on the subject led to the publication of new studies, noteworthy among which are the works of Pablo Vidal González<sup>4</sup> and Claudia Sagona<sup>5</sup> concerning the pottery from tombs and from some private collections. Other researches have been focused on the pottery found during the Italian excavations in the 1960s,<sup>6</sup> and particular attention has been given to the Punic pottery attested in the

<sup>1</sup> For a synthesis on Phoenician and Punic pottery in Malta, see Quercia 2007, pp. 336–338.

<sup>2</sup> Rossignani 1972, pp. 47–70.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Ciasca 1982, Ciasca 1985, Ciasca 1999, Ciasca 2000. For a complete bibliography of Antonia Ciasca, see Piacentini 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Vidal González 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Sagona 1996–1997, 2002 and 2003. See also the contribution from the recent excavations of the University of Malta in the Southern area of the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ, Sagona 2000.

<sup>6</sup> About the amphorae, Bruno 2004. About the cooking pots, Quercia 2000, 2002a. On the Pantellerian Ware, Quercia 2006. On the archaic Greek pottery, Semeraro 2002.

Tas-Silġ sanctuary.<sup>7</sup> The aim of the present paper is to make some remarks on typology and chronology of some of the most attested open shapes of the Maltese Punic morphological repertoire between the fifth and the first century BC. My attention will be especially focused on table vessels such as plates, cups, bowls, small plates and small cups; I will try to detect the main trends and differences in typology and technology, analysing the Maltese evidence found both in burials and sacred contexts, I also will try to detect, when possible, distributive patterns of shapes and types in the various contexts.

## PLATES

Plates are one of the best-represented shapes in the Maltese morphological repertoire; some of the types identified seem to occur more frequently, even if with some important distinctions in their distribution.

Within the fifth century BC, when the production of the Red Slip ware that had characterised the previous period (eighth–sixth century BC) is almost at its final point, a new type of plate, characterised by a thick and flat rim, is introduced in the Maltese morphological repertoire; the central depression in the middle of the floor is still wide and rather deep, even if it is smaller than the one found in most of the red slip vessels. This type of plate has, on its surface, a typical pinkish white, cream or very pale brown (7.5 YR 7/8; 10 YR 7/8) thick polished slip; the surface of the first examples of this production, with a red clay (2.5 YR 6/6–6/8), is not slipped but simply polished.<sup>8</sup> The rim can be decorated by wide or thin bands, red or purple in colour. This shape is documented, presumably between the fifth and the third century BC, by a number of different types.

One of the best-attested types (Fig. 1:1) is characterised by a thick and flat rim, rounded off at its extremity; the rim has an almost horizontal stance, or is slightly tilted. It is quite common at Tas-Silġ, where it appears already in the fifth century BC, but it is found especially in deposits of the fourth and the third century BC,<sup>9</sup> and in funerary assemblages ranging in date between 510 and 300 BC.<sup>10</sup> Parallels outside the Maltese archipelago are rare; similar plates come from Carthage,<sup>11</sup> from

<sup>7</sup> The Phoenician and Punic pottery from the 1963–1970s excavations was the subject of my Phd thesis *Ricerche sui santuario di Tas Silġ (Malta). Analisi funzionale e spaziale del complesso di eta storica* (Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, 14<sup>th</sup> Cycle), discussed in 2002 (forthcoming): Quercia 2002b. For a preliminary presentation of this work, see Quercia 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Ciasca 2000, p. 1289.

<sup>9</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 342, fig. 2 (type 2).

<sup>10</sup> Sagona 2002, p. 210 (Form III:2).

<sup>11</sup> Vegas 1987, p. 401, fig. 10, no. 183 (from Carthago, middle fifth century BC); Lancel 1987, p. 102, Type 121a, pl. 1 (from Carthago, third century BC; the vase presents a banded decoration).

Sardinia<sup>12</sup> and from Jardin;<sup>13</sup> all the examples quoted have the same chronological range of the Maltese examples.

A second type of plate (**Fig. 1:2**) has a thick and short rim, indistinct and flattened at the extremity, and it is endowed with a little deep depression in the floor. This type, which has many variants, is very common in Tas-Silġ<sup>14</sup> especially between the fourth and the first half of the third century BC, and occurs, probably with reduced frequency, in Maltese funerary assemblages dated between 410 and 300 BC;<sup>15</sup> few are the comparisons, which can be established with vessels found outside the Maltese islands and it is probable that this type should be considered as local.<sup>16</sup>

Very frequent is also a third type of plate characterised by a broader and thinner rim (**Fig. 1:3**); the depression in the floor is narrower and deeper than other types. Its chronological range is difficult to establish. According to Claudia Sagona, this type of plate appears in Maltese funeral assemblages in the sixth century BC,<sup>17</sup> but similar plates are also documented in later graves, whose contents must altogether be dated to the period between the third century BC and the first century AD.<sup>18</sup> This type seems to occur in the Tas-Silġ deposits between the fifth and the third century BC;<sup>19</sup> some examples, morphologically very near to this type, but endowed with a semi-polished or flourey slip, come from Late Hellenistic levels (from the second half of the second to the middle of the first century BC)<sup>20</sup> and could be later; they could document therefore a long period of use with a substantial continuity in the shape and a change in the surface treatment. Many parallels can be found with plates from contexts outside Malta, in particular with Sardinian vessels of the fifth and the fourth century BC.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bartoloni, Tronchetti 1981, p. 81, no. 82.14.2, fig. 9; p. 101, no. 232.35.3, fig. 15 (from Nora, fourth century BC); Bartoloni 2000, p. 82, Form 3, fig. 1:3 (from Tuvixeddu, end fifth–fourth century BC).

<sup>13</sup> Schubart 1976, pl. 35, no. 9 (sixth–fourth century BC).

<sup>14</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 342, fig. 5 (type 5). Vases of this types have also been found in the recent excavation in the Southern Area of the sanctuary by the University of Malta; they have been dated to the fourth century BC on: Sagona 2000, p. 91, fig. 12:1.

<sup>15</sup> See especially the plate recovered in the tomb found near Mriehel: Sagona 2002, pp. 871–872, fig. 50:4 (Form III-IV:1).

<sup>16</sup> See a plate from Nora (fifth century BC): Bartoloni, Tronchetti 1981, p. 83, no. 91.15.9, fig. 9.

<sup>17</sup> A plate of this type found in a tomb in Paola (no. 320) is in association with material of the fifth and fourth BC; it cannot be ruled out that the plate could be dated to same period: Sagona 2002, pp. 899–900, fig. 76.4 (Form II:1).

<sup>18</sup> A couple of vessels were found in two tombs at Rabat, New Street, where they were used as lids for funerary urns: Sagona 2002, p. 978, no. 3c, fig. 148, 10 (tomb with material of Phases IV, V and VI), p. 983, no. 3b, fig. 152, no. 7 (tomb with funerary assemblages belonging to Phases IV and V).

<sup>19</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 342, fig. 7, type 3.

<sup>20</sup> Compare the distribution of the type 3 plate in Querela 2007, p. 343, fig. 4. See also: Quercia 2002b, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Bartoloni 1983, p. 48, fig. 5a (from Monte Sirai, middle of the fifth–to the first half of the fourth BC); Bartoloni, Tronchetti 1981, p. 76, no. 43.7.3, fig. 8; p. 92, no. 156.25.2, fig. 12; p. 99, no. 221.33.5, fig. 14 (from Nora, fourth century BC); Bartoloni 1996, p. 188, no. 189, fig. 22 (from Bitia, middle fourth century BC); Campanella 2003, p. 119, fig. 6, 11 (from Sulcis, “area del Cronicario”);

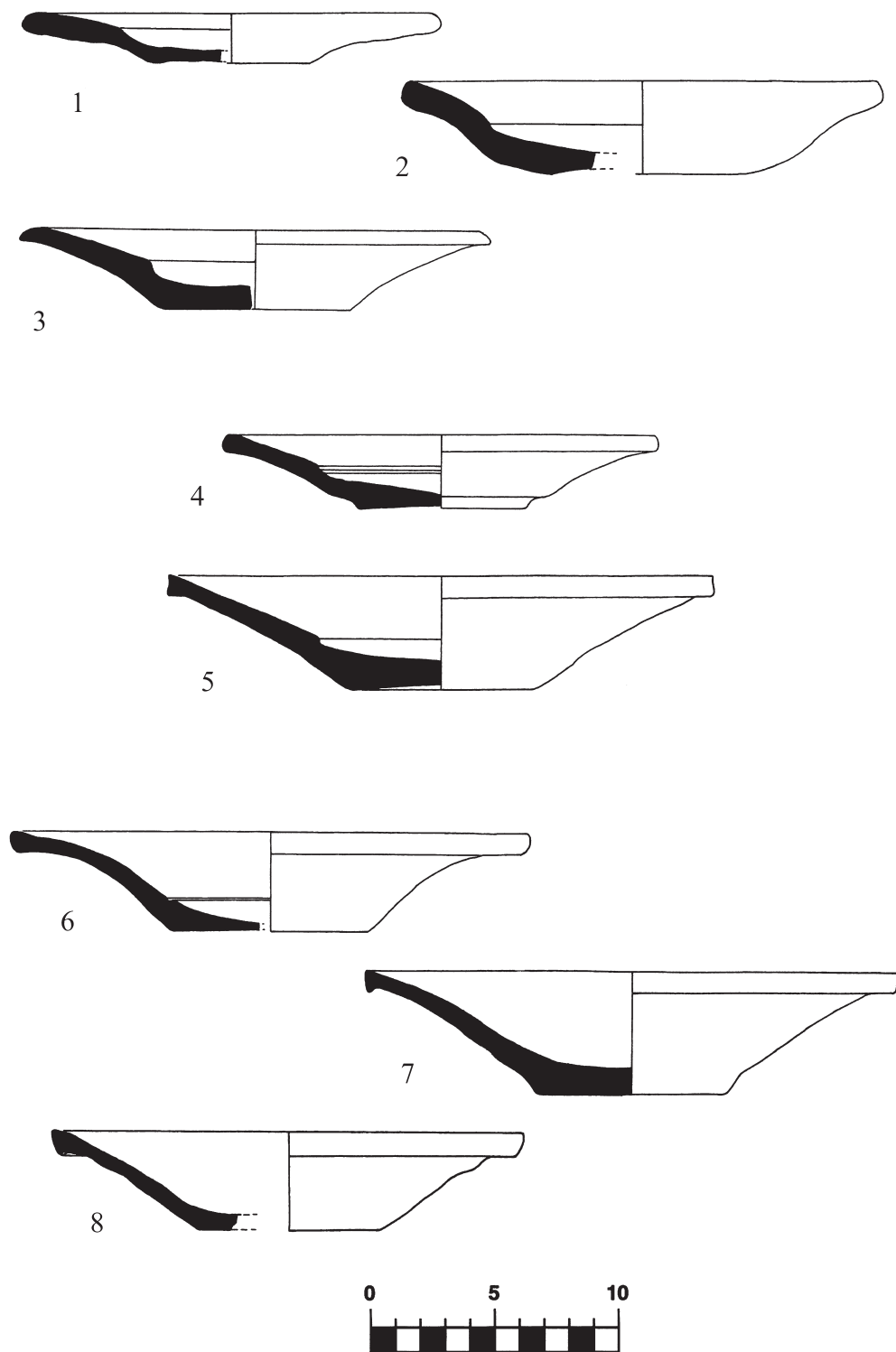


Fig. 1. Plates from Tas-Silg (from Quercia 2007, fig. 5).

Between the fifth and the third century BC plates with a concentric, more or less wide, red to purple (10R 5/6, 2.5YR 4/4) banded decoration applied on the slipped surface of the rim become very popular. Among them the best attested type is characterised by a wide, slightly pendant rim and a rather narrow depression in the middle of the floor; they have been found both in graves<sup>22</sup> and in the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ.<sup>23</sup> This type of plate could be hypothetically modelled on fish-plates of Greek<sup>24</sup> or South-Italian<sup>25</sup> production; it could be interpreted as an example of elaboration of a foreign shape that often characterised the Maltese ceramic repertoire;<sup>26</sup> some scholars have proposed a Punic origin for the Greek shape that would have, in turn, determined “*un’influenza di ritorno sulla produzione punica*”.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps within the second half of the third and the beginning of the second century BC new types of plates, endowed with thin walls and a shallow angular depression, were introduced. The new treatment of the surface is connected to morphological changes<sup>28</sup>; the polished and uniform slip of the earliest plates is replaced, in later vessels, by an uneven covering of similar, but rather floury or rough colour that can be in some vessels omitted.

To this group can also be attributed the type characterised by a short thin rim, with curvilinear and indistinct extremity (**Fig. 1:4**), perhaps already introduced in the fourth century BC,<sup>29</sup> as seem to be confirmed by parallels with vessels from other Punic contexts of the Mediterranean.<sup>30</sup> The plate with a thinner and longer wall and an offset rim (**Fig. 1:5**) has a number of variants; it is one of the best-represented types<sup>31</sup> in the Late Roman Republic levels (beginning from the second half the second down to the first half the first century BC) at Tas-Silġ. Nonetheless an earlier chronology cannot

Lancel 1968, p. 135, fig. 111 (fifth century BC); Schubart 1979, p. 194, fig. 12.a (from Morro di Mezquitha, sixth/fifth century BC).

<sup>22</sup> This type can be compared with vessels dated from the end of the fifth to the end of the fourth century BC: Sagona 2002, p. 1106, fig. 236, nos 1–2 (from Tal Horr), See also a plate from a tomb discovered near Ghajn Tuffieha, attributed to Phase IV (300–100 BC) but in association with material of the Phases III–IV: Sagona 2002, p. 814, no. 4, fig. 28.3 (Form IV:1).

<sup>23</sup> Rossignani 1972, p. 54, fig. 11:5.

<sup>24</sup> The Attic production starts at the end of the fifth century BC and continues until the Late Hellenistic period: Sparkes and Talcott 1970, pp. 147–148; Rotroff 1997, pp. 146–149.

<sup>25</sup> Morel 1981, pp. 82–87, series 1121–1127.

<sup>26</sup> On the subject, see Antonia Ciasca (1999; 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Campanella 1999, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Ciasca 1999, pp. 77 and 79; Ciasca 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 342, type 14 (note 27). A vessel found in a fourth century BC tomb at Rabat (New Street), known only through a photograph, could be referred to the same type, Sagona 2002, p. 978, no. 2b, fig. 148:5.

<sup>30</sup> Lancel 1987, pp. 102–103, type 121, (from Carthage, fourth– first half of the second century BC); De Miro, Fiorentini 1977, p. 22, no. 26, pl. XIV (from Leptis Magna, end of the fourth–beginning of the third century BC); Cappai, Chessa, Tronchetti 1992, pl. 38, no. 156/623 e 157/514 (from Cagliari, second half of the fourth BC).

<sup>31</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 342, type 15.

be excluded. Vessels of this type were recovered in the third–second centuries BC levels excavated in 1970 in the Northern area of the sanctuary<sup>32</sup> and, more recently, in the Southern area of the sanctuary, where they have been dated from the fourth century BC onwards.<sup>33</sup> Rather noteworthy is the substantial absence of this type in funerary assemblages. Exact chronological parallels to the Maltese type cannot be found; similarities can be established with a third/second century BC plate from Lilibeo,<sup>34</sup> and with a fourth/third BC plate from Hamman El Enf (Libya).<sup>35</sup>

Similar considerations can also be made for other more recent types that can be dated from the first century BC onwards, which continue to be documented in the following century. There is a change in the treatment of the vessel surface. Some plates are still characterised by a thick flourey or rough and rather irregular slip, but most of them are left plain. Some types have a simple groove in place of the central depression, as in the large plate with undulated body and a thickened rim (**Fig. 1:6**),<sup>36</sup> and the plate with thin walls, undulated profile and rim with triangular and slightly pendant section (**Fig. 1:7**)<sup>37</sup>; in another type (**Fig. 1:8**)<sup>38</sup> the groove disappears and the plate has the form of a bowl.

The types just mentioned are well represented in the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ, while they occur only sporadically in the Maltese graves; the type in **Figure 1:6** is documented in a grave recovered at Ta Qali in 1975 and ranging in date from the end of the first century BC to the Tiberian period,<sup>39</sup> while the type in **Figure 1:7** has been recovered inside a grave at Rabat (Triq Ferris) in association with objects of different chronology, between which the latest material belongs to the first half of the first century AD.<sup>40</sup> As for the plate in **Figure 1:5**, also the later types do not find exact parallels outside Malta.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See seriation analysis of the plates from the stratified sequence at the North of ‘vano 4’: Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Sagona 2000, p. 91, fig. 12:2.

<sup>34</sup> Bechtold 1993, pp. 46–47, 1.2, pl. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Cherif 1992–1993, p. 91, fig. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 5, type 20.

<sup>37</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 5, type 21.

<sup>38</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 5, type 22.

<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to Anthony Pace (Superintendent of Cultural Heritage) and Nathaniel Cutajar (curator of Superintendence of Cultural Heritage) for the opportunity to examine the funerary assemblages preserved in the deposit of the National Museum of Archaeology, in Valletta, in 2000.

<sup>40</sup> *Museum Annual Report of the Museums Department of Malta*, 1950, pp. 6–7 (Tomb 3 North). The chamber (A) in which the plate has been recovered contains materials for which Claudia Sagona has proposed the attribution to Phases IV and V (from 300 BC to the middle of the first century BC), together with fragments belonging to earlier assemblages; Sagona 2002, pp. 1051–1053. I think that this plate can be better attributed to the most recent deposition.

<sup>41</sup> Slightly similar to the plate at the fig 1.8 is a vessel from Carthage, called ‘mortier’: Lancel 1987, p. 105, pl. 5, 151c3 (the vessel has been dated to the second quarter of the second century BC). See also a plate from Termini Imerese, dated to the end of the first century BC, Belvedere, Burgio, Macaluso and Rizzo 1993, p. 136, no. 1072.

## CUPS

A new type of cup with hemispherical profile and an indistinct, thinned rim appears in the Maltese pottery morphological repertoire<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 2:1–2); the bottom is flat or with a disc base; some vessels have two horizontal and round-sectioned handles below the rim. The surface has a red polished clay or, otherwise, a creamy and pinkish white slip, and it is in both cases very similar to contemporary plates. The internal surface can be decorated by thin concentric, red or purple bands. As already pointed out by Antonia Ciasca,<sup>43</sup> the morphology of these cups is modelled upon black glaze vessels of Greek production,<sup>44</sup> while the treatment of the surface follows the Maltese tradition, that prefers clear surfaces avoiding any attempt to imitate the Greek black glaze. Such phenomenon of local elaboration of non-Phoenician models had already characterised the cups with distinct rim,<sup>45</sup> chronologically earlier than the hemispherical cups.

The hemispherical cup is very common both in graves and in Tas-Silġ votive deposits. Vessels of this type (both slipped or decorated with painted bands) are part of Maltese funerary assemblages already at the end of the fifth century BC,<sup>46</sup> but they occur more frequently in the fourth and third centuries BC and perhaps also later (second century BC?).<sup>47</sup> Many vessels of this type were found in the excavations of the Italian Mission between 1963 and 1970;<sup>48</sup> other cups dated between 500 and 300 BC<sup>49</sup> have been recovered in recent excavations of the Southern area by the University of Malta, Outside Malta there is a similar type of cup in plain pottery at Mozia, in contexts of the fourth/third century BC.<sup>50</sup>

Contemporary to the kylix just described is a second type of cup with a thinned rim, deep body and flat bottom (Fig. 2:3); no examples with banded decoration have been identified. This type is quite common in the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ<sup>51</sup> but does not seem to be documented in funerary assemblages. The identification of a formal model of reference for this type is not an easy task; it recalls cups of Punic tradition, often decorated with painted bands and attested from the late fifth century to the beginning

<sup>42</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, (type 2), fig. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ciasca 2000, p. 1289; Ciasca 1999, p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> See especially Attic kylikes (stemless cups), produced starting from the second quarter of the fifth century BC (Sparkes and Talcott 1970, pp. 98–105) and South-Italian productions of the fourth century BC.

<sup>45</sup> For this shape, see Ciasca 2000, p. 1288.

<sup>46</sup> Sagona 2002, p. 198, kylix Form III:2.

<sup>47</sup> Sagona 2002, p. 198, kylix Form III–IV:1; p. 199, kylix Form IV:2.

<sup>48</sup> Rossignani 1972, p. 51, fig. 9, no. 12–13; Rossignani 1973, fig. 19, nos 6, 7–8; Ciasca 1999, p. 77, fig. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Sagona 2000, p. 89, fig. 10:5.

<sup>50</sup> Vecchio 2002, p. 243, type 101, pl. 31:2.

<sup>51</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 7, type 3.

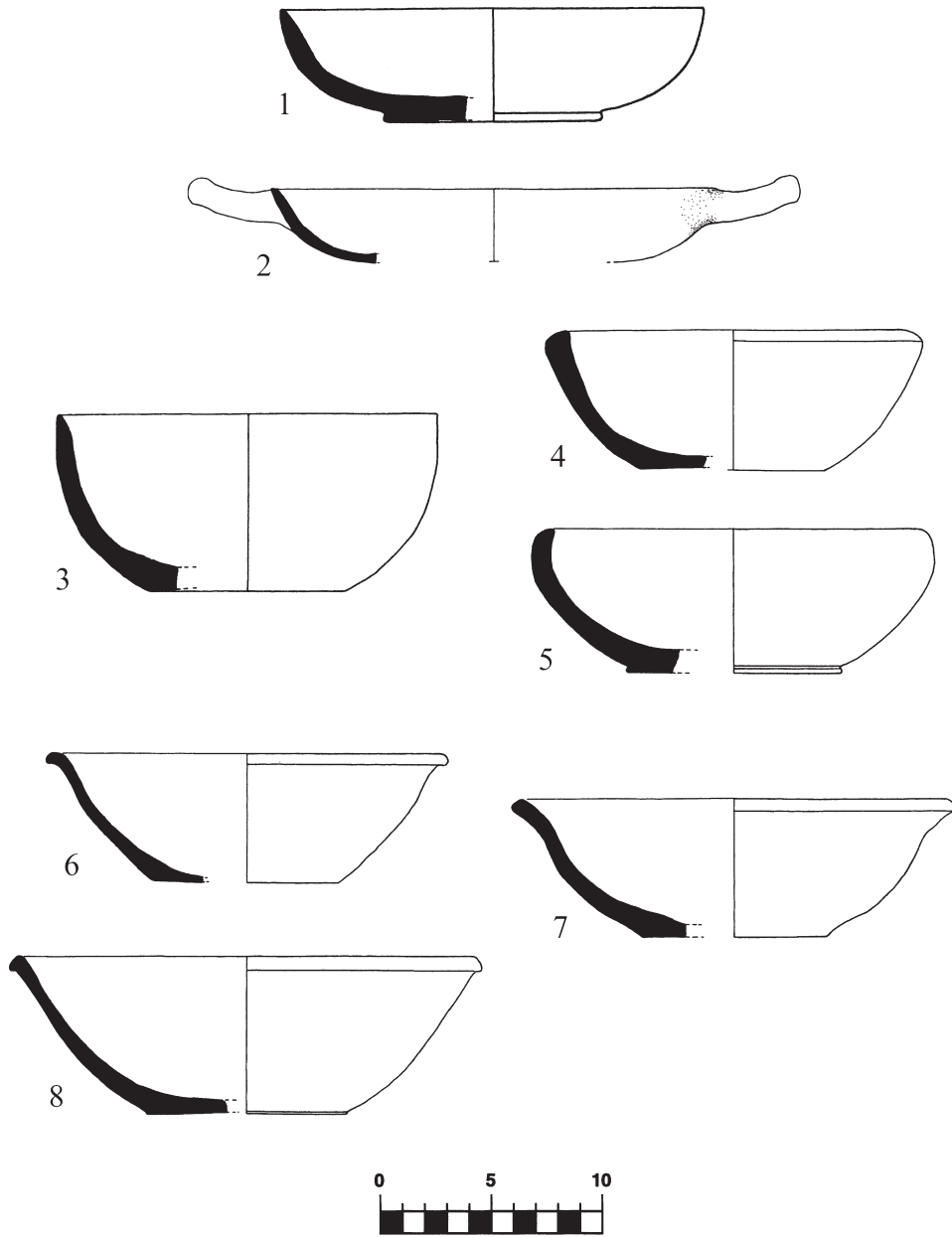


Fig. 2. Cups from Tas-Silg (from Quercia 2007, fig. 7).

of the Hellenistic period<sup>52</sup> but, as already underlined by Antonia Ciasca,<sup>53</sup> its morphology finds also good parallels with Greek black glaze shapes such as the bolsal, produced in Athens from the third quarter of the fifth to the end of the fourth century BC.<sup>54</sup>

Also the cup with thickened rim (Fig. 2:4) and the cup with thinned and inward curving rim (Fig. 2:5), ranging in date between the fifth and the third century BC, depend upon Greek models.<sup>55</sup> The first type, documented at Tas-Silġ by a certain number of variants<sup>56</sup> and, with reduced frequency, in Maltese funerary assemblages,<sup>57</sup> can be compared with cups from a Carthaginian context of the last quarter of the fifth century BC,<sup>58</sup> from Nora (fourth century BC),<sup>59</sup> and from Mozia (late fourth/third century BC);<sup>60</sup> some examples of smaller dimensions, characterised by a slip of floury consistency, could be more recent. The cup with in-turned rim, less common in Tas-Silġ than the others types previously described are frequently attested in Punic contexts of the central and western Mediterranean especially between the fourth and the third centuries BC.<sup>61</sup>

As already pointed out for the plates, it is possible to verify, starting from the second century BC, the introduction of new types of cups, which can be distinguished from the previous examples both for morphology and for surface treatment. The most common type of cup in the Tas-Silġ deposits of the second half the second and the first century BC (Fig. 2:6–8)<sup>62</sup> is characterised by truncated conical body with expanded walls. The external surface of walls has pronounced horizontal ribbing; the base is always flat and indistinct. Another characteristic of this type of cup is the

<sup>52</sup> On this type see Vegas 1999, pp. 139–140, Bechtold 2007, pp. 347–350. Good parallels are Bartoloni and Tronchetti 1981, p. 87, no. 116.16.18, fig. 10 (from Nora, fourth century BC); Belen, Fernandez-Miranda 1979, p. 56, no. 3, fig. 23 (from Cales Coves at Minorca, fourth century BC).

<sup>53</sup> Ciasca 2000, p. 1289, fig. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Sparkes and Talcott 1970 pp. 107–108, fig. 6, nos 532–557. The black glaze type is largely attested also in Western Greek settlements; see, for example, Bernabó Brea, Cavalier 1965, p. 57, tomb 164, pl. c. 2 (from Lipari, fifth–beginning fourth century BC).

<sup>55</sup> Ciasca 2000, p. 1289, fig. 4. The type characterised by a in-turned rim can be compared to Greek black glaze hemispherical bowls of the fourth–third centuries BC: Rotroff 1997, pp. 162–163, no. 1019.

<sup>56</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 343, fig. 7, type 4.

<sup>57</sup> It is similar to the bowl Form IV: I b (300–100 BC) of the classification made by Sagona (2002, fig. 346, no. 23).

<sup>58</sup> Vegas 1999, p. 114, no. 16, fig. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Bartoloni, Tronchetti 1981, p. 77, no. 50.8.1, fig. 8.

<sup>60</sup> Vecchio 2002, p. 243, type 103, pl. 31:4.

<sup>61</sup> Vecchio 2002, p. 243, type 105, pl. 31:7 (Mozia, in contexts of the fourth–third centuries BC); Finocchi 2003, p. 43, type IV, pl. 5/3 (from Nora, late fourth–second century BC); Bartoloni 2000, p. 87, Form 17, fig. 2:17 (from Tuvixeddu); De Miro, Polito 2005, p. 252, FV 180/93, pl. 42 (from Leptis Magna, second half of the second–second half of the first century BC); Belen, Fernandez-Miranda 1979, p. 42, no. 11, fig. 16 (from Cales Coves, Balearic Islands, fourth–third centuries BC); Vuilleumot 1965, p. 395, no. 2 (from Les Andalouses, fourth–third centuries BC).

<sup>62</sup> Quercia 2007, pp. 343–344, fig. 7, type 7.

absence of an evenly polished slip; some of the examples have a rough and floury slip both inside and outside. This type of cup and its numerous variants, which range in date from 300 to 100 BC, is frequently attested in Tas-Silġ deposits, while it is less common in funerary assemblages.<sup>63</sup>

Few are the parallels that can be compared with vessels from other Punic contexts and most of them have got a different chronological.<sup>64</sup> It cannot be ruled out that this type could also be considered a local elaboration of black glaze shapes produced from the third century BC<sup>65</sup> onwards.

## BOWLS

Another open shape attested in the Maltese morphological repertoire is the bowl; this shape can be distinguished from cups by the larger diameter and lower height of the body.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most common types is the bowl with carinated body, of Phoenician tradition, and common in Malta from the eighth century BC<sup>67</sup> onwards. The earliest examples, attested in funerary assemblages, are characterised by a thinned vertical rim and a ring base; the clay is usually of reddish yellow colour with fine white inclusion (Reddish Yellow Gritty Ware in the fabric classification by Claudia Sagona) and with a thick, plain slip.<sup>68</sup> Some of the bowls, which can be ascribed to the same type, but are probably of a later chronology,<sup>69</sup> have a red slip or red bands painted on a pale slip. Fragments of this type of bowl have been found in the archaic levels of Tas-Silġ (eighth–seventh BC).<sup>70</sup>

A second contemporary type of bowl is similar to the one just described; it has a rounded bottom and the slipped surface is usually decorated by bands painted in red.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 178–179, bowl Form IV:4a, fig. 346, no. 29. The vessels from the tombs can be mainly referred to the end of Phase IV; some of them have been found in contexts of the end of the second/beginning of the first century BC: Sagona 2002, p. 860, no. 4, fig. 45:12 (Mosta, no. 236); p. 949, no. 5, fig. 126:21 (Qormi, no. 384).

<sup>64</sup> Marras 1981, p. 196, fig. 5, no. 6 (from Monte Sirai, end fourth century BC); Campanella 1999, p. 60, no. 68, fig. 9 (from Monte Sirai, third–second century BC); Dore and Keay 1989, pp. 168–169, types 138–139, figs 43 and 45 (from Sabratha, middle/late first century AD) and pp. 178–182, type 162 (first century BC); Canepa 2003, p. 163, type IIC, pl. 49:4 (from Nora, attested between the second century BC and the Late Roman Period).

<sup>65</sup> Rotroff 1997, pp. 158–159, fig. 60, no. 916, p. 334 (250–200 BC); Morel 1981, p. 191, serie 2614 (second century BC).

<sup>66</sup> See fig. 2 in Quercia 2007, p. 341.

<sup>67</sup> On the type and its evolution in Malta, Ciasca 1982, p. 145, fig. 6. On the evidence from the Archaic to the late Punic period at Carthage, see Bechtold 2007, pp. 335, 351–352.

<sup>68</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 170–171, fig. 340, no. 15 (bowl Form I:6b).

<sup>69</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 173–174, fig. 343, no. 8 (bowl Form II: 1).

<sup>70</sup> Semeraro 2007, p. 322, fig. 13, no. 7–8.

<sup>71</sup> Sagona 2002, p. 169, fig. 341, no. 18–19 (bowl Form I:4a–b).

The carinated bowl is still common in the Maltese morphological repertoire in later periods, when new variants characterised by a different treatment of the surface are introduced. Between the fifth and the fourth centuries BC (perhaps even later), a carinated bowl characterised by a thick and uniform pink or yellow slip (7.5YR 8/3; 2.5Y 8/3) was introduced in the repertoire; the surface treatment is similar to that found on contemporary plates and cups. It is present both in funerary assemblages<sup>72</sup> and at Tas-Silġ<sup>73</sup> and can be compared with vessels from Carthage.<sup>74</sup>

A carinated bowl with a thinner rim, sometimes thickened on the inside or, otherwise, slightly in-turned can be assigned to a late period (third to the first century BC); the slip is uneven and powdery, or sometimes absent.<sup>75</sup> Parallels can be established with bowls from Carthage (mainly third and first half of the second century BC)<sup>76</sup> but also from Cagliari,<sup>77</sup> from Monte Sirai,<sup>78</sup> from Henchir Jabess,<sup>79</sup> and, in the Republican and Imperial Roman Period, from Nora.<sup>80</sup>

### SMALL PLATES AND SMALL CUPS

Examples of plates and cups with reduced dimension are also part of the morphological repertoire of the Maltese Punic pottery. These shapes had probably different functions from those of larger dimensions. Technical features in the treatment of the surface and diachronic changes follow those already indicated for plates and cups.

From the fifth century BC onwards a type of small plate with thick walls and a rim that is rolled on inner edge and a flat base (Fig. 3:1) becomes part of the Maltese morphological repertoire. The surface, similar to contemporary plates, is polished or, otherwise, has got a creamy or ivory coloured slip that recalls the slip used in contemporary plates and cups. This type occurs at Tas-Silġ with a large number of vessels between the fifth and the third century BC;<sup>81</sup> even if in reduced quantities, it is also

<sup>72</sup> Sagona 2002, p. 175, fig. 344, no. 6 (bowl Form III:3).

<sup>73</sup> Rossignani 1972, p. 61, fig. 10, no. 9; Quercia 2002b, p. 38.

<sup>74</sup> Vegas 1999, p. 124, no. 12, fig. 18 (from Carthage, context of the second half of the third century BC, but the shape is already attested in the fifth/fourth centuries BC). On the morphology and surface treatment of the carinated bowls in Middle Punic Age, Bechtold 2007, pp. 351–352.

<sup>75</sup> The type is common at Tas-Silġ (Ciasca 1965, fig. 6:1; Quercia 2002b, pp. 38–39), while is less common in funerary assemblages.

<sup>76</sup> Lancel 1987, p. 107, nos 211–212, p. 108, no. 271, pl. 8; Vegas 1991, p. 182, no. 51, fig. 37; Vegas 1999, p. 128, no. 28, fig. 21.

<sup>77</sup> Cappai, Chessa and Tronchetti 1992, pl. 37, no. 148/569 (fourth–third century BC).

<sup>78</sup> Campanella 1999, p. 61, nos 71–72, fig. 9 (Hellenistic period)

<sup>79</sup> Ben Younes 1995, p. 124, fig. 5:1 (second quarter second century BC).

<sup>80</sup> Canepa 2003, p. 162, type Ic, pl. 48:7.

<sup>81</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 344, fig. 8, type 1.

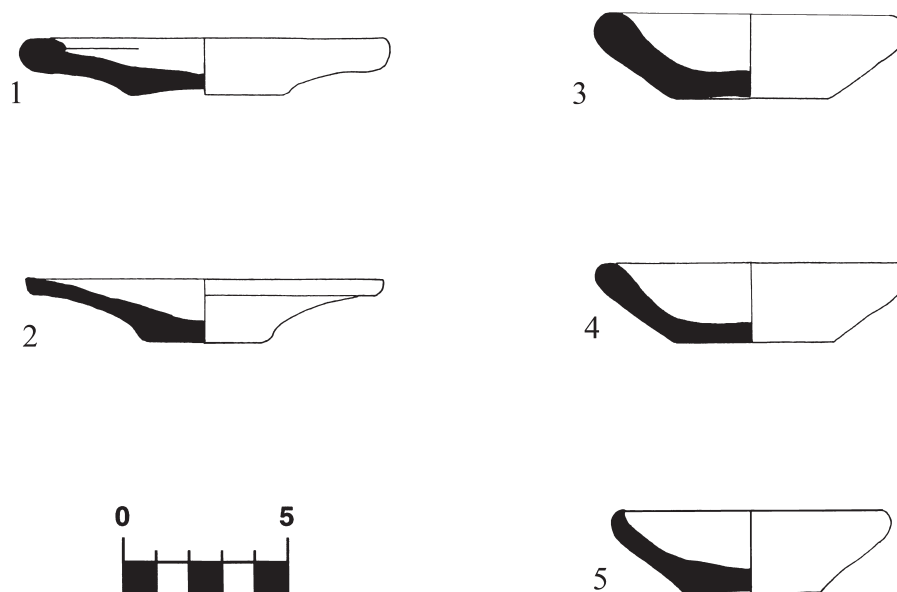


Fig. 3. Small plates and cups from Tas-Silg (Quercia 2007, fig. 9).

part of funerary assemblages ranging in date between 300 and the 100 BC.<sup>82</sup> The type, which, according to Ciasca, was inspired by Greek morphological models, does not find exact parallels outside the Maltese islands.<sup>83</sup>

In the Late Punic period, a type of small plate characterised by a horizontal or slightly inclined body and indistinct rim (Fig. 3:2) was very popular; the surface has an uneven slip, powdery or rough in texture. Vessels of this type as well as its variants, are very frequent both in the Tas-Silg votive deposits<sup>84</sup> and in graves.<sup>85</sup> Its chronological range is comprised between the second half of the second century and at least the middle of the first century AD (and perhaps later).<sup>86</sup> This type is probably a local elaboration without parallels in other Punic pottery repertoires.

<sup>82</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 178–179, bowl Form IV:3d, fig. 346, 28.

<sup>83</sup> The Maltese type can be compared with a small plate from Monte Sirai (middle of the third–second century BC: Campanella 1999, pp. 47–48, no. 38, fig. 6)

<sup>84</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 344, fig. 8, type 5.

<sup>85</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 213, Form IV–V: 1, fig. 347, nos 15–16.

<sup>86</sup> Some vessels of this type have been found in tombs of the necropolis of Tac-Caghqi (no. 17 e 14), in association with material of the first century AD. For the plates from Tomb no. 17, Sagona 2002, p. 988, nos 30–35, fig. 156, nos 21–23 (the occupation of the tomb ranges in date from 300 BC to later than the first century AD).

Analogous comparisons can be made for small cups. The best-documented types<sup>87</sup> for the Middle Punic (fifth to the third centuries BC) phase have curvilinear body, thick walls and a thickened rim (**Fig. 3:3–4**); all the examples have a polished surface or a polished slip. They are probably derived from black glaze models.<sup>88</sup>

In the Late Punic Period (from the second half the second century BC to the first century BC), a new type of small cup in plain pottery with thinner walls and a thinned indistinct rim was created; it is found especially in the Tas-Silġ deposits<sup>89</sup> (**Fig. 3:5**); some of the vessels have an uneven slip, left rough or powdery. Also this type does not find exact parallels with small cups attested from other Punic context.

### CONCLUSIONS

The interpretation of the evidence, here presented does not present a definitive resolution of some problems; in particular, it is not possible to narrow down the chronology of the types analysed. For this purpose other systematic excavations and researches in the Maltese islands are needed.

To sum up, the two interconnected trends already singled out by Antonia Ciasca are confirmed. The Maltese pottery repertoire if compared with other Phoenician and Punic productions, shows in fact a marked peculiarity both in morphological and in technical aspects. Maltese potters manifested already from the earliest phases (eighth–seventh century BC) onwards, a great interest in the imitation (or it would rather be better to speak about an elaboration) of Greek shapes, whose prototypes are seldom attested among the imported material.

Moreover, it seems possible to detect patterns in the distribution of shapes and types in various contexts. Between the fifth and fourth century we have, in fact, a substantial homogeneity in the frequency of the open shape types in funerary assemblages and in votive deposits of the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ. They, in fact, appear in both contexts without quantitative differences; the only exceptions are constituted by the plate with flat and short rim (**Fig. 1:5**), by the cup with thickened rim and by the cup with a deeper body (**Fig. 2:3–4**) that seem to be more common in Tas-Silġ than in the necropoleis.

<sup>87</sup> On their occurrence at Tas-Silġ: Quercia 2007, p. 344, fig. 8, types 1–2. Recent excavations in the Southern Area of the sanctuary have yielded examples that can be dated to the fourth century BC: Sagona 2000, p. 91, fig. 13, 7. For vessels from funerary assemblages (300–100 BC): Sagona 2002, p. 176, fig. 346, no. 22 (Form IV: I a).

<sup>88</sup> See, especially, bowls of Attic production of the second half of the fifth and the fourth century BC: Sparkes, Talcott 1970, p. 136, fig. 9, nos 909–914.

<sup>89</sup> Quercia 2007, p. 344, fig. 8, type 6.

Few are the parallels that can be established with Punic shapes attested outside the Maltese islands; notable exceptions are the carinated bowl and the plate shown in **Figure 1:3**. Instead more consistent are the morphological connections with the Greek black glaze pottery (and particularly with the Athenian and the South-Italian productions), while the black glaze technique is never imitated, but only hinted at through the adoption of a very polished surface.<sup>90</sup>

In the Late Punic period, a change in this homogeneous distribution can be detected. In particular, the principal types of plates and cups (**Figs 1:5–8** and **2:6–8**) attested at Tas-Silġ by a large number of examples and their variants in the second half of the second and the first century BC are poorly documented in graves, while the contemporary small plates are abundant in both contexts. These types are probably the most recent version of the cups and plates produced in the Middle Punic period and they do not find, as in the former phases, exact parallels in other workshops of the Punic region.

Funerary assemblages of the second and first century BC seem to be characterised by the introduction of bowls and cups with rather thin walls and by a red slip, probably of local production; they seem to imitate fine wares shapes of non Punic tradition, probably of Central or Southern Italy, as is the case of the carinated bowl with out-turned<sup>91</sup> or vertical lip<sup>92</sup> and the carinated bowls with vertical rim.<sup>93</sup>

At the present state of our understanding, the reasons for such an evident discrepancy in the distribution of the various types remains uncertain. It could be proposed that the conservatism that often characterises cult places, such as the sanctuary of Astarte at Tas-Silġ with its long history and tradition, could have favoured traditional shapes used in ritual practices, thus influencing the morphological repertoire.<sup>94</sup>

The analysis of other excavated contexts in the Maltese territory is therefore needed in order to compare the data. In particular, domestic contexts<sup>95</sup> could offer new evidence for a better comprehension of distributive dynamics. What is particularly needed is the clarification of the relationship between open shapes of Punic tradition and the Maltese adaptations of foreign shapes related to the Late Punic phase and to the Roman Imperial Period; an aspect not yet studied in detail. As already pointed out for the fifth and fourth century BC, it is possible to detect a discrepancy between the numerous

<sup>90</sup> Ciasca 2000, p. 1289.

<sup>91</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 180–181, bowl Form IV–V:3b, fig. 347, no. 11; pp. 183–184, bowl Form VA, fig. 348, no. 32.

<sup>92</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 179–180, bowl Form IV–V2a, fig. 347, no. 8.

<sup>93</sup> Sagona 2002, pp. 182–183, bowl Form V2a–b, fig. 348, nos 28–29.

<sup>94</sup> The new types from the second and first century BC funerary assemblages are common also in the Tas-Silġ morphological repertoire.

<sup>95</sup> Many fragments that can be ascribed to the new types identified in the tombs have been found also in the excavation of the Roman villa of San Pawl Milqi by the *Missione Italiana a Malta* between 1963 and 1968; Rossignani 1965, fig. 10, nos 1–2, 4.

local developments and the amount of the corresponding imports of Greek models. In addition in the latest phases, imports of fine wares such as Late Hellenistic black glaze pottery, or thin-walled, Italic and Eastern terra sigillata are scarce. A detailed analysis of these local imitations/adaptations, focused on surface treatment from a technical point of view — for example, the use of the red slip as opposed to plain slip — would be of the utmost interest in understanding the use of foreign models, the cultural and socio-economic motivations that influenced the change and the increase of these new local products in comparison to the traditional Punic repertoire.

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