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Balkan influences in the Neolithic of Northern Italy *

ABSTRACT

Balkan influences in the Neolithic of northern Italy are particularly active during the IV millennium bc Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture in the form of stamp seals («pintaderas») and figurines as well as pottery decorations characteristic of the dalmatian Cultures. Venuses are also present in early Neolithic times being exclusive of the Po Plain and Alpine cultural groups.

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The end of the Mesolithic

The appearance of industries with trapezes and denticulated blades coincides with the beginning of the Atlantic climatic phase. Assemblages of this horizon, which Kozłowski (1975) includes in the Castelnovian Culture, are well known in the north Italian areas of the Trentino (BROGLIO 1971), the Trieste Karst (CREMONESI et al 1973) and in the Tuscan and Emilian Apennines (BIAGI et al 1980).

The most complete sequence for the Mesolithic known to date in northern Italy is that from the rock shelter of Romagnano III in the

Adige Valley where excavations carried out over the last decade have revealed a long succession of Mesolithic levels covering the Pre-Boreal, Boreal and Atlantic periods. During this last climatic stage, in layers AB and AA, industries with trapezes appear, which are characterised by the scalene, rectangular and isosceles trapezes themselves, the denticulated blades, the truncated tools and end scrapers of various types, while the microburin technique is also very much in evidence. In the earlier layers of the same site we see the evolution of an industry with triangles, called by some the Sauveterrian, on account of its affinities with the Culture of the Paris Basin (ROZOY 1978). This, in the Adige Valley, presents many types for a period of almost two thousand years, although in the Pre-Boreal microlithic isosceles triangles occur which are unknown in the following climatic period. Boreal industries are known not only on the valley floors and in the Po Plain, in the latter case as isolated finds, but also at quite high altitudes as at the Colbricon pass (BAGOLINI et al 1975) in the Trentino and on other alpine passes at a height of around 2000 m. The Atlantic assemblages in the Alps, on the other hand, occur less frequently at high altitudes, although they are occasionally found. In the Emilian Apennines, industries with trapezes and denticulated blades are well known, even on sites close to the very high passes (CASTELLETI et al 1976).

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They also occur on the Po Plain, especially at the confluence of rivers (BIAI 1980), where extensive marshy areas abounding in many food resources are found (CLARKE 1978).

Industries with trapezes are also found close to the present middle altitude lake basins as well as on the major pre-alpine lakes and around the lake basins of the glacial end moraines, which were subsequently more intensively settled during the Bronze Age. This is a situation which is again observed in neighbouring Switzerland, where traces of Mesolithic encampments often cluster around existing lakes (SAKELLARIDIS 1979).

The first evidence of the Neolithic in northern Italy appears to relate to the Impressed Ware Culture both along the Adriatic and Ligurian coastlines. From a detailed analysis of the stone industries of the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic it is possible to observe a technological jump in the production of unretouched tools (PITTS 1970) and tools, even though the technology of retouch remained unchanged during both periods.

There is however a differentiation, perhaps related to the different qualities of the flint used, in the forms of the tools, as in the Neolithic new burins, awls, rhomboid geometrics and denticulated blades and broken intentionally blades with abundant traces of wear occur.

The Early Neolithic

The main influences leading to the formation of the first Neolithic in northern Italy are today recognisable in the following geographical and cultural groupings.

1. The Impressed Ware. Comprising groups found in the area of the Ligurian coast (BERNABÒ BREA 1946, 1956) and on the opposite Adriatic side in Romagna (BAGOLINI, VON ELES 1978).

The Ligurian Impressed Ware tradition made its influence felt in the perialpine regions of western Lombardy. The Impressed Ware of the Adriatic and Romagna, documented in the environs of Riccione, extends its influence likewise into the hinterland of the Po Valley as far as in the region of Reggio

Emilia. These latter territories soon afterwards become dominated by the Fiorano Culture group (MALAVOLTI 1951-52) which in its «floruit» extended its influence from the area of central Emilia into Romagna where important finds have been made near Riolo Terme, while even further afield it affects the late Impressed Ware groups of the Marche (LOLLINI 1962).

2. In the Po Plain and the Veneto traditions appear during the early Neolithic among which the Fiorano Culture is the most homogeneous and best documented; this assemblage, widely spread in the south west Veneto, in Emilia and Romagna, also extends south of the Apennine watershed into northern Tuscany (BAGOLINI, BIAI 1977).

The other groups, recognised to date, are those of Fagnigola in the lower Friuli (BIAI 1975) and of Vhò on the south Lombard plain (BAGOLINI, BIAI 1975).

3. In the Alpine and centre-eastern, perialpine regions, are found the Gabán group in the mountainous area of the Adige Valley (BAGOLINI, BIAI 1977a) and the Isolino group in the area of the Lombard Lakes (GUERRESCHI 1976-77). These groups show distinctive regional traits which distinguish them from the assemblages on the Plain. The Gaban group has the closest links with the preceding Mesolithic traditions.

4. The Trieste Karst, a border area between the cultural areas of the Po Valley and Veneto and the Balkans, is characterised during the early Neolithic by tulip-shaped pedestalled cups with restricted mouths, often with incised decoration, which have a very Balkan character (BARFIELD 1972) being comparable with material both from the Dalmatian coast and the late Adriatic Impressed Ware, especially that of the Marche. This cultural group, called Vlašca which seems to have a long life, replaces a local Mesolithic tradition with which it seems to be unconnected.

In this context we can suggest a probable chronological sequence for the area, starting with Impressed Ware elements of the Dalmatian Istrian tradition (BATOVIĆ 1975) and followed by evidence of contact with the Fiorano area and afterwards with that of Danilo (BARFIELD 1972, 1973).

In Liguria the Apennine chain is lower and

becomes easily traversable by low passes close to the coast. Communications between Liguria and the Po Plain (BIAGI 1980a) are much easier than those leading from the narrow and often rugged coastline which links Liguria with the Versilia and the Valley of the Arno.

To the south the passes of the Tuscan-Emilian stretch, although not always impenetrable, do not provide easy access with central Italy. However already during the Mesolithic they allowed extensive contact between the population on either side of the watershed (TOZZI 1980).

On the Adriatic side the geographical conditions are much more favourable since the watershed of the Romagnan Apennines, bending southwards, leaves a broad band of hills near the coast which permit easy communication with the Marche and in general with the whole Adriatic coastline.

To the east the coast provides a natural line of communication between the Venetia and the Po basin and the Balkans (BARFIELD 1973).

To the north and west the alpine watershed, with its high and difficult passes, presented a major obstacle to communication with the western and central regions of Europe.

These geographical factors affected the formation and the development of the early Neolithic of the Po and Venetian areas and determine an area of Ligurian influence in the western Po Valley and an area of Adriatic influence in Romagna, while the central Po Plain is open to multiple influences, among which are recognisable Ligurian, peninsula, Adriatic, Balkan and central European traits.

The rather scant evidence from the western alpine area of the Po Valley (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1972-74) suggests that here the Neolithic transformation originated in Liguria.

The various cultural groups that characterise the earliest Neolithic of the central and north-eastern alpine and Po Valley regions show very close similarities in their flint industries, which have connections with those of the local Mesolithic, but they have a marked individuality in ceramic traditions (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1977). The economic evidence for these groups, which is not abundant, gives

an impression of variety, with herding (BARKER 1977) and agriculture (CASTELLET-TI 1975) as well as significant levels of hunting and collecting, being represented. Particularly important is the evolution of the local Mesolithic for the Gaban group, whose economy, in its initial stages, is essentially the same as that of the preceding Mesolithic.

Such a kaleidoscope of sub cultures within the north Italian Neolithic, which appear in neighbouring territories and in similar environments, raises some interesting questions regarding the formation processes that lead to their development.

Above all the characteristics of these groups are not explicable purely in terms of the simple acculturation of local indigenous groups from the two different coastal aspects, Ligurian and Adriatic, of the Impressed Ware Culture; even if clear relationships existed with these areas, as we can see from reciprocal culture traits in Fiorano and the Ligurian Ware or between the Gaban and Vhò groups and the Adriatic Impressed Ware (BAGOLINI, VON ELES 1978).

A greater attention to the subsistence capacity available in the different areas, accompanied by a growing familiarity with the forest products and small game, fishing and birds, may have led to an increase in «territoriality» if not to true settled communities, by the final Mesolithic inhabitants of the Po Plain and the Alps. This in turn led to an increased potential receptivity with regard to the economic and technological innovations which accompanied the process of Neolithic transformation. This acculturation must have taken place by means of multiple, and not necessarily contemporary, influences.

These influences must have spread principally from the coastal centres of the Impressed Ware Culture and from the continental Balkan area across the eastern Veneto. Various cultural elements, above all in pottery and figurines, principally in the Vhò group (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1977b) recall prototypes found in the early Balkan Neolithic in particular the area of Starčevo. Contacts with the areas of the early «figulina» and painted pottery traditions in Peninsular Italy are evident at an early date, both in imports and imitations. These are especially clear in the

context of the Fiorano group, whose limits extend south of the Apennine watershed as far as the Tyrrhenian Sea in northern Tuscany (BARFIELD 1981).

It is more difficult at present to say how far certain traits of the earliest Neolithic of the eastern Po Valley, recognisable above all in the context of Fiorano, may be related to the Linear Pottery Culture of the Upper Danube, since we have no clear evidence from the intervening geographical areas.

In particular the decorative syntax of «music note» design present in the Fiorano group and found, although in a different technique, in the Gaban group appears to suggest a local re-elaboration of a similar design range found in the eastern Linear Pottery Culture.

With regard to the eventual direction of diffusion of the Linear Pottery influences the question remains open. It is worth, however, underlining the fact that the eastern Linear Pottery, in its full development characterised by «music note» motifs, reaches a final thrust of expansion towards the southern parts of eastern Europe. Its expansive pressure also extends towards southern Pannonia, compelling the population related to the Körös tradition to retreat towards eastern Hungary, where that Culture soon afterwards died out; further to the west links are established between the Linear Pottery Culture and the late Starčevo sphere, a question which is still in the process of investigation (KALICZ, MAK-KAY 1977).

Such an expansion towards the south may have allowed Linear Pottery influence to extend along the Sava, Drava and to the Pusteria Valley. This alpine route might constitute a hypothetical line of the diffusion of such influences towards northern Italy (BAGOLINI, VON ELES 1978).

We can, with reference to this question, recall that the Gaban group of the Trentino, which has contacts with the Fiorano area, also possesses in its decoration range a special elaboration of the «music note» motif on those globular flask forms with necks which remind one of the eastern Linear Pottery tradition.

Very recently a settlement of the early Neolithic related to the Gaban group has in fact been discovered near Chiusa, at Villan-

dro in the Valley of the Isarco, a discovery that extends the distribution of the sub culture north towards the Pusteria Valley (DAL RÌ 1978).

The significant parallels between the Gaban group and that of Isolino extends the above-mentioned influences westwards into the western Lombard pre-Alps.

Independent of the hypotheses concerning the direction of the diffusion of Balkan influences in northern Italy, which derived ultimately, although through intermediaries, from the developed Starčevo-Körös and Vinča-Tordoš traditions, and which perhaps could be confirmed by new excavations at the settlement of Fagnigola in Friuli, there remain some aspects of the early Neolithic groups in the Po Valley which are not explicable in any other way.

In this respect it is particularly significant that the Vhò di Piadena, group in the central Po Plain, characterised by pedestalled vessel-forms and pots with knobs, impressed cordons and grooves. This group, like others of central Po Valley, has a lithic industry related to the local Mesolithic tradition with ceramic elements imitating and imported from the Fiorano area as well as various elements of contact with the Gaban and Isolino groups (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1980).

This has produced a characteristic religious art style, represented by clay female figurines with double-headed hemispherical heads, and incised geometric decoration. Such female figurines are essentially foreign to the Impressed Ware Culture, and in general in all the western Neolithic, and can only be connected with the Anatolian-Balkan ideological world.

Aspects of Balkan ideology in the Early Neolithic

Balkan ideological elements are above all recognisable in the predominantly female figurines found in various Neolithic contexts in northern Italy.

The anthropomorphic representations are, in fact, almost absent from the area of the Impressed Ware Culture, both in the Italian peninsula and other areas. These are sub-

stantially foreign to the traditions of «western» inspiration which are established in northern Italy, above all in the final phases of the Neolithic, especially the Ligurian Chassey and Lagozza Cultures.

The cultural context of female figurines, as far as the northern peninsula is concerned, is thus restricted to some of the early Neolithic groups and the whole ensuing development of the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture (BAGOLINI 1978).

In the framework of the early Neolithic the anthropomorphic iconography clearly runs from those of Balkan inspiration, like those of the Vhò group, to others in which a Mesolithic substratum appears to be important, as in the Gaban group (GRAZIOSI 1975).

In these two groups in particular, which were in vogue during the last two centuries of the V millenium bc some features are of great significance for our argument. The incised phallic-shaped pebble from Gaban and the formal designs incised on a human femur, strongly recall that art of Lepenki Vir (SREJOVIĆ 1972) which are attributable to period which is not very much earlier (LV II). Considerable similarities are met in the remarkable sculpture found at Capdanak – Le Hault in Lot in an early Chassey context.

In the same cultural context of Gaban there is also a schematic female stereotype on a bone plaque which is comparable to female figurines with a rectangular outline distributed in various Balkan assemblages.

As far as the double-headed clay figurine from Vhò di Piadena is concerned, the Balkan parallel is limited by the ideological significance of this, since it is found in a variety of different cultural contexts. Double-headed Neolithic figures are found from Asia Minor, at Tell Brak (MALLOWAN 1947) and Çatal Hüyük (MELLAART 1967), to the Balkans (GIMBUTAS 1974). Over this area we are clearly dealing with two types of representation: one suggesting a symbiosis of two persons, male and female, and another strictly double-headed. It is evident that the symbolic and ideological motivations are very different in each case, above all in those which represent twins of opposite sex. If we exclude the twin version, the most striking parallels are found in the cultural context of Vinča in

the «two-headed goddess» from Rast (DUMITRESCU 1972) and later in the classic Vinča, at Vinča itself and Gomolava (GIMBUTAS 1974).

Reflexes from the Balkan ideological world could also be recognisable in the presence of «pintaderas» (CORNAGGIA CASTIGLIONI, CALEGARI 1978), but these are, at our present state of knowledge, absent from the Impressed Ware tradition and the early Neolithic of northern Italy. The first pintaderas with certain associations come from the ensuing Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture where they last throughout its development.

This fact is remarkable if one considers that in the Balkan area such objects are widely distributed during the early Neolithic, especially in the Starčevo-Körös Culture.

The Full Neolithic

The Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture dominates the scene during the IV millenium bc. After an initial «Ligurian style» with incised linear geometric decoration (BARFIELD 1972), there follow, in a later development, stylistic influences from the Adriatic-Balkan area which are mainly derived from the Danilo (KOROŠEC 1958, 1964) and Hvar (NOVAK 1955) Cultures. These new cultural influences are distinguished by the introduction, alongside surviving indigenous traits, of dynamic decoration, such as meanders, bar meanders, spirals and spiral meanders executed with a scratch or cut-out technique.

It is worth however pointing out how during its whole development the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture is profoundly influenced by Balkan traditions seen principally in the presence of figurines and pintaderas. These elements point to a close relationship between this Culture and those of the Balkans in the spiritual sphere. It is not possible to point to any specific similarities outside the culture area since in northern Italy they occur in original and independent forms related to the autonomy that the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture itself maintains during its development.

During the first stylistic phase of the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture linear geo-

metric scratched decoration seems to develop from its earliest Ligurian aspect (BARFIELD 1971). It does not however appear possible to support the hypothesis that there was a close correlation between the scratched style of the VBQ Culture and similar features found in the Danilo area, even though these traits appear in Dalmatia at a moment immediately following the disappearance of the Impressed Ware Culture and geographically are recognisable in a few elements, as far as the Trieste Karst (BARFIELD 1973). Also, as regards the scratched decoration in the Danilo Culture, some Yugoslav authorities do not recognise any influence from the geometric scratched ware style of Matera Ostuni, on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, apart from the fact that a few later similar decorative styles come to predominate in the Danilo tradition, executed both in scratched and incised technique (BATOVIĆ 1975).

In the stylistic sub-divisions of the Dalmatian Neolithic proposed by one Yugoslav authority (BREGANT 1968) we see that the beginning of Danilo, well documented at Danilo and Smilčić is characterised by geometric linear decoration done with a variety of techniques, among them scratching (Danilo 1-4); the spiral and spiral meander motifs, now also painted, appear at a later stage (Danilo 5-7) which in turn is stratified below the first stylistic phases of Hvar (Hvar 1-3), and this shares many motifs besides others that, like the undulating festooned bands, are specific to the latter Culture.

With the later Hvar stylistic traits (Hvar 4-6) these festoon motifs, generally painted but also incised, become well established.

This evolution of the middle and late Neolithic, if it could be better confirmed by stratigraphical evidence, which at present we do not have, presents a significant parallel to that of the early and the developed phases of the VBQ Culture.

These parallels can be summarised as follows:

1. Early VBQ (linear-geometric scratched motifs) – first stages of the Danilo Culture (Danilo 1-4).
2. Fully developed VBQ Culture (dynamic and spiral meander, scratched, incised and excised styles) – final stages of Danilo

(Danilo 5-7) and first phases of Hvar (Hvar 1-3).

The decorative elements with incised festooned bands, recognised above all at Pescale (Malavolti 1951-52), can thus be related to Hvar, perhaps in its post Danilo stages. Various features place this Emilian facies in a more developed stylistic position in relationship to other spiral meander groups of the VBQ Culture (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1977c).

In general the stylistic elements with the greatest affinities between the latest spiral meander aspects of the VBQ Culture and the Hvar Culture appear to be with the continental variant of this Culture, as at Lisičići, rather than with the coastal aspect of Smilčić. On the other hand, if the hypothesis concerning the relationship between Lisičići and Danilo tradition is correct as an episode directly related to Danilo IV, these facts would better fit in with a model of organic development. The evidence for a connection between the continental area, along the Neretva, and the north Italian VBQ area is arguably extensive, even during the early stages of Danilo, and particularly well documented through the mediation of the Kakanj Culture.

It is thus quite possible that the principal direction of contacts which lead to the introduction of Balkan influences in the middle stage of the VBQ Culture, are not to be sought primarily on the Dalmatian coast, but along more continental routes centred roughly on the Neretva and from there along the Bosna and the Sava.

In summary the direction of influence could be: Danilo Kakanj VBQ: early spiral meander. Followed by: Hvar Lisičići Butmir VBQ: late spiral meander (BAGOLINI et al 1979).

As has been just argued, there are traits which support the argument for a diffusion of cultural influence into northern Italy perhaps already during the early Neolithic which relates, however distantly, the Starčevo sphere with the cultural traditions of the Po Plain.

Balkan ideological traits in the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture

In the context of the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture Balkan ideological traits are re-

cognisable above all in the figurines and the «pintaderas».

As far as the female figures are concerned, it is clear that even at the beginning of the Culture, there are a number of stylistic variants. Two types, in particular, occur with significant regularity: these are figurines with a strongly flattened crutch shaped body, generally seated, with which can probably be associated a type with a stylised cylindrical head; and figurines with arms folded on the chest and shoulder length hair, of which type however only one example is known (BAGOLINI 1978).

Both these main types, characteristic of the Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture area, demonstrate how within the same culture and even the same settlement, there co-existed two or more figurine styles each one evidence of an ideological heritage within which the female figurine had several different forms. There indeed would appear to have been a number of different formal types which it is difficult to interpret in terms of a single «fertility goddess», the symbol of «mother earth», for whom could be performed the seasonal myths and festivals.

This observation agrees with what has been noted in the Balkan area, where there exists a proliferation of different female representations as well as other persons and cult objects.

As regards the possibility of direct morphological comparison between the range found in the VBQ Culture and that of the Balkan region these are rather imprecise because of the already mentioned re-elaboration of types in different cultures.

It is worth however noting that the seated figures with flattened crutchshaped bodies and lower part of the body with large buttocks, flexed knees and tapering lower limbs with no indication of feet, bear a strong similarity with the types found in the first phase of Cucuteni in Moldavia (GIMBUTAS 1974).

The parallels for the type of figurine with arms bent across the chest are too generalised to be significant. This attitude is in fact very widely diffused in various cultural contexts in south east Europe above all in Greece and Bulgaria.

For the «pintaderas» it is possible to say

that the majority of these objects found in Neolithic Italy are associated with the VBQ Culture (CORNAGGIA CASTIGLIONI, CATEGARI 1978) and therefore in the south of Italy are uncommon. This suggests that our area is more open to Balkan influences, which are mainly continental and not maritime.

We can further note that «pintaderas» are not characteristic of the coastal Dalmatian Neolithic of either Danilo or Hvar, in spite of the stylistic contribution made by these Cultures to that of the VBQ Culture.

The «pintaderas» also present a stylistic evolution which is related to that of the ceramic decoration. For when during the second phase of the Culture the geometric linear style is gradually replaced by the motifs of the spiral meander style, we find on the «pintaderas» also dynamic, spiral meander motifs (BAGOLINI 1977).

Conclusions

Balkan influences from various sources permeate the early Neolithic of northern Italy to the exclusions of those from the Impressed Ware Culture.

The Balkan component appears, in a greater or lesser degree, as a basic element in these cultural groups.

This component having undergone many local transformations cannot be traced to any specific Balkan Culture areas, although the Starčevo-Körös assemblages would appear to be the principle ones involved.

In the full Neolithic, which develops in the whole territory as the VBQ Culture, we find links with the Danilo Culture and to a lesser extent that of Hvar, above all in the decorative range of the pottery. Clear links with the Balkan ideological traditions are to be seen in the various types of female figurines and «pintaderas».

In the late Neolithic, characterised in the west by the spread of the Chassey and Lagozza traditions and by the penetration of groups related to Diana from the direction of the Adriatic coast (BAGOLINI, BIAGI 1977), the traditional contacts with the Balkan area, which had come along coastal or land routes, seem to be interrupted. In some areas such as that

centred on the Euganean Hills, Lake Garda and the Trentino, the VBQ Culture survives to develop local variants permeated by north Alpine traits, even though a survival of Balkan traditions is still clearly recognisable in the continuing use of «pintaderas» and of female figurines, which are similar to those of earlier times.

(Translated by L.H. Barfield)

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SUMMARY

Balkan influences from various sources permeate the early Neolithic of Northern Italy to the exclusions of those from the Impressed Ware Culture.

The Balkan component appears, in a greater or lesser degree, as a basic element in these cultural groups.

This component having undergone many local transformations cannot be traced to any specific Balkan culture areas, although the Starčevo-Körös assemblages would appear to be the principle ones involved.

In the full Neolithic, which develops in the whole territory as the VBQ Culture, we find links with the Danilo Culture and to a lesser extent that of Hvar, above all in the decorative range of the pottery. Clear links with the Balkan ideological traditions are to be seen in the various types of female figurines and «pintaderas».

In the late Neolithic, characterised in the west by the spread of the Chassey and Lagozza traditions and by the penetration of groups related to Diana from the direction of the Adriatic coast the traditional contacts with the Balkan area, which had come along coastal or land routes, seem to be interrupted. In some areas such as that centred on the Euganean Hills, Lake Garda and the Trentino, the VBQ Culture survives to develop local variants permeated by north Alpine traits, even though a survival of Balkan traditions is still clearly recognisable in the continuing use of «pintaderas» and of female figurines, which are similar to those of earlier times.

RÉSUMÉ

Des influences balkaniques de diverses sources marquent le premier Néolithique de l'Italie du nord, à l'exclusion de la Culture de la Céramique Impressionnée.

La composante balkanique apparaît, de façon plus ou moins accentuée, comme l'élément base de ces groupes culturels.

Cette composante ayant subi de nombreuses transformations locales ne peut se référer à une zone culturelle spécifique des Balkans, bien que les assemblages Starčevo-Körös puissent apparaître comme ceux qui sont le plus concernés.

Dans le plein Néolithique, qui se développe sur tout le territoire comme la Culture des vases à embouchure carrée, nous trouvons des liens avec la Culture de Danilo et, dans une moindre mesure, avec celle de Hvar, surtout dans les bandes décoratives des poteries. Des liens évidents avec les traditions idéologiques des Balkans peuvent se voir dans les divers types de figurines féminines et «pintaderas».

Au cours du Néolithique tardif, caractérisé à l'ouest par l'extension des traditions Chassey et Lagozza et par la pénétration de groupes reliés à Diana et provenant de la côte adriatique les contacts traditionnels avec la région balkanique, qui s'étaient créés le long des routes côtières ou internes, semblent s'interrompre. Dans certaines zones comme celle qui est centrée sur les Collines Eugéennes, le Lac de Garde et le Trentin, la Culture VBQ survit pour développer des variantes locales influencées par des traits provenant du nord des Alpes, même si une survivance des traditions balkaniques est encore clairement reconnaissable dans l'utilisation continue des «pintaderas» et dans les figurines féminines, qui sont semblables à celles des temps passés.