

The Iron Age II necropolis of San Maurizio, Bolzano (Alto Adige)¹

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ABSTRACT - In 1981 an Early La Tène necropolis was brought to light. 25 tombs were uncovered. Details about the social structure of the human groups and the new types of burial practices can be determined on the basis of the burial goods. The burial goods suggest the presence of a group of women with quite wealthy "trousseaus". the necropolis covers a period of time from the end of the V to half way through the III century BC. On the one hand it reflects local traditions and on the other hand it suggests a strong Etruscan influence. From the IV century onwards, there is also an increasing Celtic influence that can be seen in fashion and in local armours.

Key words: Iron Age, Necropolis, Bolzano, Alto Adige

Parole chiave: Età del Ferro, Necropoli, Bolzano, Alto Adige

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1. INTRODUCTION

San Maurizio is situated in the Comune of Bolzano, on the western outskirts of the town (Fig.1:14). At about 2.5km along the left slope of the Adige valley towards Merano, there is a locality called Settequerce, a hamlet in the Comune of Terlano. Towards North the area is confined by the so-called "Tschoeggberg", a massive porphyry slope, whose base is the northeast extension of the Bolzano porphyry platform (Fig.1) (STAINDL, 1967; MAURER, 1981).

The sediments of the Rivers Talvera and Adige continuously flood the area of San Maurizio and therefore the actual settlement area is situated on an alluvial cone, slightly higher than the bottom valley. Consequently the Bolzano bottom valley is composed of huge sedimentations accumulated from the three main rivers and by minor rivers (LOOSE, 1991; COLTORTI, 1991). From a topographical point of view, the area of Bolzano is in a strategic position. The Adige and Isarco valleys converge there and along with the Resia and Brennero passes provide access across the Alpine range (LEIDLMAIR, 1991; HYE, 1993). However the Bolzano-Settequerce area is on the northern boundary of a transitional climatic area, where the Mediterranean vege-

tation meets with the different degradations of the alpine regions (ZAMS, 1973; WAHLMÜLLER, 1990).

2. HISTORY OF THE STUDIES

Archaeological research in San Maurizio dates back to the last century in 1858-60 and 1868 when two important assemblages of materials were discovered East of the church, near the road (Fig.1:14). Along with various weapons, two bronze situlae and a cyst with floral decorations were discovered. Friar P.Orgler, one of the founders of prehistoric research in Alto Adige, wrote that both the assemblages came to light from under a great mass of stone (ORGLER, 1866, 1871; WIENER, 1891; MENGHIN, 1910; EGG, 1992; STEINER, 1997). In 1877 he announced the discovery of a "bronze figurine of a bird" probably part of a burial ritual cart near the so-called "Kresslacke", a saline spring. (Fig.1:11) (ORGLER, 1877). The first archaeological findings were uncovered mainly in the Settequerce area in the 70's of the last century. In the area of the "Grosskornell" and "Steiner" farmsteads, many archaeological discoveries were made, mainly regarding the Urnfield Culture and

the Early La Tène (Fig.1:5,7) (MAZEGGER, 1896; MEYER, 1900-01; MENGHIN, 1910; ATZ, 1902; LUNZ, 1973, 1974, 1991; GLEIRSCHER, 1993). The S.Maurizio-Settequerce area, near the area beyond the River Adige and the Non valley, is one of the areas that yielded most of the findings of all the cultural areas taken in consideration with regard to the La Tène period. On many occasions the remains of cremation tombs were also discovered, but unfortunately extensive vineyard works during the past centuries have destroyed many archaeological contexts (ATZ, 1902; LUNZ, 1993). Therefore it is difficult to give a global interpretation of the archaeological remains because of the lack of modern archaeological excavations. The discovery of a prehistoric settlement in 1929 was sensational. It was brought to light during roadworks, and is situated to the East of San Maurizio church at the foot of "Tschoeggberg" near a sulphur spring (Fig.1:13). Along with two pins, three fibulas, a bronze lamina figurine and a few potsherds, about three thousand bronze rings were found in the exact position of the sulphurous spring. During the Late Urnfield period up till the La Tène period, bronze rings were deposited in this place as votive presents to the gods of the waters (GHISLANZONI, 1930-31; FRANZ, 1952; LUNZ, 1974).

Continuous discoveries were also made near the castle of "Greifenstein", situated on a cone-shaped rocky buttress opposite the "Tschoeggberg" (Fig.1:3) (MAYR, 1935, 1954; HUCKE, 1971). To the East of "Greifenstein", separated by a deep gorge, there is a hill called "Naifer Bichl" (Comune of San Genesio), where a votive pyre from the Iron Age has been attested along with a large stone heap (Fig.1:2) (EISENSTECKEN, 1933; INNEREBNER, 1976). To the West of the "Greifenstein" castle there is the "Moarbichl" (Comune of San Genesio) where another votive pyre was found. In 1860, a little further to the North, at the foot of the same hill, a necropolis of Iron Age I was found and then destroyed (Fig.1:1) (ORGLER, 1866; LUNZ, 1974; EISENSTECKEN, 1933). On the steep slope below the "Greifenstein" castle, archaeological excavations were carried out superficially and lead to the discovery of the remains of a Late La Tène building, along with other Hallstatt findings (Fig.1:10), (HAUSER, 1976; LUNZ, 1981). In 1975 about 200m to the West of the consecrated church of SS. Cosma and Damiano the remains of a votive pyre were found along with fragments of at least 10 Negau-type helmets, ceramics and two Celtic coins (Fig.1:4) (LUNZ, 1981; EGG, 1986). A vase handle with figurative decorations belonging to an Etruscan crater, which had been found in the same place in 1887, most probably refers to the same votive pyre (DAL RI, 1986). In 1985, near Settequerce, during the construction of an aqueduct, a continuous stratigraphy was examined and a survey was carried out. This opportunity confirmed the great quantity of archaeological evidence of

the area, particularly consisting of remains of La Tène buildings (Fig.1:6) (DAL RI, 1985; NOTHDURFTER, 1985; LUNZ, 1985, 1991, 1993). During the same year the SS. Cosma and Damiano church at Settequerce was examined (Fig.1:8). The site had already been levelled during the Roman period and then built upon. Various tombs including a Capuchin one were attributed to a building of the Upper Middle Ages (NOTHDURFTER, 1993).

3. THE EXCAVATION

In 1981, during the excavation of the foundations of Berger farmstead, at about 800m East of San Maurizio church, an Early La Tène necropolis was brought to light and then excavated by the Sovrintendenza ai Beni Archeologici di Bolzano (Fig.1:14) (BONFANTI, DAL RI & RIZZI, 1985). Unfortunately a part of the necropolis was destroyed by excavators before calling the authorities. In 1994 an excavation was carried out during works on a garage and other tombs were documented (DAL RI & RIZZI, 1997; STEINER, 1997). In all, 25 tombs were uncovered at least 2m below the alluvial strata of recent epochs. During the Early La Tène epoch, this was a human occupation area, while during the Middle La Tène it was used for other activities. A wall that crosses the entire necropolis linked up with carbonaceous strata and pits filled with wood charcoal dates back to this period. The wall and the carbonaceous strata cover the tombs that are underneath. The area of the necropolis was prepared and levelled before building the structures. Some of the tombs were uncovered because of this and consequently the structure of the sepulchre and the burial goods were not intact. The site was covered by alluvial strata after it had been used in the Middle La Tène period.

The following strata, some of which are very thick, along with the terrace wall towards the slope, belong to the beginning of the modern epoch. This means that during the Middle La Tène and the beginning of the modern epoch, the area was seldom subject to alluvial events (COLTORTI, 1991).

4. THE SEPULCHRAL STRUCTURES

Even though the state of preservation of the cremation tombs varies, several types can be distinguished: a 30cm diameter circular grave was dug out for the construction of the tomb where the burnt remains from the pyre were placed. This suggests that the material

containing charcoal from the cremation was intentionally not placed in the grave. In only a few cases there were stone alignments along the sides of the tombs and a stone lid. On one of the tombs, there is what is supposed to be a lid in the shape of a grave pit. Most of the tombs were sheltered by a large mass of porphyry and in some cases they were protected by a stone. Archaeological research has clearly proved that the stones, which are up to 2m long, were found in a sterile strata and stuck out from the surface for about 40cm when the necropolis was in use. They were no doubt used as signs on the surface. This type of tomb is unique even to the present day in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture. Parallelisms can be found in a similar tomb - which has been badly examined - at Matrei in Eastern Tyrol (KALTENHAUSER, 1977). Generally the tombs are very close and sometimes they actually touch each other, similarly to other necropolises. We do not know the reason for the various typologies of the San Maurizio tombs and whether they are family structures of social divisions.

5. THE FUNERAL RITE

The dead bodies were burnt on the pyre along with personal clothes and weapons. Unlike the ceramic containers, all the bronze objects show evident traces of fire. The burnt remains were then purposely chosen and placed in the grave that had been prepared beforehand. It is presumed that only a part of the clothing and weapons were first put on the pyre and then into the grave. There are only very few fragments of calcined bones deposited in the tomb of the San Maurizio necropolis that find parallelisms in other sepulchral sites (LIPPERT, 1972; MENGHIN, 1974; DAL RI, 1992). Two intact tombs did not contain any wealth goods or calcined bones. These are obviously symbolic sepulchral structures. In some cases the burnt remains were put in a terracotta urn (vessel, situla-shaped container with horizontal handles, parts of bronze situla) and covered with a bowl with embossed decorations (Fig.2-3). The urns were mostly fragmented and in most of the tombs there were only a few potsherds sometimes belonging to different containers. It is supposed that the ceramics were intentionally broken on the burning area and that only a part was placed in the grave where it acquired less important or none at all. There are also fragments of ceramic vessels belonging to other tomb contexts regarding the remains of later burials. The intentional distribution of the vessels on the pyre was probably part of a funeral ritual. In the majority of the cases the calcined bones were distributed in the grave and covered with bronze objects. Apart from the terracotta urns

there were also containers made of organic material which had the same purpose. Several metal containers and weapons were intentionally put out of use before placing them in the tomb. The containers may also have been placed as "pars pro toto".

After the deposition of the burnt remains, the grave was covered with a layer of sand or gravel. The tomb was closed with small stones and probably marked out unless one of the large slabs near the tombs served this purpose. On the pounding surface, near the tombs, sometimes there were potsherds that partly referred to the broken cremation urns. We do not know whether they went lost while they were carried to the tomb or whether a part of the wealth goods was purposely scattered around the necropolis.

6. THE FUNERAL WEALTH GOODS

In the necropolis of San Maurizio, the funeral wealth goods of a group of women's graves is particularly rich (GLEIRSCHER, 1989; STEINER, 1997). There is a decorated bronze lamina belt and one or two gold bracelets belonging to a woman's complete costume. The women had a pair of earrings/plait rings and a decorated ring and three Certosa-type fibulae. The high social rank of the women is emphasized by the presence of a bronze situla and a ladle. The men's tombs are characterised by the deposition of a fibula and weapons, usually an iron knife with a tang hilt with a sheath with two buttons at the end. The armour was completed with a sword and a winged axe. In another group of sepultures, the burial goods give no clues as to the sex of the dead. This difference in wealth of the burial goods of the various sepultures does not seem to depend on the tomb structures. Two tombs only contained calcined bones and another two were empty even if they were well-preserved. In this case it is possible that they were children's tombs. The paleontological remains of the necropolis have not yet been examined scientifically.

The archaeological material of the necropolis of San Maurizio covers the period between the end of the V and the first half of the IV century BC. On the one hand it reflects local characteristics, following an old tradition and on the other hand it is strongly influenced in its formal, substantial and spiritual aspects by the Etruscan Culture rooted in the Po Plain. Moreover, from the IV century BC onwards, the increasing Celtic influence can be detected. The Celtic forms are introduced in local fashion and armours.

In the ceramic repertoire bowls with "Z" shaped embossed profiles are popular, typical of the First La Tène as well as vessels, which have maintained the di-

distinct formal and decorative elements of the Luco vessel of the Urnfield period (Fig.2:1-2) (LUNZ, 1983; GLEIRSCHER, 1987; STEINER, 1997). We are face to face with an exceptional proof of secular tradition, which attests the continuity of a population. The vessel is an important element of the burial goods from the Luco-Meluno Culture onwards and can be found in this area of dispersion up till the First La Tène (see MERHART, 1927; LUNZ, 1977, 1992). The situation is different with regard to the northern part of the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture that is based on a diverse cultural tradition and perceives a cultural *koinè* with the territory South of Brennero only from this period onwards. In the San Maurizio necropolis, situla-shaped containers with facing horizontal handles are used as urns (GLEIRSCHER, 1987; DAL RI, 1992). This shape derives from Etruscan prototypes and is found in the Central Alpine area up till the Middle and Late La Tène.

A significant cultural influence coming from the Mediterranean area, through Etruscan mediation, can be seen in the deposition of a set of drinking vessels consisting of a bronze situla and a ladle (Fig.3, 5:4). Both carry a votive inscription. The decorated situlae are the last examples of their kind and the decline of the situlae art is evident. The figurative representation of narrative scenes was slowly substituted by floral decorations. A bronze lamina fragment with two decorated areas originates from tomb 12 (Fig.8:1) (STEINER, 1997). The upper part features a symposium scene and the lower one refers to a procession of horsemen. The representations find a precise stylistic parallel in situla 2 of tomb IV/3 of Novo Mesto in Slovenia which, on the basis of the burial goods, was dated around 400 BC (KNEZ, 1975). Both these tombs present typical elements of the late situlae style: the preceding realistic scenery has been reduced and stylized. The features of the human and animal figures seem as if they have not turned out well and even the reproduction of the harness is partly inexact or has been interpreted badly. Other elements are only to be found in the late phase of the situla art, as for example the knotted tail of the horse and the S-shaped duck-beak shoes of the individuals (KNEZ, 1975; LUCKE & FREY, 1962). The works of the late phase are characterised by a change in the contents and the figurative expression and human figures become less important and are replaced by floral motifs. With these works situlae art approaches its decline in the whole of its diffusion area, from Bologna to Este, in Slovenia and in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture.

Tomb 2 of San Maurizio contained a fragmented bronze situla (Fig.3). The body of the container is divided in three horizontal areas covered with floral motifs. The top one presents a repeated frieze with small arcs, followed by a curvilinear band with palmettes in relief. In the third area the first motif is repeated. Both

of the decorated motifs, as shown by M.Egg, are limited to the late phase of the situlae art and derive from the Attic late archaic ceramics with polychromic black and red figures (Fig.4) (EGG, 1992). Whereas the frieze with small arcs appeared in all the diffusion area of the situla art, the curvilinear band with palmettes in relief is limited to the Central Alpine area. The combination of the two motifs can only be found in Alto Adige, according to Egg, which leads to believe that it is a local production (EGG, 1992).

In the San Maurizio necropolis, the situla was probably used as an urn. Tomb 12 contained a miniature bronze container that was richly decorated and probably represents the symbolic deposition of a situla. The decoration on the situlae is generally highly technical.

Even the bronze ladle is undoubtedly of local origin. In the San Maurizio necropolis they are associated with bronze situlae (Fig.5:4). This container, which is diffused in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture has its own characteristic form (GLEIRSCHER, 1985; NOTHDURFTER, 1989). The combination of the form of Etruscan origin and the production of the local workshops is evident. Both the arched joints in the form of widespread human arms and the decorative motifs follow the Hallstatt tradition. The particular technical quality of the ladles, their representations on the situlae as well as the votive inscriptions present on the handle testifies the particular cultural use. They are part of the drinking set placed as burial goods of the dead. The distribution chart shows a particular frequency of the ladles in the area of San Maurizio-Settequerce and at Sanzeno, which can be justified by the presence of workshops in these areas (Fig.6). Out of all the twenty specimens found in the southern territory of the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture, there is only one ladle from the northern region.

The San Maurizio necropolis attests that the bronze lamina belt was an integral part of women's costume (Fig.7). It consists of a thin bronze lamina, about 9cm wide. The visible part is separated by pairs of ribs in three horizontal friezes, each of which is densely filled with a row of vertical sticks. The sticks have wedge ends. The embossing technique on the back is very precise (STEINER, 1997). On both sides of the decorative motif there is a sort of serrated motif and a row of dents produced with the burin technique. Before carrying out the decorations, the artist divided both the front side and the backside of the piece in horizontal areas. The lamina belt was fixed by some rivets onto an organic support. The characteristic frieze with sticks along with the repeated frieze with small arcs and the curvilinear band with palmettes of the situlae derive from Attic late archaic vase painting (Fig.4). This is also found on the Kuffern situla, in a recent finding of Novo Mesto and on the vessel with a handle

in the shape of a bull's head of Sanzeno. The new decorative motifs were transmitted from the Etruscans who had settled in the Po Plain from the late VI century BC onwards (KIMMIG, 1961, 1983; MARZATICO, 1986). The only similarities with the San Maurizio belt are found in the Vadena necropolis and at Mechel, evidencing once again a local production (GHISLANZONI, 1940; DE CAMPI, 1900). A richly decorated bronze lamina, from tomb 12 of San Maurizio features various decorated rivets and was originally applied to the leather part of the belt. This element presents a South-Eastern Alpine component; the link with this area is also confirmed by the late *situlae* art. Richly decorated belt laminae are also found in the *situlae* art (LUCKE & FREY, 1962). Evident signs of wear and tear and mending indicate that they were articles of everyday clothing. Tomb 23 contained a male sepulture together with an iron knife with tang hilt with sheath ending with two buttons and a Celtic belt fastener in pierced work. This is part of the group of belt fasteners characterised by representations of animal and dragon tammers (DE WILDE, 1980; VITALI, 1987). As can be seen in many wealthy tombs of warriors, the fastener is part of a girdle for special, magic weapons. Celtic girdle fasteners appear in this territory even before the historic migration of the Celts. Tomb 23 of San Maurizio is dated to the end of the V/beginning of the IV century BC on the basis of a Certosa type fibula. It definitely confirms how the girdle of Celtic origin was worn along with local weapons. The person who wore this belt was probably a local leader.

Some solid bronze bracelets are also part of women's costume (Fig.8:5). On the external part of the bracelet/armbands there is a big round dent which could be spigot from the casting. This type of undecorated bracelet is mainly diffused in the area between Southern Germany, France and Northern Switzerland (STEINER, 1997). Chronologically they refer to the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène period. The form of the bracelets found in the San Maurizio necropolis have North Alpine characteristics, while the decoration indicate a local production.

Among the female ornaments, bracelets with ends in the shape of animal heads were also found (Fig.5:2,5). A ram's head motif was most popular in Northern Italy during the V century BC and also in the Central Alpine areas during the cultural influences, where it is also found in the decorations of bracelets. These bracelets as well as the ones in the shape of a snake's head are the typologies prior to the Wilten and Sanzeno type of bracelet of the IV century BC, which even then betrayed Celtic influences (GLEIRSCHER, 1986).

Other exclusive ornaments found in the female sepultures are presumed to be earrings or plait rings/clasps (Fig.5:1). These are two parallel bronze bands measuring 4 to 5mm. They both have perforations at

regular distances that were used to attach the two strips to bronze clips. The front part of both these strips is decorated with two parallel lines. This form is already present in the Hallstatt period but is mainly diffused in the Early La Tène in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture and is inspired by the motifs of the local cultures (Fig.9) (MARZATICO, 1997). In the San Maurizio female tombs, bracelets are arranged in pairs (STEINER, 1997). Unfortunately, due to the high combustion temperatures, there are no complete specimens preserved and this is the reason why the fastening clasp mechanism is unknown. The representation of ring ornaments placed at ear level is frequent in *situlae* art but they are not sufficiently detailed to accurately compare them with the archaeological material. The rings are also represented on plaits and were perhaps braided in the hair. Sometimes there are spiral-form earrings on the *situlae* (LUCKE & FREY, 1962). Perhaps parallels can be found in the bronze spirals which are regularly found in the San Maurizio female tombs; in one of the tombs they are arranged in pairs. Even though the objects are fragmented, sometimes they are at least 5cm thick.

Another element of women's ornaments is the band-shaped ring with very ornate decorations of lines and dents (Fig.8:3). This type of object, which is produced locally, is limited to the Bolzano basin and well represented mainly in the Sanctuary next to the San Maurizio sulphurous spring (GHISLANZONI, 1930-31). On the basis of various sepulchral contexts, the San Maurizio rings can be attributed to the period from the end of the V century to the middle of the IV century BC.

The "Ticino type" Certosa fibula prevails in the San Maurizio necropolis (Fig.8:2). The relatively small form of the fibula is characterised by a wide foot and a thin disk for fastening pleats (PRIMAS, 1967; TERZAN, 1977; DE MARINIS, 1981). The decorations on the foot and the horse-shoe are typical and can be defined as "Trentino variety" type (LUNZ, 1974). It is from the late V century BC and has endured in the Central Alpine area up until the LtB1 and B2 period. There is another more elegant Certosa type fibula that is much larger and measures 8cm (Fig.5:3). Similar fibulae are mainly popular in the Este and the South-Eastern Alpine regions (TERZAN, 1977; MIGLIAVACCA, 1987). These fibulae, unlike the San Maurizio ones do not have a pleat clasp disk. The disk or ring is chronologically considered to refer to a later period. The first fibulae are found in the second half of the V century BC up until the beginning of the IV century BC. Chronologically, they are considered to be more ancient than the "Ticino type" "Trentino variety" Certosa fibula. There is also a fibula style anthropomorphic pendant found in tomb 12 (Fig.8:4). In the female sepultures three fibulae were found, two of which were placed on the shoulder attached to a chain. There were also apotropaic pendants

tied to these. This type of pendant is connected to the anthropomorphic figurine *ambit* present in Trentino/Alto Adige from the First La Tène onwards (GLEIRSCHER, 1986a; EGG, 1986a).

The male sepultures are characterised by the presence of fibulae and weapons. The main part of the armour of the few male burials of San Maurizio is the iron knife with tang hilt with a sheath with two buttons at the end. The knife has a curved back. This type of knife is mainly found in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture territory and in the areas of Verona. In a detailed study, M.Egg distinguished the "Oppeano variety" and the "Vadena variety" on the basis of the different methods of construction and the forms (EGG, 1992). J.Nothdurfter has proved knives were a derived form of the Este Culture, diffused in the Veneto area (NOTHDURFTER, 1979). There is no doubt that the San Maurizio specimens belong to the "Vadena variety" mainly diffused in Alto Adige and in North Tyrol. It is a local production. The armour may include traditional iron winged axe. The San Maurizio necropolis particularly attests the influence of Celtic armours used by the local population. The new weapons, in particular the sword and the girdle have not however, substituted traditional rigging but were slowly integrated. Along with the "Vadena variety" knife, tomb 23 contained a Celtic hook; tomb 20 yielded a winged axe and a Celtic sword as well as the knife. The persons who wore these armours were obviously local leaders.

7. OLD FINDINGS

On the basis of the archaeological research carried out on part of the Iron Age II necropolis and the observations made, an interpretation can be given as to the findings uncovered during the last Century in this locality. During building works carried out in 1868, West of San Maurizio church, near the road, "under a large rock" a large accumulation of findings was discovered including the famous cyst with figurative decorations (ORGLER, 1871; WIESER, 1891). The finding place was on Johann Innerebner's land, who only owned this lot of land at San Maurizio. This is the exact position where the 1981 and 1994 archaeological excavations took place on part of the necropolis (Fig.1:14). The fact that the material was found "under a large rock" is a clue as to the typical tomb structure of San Maurizio where the sepulchral structures were placed under the shelter of an enormous slab of porphyry that was obviously placed there as a sign. It is for this reason that the material, which up till now had been interpreted as a deposit, can now be compared with the necropolis (LUNZ, 1974; STEINER, 1997).

The complex contains a bronze cyst with figurative decorations belonging to the final period of the *situlae* art and is still linked to the classic phase (LUCKE & FREY, 1962). The remains of a *situla* with a row of arched friezes were also found. This motif definitely derives from the same workshop as the sample found in tomb 2 (Fig.3) (EGG, 1992). Next to the remains of another *situla* there is a fragment of a ladle and a bronze plate with figurative decorations that was part of a vessel with a handle in the shape of a bull (ORGLER, 1871; WIESER, 1891; STEINER, 1999). These containers are found in the South Germany area in the HaC and D1 periods and continue in the internal Alpine areas up till the First La Tène and are there are also imitations in clay. Girdle mounts and strips of bronze etc. were also recovered.

The weapons include a "Vadena variety" knife with a tang hilt, two swords bent many times over and three lanceheads. There is also an iron helmet which is intentionally deformed and that, according to U.Schaaff's typology, belongs to the group of helmets made from only one piece with bronze applications (SCHAAFF, 1974). The small pommel is embellished with coral applications. This type of helmet is particularly diffused in the southern part of the Alpine area.

The items recovered partly show traces of burning that along with the intentional deformation of the weapons are a clear sign that these were tombs. The absence of carbonaceous layers, calcined bones, potsherd and lithic cysts, referred by F.Orgler after having re-examined the site immediately after the discovery, is not surprising if we consider the few remains of calcined bones and carbons contained in the cremation place found in the San Maurizio tombs (ORGLER, 1871).

The findings suggest that there are at least three male tombs rich in burial goods which are surprisingly scarce in the part of the necropolis examined up till now. Apart from a dagger of the Middle Bronze Age and a Roman signet ring, which are both sporadic findings, the hoard is dated IV to the first half of the III century BC. This chronological range corresponds to the occupation of the necropolis.

An area of archaeological findings was already identified at San Maurizio in 1858 and 1860. An assemblage of archaeological findings once again came to light near the road "under a large rock" which had to be moved (ORGLER, 1866). The discoverer sold the archaeological material to an antique dealer from Bolzano. Apart from three bronze vase handles the material ended up in Baviera and then in Berlin. The material was thought to have been lost until M. Egg discovered the photos of P.Reinecke and distinguished the majority of the objects in the Antikenmuseum der Staatlichen Museen-Preussischer Kulturbesitz and in the Antikensammlung der Staatlichen Museen of Berlin (EGG,

1992). The Berlin checklist indicated that the material came from Greifenstein castle, while F.Orgler referred to the San Maurizio area. Considering that the places are very near to each other, Orgler's theory seems to be more reliable. The indication "Castel Greifenstein" was probably passed on through word, as the castle was a more important reference than the small village of San Maurizio.

Even though the precise location of the area cannot be reconstructed the materials could be related to sepulchres. Furthermore, Orgler's description "under a large rock" suggests evident parallels with the archaeological researches in the necropolis and with the 1868 findings. The findings include a bronze situla with two horizontal areas covered with floral motifs. There is a frieze with continuous arcs applied on the upper band. The second band is curvilinear with two palmettes in relief. A ladle and a bronze vessel with a handle in the shape of head bearing a votive inscription on the edge written in Bolzano alphabet were also recovered (EGG, 1992; STEINER, 1999). There are also three horizontal cyst handles and two situla handles. The armour includes a Celtic helmet in fragmentary iron and an iron knife attributable to the "Vadena variety" (EGG, 1992).

Both the character and the composition of these findings strongly betray parallels with the 1869 hoard. Only one bronze amphora fragment is datable to between the second half of the V and the first half of the IV century BC (EGG, 1992). This is partly confirmed by the presence of a Certosa fibula and a fragment of a Celtic iron fibula. Most of the bronze containers were fragmented and sometimes only handles without vase bodies were found in both complexes. This is also the case for the San Maurizio necropolis. The handles were probably intentionally broken from the vases and placed in the tomb as "pars pro toto". On the basis of the findings it is presumed that these tombs with wealthy burial goods were located under the shelter of an enormous slab of stone as can be confirmed by the partly excavated necropolis.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In the 1981 and 1994 archaeological excavations at San Maurizio, part of an Iron Age II necropolis was documented. The original dimensions are still unknown. Details about the social structure of the human groups and the new types of burial practices can be determined on the basis of the burial goods. Two archaeological areas that were already discovered last century in the same area are connected to the necropolis. The burial goods suggest the presence of a group of men and women with quite wealthy burial objects. Along with

the two 20th century findings, the necropolis covers a period of time from the end of the V to half way through the III century BC. On the one hand it reflects local traditions and on the other hand it suggests a strong Etruscan influence. From the IV century onwards, there is also an increasing Celtic influence that can be seen in fashion and in local armours. The archaeological material is particularly influenced both by the Etruscans who settled in the Po Plain and by the Mediterranean culture in general. The introduction of writing and situlae with figurative decorations suggest a strong Mediterranean spiritual influence that also determines burial rituals. This Mediterranean influence was certainly encouraged by the geographic position of the Bolzano basin that is on the main access route to the Central Alps. It is also thought that the Fritzens-Sanzano Culture took part in the Etruscan northern trading connections across the Alps from the Early La Tène period onwards. Along with Mediterranean elements, the cultural material betrays strong local components: the vessels are the last specimens of a tradition lasting from the Urnfield period and testify the fading out of a culture. The highly technical bronze objects were exclusively produced in local workshops. This is a clue as to the presence of a metal workshop in this area. Some of the findings attest that there were contacts with South Germany and the Southeastern Alps.

The Etruscan power fades at the beginning of the IV century BC with the invasion of the Celts in Northern Italy. Once again the political situation completely changes in this area. From this period onwards Celtic ornaments and weapons are widely diffused in the Fritzens-Sanremo Culture. There is a break with regard to dwellings and votive pyres which the experts interpret as being an indirect consequence of the Celtic Invasion (GLEIRSCHER, 1987). Unfortunately this is not so in the few necropolises explored till now. There was a continuous use of the San Maurizio necropolis from the end of the V century BC until the LtB1 period. The 1868 finding connected to the necropolis widens the chronological range to the LtB2 period. On the contrary to what one would expect from the drastic incursions, a break of the necropolis in the Bolzano basin should not be seen. The new Celtic elements gradually entered in the local repertoire: as well as the traditional knife, the Celtic sword was also introduced. Local leaders carried this sword together with a Celtic girdle hook. These Central European happenings did not bring about important spiritual changes in the Central Alpine area. The Celtic influence is to be considered as only superficial (MARZATICO, 1992).

The San Maurizio necropolis situated on the western outskirts of Bolzano could be connected to a very important dwelling site that has not yet been identified. This site was pointed out in the Bolzano-Settequerce area for the Luco-Meluno Culture. There was

an important Sanctuary near the sulphurous spring dwelling area at the bottom of the valley. For many centuries votive offerings, mainly bronze rings, were placed at the Sanctuary for medical purposes. This custom was abandoned towards the end of the First La Tène period. On the opposite side of the valley on the "Greifenstein" slope, a votive pyre attested as belonging to the La Tène period has yielded very important Etruscan and Celtic imported material. A high quantity of La Tène material is generally noted in the San

Maurizio-Settequerce area. It is difficult to interpret all the material found because no other excavations have been carried out.

NOTES

1 - This article is a brief summary of the dissertation held by the author on this subject at the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck in 1997

SUMMARY - In 1981 an Early La Tène necropolis was brought to light. 25 tombs were uncovered. Details about the social structure of the human groups and the new types of burial practices can be determined on the basis of the burial goods. The burial goods suggest the presence of a group of men and women with quite wealthy burial goods. The necropolis covers a period of time from the end of the V to half way through the III century BC. On the one hand it reflects local traditions and on the other hand it suggests a strong Etruscan influence. From the IV century onwards, there is also an increasing Celtic influence that can be seen in fashion and in local armours.

RIASSUNTO - Nel 1981 è stata portata alla luce una necropoli di 25 sepolture del primo periodo La Tène. I corredi funerari forniscono informazioni sulle caratteristiche della struttura sociale del gruppo umano e sugli originali tipi di pratiche funerarie. In particolare, si evidenzia la presenza di individui femminili con corredi ricchi. La necropoli è databile dalla fine del V al III secolo AC. Lo studio di manufatti indica da un lato la presenza di tradizioni locali e dall'altro una forte influenza etrusca. A partire dal IV secolo in poi, si osserva anche una crescente influenza celtica attraverso lo stile e le armature.

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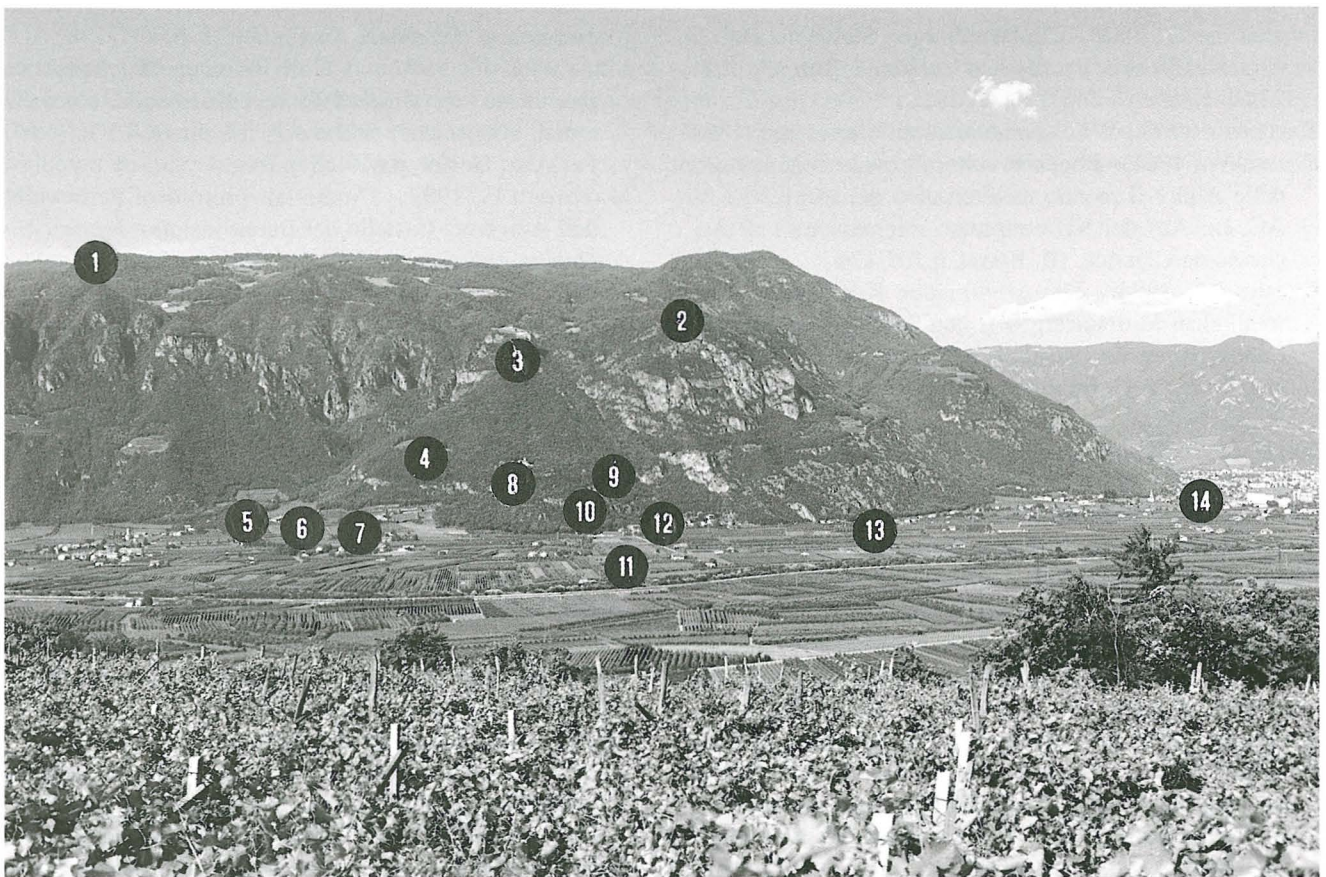
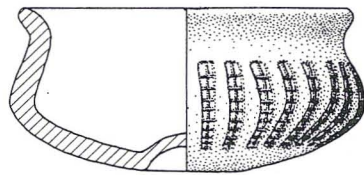
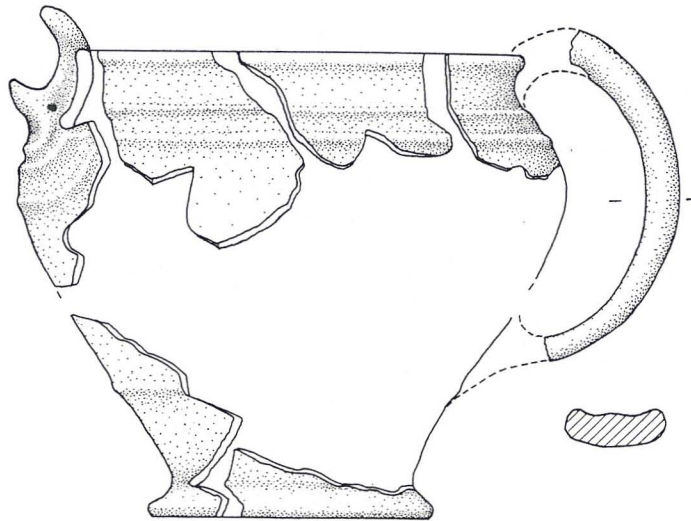


Fig. 1 - The area of San Maurizio-Settequerce and the Tschöggberg (North) with the prehistoric sites as can be seen from Missiano (Comune of Appiano). 1) Moarbichl (Comune of San Genesio), Iron Age votive pyre. The contemporary necropolis towards North; 2) Naifer Bichl (Comune of San Genesio), Iron Age votive pyre; 3) Greifenstein Castle (Comune of San Genesio), Eneolithic-Bronze Age dwelling, sporadic findings of Iron Age II; 4) Upper slope of Greifenstein (Comune of Terlano), Iron Age II votive pyre with imported Etruscan and Celtic material; 5) Steiner farmstead (Comune of Terlano), burial remains and lithic cyst, sporadic findings; 6) Early and Late La Tène wall remains; 7) Grosskornell farmstead (Comune of Terlano), abundant findings of last century (Urnfield epoch-High Middle Ages), dwelling, necropolis, ritual place; 8) SS. Cosma and Damiano (Comune of Terlano), romanian church with gothic restructure, the first building dates back to the Middle Ages with a Capuchin tomb. Iron Age II dwelling?; 9) Oelknott (Comune of Terlano), sanctuary of the waters of the SS. Cosma and Damiano church, roman material from the surface; 10) wall remains of a Middle-Late La Tène building. Bronze and Iron Age findings; 11) Kresslacke (Comune of Terlano), salt water spring, finding of a bird figurine; 12) Dwelling of Late Urnfield and Late La Tène epoch. Excavations carried out now. Kind letter from the Sovrintendenza di Bolzano; 13) San Maurizio-sulphur spring (Comune of Bolzano), sanctuary (late phase of Urnfield-Early La Tène); 14) San Maurizio-Berger farmstead (Comune of Bolzano), Early La Tène necropolis, two deposits recovered last century



1



2

Fig. 2 - San Maurizio, necropolis: tomb 8 (by BONFANTI, DAL RI & RIZZI, 1985), scale 1:2

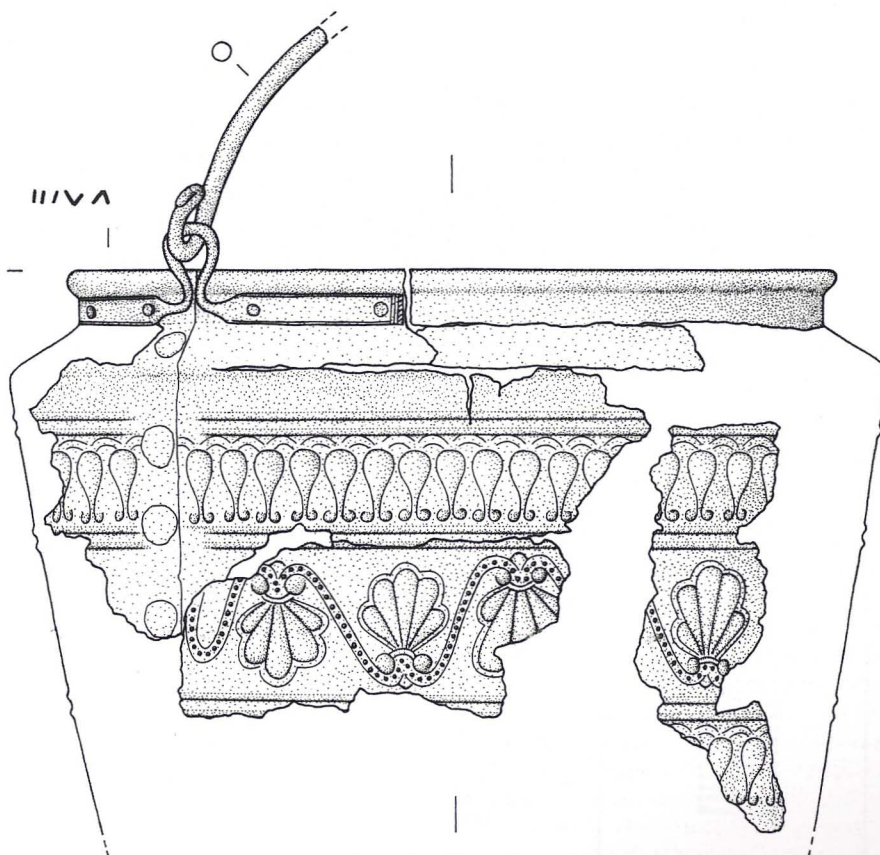


Fig. 3 - San Maurizio, necropolis: tomb 2, scale 1:2



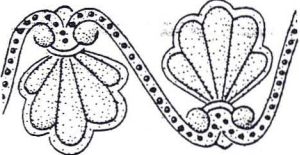

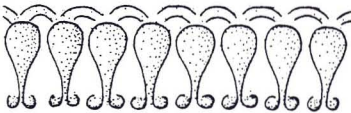
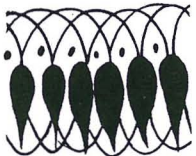
MORITZING	VULCI
	
	
	

Fig. 4 - comparison of the decorations (continuous frieze with arcs, curvilinear band with palmettes, frieze with sticks) in the situlae art of San Maurizio and the Attic vase paintings (Vulci). According to Egg with extra notes.

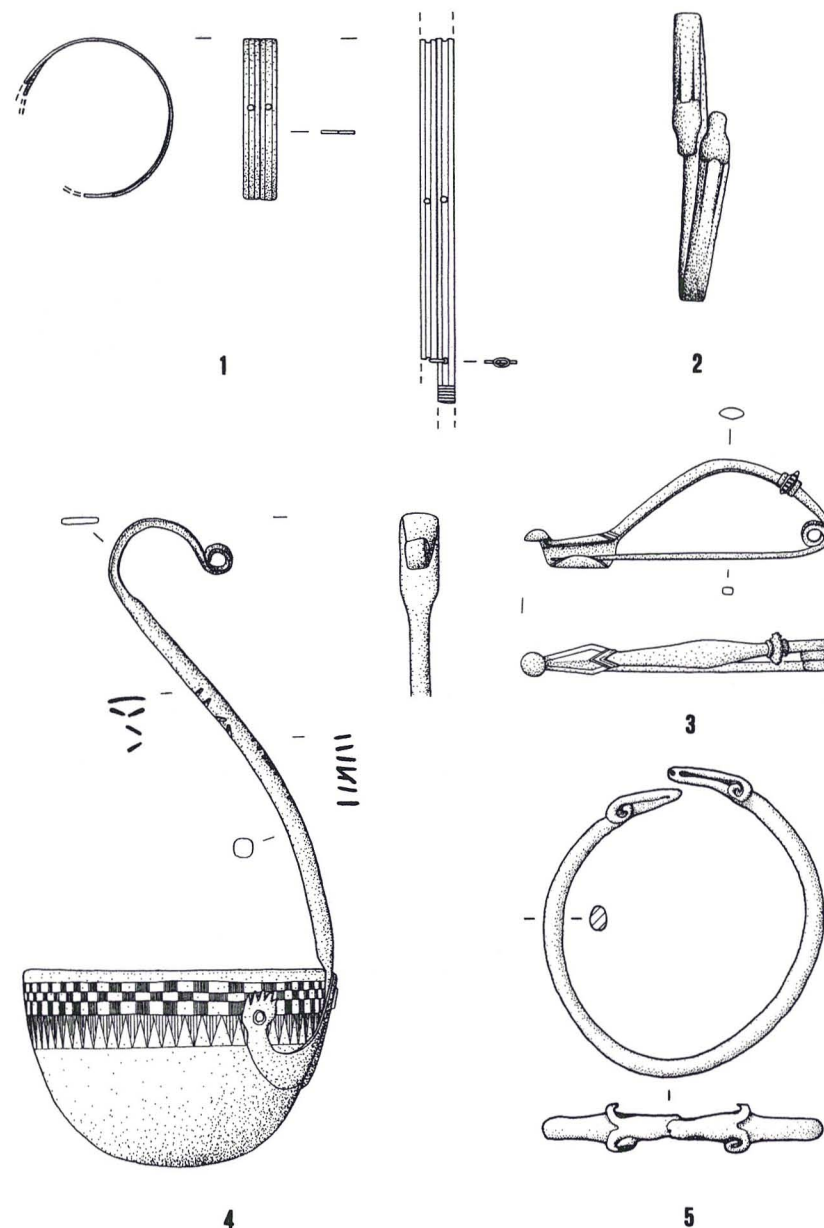


Fig. 5 - San Maurizio, necropolis. 1,5) tomb 5; 3) tomb 11; 2,4) tomb 20 (5 by BONFANTI, DAL RI & RIZZI, 1985), scale 1:2

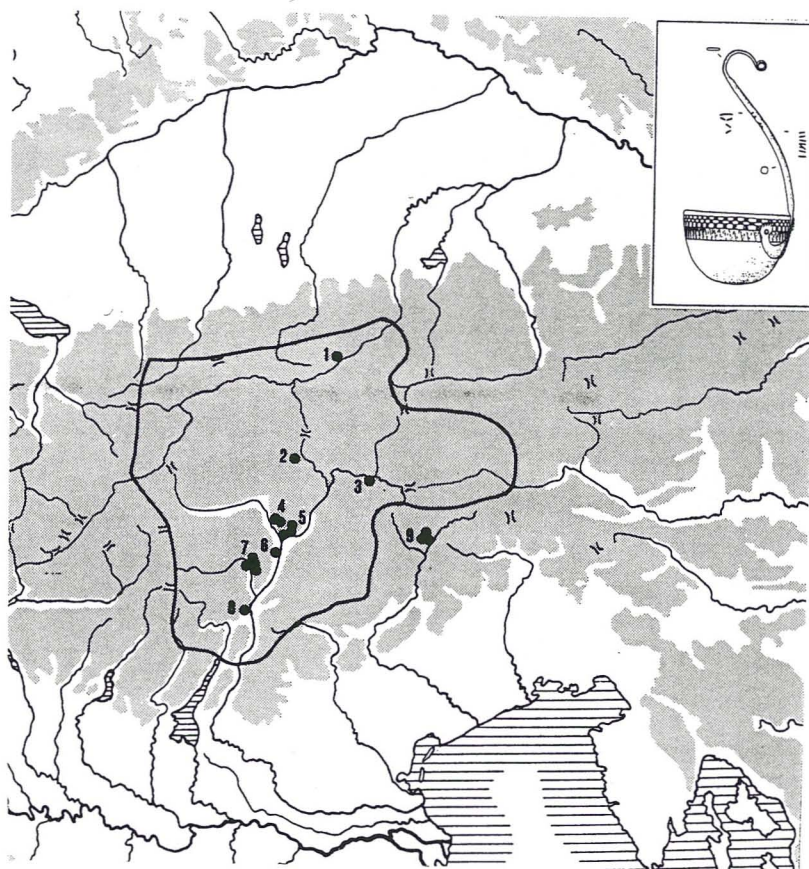


Fig. 6 - Distribution of the ladles in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture. 1) Burgberg, Stans; 2) Burgstaller Kopf, Racines; 3) San Lorenzo; 4) Settequerce; 5) San Maurizio; 6) Vadena; 7) Sanzeno; 8) Fai della Paganella; 9) Lagole

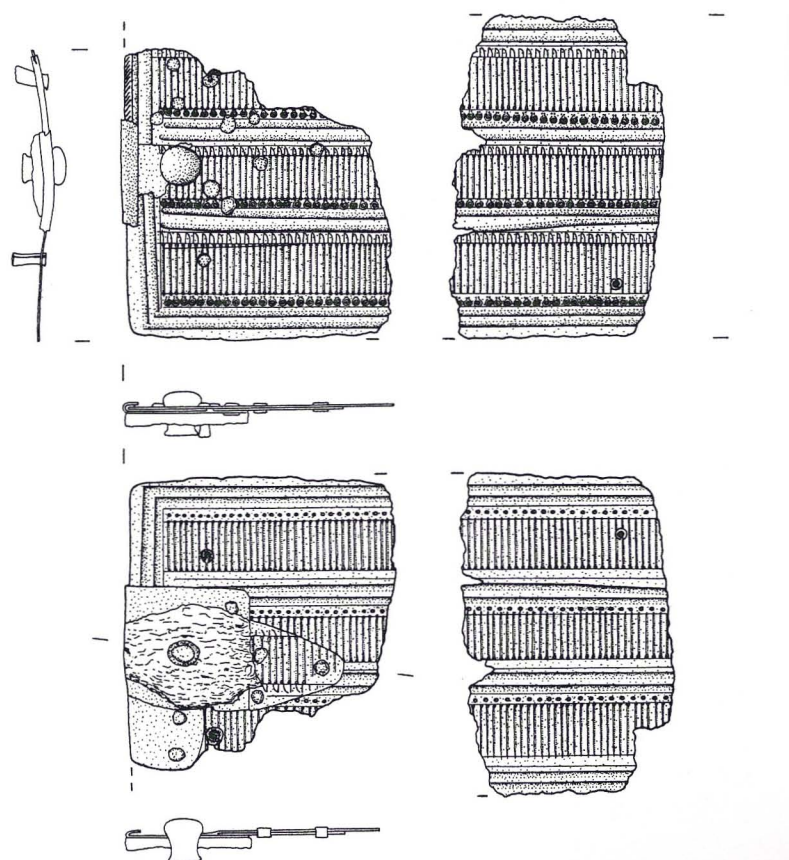


Fig. 7 - San Maurizio, necropolis: tomb 1, scale 1:2

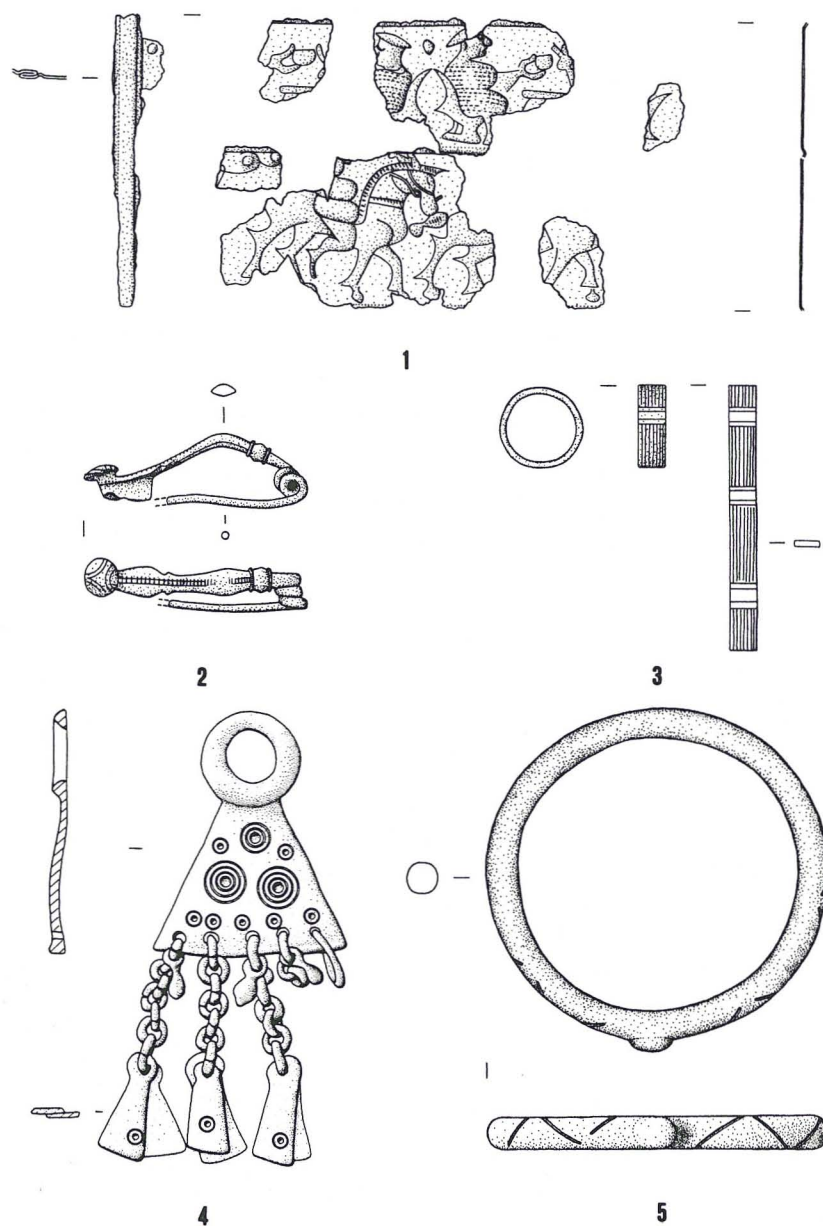


Fig. 8 - San Maurizio, necropolis: tomb 12, scale 1:2



Fig. 9 - Diffusion of earrings/plait ring clasps in the Fritzens-Sanzeno Culture. 1) Fließ; 2) Himmelreich, Wattens; 3) Vandoies di Sopra; 4) Rungger Egg, Siusi; 5) San Maurizio; 6) Laives, via Galizia; 7) Vadena; 8) Sanzeno; 9) Mechel; 10) Monte Ozol; 11) Stenico; 12) Groa of Sopramonte; 13) Montesei of Serso