

## The Early Neolithic of Central-Eastern Emilia and of Romagna

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**ABSTRACT** - New data about the neolithization process of this area are here presented. The analysis of the raw materials used by the first farmers, new radiocarbon datings and the discovery of some new sites allowed the authors to propose a different chronology for this process and a better understanding of the contacts between Fiorano Culture and Adriatic Impressed Ware groups.

**Key words:** Emilia Romagna; Early Neolithic; Adriatic Impressed Ware; Fiorano Culture; raw materials  
**Parole chiave:** Emilia Romagna; Primo Neolitico; Ceramica Impressa adriatica; Cultura di Fiorano; materie prime

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### 1. THE ADRIATIC IMPRESSED WARE<sup>1</sup>

There is more information about the population modalities of the Adriatic Impressed Ware groups in Romagna at the present time (BAGOLINI *et al.*, 1989; BAGOLINI & BIAGI, 1977). The sites at Miramare in the Rimini area (BAGOLINI *et al.*, 1989), as well as the findings out of context at Lugo di Romagna (VON ELES MASI & STEFFÈ, 1987) referring to this culture add to the information already obtained from the following sites: Misano (RN) (BAGOLINI & GHIROTTI, 1980), Faenza Fornace Cappuccini (RA) (ANTONIAZZI *et al.*, 1987) and Imola Ospedale Nuovo (BO) (BAGOLINI & VON ELES, 1978) (Fig.1).

On the whole the Romagna sites are well placed in the mid-Adriatic traditional facies of this culture, which was once defined as the "Aspetto abruzzese-marchigiano" (RADI, 1995), that testified as to the process of diffusion of groups that moved North from their mid-Adriatic bases to the coastal land and then to the Romagna hinterland.

Very little is known about the economic basis of this diffusion. A recurrent fact in the choice of the location is that the settlements were situated at the foot of the Apennine highlands, quite near the sea, mainly

on deposits that were suitable for agricultural purposes.

Agricultural activities are indirectly presumed by the general presence of lithic elements with gloss, querns and grinding stones, whereas the scarce data available on Miramare (site I) - situated in a thick forest environment - only suggest that ibex and deer were hunted and that there were also pigs of various sizes and very large domestic cattle.

As a result of research carried out on the coastal areas, it would seem that the diffused population gravitated along brief watercourses towards the sea. The situation beyond Miramare is very interesting because there are abundant findings referable to the Impressed Ware Culture and others generally attributed to the Early Neolithic, as well as sites with Fiorano and Catinzano/Ripoli elements (BAGOLINI *et al.*, 1989). The only Romagna station with Impressed Ware of which C14 dating is available is Faenza Fornace Cappuccini, where the earliest dates refer to the second half of the VII millennium BP (Fig.2).

The analysis of the flint lithotypes used allows to identify different periods in which this culture colonized Romagna. The major use of raw material from "southern sources" infers earlier settlements - as for example flint from Marche - which is situated close-by

the original area of these communities. While in the other sites the predominant use of local lithic resources suggests that the long-term settlers knew the surrounding territories very well (FERRARI *et al.*, in press). The diffusion of Impressed Ware elements in the central Emilia area is documented only on the basis of sporadic potsherds findings. Along with the well-known locality of Bazzarola near Reggio Emilia (TIRABASSI, 1987), there is also the Fiorano site in via Montagnani (MO) and the Spilamberto site (MO) (FERRARI & STEFÈ, 1993) where Fiorano materials were also found.

On the basis of the scarce material available, at present it is difficult to establish if these infer local activities or simply imported potteries.

There are no radiometric datings available at the moment in order to chronologically place this penetration of the Adriatic Neolithic groups. In the first hypothesis we believe that it should be dated before the first half of the VII millennium BP, parallel to or a little after the earliest coastal colonization.

## 2. THE FIORANO CULTURE

The new C14 datings for the Fiorano Culture (Fig.2) suggests that it was already in its mature phase before the first half of the VII millennium BP and therefore, it most probably limited a more widespread diffusion of the Impressed Ware towards the hinterland.

This hypothesis would justify the absence of real and proper sites of the Impressed Ware in the internal part of North-Eastern Italy considering that there were no real geographical obstacles. Nevertheless, the Adriatic Impressed Ware influences can be identified in the Po area in the pottery assemblage of the Vhò and Gaban Groups and the Fiorano Culture at Ca' Bissara (BAGOLINI, 1984) and Lugo di Grezzana (MOSER & PEDROTTI, 1996).

On the basis of C14 dating from the Fiorano site of Lugo di Romagna, the expansion of this culture towards the coast seems very ancient and it overlaps the first Neolithic colonization. The diffusion of these Po aspects which reach the Romagna area would appear to be responsible for the absence, in this area, of the more recent mid-Adriatic aspects of the Impressed Ware, such as those known at Ripabianca di Monterado (LOLLINI, 1965). In this borderland between the Po and the Adriatic cultures various types of relations and contacts are perhaps better documented. The presence of decorations and Adriatic ware shapes in the Lugo di Romagna site (not in a stratigraphic context) could therefore refer both to intercultural relationships and to a preceding episode of neolithization.

With regard to contacts between the two groups

(Adriatic Impressed Ware and the Fiorano Culture), the results of the research on the raw materials used stress the difference in the exchange systems and traditions, which seem very independent, tied to peninsular sphere for the Impressed Ware and to Alpine sources for the Fiorano Culture.

The independence of the exchange circuits of the two cultures would appear to explain the absence of obsidian in the Fiorano sphere - apart from a few sporadic elements at Savignano (BERNABÒ BREA *et al.*, 1990) and at Formigine Villa Gandini (Sardinian and Lipari material) (BONI, 1872; WARREN *et al.*, 1979). However, this raw material is abundant in Impressed Ware sites such as Faenza Fornace Cappuccini.

The formative processes of Fiorano are still unknown: it can only be remarked that this Culture appears to have reached Romagna during its mature phase following in the steps of the Adriatic Impressed Ware but in different directions.

The common traits identified among some of the pottery classes of the Po Culture and the mature style of the Cardial ware of Southern France have been known for a long time (Fig.3-6). These potteries are known mainly for their particular shapes, as for example the multihandle jars often with internal reinforcements below the rim (BAGOLINI & BIAGI, 1974).

With regard to this, the most recent information on the circulation of green stones in Northern Italy (D'AMICO, this volume) and in the nearby French areas (RICQ DE BOUARD, 1996) underlines the wide diffusion of jade and eclogite as far back as the first phases of the Neolithic and suggests the routes taken by the raw materials and cultural elements.

At the present moment of research Fiorano represents the only Po-Alpine Early Neolithic complex which is very homogeneous as can be clearly seen in the pottery assemblage (Fig.3-6), it is also highly dynamic and probably tied to exchanges and trading of materials such as "Alpine" flint. Fiorano elements are present in more or less all of the Early Neolithic sites of Northern Italy, often in large quantities and mainly consist of carinated cups and small cups with typical decorations. The persistent Fiorano Culture influences over the other Groups gave rise to local imitations, both in the pottery shapes and the decorative syntax, often resulting in original styles, as can be seen at Sammar-denchia of Friuli (FERRARI & PESSINA, 1996).

Viceversa Fiorano appears to have acquired very few elements from external sources, such as the pedestals and the heel bottom elements.

One of the problems still standing is the acculturation of the indigenous local base, represented by the last Mesolithic hunters-gatherers. As mentioned above, from a radiometric point of view, the mid-Adriatic Impressed Ware and Fiorano Cultures overlap, nevertheless they can only partially be compared to the more

recent Po-Alpine Castelnovian events, which seem to be more ancient apart from the exception of Lama Lite in Reggiano.

The little information available with regard to this last aspect in Emilia almost exclusively refers to seasonal hunting sites on the Apennine ridge that appear to have no contacts with the Neolithic sphere, unless the very few "Alpine" flint artefacts found in this area - even though often present - could be interpreted in this way (BIAGI *et al.*, 1980; FERRARI & FONTANA, in press).

With regard to the first Neolithic population of the region, as it is known at present, it should be observed that the diffusion of Impressed Ware groups of Romagna suggests that the traditional Mesolithic elements found in the lithic industry were acquired from elsewhere.

Elements that vaguely recall the recent Mesolithic period found in the Fiorano Culture, the Vhò Groups and the Friuli facies appear to be weak and indirect. The lithic industry, the sources and exchanges of raw materials are in fact very different and independent.

Finally, with regard to the chronological life span of the Fiorano Culture, non-calibrated C14 datings indicate a period of about half a millennium. Very little is known about the last expressions of this aspect. Perhaps they refer to the final period of the development of Fiorano in the Pescale and Riolo Terme sites (PACCIARELLI & VON ELES, 1994), where Fiorano forms consisting of figulina ware (in the first case) and exuber-

rant and complex decorations (in the second case) suggest a further re-elaboration of the classical decorative style of Fiorano.

In Emilia at Savignano sul Panaro lithic elements in the style of the Square Mouthed Pottery appear in the Fiorano documentation of the site that otherwise cannot be distinguished from the classical evidence. On the other hand, apart from the well known cases of Quinzano Veronese (BIAGI, 1972) and Fimon Molino Casarotto, recent excavations show how during the initial phase of the "linear-geometric" style of the Square Mouthed Pottery Culture the lithic industry was highly permeated by the influence of the preceding cultural tradition at Cantone di Magreta (MO), Rivaltella Ca' Romensini (RE) and Ponte Ghiara (PR) (BERNABÒ BREA *et al.*, 1997).

Recent findings at the Fiorano sites in the Apennine area (Sasso Marconi) testify that this group was involved in the circulation coming from the South (FERRARI & STEFFÈ, 1993). The presence of the Fiorano Culture in the peninsula area have been documented at Romita di Asciano (PERONI, 1962-1963), at San Rossore (BAGNONE, 1982) and at Grotta del Leone (D'EUGENIO, 1990) in the Pisa area, at Pienza (SI) (CALVI REZIA, 1977) and at Palidoro (RM) (PERONI, 1965).

#### NOTES

1 - The three authors equally took part in this work

**SUMMARY** - New data has enriched the picture of Neolithization in Central-Eastern Emilia and Romagna. At the present time there is more information on how the coastal area was populated by the Adriatic Impressed Ware groups. The penetration of Impressed Ware elements from the coast towards central Emilia is continually documented on through sporadic findings of potsherds decorated with impressions. It is possible that mature aspects of the Fiorano Culture, which appeared even before the first half of the VII millennium BP, as indicated by the new C14 dating, quickly replaced the former cultural tradition. On the basis of the same C14 dating, the expansion of the Fiorano Culture towards Romagna also seems very ancient, overlapping the first Neolithic colonization. It is possible that various relations and contacts were developed between the two cultures on this borderline. With regard to contacts between the two groups (Adriatic Impressed Ware and Fiorano Culture), the results of analysis carried out on the raw materials stresses the differences in the circuits and exchange traditions, which would seem to be completely independent. Recent findings of Fiorano sites in the Apennine area testify that this group was involved in the traffic coming from the South. There is still little information on the formative processes of Fiorano.

**RIASSUNTO** - Nuovi dati hanno arricchito il quadro della neolitizzazione dell'Emilia centro-orientale e della Romagna. Sono ora meglio note le modalità di popolamento dell'area costiera ad opera di gruppi della Ceramica Impressa adriatica. La penetrazione di elementi della Ceramica Impressa dalla costa verso l'Emilia centrale continua ad essere documentata esclusivamente da sporadici rinvenimenti di ceramiche decorate ad impressioni. È probabile che la comparsa di aspetti pieni della Cultura di Fiorano già prima della metà del VII millennio BP, come indicato dalle nuove date C14, abbia velocemente sostituito la precedente tradizione culturale. Sulla base delle stesse date C14 anche l'espansione di Fiorano verso la Romagna pare estremamente antica, sovrapponendosi alla prima colonizzazione neolitica. È possibile che in questa zona di confine tra i due ambiti culturali si siano sviluppati rapporti e contatti di vario genere. Per quanto riguarda i contatti tra i due gruppi (Ceramica Impressa adriatica e cultura di Fiorano), le indicazioni provenienti dall'esame delle materie prime indicano come completamente diversi siano stati i circuiti e le tradizioni di scambio, che paiono largamente indipendenti. Recenti rinvenimenti di siti Fiorano in area appenninica testimoniano dell'interesse di questo gruppo anche per le direttive di valico meridionali. Per quanto riguarda i processi formativi di Fiorano, essi restano ancora mal noti.

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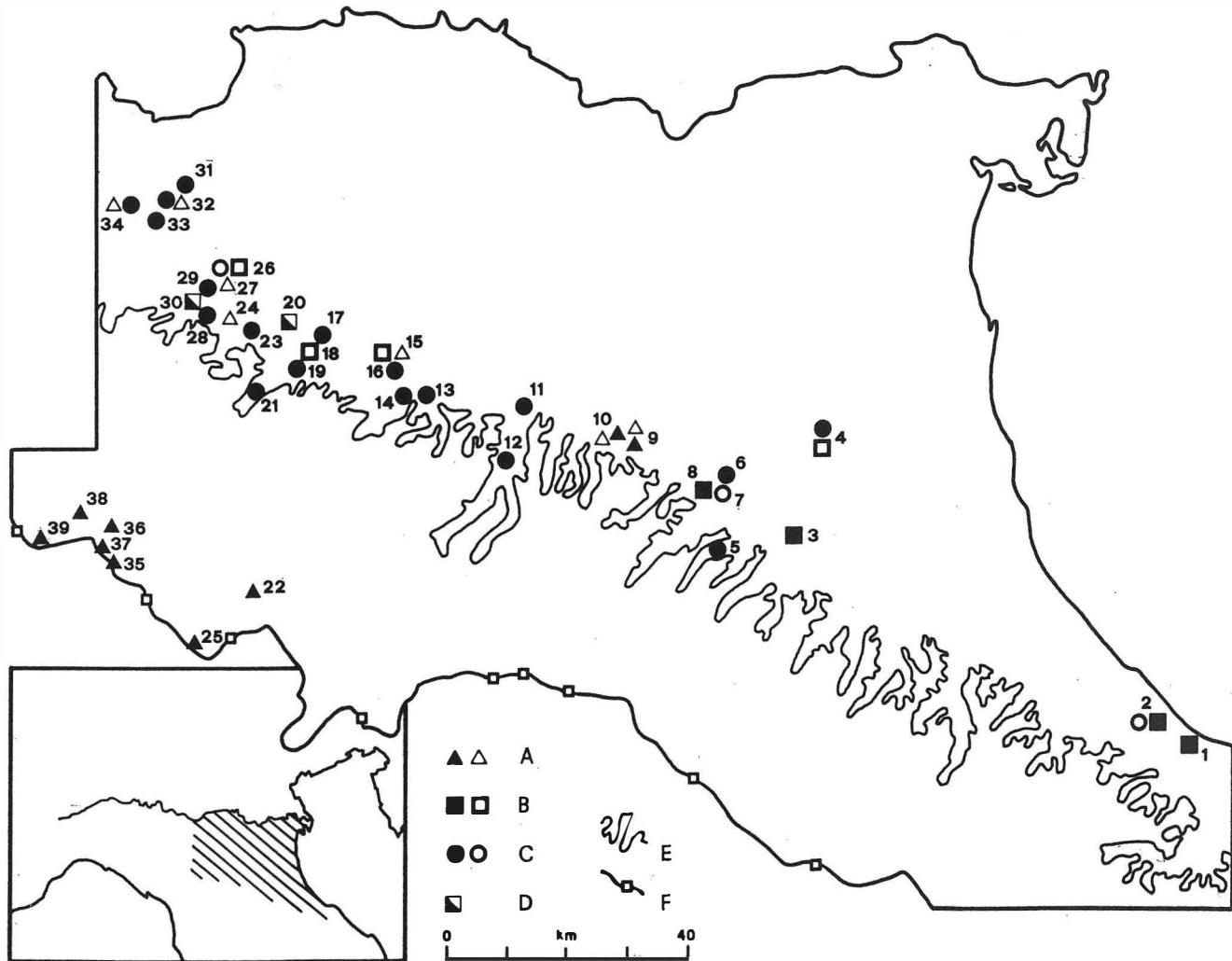


Fig. 1 - Scatter plot of the presence in central-eastern Emilia and in Romagna regarding the Castenovian culture (A), regarding the Impressed Ware (B), regarding the Fiorano Culture (C) and with regard to the early aspects of the "linear-geometric style" of the Square Mouthed Pottery Culture (D); filled mark: sites; empty mark: elements. E) contour line 200 m above sea level; F) Toscana-Emilia watershed and the main Apennine mountain passes.

List of the localities: 1) Misano Adriatico, poderi Leardini and Fantini; 2) Miramare di Rimini, loc. S.Salvatore (site I), loc. S.Lorenzo in Correggiano (site II, III), loc. Casalecchio (site IV, V); 3) Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini; 4) Lugo di Romagna, Fornace Gattelli; 5) Riolo Terme; 6) Laguna di Imola; 7) Imola, ex convent of S.Francesco; 8) Imola, Ospedale Nuovo; 9) Ozzano dell' Emilia, poderi Stanga and Pradello, poderi Ronchi, Riola Ca'S.Rocco, Ca' Fontanazzi and Prati Carlina; 10) S. Lazzaro di Savena, loc. Pizzocalvo - podere Camponi, loc. Idice - vigna Bignami, loc. La Campana - SAFRA quarries; 11) Casalecchio di Reno, zona "A"; 12) Sasso Marconi, Ca' de Testi; 13) Bellaria di Bazzano; 14) Savignano sul Panaro, loc. Doccia; 15) Spilamberto, Panaro sites; 16) Spilamberto, loc. La Dottora; 17) Formigine, villa Agandini-Agazzotti; 18) Fiorano Modenese, via Montagnani; 19) Fiorano Modenese, Fornaci Carani and Fiorano - Cava Est; 20) Cantone di Magreta; 21) Pescale; 22) Passo del Lupo; 23) Chiozza di Scandiano, Fornaci Alboni; 24) Pratissolo; 25) Lago Baccio; 26) Bazzarola; 27) Fogliano, Le Basse; 28) Albinea; 29) Rivaltella, Villa Corbelli; 30) Rivaltella, Ca' Romensini; 31) Castelnuovo Sotto, podere Orlatica; 32) Razza di Campegine; 33) Calerno Amadosi; 34) S. Ilario d'Enza; 35) Monte Vecchio; 36) Corni Piccoli; 37) Lama Lite; 38) Lago del Caricatore; 39) Passo della Comunella.

Sito	us	Laboratorio	misura BP	a.C. cal 1 sigma
<b>Castelnoviano</b>				
Passo della Comunella		Birm-830	6960+-130	5970-5650
Laghetti del Crestoso		Har-8871	6790+-120	5750-5550
Lama Lite II		R-1394	6620+-80	
Fienile Rossino		Bln-3277	6810+-70	5739-5629
<b>Cultura di Fiorano</b>				
Lugo di Romagna		Bln-3370	6170+-50	5213-5049
367		R-2747	6626+-110	5594-5437
973		R-2746	6161+-39	5206-5050
987		R-2748	6585+-87	5575-5435
Savignano sul P. (MO)		Bln-2976	5880+-50	4802-4715
		Telod. Isot.	6310+-210	
Fiorano Modenese (MO)	strato IV	Bln-3137	5570+-50	4466-4357
	pozz. 2	GrN-19838	6690+-180	5697-5437
	pozz. 5	GrN-19839	6540+-60	5520-5389
Lugo di Grezzana (VR)		R-2745	6524+-76	5520-5343
Miletto (FI)	fossa 1	Beta-44114	6180+-80	5235-5007
	fossa 2	Beta-44155	6100+-80	5208-4906
Poggio di Mezzo (PI)		?	5850+-60	4790-4684
<b>Ceramica Impressa della Romagna</b>				
Faenza Fornace Cappuccini	fossato	Bln-3372	6320+-60	5336-5232

Fig. 2 - List of the C14 dates available for the Late Castelnovian, the Romagna Impressed Ware and the Fiorano Culture.

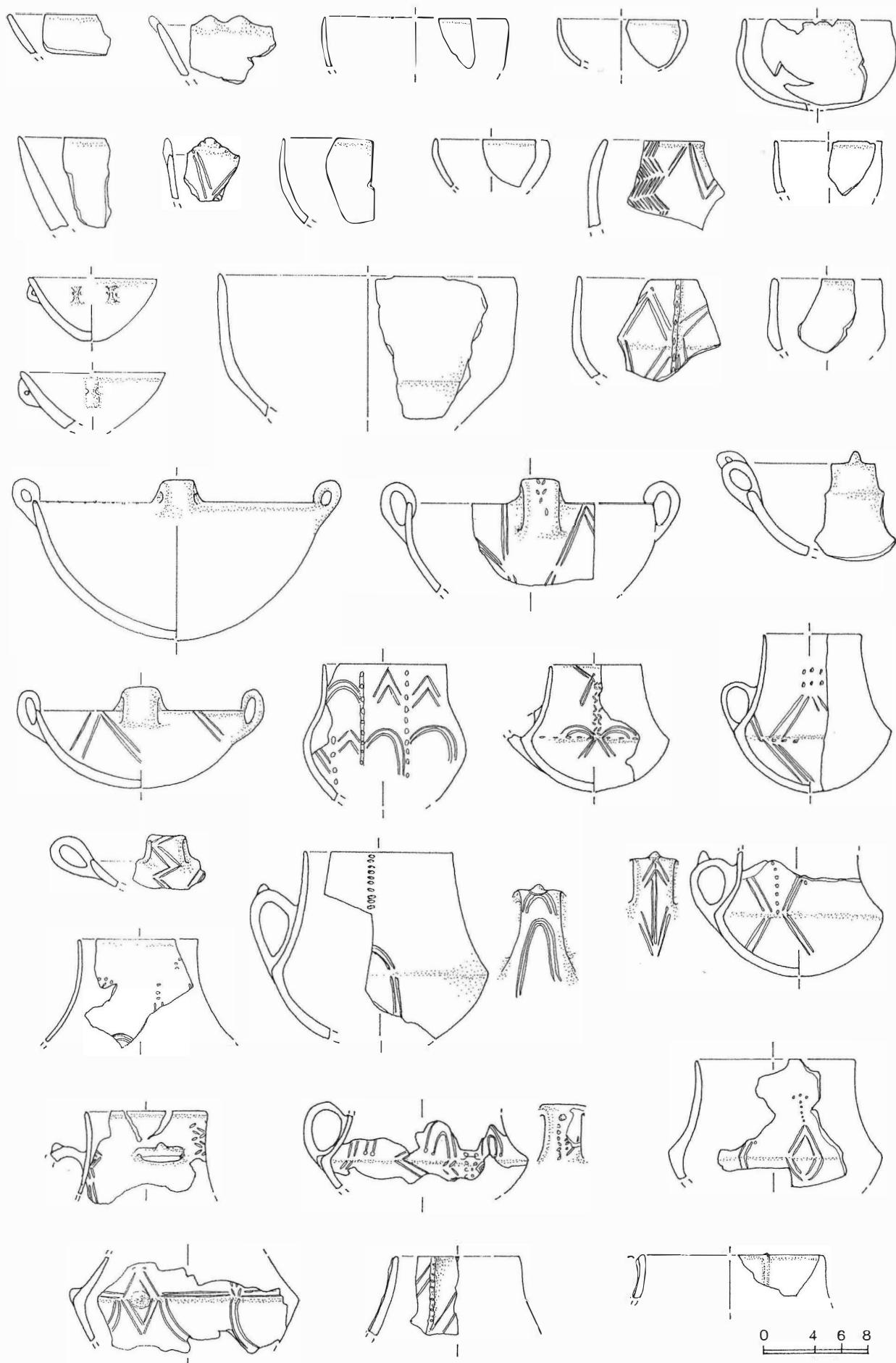


Fig. 3 - Pottery shapes and decorative syntax of the Fiorano Modenese Fornaci Carani site

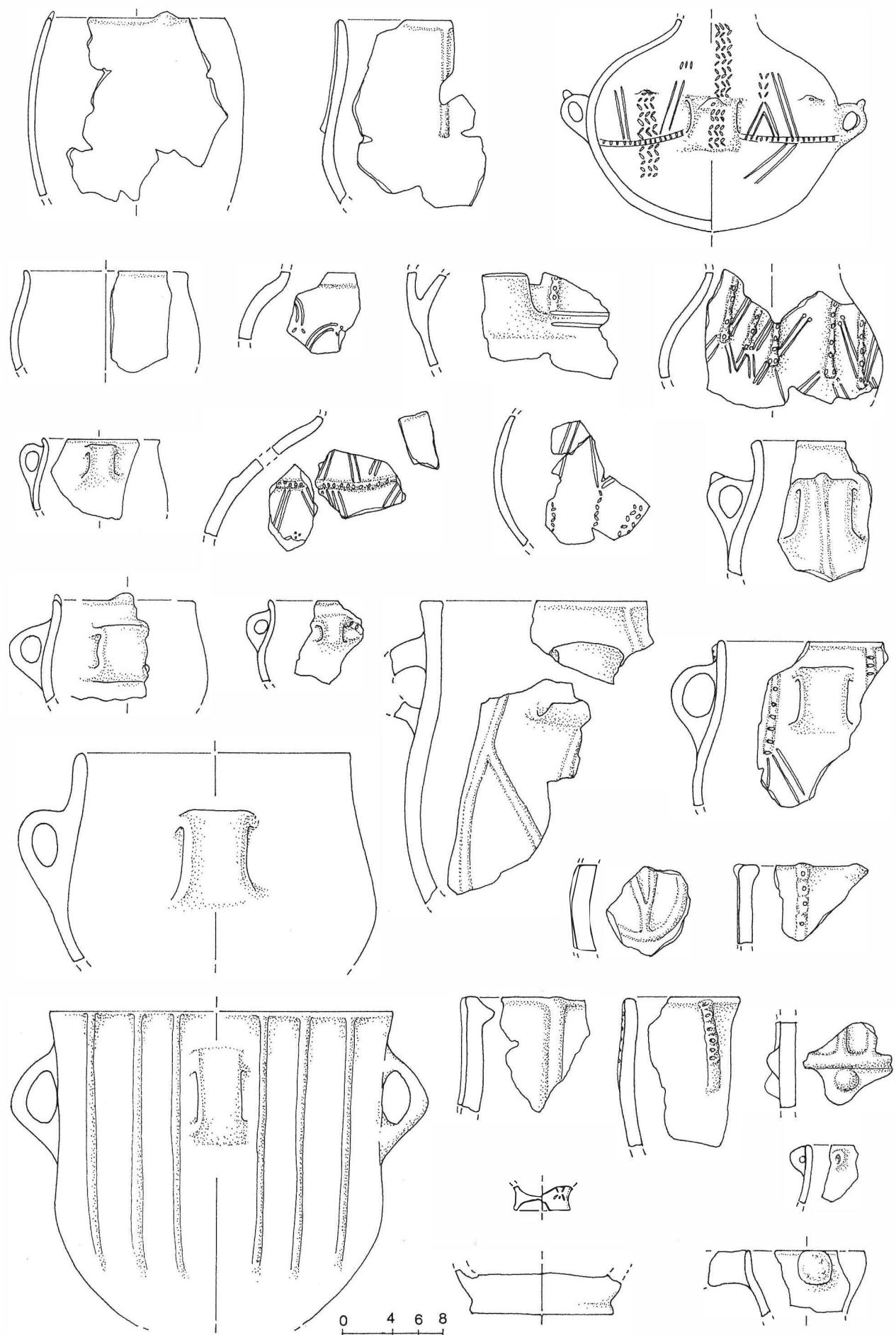


Fig. 4 - Pottery shapes and decorative syntax of the Fiorano Modenese Fornaci Carani site

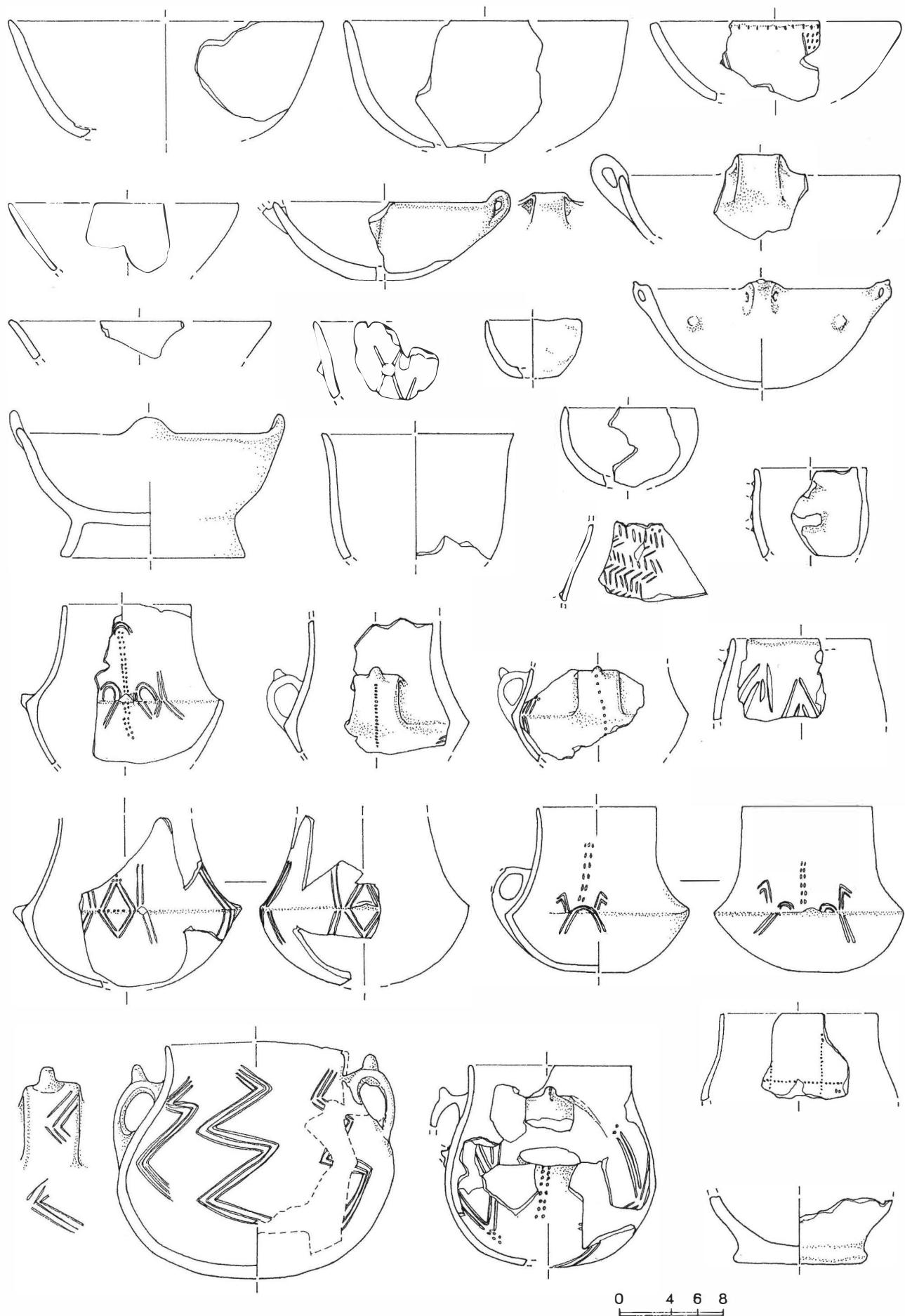


Fig. 5 - Pottery shapes and decorative syntax of the Fiorano Lugo di Romagna site

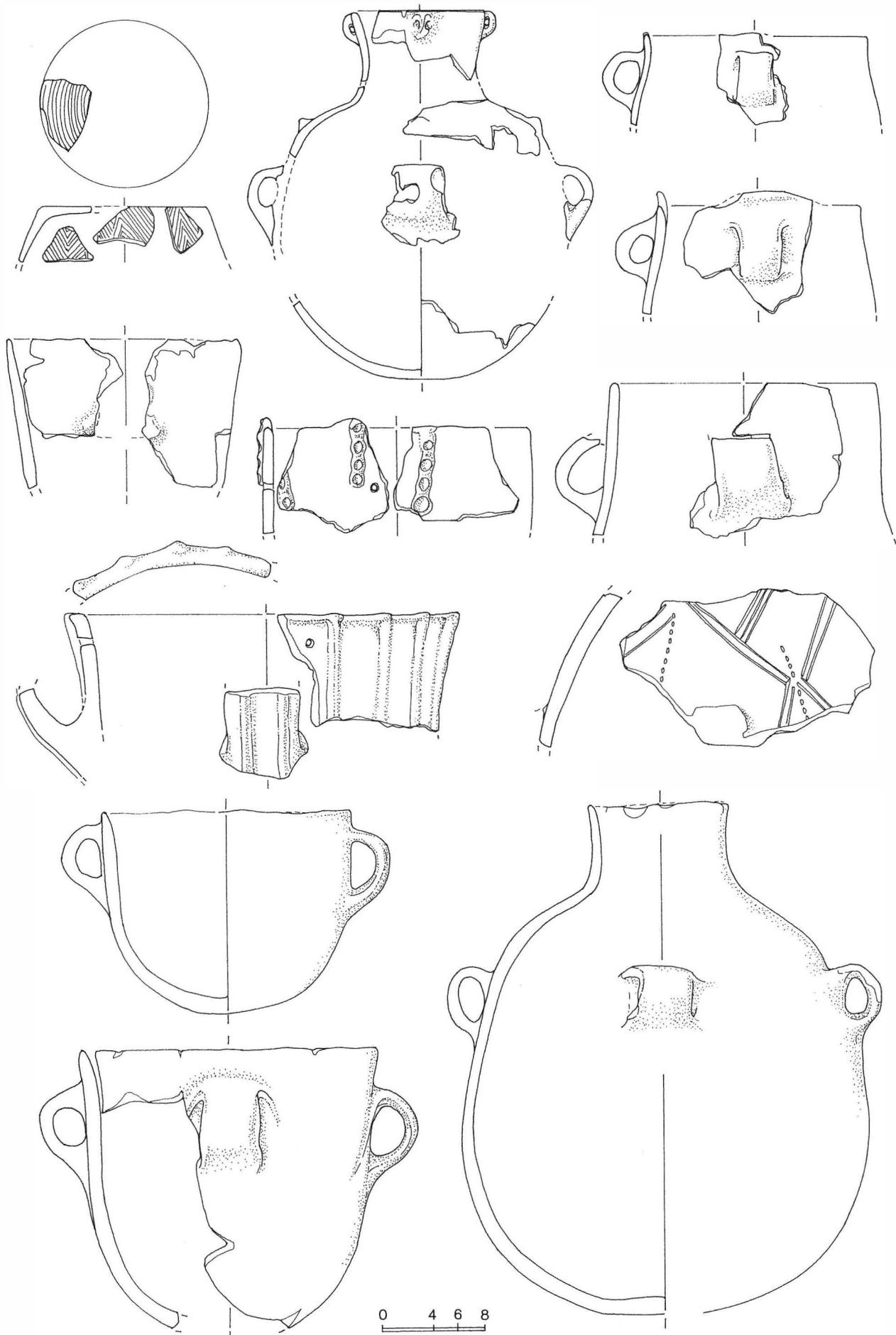


Fig. 6 - Pottery shapes and decorative syntax of the Fiorano Lugo di Romagna site