

New data on the Neolithic Age in Romagna

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ABSTRACT - The Early Neolithic: Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini with Impressed Ware Culture. The Middle Neolithic: SQP, geometric-linear style and meander-spiral style. The Recent Neolithic: aspects of Ripoli, Fossacasia, Diana and influences of Chassey-Lagozza Culture.

Key words: Neolithic, cultures, chronology, Romagna, Italy

Parole chiave: Neolitico, culture, cronologia, Romagna, Italia

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1. THE EARLY NEOLITHIC

The earliest phase of the Neolithic process in Romagna is documented in Faenza in the Fornace Cappuccini settlement, attributed to peoples possessing the Impressed Ware Culture. Twelve settlement structures were investigated. These structures were situated both inside and outside an artificial ring-shaped ditch. The ditch was contemporaneous with the first occupation of the site and subsequently purposely refilled many times over, as confirmed by the analysis on the stratigraphy and the material. The materials range from pottery of the archaic phase of the Square Mouth Vase Culture to objects of the Copper and Early Bronze Ages (MASSI PASI *et al.*, 1996).

The purpose of the structures is uncertain as they were very small: only structure 30 was postulated as the base of a dwelling as it was quite large and contained elements such as slabs of concotto, traces of wicker work and reddened earth with traces of charcoal and ash, probably the remains of a hearth.

1.1. *The ceramics*

Ceramics are divided in three groups: coarse ceramics with rugged and rough surfaces containing thick and often sharp grog, calcareous, carbonatic and lithic ingredients of an orange, brown or brown-red

colour; purified ceramics with small lithic components including quartz and mica, smoother outer and inner surfaces forming a film, not always preserved, of different shades of colour from beige to pink and from black to grey; fine ceramics including fine sand without other added grog, thin walls, compact and smooth surfaces of a dark grey, shiny black or yellow-orange colour. Among the semi-coarse ceramics there are mainly large size vases including ovoid and semi-ovoid ollas (Fig.1:1), cylindrical, vaguely truncate conical shapes (Fig.1:2), with convexed walls and flared lips; medium size vases with semi-ovoid outlines (Fig.1:3-4, 2:3), truncate cone shapes (Fig.2:2) or with narrow mouths (Fig.2:4), often with applications of ashlar and horizontal handles; semi spherical, truncate cone-shaped drinking vessels with narrow mouths; tulip shaped vases with heeled bottoms. The bottoms usually feature heels that are more or less prominent and are rarely flat or convex. The fine ceramics include flask vases, many necks of which were found (Fig.2:6); truncate cone-shaped drinking vessels and flat bases (Fig.2:5) or ovoid-shaped drinking vessels with convexed bases (Fig.2:7); spherical shaped cups with narrow mouths and small vertical handles applied just under the rim. There are also large shallow bowls with sinuous profiles; open truncate cone-shaped bowls, bowls with straight rims; cylindrical drinking vessels; carinate truncate cone-shaped bowls, rounded carinate bowls (Fig.2:8) or with truncate conical bodies and convexed bottoms, with two handles close to each other, immediately un-

der the rim (Fig. 2:9). The handles are either horizontal with rod sections applied on the rims of truncate conical large bowls, band handles or ring handles.

A great amount of coarse and semi coarse potsherds are decorated with impressions and engravings. The reconstructed forms mainly refer to vases with semi ovoid bodies and bottoms with small feet or heels, vases with truncate conical walls with straight rims, vases with dented walls and vases with convexed bases.

The untidy decorative syntax of the whole surface is often slanting and sometimes bands are applied under the rim.

There are digital and nail semicrescent-shaped impressions with more or less evident clay applications on the sides, or digital impressions on coarse or semi coarse walls. Bone and siliceous tools were used and the impressions obtained are pointed, circular and triangular. The engravings on the medium and semi purified ceramic walls consist of very simple but varied patterns: vertical straight lines, horizontal slanting lines with intersections that form reticulate herring-bone or meander motifs. Sometimes different techniques are used together, such as impressions and engravings, while grooves are rarely found.

In structure 1 (1984), 2, 5 (1985), 6-12 (8-shaped structure) and 30 (1987) there were 1540 pieces of ceramics; the percentage of impressed pottery as well as the smooth engraved pottery and also the morphological structure of the fragments have been elaborated and clearly show that walls are more abundant than rims and bottoms (Fig. 3).

Impressed Ware is documented at Misano and at Miramare and mainly include finger impressions, globe shaped vases with necks and narrow mouths, cups and little cups with ashlar and only a few engraved lines on purified vases (GRIFONI, 1996:84).

The Faenza ceramic shapes can be found in all the Impressed Ware area of the Central Adriatic: it appears in Romagna from the Marche-Abruzzo areas (RADI, 1995:134) along the coast in a later period than the first appearances in Southern Italy. However, at present the differences are less obvious and connections can be seen with the Impression Ceramics of the Basilicata and Puglie areas. These ceramics find their way inland (BAGOLINI & GHIROTTI, 1980; BAGOLINI, 1992) just a little later than at Imola (BAGOLINI & VON ELES, 1978:33-63) and at Bazzarola of Reggio Emilia (TIRABASSI, 1987).

1.2. The lithic industry

The lithic industry is characterized by the presence of obsidian, the quantity of which varies in the different structures: such a richness of obsidian is only

found at Santo Stefano-Ortucchio (RADI, 1989:113); in the same period it is also documented in Muccia, Piccioni Grotto and Continenza Grotto. In structure 1 (1984) the obsidian artefacts represent 10% of the lithic industry; in structure 2 (1992) there is a low percentage: there are flakes, small blades whereas no cores are present. Some obsidian artefacts were analysed by G. Bigazzi of the Istituto di Geocronologia e Geochimica Isotopica of the CNR of Pisa using the fission trace method. The artefacts were divided in three types A, B and C. Type A is from Lipari and the others are from Palmarola. Flint is the main material used in the lithic industry, generally coming from the Marche area and includes perfect conoid flakes. Microlithic industry is abundant with traditional Mesolithic working techniques and typologies. There is a relation between the southeast complexes and the Po area ones (BAGOLINI & BIAGI, 1987; BAGOLINI, 1980, 1992). The microlithic industries are present in Misano, Miramare and at Continenza Grotto, S. Stefano, Tricalle and Fontanelle; there are flaked blades like at Miramare, Piccioni Grotto, Capodacqua, Villaggio Leopardi, Marcianese, Tricalle, Fontanelle. Differentiated vertical elements are also present at S. Stefano, Maddalena of Muccia; a few at Piccioni Grotto, Leopardi, and Capodacqua.

Geometrical shapes are also found at Miramare, S. Stefano, Piccioni Grotto, Maddalena of Muccia; the piquant triedre type is present at Miramare and at Maddalena of Muccia as well as Faenza. Burins are also well represented at Marcianese, Muccia, Tricalle and Fontanelle, less represented at Miramare, S. Stefano, Capodacqua, Piccioni, and Leopardi. Scrapers are scarce and few between everywhere. With regard to the lithic industry in general, the Faenza sites find comparisons in nearly all the Impression Ceramic sites of the Central Adriatic and in particular the microlithic industries at Misano, Miramare, Tricalle, Fontanelle, Continenza, connected to the Mesolithic substratum of the Castelnovian phase, such as the trapezoids with concave base and the denticulated bladelets.

There were few polished pebble implements made from various types of ophiolites, jadeite, phthanite, a variety of fine grain sandstone and other stones that were difficult to classify (MASSI PASI *et al.*, 1996:117-119).

Structure 2 (1992) yielded half of a small jadeite hatchet, including the middle part and the cutting edge. It had a deep V-shaped groove positioned at 90° from the cutting edge and could be interpreted as part of a highly stylized "Venus" statuette of a woman (the legs) or part of the body (the vulva).

1.3. Conclusions

The calibrated absolute dates obtained from various carbon specimens are as follows: 5335-4560 BC;

5470-4990 BC; 5263-4957 BC (BERMOND MONTANARI, 2000:22).

These dates allow to date the Impressed Ware of Faenza to around the first centuries of the second half of the VI millennium. Typological relations can be found with the most archaic phase of the Abruzzo-Marche facies, represented by Villaggio Leopardi and Maddalena of Muccia, but the typology differs from the more evolved phase referable to the last centuries of the VI millennium, because of the absence of painted or unpainted figurines and the Ripabianca burin.

Regarding the Fiorano aspects of the Lugo settlement, kindly see the authors of the excavations (STEFFÈ, 1996); Lugo is one of the most oriental sites referable to this culture.

Some Fiorano elements can be identified in the Miramare area (BAGOLINI *et al.*, 1989) and at Riolo. In this phase of the Neolithic, obsidian is less frequent.

2. THE MIDDLE NEOLITHIC

Ceramic fragments belonging to the geometric-linear phase, attributable to an archaic period of the Square Mouth Vase Culture were uncovered in the fill-up deposit of the ditch of the north-eastern sector of Fornace Cappuccini at Faenza. It is not possible to identify them as dwelling structures but they are above all circumstantial evidence of this period: there is no liaison with the preceding or the successive period (MASSI PASI *et al.*, 1996:87 and 130).

The following phase that is characterized by decorated ceramics with spiral-meander motifs using the graffiti and engraving techniques present on the whole of the Italian territory, except for Liguria, is certified at Vecchiazzano of Forlì. Along with Miramare, this town represents the most eastern diffusion point of this style: there are bowls with square mouths and 'barbed-wire' decorations, lids, small ollas, hemispheric bowls with protruding rims. The lithic industry is scarce: there are foliates, long vertical scrapers, scrapers on blades, obsidian; axes and hatchets of polished stone (MASSI PASI & PRATI, 1996).

3. THE RECENT NEOLITHIC

During the Recent Neolithic, between the end of the IV and the beginning of the III millennium, Romagna receives the Adriatic current of Ripoli, Fossacesia,

and Serra D'Alto-Diana. In the Forlì area, in the settlement of Via Decio Raggi on the outskirts of Forlì (MORICO & PRATI, 1996:143) there are cultural aspects of the Western Neolithic similar to Chassey-Lagozza, with fine ceramics, smooth and polished surfaces of a brown-black colour, which feature plates with brims, truncated cone-shaped shallow plates, ashlar with horizontal perforations, establishing parallels with Neto of Bolasse (SARTI, 1985), Sesto Fiorentino (SARTI & MARTINI, 1993) and Spilamberto (BAGOLINI & VON ELES, 1981).

Ripoli is concentrated in Abruzzo and Marche, but Ripoli elements can be found in Umbria, Toscana, Lazio, Liguria and Valpadana, where late elements of this culture appear. During this mature phase, according to Grifoni "Chassey-Lagozza contributions deeply sink into the Ripoli features and the Diana influence is felt at the same time" (GRIFONI, 1996).

Characteristics of Ripoli can be recognized from the large-eared handles of Vecchiazzano and also of Misano, but the lithic industry is scarce and atypical.

Certain aspects of an evolved phase of Diana are present along the coast and on the high inland plain at Vecchiazzano of Forlì (Fig.4), S.Egidio of Cesena and Miramare (MASSI, 1996). The ceramic material presents: truncated cone-shaped bowls, ovoid-shaped vases, spool-shaped handles and holds, tubular mouldings without perforations beneath the rims, impressed and engraved motifs; the lithic industry includes frontal scrapers, laminar aspects, macrolithism and obsidian.

Diana is common along the entire Adriatic coast and is connected with the diffusion of obsidian.

Miramare also seems involved in the Southern Serra d'Alto and Diana traditions, which invaded the Po area (Spilamberto, Pescale). A chronological seriation of Ripoli-Serra d'Alto-Diana-Chassey-Lagozza in the Romagna Recent Neolithic ambit can only be hypothesized at the moment for lack of data.

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SUMMARY - This paper deals the problem of Neolithic Age in Romagna. The Early Neolithic: the Impressed Ware Culture is represented with important evidence at Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini. Stratigraphic excavation brought to light a settlement and an artificial ditch with a ring shape, filled in Middle Neolithic: SMP, geometric-linear style and in Copper Age. The Fiorano Culture is documented at Lugo; as at Vecchiazano (Forlì), is documented evidence of SQP with meander-spiral style. In the recent Neolithic Age the finds evidence the peninsular aspects of Ripoli, Fossacesia, Diana, together with the influences of the Western Neolithic refer to Chassey- Lagozza cultural aspects.

RIASSUNTO - Si è affrontato il problema delle presenze nel periodo Neolitico in Romagna, privilegiando il sito di Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini, che ha restituito un insediamento della cultura a ceramica Impressa ed un fossato anulare, dal cui riempimento artificiale provengono elementi del Vbq di stile geometrico-lineare e dell'Eneolitico. La cultura di Fiorano è nota dall'insediamento di Lugo, mentre la fase tarda del Vbq, stile meandro-spiralico è nota a Vecchiazano nel forlivese. Il Neolitico recente mostra di recepire le influenze della tradizione centro-sud- adriatica, con gli aspetti di Ripoli, Fossacesia, Diana, sia quelli che afferiscono alle culture nord-occidentali di Chassey-Lagozza.

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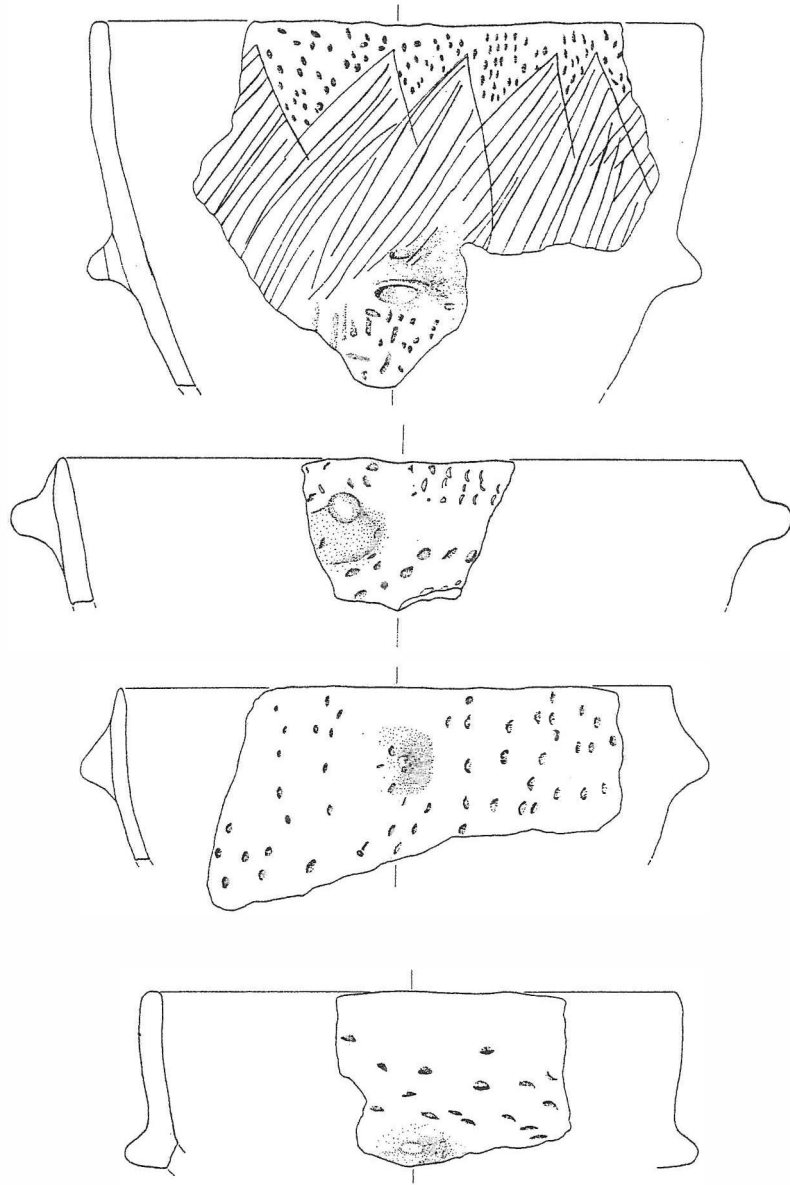


Fig. 1 - Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini. Types of vases of the Impressed Ceramic Culture ($\frac{1}{4}$ nat. size)

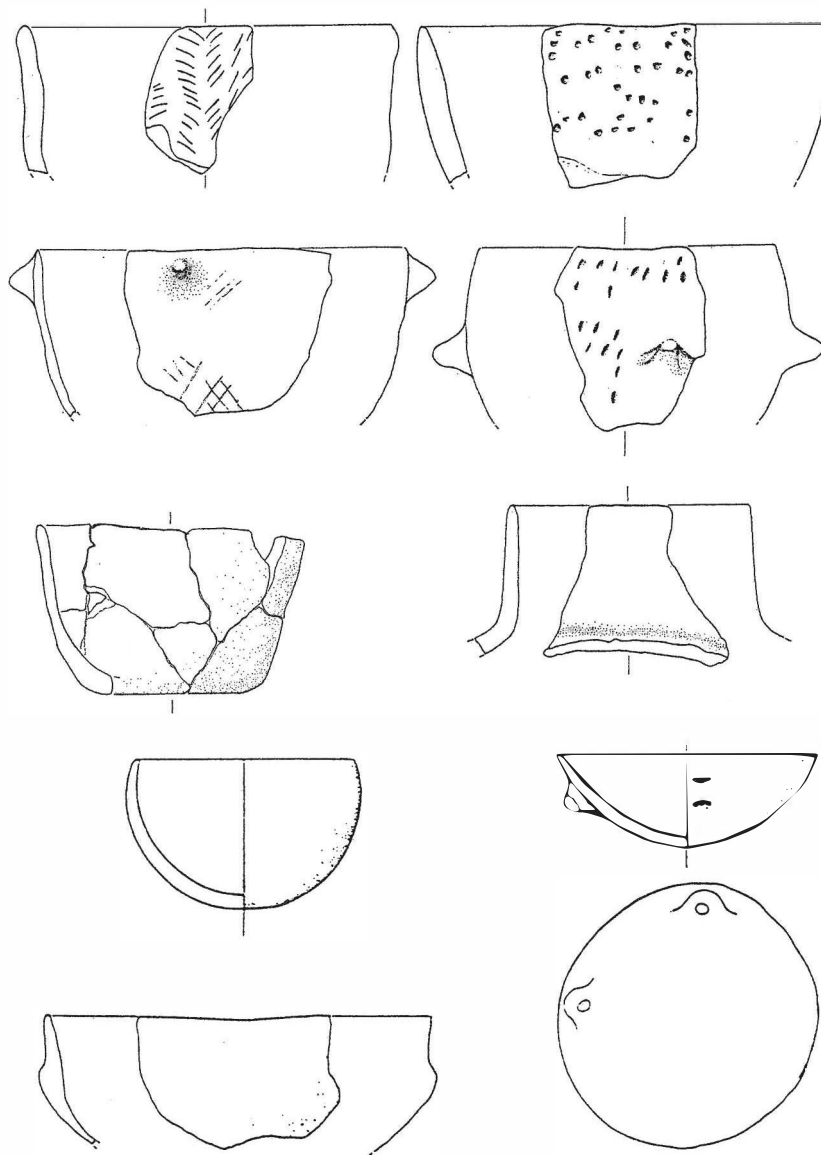


Fig. 2 - Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini. Types of vases of the Impressed Ceramic Culture ($\frac{1}{4}$ nat. size)

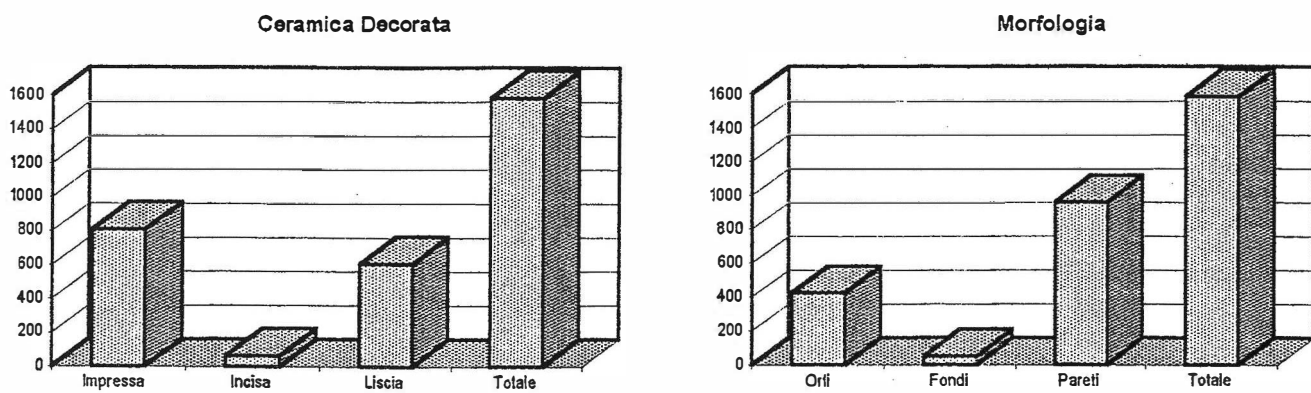


Fig. 3 - Faenza, Fornace Cappuccini. Histograms relative to the presence of impressed ceramics in comparison to the smooth engraved ceramic and to the shape of the fragments

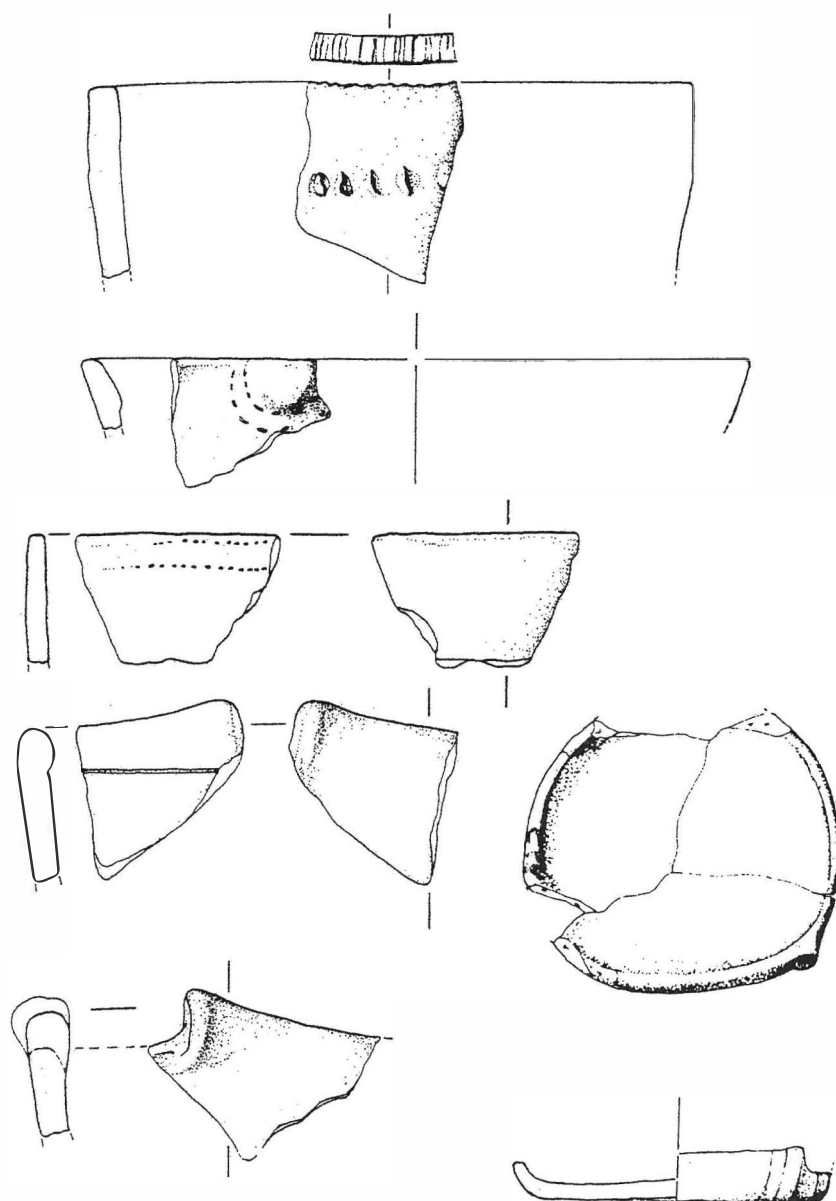


Fig. 4 - Vecchiazzano, Forlì. Types of vases of the Recent Neolithic ($\frac{1}{2}$ nat. size)