

## The Neolithic site of La Vela (TN). 1987-88 excavation campaigns: the pottery of the Gaban group and the Square Mouth Pottery Culture levels

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ABSTRACT - Authors present the pottery found in the Neolithic levels of "La Vela", near Trento (Italy)

KEY WORDS: "La Vela", Trento, Pottery, Neolithic

PAROLE CHIAVE: "La Vela", Trento, Ceramica, Neolitico

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Considering that the ceramics are highly fragmented, the study on the typology of the pottery of the levels from La Vela is based on the analysis of the syntaxes and the techniques of decoration adopted. With regard to the reliability of the stratigraphic contexts used here for the ceramics, two important points must be kept in mind:

1 - The physical proximity of the Early Neolithic "Gruppo Gaban" levels and those of SMVC phase I in the geometric-linear style of the northern area.

2 - The presence of many features (post-holes, trench systems, burial pits) that almost systematically cut through the deeper sequences causing the mixing up of ceramic materials. The study of the artifacts was carried out on homogeneous complexes of phases, correlating the typological with the stratigraphic data.

The Gaban group assemblage consists of 23 decorated fragments. The patterns found are: parallel lines incised on the walls or the rim; incised rhomboids, made by fine scratching; grooves impressed on cordons or rims. Incision is by far the predominate technique (46%). Scratched techniques are also very common (27%) as well as

impressed techniques (18%), while plastic decoration is poorly represented (9%).

The preliminary analysis on the decorative syntaxes of the Ceramic Industry found in the levels attributable to the Square Mouth Pottery Culture clearly distinguishes two distinct chronological phases (SMVC I in a geometric-linear style and SMVC II in a meander-spiral style):

The collection referring to the geometric-linear style of phase I includes 20 decorated fragments.

The scratched patterns mainly include: hatched bands, zig-zag bands, triangles with hatched backgrounds. Incised parallel line patterns similar to others found in the Early Neolithic settlement areas of the "Gruppo Gaban" are common. Decoration is applied to the walls, just under the rims and above the carenation.

The main technique adopted is scratched (60%) followed by incised (30%) whereas impressions (10%) are exclusively represented by rim impressions.

The change in techniques between the Early Neolithic and phase I of the SMVC is significant: incision rather than scratching was applied. In fact

in phase I of the SMVC there are fewer incised (30% less) and more scratched (60%). In phase II this is still the case but excisions appear for the first time (1%).

161 decorated fragments were found in the levels of phase II of the meander-spiral style.

Decorations is mainly dynamic (meanders and spirals) and geometric - linear (ladder bands, hatched patterns and triangles). Decoration is usually applied to the everted rim, under the rim, on the walls above

the carenation. Scratching is still predominant (64%), incision persist (23%), while the impressed technique (12%) is documented as being represented by impressed rims and finger nail impressions.

Future analysis of the material aims at the definition of another aspect, characterized by a high percentage of elements in a geometric linear style, featuring sparse fragments of style II and the absence of excision. This is suggested by the analysis of burial contexts.

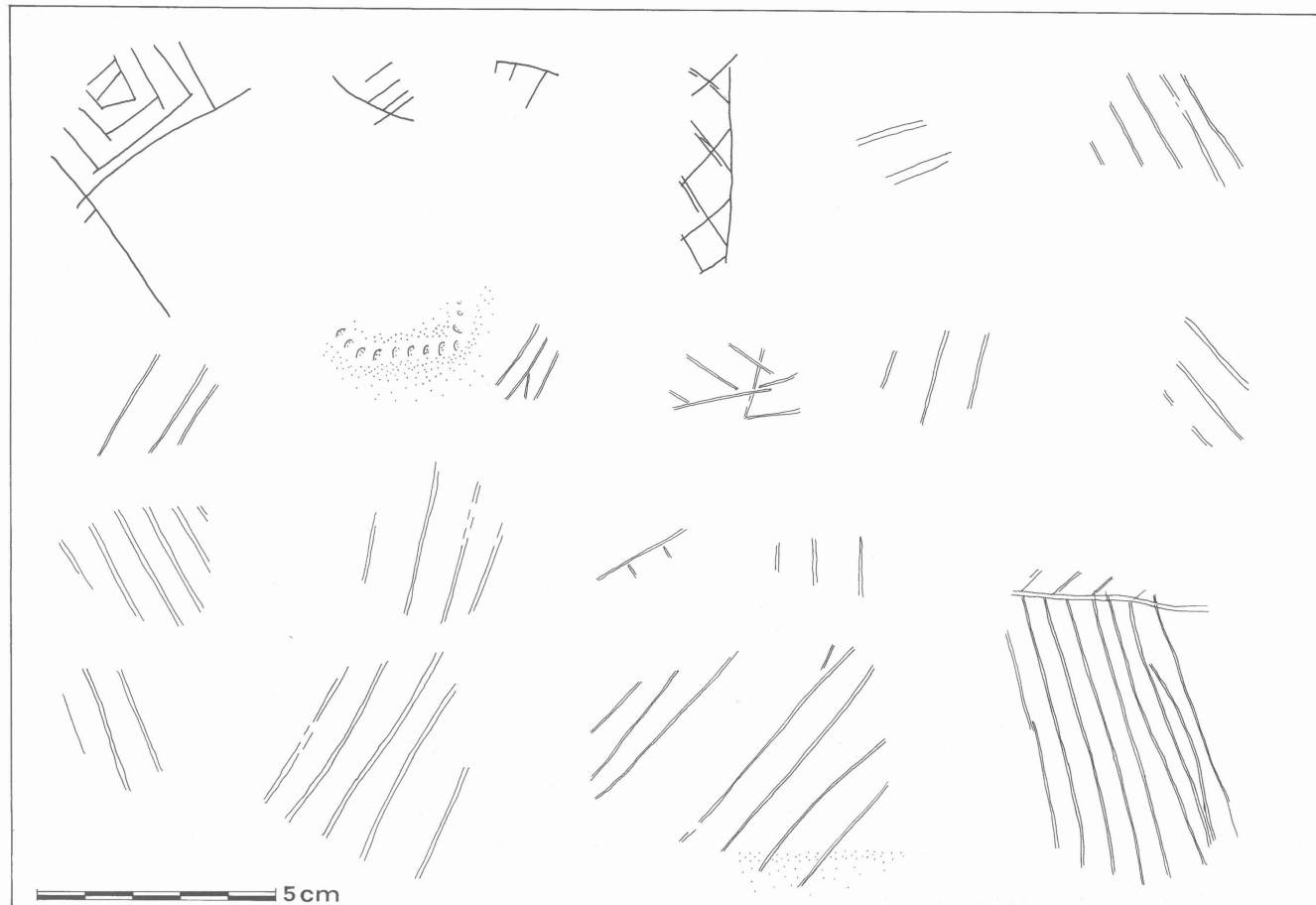


Fig. 1 - Decorative syntax of the Early Neolithic "Gruppo Gaban" (Graphics: Sonia Lunardelli)

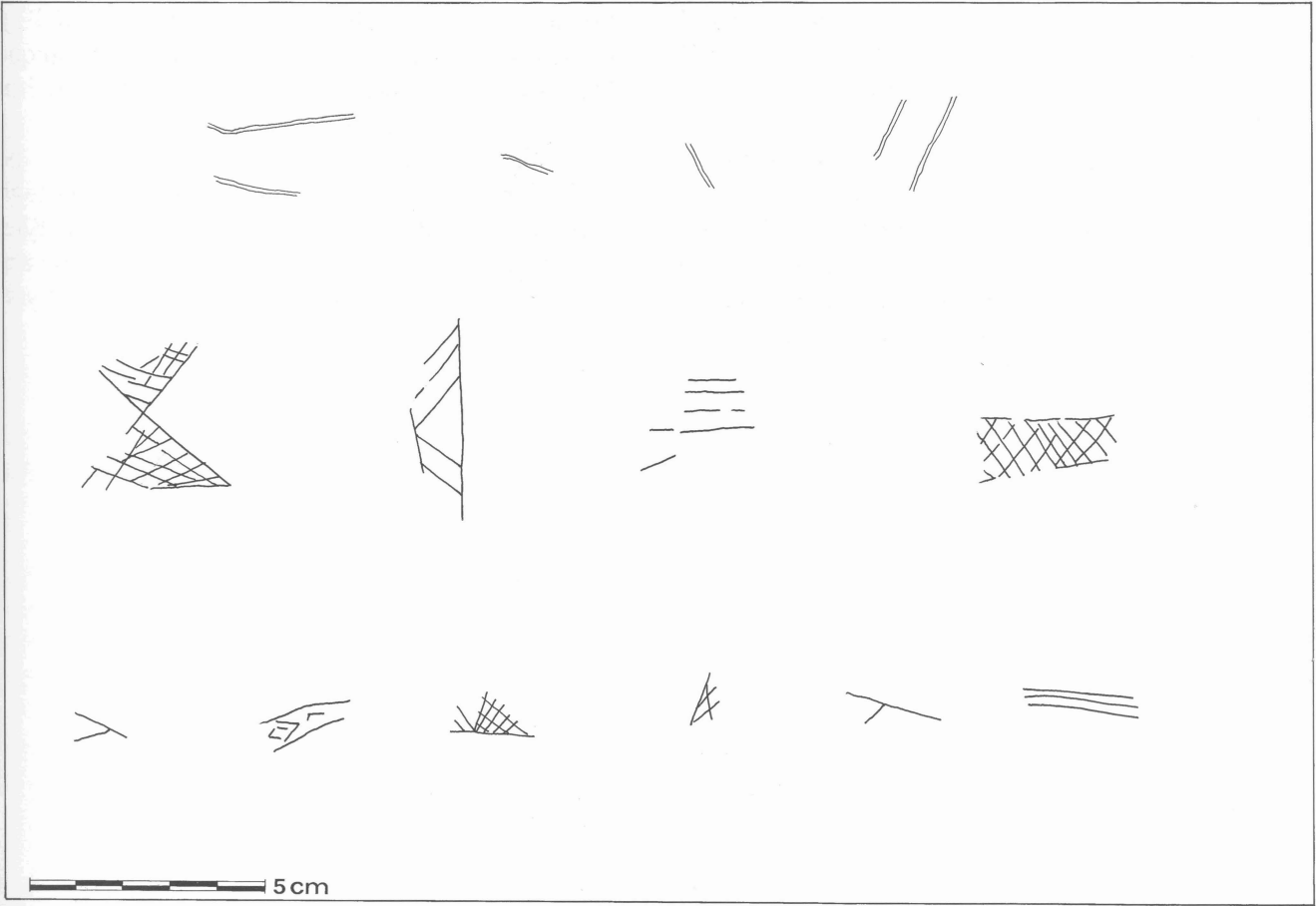


Fig. 2 - Decorative syntax of SMVC I (Graphics: Sonia Lunardelli)



Fig. 3 - Decorative syntax of SMVC II

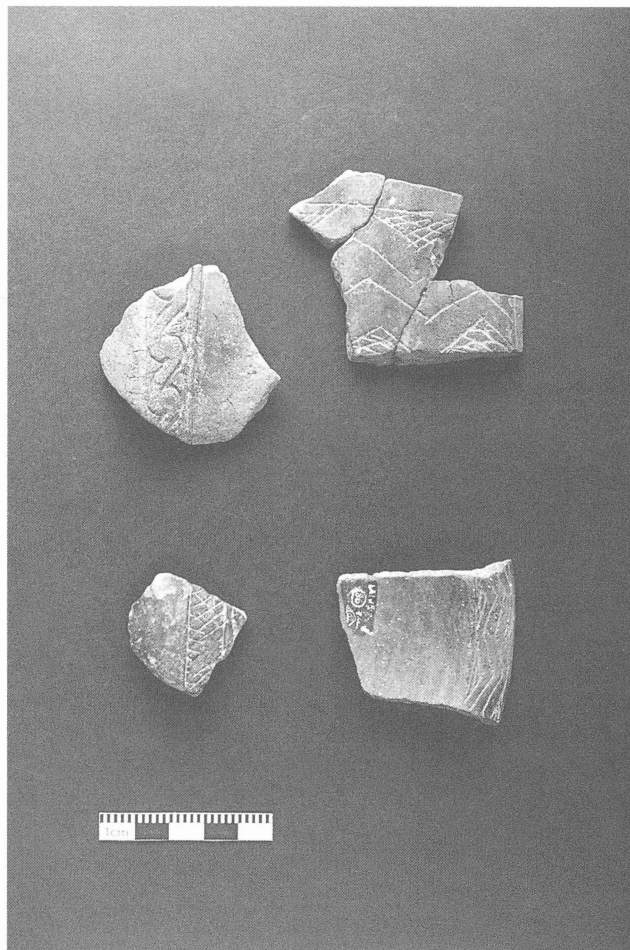


Fig. 4 - Fragments of decoration in the meander-spiral style  
(Photo Paolo Chistè)

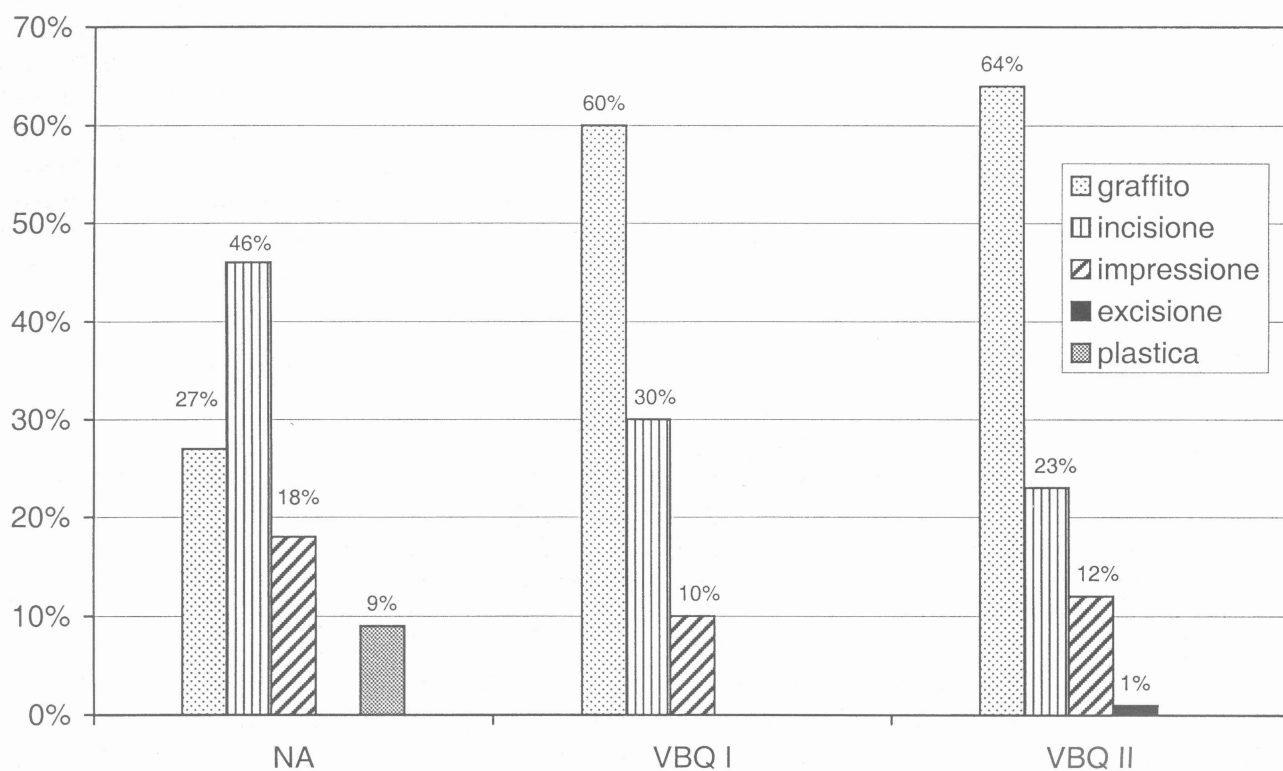


Fig. 5 - Fragments of decoration of the decorative syntax in the different phases (Early Neolithic, SMVC I, SMVC II)