

The High Ground Settlement of Colle Piper Near Collalbo, Renon (BZ): Considerations on Unpublished Ceramic fragments

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ABSTRACT - In this research, which was originally the author's thesis, data from old excavations of Colle Piper near Collalbo (BZ) were reanalysed. The absence of precise stratigraphic data made it necessary to establish a chronology from the Neo-Eneolithic to the Iron Age based on a typological comparison of the artifacts.

KEY WORDS: Colle Piper (Collalbo), High Ground Settlement, Iron Age, Meluno ceramic

PAROLE CHIAVE: Colle Piper (Collalbo), Sito d'altura, Età del Ferro, Ceramica tipo Meluno

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The Colle Piper site, near Collalbo, is found at an altitude of 1135m on the eastern slope of the Isarco Valley which is part of the Renon plateau North-East of Bolzano. This territory has provided much evidence of human prehistoric and proto-historical activity (Fig. 1).

The site was discovered in 1913 during the construction of a villa and published by Menghin in 1914. Ghislanzoni excavated the site in 1925 and 1926. The absence of stratigraphic data, however, makes a precise evaluation of the rich and varied assemblage of artifacts quite difficult. The artifacts include over 200 fragments of ceramics, flint tools, and many interesting objects in a variety of materials: bronze, iron, wood, stone, bone, and horn. Among the items are terracotta weights, an undefined object in amber and three republican coins. All these materials are conserved in the Civic Museum of Bolzano and were partially published by LUNZ (1972). He dated the site on the basis of typology from the Neo-Eneolithic to the second Iron Age.

The proto-historical settlement of Colle Piper at Collalbo (Renon) was the title of the author's thesis in 1973-74 under Prof. G. Fogolari at the University of Padova. In this thesis the rele-

vant data was restudied and an attempt was made to overcome the inadequate stratigraphic data and establish a chronology based on a typological comparison of the artifacts. Due to restrictions of space, this poster presents various unpublished artifacts and does not take into consideration material already described as cited above. The results, following a typological classification of the ceramics, allowed the identification of four phases: Pre-Luco, Luco, Meluno, and Post-Meluno.

The Pre-Luco phase goes from the Late Neolithic and Eneolithic (2500-1800 BC, according to LUNZ) to the Recent Bronze Age. The cultural phase of Luco begins during the last part of the Recent Bronze Age in correspondence with HaA1. During the Pre-Luco phase, human occupation was probably not continuous. Numerous artifacts, however, document human presence. There are a number of flint tools including a sickle classified as Laplace F10. The ceramics include two rims of vases with little horizontal handles, according to LUNZ (1973a, tabl.1:5, 2:1) typical of the Neolithic tradition, a single handled cut Polada cup, "prese a lingua", and ribbon handles. Numerous other fragments of jars and bowls impressed with smooth applied cord beading running in a horizon-

tal wave or as festoons, can be referred to the Middle Bronze Age. Finally, some ceramic fragments present elements datable to the Recent Bronze Age (Fig. 2). A large bronze pin with a ringed head, and various objects in stone, bone, and wood completes the list of artifacts.

The Luco phase is represented by a few ceramic fragments of vases and jugs. These have straight hat-like rims with small ear-type handles round in section, and are all typical of the Classic Luco phase (HaB1); an example is shown in Fig. 3a. There are also two rim fragments belonging to jugs datable to the Recent Luco (FeI) or Final Luco (FeIIa) phase.

Most of the ceramic ware found at Colle Piper can be attributed to the Meluno phase and is associated with metal objects (in particular, a fragment of a bronze fibula with large ribs datable to HaC). Other artifacts include stone tools, millstones, and pottery weights. This phase is characterized by permanent settlements known from other high altitude sites (Höhensiedlungen) and is documented by the presence of dry stone walls (remnants of rectangular hut walls) and wood (drained peat pools with box-like structures interpreted by Lunz as more likely to be water cisterns than hut foundations). The ceramics are composed of nu-

merous cup fragments characteristic of the Meluno phase. In particular, various fragments of vertical small stick or ribbon handles and decorated with cord impressions, incisions, ribs, and vertical grooves (Fig. 3b). The most common class is composed of medium small, bi-conic containers decorated with groups of incised oblique lines (Fig. 3c). Datable to the V-IV century BC are Retic inscriptions which appear on a porphyry stela, a birch rod (the so-called *lituus*), an iron pick, fragments of cup bottoms (one classified as Sanzeno type B), and on two handles (one handle may be more ancient, perhaps Meluno) (Fig. 3d).

Objects datable to the Post-Meluno phase and later (HaD) are more rare. The presence of transition elements, however, offers interesting information. For example, a fragment of a cup with a cylindrical neck and decorated with oblique grooves on the shoulder (Fig. 3e: 8). More recent human occupation of the site is shown by Sanzeno type B cups (Fig. 3e: 9) along with fragments of type A vases according to the classification of Perini for the Montesei of Serso. Other artifacts include a rich series of iron utensils and tools, a fragment of a fibula defined by Lunz as the Nauheim (LUNZ, 1981: 24) type, and three silver coins from the middle of the second century BC.

SUMMARY - This research was, originally done for a thesis at the University of Padova in 1973-74 on the settlement at Colle Piper near Collalbo (BZ) at 1135m on the Renon plateau. The first studies on this site go back to 1913 (MENGHIN), and the first excavations were done in 1925-26 (GHISLANZONI). However, the absence of precise stratigraphic data made it necessary to establish a chronology based on a typological comparison of the artifacts conserved at the Civic Museum of Bolzano. All the artifacts, especially the ceramics, were re-examined and compared with artifacts from other sites in this area for which good stratigraphic sequences are available. On the basis of the comparison, a chronology divided into phases could be proposed. The initial, non-permanent, use of the Colle Piper site probably goes back to the Eneolithic and can be divided into two phases: pre-Luco and Luco, permanent settlement with habitations, recognised as high ground type (Höhensiedlungen), is known only from the Iron Age, phase Meluno. This period is documented by the presence of dry stone walls (remnants of rectangular hut walls) and wood structures (drained peat pools), and by numerous artifacts in metal, wood, stone, bone, horn as well as ceramic which can be mostly referred to the Meluno type.

RIASSUNTO - In questa ricerca, oggetto della tesi di laurea della scrivente (Università di Padova, 1973-74, relatore Prof. G.Fogolari) vengono presi in esame i dati di vecchi scavi (MENGHIN, 1913; GHISLANZONI, 1925-26) sull'insediamento d'altura del Colle Piper a 1135m s.l.m. presso Collalbo, altopiano del Renon (Bolzano). In assenza di stratigrafia, si è tentato un inquadramento cronologico basato sull'analisi tipologica del materiale conservato nel Museo Civico di Bolzano. Tutti i reperti sono stati riesaminati, in particolare la ceramica che ha permesso di proporre una successione dal Neolitico finale ed Eneolitico alla II età del Ferro, con una suddivisione in fasi. Vengono così evidenziate le fasi Pre-Luco e Luco, durante le quali si ebbe sul Colle Piper una frequentazione non continuativa, mentre un insediamento stabile, di tipo abitativo ricollegabile ai siti d'altura (Höhensiedlungen), è documentato solo nella successiva fase Meluno. Lo testimonia la presenza di strutture murarie in pietre a secco (capanna retica a pianta rettangolare) e lignee (bonifica di stagno torboso) e di numerosi manufatti in metallo, in legno, in pietra, in osso, in corno, oltre che di ceramica riferibile per la maggior parte al tipo Meluno.

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Fig. 1 – Colle Piper from the South

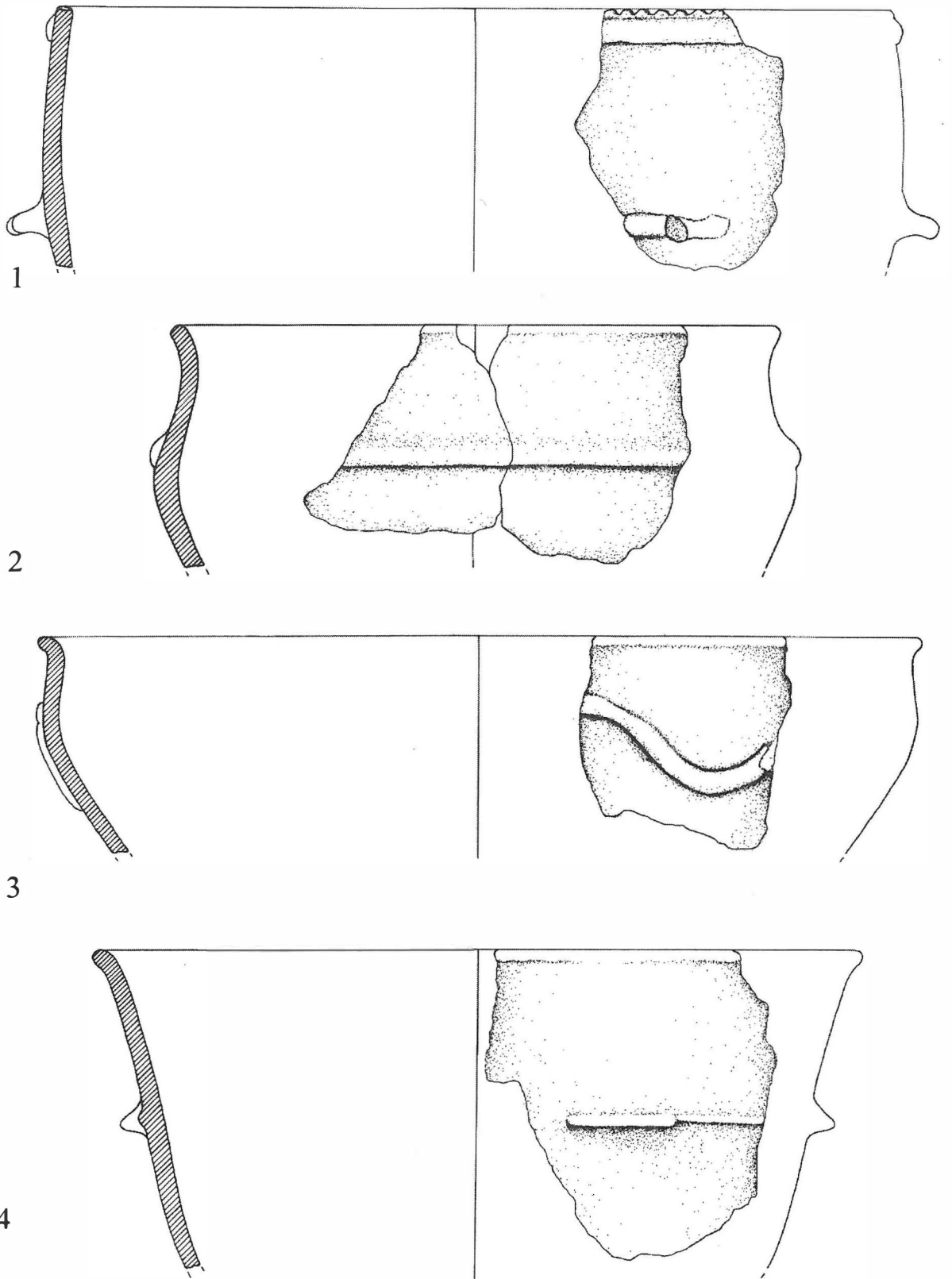
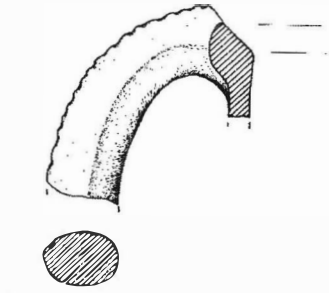
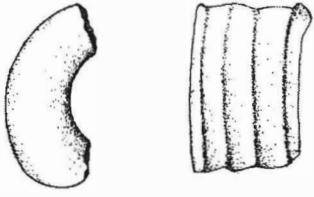


Fig. 2 – Ceramic fragments of the Pre-Luco phase (1/3)

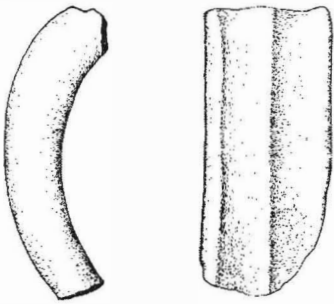


1

A



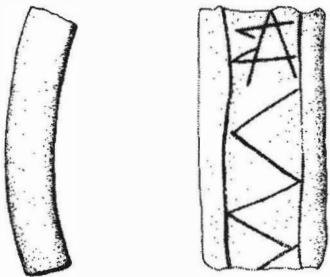
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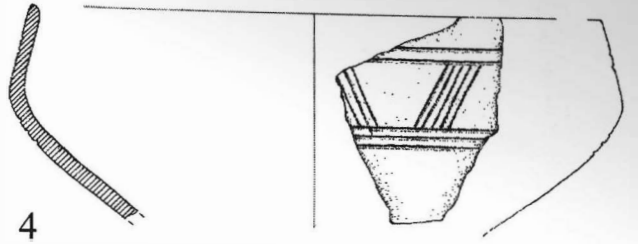
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D

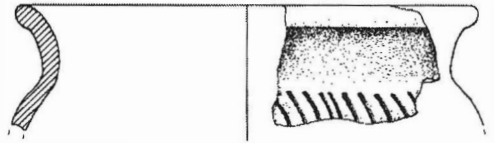


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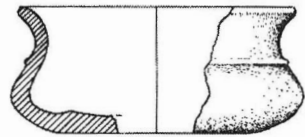
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6

C



8



9

E

Fig. 3 – A) Handle, Classic Luco type; B) Handles, Meluno phase; C) Decorated bi-conic vases, Meluno phase; D) Handle with a decoration and inscription; E) Cups, Post-Meluno phase (1/3)