

## The Neolithic site of Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra (Pordenone)

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**ABSTRACT** - This paper presents the preliminary results of the excavations (1995, 1996, 1997) carried out at Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra. The dwelling area, characterised by pits of various form and dimensions, has yielded a rich documentation of pottery, stone artefacts, and faunal remains. The site, located in the Lower Plain of Pordenone (Friuli, North-Eastern Italy), provides for the first time in Friuli-Venezia Giulia some data about the early stages of development of the third style of the Square Mouth Pottery Culture.

**KEY WORDS:** Square Mouth Pottery Culture, Archaeological structures, Faunal and palaeobotanical remains, Chronology, Raw materials

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** Cultura dei Vasi a Bocca Quadrata, Strutture archeologiche, Resti faunistici e paleobotanici, Cronologia, Materie prime

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The site of Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra is located in the middle of a strip of land between the rivers Sile and Fiume. From a pedological point of view this area is characterized by "sandy, clayey soil variedly mixed with gravel" (Carta Pedologica Friulana, 1982) (Fig. 1).

In 1995, after being informed of the finding of archaeological materials and of an anthropical area on the surface of the cultivated fields, the Soprintendenza per i B.A.A.A.S. del Friuli Venezia Giulia carried out a survey in order to verify the consistency and conservation of the structures. Two 5x5m excavation surveys were undertaken next to some surface findings which revealed five structures partly destroyed by modern cultivation. Only two of these were examined<sup>1</sup>. These structures were like cavities with a rectangular and sub-rectangular design, dug out of the sterile soil, similar to the pits common to the sites of the Early Neolithic Age of the same region (TASCA & VISENTINI, 1995; COTTINI *et al.*, 1997).

The 1996 and 1997 research<sup>2</sup>, carried out on an area of 200 m<sup>2</sup> located to the south of the excavation of 1995, revealed five pit-shaped structures,

a total of six structures (structure 8) and a black formation of sediment of anthropic origin with rare archaeological materials, cut in a north-south direction by a historical waterway (TASCA & VISENTINI, 1996).

The complex of structures called structure 8 is formed by a light depression stretching from East to West, with a maximum dimension of approximately 7m; inside three pits were identified with sub-vertical walls and a flattish bottom filled with many layers (8A, 8B, 8E), a small cavity with an irregular bottom, a shallow cavity with a flat bottom and a little hole dug out of the filling of stratum 8E. Next to this complex of structures there were two other structures, 6 and 10, the latter cut by structure 11 (Fig. 2). The lower part of the filling of the mentioned structures was scarcely anthropic, the upper layer of filling of the different cavities was formed by soil, rich of charcoal and cultural remains whereas the upper part which reached the ploughed sterile surface was indistinct.

The poor distinction of the anthropic elements considering the distribution of the archaeo-

logical materials, which originally must have been complex and stratified, can derive from a new elaboration due to pedogenetic processes which took place after the site had been abandoned: re-forestation, elevation of the stratum (OTTOMANO, 1997).

The few data available do not allow for an interpretation of the primary function of these structures, which were later used as garbage holes in the settlement.

In the economy of the village the breeding of oxen, goats/sheep, and pigs are attested; the bad conditions of the faunal findings examined up till now (the 1995 excavation) do not give other new information as to the identification of the represented species (there are probable signs of striping of flesh present only in a fragment of a goat/sheep pelvis) (COTTINI *et al.*, 1997:139-141).

Agriculture and harvesting are scarcely documented by few caryopsis of wheat (spelt or little spelt), by hazelnut hulls or by a fragment of a cornel pip (COTTINI *et al.*, 1997:141-144).

The lithic industry is represented by flints, large flints and very large flints; as far as size is concerned, the hypermicrolithic and microlithic classes predominate. Among the retouched artefacts the Scrapers and Foliate Classes prevail.

The functional analysis of the lithic artefacts revealed that retouched artefacts showed more signs of wear than non-retouched ones, and were used in woodwork and rarely in the harvesting of gramineous plants (COTTINI *et al.*, 1997:138-139).

The raw material used for the manufacturing of artefacts mainly comes from elsewhere and its origin can be located in the Southern Calcareous Alps (Monte Baldo and Monti Lessini) (COTTINI *et al.*, 1997:131-134).

The pottery which is characterized by a dense mixture, contains mainly sharp edged quartz and calcium superficial elements; it is difficult to find a type of mixture with rounded edged elements. Only a few fragments show signs of smoothing of the surface. The most represented shapes are bowls, round shaped containers with turned rims, round-shaped and narrow-mouthed containers and square-mouthed containers. Decorations mainly feature zigzag engravings and wavy lines; the types of hand grips include small inserted handles, sagged ring-shaped handles and square sagging hand-grips.

It would seem that the ceramics and lithic context might date the site of Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra to an early period of the third style of the Square Mouth Pottery Culture.

Dating<sup>3</sup> obtained from charcoal samples documents the settlement as being very ancient (Fig. 3) and is comparable only to the C14 dates of Iserra 1 (PEDROTTI, 1996).

## NOTES

1 - The operation was directed by S. Vitri, Archaeology Director of the Soprintendenza per i B.A.A.A.S. del Friuli Venezia-Giulia.

2 - Research was promoted by the Museo delle Scienze di Pordenone, on ministerial license and directed by M. Tonon, director of the Museum and A.N. Rigoni, curator of the archaeological section and sponsored by the Amministrazione Comunale di Poredenone and of Fiume Veneto (PN).

3 - Acknowledgements: Nicoletta Martinelli for the calibration of the dating (according to STUIVER & PEARSON, 1993).

**SUMMARY** - This paper presents the preliminary results of the excavations carried out at Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra. The site is located in the Lower Plain of Pordenone (Friuli, North-Eastern Italy), provides for the first time in Friuli some data about the early stage of development of the third style of the Square Mouth Pottery Culture. The location of the site was discovered thanks to the presence on the surface of the cultivated fields of the black soil areas with archaeological materials. The dwelling area, characterised by pits of various form and dimensions, has yielded a rich documentation of chronology, palaeobotany, pottery, stone artefacts, faunal remains and the provenance of the raw material.

**RIASSUNTO** - Vengono presentati i risultati delle campagne di scavo condotte nell'abitato neolitico di Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra. Il sito, ubicato nella bassa pianura pordenonese, fornisce per la prima volta in Friuli dati sul momento antico del terzo stile della Cultura dei Vasi a Bocca Quadrata. L'individuazione dell'abitato preistorico è avvenuta tramite l'osservazione della presenza nel terreno arato di materiale archeologico associato a chiazze di terreno nerastro corrispondenti a strutture che hanno restituito numeroso materiale litico e ceramico. Sono inoltre disponibili alcuni dati sulla cronologia, sulla paleobotanica, sulla fauna e sulla provenienza della materia prima.

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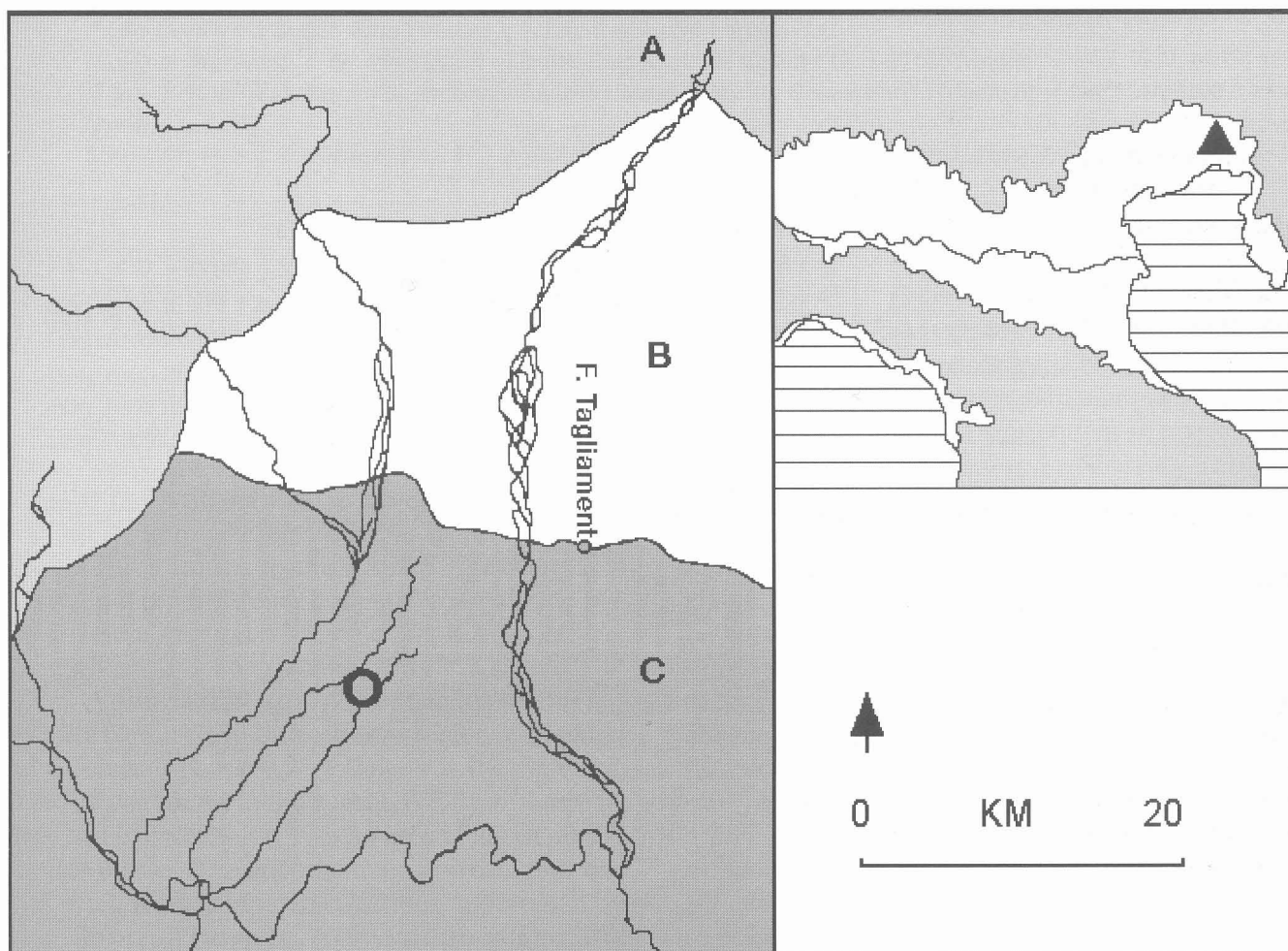


Fig. 1 - Location of the Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra site

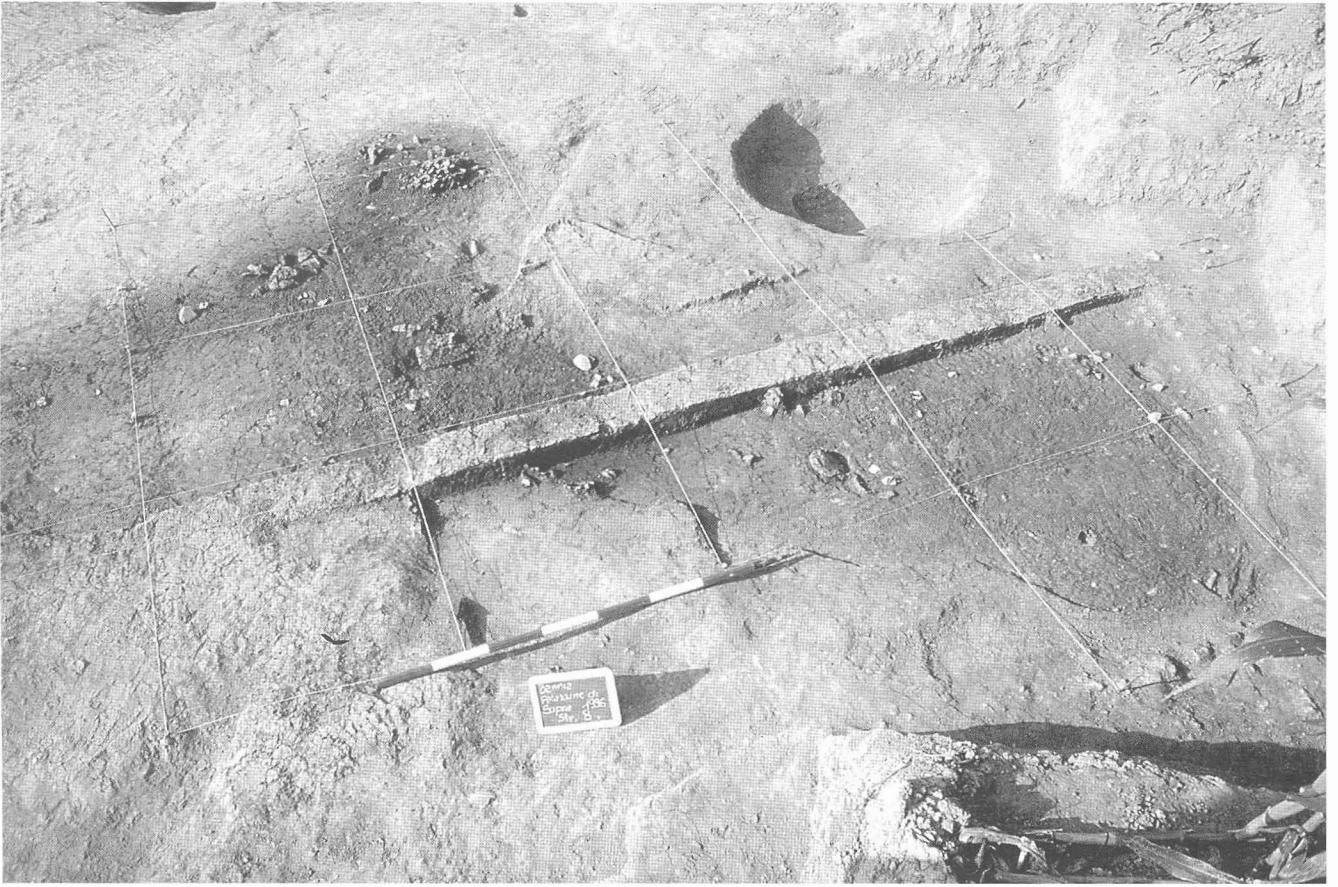


Fig. 2 - Structure 8 during excavation

Struttura/US	n° lab.	BP non cal.	a.C. cal. 1 $\sigma$	Bibliografia
Str. 1/US 1	GrN - 22172	5870 $\pm$ 90	4809 - 4685	Cottini et al., 1997
Str. 8/US 1	GrN - 22832	5580 $\pm$ 90	4498 - 4342	inedito: van der Plicht com. pers.
Str. 8A/US 2	GrN - 22833	5600 $\pm$ 80	4508 - 4351	inedito: van der Plicht com. pers.
Str. 10/US 1	GrN - 22834	5630 $\pm$ 90	4541 - 4357	inedito: van der Plicht com. pers.
Str. 6/US 1	GrN - 22835	5600 $\pm$ 90	4520 - 4348	inedito: van der Plicht com. pers.
Str. 7/US 1	GrN - 22836	5560 $\pm$ 80	4464 - 4339	inedito: van der Plicht com. pers.

Fig. 3 - List of radiocarbon dates of the Bannia-Palazzine di Sopra site