

Original Study

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“Shaping” and “Painting” during the Early Bronze Age: the Case-study of Pottery of Colle della Croce (Scicli, Ragusa)

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Abstract: Pottery technology, although largely neglected in studies of the Sicilian Early Bronze Age (Castelluccio culture, 2200-1450 BC), represents a strategic field of research for focusing on main steps of manufacturing of Castelluccian vessels. In this perspective, the evidence from the archaeological deposit of Colle della Croce (Scicli, Ragusa) has allowed us to emphasise some new technical features that can be observed in the production within other cultural districts. The most significant phase of the study was the autoptic examination of materials and surfaces that led to the definition of this production as medium and coarse ware, with the use of different kinds of technical solutions in relation to different uses and functions. The manufacturing techniques, especially when surface treatment is clearly recognizable on fragmentary specimens, can be conditioned by several factors, such as the shape type and the function of the vessel. Features such as working plans and supporting systems were observed quite frequently, as well as polishing techniques and joints slots for the handles that could be interpreted as ‘workshop standards’ rather than simply local traditions.

Keywords: Sicily, Castelluccio style, Pottery, Technology, Decorative motifs

1 Introduction

The technology of pottery, although largely neglected in studies of the Sicilian Early Bronze Age (Tab. 1), represents an important field of research for better understanding the manufacturing steps of Castelluccio style vessels.

The Early Bronze age in Sicily runs from the end of the third Millennium to the middle of the 15th century BC (Castelluccio culture, 2200-1450 BC). The site of Castelluccio (Noto, Siracusa) was chosen by Luigi Bernabò Brea to indicate the main culture of this period (for the aspects and issues related to Castelluccio culture, cf.: Orsi 1892, 1893; Bernabò Brea 1957, 1968-69; Peroni 2004: 89-96, 185-194; Tusa 1999; Leighton 1999: 113-146). This settlement, discovered by Paolo Orsi at the end of the 19th century, is considered one of the most important sites of Sicilian prehistory.

The remnants of Castelluccio culture are present in almost all of Sicily, especially in the territory of Siracusa, Catania, Ragusa, Caltanissetta and Agrigento (Fig. 1).

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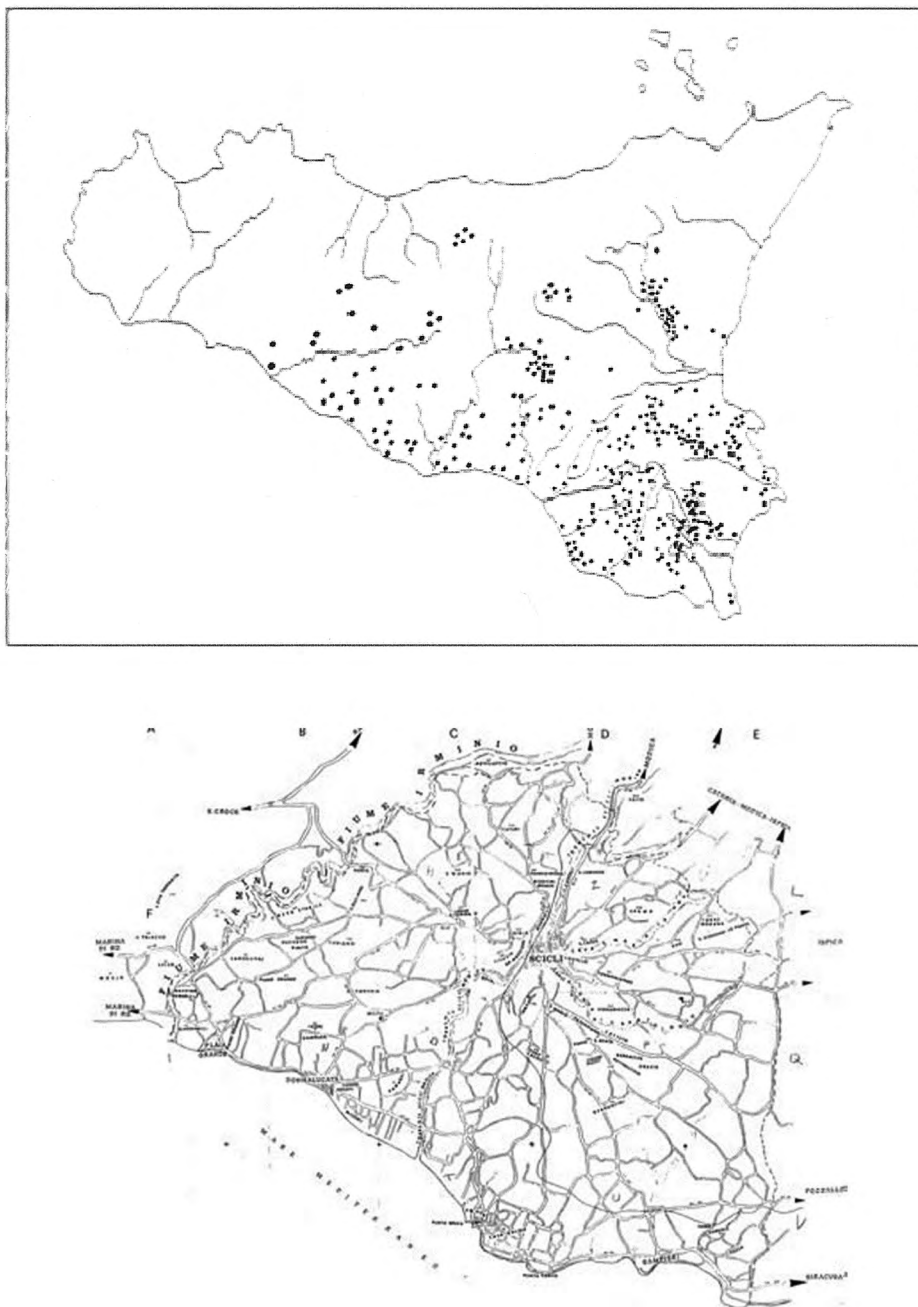


Figure 1. A) Distribution map of the Early Bronze Age sites in Sicily (elab. G. Giacchi); B) Map of Scicli with topographical indications (Militello 2008).

The chronology of this culture is fixed in the third Millennium BC: its phases start between the Late Copper age and the arrival of the Thapsos culture (Middle Bronze age, 1450-1270 BC) (Holloway 1986: 77; Holloway 1990; McConnell 1995); the latter is defined thanks to the Mycenaean imports (LH IIIA-B) (Palio 2004) discovered in settlements and necropoleis of this culture.

Another contribution of L. Bernabò Brea (1957, 1976-77) is the definition of the Castelluccio culture, and of its chronological and geographical phases.

Table 1: Comparative chronological chart of the internal sequence of the EBA in Sicily, Southern Italy and the Aegean.

Hypothesis	EBA internal sequence	Southern Italy	Aegean	Absolute chronology
<i>Bernabò Brea</i>	1800-1400 BC			
<i>Holloway, McConnell, Tusa</i>	2200-1450 BC	Early Bronze 1-2	MH - LH II	2200/2100-1440/1420 BC
<i>Leighton</i>	EB1 2500-2000 BC (Naro, Castelluccio, Muculufa)			
	EB2 2000-1500 BC (Castelluccio, Rodi-Tindari-Valllunga)			
<i>Peroni</i>	Castelluccio 1 - Early Bronze	Middle Bronze 1-2		
	Castelluccio 2 - Middle Bronze			
<i>Cultraro</i>	Phase I (Pellegriti-Marca; S. Ippolito; Muculufa Village) Phase II (Pietralunga cave, us.2; Castelluccio, scari-chi; Muculufa Sanctuary) Phase III (Pietralunga cave, us.1; Castelluccio, scarichi and necropolis; M. Aperto-M. Sara; Monte Grande) Phase IV (Villaggio Garofalo; M. Racello-M. Sallia; Serra del Palco)			

The main form of burial in the Castelluccio culture is the ‘tomba a grotticella’, a chamber tomb excavated in the rock that contained the dead, and sometimes with a little entrance room, where the bodies could also be located (Orsi 1892; Bernabò Brea 1957; Tusa 1999; Leighton 1999: 113-132).

The painted pottery in Castelluccio style, although common and recognisable, is varied in typology and decoration. This is due to the widespread area in which it is found, and secondly to the wide range of time in which it was produced (Copat, Piccione, Costa 2008: 211). Its stylistic development has to be clarified (Leighton 1999: 138-139). For a working hypothesis of the painted pottery of Castelluccio, a chronological partition of eastern Sicily containing three phases has been proposed (Bernabò Brea 1968-69: 42-49, 1991-92):

- the first, called “proto-castellucciano”, including ceramics similar to the Sant’Ippolito and Naro style (Late Copper age);
- the second, “middle phase”, located in the area of Hyblean mountains;
- the “later phase”, with simple decoration and standard shapes.

In this perspective, the evidence coming from the archaeological site of Colle della Croce (Scicli, Ragusa), which will be discussed in this paper, has allowed us to emphasise some new technical features that have parallels in other cultural districts.

The corpus of materials taken into consideration includes 151 ceramic pieces (nn. inv. SC 1-151) of Castelluccio culture, collected on the 17th July 1953, by Francesco Drago and Elio Militello, inside the so-called ‘Tomba del Mandorlo’, a chamber tomb relating to the Early Bronze Age cemetery of Colle della Croce hill in the territory of Scicli (IGM F. 276 II NO 33SVA740716) (Fig. 2). They are currently kept in the storerooms of the Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. of Ragusa. Although the necropolis has been largely damaged in past decades, twelve chamber tombs remain along the north-west wall of the hill. Some of them still show the planivolumetric plan (Terranova 2008: 102-103), while the rest are filled with debris. Organised in three small groups, these tombs are between 230 and 210 meters above sea level, while the Tomba del

Mandorlo can be found in the eastern part of the cemetery. Most of the tombs are located facing north/north-west and have a circular plan, with a lowered or flat ceiling and some of them have a vestibule in front of the entrance. The diameter varies from 1.20 to 2.20 meters and the façade does not usually show peculiar architectural features. This complex is one of several necropoleis found in the territory of Scicli, in the focal point created by the intersection of three valleys: Fiumara, S. Bartolomeo and S. Maria La Nova.

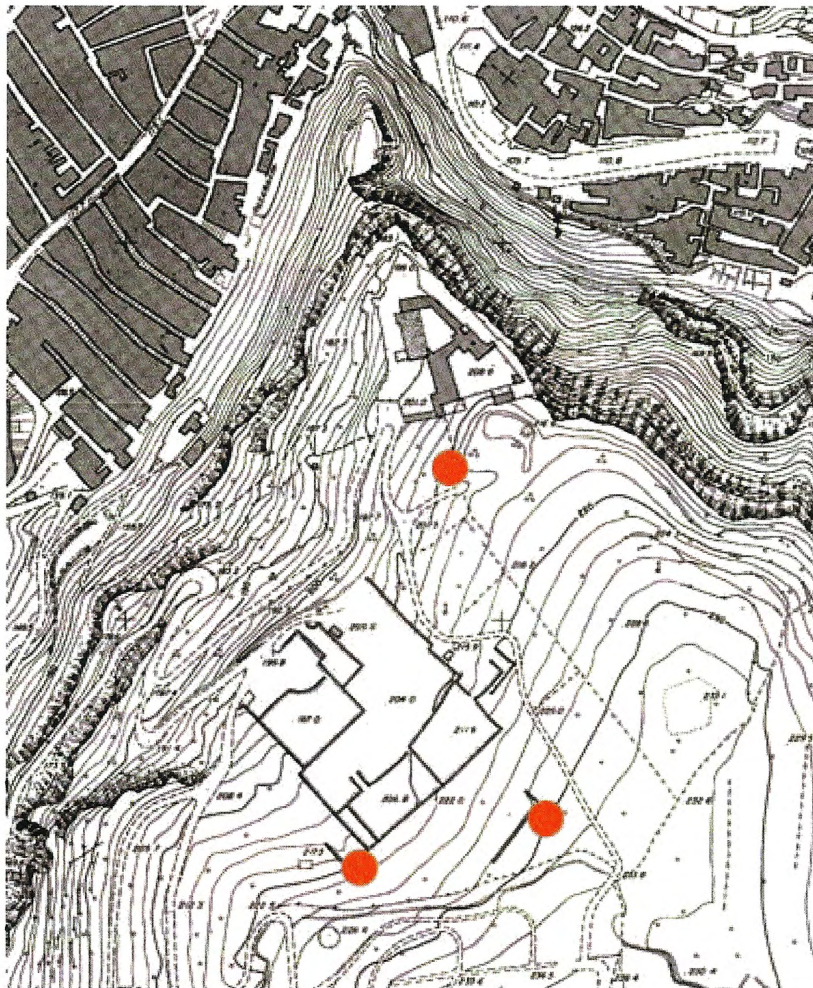
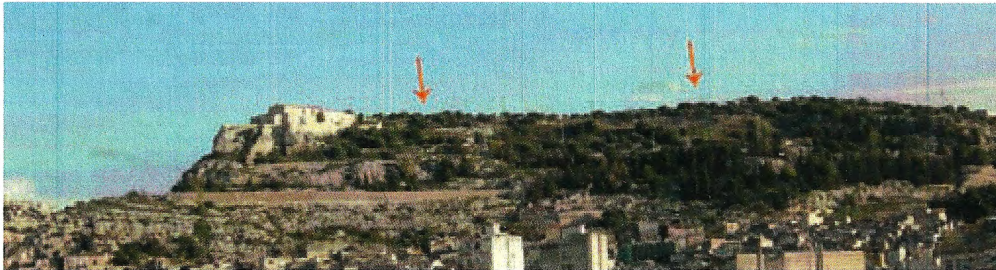


Figure 2. (1) Colle della Croce, Scicli (Ragusa): viewpoint from the W, indicating the groups of chamber tombs (Terranova 2008); (2) Portion from map 1:2000 of Scicli indicating the locations of chamber tombs (Terranova 2008).

2 Materials and Methods

The materials from the ‘Tomba del Mandorlo’ (Fig. 3), aside from the 151 ceramic pieces, comprise 1 clay horn (n. cat. SC 168), 1 pebble (n. cat. SC 160) and several stone tools, including tools of ground and chipped stone, here comprised 18 basalt axes, 21 flint blades, knives, chisels and flint chips (nn. cat. SC 161-167), and even skeletal remains. They are discussed elsewhere through a chrono-typological point of view (Veca 2012) (Fig. 4), and have been analysed in order to get data with which we can formulate a hypothesis about the production processes and a classification of decorative motifs, despite the temporary lack of archaeometric analysis.

The starting point of this research was the typological analysis of the specimens, following the statistical hierarchy of shape, type and variety, carried out in the aforementioned paper (cf. Terranova 2008)

The second step was the autoptic study, which included the description of the materials, based on macroscopic analysis, and the hypothetical description of manufacturing techniques.

For the painted decoration, a classification system founded on the disjunction of complex patterns into simple core motifs, was applied.

Finally, groups of materials were chronologically defined, following the sequence of the Etnean production of Castelluccian pottery, thanks to a wide range of formal and decorative comparisons.

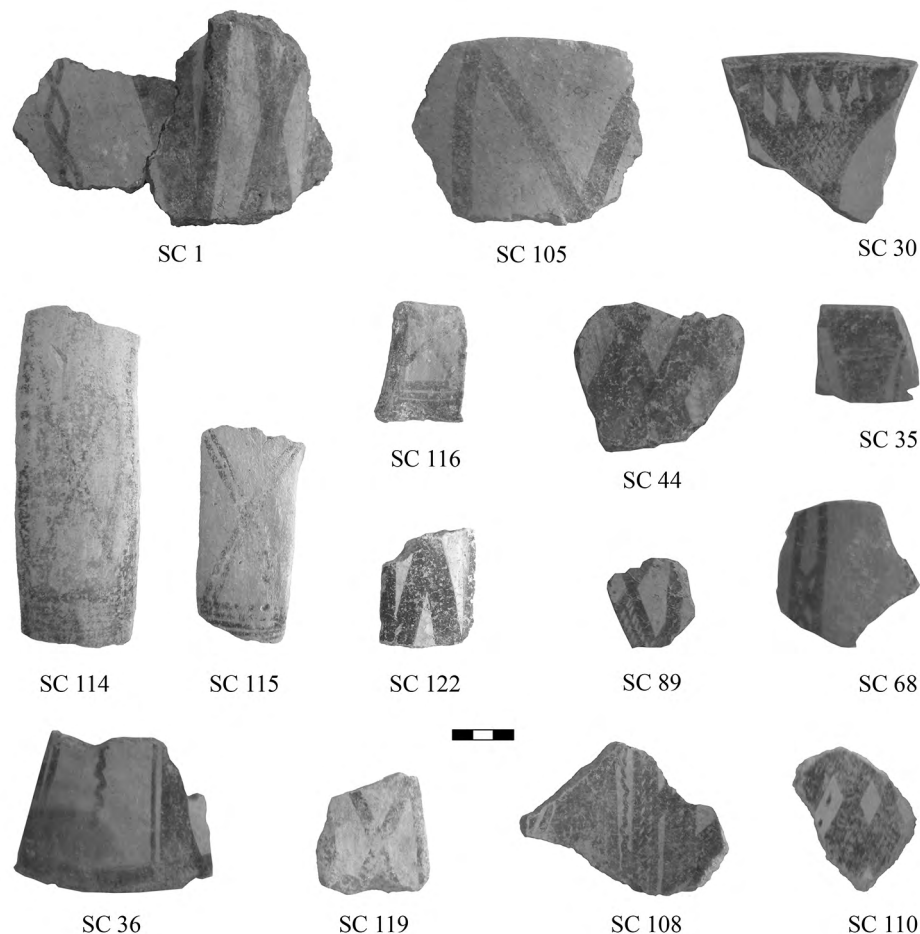


Figure 3. Ceramics from Colle della Croce di Scicli (Ragusa): some specimens with a painted decorative pattern (Castelluccio style) (ph. C. Veca).

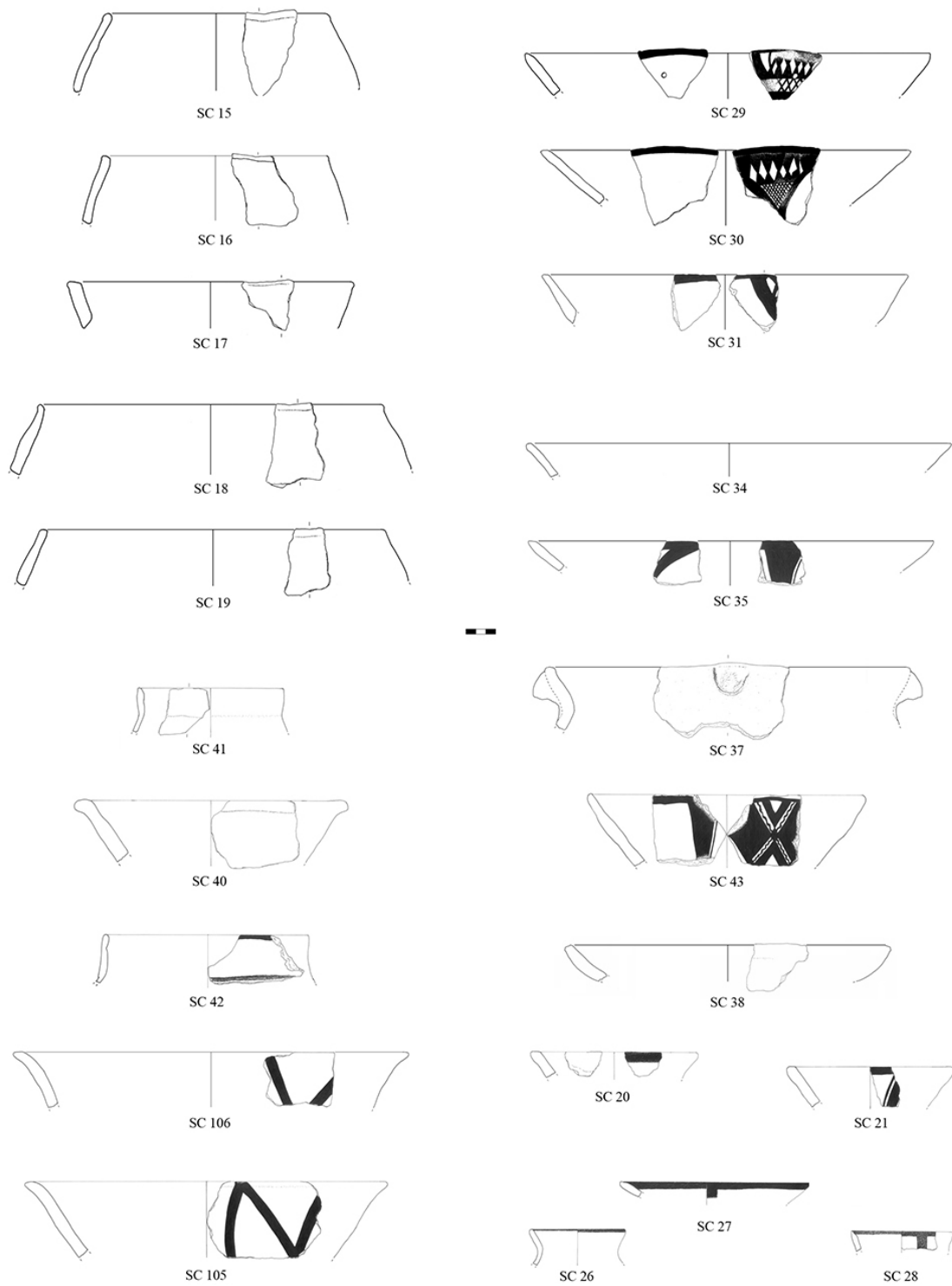


Figure 4. Some drawing examples of the major vessel shapes studied from Colle della Croce (scale 1:8; dwg. C. Veca).

3 Description of Materials, based on Macroscopic Analysis

Surface treatment is a vast topic, related to formal repertoire but also to the quality of the specimen and the use of the vase. Different functions can involve different treatments of the raw materials used to make the vase, which is clearly ascertainable through a macroscopic analysis of the fabric (pottery classes have been distinguished according to Levi, Vanzetti 2009).

Nowadays, the study of pottery technology cannot do without archaeometric analysis to obtain useful results, usable for other studies. However, in this work, a new set of methods are not used because this would require additional specialised expertise, time and finance. Nevertheless, this autoptic study of Colle della Croce's pottery could be considered as a necessary starting point for further enquiries.

The autoptic study of the Tomba del Mandorlo pottery revealed a substantial absence of fine ware and a predominance of medium and coarse ware (Vidale 2007: 13). For ceramics with a painted decorative pattern and non-decorated ceramics, a more uniform, compact and smooth material was used, especially on pedestal bowls and small cups. The frame, the coarser part of the object, shows solid particles with no plasticity (Vidale 2007: 11) and a fine grain (for the macroscopic analysis, it has been used the comparison chart for visual percentage estimation, cf. Matthew, Woods, Oliver 1991; Munsell Washable Soil Color Charts 2009 Edition), with scattered tempers such as rock fragments or volcanic debris; for the rest, the material is coarse and porous with a lot of volcanic debris, lime fragments and sometimes chamotte, especially on containers or pourers (jars, pots, basins and amphoras); more sand is present in some non-decorated pitchers. The natural and mineral additives were added to prevent an excessive plasticity of the clay and its contraction during the drying and cooking process (Mannoni, Giannicchedda 1996; Saracino 2005; Vidale 2007). The clay has many colour variants: grey or reddish-grey at the core (10 YR 5/1)¹, red on the surface (2.5 YR 5/8) in coarse productions, reddish-yellow in those more refined. Pedestal bowls are slipped, with smoothed surfaces, while tableware is generally smooth just by the rim, with light reddish-brown (2.5 YR 7/4) or reddish-yellow (7.5 YR 7/6) surfaces; sometimes the surface is talcose to the touch; containers and pourers, jars and cups, have a smooth surface, internally slipped.

4 Shaping Techniques

The autoptic study provided helpful information about manufacturing techniques. Leaving aside the characteristics of the production cycle of pottery (Cuomo Di Caprio 2007; Levi 1999, 2010; Mannoni, Giannicchedda 1996; Rice 1982; Rye 1981; Saracino 2005) the study of the ceramics of Colle della Croce gave us many ideas, especially about the 'shaping' (for technical terms, cf.: Mannoni, Giannicchedda 1996: 78-88; Saracino 2005: 91-93) (Fig. 5).

Some drinking cups are concave at the base (as in specimen SC 45)², which suggests that the shaping was done on a pedestal, a convex support able to fix a nucleus of clay to be worked, as opposed to containers with a flat base, shaped on a smooth surface. The majority of the cups, both decorated and undecorated, are partly smoothed with a tool up to the rim, but not on the rest of the body (SC 113). On the inner surface of the containers, it is often possible to spot potter's fingerprints (SC 101), clear evidence of the handling. On the finest containers, such as pedestal bowls, we can see a smooth internal surface (SC 113), possibly produced with fingertips, and splinting on the external surface, made with some smoothing tools like pebbles or small spatulas (SC 111).

Some handles on pedestal bowls (SC 2) show systems of joining, for example inner joints were used to fix the handle to the body, and barbotine, liquid clay that once connected together creates a joint ("prisoner"), was used where the inner met the outer joints. These "male and female" joints were also put horizontally on pedestal bowls (SC 111), between the connection between the body and the foot; the two parts were modelled separately and then overlapped, again using barbotine as a binding agent.

¹ To identify the chromatic mixtures and surfaces, we refer to Munsell (Washable Soil Color Charts 2009 Edition).

² The abbreviation "SC" is used to indicate the name of the specimen in the catalogue of finds.

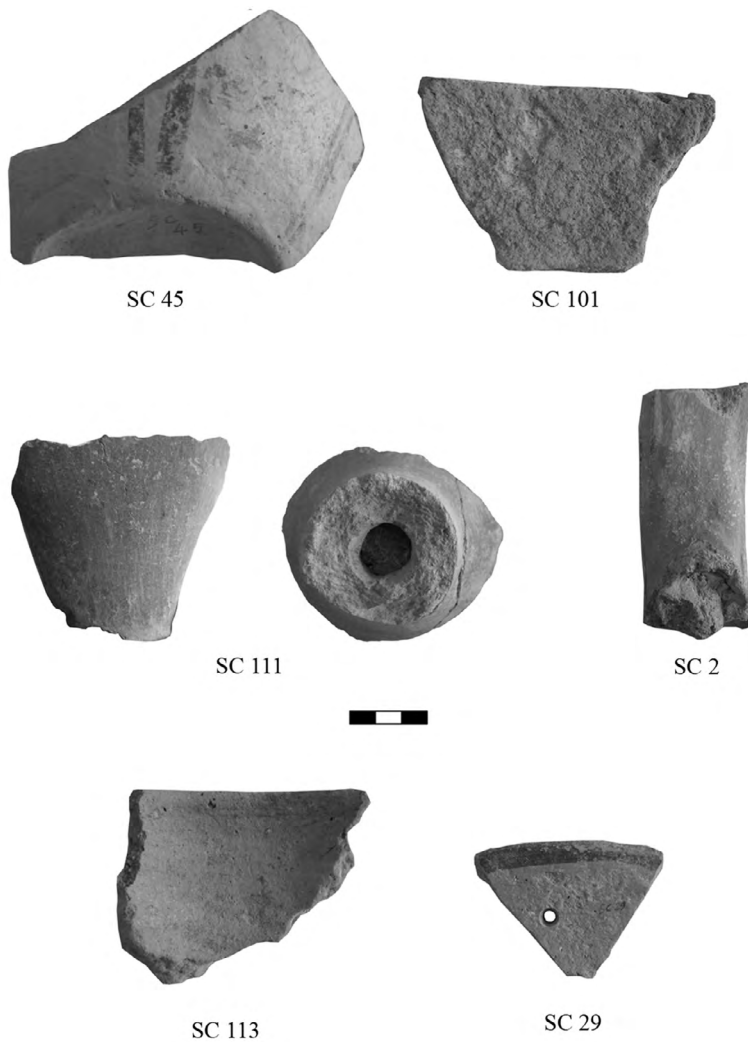


Figure 5. Manufacturing techniques: concave base (SC 45); fingerprints in the inner surface (SC 101); fixing hole (SC 29); smoothing of inner surface (SC 113); tool smoothing on outer surfaces (SC 111); system of junction “male” (SC 2); system of junction “female” (SC 111) (ph. C. Veca).

Another observable characteristic is the presence of fixing holes (SC 29) on truncated-conical sections, which are evidence of repairs, and the reuse/recycling of cups used first for the living and then for the dead.

During the observation of the wall fragment of a large *pithos* (SC 104), it was possible to see the overlapping of at least two separate layers of clay and of an outer moulded rib (Fig. 6). This practice was probably necessary to support the installation of the large clay-ribs or strips during the manufacturing process, shaped through clay “foils” previously stretched and folded, as already stressed elsewhere (Barone, Mazzoleni, Tanasi, Veca 2011; Veca 2014, 2015).

It is difficult to say what the technique used by Castelluccian potters from Colle della Croce was; it is possible to suggest that various handmade shaping processes were used together (Levi 2010). At least, something can be inferred about the firing of the pottery³.

Because of the peculiar colour on the fracture segments, it is probable that there was an oxidizing environment during the firing process (Saracino 2005: 64), rich in oxygen. That could have produced the clay oxidation of some materials, which gives a typical colour (in contrast to the reducing environment);

³ ‘Firing pottery’ refers to the heat treatment that chemically transforms the clay into ceramics.

the kiln was possibly a simple pit dug in the ground in which the tableware was stacked on embers, covered with burning coals and sealed with earth (Cuomo Di Caprio 2007; Levi 2010: 114; Saracino 2005: 61-65). This process allowed a better control of the fire, protected from the wind, and therefore of the environment, regulating the air flow⁴ (Mannoni, Giannicchedda 1996: 85). Thanks to archeometric analyses on other materials - petrographic analyses on ceramics from La Muculfa, carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston (cf.: McConnell 1995: 66); the same kind of analysis on materials from Tornambè (Enna), carried out by Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra and “Centro Interdisciplinare Grandi Strumenti” of the University of Modena (cf.: Fragnoli, Manin, Giannitrapani, Iannì, Levi 2012) - it is known that those primitive kilns were able to reach temperatures above 850°C, or even 1000°C, and both the slip and the brown paint, which was manganese based⁵, were applied before the firing.

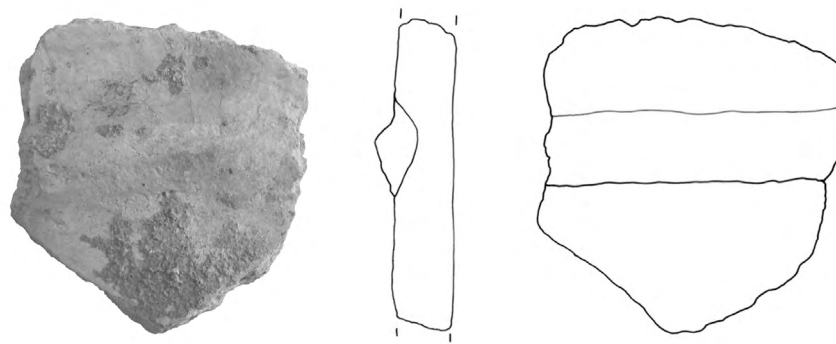


Figure 6. Fragment of the large pithos SC 104: photo and technical drawing of clay layers (scale 1:6; ph. and dwg. C. Veca).

5 Decorative Patterns: A Proposal for Classification

The decoration on the painted specimens is mainly characterised by geometric patterns peculiar to the “Castelluciano Hyblean” style.

This study does not involve a hierarchical classification based on main decorative patterns compared to secondary ones, structuring or fillers. Due to the fragmentary state of the materials taken into consideration, it is difficult to define a complete decorative pattern and a structural scheme connected to the tectonics of the containers. A method based on the breakdown of the decoration was used instead, according to other studies on Castelluccian ceramics (Sluga Messina 1983; McConnell 1995; Tiné 1997), and an analysis of the ‘basic decorative elements’ from which we can build up the geometric Castelluccian patterns, thanks to the repetition, combination and shifting of these patterns.

To classify these elements, the specific parameters of *shape*, *space* and *thickness* were analysed (Copat, Piccione, Costa 2008: 211-238). Twenty-eight basic decorative units have been identified and they are represented by simple linear patterns, connected in different ways, which represent the minimal Castelluccian syntax (Fig. 7). A specific analysis of every single basic decorative element was undertaken, trying to understand all the elaborations, combinations and variants among them (Fig. 8), connecting them to the identified shapes (Tab. 2). In the description of these elements, a distinction was made between the line and the band: the first is considered just a fine graphic mark; the second is the filling between two lines.

⁴ All of these hypotheses without evidence in the archaeological record represent *argumenta ex silentio*.

⁵ High temperatures, around 1000°C, were used to fix the manganese decoration.

Table 2: Overview of decorative motifs.

Decorative motifs		ped. bowl	dipper cup	jar	cup	amphora	jug	neck vase	pitcher	lid
<i>Straight line</i>	vert.	x	x		x	x				
	horiz.	x								
	oblique	x								
<i>Strip</i>	vert.	x	x	x	x				x	
	horiz.	x	x	x	x				x	x
	oblique	x								x
<i>Segment</i>	vert.							x		
	horiz.									
<i>Triangle</i>	Full pattern	x	x							
	grid	x								
<i>Lozenge</i>	Full pattern	x								
	grid	x								
<i>Angle</i>		x	x	x						
<i>Cross segments</i>		x	x							
<i>Band</i>	vert.	x				x				
	Full pattern									
	vert. grid						x		x	
	horiz. Full pattern	x								
	horiz. grid						x			
<i>Straight and sinuous element</i>			x							
<i>Wedge</i>		x								
<i>Sinuous line</i>	vert.	x								
	orizz.	x								
	oblique	x								
<i>Horiz. broken line</i>		x								
<i>Double drop</i>		x								

Straight line - the motif is analysed on the basis of its distribution in the decorative syntax of the vessel; there are three sub-types: straight vertical lines (Fig. 7: 8), straight horizontal lines (Fig. 7: 2) and oblique straight lines. It is mainly present in the pedestal bowls (SC 21, 31, 36, 89, 119), on the rim or the foot, as a single or multiple element; it can also support elements of another decorative pattern on the body of the vessel, as the vertical segment (Fig. 7, 22), and it is frequently sided by bands or by more complex designs (sinuous lines, wedge, double drop, etc.). In dipper-cups (SC 6, 51), cups and jars (SC 45, 46, 47) it occurs on handles or by the base.

Stripe - this motif can be subdivided into: vertical straight stripes (Fig. 7: 7), horizontal straight stripes (Fig. 7: 1) and straight oblique stripes (Fig. 7: 14). The motif occurs on almost all shapes, covering inner and outer surfaces of the rim, but it is more frequent as exclusive decoration on pedestal bowls (16 specimens). Moreover, it can match other motifs, always on the outer surface, as cross segments (SC 31) or parallel straight lines and parallel sinuous lines on the foot of the vessel (SC 36) or covering the foot. The inner body presents stripes that can be parallel (SC 90) or converge to the straight lines (SC 109). The stripe often decorates the handles, including generally parallel series of horizontal segments (SC 3, 114), or cross segments (SC 116). On cups, jars and pitchers, stripes can cross one another on the outer body (SC 28, 49) or follow the parallel disposition of the handles (SC 1). The motif is also present on only two lids (SC 77, 78), exclusively on the outside.

Triangle - there are two main types of triangles: the first full pattern triangle (Fig. 7: 28), occurring 6 times, especially in pedestal bowls, is always found in the inner body and combined with other motifs (SC

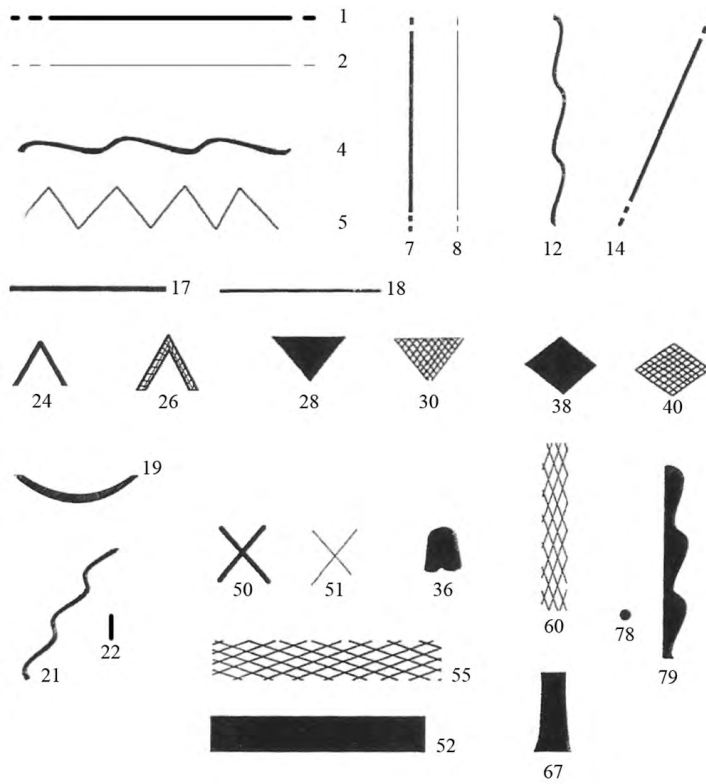


Figure 7. Synopsis of “basic decorative elements” (Copat, Piccione, Costa 2008; elab. C. Veca).

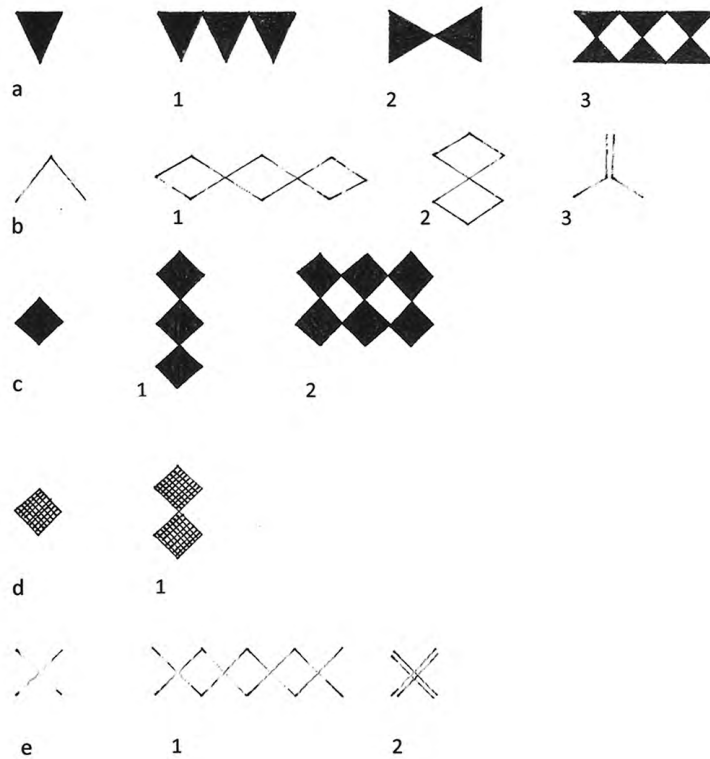


Figure 8. Pattern configurations: a,b,c,d,e: decorative pattern; 1, 2, 3: spatial configuration (elab. C. Veca).

25, Fig. 8: *a-1*), except for cup SC 22. It can also be found in parallel reflected horizontal series (SC 29, 30, 109, Fig. 8: *a-3*), or mirrored (SC 150, Fig. 8: *a-2*). The motif never appears alone, but in conjunction with others: under horizontal bands, together with cross segments and between vertical straight lines and bands.

The triangle appears in grid patterns (Fig. 7: 30) in only one case (SC 30), in a pedestal bowl, associated with the full pattern triangle, combined in parallel reflected series.

Lozenge - there are two main types that can be identified: lozenges with full filling (Fig. 7: 38), which appear in two cases, and lozenges with grid pattern filling (Fig. 7: 40), in only one case. The first is always combined in multiple elements: with vertical mirroring (SC 44, Fig. 8: *c-1*), and parallel reflected horizontal series (SC 110, Fig. 8: *c-2*). It often appears on the outside of pedestal bowls in association with the angular motif and the dot (Fig. 7, 78). The only case in which the lozenge with a grid pattern filling appears (SC 89, Fig. 8: *d-1*) is on the outside of a pedestal bowl, and it is bordered by bands.

Angle - this decorative motif (Fig. 7: 24, 26) appears three times: on a jar (SC 1), on a pedestal bowl (SC 44) and a dipper-cup (SC 73). It is always combined with vertical mirrored angles (Fig. 8 *b-1*), shifted along the vertical axis (Fig. 8 *b-2*), combined with other motifs, such as the band, or lozenge. In one case, the mirroring is not specular (Fig. 8 *b-3*).

Cross segments - this motif (Fig. 7: 50, 51) appears four times, usually on handles of pedestal bowls (SC 114, 115), or on the outer body (SC 31), and in one case, on the handle of a cup (SC 116). When it is on the body of containers, it is surrounded by bands (Fig. 8: *e-1*), or associated with triangle patterns; on the handles, it is almost always doubled (Fig. 8: *e-2*) and enclosed by bands at the edges, and delimited by segments.

Band - four types of bands can be identified: vertical bands with full filling, vertical bands with grid filling (Fig. 7: 60), horizontal bands with full filling (Fig. 7: 52) and horizontal bands with grid filling (Fig. 7: 55). In the first and the third cases, the motif is associated with parallel straight lines, divergent stripes and, in one case, a triangle (SC 150), and it appears externally or internally on pedestal bowls (SC 109, 146), and on an amphora (SC 47). In the second and the fourth cases, the motif appears floating on the body of jugs (SC 68, 71).

Straight and sinuous element - these appear only once (Fig. 7: 79), on a handle of a dipper cup (SC 2).

Wedge - there is only one occurrence of a wedge (Fig. 7: 67), inside the body of a pedestal bowl near the rim, associated with parallel lines and bands.

Sinuous line - there are three types of sinuous lines according to the spatial configuration: vertical (Fig. 7: 12), horizontal (Fig. 7: 4) and oblique (Fig. 7: 21). These appear on the outside of pedestal bowls, always in association with parallel straight lines (SC 36), straight oblique lines (SC 76), or bands with grid filling (SC 108).

Horizontal dashed line - this motif appears on the outside of pedestal bowls (Fig. 7: 5), isolated and prominent on the body of vessels (SC 105, 106).

Double drop - there is only one case of a double drop on a sherd of a pedestal bowl (SC 19) (Fig. 7: 36), with a vertical segment that starts from a straight line.

Handles - it was decided to dedicate a separate and specific section to handles, due to their particular decoration, and especially to derive a set of typological decorative patterns, highlighting where possible the evolution of the patterns themselves.

Of the handles with painted decoration, 70% on pedestal bowls and dipper cups, show, apart from the already mentioned pattern with a vertical band and a curvy profile on a side, a decoration with a repetition of segments (Fig. 7: 18), or band segments (Fig. 7: 17). These are usually horizontal and sometimes parallel (from 2 to 7) surrounded by outlines or bands, that is the crossed segments pattern or band crossed segments pattern, surrounded with bands on the edge of the handle and outlined by segments, above and under; or a double pattern of crossed segments (‘S. Andrea’s cross’), also surrounded by bands and alternated, above and below, with segments patterns.

Furthermore, it can be said that sometimes there is minimal decoration on the handles (Fig. 9), characterized by two horizontal segments (SC 12), escalating up to seven (SC 121); at the same time it has an outline (SC 3, 5, 6); on the other side we have a more elaborated surround of the margins, together with a combination of parallel horizontal crossed (SC 1, 116) and doubled segments (SC 114, 115).

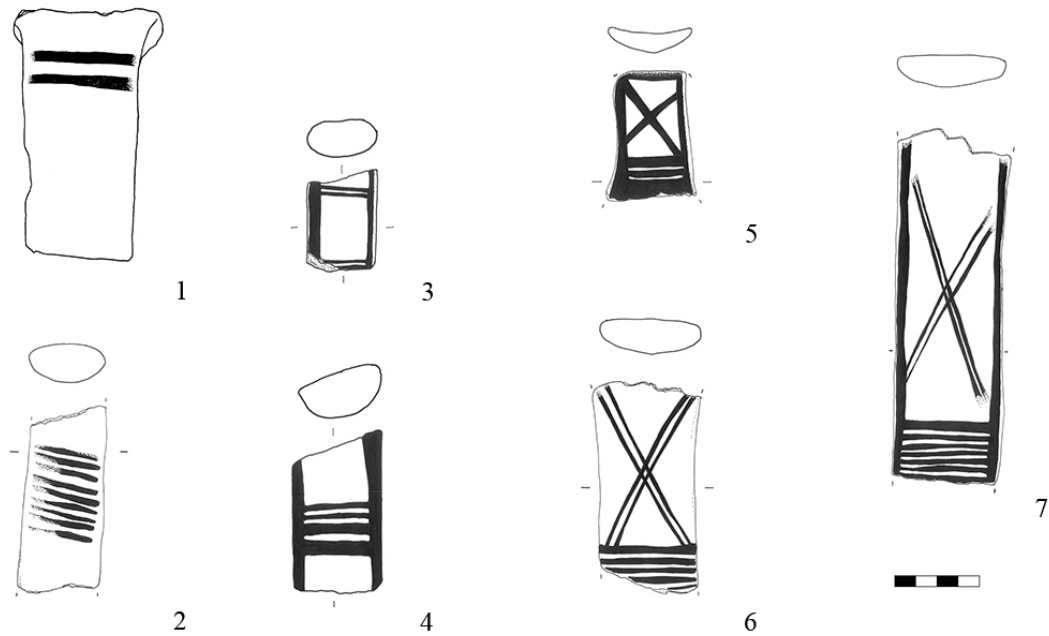


Figure 9. Synthesis of decorative pattern on the handles: 1-2) horizontal segments (SC 12; SC 121); 3-4) horizontal segments and marginal outline (SC 6; SC 3); 5) marginal outline and alternation of horizontal parallel and cross segments (SC 116); 6) alternation of horizontal parallels and double cross segments (SC 115); 7) marginal outline and alternation of horizontal parallel and double cross segments (SC 114) (scale 1:4; dwg. C. Veca).

6 The Complex of Scicli Compared to the Sicilian Early Bronze Age

Although it is fragmentary, the material affords the possibility to propose a generic framework in the pottery production of the Sicilian Early Bronze Age, thanks to the reconstructed shapes and the decoration. This framework poses a primal problem which refers to the geographical or chronological interpretation of the comparisons (Tab. 3). Most of these comparisons come from complexes lacking a clear stratigraphic context. The following correlations have a topographical value.

Out of 99 painted examples, 56 are related in form and decoration (55.4 %); most of the similarities are found in the “scarichi del villaggio”, the village dump of the Castelluccio settlement, where twenty-two correlations are found, including:

- 10 pedestal bowls (SC 12, 21, 27, 30, 89, 90, 106, 115, 119, 130) (Orsi 1893: tav. V, fig. 59; tav.VI, fig. 23; tav. VII, fig. 37; tav. VII, fig. 48; tav.VI, fig. 38a, 43; tav. V, fig. 40, 42, 63; tav.VI, fig. 42; tav. VII, fig. 29; tav. VII, fig. 48; tav. V, fig. 40; tav. VII, fig. 29; tav. V, fig. 39, 40, 56, 60; tav. V, fig. 62-63, e tav.VI, fig. 5, 11, 39; tav.VI, fig. 11),
- 7 dipper cups (SC 3, 5, 6, 22, 25, 73, 116) (Orsi 1893: tav. VI, fig. 13-15; tav.VI, fig. 13; tav.VI, fig. 13-15; tav. VII, fig. 45; tav. VII, fig. 45; tav.VI, fig. 29; tav.VI, fig. 14),
- 2 cups (Orsi 1893: tav. VI fig. 38),
- 1 pitcher (SC 49) (Orsi 1893: tav. VII, fig. 48),
- 1 bowl (SC 68) (Orsi 1893: tav. VI, fig. 20; Tusa 1999: 375, fig. 28),
- 1 jar (SC9) (Orsi 1893: tav. VI, fig. 23a).

There are other comparisons in the territory of Ragusa (11), such as Monte Tabuto (Tusa 1999: 395, fig. 47) (1 amphora, SC 47), but especially in the area of Scicli:

- six in Grotta Maggiore including:
 - 3 pedestal bowls (SC 31, 32, 36) (Terranova 2008: 421, fig. 8.8d; p. 421, fig. 8.8 d, p. 420, fig. 8.7 c),
 - 1 jar (SC 1) (Terranova 2008: 421, fig. 8.8b),
 - 1 dipper cup (SC 22) (Terranova 2008: 430, fig. 8.7b),
 - 1 pithos (SC 150) (Terranova 2008: 422, fig. 8.9e);
- one in Contrada Cancellieri (1 pithos) (SC 19) (Terranova 2008: 418, fig. 8.3);
- two in Contrada Valentino, including one dipper cup (Terranova 2008: 429, fig. 8.22b) (SC 73) and a vase (SC 80) 429, (Terranova 2008: fig. 8.22b);
- one in Contrada Balata (1 pithos, SC 104) (Terranova 2008: 425, fig. 8.13b).

A similar number of comparisons (eleven) is located in the territory of Caltanissetta:

- eight in Monte Calvario, including:
 - 4 dipper cups (SC 3, 5, 6, 116) (Iannì 2007: 111, fig. 92; p. 143, fig. 117; p. 185, fig. 155; p. 142, fig. 116; p. 143, fig. 117; p. 163, fig. 134; p. 142, fig. 116; p. 143, fig. 117; p. 112, fig. 93.),
 - 1 basin (SC 40) (Iannì 2007: 90, fig. 71),
 - 1 pedestal bowl (SC 121) (Iannì 2007: 109, fig. 20, p. 184, fig. 154),
 - 1 vase (SC 150), (Iannì 2007: fig. 78);
- one in Contrada La Montagna (1 dipper cup, SC 2) (Iannì 2007: 58, fig. 49);
- one in Monte del Gesso (jar, SC 42,) (Iannì 2007: 156, fig. 127),
- one in Manfria, Gela (1 pedestal bowl, SC 114) (Orlandini 1962: tav. 36, fig. 3; tav.39, fig. 4).

There are also six comparisons in the Etna area:

- four in Villaggio Garofalo, including: 2 pedestal bowls (SC 20, 27) (Cultraro 2007: 67, fig. 6) and 2 dipper cups (SC 23, 24) (Cultraro 2007: 67, fig. 6);
- two pedestal bowls in Grotta Pietralunga (SC 43, 106) (Cultraro 2007: fig. 4.1; p. 65, fig. 4.6).

Lastly, there are two comparisons in the territory of Agrigento, 1 cup (Tusa 1999: 112, tav. IV, fig. 59) (SC 28) and a pitcher (Tusa 1999: 113, tav. IV, fig. 61) (SC 71), and four comparisons in the village of Muculufa, including 1 jar (McConnell 1995: 159, tav.33, fig. 109) (SC 1), 2 pedestal bowls (McConnell 1995: 150, tav.24, fig. 38; 155, tav.29, fig. 82) (SC 110, 121) and 1 neck vase (McConnell 1995: 158, tav.32, fig. 107) (SC 124).

Table 3: Formal and decorative comparisons.

	Pedestal bowl	Dipper cup	Cup	Pitcher	Bowl	Jar	Amphora	Pithos	Vase	Basin	Neckvase
<i>Scarichi del villaggio</i>	10	7	2	1	1	1					
<i>Monte Tabuto</i>							1				
<i>Grotta Maggiore</i>	3	1				1		1			
<i>Contrada Cancellieri</i>								1			
<i>Contrada Valentino</i>		1							1		
<i>Contrada Balata</i>								1			
<i>Monte Calvario</i>	1	4							1	1	
<i>La Montagna</i>		1									
<i>Monte del Gesso</i>						1					
<i>Manfria</i>	1										
<i>Villaggio Garofalo</i>	2	2									
<i>Grotta Pietralunga</i>	2										
<i>Agrigento</i>			1	1							
<i>Muculufa</i>	2					1					1

7 Discussion

Comparisons clearly show how there are direct connections to the materials removed from the village dump of the Castelluccio settlement, in the territory of Noto (SR), which fully represents the central phases of the Castelluccian culture. Many similarities in decorations were also detected in the territory of Agrigento, especially in the village of Muculufa. Comparisons found in the Etna area have often been crucial to the chronological framework. It seems clear, however, that the batch of examined material is primarily situated within the ‘Hyblean-Ragusano group’ (Cultraro 1996). but some comparisons show a certain spread of decorative motifs in the Etna area and Caltanissetta-Agrigento. It is important to note that the site of Castelluccio, from which the largest amount of comparisons for our materials comes, is assigned by Cultraro to another ‘cultural province’. Such a ‘province’ is different from the one of Colle della Croce which geographically belongs to what he called ‘calatino-siracusana’. It is nevertheless located in the Hyblean area, a peculiar area itself from a cultural point of view. A certain discrepancy in the evidence from a spatial viewpoint must also be noted. Not only is it partly the result of the state of research, but it also reveals a more or less emphasized phenomenon of osmosis. These phenomena are not always due simply to topographic continuity but also to specific cultural choices (Copat, Piccione, Costa 2008: 212-213). Despite the recurrence of decorative motifs in nearer or more distant geographic areas, it is due above all to the strong variability of the decorative Castelluccian style, in relation to the aspects we have gradually taken into account. The distribution of exclusive decorative elements in restricted territorial areas should not necessarily reveal stylistic circumscribed areas, but it should group topographic sites characterized by contiguity. On the contrary, the “spread” of decorative configurations could lead to the reconstruction of contacts. Depending on the shape of containers and decorative syntax, with separate incidence, these ornamental configurations are indiscriminately used in many ways in different sites (Copat, Piccione, Costa 2008: 234).

8 Conclusions

The preliminary review of the Castelluccio materials from Colle della Croce provided many insights into the pottery technology (working methods and supporting systems, polishing techniques and joints slots for the handles). The proposed classification of decorative motifs, while it may seem overly schematic, might nonetheless allow the identification of criteria relating to a very clear area of exclusive decorative spread. Both of the two methods of investigation, technological and decorative analysis, suggest the existence of “standards” in the manufacture of the Castelluccio pottery from Colle della Croce, which could indicate the existence of “potters” and “ceramists” already during the Sicilian Early Bronze Age, considering both as specialized artisans skilled in manufacturing operations and painting decoration.

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