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Favella. A Neolithic Village in the Sybaris Plain

It could be argued that the whole philosophy of archaeology is implied in the questions we ask and the form in which we frame them.

RENFREW, BAHN 2004⁴, p. 17

This book is organized on a thematic and taxonomic criterion. Each contribution previously included in this volume referred to a specific aspect of the natural and cultural context of the Neolithic village of Favella.

The following summary attempts to reorganize the data as possible answers to fundamental questions about the past, investigated by an archaeological approach. These are the same questions clearly formulated by Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn in their *Archaeology* (2004⁴). While we could not reach the consistency and effectiveness of the examples proposed in their book, we will try to deepen the perspectives – however partial and indirect – to draw answers to these questions in the micro-reality of the Favella site.

1. What is left? (see Chap. 1)

The archaeological site of Favella (near Corigliano Calabro, Cosenza, NE Calabria) is located in the middle of the Sybaris Plain (figs. 1.1-4). Currently, it is about 6 km far from the coast (at East), 1.5 km from the river Crati (North) and 3.5 km from the confluence of the latter into the river Coscile (NW).

The Neolithic settlement is placed on the edge of a river terrace of Pleistocene formation (fig. 1.5), belonging to the first order of fluvial terraces of the river Crati and slightly elevated above the plain, at average heights of around 15 m above sea level and with a total extension of about 100,000 square meters.

Dramatic historical changes, with an anthropogenic and natural origin, have interested this site. In particular, the cur-

rent appearance of almost perfect planar continuity is the result of a massive input of allogenic soils, transported here in recent times to level the gap between two distinct morphological peaks. These peaks divided the terrace toward North and South and which were originally separated by a wide depression, that was occupied in classical times by a channel of water adduction (figs. 2.1.13-14).

The present agricultural landscape is characterized by the modern geometry of the channels, which have carved the earth along regular geometric shapes (fig. 1.4): the main, to the North, is represented by the Scavolino Channel, while an orthogonal channel, passing to the west, stands beside the National Road 106, separating the terrace of Favella from the plain below.

The agricultural impact, during the historical and classical ages (documented by materials and structures relevant to rural and funerary use of the site between the V and the IV century BC), as well as during the modern age, was the principal disruptive agent of the local stratigraphy (fig. 1.6). This is represented by the following sequence:

- modern agricultural soil (0-0.4 m from the soil surface), more or less unsettled and mixed with foreign soils;
- historic agricultural soil (0.4-0.6/7 m approx. from the soil surface), clearly altered and containing materials of different ages (from Early and Late Neolithic to Classic and Hellenistic age);
- sandy terrace level, consisting of sandy-loamy soils, with variable depth of 0.8-1.0 m, which is the substratum of the archaeological structures containing Early Neolithic materials;
- gravel level with abundant earthy matrix, sometimes interspersed by slimy sublevels, which represents the lowest horizon of archaeological stratigraphy.

This series, which continues forward with an alternation of sandy levels more or less fine or coarse, interspersed with low silty or clayey levels, results from the accumulation of terraced sediments, referable to an ancient bed of the river Crati, with alternation of alluvial sediments (gravel beds) and with evidence of residual groundwater fluctuations (see Chap. 2.3; figs. 2.3.2).

The archaeological investigations have brought to light structural and cultural residues belonging to a first settlement in the earliest phase of the Southern Neolithic (described in Part II, Chaps. 4-12): the so called *Archaic Impressed Wares* phase (i.e. early centuries of the sixth millennium BC). Less preserved are residues of a later Neolithic settlement, in the more advanced stages of the Neolithic Age, during the development of the so-called *Capanna Gravela of Serra d'Alto* and *Diana-Bellavista* cultures, along with further results in the Final Neolithic *Spatarella* culture (described in Part III, Chaps. 13-16). The absolute chronology of these later settlements spans between the second half of the fifth millennium BC and the early centuries of the fourth.

A long gap, more than a millennium, corresponding to the development of advanced stages of the Early Neolithic and to the full development of the Middle Neolithic ages, clearly separates these two phases of the settlement, revealing with particular clarity the main cultural characters of each one. This chronological and stratigraphic separation of the different phases of Neolithic Favella is one of the main interesting reasons offered by this site, especially in regards to its potential for a systematic definition of the cultural features of the oldest Neolithization stage in peninsular Italy.

The uniqueness of Favella, which is so far the only reference for the earliest Neolithic Calabria and is also one of the few sites known for what concerns the oldest phase of Italian Neolithization, warranted the resumption of research on this site, after the former investigations in the '60s, despite the unfavourable preservation pattern of the stratigraphic record. The mechanical plowing, performed in recent decades at considerable depth by means of special equipment suited to heavy soils, has been the main responsible cause for the lack of *in situ* preservation of undisturbed Neolithic palaeo-soils, that were almost everywhere relentlessly pickled or significantly altered. The only residual formative basins from the Early Neolithic settlement are large pits (singles or multiples), which were filled by refuse deposits containing pottery and stone implements, animal bones and structural by-products (hut-daub fragments). Regarding the Late Neolithic settlement, only scattered concentrations of cob-

blestones have been spared, associated with pottery, but mostly out of a clear stratigraphic context.

This bad post-depositional outcome represents the main limit to the analysis of the archaeological site – especially with regards to the Late Neolithic settlement – preventing almost completely the stratigraphic and spatial contextualization of the findings.

In a few words:

- pit-structures of the Early Neolithic phase, pickled and isolated, are available only as containers of anthropogenic fillings, resulting from non-primary functional dynamics (multi-stage secondary refuse);
- the Late Neolithic pebbles structures, albeit widely altered by plowing, can only suggest some spatial aggregation of cultural elements.

2. What was the environment? (see Chap. 2)

The Sybaris Plain, overlooking the Ionian Sea, is surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, consisting of the low descendants of the Pollino Massif, the Coastal Chain and the Sila Massif. The flanks of these relieves are carved by several rivers, carrying the products of erosion and depositing them in a thick blanket of Quaternary alluvial sediments (fig. 2.1.1.5). Some of these rivers, with a torrential character, generated at their mouth a series of fan-shaped alluvia, whereas the central part of the plain is the domain of the rivers Crati and Coscile. At present times, these rivers converge into a single bed in the outlet plain all the way to the mouth, but literary and cartographic sources testify very different situations, such as those dated around 510 BC (destruction of the Achaean colony of Sybaris) and between XVIth and XVIIIth century, when the two rivers followed separate paths and had distinct estuaries (fig. 2.1.2,6).

A system of faults is the primary cause for the great instability showed by the river surface axis, while tectonic features running NE-SW explained their tendency to adjust alignment. The Sybaris Plain can be defined, therefore, as a *graben*, filled by alluvial sediments and involved in active processes of subsidence from the more distant past (fig. 2.1.3,4).

The current geomorphological aspect of the plain suffered major anthropogenic disruptions, especially during the mid XXth century, which amended and reshaped the natural environment

thanks to hydraulic works for agricultural use, affecting zones historically well known as marshy and stagnant.

The stratigraphy of the plain has been investigated by drilling samples carried out in the proximity of archaeological sites, which identified a series of alluvial sediments of Pleistocene and Holocene age, consisting of a sequence of sandy, silty and clay deposits (GUERRICCHIO, MELIDORO 1976; CHERUBINI *et al.* 2005). With the aim to define the local site stratigraphy, two drilling campaigns were undertaken in 1992 and 1993, in order to detect the lithologic sequence through undisturbed cores (see Chap. 2.2-3; figs. 2.1.8-11 and 2.2.1-3). The identified layers are as described above.

The actual topographic surface is the result of severe anthropogenic interventions, motivated by agricultural purposes, such as reducing the morphological peaks and levelling natural draining depressions or wetlands, like the one crossing the central part of the terrace in a W-E direction, that is no longer visible today and was identified by geophysics and remote sensing (see Chaps. 2.1 and 2.5; fig. 2.5.2). However, assuming the contour as from the topographic relief, it is still possible to detect the ancient morphological peak – marked from the 15 and 16 m contour lines, identified by the surface survey, trial trenches and prospectings – as the Early Neolithic settlement area (see Chap. 2.4; fig. 2.4.1). This peak, interposed by two depressions to the North and South, is emphasized by data collected from different sondages windows, which allowed the interpolation of gravel substrate curves of the site (fig. 2.4.2).

The terrace of Favella does not seem to have been affected by river flooding phenomena typical of the alluvial plain of Sybaris. Indeed, even over a very long period (8000 years) it seems to have enjoyed an environmental status of discrete stability. This stability could be dictated by particular geographical and structural factors, as the terrace of Favella is located at the edge of the active subsidence zone – interesting more the eastern and northern areas of the Plain – thanks to the compaction of sedimentary deposits with important differences in the lithological sequence (alternating presence of sand-gravel and gravel).

The area of the site was investigated by remote sensing on aerial photographs, using flights performed in 1960, 1968, 1970, 2001 (see Chap. 2.1). It was thus possible to recognize the traces of ancient abandoned river beds whose deposits formed a fan-shaped alluvium, while North of the site there are clear traces of the final turns of the river Crati and its confluence with the Scavolino (figs. 2.1.12-13). To the East, beyond the terrace, where the

flat plain begins, networks and braided channels have been recognized, branched from short and narrow paths, typical of channels formed in a lagoon environment. This environment of lake and river flooding has resulted in sediments of silty-clay type, identified by drilling. The sandy deposits that are found towards the coastline could be due, however, to buried dune devices, corresponding to ancient coastlines, potentially overlapping with those of pre-protohistoric age.

3. Where? (see Chap. 3)

Several research techniques were used at Favella to test archaeological assumptions about productive systems and settlement patterns of Neolithic groups.

The discovery of the site, in 1954, is due to Donald Brown of Harvard University in collaboration with Ermanno Candido. The first archaeological surveys were directed in 1962 and 1964 by Santo Tiné of the Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Calabria (fig. 3.1). Systematic and extensive researches were performed at the site between 1990 and 1998 by the Istituto di Archeologia of the University of Genoa and by the Istituto Italiano di Archeologia Sperimentale of Genova on behalf of the Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Calabria, still under the direction of Santo Tiné. Further excavation campaigns were conducted in 2001 and 2002 by the Soprintendenza Speciale al Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico ‘L. Pigorini’ of Rome, under the direction of the Author.

In addition to the geomorphologic, stratigraphic and geophysical surveys (see above), the eleven years of research conducted at the site between 1990-1998 and 2001-2002 have provided (fig. 3.2):

- stratigraphic investigation on two areas of extensive excavation: the A zone (1990-1996), 190 square meters in total, located in the central-southern sector of the terrace and divided into A1 (North) and A2 (South) (figs. 3.2.1-15), and the B zone (1997-2002), totalling 210 square meters, located in the north-western sector of the terrace and divided into B0 (Centre), B1 (East) and B2 (West) (figs. 3.2.16-21);
- stratigraphic surveys of trial trenches of limited extent: the A-E/1995 and the F/2002 trial trenches (figs. 3.2.22-28);
- surface collection on the whole terrace, which amounted to an area of approx. 100,000 square meters (1992, figs. 5.1 and 14.1);

- analysis of the exposed section of about 300 m in length, crossing S-N through the site (1994, fig. 3.2.30);
- a network of cores, set on a 4x4 mt grid and placed over an area of 50x50 square meters, around the excavation zone A (1994, fig. 3.2.1);
- test trenching of the site by 16 radial transects, of length between 10 and 40 m in length: transects T1-6, carried out in 1995 (tab. 3.2.1) and transects TNI-3, Tnwi, TWI-2, TSI-2, Tei-2, carried out in 1997 (tab. 3.2.2; figs. 3.2.31-34).

The association of these different prospecting methods returned detailed and extensive data about the settlement, subsistence and production patterns during the two main phases of Neolithic occupation of the site. They are discussed in Chapters 4-16.

4. When? (see Chaps. 6, 12 and 15)

The absolute chronology of the oldest frequentation phase of the site, in the initial Early Neolithic (see Chap. 12; tab. 12.1, fig. 12.1), is fixed by six AMS radiometric datings, which show low values of standard deviation (40-75 y) and a remarkable consistency (95% of overlap; square root of variance = 20.26). These six dates consistently identify the medium range: 6900±100 BP, corresponding to a 2σ calibrated range of 7650-7950 BP, equivalent to 6000-5700 BC.

A short span of life of the EN village, corresponding to the first 2-3 centuries of the sixth millennium BC, is hinted to by these datings, which coincide with those known for other sites of the same cultural horizon characterized by archaic imprinted wares (tab. 12.2; fig. 12.2). Specifically, they perfectly overlap with those available from Trasano-phase I, unfortunately affected by a large standard deviation (GUILAINE, CREMONESI 1996; TINÉ V. 2003).

In this context, the first Neolithic settlement at Favella seems to span the entire course of development of the archaic phase of south-eastern Imprinted Wares (Early Neolithic I), until the transition to the evolved phase of Impressed Wares (Early Neolithic II), as clearly indicated by the complete absence in the site of pottery belonging to this later phase (see Chap. 6.1). The special importance of the site lies right in its characterization as a single-phase site, almost exclusively concerning the Early Neolithic age, which allows us to define a framework of highly focused features about the earliest stage of Southern Italian Neolithization.

Indeed, subsequent phases of settlement in the Late and Final Neolithic are separated from the original one by a *hiatus* of over a millennium. Concerning these later phases there is no direct radiometric dating, made impossible by extremely disturbed stratigraphic contexts. The date range suggested by other sites of similar *Diana-Bellavista* culture, in Sicily and Calabria, covers the last centuries of the fifth millennium BC, i.e. between 5200 and 4900 BP, corresponding to 4200-3700 BC. Taking into account the transitional phase between *Serra d'Alto* and *Diana* cultures (the so-called Gravela Hut of *Serra d'Alto* style) – as documented by the characteristic depurated pottery associated with residuals scatterings of cobblestones – as well as the evidence for continuity in the Final Neolithic (see Chap. 15), the radiometric dating of other sites for these phases (PESSINA, TINÉ V. 2008) suggests a revival of the Neolithic settlement during the middle of the fifth and the first centuries of the fourth millennium BC (cal BC).

5. How were societies organized? (see Chaps. 4-5 and 13-14)

In the available archaeological record from Favella the most informative evidence regarding this question – according to the meaning suggested by Renfrew and Bahn – concerns the models for the housing and settlement organization. These models were investigated by a tentatively cognitive and not purely phenomenological approach, as this seems the best way to investigate any social and ideological superstructure possibly at work. Indeed, despite the apparent weakness of the remains, this approach seems successful in the case of Favella.

Early Neolithic structures (see Chap. 4)

The major structural types, as revealed by digging and other forms of archaeological exploration on the EN contexts, are represented by several pit-structures dug in the sandy soil of the terrace and filled by pottery, lithics, daub, bones and other anthropogenic elements (see Chaps. 4.1 and 4.3-4), and by one residual surface structure, left as planar scattering of daub elements (see Chap. 4.2).

To the first type, which is the most widespread on the site, belong:

- 5 structures investigated in the two areas extensively dug: A, B and D in area A (see Chap. 4.1; tab. 1, figs. 4.1.1-28), E and G in area B (see Chap. 4.1; tab 1, figs. 4.1.29-52);

- 40 structures intercepted by different survey methods on the site (test trenches, transects, exposed section and so on; see Chap. 3.2; tabs. 1-2; figs. 3.2.30-34).

With the exception of structure G, which is a single pit, all these structures consist of groups of two or three large pits linked together. They are all normally dug in the sandy substrate – only 2 out of a total 13 pits reached all the way to the gravel level below – and filled by deposits of anthropogenic refuse. The layout of the pits varies from sub-circular to sub-elliptical; the profile of their walls is hollow, more or less straight or flared and the bottom surface tends to be flat or slightly convex. Their rather irregular morphology seems the result of a soil digging process conducted without a clear attempt at planar regularity and planning. On the other hand, every pit complex shows typical association between two small and more superficial pits and a wider and deeper one. Moreover, the overall size of each complex of pits is of about 3 m³ of soil (only the G pit reaching 4 m³; fig. 4.2.57).

The stratigraphic pattern of the fills, in which there are no recognizable significant post-depositional alterations (except on the surface levels affected by a later post-filling stage), is characterized by clear distinction between (fig. 1):

- a layer mainly composed by structural residues, represented by daub fragments with timber and pile imprints (US 3);
- a layer mainly composed by daily waste residues, i.e. pottery and stone industries associated with organic remains, especially animal bones (US 4).

The ubiquity of daub in the fill of at least one of the pits of every complex seems the most important signal for understanding the primary function of these structures. Indeed, the archaeometric analysis (see Chap. 4.4) has proven that the daub fragments are composed of local sandy sediments, extracted and mixed with water and straw during the original digging of the pits. The pits were then used as discard places of various man-made materials.

Therefore, these structures are more likely quarries and not intended as wells or silos as their primary function (these three types being the typical repertoire of pit structure well documented in Italian as well as European Neolithic). Moreover, these pit structures seem typical of several Italian and European Neolithic contexts and have been widely discussed in the last part of Chap. 4.1 by comparing morphometric and stratigraphic characteristics of each type, even in the light of the more clear evidence available from Eastern Europe (see bibliography cited).

Experimental and archaeometric evidence has shown that daub conservation in archaeological samples must be linked to the burning of wood and earth structures from which they come. Indeed, only a destructive fire of the hut may produce the burning of the sediments deposited on the wooden walls while also leaving traces of the frame itself on their contact surface. The morpho-typological analysis of the daub fragments from some structures in Favella (see Chaps. 4.1 and 4.3) has shown that these marks could have a flat, angled or curved profile (with similar frequency for the three types) and an average width of 7 cm. Moreover, all marks are parallel among themselves and they appear on a single side of the fragment, the other being completely smooth (figs. 4.1.69 and table 4.3.2). Therefore, by their nature and aggregation they appear characteristic of walls consisting in a frame of wooden splits (wedge sections of logs), standing vertically and connected by a few horizontal elements (*timber frame technique*), as opposed to a wall resulting from a frame of interleaved branches (*wattle and daub technique*; fig. 4.1.68). This timber frame technique is more sporadically documented in Neolithic Italy than the wattle frame one – but already known and described at Ripa Tetta – while it seems typical of the most ancient sites of the Neolithic Balkans (e.g. Karanovo I, Servia and Anza).

The substantially uniform volumes of pit-groups A-E (around 3 m³) seem to reflect a constant mass of sediment extracted, which – given the specific weight of 1.7 g/cm³ – amounts to approx. 5 tons of earth. The homogeneity in the values of residual

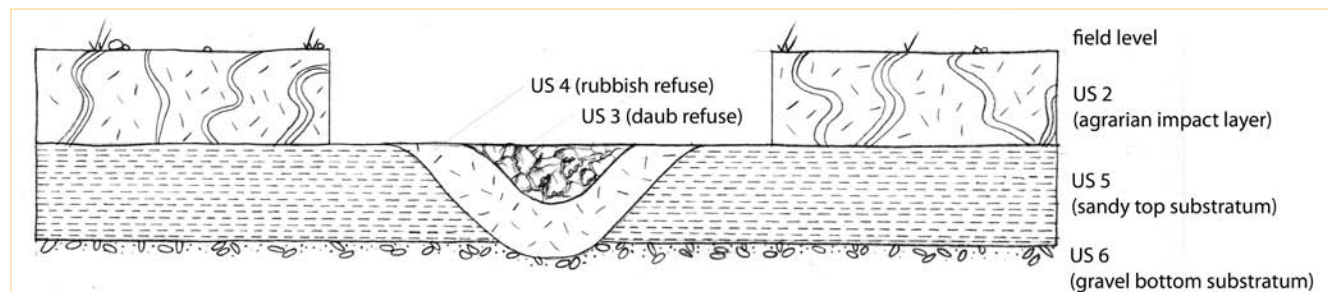


Figure 1 - Favella. The stratigraphic pattern (drawing by M. Agrostelli).

daub quantities in the various excavated structures (around 400-500 kg) suggests a standardization of the earthy material used for coating the huts. Its residual fraction, discarded in the pits after the burning down of the huts, also remains almost constant (ca. 10% of the original quantity of earth extracted). Considering the average thickness of residual daub (between 6 and 10 cm) and assuming an average height of 1.2 m, a possible total length of about 23 m has been suggested for the walls, corresponding to a covered area of approx. 30 m² (see Chap. 4.1).

Because of the severity of historic agrarian impact, Neolithic palaeo-surfaces were never found *in situ*, similarly to the primary elements of the real dwellings, with the possible exception of scattered residues from the collapse, extensively altered by plowing, in excavation areas A1 (fig. 3.2.11) and B0 (fig. 3.2.20). On the other hand, no evidence was found of negative structures other than pits, e.g. post holes or foundation trenches, leaving traces in the sterile substratum. We could, therefore, assume that

the huts were simple timber frames resting on the ground and anchored together to stand up on their own or on corner post holes, and, based on some kind of basement, maybe composed by the small pebbles which were found in the fills of the pits. This feature would be particularly appropriate draining system of the wooden structure from the ground water. Only general assumptions can be proposed, finally, on the covering system, probably a double-sloping roof, resting on the exterior walls and interior pillars (fig. 2).

A more in depth analysis of the social organization of the Neolithic group living in the site could provide the taphonomic dynamics that have affected the only available structural residues, i.e. daub fragments (see discussion in Chap. 4.1). The process of formation of large amount of daub in the archaeological record of several Neolithic sites in Europe, because of its systematic nature, can not derive in fact from simple accidental factors. In a wide area of Neolithic Europe, stretching from Macedonia

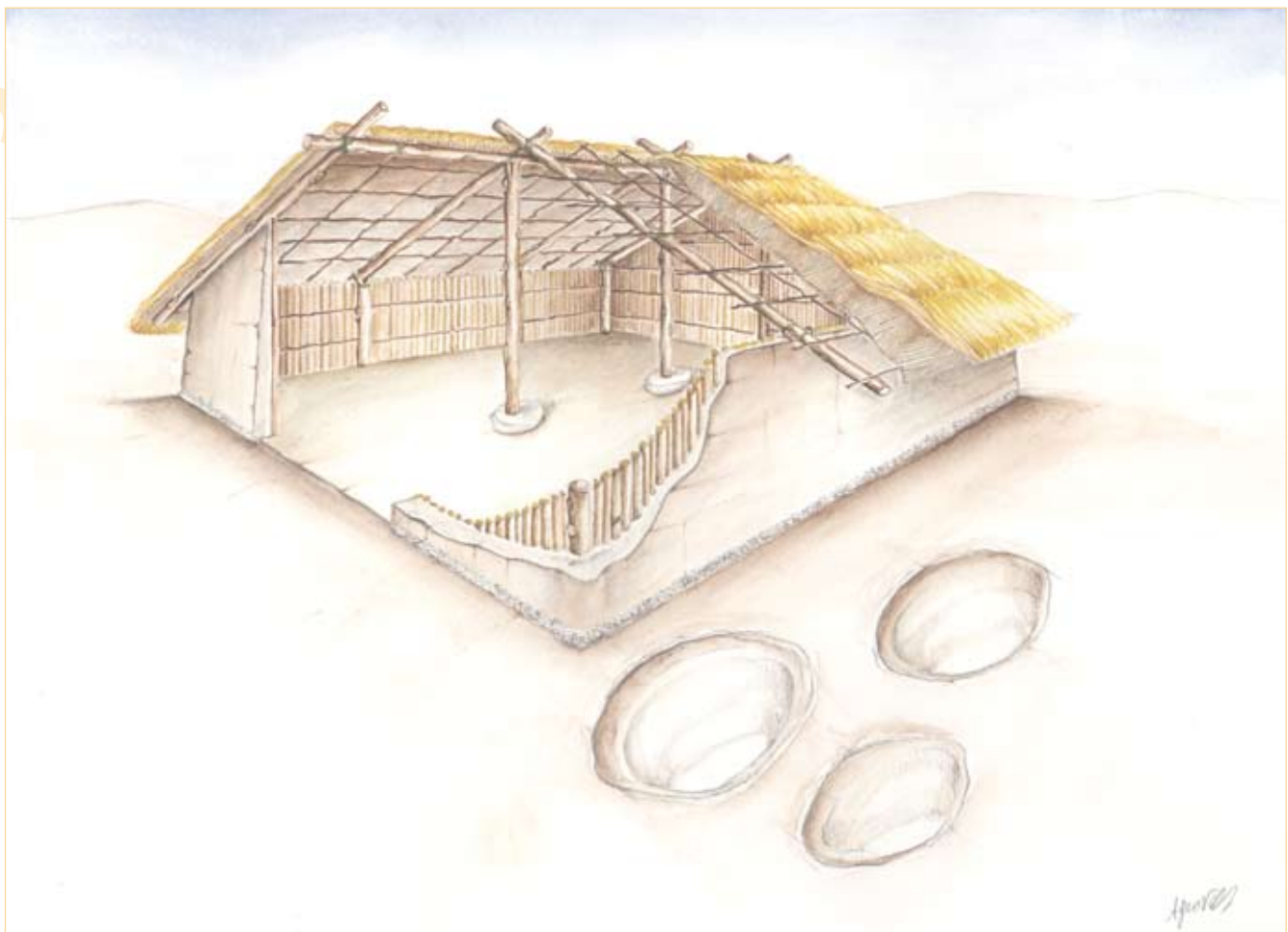


Figure 2 - Favella. Hypothetical reconstruction of the hut with cave-pits (drawing by M. Agrostelli).

to Sweden, a deliberate pattern for the vacation of early structures seems to emerge. It might be implemented by different dynamics (fire or simple abandonment), but, in any case, it shows the typical systematic nature of a cultural *ethos* or a socially motivated performance, totally irrespective of environmental constraints or practical and economic considerations: a true *habitus* in the sense proposed by F. Bordieu (1977).

The interpretative model of this phenomenon which fits better the archaeological features appears the social decision to draw a parallel between the termination of a house – as a material expression of the household – to the death of its most influential representative. To sum up, Favella, as several other sites in Italy and Europe, could fall within the so called *Burned House Horizon*, as defined in the Balkans by R. Tringham and M. Stevanovic (TRINGHAM 1971; 2005; STEVANOVIC 1997, 2002) and developed elsewhere by several authors (BAILEY 1990; HODDER 1994; BRADLEY 1996, 1998, 2005; CHAPMAN 1999, 2000b).

Borrowing the term *domicide* proposed by D. Porteous (2001), Ruth Tringham (2005, p. 107) has recently proposed the term *domithanasia*, emphasizing the positive and not destructive nature of the decision to burn the house. Indeed, it is not a matter of enemies (as in the classical reconstruction of the advent of the Indo-Europeans by M. Gimbutas), but rather of friends and relatives of the deceased, who with the burning the house meant to unify the household, by nourishing the memory and contributing to the identity of place. The daub and other residues of the houses were eventually discarded in what were originally the quarry pits as the last filling layer, often long after they were exposed to weather, as the taphonomic analysis of the animal bones from Favella has clearly showed (see Ch. 10.1; however, in some cases, as in the well near House 4 at Opovo, this was accomplished immediately after the burning event).

In general terms, the widespread deliberate destruction of houses in the Neolithic age is considered by J. Chapman (2000a, p. 105-106) as a “dramatic rite of passage where burning marks a radical rupture between the tragedy of death and the changed order created anew by the social group.” In this framework, the *domus* – as determined by I. Hodder (1990) – is emerging as the main place of production and reproduction of social relations, the symbolic centre of socio-economic strategies and relations of power. As a living symbol of aggregation, the Neolithic home – according to R. Bradley (2005) – is the mirror of a linear conception of time and generations. It is born, carries out its function and dies in a kind of biographical development (*living house mod-*

el), which is archaeologically recoverable and basically reflects the history of the household.

Apart from effective monumentality of structural remains relating to the earliest stages of Neolithization in Italy (as reflected by remains at Rendina and Trasano I), the most interesting data for a symbolic characterization of this age derive from the widespread evidence for their early and deliberate destruction. The repetition of this practice is particularly clear at Favella, where each pit-complex contained substantial daub fragments coming from the hut walls, according to a model of *structured deposition* (CHAPMAN 2000b) linked to socio cultural and non-practical instances (figs. 3-4).

The second structural type in the site is represented only by structure F, which was dug in the B1 area (see Chap. 4.2). This is a dispersion of planar elements of plaster, spread over an area of approx. 2.5 m² (figs. 4.2.1-6). The *in situ* conservation of this single and possibly primary structure, was made possible by the overlapping of a cobble structure during the Late Neolithic, which has partially preserved the older one by pickling derived from deep plowing (figs. 4.2.7-8).

A curvilinear alignment of daub elements is clearly recognizable (fig. 4.2.4: β zone), with a diameter around 1 m, attributable to the base of a semi-dome combustion-type (oven) structure, flanked by a possible processing platform (γ zone) and tackled by windbreaks (δ zone). This structure is comparable to those found in several sites of South-Eastern Europe, as at Achilleion and Dikili Tash (GIMBUTAS *et al.* eds 1989; DESHAYES 1974), as well as in the repertoire of Southern Italy Neolithic kilns, in particular with the structure explored in the B area of Ripa Tetta (TOZZI 2002).

The functionality of this structure, apparently located outside the house, should be linked to the production of bread (fig. 4.2.16), but a complementary function could have been that of a kiln for the fine wares of B class, considering the technical and morphological characteristics of this class of pottery (see Chap. 6.1-2).

The Late Neolithic structures (see Chap. 13)

The only residual type of structure concerning Late Neolithic occupation – of the site, as resulting from excavations and other forms of investigation on the site, is represented by flat scatterings of cobbles.

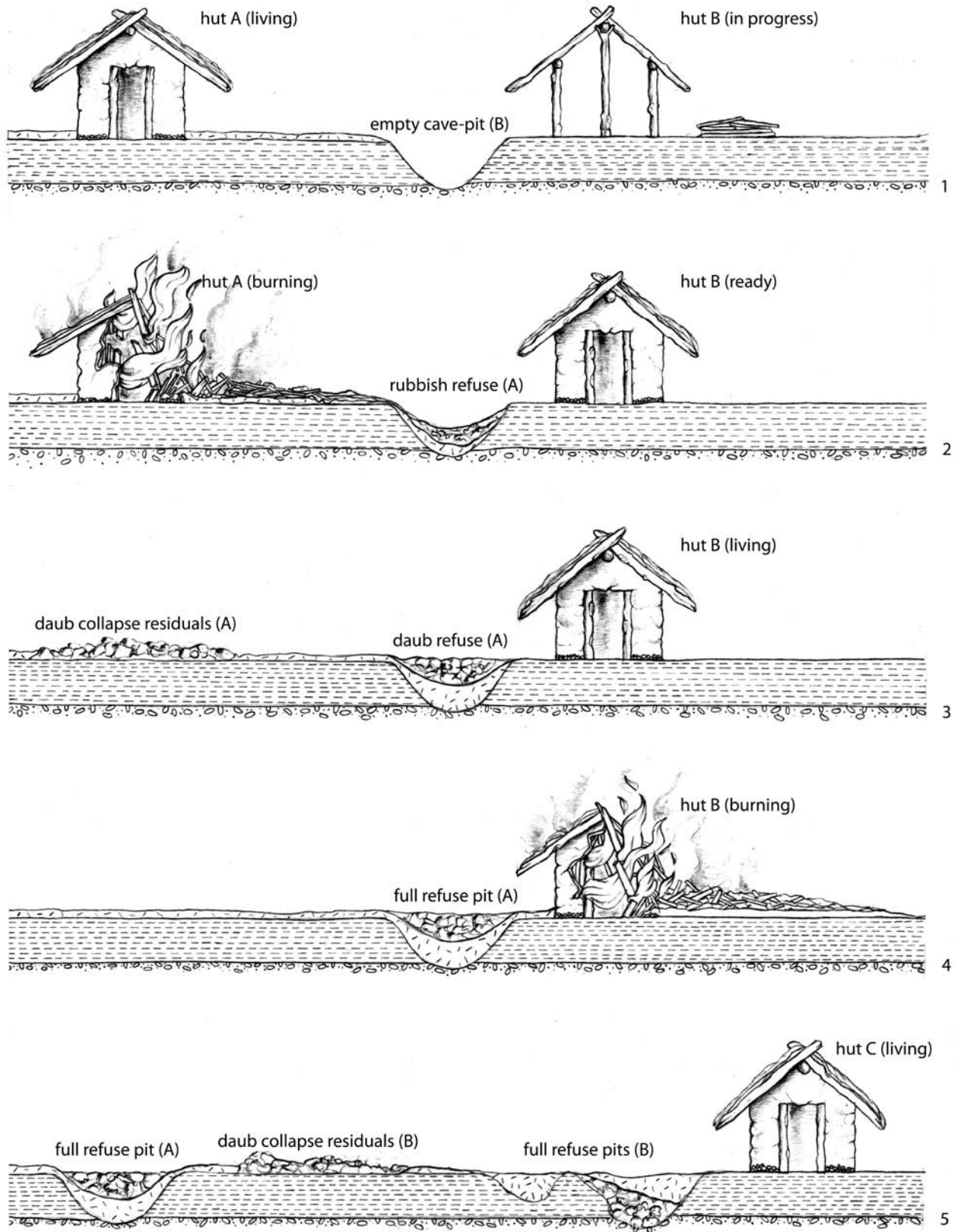


Figure 3 - Favella. Taphonomic journey of the structural residuals (Neolithic Age) (drawing by M. Agrostelli).

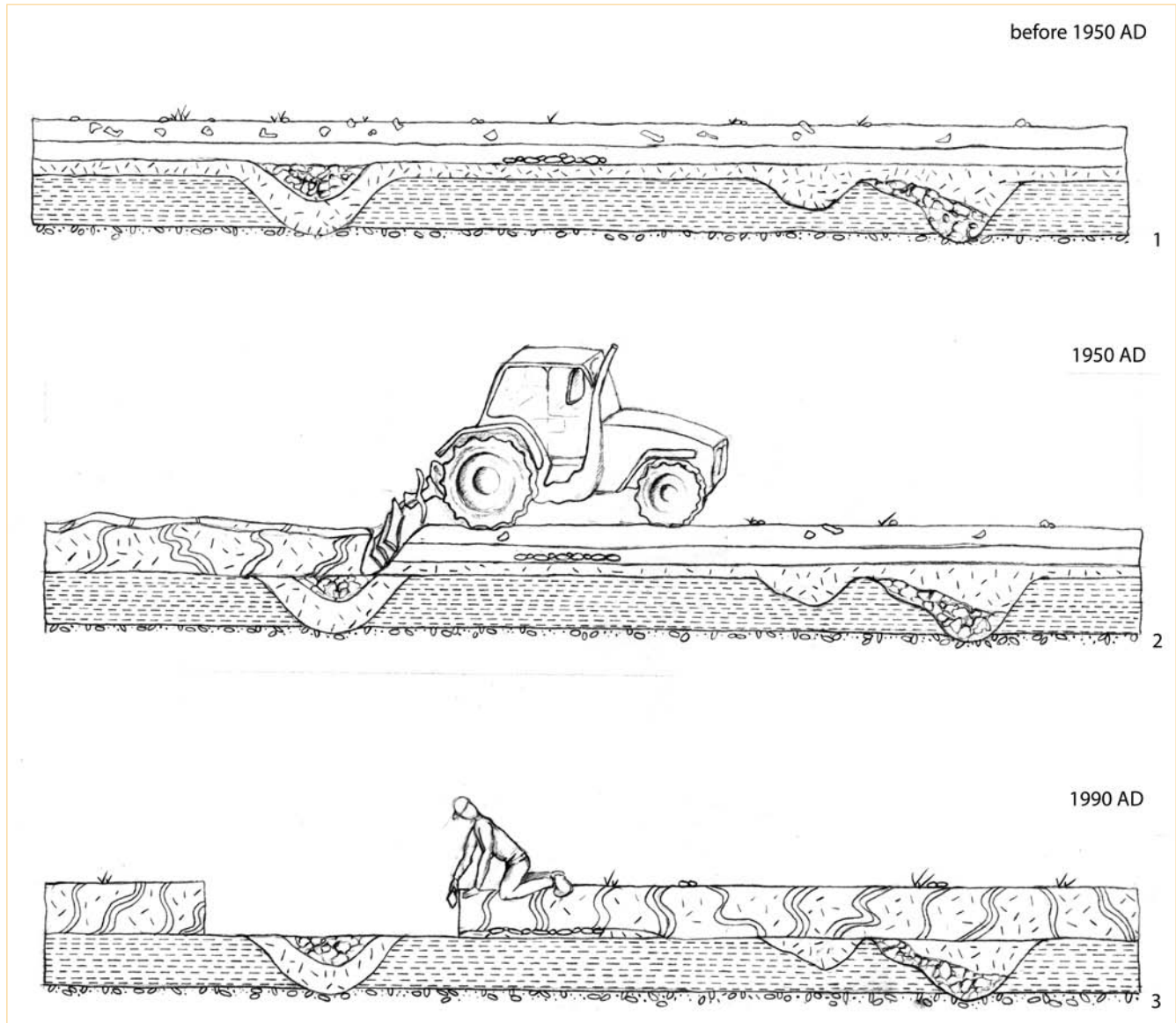


Figure 4 - Favella. Taphonomic journey of the structural residuals (Modern Age) (drawing by M. Agrostelli).

To this type belong:

- 5 excavated structures: A/90 in area A1 (fig. 13.1); X/95 in trial trench C (figs. 13.2-3), H1 and H2 in area B1 (figs. 13.4-5 and 13.8-10); Tnw2 / D in area B2 (figs. 13.6-7);
- 4 structures intercepted by the alternative prospecting methods: TN2/1 (transept TN2); Se12b, Se 15b, SE16 (SN exposed section; fig. 3.2.30).

They are composed of scattered pebbles of moderate size and are highly altered by deep plowing in modern age. In no area of extensive investigation has it been possible to define exact plans and original limits for these facilities, but only some possible corners or tendentially linear edges. The average area occupied by these *in situ* residues is around 2-3 m².

Given the small size – although not matching the original – and the apparent linearity of the edges, locally associated with traces of little and sporadic daub fragments – perhaps residual from normally unburned wooden walls – and the presence of possible post holes, these structures could be interpreted as platforms or under-pavements of covered (?) working areas or small huts. A structure of this type with equivalent size is documented in Calabria at the Stentinello site of Capo Alfieri (MORTER 1996, 2004). On the other hand, much larger structures of pebbles at Ripa Tetta (area B) and Santo Stefano di Ortucchio have been interpreted as open working areas (TOZZI 2004; RADI 2004). The limited of documentary evidence for these structures does not allow, however, a clear functional assignment.

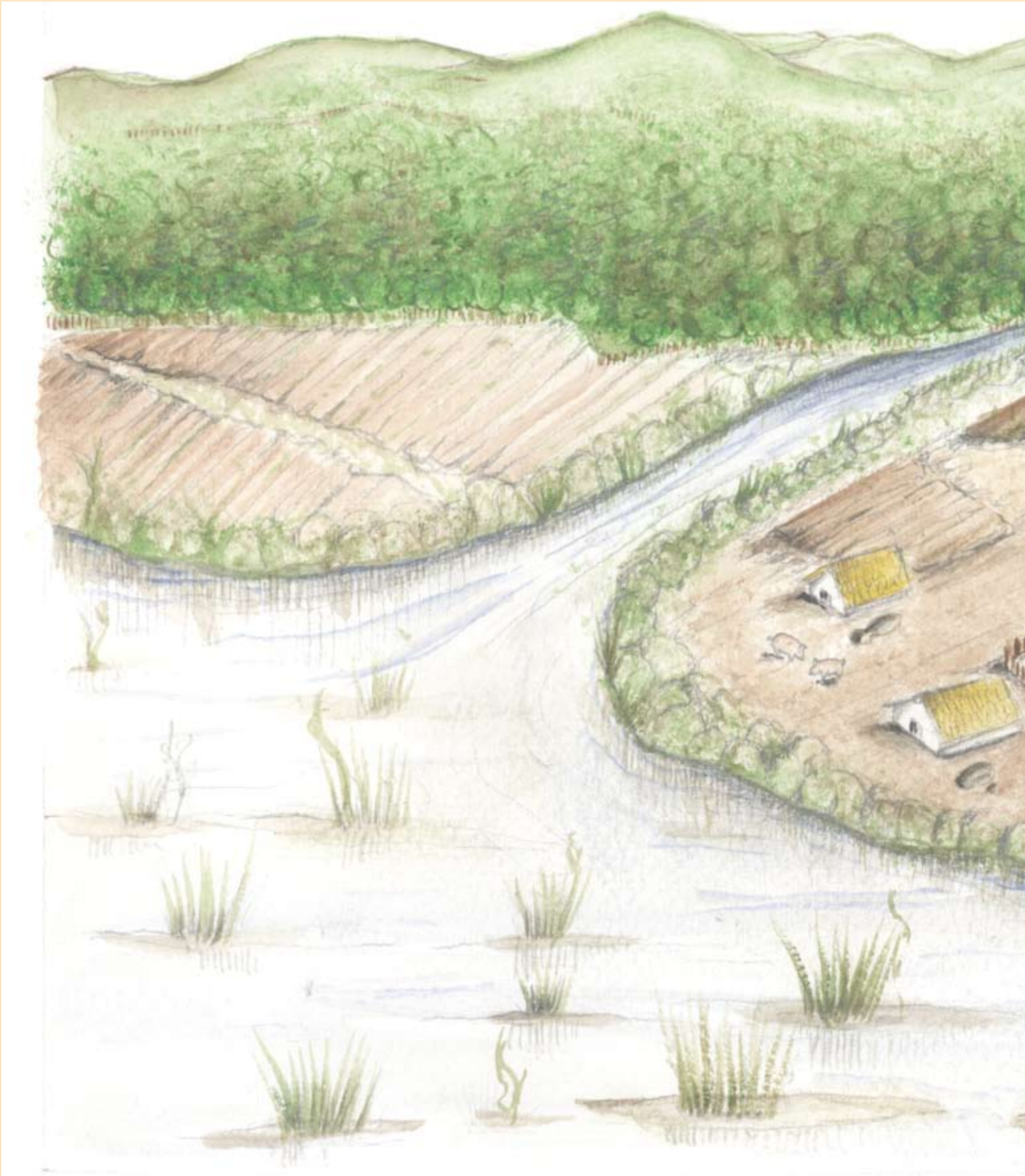


Figure 5 - Favella. Hypothetical reconstruction of the landscape and the settlement pattern (drawing by M. Agrostelli).



The Early Neolithic settlement pattern (see Chap. 5)

The chosen area for settlement is an elevated terrace, isolated to the North, East and South by significant gradients, and characterized by heavy but well drained soils. The palaeo-environmental analysis, carried out by remote sensing, has pointed out the proximity of the site to an old lagoon, that extended immediately to the east of the site, and to the coastline, which at the time was considerably more extended than in present times (see Chap. 2.1). A site standing at the crossing of different kinds of environments offered access to a wide range of resources (fig. 5), and a similar choice of location is shared by several other villages of the initial Neolithic in South Eastern Europe, as well as elsewhere in the Mediterranean area, identifying a true *ecotonic model* (MANFREDINI 1988-89).

The adoption of a set of alternative detecting techniques, besides the two extensively excavated areas A and B (see above and Chap. 3.2), allow us to formulate general assumptions about the infra-site organizing pattern. Remote sensing, surface collection, geophysical survey, and analysis of radial transects and the exposed S-N section, let us define accurately the limits of Early Neolithic village (fig. 5.1). They coincide with the northern part of the terrace of Favella, which was originally separated from the south one by a large and low valley, now no longer visible.

Within this area, whose extension is approx. 15,000 m², around 45 typical EN pit-complex structures, with relevant concentration of daub, have been detected by several techniques. The dispersion pattern of these structures seems fairly uniform and dense, as a nucleated and not scattered type, however it should also be interpreted on a diachronic dimension. The available data for the discernible areas of the site – the extensively excavated zones and the one detected through a probing grid – when correlated with the chronological span suggested by carbon-14 datings (around 200 years) hints to the simultaneous presence on the site of around 9-12 huts. This datum, according to the housing reconstruction proposed in Chap. 4 (see above), represent a potential population of around 35-70 people during the same average architectural phase.

This kind of preferential option towards middle-scale settlement patterns, like the *small village* type suggested at Favella from the data reported above, seems shared by most sites of Early Neolithic peninsular Italy together with the *farm* or *hamlet* types. The possibility that the first of these models may be regarded as typical of the most ancient phase of Italian Neolithiza-

tion seems supported by its application to the reality of several sites of the *Archaic Impressed Ware* phase, as Trasano-I (GUILAINE *et al.* 1990), Torre Sabea (GUILAINE, CREMONESE eds. 2003) and especially Rendina-I (CIPOLLONI SAMPÒ 1977-82), a site where a discrete decrease in size between phase I and II has been noted.

Moreover, this trend towards relative complexity of the settlement pattern, seems to typify the earliest Neolithic villages in the rest of Europe, too, identifying some kind of *colonial model*, which evidently was more appropriate to the *domestication* of virgin territories in the sense indicated by I. Hodder (1990).

The Late Neolithic settlement pattern (see Chap. 14)

Because of the bad state of preservation of relative stratigraphic contexts, data on the palaeo-environment in the Late Neolithic phase of occupation of the site are actually not available. Therefore, it is impossible to ascertain the degree of variability of the settlement and of the ecosystemic pattern compared to the Early Neolithic one.

Due to the less visible pottery record on the surface, as well as of structural remains on sections exposed by transects, the detection of the limits of the village during this phase is much more problematic than what concerns the Early Neolithic. However, the location of several typical pebble structures, recovered by trench trial trenches and transects, and the surface record for pottery distributed over the site, seem to demonstrate a significant extension of settlement at Favella in the Late Neolithic period (fig. 14.1). This larger area overlaps with the Early Neolithic one in the northern part of the terrace, while also extending in the southern part. To the East, the discovery of a pair of *Diana-Bellavista* style pots (see Chap. 15.1) could be connected to a funerary function of this peripheral area. The area thus defined covers a total area of approx. 5,000 m².

This extensive area was covered by subsequent settlements, covering a long span of time – ca. 4500-3800 BC – but marked only by scattered structural finds giving the impression of isolated residential/productive units (*isolated farm* or *hamlet* type), sharing large parcels of productive land and probably not contemporary between them. In any case, the documentation is not such as to enable more reliable assumptions on how the employment and exploitation of the site was performed in these phases.

6. How did they make and use tools? What contacts did they have? (see Chaps. 6-7 and 15-16)

Given the absence (or, in the case of obsidian, debatable presence) of prestige goods and raw materials in the Early Neolithic contexts, only the technological and typological implications of the two main classes of artefacts documented in the site – pottery and lithics – could suggest some level of relations or wide range exchange, perhaps ethno-cultural rather than strictly economic, with other contemporary communities of South-Eastern Italy.

Both these questions have been addressed in the chapters devoted to the pottery (Chap. 6) and stone (Chap. 7) industries, which, together with housing structures, are certainly the most extensive items to debate, even in terms of socio-cultural implications.

The Early Neolithic pottery (see Chap. 6)

The ceramic material from Early Neolithic contexts at Favella has been the object of a detailed technological and typological study, because of the extraordinary importance that this site – single-phase as regards the Early Neolithic Age – provides in defining the initial phase of the Neolithic in the South-East, during the development of the so called *Archaic Impressed Wares phase*.

Among the contexts considered there are 28 pit-complex structures, including 4 fully excavated (A, D, E, G) and 24 only partially dug (B) or intercepted by transects and small trial trenches (see Chap. 3.2).

From a technological point of view (*impasto* and surface treatment) there is a clear division into two classes: *coarse* and *fine*. The coarse class is characterized by a non-purified clay mixture, with abundant, inorganic, medium or large-sized inclusions; the surfaces are often smoothed and only exceptionally polished. The fine class is characterized by a more purified clay mixture, with inorganic, medium or small-sized inclusions; the surfaces are always smoothed and often well burnished.

The archaeometric analysis of this pottery (see above and Chap. 6.2) reveals the same chemical/physical composition and manufacturing treatment for both these classes. The more diverse aspect of technology is, in fact, only the surface treatment. Comparison of petrographic and mineralogical characteristics show affinities with the fluvial sands of the western edge of the Sila Massif, characterized by the association of plutonic and metamorphic rocks. The concentrations of major and trace chemical elements show the similarities between the samples of

these two pottery classes and the sandy-clay substratum layers, dug into were the typical on site quarry-pits, also used for extracting structural daub.

The vases of both classes were fired in open air ovens, in a poorly controlled and oxidizing atmosphere and at temperatures between 600 and 800°C.

Shapes of coarse wares include large and medium-sized vases, with an ovoid or truncated cone profile; rarer are hemispherical vases and neck vases (fig. 6). The handles are attached horizontally or vertically, with respect to the edge, and all belong to the neck vessels. The bottoms are mostly flat or concave, with supporting rim, and only a few are hemispheric. In the fine class mostly vases have a hemispherical or truncated cone profile; rarer are vases with an ovoid profile or with a neck. The bottoms are mostly hemispherical; there is no evidence for handles (fig. 7).

The formal repertoire is therefore quite simple and repetitive in both classes and they also seem clearly complementary from a functional point of view: possibly transport and storage jars for what concerns coarse class, cooking (?) and table or display vases for the fine one. This low formal variability, with a clear lacking of real types, implies the replication of a few reference models, suggesting that pottery production responded to traditional rules in the local community, where each family produced and used all the different containers. The repetition of the same forms in all contexts examined highlights also the lack of special function structures, such as storage, cult or other kind of buildings not simply destined to habitation.

On stylistic grounds, an analysis of decorating techniques seems particularly illuminating. The impressed technique is quite predominant (98%), while the incision one has a very marginal role (2%). The experimental approach has allowed defining seven main technical categories, detected on the basis of the instrument used: finger, fingernail, nail and finger opposed each other (pinching), shell with wavy edge (*Cardium*-like or similar), shell with smooth edge (*Pecten*-like or similar), tip and flake. In every case, we are dealing with natural and not purpose built instruments, as is the case for the later horizon of Impressed Wares. More elaborated patterns of decoration, as rocker, micro-rocker and sequence, are never attested at Favella, while they are documented in some contemporary sites (see below) and are then typically attested in the subsequent phases of the Early Neolithic.



Figure 6 - Coarse ware (drawing by Elena Natali and Marisa Agrostelli).



Figure 7 - Fine ware (drawing by Elena Natali and Marisa Agrostelli).

The distinctive element of the coarse class is decoration. Indeed, the percentage of material decorated varies between 93.2% and 95% in the four structures examined. In this class there is a clear preference in decorating with the fingers, especially pinching. Motifs carried out by flint flakes (22.4%) and wavy edges of shells (14.2%) are also well documented in this class. The decoration occupies only the outer surface of the vessel and the impressions are arranged mainly in a disordered pattern (71.1%), more rarely following alignment trends (19.5%). In every case, any form of syntactic organization of the decorating motifs is absent.

Decoration is much less represented in the fine class, with percentages varying in different structures between 16.6% and 35.8%. Particularly common in this class is the wavy pattern obtained with a shell edge (64.2-83.4%), while much rarer are the impres-

sions obtained by flakes (14%), tips (7.5%) and pinching (6.7%). In this class the decorative motifs are organized with greater accuracy than in the coarse one; almost always they are aligned among them and they leave an empty range close to the rim or the bottom of the vase.

At an infra-site level, the primary consideration concerns the great uniformity of ceramic material in every pit-complex considered. The quantitative and statistical analysis of several technological, decorative and formal parameters did not show stylistically autonomous groups between structures, which could be interpreted on a diachronic or spatial scale.

At an inter-site level, the comparison between the ceramic material of Favella and that from other sites in the same Archaic Impressed Wares phase highlights elements of both affinity and

divergence within a substantially uniform cultural horizon. In all these sites a pairing of at least two *impasto* classes seems constant: a coarse one, with large and medium-sized pots, and a fine one, with medium and small-sized vessels. The wide diffusion of the impressed technique, with only natural instruments, and the minor role of the incised technique, are other typical elements of this phase.

The detailed comparison of the decoration technology between these sites is made problematic by the lack of systematic studies of the pottery materials. However, it was possible to highlight some significant trend lines, which seem to characterize hypothetical regional groups or possible sub-phases, as well. The rocker pattern (realized with both wavy and smooth edge shells) was absent in four sites of the archaic stage: Prato Don Michele, Grotta del Guardiano, Rendina I and Favella. At Rendina, the rocker decoration appears only in the more advanced stages of the site (Rendina II-III). Similarly, in other stratified sites where the rocker is present from the oldest phase, it was possible to detect an increasing of this pattern in the later stages of settlement. This seems to suggest an increasing trend of this type of decoration with time, which could have some kind of chronological and not purely geographical value.

The decorative choices for the fine ware seem to represent specific options performed by the different key sites. The micro-rocker pattern seems predominant at Masseria Candelaro and Torre Sabea, as opposed to the sequence pattern at Trasano and the wavy edge shell (*Cardium*) decoration at Grotta del Guardiano and Favella. Another different case is represented by Rendina I, where the fine class is decorated only with plastic motifs (lined cords and bosses). This significant relationship of the decorative patterns in the fine class seems to have a possible spatial and non-chronological value, identifying areas and cultural groups, which are otherwise stylistically parallel.

Elements of chronological differentiation between these sites and those of subsequent Evolved Impressed Ware phase can be identified in some characters, that seem typically *archaic*. These are: the clear co-existence of two classes of pottery material, coarse and fine, with quantitative predominance of the first, the lack of shape diversification (only a few and repetitive shapes, never with any kind of angular profile), the thorough covering by decorating motifs, the broad frequency of digital and natural instrumental patterns, the absence or low impact of *rocker* and other decorating patterns utilizing chain repetition of the same motif (as *microrocker* and *sequence*).

The Late Neolithic pottery (see Chap. 15)

Ceramic materials typologically related to several Late and Final Neolithic occupation phases were collected in the uppermost layer, the arable one (US1), as in the underlying disturbed layer, highly altered from historic agrarian impact (US2) and in the higher levels of the pit-structures of the Early Neolithic (UU.SS. 3 and 4, upper cuts). These materials are, in some cases, associated with characteristic pebble structures (see above and Chap. 13), but they were always found in secondary deposit and in very bad state of preservation and fragmentation, due to serious disruptive events of surface stratigraphy in the site.

Their chronological attribution was therefore based solely on technological and stylistic comparison, recognizing three main phases of occupation:

Phase 1. Late Neolithic I (final stage of *Serra d'Alto* or *Capanna Gravela di Serra d'Alto* style; LO PORTO 1989; TINÉ S. 1978); based on the prevailing associations, this is the dating for the planar structures of scattered pebbles;

Phase 2. Late Neolithic II (*Diana-Bellavista* culture; BERNABÀ BREA L., CAVALIER 1960, 1980; QUAGLIATI 1909; GENIOLA 1987); attributable to the materials associated with possible burials, disrupted by recent agricultural work, in conjunction with a likely agricultural exploitation of the site;

Phase 3. Final Neolithic (*Diana D* or *Spatarella* culture; CAVALIER 1979; MARTINELLI 2001) linked to the peninsular aspects of Macchia a Mare (PALMA DI CESNOLA 1987) and Zinzulusa (CAVALIER 1960), with elements of comparison that also refer to the late *Ripoli* culture or *Paterno* aspect (CREMONESI 1984).

On a technological basis it has been possible to distinguish three classes: *coarse* (class A, table 15.1); *semi-depurated* (class B, table 15.2) and *depurated* (class C; table 15.3). Considering the morpho-typological layout, and assuming the relative stratigraphic position of the associated cobbled structures, pottery classes A and B could be related mainly to the Late Neolithic I, Late Neolithic II and Final Neolithic phases, whereas class C could be related to the Late Neolithic I phase.

Ceramic materials of *Serra d'Alto* (classic or final stages) and *Diana-Bellavista* cultures are well documented in Northern Calabria, in the stratigraphic sequences of the caves Madonna of Praia a Mare (CARDINI 1970; FUGAZZOLA *et al.* 2005), S. Angelo III (TINÉ S. 1962, 1964a) and Pavolella (CARANCINI, GUERZONI 1987) of Cassano Jonio, in the Romito shelter of Papisidero (TINÉ S. 1964b) and, in more recent times and with considerable evidence and diag-

nostic means, in the cave San Michele of Saracena (TINÉ V., NATALI 2005; 2007). Even the recent findings in the Oenotrian site of Broglio Trebisacce could refer to the late stage of *Serra d'Alto* culture (PERONI, VANZETTI 2005).

The continuity of settlement down to the final stages of the Neolithic age (as at Favella) and the Calcolithic (*Piano Conte* culture) has been stratigraphically documented, even in Northern Calabria, in the caves Madonna di Praia a Mare and San Michele of Saracena (CARDINI 1970; TINE V., NATALI 2003).

To summarize: the ceramic indicator testifies a recovery of Neolithic settlement at Favella in the transitional stage between *Serra d'Alto* and *Diana* cultures, as well as substantial continuity during the development of the true Late Neolithic cultures of *Diana-Bellavista* and *Spatarella* (Final Neolithic), at the end of the Neolithic age. The same model of continuity of the human occupancy during these phases had already been detected in the main cave sites of the same region.

The Early Neolithic stone assemblages (see Chap. 7)

The main difficulty regarding the typological classification of Early Neolithic chipped stone industries (see Chap. 7.1) is the weak amount of tools recovered and the complexity of distinguishing them from those of the Late Neolithic, due to the stratigraphic pattern of the fills found inside the pit-structures where they were found. Therefore, mainly the materials coming from the lower levels of structure A, in excavation area A, and from the similar levels of structures E and G (these latter two grouped together to achieve a quantitatively comparable amount of tools), in excavation area B, have been considered.

The material used is mainly flint (above 90% of artefacts), mostly translucent (occasionally almost glassy in appearance) and with a fine texture, probably derived from nodules. There are also artefacts made of chalcedony (0.29%), jasper (1.45%), quartz (1.45%) and obsidian (1.54%).

Amongst the *burins*, the only type certainly attested is that on fracture, with a low index (2.8-5.4%). The *end-scrapers* are classifiable as long frontal type (one of them has a lateral retouch), with low index (0-5.4%). The *truncations* are represented by elements showing both oblique and normal, deep retouch (in a case with a sinuous pattern), with index between 5.4 and 8.3%. Some normal truncations with concave retouch, coming from higher levels of filling in structure A, could also refer to Early Neolithic.

The *borers* reach a percentage that vary between 54.1 and 11.1%. The spatial distribution of these artefacts, which are much more represented in structure A than in E/G, seems to reflect a clear distinction between two different areas of the settlement. The *backed points* are almost completely absent in the various complexes while the *backed blades* are represented only by a single specimen in each of the two key complexes; they are often characterized by sickle gloss on the unretouched margin and their index ranges from 2.7 to 2.8%.

The *geometrics* most widely documented are the *isosceles trapeziums* (7 specimens), with an index varying between 8.1 and 11.1%. It is possible to suggest that most of them were obtained using the *microburin technique*. The *retouched blades* (15 pieces) have an index which varies between 8.1% and 33.3%. Most specimens come from structure A, while those showing sickle gloss come exclusively from structures E/G. The *flakes with simple retouch* are represented by a single item, which has been found in structure E. The *flakes with abrupt retouch* are absent in complex A, while there are three specimens in complexes E/G, with an index of 8.3%.

Denticulates, mainly represented by notched specimens, show an index of 11.1% in both of the key complexes. The *pièces écaillées* belong to type E1 of Crémillieux and Livache's (1976) typological list, with index equal to 5.6%. The *sickle blades* are represented by 10 specimens (4 in A, 6 in E/G), with percentages varying between 10.5 and 17.6%. They are in two cases derived from instruments (a burin on fracture and a borer); the sickle gloss is mainly parallel to the sides, and in two cases it is present on both sides of the tool.

Among sites of the Archaic Impressed Ware, the chipped stone assemblage from Favella shows clear similarities with that one from Torre Sabea (BARBAZA, BRIOIS 2003). These two complexes share some important features, like a quite high blade index (33% at Torre Sabea, among 32% and 34.4% at Favella), a strong microlithism, as well as the probable use of the indirect percussion chipping technique. In both cases, the geometrics are well represented, along with retouched blades and borers; nevertheless, it is worth noting that the trapeziums from Torre Sabea are wider than those from Favella and show a *tang-like* short side.

The strong presence of borers, as well as the scarcity of burins and end-scrapers, relates the assemblage from Favella to that one from Coppa Nevigata (RONCHITELLI 1987), but the blade index is there decidedly lower, while the geometrics are absent. Trapeziums very similar to those from Favella appear in the archaic stage

of Pulo di Molfetta (MARTINELLI 2002a), together with borers, but the laminar index is here very low and the percentage of burins and end-scrapers is higher.

More problematic is the comparison with other sites of the same early stage of the Impressed Ware Culture, like Masseria Candelaro-phase I (CONATI BARBARO *et al.* 2004), Trasano-phase I (GIAMPIETRI 1996; RADI 2002) and Rendina-Phase I (RONCHITELLI SARTI 1977-82). The assemblages from these sites are quantitative-ly very poor and mainly obtained from flakes. Trapezes are missing (Candelaro, Masseria and Rendina) or very few (Trasano-I), while end-scrapers predominate on denticulates.

Within the three major groups of stone industries from the Impressed Ware Phase, as proposed by G. Radi and A.M. Ronchitelli (2002), the complex of Favella could be placed among the so called *Blade Industries of central-southern Adriatic and Ionian* group, since it shows most of the features of the group. The most important difference between these assemblages and the one from Favella is represented by the lack, in this latter site, of the circular scrapers of the so-called *Epiromanellian tradition*, which, on the contrary, are present in the two oldest Apulian industries belonging to the same group, i.e. Pulo di Molfetta (MARTINELLI 2002a) and Torre Sabea (BARBAZA, BRIOIS 2003). As long as the similarities between this hypothetical group of Neolithic blade complexes and the Castelnovian assemblages are concerned (RADI, RONCHITELLI 2002, p. 261), it should be noted that the only well known complex belonging to the Castelnovian Mesolithic is that one from Latronico III South Cave (CREMONESI 1978; TOZZI 1996). The assemblage from this latter site and that one from Favella share some features, like the very high blade index and the presence of trapeziums. Nevertheless, one can also note some important differences, like – at Favella – the presence of a high percentage of specialized tools (i.e. the borers) and the absence of the most typical Castelnovian geometrics (i.e. the scalene and rectangular trapeziums), which are instead well documented at Latronico Cave. To sum up, the evidence from chipped stone assemblage at Favella could seem oriented to make more likely the hypothesis that these industries were part of the imported Neolithic package.

The microwear analysis of the retouched stone tools and unretouched blades (see Chap. 7.2) has shown that they were mostly used for cutting soft materials (16.4%), presumably plants, although not for properly harvesting activities (except for those identified by gloss as sickle elements), but more generally for cutting branches, grass and straw. Therefore, these stone implements seem to have had a role in constructing the wooden structures

well documented in the site by daub fragments with imprints (see Chap. 4.1). An alternative primary use (18%) was for cutting materials of medium hardness, probably leather. The tools used for cutting hard material, such as bone or horn (14.7%), are identified by the heavily worn and no longer functional cutting edge.

A few obsidian flakes (9), coming from Lipari (see Chap. 7.3), were found in the deepest, apparently undisturbed fill levels from the A, E and G pit-structures. This could suggest a possible diffusion and use of obsidian already in the earliest Neolithic phase of South-Eastern Italy. They are only very small flakes (<1 cm), whose presence in these layers could be considered as compatible with an infiltrating phenomenon, due to roots and coming from upper LN layers, typically characterized by this kind of raw material. Comparing this weak evidence from Favella with the problematic presence of the same material in other key sites of the Archaic Impressed Wares phase, as Pulo di Molfetta and Torre Sabea, as well as its absence in other sites, such as Rendina I and Trasano I, the question about obsidian spreading in initial Early Neolithic seems destined to remain yet unsolved. It seems important to remember that we actually lack any evidence conceiving the Neolithic spreading along southern Tyrrhenian and Aeolian shores before the evolved phase of Impressed Ware (Stentinello Culture).

Similarly, the typological definition of polished stone industries (see Chap. 7.4) appears complicated by the stratigraphic pattern of the fills in the pit structures where they were found, which makes it difficult to distinguish materials relevant to both phases of frequentation of the site. The typologically identifiable findings include querns, with a plano-convex saddle and oval or sub-rectangular shape, *grinders*, whether spherical or oval, with one or two usable faces (an item shows traces of red colour on the surface), *axes*, sub-trapezoidal or triangular, with curved edge and a straight or rounded heel, *hatchets*, with a pointed or straight heel and a straight edge, and *chisels*, with a oval or biconvex section. There are also two not clearly definable artefacts, but that may be interpreted as *sleekers* and *whetstones*.

Among the sites of the early phase of Impressed Wares, the most obvious comparison regarding the querns is with Torre Sabea (Grifoni Cremonesi in GUILAINE, CREMONESI eds. 2003) – where a grinder with traces of red colour is also documented as in Favella – and with Prato Don Michele (CURCI 2004).

The production material is exclusively local (sandstone, granules, quartzite, and kinzigitic gneiss), which seems to exclude a

broad exchange of exotic materials in the initial Early Neolithic, as proposed for Torre Sabea on the basis of a single fragment of greenstone axe (Grifoni Cremonesi in GUILAINE, CREMONESI eds. 2003). The probable operational chain – not documented by direct residues on the site – suggests rough-hewing of pebbles by chipping, followed by bush-hammering and sanding for shaping, and, possibly, hammering (axes and hatchets only).

The Late Neolithic stone assemblages (see Chap. 16)

The blade index of the chipped stone assemblages relating to Late Neolithic contexts shows the same value of the Early Neolithic one (29.6%). However, the size of unretouched artefacts is comprised in a lower range, as is the blade index of the retouched pieces (57.1%). Among typical tools from this phase, a microlithic *pièce ecaillée* and a so-called *twin burin* (i.e., a burin with a lateral *pan* on both sides) can be compared to similar specimens from Cala Colombo (RONCHITELLI, SARTI 1984), whereas a blade with alternating retouch draws a sample from Grotta del Fico (PALMA DI CESNOLA, MINELLONO 1961) and a quite long borer/backed point recalls the so-called *pugnaletti a mano* (hand daggers), documented in the *Ripoli Culture* levels at Piccioni Cave (Cremonesi 1976) and in the *Serra d'Alto* levels at Latronico III (CREMONESI 1978).

The very high percentage of obsidian in the lithic assemblage of Late Neolithic Favella (UU.SS. 2-3) recalls the amount documented in the *Stentinello Culture* sites of central and southern Calabria, like Acconia (AMMERMAN 1985) or Capo Alfiere (MORTER 2002), as well as in the Aeolian sites of *Diana culture* (BERNABÒ BREA, CAVALIER 1960; 1980).

The Early Neolithic bone assemblages (see Chap. 10.4)

The archaeozoological approach to these kind of industries has allowed a detailed study of the origin and treatment of the materials adopted, in conjunction with the faunal record from the site (Chap. 10.1). These tools have been shaped mostly by adapting appendicular elements as well as ribs of middle-sized domestic animals (mainly sheep and goats) and, to a lesser extent, deer antlers and teeth. Among the techniques identified there are: longitudinal cutting and abrasion for the supports and sanding, scraping and boring for the instrument proper. However, clear remains of work in progress for the supports, as well as of prototypes or workmanship wastes, have never been found.

From a typological point of view it is possible to recognize the following: *awls*, made predominantly on longitudinally cracked

or abraded media, *tips* (a single, double item, realized on diaphysis, with an elliptical cross section), *biseaux*, made on longitudinally cracked bones, and *rectangular plates*. The clear dominance of pointed elements falls under typical peninsular Early Neolithic bone assemblage and it also characterizes other sites of the same earliest phase of Impressed Ware, as Torre Sabea (RADI 2003), Rendina I (CIPOLLONI SAMPÒ 1977-82) and Trasano I (GUILAINE, CREMONESI 1987).

In this group there are also a fragment of a fox ulna diaphysis with incised decoration, possibly on a zig-zag wave, and a pierced element, that could be better interpreted as a fishing hook, of a type (plate with hole and longitudinal grooving) already documented in Neolithic Southern Italy, at Scamuso (COPPOLA 1997) and in Sicily, at Grotta dell'Uzzo (TAGLIACCOZZO 1993).

7. What did they eat? (see Chap. 10-11)

Faunal remains (see Chap. 10.1-3)

The archaeozoological sample (almost 5,000 items, of which 1500 are recognizable) is characterized by high fragmentation of the bones and teeth and, in several cases, even by a clear alteration of surfaces. The latter is due to various different events of taphonomic and diagenetic type, concerning these findings in the pre- and post-depositional stages. Indeed, burned and gnawing remains were found (4.8%) which, together with the high fragmentation and the differential preservation of the faunal remains in general terms, seem to indicate the secondary nature of the source sediments (see also Chap. 3-4).

Overall, the domestic fauna largely prevails over the wild one (97% vs. 2.9%), revealing a well characterized herding economy, only occasionally accompanied by hunting of ungulates: wild boar, auroch, deer and roe deer. Among the small carnivores a few elements are referable to dogs, foxes and wild cats. Concerning birds, the determined remains refer only to a single large size crow.

Among the domestic animals, sheep and goats are largely prevalent (68.5% NISP; 55.4% MNI) over cows (NISP 21%; 21.5% MNI) and pigs (NISP 10.4%, 23.1% MNI). Determination of the age of the remains (killing pattern) reveals the predominant slaughter of young or sub-adult individuals among pigs – with the clear purpose of optimizing the exploitation of meat – while almost all ranges of age are documented among cattle, sheep and goats – used mainly for their meat but also for milk production.

It seems significant that, as is the contemporary site of Torre Sabea (VIGNE 2003), the sheep population is larger than the average in Early Neolithic central and southern Italy, falling instead in the range belonging to the transitional phase between the Pre-pottery Neolithic and the Early Neolithic in the Near East.

Overall, the faunal record at Favella is comparable with the one documented in other sites of south-eastern Early Neolithic, especially with Torre Sabea (VIGNE 2003) and Ripa Tetta (WILKENS 1988). There, as at Favella, pigs are under-represented and the other *taxa* are found in similar proportions, according to a model of farming based mainly on sheep herding, but with an important role of the cattle and a more limited use of pigs, which seems to characterize the earliest Neolithic of Southern Italy. As suggested also by the high variability of killing pattern, this seems to be an appropriate model for the livelihood strategy: not overtly specialized and intensive, but oriented to diversify energy resources, adjusting the diet to daily availability, therefore following some kind of *bad year economy*.

In the sample from Favella there is also an interesting and hitherto unique horn core goat bone, intentionally cut to separate it from the skull (see Chap. 10.2). This specimen has dimensions comparable to those of males of wild species (*Capra aegagrus*), but with a morphology that is similar to that of large adult males of the Levant, Anatolia and Cyprus, in the stages of transition from wild to domestic species (ZEUNER 1955). It might be a hint of the introduction in Italy of transitional forms of goat or a kind of trophy that accompanied the group of settlers passing through generations of Neolithic migrants.

Among the fish (see Chap. 10.3), freshwater species are completely absent and sea species, such as groupers, dominate, flanked by other partially euryhaline species (as mullets, gurnads and meagres). Referring to specimens of medium to large size, these elements are the result of selective fishing techniques, which were operated with harpoons or large hooks (see above and Chap. 10.4) on sandy and not very deep bottoms, in a biotope of coastal and lagoon waters, as that which characterized this site in ancient times (see Chap. 2).

Plants (see Chap. 11)

The anthracological and carpological remains are quantitatively limited and largely degraded, due to same taphonomic processes discussed above, which affected the formation basin of the deposit (pit structures A/E).

However, the carbon residues indicate the presence of holm and of olive/oleaster (evergreen sclerophyllous maquis) and hornbeam (mixed oak forest), while the seed residues document the cultivation of cereals (*Hordeum* sp., *Hordeum* cf. *Vulgare*) and Triticum (*Triticum* sp., *Triticum* cf. *dicoccum*), with also sporadic indications of grass, of type *Lolium temulentum* / *remotum* (fig. 1, 2-3), and legumes, type *Lens*.

A major documentary value, compared to the disappointing outcome of the flotation – which has been systematically developed for certain contexts, as structure D – could derive from the plants imprints on daub fragments (see Chap. 4), but this study has not yet been completed. Nevertheless, the available data seem to define a model of primitive dry agriculture, based on a few *taxa* of resistant cereals (barley and emmer), suitably integrated with equally strong pulses (lentils).

8. What did they think? (see Chap. 8-9)

We have already considered some possible answers to this question on the basis of the housing and settlement features documented in the site. Let us now focus on the evidence coming from archaeological materials typically related to thinking and extra-functional dimension, i.e. figurines and ornaments.

Figurines (see Chap. 8)

Five fragments of clay female figurines (*Favella* 1-5; figs. 8.1-4) were found in several pit-structures (A, G, Tn2/5). However, their discrete typological variability could be connected to a substantially uniform iconography: a pylon structure of the torso, with arms welded to the body (preserved only in *Favella* 3) and limited physiognomic details, the whereas much more importance is given to the central part of figure, accurately moulded in a more naturalistic way and where the primary sexual features – always clearly emphasized – reveal the central symbolic focus.

Within the same Archaic Impressed Ware phase a clear comparison for fragment *Favella* 1 is represented by a statuette found in the site of Rendina (CIPOLLONI SAMPÒ 1977-82, fig. 39), especially with regard to the seated – or crouched – posture and the significant detail of the large dotted pubis.

The more complete fragment *Favella* 3 shows a general affinity with many types of female figurines known in the Italian Neolithic – especially in some Square Mouthed Vessels contexts of Liguria and the Po Valley (FUGAZZOLA, TINÉ V. 2002) and in the well known

Middle Neolithic figurines from Passo di Corvo (TINÉ S. 1983) – but a closer comparison can be established with the MN statuette (or jar handle) from the nearby cave Pavolella of Cassano Jonio (CARANCINI, GUERZONI 1987). The remarkable structural and stylistic similarities between these two examples – extended to the significant functional detail of a kind of veil or crown placed on the head of both, which could indicate a particular status of the women represented – highlights a long-term iconography in the Neolithic of the Sybaris region.

Extending the comparison to the European and Mediterranean Neolithic, the hypothetical squatting or crouched posture of *Favella 1* and the peculiar genital emphasis could find a direct comparison with specimens from a wide area, which extends from the Levant, where it is possible to identify the most likely prototypes (as at Cayonou; MELLAART 1976, 53, fig. 20), to the Aegean Sea (as at Franchti FC12; TALALAY 1983, fig. 80) and, above all, to the Balkans (*Vinca culture*; GIMBUTAS 1982, fig. 2). Female statuettes with standing representation and emphasis on pregnant belly and pubic triangle, like *Favella 2* and *4*, seem to characterize, instead, many sites of Early Neolithic Thessaly, such as Melissochori, Sesklo, Zappeio or Prodromos (*Déeses*; nn° 22, 25, 30, 31).

It seems interesting to point out that in these and other Early Neolithic figurines from Thessaly the figurine construction is articulated in such a way as to emphasize the aspects of femininity through a naturalistic rendering of the central part (sex, hips and buttocks are plastically moulded with a special relief), while heads and stretched necks seem to evoke erected male genitalia, so that the whole structure could be read as a representation of a penis with male testicles assimilated to female buttocks. This figurative option of Early Neolithic Thessaly – shared in the Balkans by the parallel group of Starcevo-Korös (see statuette from Endrod 39 in MAKKAY 1999) – has allowed some authors (KOKKINIDOU, NIKOLAIDOU 1997; WHITTLE 1998) to draw interesting considerations about a possible, deliberate, sexual ambiguity, as a typical feature of the most ancient Neolithic of Eastern Europe and arguably replicated here by the *Favella 2* figurine.

All statuettes at Favella were found in the fills of pit-structures associated with other anthropogenic implements, including daub fragments, which represent the only (secondary) evidence of dwelling structures on the site. The comparison with *Vinca* sites in former Yugoslavia, as Opovo and Selevac (TRINGHAM *et al.* 1992; TRINGHAM, KRSTIC eds. 1990), is particularly illuminating for this class of material, as already debated above regarding the structural remains. Indeed, at Opovo each quarry/refuse pit con-

tains a fragment of statuette, with a systematic repetition that has been considered as related to specific ritual performances linked to house firing and de-functionalizing (see above).

Following this interpretation, the typical fragmented condition of statuettes could not be random, but determined by the aim to accompany the fate of housing structures, with a deliberate process of refusing and renewal that is well documented in the Balkans – as early as in the Early Neolithic culture of Korös-Endrod – by contexts where the statuettes are built in pieces, specifically to be dismembered (MAKKAY 1999) and then in various other settings according to what appears to be a specific process of fragmentation and burial of worship objects (CHAPMAN 2000).

Personal ornaments (see Chap. 9)

In the filling levels of the pit-structures A, D and G some stone and clay personal ornaments were found (fig. 9.3-6). Along these objects, some stone remains connected with disk bead manufacturing were discovered; among them there are some rough outs and a rounding blank – proving a local manufacture – as well as two small finished disk beads and a large fragmented discoidal bead. Their perforation profile has different shapes, varying from cylindrical (unipolar drilling) to hourglass (bipolar drilling). The raw materials used for the two samples submitted for analysis (see Chap. 9.2) are radiolarite and serpentinite.

The stone beads are not so frequent in the *parures* of Early Neolithic peninsular groups. In the early period of the Impressed Ware Phase they are only documented at Coppa Navigata (RONCHITELLI 1987a) and in the later stages at Marcianese (GENIOLA 1982). The clay beads have different shapes – ovoid, cylindrical, barrelled, pyriform or globular – and are made by fine or coarse impasto. Due to the significant amount of items and their typological variety, this class of materials from Favella are also important evidence, which is comparable only with that from sites of the more advanced stages of South-Eastern Neolithic, e.g. Scamuso (levels I and II, belonging to the initial and advanced Middle Neolithic).

It seems also significant that all the findings at Favella are elaborate type ornaments – documenting the production and use of stone and clay beads already in the earliest stage of Neolithization – whereas ornaments in animal hard materials or shell were not found. The latter are instead typical of other several Early Neolithic peninsular sites, where they could be linked to a

possible former Mesolithic tradition. Indeed, in the case of Favella, there seems to be a cultural – perhaps almost ideological – option linked to alien influences that differs markedly from those of the local tradition.

9. In a few words ... who were they?

Favella in the Early Neolithic Age

The image offered by the different elements derived from excavations and surveys at Favella is that of a group of Neolithic settlers with a clear alien origin. Their material culture, characterized by typical *Archaic Impressed Wares*, allows us to link this people to a non-remote oriental provenance: maybe from the opposite coasts of north-western Greece and South Western Albania, where the site of Sidari (level C) on the Island of Corfu still represents the most direct precedent (see various contributions in METALLINO ed. 2007) – around 6200 BC – together with Konispol Cave (level IIIA) in the Sarandë District (KORKUTI 1995, 2007; KORKUTI, PETRUSO 1993; KRISTO 1999-2000).

Considering all the data available on south-eastern Neolithization, this involving Favella could be viewed as a second wave of expansion, after the original one from the eastern shores, which probably involved initially the Tremiti Islands (sites of Prato Don Michele at San Domino) and the Low Adriatic and Ionian coasts of Apulia (sites of Pulo di Molfetta and Torre Sabea). Nevertheless, as also illustrated by carbon-14 dating, archaeological evidence seems to point to an almost immediate diffusion of the Neolithic straight into the internal territories (as indicated by Rendina, in the Ofanto Valley, and Trasano, in the Bradano Valley) and it is not possible to distinguish sub-phases in this process. The whole South-East, i.e. the area comprised between the Gargano Massif and the Sybaris Plain and extending to the sub-Apennine hinterland and main interior valleys, was invested – between 6100 and 5800 BC – by this Neolithization wave, which essentially links the several Archaic Impressed Ware sites in the current territories of Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria.

As in every other cases investigated so far, these earliest processes of Neolithic diffusion in Southern Italy seems to happen *in vacuum*, without any apparent contact with possible Mesolithic people, since in none of these sites has it been possible to document some form of settlement continuity between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic. In those contexts where a Final Epygravettian phase is witnessed (e.g. at Madonna Cave of Praia a Mare) or a Castelnovian one (e.g. at Latronico III Cave and – less sure-

ly – at Terragne), this early stage of Impressed Ware is never attested and the first Neolithic evidence belong to the initial phases of Middle Neolithic Age (*Red Stripes Wares* phase at Praia and Latronico) or to the advanced stages of Imprinted Wares (at Terragne). The cultural elements of possible Mesolithic tradition in the true archaic contexts are reduced to a few clues in the repertoire of lithic assemblage – such as, at Favella, the use of microburin technique for producing trapeziums or the strong presence of beaks-drills – which a more careful analysis reveals as likely components of the imported Neolithic package.

The salient features of this complex of cultural traits could be identified in the mixing of great technical legacies, particularly regarding ceramics, where it is possible to recognize two technologically well-distinct classes: the *coarse* one, with several kinds of impressed, non-syntactic, decorations and the *fine* one – more properly diagnostic of this cultural horizon – polished and monochrome or zone decorated with *cardial* motifs. This latter class could also suggest some inter-group differences at a regional level, assuming the particular decorative features that seem to characterize the several key sites and corresponding areas of the South-East as a possible ethno-cultural marking value. Equally significant seems the possibility to connect this pottery class with the typical monochrome burnished wares which represent in Greece the first stage of local Neolithization.

Even for what concerns other techno-cultural and economic aspects the evidence from Favella appears oriented to defining a community with a high level of socio-cultural organization, with clear links with the areas of oldest Neolithization in the Eastern Mediterranean. Among this evidence we can list:

- the clay female figurines, with characteristic emphasis on primary sexual features, which find a direct comparison with those from the contemporary site of Rendina, but also with those from several site of Early Neolithic Thessaly and the Levant;
- the ornaments, which are characterized by a high degree of development and the exclusive use of non-traditional materials, such as clay and stone;
- the wide use of polished stone for millstones, grinders, axes and hatchets.

The means of subsistence are based almost exclusively on herding – mainly goats and sheep but also cattle and pigs – only occasionally supplemented by hunting and perhaps more systematically by fishing, and on agriculture, as witnessed by seeds of strong cereal and leguminous species, such as barley, Einkorn and lentils.

The substantial self-sufficiency – and maybe isolation – of this group seems clearly suggested by the almost exclusive use of local materials for industrial productions, with the only possible – but doubtful – exception conceiving the obsidian from Lipari, whose real presence in this early stage of Southern Neolithic should not make of a Favella a clear example because of its weak amount and possible infiltration from the later phases. In the context of the Neolithic Sybaris Plain, Favella remains at the moment isolated, emphasizing an impression of spatial isolation, which is perhaps only a consequence of the state of research state together with the dramatic agrarian impact in modern ages.

The settlement option is clearly aimed toward a topographically well defined place, thanks to the presence, in ancient times, of natural boundaries as rivers and a lagoon, which are currently no longer perceptible but that the palaeo-environmental investigation has helped to locate. These natural elements of isolation may have made unnecessary the construction of additional outside works, such as walls, ditches and fences, which are instead well documented elsewhere in this phase (a ditch at Rendina I, a wall stone at Pulo, a timber fence at Torre Sabea).

From an environmental point of view the site occupied a typical ecotonic position at the confluence of diverse environments, but predominantly fluvial, given its proximity to the main water system of the Crati river and to the coastline, through an intervening lagoon, as highlighted by geo-archaeological surveys and remote sensing. The infra-site model of settlement, reconstructed from data recovered by a digging and prospecting approach, is that of a small village, extending over 15,000 sqm, consisting of no more than a dozen huts and inhabited by a few dozens people. This is a fairly complex organization which goes beyond the typical one in other geographic contexts, represented by farms and hamlets, but which is significantly shared by most sites of the first Neolithization phase in the South-East, thus apparently representing the best adaptive response to colonial settlement in virgin territories.

The huts were built with a timber frame, plastered with a mixture of earth, water and straw, obtained from the characteristic quarry-pits, which represent the only surviving evidence of the structural record, together with a considerable amount of daub fragments with traces of wooden splits. The quarry-pits are the only formative basins of archaeological stratigraphy surviving dramatic agrarian impact that devastated the Neolithic palaeo-surfaces. Judging by the pattern of fills, these structures seem typical of secondary refuse by anthropogenic materials. Howev-

er, the particular pattern of stratigraphic isolation of the daub fragments and the evidence for the taphonomic journey of different classes of artefacts and ecofacts in the pits, may be linked to practices of voluntary de-functionalizing of the huts through fire, according to a model that had wide diffusion in the Neolithic of south-eastern Europe. Again, this seems an important signal of the complexity level of the social group settling Neolithic Favella, which seems to have imported also a specific mental *habitus* together with the economic basis and the production pattern.

Favella in the Late Neolithic Age

Much more evanescent is the archaeological evidence related to the site re-settlement by Late and Final Neolithic groups, during the period spanning from the most advanced developments of the *Serra d'Alto culture* and the ones of *Diana-Bellavista* and *Spatarella*, i.e., in absolute chronological terms, the second half of the fifth and first centuries of the fourth millennium BC, with a *hiatus* of nearly 1500 years from the first settlement.

For these phases only sporadic structural elements are available, represented by small areas of cobblestones and scattered indications of funerary structures, together with associated ceramic materials, but not in a clear stratigraphic relation. The preservation state of these LM and FN contexts is not such as to permit specific socio-economic inferences on related groups or to sketch their internal organizational dynamics. The considerable size of the area interested by these findings (about 5,000 m²) and the apparent isolation of the structural evidence suggest a more likely long-term schedule of individual episodes of attendance for agricultural purposes, as isolated farms or hamlets.

Completely different from the earlier one is the cultural heritage of the late Neolithic inhabitants of the Favella terrace, characterized by depurated, not locally produced, pottery, followed by monochrome and, later, also by scratched ware. However, only a typological assessment is possible, because of the lack of a clearly preserved stratigraphy. To these phases may be related some specific types of stone tools, which, as the gemini-burin and the back-point drill, were better documented in other contexts of advanced Neolithic in Southern Italy. The large amount of obsidian found in the upper layers of the site is certainly linked to the Late Neolithic occupation phase, replicating similar models of wide dissemination of this volcanic material in MN e LN sites of the whole region, revealing consolidated networks of wide range and high-intensity exchange, a phenomenon of which Calabrian Neolithic groups appear to represent the main promoters.