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PROTOHISTORICAL NECROPOLIS OF PARRANA SAN MARTINO (COLLESALVETTI, LIVORNO). PRELIMINARY NOTE

Abstract - In this paper, the preliminary results of the study of the incineration protohistorical necropolis found near Parrana San Martino (Collesalveti, Livorno) are presented. The necropolis has been discovered by one of the authors (F. Sammartino). The necropolis is located on a plateau along a firebreak track. The integrity of the archaeological remains was compromised by the passage of the vehicles used for the building of the firebreak track. During the first excavation campaign (July, 2010), the extension of the site was checked; the site includes about one hundred burials; only the burials most at risk have been removed. Up to date, the collected funerary urns show bi-conical shape, they bear one loop and a covering bowl provided with a single loop. Each funerary urn is set within a small cavity made in the field and then filled by sediment. The study of the materials is in its preliminary phase and it is not possible to provide a precise chronological assessment of the context. However, after a very preliminary analysis of the collected specimens, the age of the necropolis should be constrained between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age (end of II^o - beginning of I^o millennium BC).

Key words - Parrana San Martino, Necropolis, Protohistorical Age.

Riassunto - *La necropoli protostorica di Parrana San Martino (Collesalveti, Livorno). Nota preliminare* - Vengono presentati i dati preliminari relativi alla Necropoli protostorica ad incinerazione scoperta da uno degli Autori (F. Sammartino) nei pressi di Parrana San Martino (Collesalveti, Livorno). La necropoli è situata su un pianoro posto lungo una pista tagliafuoco. L'integrità dei resti è stata compromessa dal passaggio dei mezzi meccanici impiegati per la realizzazione della barriera antincendio. Nella prima campagna di scavo (luglio 2010) è stata verificata l'estensione del sito, che contiene un centinaio di sepolture, e sono state asportate solo quelle più a rischio. I cinerari fino ad ora recuperati presentano forma biconica, generalmente monoansata, con ciotola di copertura anch'essa munita di una sola ansa. Ogni cinerario risulta deposto all'interno di una piccola cavità praticata nel terreno e poi ricolmata di terra. Lo studio dei materiali è in fase preliminare e non è possibile fornire una datazione precisa del contesto anche se, una prima analisi dei reperti sembra collocare la necropoli tra la fine dell'Età del Bronzo e l'inizio dell'età del Ferro (fine del II^o - inizio I^o millennio a.C.).

Parole chiave - Parrana San Martino, Necropoli, Età protostorica.

The necropolis is located within the Monti Livornesi Park near Parrana San Martino (Collesalveti, Livorno). More precisely, the site is located on a plateau along a firebreak track developed from Poggio i Pari and Poggio della Quercia, at the altitude of 345 m a.s.l.

Up to date, a single field work campaign was performed (July, 2010); such a campaign was carried out thanks to a cooperation between the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana and the Museo di Storia Naturale del Mediterraneo di Livorno. The necropolis was discovered during an explorative analysis of the field

performed by Mr. Franco Sammartino who is member of the Gruppo Archeologico Paleontologico Livornese. The deforestation works and the mechanical vehicles used for the building of the firebreak track compromised the integrity of the necropolis; the upper portions of the funerary urns were broken from the edge to the median part in some specimens.

LOCALITY INFORMATION

The area where the necropolis is located has an extension of 550 m² (Fig. 1). The area was subdivided into six sectors. The explorative excavation of three of these six sectors allowed to find 97 funerary urns.

The burials open on a layer formed by silty matrix with an ochraceous-yellowish clayey component.

Each funerary urn is set within a small cavity made in the field. The determination of the borders of these burials is problematic as the filling sediment is hard to distinguish from that of the layer where the burials are included.

It is supposed that the sediment removed by the preparation of the cavity for the deposition of the funerary urn was then used again to fill the cavity itself; therefore, the cavity borders can hardly be found. At the moment, the complete deposition pit of a single funerary urn has been individuated.



Fig. 1 - Excavation area.

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The burials realized in the first sector are badly preserved; such a condition is made even worse by the erosion of the field that is obliquely oriented toward the adjacent dirt road; the burials realized in the fourth sector show a better preservation because they are located close to an artificial lake.

The strong compression realized by the mechanical vehicles fragmented the funerary urns whose original shape is, however, preserved because the sediment put within them was able to maintain the fragments together.

In general, the shapes that could be reconstructed are bi-conical; the funerary urns bear one loop and in some specimens fragments of the covering cup is still preserved; such a cup is also provided with a single loop.

The sediment filling the funerary urns is characterized by a dark-yellow silty matrix that covers a mass of calcinated bones adherent to the urn floor. Bone sizes vary from a few mm to approximately 5-6 cm.

It was possible to determinate the borders of only one deposition pit. It is an oval pit filled by a sediment that is similar to that of the layer where the pit was excavated. Within the pit, apart from the funerary urn, also a single-loop bowl, a quartzite block, and a subtle limestone slab are laid down. The limestone slab has an oval shape and is vertically planted in the ground (Fig. 2). It is hypothesized that the latter elements were set in place to block the ground of the funerary urn that was found in its original position. The urn has a bi-conical shape; its surface is decorated by an elaborated syntax of geometrical motives (concentric circles, triangles, etc.).

MATERIALS

On the plateau, a significant amount of materials has been discovered during the explorative excavation of the ground: bronze ornamental items; small fragments



Fig. 2 - Pit containing cinerary, bowl, a block of quartzite and a slab of limestone stuck vertically into the ground.

of calcinated bones that are often concentrated in small circular patches, pottery fragments (many of which are decorated).

The decorative syntaxes are the following: beams of parallel engravings bordered by a line of imprinted points forming angular or curved motives; semicircular engravings; false cord imprints; «sun» motives formed by small cups surrounded by imprinted points. The loops are horizontally realized; they are often spiral or trapezoidal. The bronze ornamental items include fibulae, twisted rods and, probably, armillae (Fig. 3).

The study of the collected materials is in its preliminary phase and it is not possible to provide a precise chronological assessment of the context. However, the preliminary results of the study of the collected specimens suggests that the age of the necropolis can be constrained between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age (end of II - beginning I millennium BC).

The few funerary urns removed up to date, together with the materials that were collected from the ground, suggest a diversified context because of the variety of the vascular forms and of the extraordinary articulation of

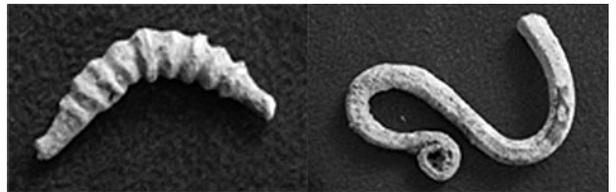


Fig. 3 - Bronze objects.

the decorative syntax. Further research will contribute to make light on a period of the Livorno protohistory that is currently represented by a single settlement, the Stagno pile-structure, and by occasional finds (A. Zanini, 1997; F. Sammartino, 1997). In this situation, the necropolis found at Parrana San Martino is of high scientific importance because it represents the only *in situ* record of a funerary context of protohistorical age in the Livorno territory.

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