

10. Living and dying in a foreign country: Maltese immigrants in Middle Bronze Age Sicily?

Davide Tanasi – Arcadia University
The College of Global Studies, MCAS, Italy
TanasiD@arcadia.edu

Abstract. In the Middle Bronze Age, Sicily is drawn into the Mycenaean commercial network which brings cultural elements from the central and eastern Mediterranean to its shores. Among the foreign artefacts introduced in several coastal settlements in the territory of Siracusa are not only Mycenaean and Cypriot wares but also a substantial amount of Maltese Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery. This has been found in both domestic and funerary contexts. The most important evidence of this ceramic class comes from the necropolis of Cozzo del Pantano, located on the banks of the river Ciane, explored by Paolo Orsi in 1893. This paper considers the large assemblage of vessels coming from tomb 23 in order to explore the significance of such pottery in Sicilian sites. The suggestion is made that Maltese immigrants may have been living within local coastal enclaves.

Keywords: Sicily, Malta, Middle Bronze Age, immigrants, funerary rituals, interconnections.

10.1. Sicily and Malta: a Mediterranean connection

Over the last few decades, the earliest contacts between Sicily and the Maltese archipelago have been the subject of studies that have sought to explain several facets of this complex relationship¹. This relationship developed over the centuries on account of geographical contiguity and a lack of specific resources in each of these two island worlds².

¹ Trump 2003; Cultraro 2008: 5-19; Guzzardi 2008: 39-48; Tanasi 2008; Tanasi and Vella forthcoming.

² Bonanno 2008: 27-37.

For the Neolithic, the Maltese presence in Sicily is represented by the Ghar Dalam phase pottery imports found in the territory of Siracusa at Vulpiglia³. Imports have not been identified in the Copper and Early Bronze Ages, but an influence of Maltese temple architecture has been claimed for Sicilian funerary architecture in the Hyblaeen area⁴.

Rarer but significant is the presence of Sicilian artefacts in Malta. Lithic materials, such as flint and obsidian, and Sicilian Neolithic and Copper Age pottery sherds have been found at the sites of Skorba and Xagħra Circle⁵. Later on, at the beginning of the Bronze Age, a class of incised and impressed pottery called Thermi ware⁶ together with a bossed bone plaque⁷ typical of the Sicilian Early Bronze Age, suggest that the relationship was reciprocal.

The most important moment in the development of this inter-island connection occurs in the Middle Bronze Age⁸. The intense trans-Mediterranean commercial activities of Cypriot and Mycenaean entrepreneurs, travelling from East to West, are the most important novel event of this period⁹. These long-distance voyages, which were aimed at acquiring raw materials and luxury items, had south-eastern and south-central Sicily among their destinations, but seem to have excluded the Maltese archipelago¹⁰.

Within these interactions occurring on a 'global level', significant contacts must have also happened on a 'local level'. In a recent contribution by Vander Linden¹¹, human mobility is considered as a seminal factor for the creation of archaeological cultures or traditions. Since the introduction of particular artefacts, know-how and ideas are obviously the consequence of human agency, in his view, small-scale contacts, concerning primarily restricted exchange,

³ Guzzardi 2008: 39-48.

⁴ Terranova 2003.

⁵ Vella 2008: 81-102; Trump 1966: 44-46; Malone *et al.* 2009: 212-213, fig. 10,7(i-l).

⁶ This pottery has recently been interpreted as being strictly related to the Sicilian pottery of Ognina type by Palio (2008: 71-80).

⁷ Trump 2003.

⁸ Tanasi 2008a.

⁹ Burns 2010.

¹⁰ Blakolmer 2005: 653-661.

¹¹ Vander Linden 2007.

guarantee that immediate and bilateral reciprocity which cannot be fulfilled within global networks. In this perspective, whereas one-to-one contacts cannot be held to be responsible for a substantial change within a culture, they are necessary vectors of that change.

Interactions cannot be studied without a chronological framework. Here I make use of the traditional Sicilian chronology for the Middle Bronze Age (mid-15th to mid-13th century BC) which can be divided into the three phases of the Thapsos culture (I, II, III)¹², which in turn correspond to LH IIIA1-LH IIIB1 (of the Aegean chronology). These phases correspond also to the transitional moment between the two phases of the Maltese Borġ in-Nadur cultural *facies*, II B2 and II B3 respectively¹³ (Table 1.1).

A recent exhaustive analysis of the Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery imports in Middle Bronze Age Sicily has pointed out the existence of relevant new data¹⁴. As a result of that analysis, imported vessels of the type associated with the Borġ in-Nadur cultural *facies* were identified in eleven sites of south-eastern Sicily in both funerary and domestic contexts, together with one example of unknown provenance held at the Palermo Museum and now lost¹⁵. A few Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery sherds seem to have been found also in the excavation of the settlement of Cannatello¹⁶, near Agrigento, but it has not been possible to include those pieces in the present discussion. Based upon the available data, no other traces of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery or cultural influences have been identified in any other part of Sicily. Ten sites are set along the coastline of the province of Siracusa: Thapsos¹⁷, Cozzo del Pantano¹⁸, Plemmirio¹⁹,

¹² Alberti 2007: 363-376. See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

¹³ Trump 1961: 253-262; Tanasi 2009.

¹⁴ Tanasi 2008a; Tanasi 2010; Tanasi and Vella forthcoming. In this paper preference is made for the use of the compound adjective 'Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery' rather than a straightforward 'Borġ in-Nadur pottery' in the belief that only scientific provenance studies will allow us to differentiate with certainty foreign from local production. This seminal matter is taken up in the concluding chapter to this volume.

¹⁵ Tanasi 2008a: 33-53.

¹⁶ Levi 2004: 237, n. 23.

¹⁷ Orsi 1895; Voza 1973a; 1973b.

¹⁸ Orsi 1893.

¹⁹ Orsi 1891.

Matrensa²⁰, Molinello²¹, Ognina²², Calafarina²³, Vendicari²⁴, Chiusazza²⁵, Ortigia²⁶. Only one site, Monte San Paolillo²⁷, is located in the northern suburban area of Catania.

Leaving apart the evidence found at Thapsos, which in this period was the most important hub for foreign travellers including Mycenaean and seemingly Maltese merchants, a significant documentation is that coming from the sites located around the Great Harbour of Siracusa (Fig. 10.1a,b), namely Ortigia, Cozzo del Pantano, Matrensa and Plemmirio. In particular a reappraisal of the extent and significance of the Maltese presence in Sicily can come from the study of the grave goods of the necropolis of Cozzo del Pantano, where the largest group of Borg in-Nadur-type pottery has been discovered.

10.2. The necropolis of Cozzo del Pantano, Siracusa

Cozzo del Pantano is a small narrow plateau, measuring 1 km by 20 m and reaching a height of just 20 m. It is located 4 km south of Siracusa by the spring of the river Ciane, inside the nature reserve of Pantanelli-Ciane.

The exploration of the site by Paolo Orsi in January 1892 revealed a necropolis composed of chamber tombs excavated in the gentle slopes of the hill and organised in six groups. No clear traces of the related village were found even if the discovery of scattered lithic implements made Orsi suppose that one existed on the top of the plateau. A preliminary report of that exploration was published in 1982 by Edoardo Caruso²⁸, Orsi's co-worker and the real field director of the excavation, while the scientific results were published one year later by Orsi alone²⁹. In order to obtain a

²⁰ Orsi 1903.

²¹ Orsi 1902.

²² Bernabò Brea 1966.

²³ Guzzardi 1997-1998.

²⁴ Guzzardi 1991-1992.

²⁵ Tinè 1965.

²⁶ Orsi 1919.

²⁷ Tanasi 2010.

²⁸ Caruso 1892.

²⁹ Orsi 1893.

complete outline of the evidence coming from Cozzo del Pantano it is necessary to take into consideration both publications as Orsi curiously left out significant data pointed out by Caruso³⁰.

Tomb 4	1 bronze dagger	Tomb 22	1 pedestal jar 1 lid
Tomb 7	2 simple jars 2 pedestal jars 1 Mycenaean kylix	Tomb 27	1 simple basin
Tomb 9	1 pithos 1 pedestal basin 1 simple jar 1 simple cup 2 pedestal cup	Tomb 29	1 bronze dagger 1 bronze blade
Tomb 10	2 pedestal cups 1 simple jar	Tomb 30	1 jug 3 lids 1 jar 1 bone bead
Tomb 11	4 dipper cups 1 pedestal basin 1 simple jar 2 pedestal cups	Tomb 31	3 dipper cups 1 lid 1 bronze dagger
Tomb 15	2 flint blades 1 bronze bead	Tomb 32	1 jar 1 lid
Tomb 16	3 simple jars 14 basalt axes 9 flint blades 1 obsidian blade 2 stone beads	Tomb 33	1 pedestal basin 1 pedestal dish 1 cup 1 bronze chisel 1 bronze dagger
Tomb 17	4 dipper cups 1 pedestal cup 1 lid 1 bronze drill 1 bronze chisel	Tomb 35	1 juglet 1 dipper cup 1 lid 1 flint blade
Tomb 18	3 bowls 1 simple cup	Tomb 37	1 jar 1 lid
Tomb 19	1 pedestal jar		

Table 10.1. Summary of the finds dated to the Middle Bronze Age from tombs at Cozzo del Pantano found in a good state of preservation.

³⁰ Tanasi 2005.

The necropolis included 62 tombs, 28 in the northern side (groups A and C in Fig. 10.2) and 34 in the southern one (groups B, D and E in Fig. 10.2). A sixth group consisting of a few tombs was explored in the slopes of Cava del Feudetto, a few hundred meters west of Cozzo del Pantano, an area now deeply altered by the construction of the highway Siracusa-Gela.

According to Orsi, of the 62 graves only 10 were untouched (tombs 9, 10, 10bis, 11, 13, 16, 22, 23, 31, 33), while the others had been plundered or altered by successive re-use in different periods (Iron Age, Archaic Period, Late Roman and Byzantine) or were found empty. In the publications of Caruso and Orsi, 38 tombs and their goods are presented (tombs 1-37, 10bis). They are basically related to the three typologies largely attested in this period: vaulted circular chamber tombs, tholoid chamber tombs, and shaft graves. Tombs are often furnished with side niches, additional chambers, annular benches, funerary beds and deep drainage channels excavated along short entrance corridors (Fig. 10.3). Multiples burials consisting of up to 68 individuals were arranged inside the tombs and in some cases also in vestibules or in the corridors.

The grave goods, listed in Table 10.1, consist essentially of local vessels, with the exception of a Mycenaean kylix dated to the beginning of LH IIIA³¹, a few bronze and bone objects and a large amount of stone axes and flint blades. The lithics are, in fact, an uncommon feature in tombs of this period. Significantly, all the Maltese Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery was concentrated just inside two tombs, 13 and 23, considered the richest of the entire necropolis.

10.3. The evidence of tombs 13 and 23

Before discussing the catalogue of finds from these two tombs it will be useful to consider their context by presenting a translation of excerpts from the original report concerning both two tombs published by Orsi (Fig. 10.4)³².

³¹ Tanasi 2005.

³² Orsi 1893: coll. 16-17, 20-26.

Tomb 13. It is untouched. It includes a vestibule, shaped as a rectangular pit (1.70 x 0.80 m) with a long draining channel, containing remnants of a skeleton and a small handled juglet 13 cm high. The block represented by a large slab was perfectly in situ; at the bottom of the circular chamber were two skeletons; by the skull of one of them there was a conical cup (rim diameter 16.5 cm), similar to other examples coming from tomb 23, and remnants of others. Among the remains, [there were] a dipper cup and a miniature jug; an arc-elbowed fibula, similar to others found before, was without a pin.

Tomb 23. A few paces away from the preceding tomb, a large chamber with a vaulted roof, oriented to the North, of which I present a plan and a section, was excavated. Even if the sealing slab were missing, of which not even the remnants were found, the tomb turned out as the richest of all the necropolis, with all its untouched grave goods, protected by a thick layer of earth that slowly had infiltrated the chamber up to 70 cm from the vault. In the vestibule was just one skeleton with a few sherds. In the chamber twenty-two skeletons were located irregularly at the bottom, but none was positioned in the two large niches; two of them were clearly in a foetal position. The vessels seemed to be located on top of them instead of being in their middle. I present here just those that were restored, because a large part of them, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$, was so destroyed by the pressure of the ground and humidity that it was not possible to recover them or to interpret their shapes³³. [...] Of bronze objects, the chamber restituted the remnants of two swords [...] Maybe related to the swords' handle were some pieces of ivory [...] Mixed with the earth there were two bronze fibulas broken of arc-elbowed type and three pierced ivory beads of ornamental use.

After reading Orsi's description it is important to focus on a crucial point. First the real condition of the tombs at the moment of their discovery and second the strange presence of bronze fibulas, whose typology and chronology are different from that of all the other objects³⁴. In fact the two arc-elbowed fibulas from tombs 13 and 23 can clearly be dated to the Final Bronze Age (mid-11th – mid-9th century BC) and the third one from tomb 23 is actually a curved bow fibula that can be dated both to the Late Bronze Age (mid-13th – mid-11th century BC) and Final Bronze Age³⁵. This matter can be explained suggesting two hypotheses. Both are considered in turn.

³³ A detailed description of all the pottery discovered by Orsi is here omitted as it will be commented later on in this chapter.

³⁴ Tanasi 2004.

³⁵ Albanese Procelli *et al.* 2004.

In the first scenario, the absence of any system of closure in tomb 23 can be interpreted as evidence of the reuse of the grave which determined the introduction of the fibulas inside the graves. In the same way, the presence of the blocking slab by the door of tomb 13 could mean that the grave was not touched by looters but that it was discovered by Orsi after its secondary use.

Tombs 9, 11, 16, 30 and 32 were reoccupied in the Final Bronze Age, without the destruction of the previous burials and accompanying goods. In particular, in tomb 9, besides the set of Middle Bronze Age vessels, only two fibulas were introduced, one with violin bow, dated to the Late Bronze Age, and one arc-elbowed dated to Final Bronze Age.

On consideration of this evidence we can assume that at the transition between the Late Bronze Age and the Final Bronze Age, some tombs at Cozzo del Pantano were opened, reused and then closed again. In some cases this reoccupation is marked by a set of vessels and in some others simply by the presence of bronze fibulas.

In this scenario, tombs 13 and 23 cannot be considered really untouched and the fibulas must be considered external to previous groups of objects which are otherwise culturally homogenous. Finally, the absence of a blocking slab in tomb 23 can be connected with an additional attempt of plundering – ancient or modern – or with a different method of closing the tomb, simply filling the corridor with earth.

In the second scenario, the two tombs were really untouched and the presence of the fibulas can be interpreted suggesting a different chronological definition for both local and Maltese vessels. In fact according to G. Voza, the extent of the Thapsos culture to which the local vessels belong, is not restricted to the Middle Bronze Age but it covers a lapse of time which includes the Middle, Late and Final Bronze Ages³⁶. In his opinion, the assemblage of pottery and fibulas found is coherent with the cultural production of the very beginning of the Final Bronze Age, as the discovery at Thapsos of

³⁶ La Rosa 1989.

Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery together with typical plumed ware of the Final Bronze Age would suggest³⁷.

But the weak points of this reconstruction are several. The stratigraphic evidence from the site of Pantalica³⁸ together with the typological study of Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery production³⁹ have demonstrated that the Thapsos culture is to be related only to the Middle Bronze Age. In the same manner, it has become clear that the North Pantalica and Cassibile cultures were the main expression of the Late and Final Bronze Age.

The presence of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery together with plumed pottery in Final Bronze Age layers at Thapsos is simply the demonstration that also in that period the Maltese were importing pottery into Sicily, or having it made there, as they were doing also in the Late Bronze Age⁴⁰.

In my opinion, the first scenario is more reasonable. Furthermore, since Final Bronze Age burials with grave goods consisting solely of fibulas of different types are not known in other Sicilian sites, another suggestion can also be made. It is possible that fibulas were not related to new burials but that they were placed inside the tombs in a ritual of honouring dead individuals, ancestors perhaps, though a cyclical opening of the tombs, offering single symbolic objects and reclosing of the graves. This would be the same kind of ritual act, discussed by Vives Ferrándiz for Iron Age east Iberia, aimed to maintain social memory, confirming cyclically a relationship with the past through these practices⁴¹. In tomb 23, this performance could also be connected with the single burial located in the vestibule that was obviously the last one to be placed there. In this way, the fibula, the cultural homogeneity of the other grave goods, and the fact that the tombs seemed untouched to Orsi, can be explained. In the way I am looking at matters here, it would appear worthless to investigate the meaning of two of Orsi's statements in his description of tomb 23: 'the vessels seemed to be located on top of them [skeletons] instead of being in their middle'

³⁷ Voza 1973a.

³⁸ Bernabò Brea 1990. See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

³⁹ Alberti 2007; Tanasi 2008b.

⁴⁰ Levi 2004; Jones *et al.* forthcoming.

⁴¹ Vives-Ferrándiz 2010: 202.

TOMB 13 (Figs 10.5-10.13)			
	Type	Inventory	No.
Borg in-Nadur-type pottery (4)	Simple cup	11222 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	1
	Pedestal basin	11223 and CP13/1 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	1
	Juglet	11224, CP13/6 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	2
Thapsos pottery (2)	Pedestal cup	CP13/4 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	1
	Juglet	CP13/3 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	1
Phase of later reuse	Arc elbowed fibula	11221 (Figs 10.5, 10.13)	1
TOMB 23 (Figs 10.6-10.12, 10.14-10.20)			
Borg in-Nadur-type pottery (21)	Simple cup	11250, 11251, 11252, 11253, 11254, 11255 CP23/9 (Figs 10.6, 10.14)	7
	Pedestal cup	11239, 11242, 11246 11247, 11256, 11259 (Figs 10.7, 10.15)	6
	Simple basin	11243, 11244, 11249 (Figs 10.8, 10.16)	3
	Pedestal basin	11240, 11241, 11258 (Figs 10.9, 10.17)	3
	Juglet	11264, 11265 (Figs 10.9, 10.17)	2
Thapsos pottery (17)	Pedestal cup	11245, 11248, 11260 (Figs 10.10, 10.18)	3
	Pedestal basin	11238, 11257 (Figs 10.10, 10.18)	2
	Juglet	11263 (Figs 10.11, 10.19)	1
	Dipper cup	11261, 11262 (Figs 10.11, 10.19)	2
	Jar	11266, 11267, 11268, 11269, 11270a, CP23/6, CP23/7, CP23/8 (Figs 10.11, 10.19)	5
Lid	11270b, 11271, 11272, CP23/3 (Figs 10.11, 10.19)	4	
Thapsos phase weapons (3)	Bronze sword	11275, 11276, 11277 (Figs 10.12, 10.20)	3
	Ivory hilt	11273 and 1174 (Figs 10.12, 10.20)	1
Phase of later reuse	Curved bow fibula	CP23/1 (Figs 10.12, 10.20)	1
	Arc-elbowed fibula	CP23/2 (Figs 10.12, 10.20)	1

Table 10.2. Summary of Maltese-type and Sicilian vessels in tombs 13 and 23, Cozzo del Pantano.

and ‘mixed with the earth there were two bronze fibulas broken of the arc-elbowed type ...’; we know that Orsi did not use a stratigraphic method of excavation and that in many cases his observations had been demonstrated to be incorrect⁴². So, except for the introduction of the fibulas, the contexts of tombs 13 and 23 are here taken to be unviolated and date to the Middle Bronze Age. Furthermore, tomb 23 in particular must be considered the richest burial of the entire necropolis when considered against the rest.

Once this issue has been cleared, it is important to add that the number of grave goods given in Orsi’s report and the number of objects studied at the museum of Siracusa do not tally.

The detailed catalogue of finds is appended to the contents of the DVD. A summary is provided here (Table 10.2).

10.4. Borg-in Nadur-type pottery of Cozzo del Pantano: typology, chronology, interpretation

A classification of the Borg in-Nadur-type pottery in Sicilian Middle Bronze Age contexts was carried out in 2008 using morphological and stylistic criteria for the construction of a pottery typology, divided into types and sub-types⁴³. At the time it was only possible to study the pottery from Cozzo del Pantano exhibited at the museum of Siracusa, that is one vessel from tomb 13 and 22 from tomb 23. More recently it was possible to study all the material kept in storage at the museum, warranting a revision of the outline published in 2008. Borg-in Nadur-type pottery from tomb 13 includes six vessels and those from tomb 23 number 21⁴⁴.

During the exercise it was possible to point out that cups and basins, which have all the same basic shape but come in different sizes, three main types can be distinguished: with a hemispherical body⁴⁵, with a conical body⁴⁶, with an elongated conical body⁴⁷.

⁴² Tanasi 2008b, p. 144.

⁴³ Tanasi 2008a.

⁴⁴ After an accurate examination, nos 48 and 49 in Tanasi’s (2008a) catalogue were revealed to be local vessels, while another Borg in-Nadur-type vessel was recognised among the fragmented material.

⁴⁵ Type I in Tanasi’s (2008a) classification of cups.

⁴⁶ Type IIA in Tanasi’s (2008a) classification of cups.

While the types with hemispherical and elongated conical bodies are quite rare (namely, CP23/9 and 11243), the conical shape of the body is attested in 18 examples⁴⁸.

The second level of classification is represented by the type of rim: rounded, quadrangular, and thinned with a straight or an inverted profile.

The third level of classification is based on the decoration. Even if the outline of cut-out decoration, characterised by rows of horizontal lines, vertical segments, dots and chevrons, appears the same throughout, it is significant to highlight that not one of the motifs present on cups and basins is in fact repeated. In fact, six main motifs can be distinguished for the simple cups and basins (Fig. 10.21): a) simple row of horizontal lines; b) row of horizontal lines bordered by two dots; c) row of horizontal lines crossed by three dots in a vertical line; d) row of horizontal lines crossed by a vertical segment; e) row of horizontal lines crossed by a vertical segment bordered by two dots. Three main decorative patterns can be observed for the pedestal cups and basins: f) row of horizontal lines crossed by a vertical segment bordered by two dots combined with a chevron; g) row of horizontal lines crossed by a vertical segment bordered by two dots combined with a chevron crossed and sided by vertical segments bordered by two dots; h) row of horizontal lines crossed by a vertical segment bordered by two dots combined with a chevron with vertical segments bordered by two dots in the middle and by the sides. All these motifs that usually are in the front and the back of every vessel, can also be repeated in pairs by the sides of the handles.

With regards to juglets, three examples (11224, 11264, 11265) are of the same typology⁴⁹ while the fourth one (CP13/6), of which only the handle is preserved and was identified only through its fabric, cannot be clearly interpreted.

A significant feature of the Borg in-Nadur-type pottery from Cozzo del Pantano is a peculiar integral red burnished slip that can be clearly observed on vessels 11222, 11243, 11244, 11246, 11247,

⁴⁷ Type III in Tanasi's classification of cups.

⁴⁸ Nos 11222, 11223, 11239, 11240, 11241, 11242, 11244, 11246, 11247, 11249, 11250, 11251, 11252, 11253, 11254, 11255, 11258, 11259.

⁴⁹ Type V in Tanasi's (2008a) classification of juglets.

11256, 11258, 11264, 11265. While it occurs together with the cut-out decoration, grooves are filled with a white paste derived from gypsum⁵⁰ (11222, 11244, 11246, 11258) in order to produce a chromatic effect of white on red. But even if red slip is present on nine of the 27 Borg-in Nadur-type pieces, its presence on the other vessels cannot be excluded. In fact, the vases were cleaned – presumably after discovery – in a way that abraded deeply the surfaces, making the slip disappear in the process. Furthermore, during the restoration intervention, a gypsum slip was used for covering the internal surface of fragmented open vessels and of hollow conical feet whereas a layer of transparent adhesive was applied on external surfaces causing a further alteration of their aspect. Archaeometric analyses on Middle Bronze Age pottery having the same decoration from Ariano Irpino (Avellino, Campania) showed that gypsum paste was fixed after firing with milk⁵¹. Since the kind of adhesive used on the vessels from Cozzo del Pantano was probably of an organic nature and a weak one, it could have been removed from cut-out decorated vessels during cleaning.

The Borg in-Nadur-type vessels of Cozzo del Pantano find a wide range of comparative material both in Sicily and in the Maltese archipelago. But, even if the morphological similarities are very close, there is not an identical match between the decorative features.

In contemporary Sicilian contexts, the cup with hemispherical body (CP23/9) can be compared with a cup with cut-out decoration from the cave settlement of Chiusazza⁵² (Fig. 10.22a). The basin with elongated conical body (11243) is also attested in tomb 6 of the Matrensa necropolis⁵³ (Fig. 10.22c); and the cup or the basin with conical body, undecorated or with cut-out decoration, can be found in tomb 22 of the Thapsos necropolis with the same rim features⁵⁴ (Fig. 10.22b), and in the Thapsos settlement⁵⁵, in tomb 6

⁵⁰ Analysis recently carried out with Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) on white paste filling incised decoration of Thapsos pottery from Licodia Eubea (Catania) had demonstrated that it is composed of calcite and gypsum applied without any kind of adhesive: Barone *et al.* forthcoming.

⁵¹ Paternoster *et al.* 2008.

⁵² Tinè 1965: 237 (no. 431) and 239, fig. 18.1, pl. 36.1-5.

⁵³ Orsi 1903: 147, pl. 10.3.

⁵⁴ Orsi 1905: col. 110.

of the Matrensa necropolis⁵⁶, and in the settlement area of Ognina⁵⁷. In the Maltese archipelago, the simple cup/basin and the pedestal cup/basin were classified by Evans as shapes 92 and 93⁵⁸ of his sequence of prehistoric pottery⁵⁹. This shape, basically the same in its two versions but with different dimensions, is documented in Sicily by 34 examples⁶⁰. Considered one of the most representative shapes of the Borġ in-Nadur pottery repertoire, it is not so frequently attested in the few published contexts known to date. Some examples were found during the excavation of the Borġ in-Nadur temple⁶¹, two later examples of the same type are known from Mtarfa⁶² (Fig. 10.22e) and another one from the Brochtorff Circle at Xaghra has just been published⁶³ (Fig. 10.22f). Few sherds were also found during the Italian excavations at Tas-Silġ in 1964 and 1965⁶⁴. In all, these cases, the vessel was fragmented and the only example with a complete profile was reconstructed into a pedestal conical cup on Evans' instructions using as a model the Sicilian ceramic material⁶⁵.

The recent overall analysis of all the ceramic evidence coming from Murray's excavations at Borġ in-Nadur has added much significant data to our knowledge of the Maltese Bronze Age pottery repertoire⁶⁶. In particular, several cups and basins find exact parallels in the vessels coming from Cozzo del Pantano. On the basis of morphology and typology, in fact, all the Sicilian types can be compared to pottery found in the area of the Borġ in-Nadur temple. In some cases, in addition to similarities in shape there are also similarities in the same patterns of cut-out decoration, as with

⁵⁵ Voza 1973b: pl. 9.143.

⁵⁶ Orsi 1903: 147, pl. 10.5.

⁵⁷ Bernabò Brea 1966: 46, 65, pl. 46.6.

⁵⁸ Evans 1953: 70, fig. 11.

⁵⁹ Evans 1971.

⁶⁰ Tanasi 2008a.

⁶¹ Murray 1923: pl. 9.25; 1925: pl. 21.218; 1929, pl. 25.260, 257, 261.

⁶² Sagona 1999: 54 (P.6), fig. 3.1, 55 (P.13), fig. 4.4.

⁶³ Malone *et al.* 2009, p. 215, fig. 10.19:V.

⁶⁴ Mallia 1965; Mallia 1966.

⁶⁵ Evans 1971, p. 17, fig. 2:2, pl. 32:4.

⁶⁶ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

cups 11239 and 11247 from Cozzo del Pantano and cups BN/P40 (Fig. 10.22g) and BN/P13 (Fig. 10.22d) from the Borġ in-Nadur temple⁶⁷.

This exact correspondence between Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery found in Sicily and that coming from Borġ in-Nadur is not specific to Cozzo del Pantano alone. For example, the Maltese cup coming from tomb 6 of Matrensa, with a peculiar decoration consisting of a horizontal row of dots above a horizontal line not present in any Maltese-type vessels found in Sicily, can be compared with cup BRG/010/127 from the Borġ in-Nadur temple⁶⁸ and is also widely attested at the site of Ghar Mirdum⁶⁹.

Quite different is the scenario which arises from the documentation related to the juglets. The four examples from Cozzo del Pantano, with the exception of CP13/6 of which only the handle is preserved, belong to the same typological category: slightly carinated body, high neck with concave profile, vertical loop handle between neck and shoulder⁷⁰. Among the group of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery found in Middle Bronze Age Sicily, several juglets of the same type but with some peculiar features have been found in Thapsos (Fig. 10.22h), Matrensa (Fig. 10.22i), Plemmirio, and Molinello⁷¹. In the Maltese archipelago, this shape, classified by Evans as 106 of his sequence⁷², is not so widely attested also because of the availability of fragmentary pieces. Good comparisons for the Cozzo del Pantano vessels come from Ghar Dalam⁷³ (Fig. 10.22l) and Tarxien⁷⁴ (Fig. 10.22m). An uncommon two handled example was found also at Ghar Mirdum⁷⁵ (Fig. 10.22n). From the Borġ in-Nadur temple, only two juglets, one published by Murray and then

⁶⁷ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

⁶⁸ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

⁶⁹ An exhaustive analysis of the material evidence coming from the explorations carried out at Ghar Mirdum (Evans 1971, p. 22) between 1964-1965 has been carried out by the author and a preliminary report is about to be published. Eight examples of conical cups share the same typology and decorative patterns of the cup coming from tomb 6 of Matrensa: MRD64/P/271, MRD64/P/288, MRD64/P/293, MRD64/P/478, MRD64/P/486, MRD64/P/750, MRD64/P/831, MRD64/P/872

⁷⁰ Type V in Tanasi's (2008a) classification of juglets.

⁷¹ Tanasi 2008a.

⁷² Evans 1953: 70, fig. 11.

⁷³ Trump 2002: 253.

⁷⁴ Evans 1971: 160, pl. 55.9.

⁷⁵ Ashby, Zammit and Despott 1916: 7-8, fig. 1.8.

lost⁷⁶ and another one recently identified (BN/P56)⁷⁷ (Fig. 10.22o), can be related to Sicilian examples.

For the chronological definition of the contexts of tombs 13 and 23 at Cozzo del Pantano, including the Maltese-type vessels, the studies carried out by Alberti on a comparative chronology which ties in Sicily, the Aegean and Cyprus, can, in my opinion, be taken as a reliable system of reference⁷⁸.

Going by the typology of the local pottery and the association with Mycenaean imports in other undisturbed contexts, Alberti ascribes the use of tomb 13 to Thapsos phase II (1400/1350-1310/1300 BC, contemporary with LH IIIA2 in the Aegean)⁷⁹. Tomb 23 is also dated to Thapsos phase II on the basis of the juglet (11263) which is considered to be a local imitation of a Cypriot prototype, belonging to Åström type IIA of the Black Slip III, VIB of the Red on Black and IVA1 of the Black Lustrous Wheel-made Ware; for its chronology LH IIIA2 is indicated as *terminus ante quem*⁸⁰.

The last issue to be stressed is the nature of the Borg in-Nadur-type pottery from Cozzo del Pantano. Are the vessels Maltese imports or were they locally made? If they were locally made, who produced them? These two questions are pertinent to our debate and can, in fact, be extended to all the Borg in-Nadur-type pottery found in Sicily.

With the exception of the unpublished Borg in-Nadur pottery coming from Late Bronze Age layers of Cannatello, for which archaeometrical analysis presented in a preliminary manner have demonstrated their Maltese origin⁸¹, petrographic and chemical characterisation of all the other Borg in-Nadur-type vessels found in Sicily is unfortunately lacking. However, the careful macroscopic

⁷⁶ Murray 1929: pl. 25.246.

⁷⁷ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

⁷⁸ Alberti 2004; Alberti 2007; Alberti 2008. Until the results of recent Italian and Maltese excavations at Tas-Silġ are published, dating the Borg in-Nadur pottery repertoire will have to depend on cross-dating with Sicily.

⁷⁹ Alberti 2004.

⁸⁰ Alberti 2005: 346-348.

⁸¹ Levi 2004; Jones *et al.* forthcoming.

study of the vessels from tombs 13 and 23 of Cozzo del Pantano, allows us to formulate some considerations⁸².

Of the 27 vessels found, 19 of them have a very soft and fragile fabric, while only eight have a hard fabric. Calcareous grits are very common and they can be observed on 18 examples, while *chamotte* is rarer and attested only on nine of them. Superficial voids occur on 15 vessels, while external cracks are visible on three examples. With regards to firing conditions, six vessels appear totally blackened as a result of over burning and two of them collapsed because of a sudden change in temperature. From the traces of fire visible on the surface, the pedestal cup 11246 was probably located in an overturned position in a furnace with a lower firing chamber. The colour of the fabric is generally orange or reddish yellow (5 YR 6/8 or 7.5 YR 8/6) and sometimes pink (7.5 YR 7/3). All the vessels are handmade with the exception of nos 11240 and 11241 which show clear signs of refining on a potter's wheel on the conical feet. Cup 11252 with an unusual concave base was probably constructed by working the clay on a small wooden or stone support, following a system quite common in Maltese Borg in-Nadur pottery which resulted in vessels with embossed bases⁸³.

The picture resulting from an analysis of the Sicilian pottery from the same tombs is not so diverse but some differences can be pointed out. Fabrics are in general harder, calcareous grits are common and superficial voids are present but *chamotte* is quite rare (present only in CP23/9). Problems caused by firing conditions, like black blotches and asymmetrical bodies are frequent. Also in this case the colour of the fabric is usually orange or reddish yellow (5 YR 6/8 or 7.5 YR 8/6) but verging on light gray (10 YR 7/2). Some examples have a very pale brown slip (10 YR 7.3) common in the production of several other contemporary sites. All vessels are handmade and their incised or cut-out decoration goes from rough to fine execution.

If the pottery from Cozzo del Pantano is considered in the context of the information now gathered from a study of a large complex of Borg in-Nadur pottery from several Maltese sites (In-

⁸² The study is complicated by the fact that aggressive systems of restoration were used on the pottery in the past making hard the distinction of features peculiar to the two groups and their fabric.

⁸³ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

Nuffara, Mtarfa, Ghar Mirdum, Borġ in-Nadur, Bahrija), discussed elsewhere in this volume, more data can be marshalled to provide an interpretation of the evidence from Cozzo del Pantano⁸⁴.

Fabrics 1 and 2 identified for the pottery coming from the Borġ in-Nadur temple are very similar to the fabrics observed on the ‘Maltese’ vessels from Cozzo del Pantano, with the exception that they are very hard and without added *chamotte*⁸⁵. Softer, sandy and rich in *chamotte* are instead those fabrics identified for the pottery coming from the In-Nuffara silo pit in Gozo.

In absence of archaeometric analyses for the 25 ‘foreign’ vessels from tombs 13 and 23, the label ‘Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery’ shall have to continue to be used. However, two hypotheses can be posed in order to explain these vessels. In the first case, we can envisage the pottery being produced in Gozitan workshops and then imported into Sicily. The second hypothesis would have the pottery being produced in Sicily by Maltese immigrants who used their crafting and pyrotechnological knowledge and used local sources.

Our investigation can be taken a step further if we consider some aspects of the pottery production which display clear elements of hybridisation. In one case, a small jar (11267) with a typical Middle Bronze Age Sicilian shape (largely attested at Thapsos) has a surface treatment (red slip, 2.5 YR 4/6) that is instead common on Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery associated with it in the same context but *not* on contemporary local pottery. Then there is the case of the occurrence of white paste. This fills the incised decoration of the local jar 11270a and of the related lid 11270b. As discussed at length elsewhere⁸⁶, even if this type of decoration survives on pottery with difficulty, the white paste is a distinctive feature of the Thapsos pottery. Indeed, it is better represented in those Sicilian sites where Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery has been recorded. As cut-out decoration filled with white paste is one of the main characteristics of Maltese Borġ in-Nadur pottery from the first time of its development in Malta, it is reasonable to suggest that this technique was introduced in Middle Bronze Age Sicily by Maltese artisans.

⁸⁴ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

⁸⁵ See Tanasi, this volume (chapter 4).

⁸⁶ Tanasi 2008a; Barone *et al.* forthcoming.

In order to understand the possible dynamics ruling cultural interactions and related material outcomes, it is relevant to recall the definition of ‘appropriation’ and ‘daily interaction’ recently put forward by Vives-Ferrándiz⁸⁷: ‘appropriation is the incorporation of new material culture into a context in which the new items change function and/or meaning in relation to other contexts’⁸⁸. This process of appropriation can be influenced, the scholar argues, by several factors, but in particular by social perception of objects, taste and daily interaction⁸⁹. Scarce availability and exotic appearance of the Borġ in-Nadur pottery could have made it very attractive for those local (Sicilian) individual ambitious claiming a superior rank. In some way it could be used for social strategies of displaying status with a value comparable to other classes of foreign pottery, such as Mycenaean and Cypriot. Red slip (so familiar in the material culture of prehistoric Sicily), burnishing (to replicate the brilliant surface of metallic vessels), and filling in white paste (to create a strong chromatic contrast on the red background) could have appealed to local tastes. This way of thinking is particularly reasonable when one takes into account the fact that Borġ in-Nadur-type shapes which occur in Sicily have the *same* function as their corresponding local ones.

In this perspective, these examples of material hybridisation can be explained by suggesting that the complex of 25 Borġ in-Nadur-type vessels from Cozzo del Pantano were made by Maltese artisans working on site who exchanged technical data with local potters. For even if the fabrics of the Borġ in-Nadur-type vessels from Cozzo del Pantano are similar to the local ones because the natural sources used were essentially the same, the know-how of the production, the technological tradition and the morphological archetypes are totally Maltese. In this way it is possible to justify the variety in pottery typologies, particularly in the decoration, and the absence of exact comparisons in the Maltese archipelago.

⁸⁷ Vives-Ferrándiz 2010: 191, 205.

⁸⁸ Vives-Ferrándiz 2010: 191.

⁸⁹ Vives-Ferrándiz 2010.

10.5. Towards an interpretation of the evidence from Cozzo del Pantano

In order to attempt an interpretation of the evidence of tombs 13 and 23, it is necessary to deal with the problem of the identity of individuals buried in those tombs. Three questions are posed. We consider each in turn.

1. What was the role of the group inhumed in tomb 23 and why is this tomb, which held the wealthiest complex of Borg in-Nadur-type pottery ever known, also the richest in terms of quantity and quality of material culture items of all the Cozzo del Pantano necropolis? Since studies on the social complexity of indigenous communities of Middle Bronze Age Sicily are generally lacking, it is only possible to present some preliminary reflections here.

Signs that in Middle Bronze Age Sicily a transegalitarian society developed can be found in the following, using criteria developed for elsewhere⁹⁰: the use of different funerary rituals and tomb typologies; the acquisition of foreign and exotic goods and their use as status indicators in a funerary sphere; the discovery of objects and tools as grave goods for indentifying their owner as traders, middlemen or artisans; the use of bronze long swords and daggers for announcing the affiliation to warrior guilds. The model is based on the affirmation of inequality claimed by households or factions centered on small hamlets connected in small networks⁹¹. The leaders of these two kinds of groups are believed to be aggrandizers, individuals whose role is to consolidate their power and to establish it outside their own group. The most common strategy for achieving this goal is to acquire and use high-value prestige goods from foreign people and the use of such paraphernalia in funerary rituals – in short the classic recipe of Helms' *Ulysses' Sail*⁹². In the case of Sicily, the privilege of being connected with Mycenaean or Maltese people and of possessing their wares,

⁹⁰ Hayden 1995: 15- 86.

⁹¹ Bogucki 1999: 208-259.

⁹² Helms 1988.

weapons and ornaments was a symbol of success and power for members of a household or of a faction.

Going back to the evidence from Cozzo del Pantano, besides the high number of objects found in tomb 23, what is also remarkable is the presence of the only three examples of bronze long swords ever discovered in this necropolis, one with an ivory handle. In fact, besides the short bronze daggers coming from tombs 4, 29, 31 and 33, all the other weapons recovered are made out of stone and flint.

In my opinion, tomb 23 was the group burial of the ruling faction of the community living at Cozzo del Pantano, a faction that based its power on the relationship entertained with Maltese people visiting the hamlets in the area of Siracusa's Great Harbour. It is reasonable to suggest that Maltese immigrants lived in the settlement of Cozzo del Pantano, integrated with indigenous people, sometimes sharing local culture and sometimes recreating their tradition. It is also likely that members of the ruling faction had intermarriages with Maltese immigrants both for consolidating their status and for controlling the future arrival of goods and for managing the redistribution of those goods in the Great Harbour district.

Going by the few examples of Borg in-Nadur-type pottery in the other settlements of that district – Ortigia, Matrensa, Plemmirio – in contrast with its relative abundance at Cozzo del Pantano, it would seem that the latter site was probably the commercial hub and the outpost which had a resident Maltese community. The use of the bronze long swords, the manufacture and typology of which are strictly related to Mycenaean metalworking, confirm the authority of the ruling faction and its ability to acquire also goods of Mycenaean type.

The grave goods of tomb 23, I would argue, represent a rare instance of a phenomenon of cultural interchange where different kinds of foreign objects are used for giving socio-political messages amplified by their deployment in funerary symbolism. Beneath the socio-political layer there are also the religious and cultural layers, where diverse ritual traditions are mixed together and where similar beliefs converge into the same performance.

2. At this point a second question arises: what were the assemblages of pottery located in tombs 13 and 23 for? Starting from the

assumption that both tombs were undisturbed, as discussed above, some significant points can be made on the assemblage of Middle Bronze Age grave goods. In tomb 13, a single burial accompanied by the juglet (11224) was found in the vestibule, while inside the chamber there were two isolated individuals. Their grave goods included at least two local vessels⁹³ and a set of three Borg-in Nadur-type pots, namely a pedestal basin (11223-CP13/1), a conical cup (11222) and a juglet (CP13/6). The same set of Maltese vessels is found in a contemporary context represented by tomb 6 at Matrensa⁹⁴. The same kind of assemblages was probably also located in the disturbed tombs 6 and E of the necropolis at Thapsos⁹⁵.

In tomb 23 at Cozzo del Pantano, even if it is impossible to reconstruct the associations between all the vessels, the presence of two juglets, three pedestal basins and several cups, both pedestalled and not (simple base), suggest that at least two sets of the same type of pots could have been used. It is also quite significant that the same association of objects was found in the reoccupation layers inside the so-called Double Chapel at Borg in-Nadur demonstrating an exact association of these three vessel types in Malta and in Sicily⁹⁶. For tomb 23, on the other hand, interpretation is more difficult because Orsi stated clearly that about a third of the ceramic goods found were too fragmentary to be identified or restored. However, leaving aside the individual accompanied by 'some sherds' buried in the vestibule, inside the chamber there were 22 individuals with an assemblage of 16 local vessels (plus four lids), 21 Borg in-Nadur-type pots and three bronze long swords, one of which with an ivory handle. Orsi also stated that neither skeletons nor vessels were located in the two side chambers or on the bench running along the perimeter of the chamber. To find side chambers, usually meant to receive additional burials, empty is odd especially when one considers that a burial was found in the vestibule. An empty bench, on the other hand, is not uncommon in several graves of the period since its presence in tombs is related to a specific

⁹³ Spouted juglet CP13/3 and pedestal cup CP13/4.

⁹⁴ Orsi 1903.

⁹⁵ Tomb 6: conical cup and pedestal basin; Tomb E: juglet and conical cup.

⁹⁶ Murray 1929: pl. 25; Tanasi 2008a: 77, fig. 59c.

ritual involving a funerary feast. This is thought to have been performed inside the tomb by the relatives of the dead, who symbolically partook in it⁹⁷. The participants sat on the bench and meat-based meals were prepared. A pottery set, composed of a pedestalled cup or one with a simple base, a pedestalled basin, and a jug, was used for the communal consumption of the food, and the set was then placed in the centre of the tomb together with the remains of the food. So going by the remains discovered in tomb 23, the ritual feast would seem to have been carried out using two sets of identical pottery containers.

In this perspective, it is very important to highlight how the above mentioned set of Maltese vessels is morphologically and functionally similar to the local one usually used for the funerary feast (Fig. 10.23).

This would suggest that the same kind of ritual was carried out using both local and Maltese vessels or by local people using exotic objects or by Maltese people using both their own pottery and also local vessels. A hint for supporting this hypothesis comes from the traces of burning observed on the conical cup (11253) that may have been used for the actual preparation of the food to be consumed. But there is also another possibility. It is interesting to note that the Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery consists of exclusively open vessels whereas local pottery includes open vessels but also a variety of small jars equipped with lids; these can be interpreted as personal belongings pertaining to an individual/s. The exclusive presence of this type of object among the group of local vessels can be taken to be related to a practice traditionally considered 'local' and that cannot be carried out with 'foreign' vessels.

In my opinion, this reading of the evidence can be taken a step further to suggest that among the 22 individuals, buried in tomb 23, there were Maltese persons accompanied by Borġ in-Nadur-type vessels, Sicilian persons accompanied by Thapsos vessels, both participating with their own pottery shapes in the ritual of the funerary feast. In addition to this, at least a second practice of offering small jars equipped with lids was also carried out, probably involving only local people.

⁹⁷ Maniscalco 1999: 188-189.

The suggestion that Maltese people may have accepted local practice, like the funerary feast carried out through the use of a ritual set of vessels, must not be considered unlikely for several reasons. First, the use of those types of tableware together is documented also in Malta⁹⁸. Second, practices of commensality performed in honour of the dead are quite common in Mediterranean prehistory⁹⁹. Third, the acquisition of diverse beliefs, or tastes as pointed out by Vives Ferrándiz, as well as the development of different cultural facets is the main feature of intermarriages¹⁰⁰.

3. This leads us to the third and final question: were the people using ‘foreign’ vessels local or were they Maltese immigrants living and dying in a foreign country following Maltese funerary prescriptions? This issue may be taken to embrace all the other Sicilian contexts, funerary or domestic, where Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery was found. To justify the large amount of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery found in Sicily, and also to attend to this question directed to the evidence from Cozzo del Pantano, two hypotheses can be proposed in a preliminary manner, to provoke rather than provide definitive answers.

It could be suggested that Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery was offered to Sicilian local elites in a commercial strategy aimed to put in contact Maltese people with Mycenaean merchants frequenting Sicilian emporia. Pottery was given to acquire the right to trade directly with Mycenaeans or to obtain indirectly Mycenaean merchandise from local rulers. It is likely that the Maltese-type pottery with its strange metal-like surface, so different and yet so technologically well developed, could be considered exotic and worthy of note by the Sicilian elites controlling the commercial trade. Furthermore, the discovery of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery, in some cases huge versions of open vessels without any practical use, inside warehouses A and B at Thapsos, could testify to the donation of a symbolic gift of pottery vessels¹⁰¹, as is known to have

⁹⁸ Murray 1929: pl. XXV; Tanasi 2008a: 77.

⁹⁹ Hayden 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Vives Ferrándiz 2010: 203.

¹⁰¹ Tanasi 2008a: 78.

happened elsewhere¹⁰². From this point of view, the presence of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery in domestic and funerary contexts could be interpreted as exotic objects acquired by local middlemen used together with other rare Aegean goods to enrich their tombs, or stored in the warehouses with other foreign merchandise or used in their houses as everyday pots as an alternative to similar local vessels. The use in a funerary sphere can be interpreted by suggesting that Maltese vessels were used by indigenous elites as an exotic and alternative version of the local pottery, which was basically similar in shape and function to the Borġ in-Nadur-type counterpart. Furthermore, the hypothesis of a conscious use of the Borġ-in Nadur-type pottery could also be confirmed by the practice attested in the Thapsos ritual funerary feast of substituting the local vessels by a Mycenaean version of them presumably in an effort to mark through display a privileged status for the deceased and his/her group¹⁰³.

Another hypothesis would have the Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery as the personal possession of Maltese people who travel to Sicily to live within local communities. In this case, Borġ in-Nadur-type vessels were consciously used for ritual reasons by the same Maltese people, living and dying in Sicily.

Available data and studies already carried out¹⁰⁴ have clearly rebuilt a scenario in which Maltese merchants were regularly coming to Sicily to participate in commercial business with Mycenaean partners and stopping at least at the two main coastal hubs of south-eastern Sicily, the Great Harbour of Siracusa, controlled probably not by a single site but by a network of hamlets, and the bays of the Magnisi Peninsula controlled by Thapsos. It is possible that some 'visitors' could have been chosen to settle permanently in local villages and could have even mixed with local people through intermarriages determining forms of cultural hybridisation. This can easily explain the presence of Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery in domestic contexts. At the end of their life,

¹⁰² Dietler 1999.

¹⁰³ Tanasi 1999: 46.

¹⁰⁴ Tanasi 2008a; Tanasi 2010.

they could have been buried in Sicily in the most popular graves, that is, the chamber tomb accompanied by sets of vessels as grave goods.

Even if the funerary practices of the Borġ in-Nadur culture in the Maltese islands are largely unknown, the evidence of Ghar Mirdum can add significant data. Explored by a group of speleologists between 1964 and 1965¹⁰⁵, it is a complex of 19 natural caves interconnected by galleries with traces of occupation from the Neolithic to Roman times¹⁰⁶. The more relevant phase of its frequentation is that of the Borġ in-Nadur phase. Among several significant discoveries, the most important is represented by two inhumations accompanied by several grave goods, found in chamber P, which are the only known and documented examples of burials for the Middle Bronze Age. The analysis carried out on the two individuals demonstrated that they were an adult and a two-year-old child¹⁰⁷. This evidence informs us that it could not be so hazardous to suggest that Maltese people adopted the practice of inhumation in subterranean contexts and carried out the same type of funerary ritual as their Sicilian neighbours. As the evidence of Maltese-Sicilian cultural interchange may involve the production of Borġ in-Nadur pottery, as may have been the case at Cozzo del Pantano, and a Maltese influence on local pottery technology, it is reasonable to think that among those Maltese immigrants there were also artisans. The commissioners of these specialists of pottery making could have been both local elites attracted by the exoticism of Borġ in-Nadur ware and Maltese people who needed their traditional pottery for use in their daily life and for funerary rituals.

In conclusion, the evidence from the necropolis at Cozzo del Pantano turns out to be fundamental for defining the role the Maltese archipelago played in the south-central Mediterranean in the second half of the second millennium BC. Furthermore, sufficient arguments can be made to suggest that Maltese immigrants may have lived in eastern Sicily during the Middle Bronze Age.

¹⁰⁵ Evans 1971: 22.

¹⁰⁶ www.shurdington.org/gharmirdum/

¹⁰⁷ MAR 1965: 1; Trump 2004, p. 238.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Concetta Ciurcina and Beatrice Basile, former and current director of the Archaeological Museum of Siracusa respectively, for allowing me to study the finds from Orsi's excavation at Cozzo del Pantano. This research would have been unsuccessful without the help of Anita Crispino and Angela Maria Manenti at the Museum of Siracusa. Many thanks to Carlo Veca for the fine drawings and to Dalma Cultrera who contributed a lot to the cataloguing of the pieces. I am grateful also to Michele Uccello and Giuseppe Pirrotta for helping me to put order in the material.

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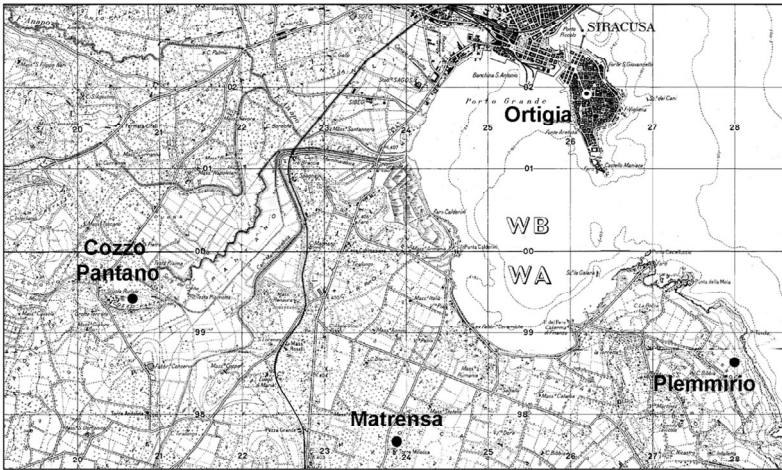
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Davide Tanasi PhD is Adjunct Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History at Arcadia University – The College of Global Studies. He has authored several publications about Mediterranean prehistory including *La necropoli protostorica di Montagna di Caltagirone* (Polimetrica, 2008) and *La Sicilia e l'arcipelago maltese nell'età del Bronzo Medio* (Officina di Studi Medievali, 2008). He is co-director of the Archeomatica Project (IPLab, University of Catania) aimed to develop new digital tools for archaeological research and the preservation of cultural heritage.



A



B

Figure 10.1. (A) Plan of southern coastal territory of Siracusa with indications of more relevant Middle Bronze settlements: Ortigia, Cozzo del Pantano, Matrensa, Plemmirio; B) Aerial view of the Siracusa's Great Harbour.



Figure 10.2. Aerial view of Cozzo del Pantano with indication of the five main groups of tombs (A, B, C, D, E).



A



B

Figure 10.3. (A) Entrance of tomb 13, from the South; (B) Entrance of tomb 23, from the South.

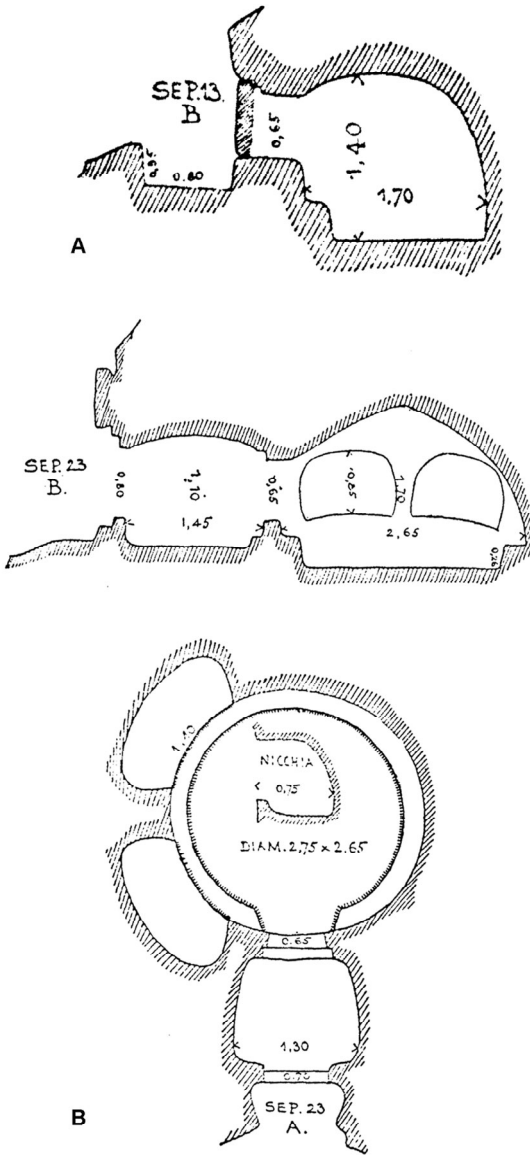


Figure 10.4. (A) Plan and section of tomb 13 (after Orsi 1893); (B) Plan of tomb 23 (after Orsi 1893).

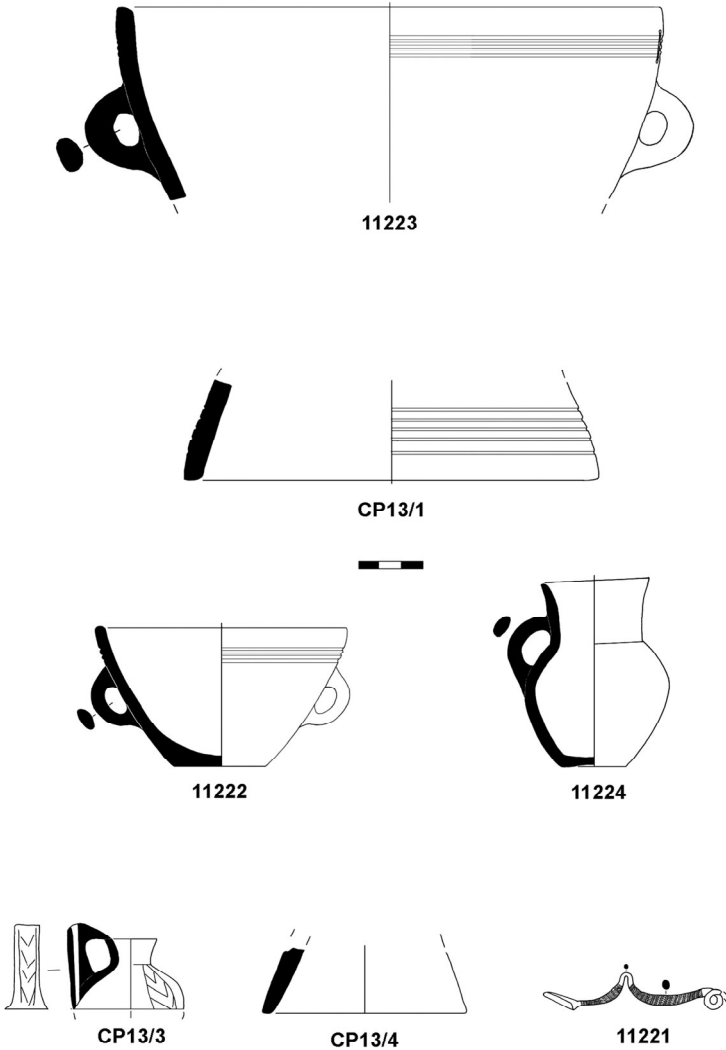


Figure 10.5. Tomb 13, Borg in-Nadur type pottery (11223, 11222, CP13/1, 11244; Thapsos pottery (CP13/3, CP13/4); bronze fibula dated to a later phase of reuse (11221) (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

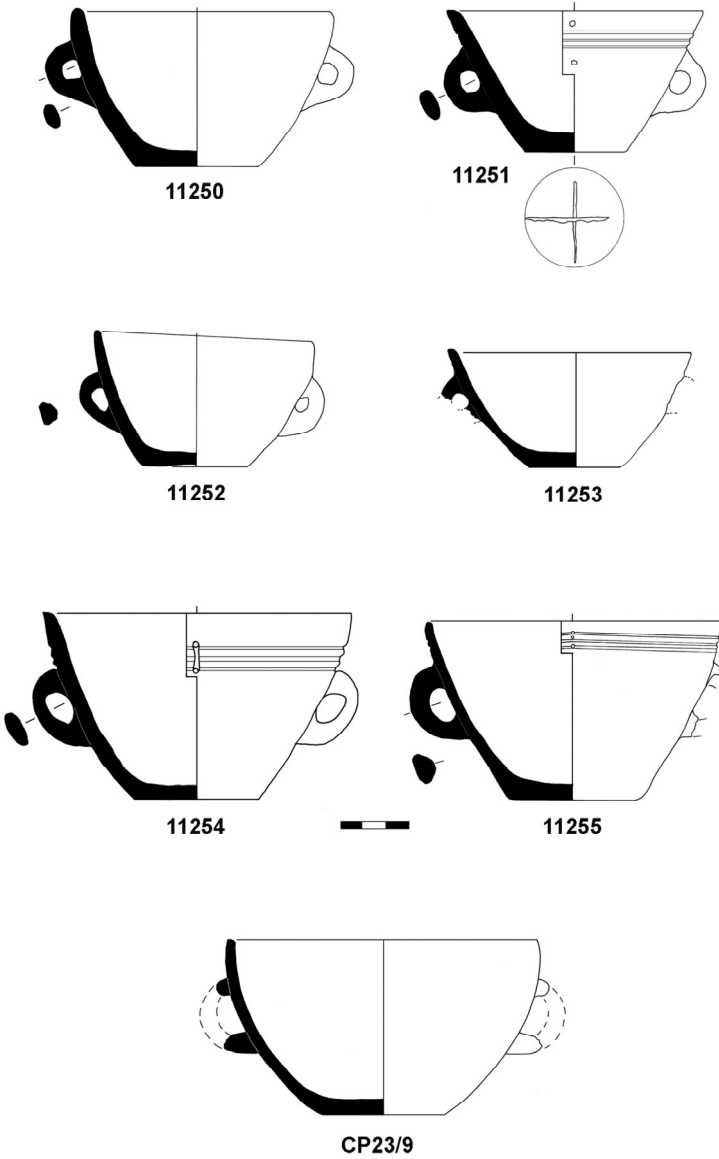


Figure 10.6. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, simple cups (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

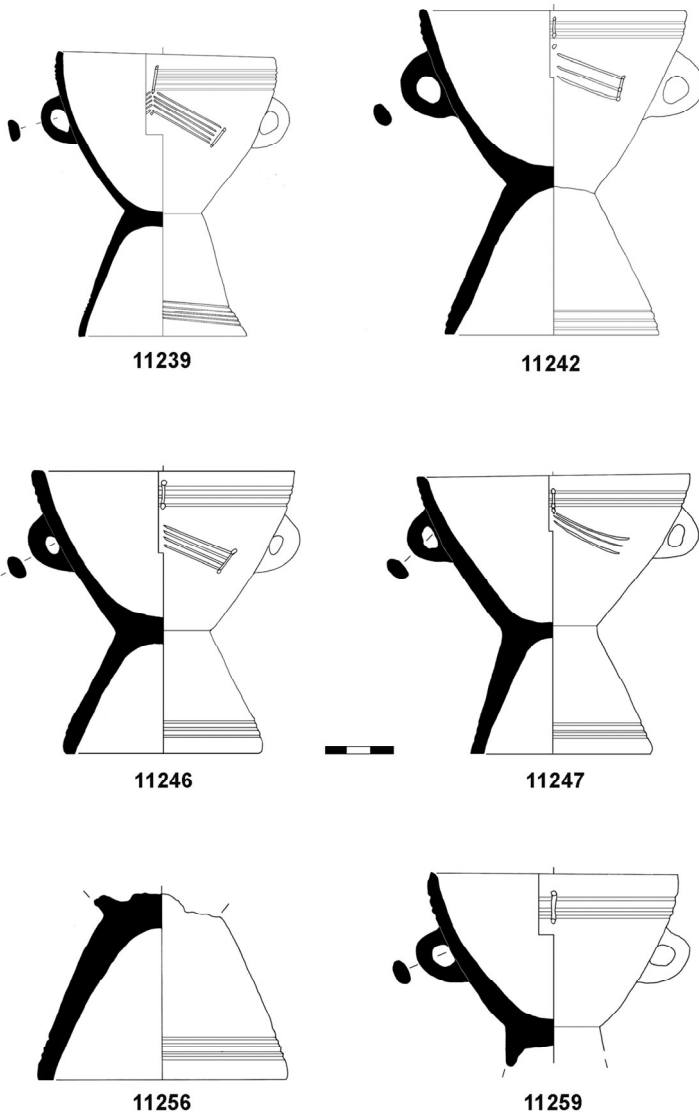
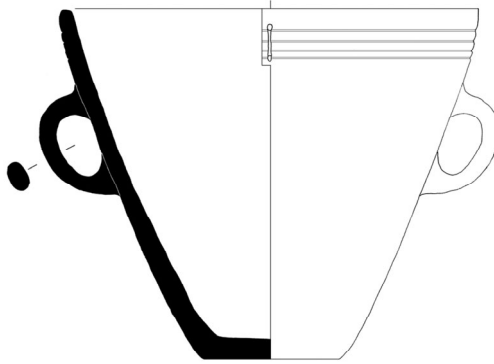
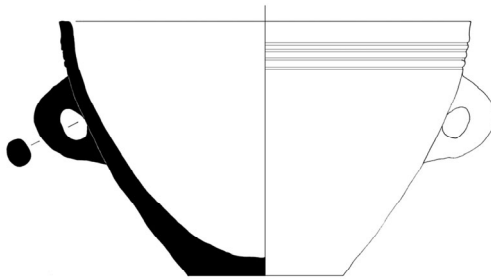


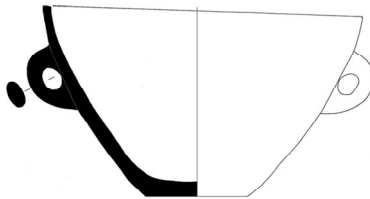
Figure 10.7. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, pedestal cups (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).



11243



11244



11249

Figure 10.8. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, simple basins (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

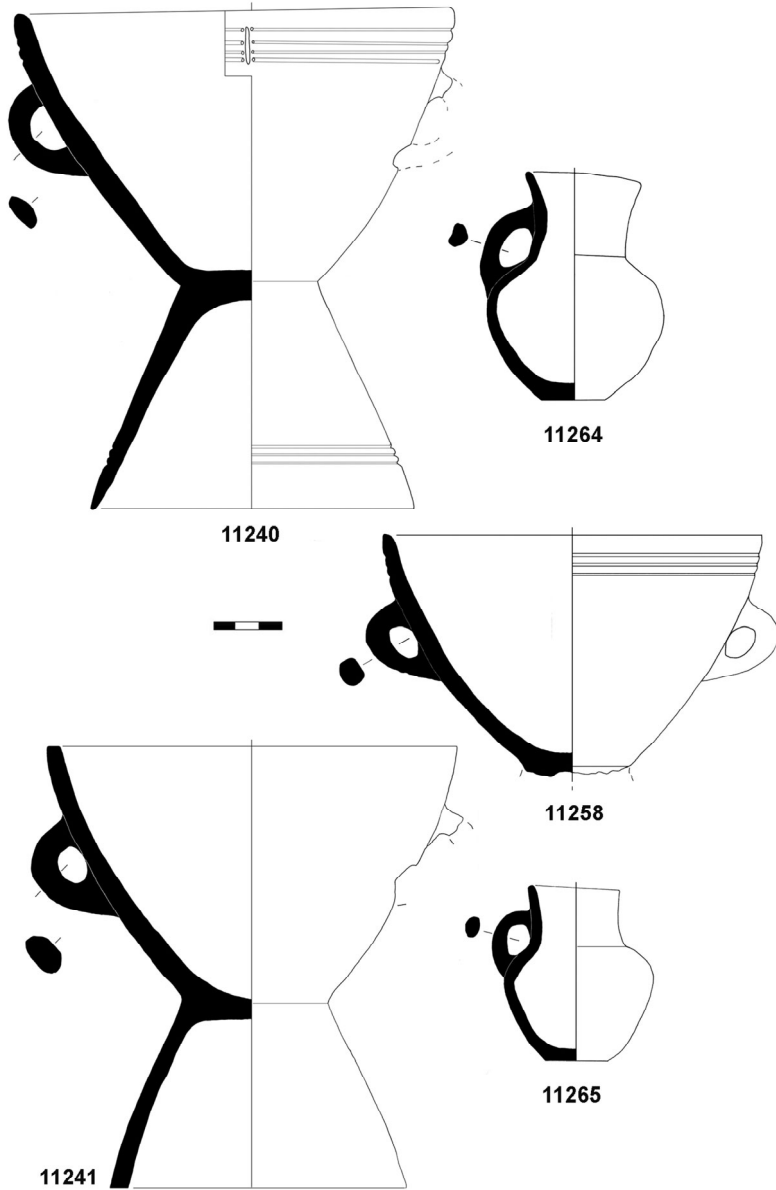


Figure 10.9. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, pedestal basins and juglets (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

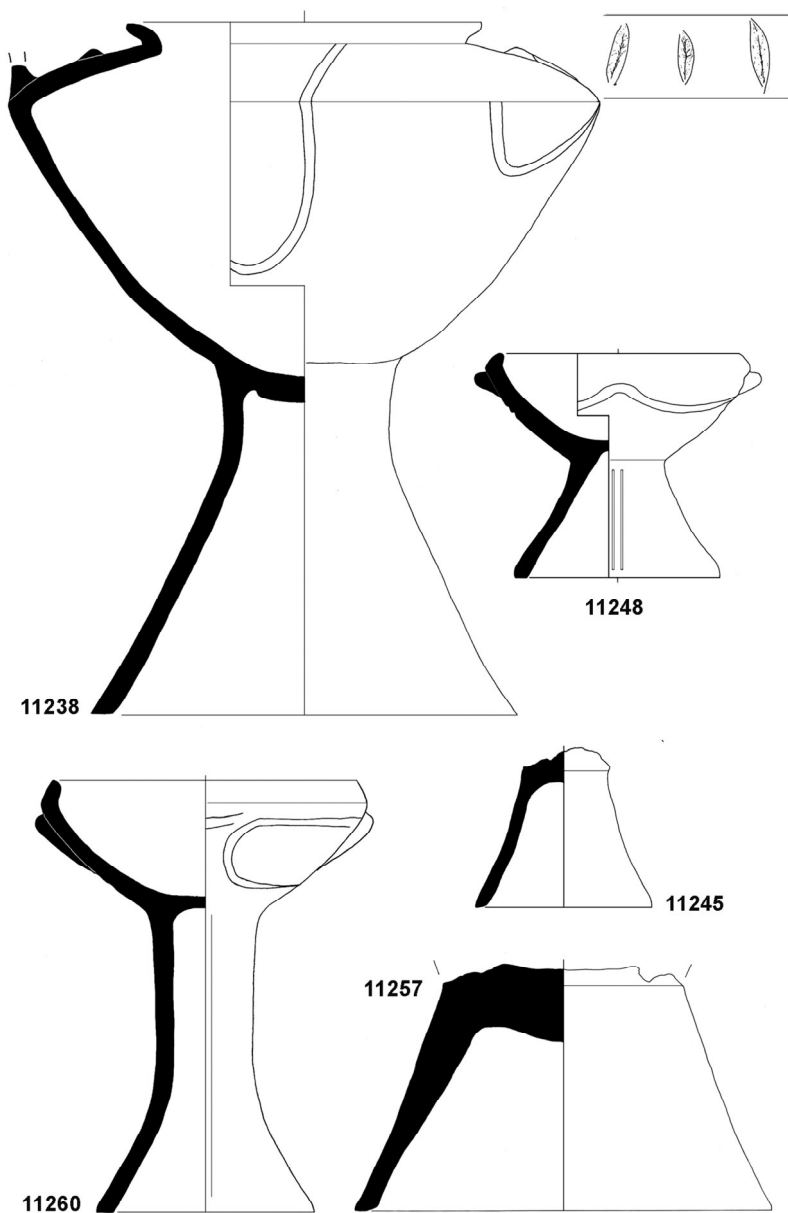


Figure 10.10. Tomb 23, Thapsos pottery, pedestal cups and pedestal basins (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

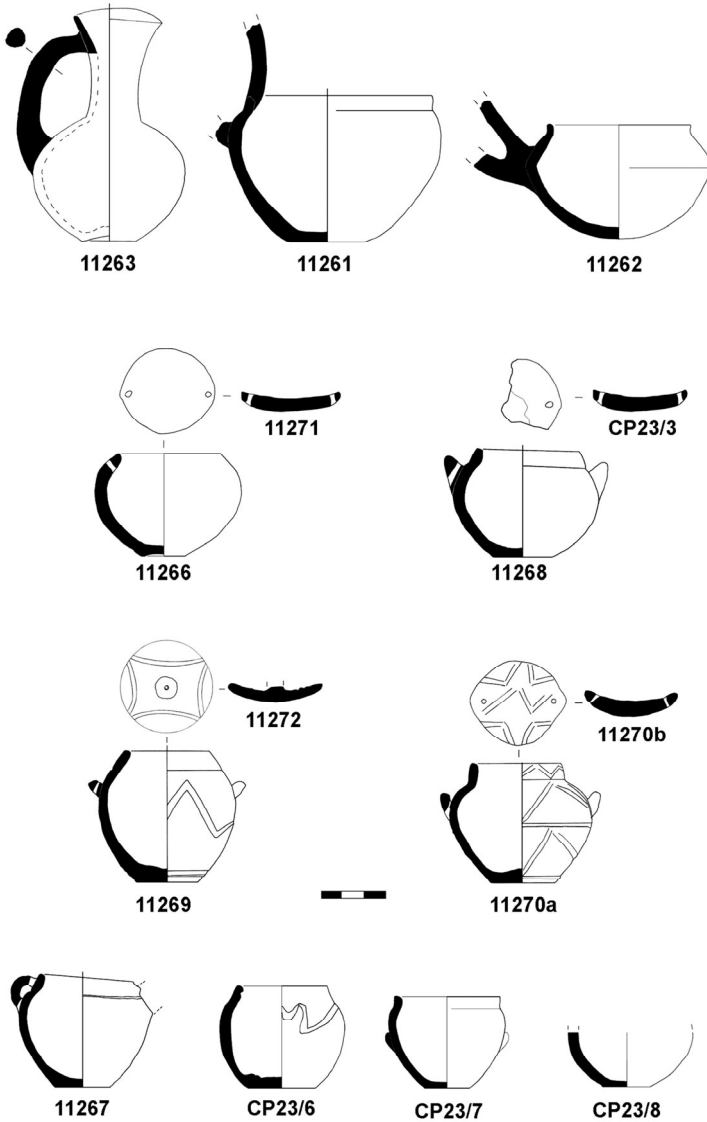


Figure 10.11. Tomb 23, Thapsos pottery, juglet, dipper cups, jars with lid (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

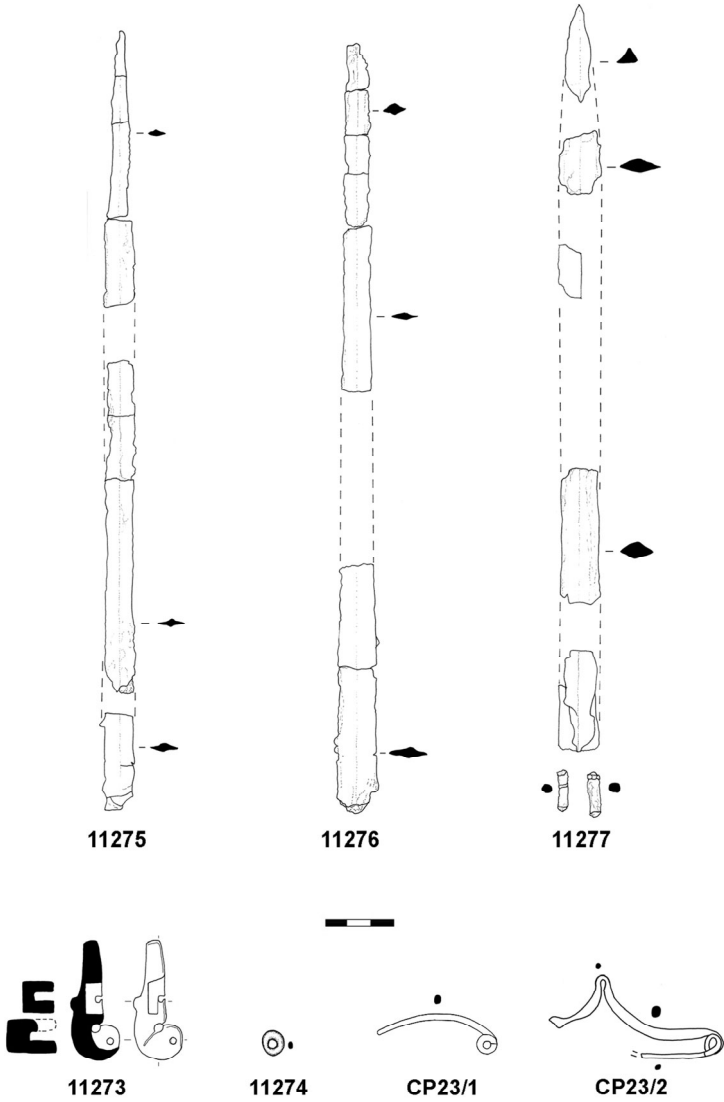


Figure 10.12. Tomb 23, Thapsos bronze swords, ivory hilt; bronze fibulas dated to reuse phase (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).

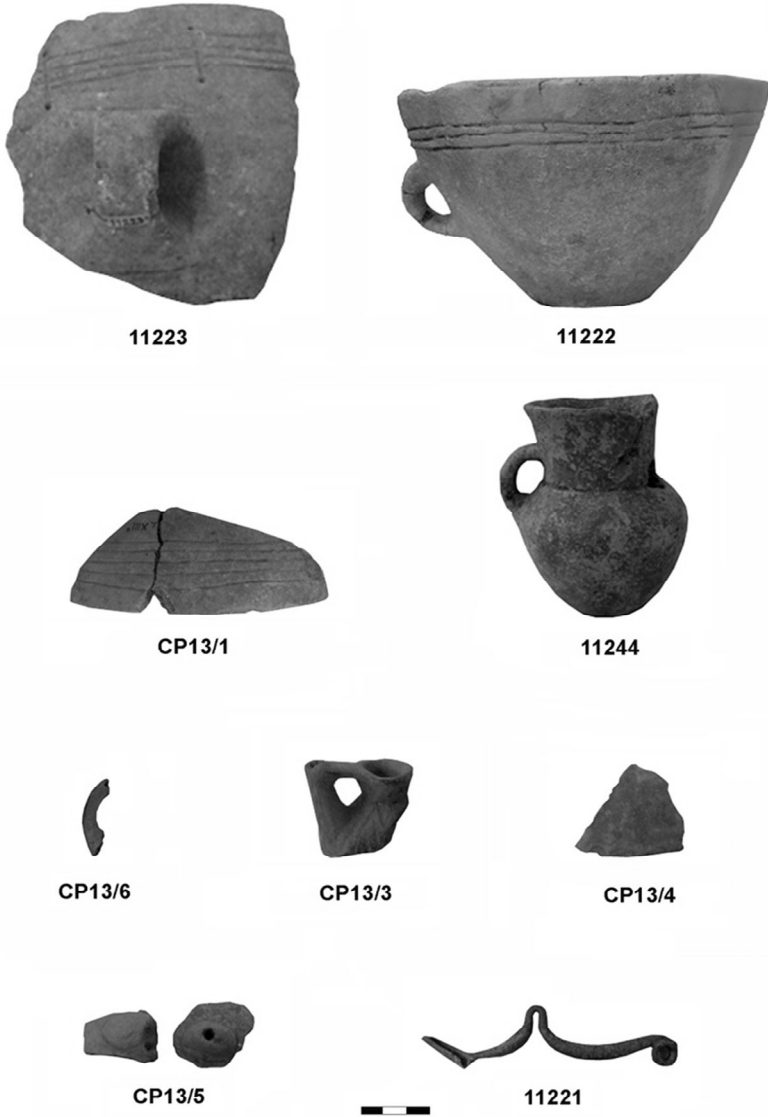


Figure 10.13. Tomb 13, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery (11223, 11222, CP13/1, 11244, CP13/6); Thapsos pottery (CP13/3, CP13/4, CP13/5); bronze fibula dated to a later phase of reuse (11221) (photo author).

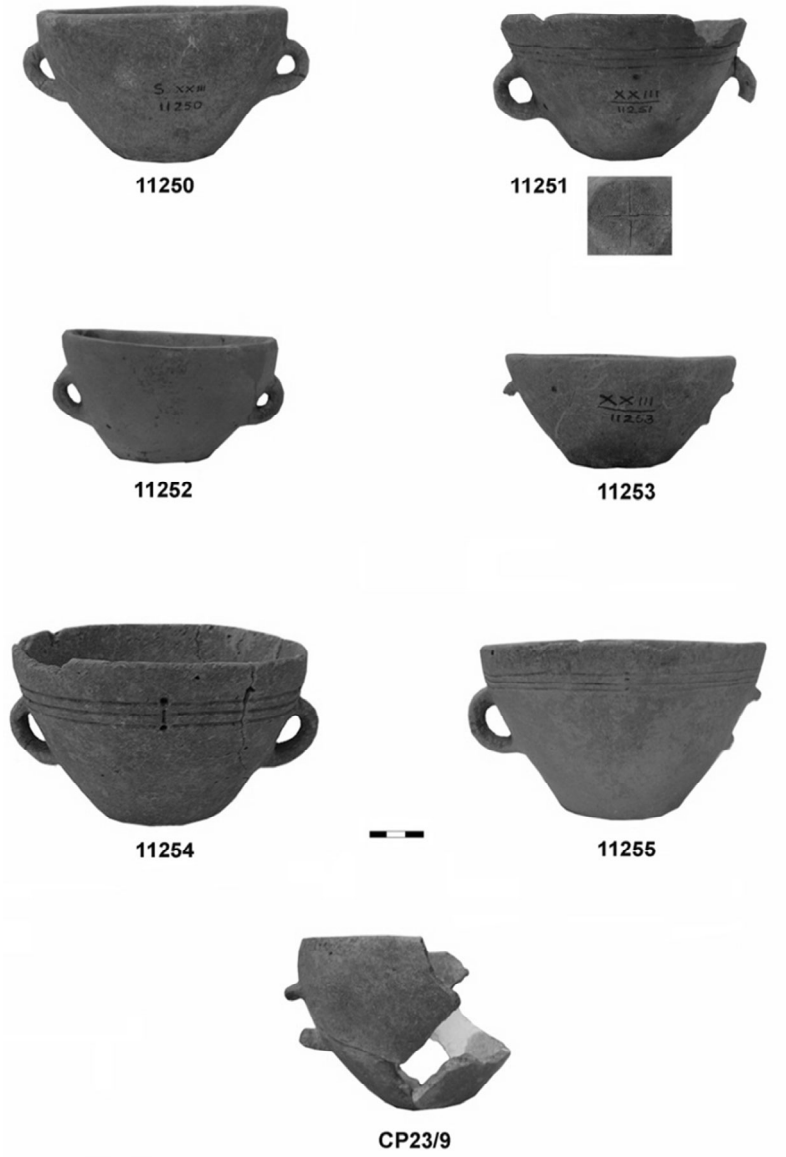


Figure 10.14: Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, simple cups (photo author).



Figure 10.15. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, pedestal cups (photo author).



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Figure 10.16. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, simples basins (photo author).



Figure 10.17. Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type pottery, pedestal basins and juglets (photo author).



Figure 10.18. Tomb 23, Thapsos pottery, pedestal cups and pedestal basins (photo author).

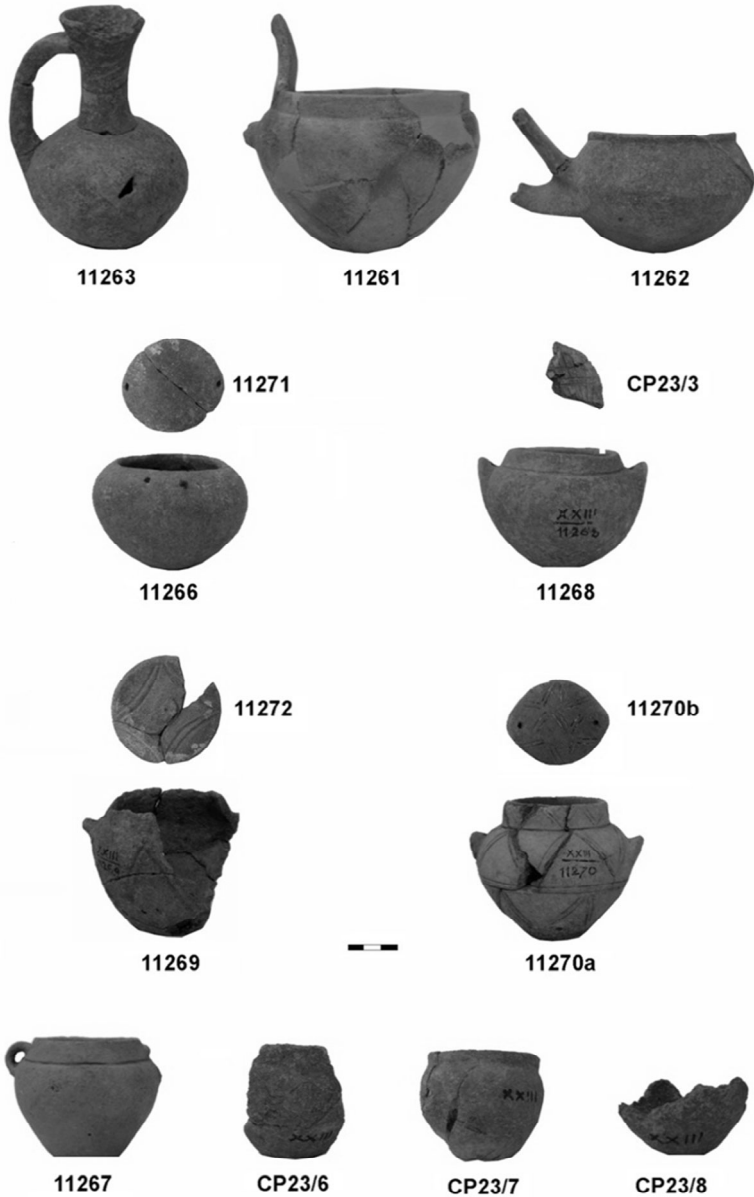


Figure 10.19. Tomb 23, Thapsos pottery, juglet, dipper cups, jars with lid (photo author).

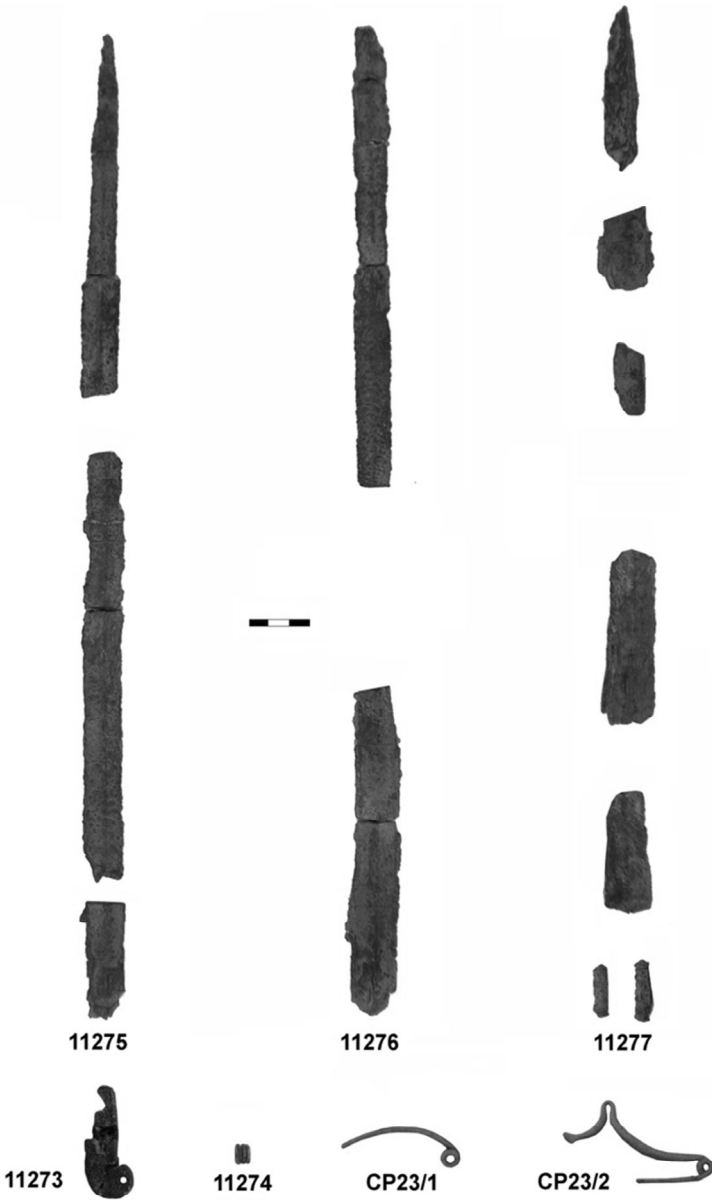


Figure 10.20. Tomb 23, Thapsos phase bronze swords, ivory hilt; bronze fibulas dated to reuse phase (photo author).

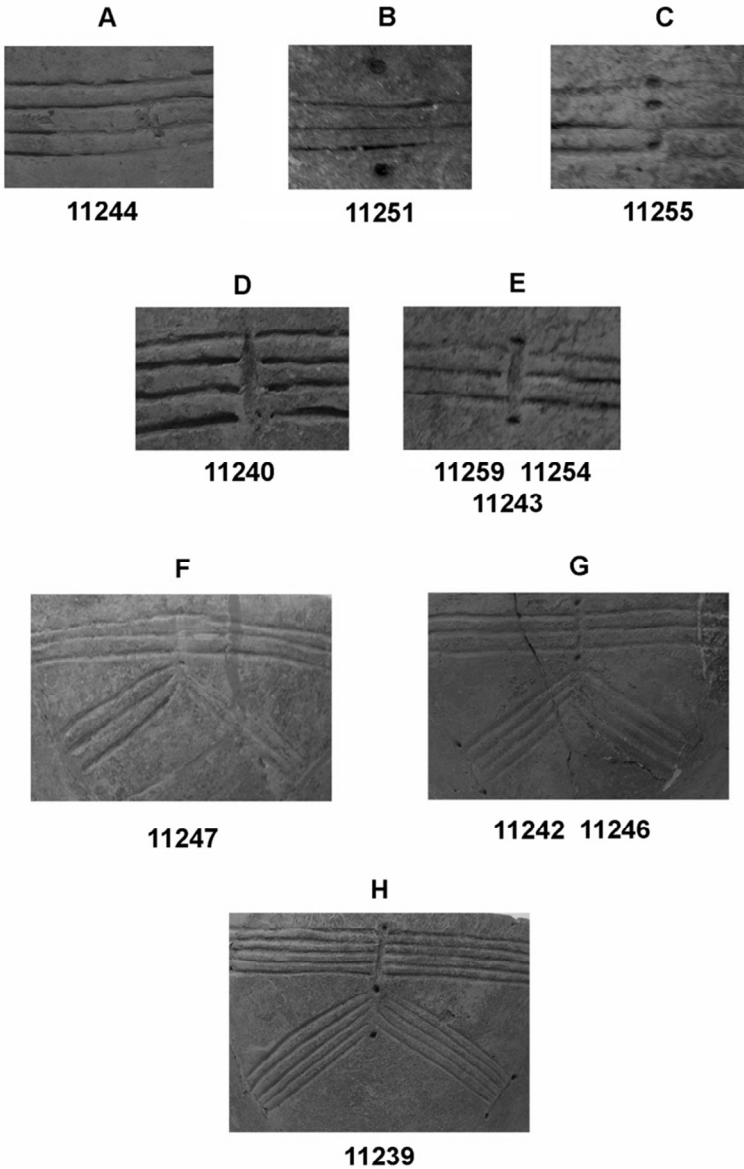


Figure 10.21. Decorative motifs of simple cups and basins (A-E) and of pedestal cups and basins (F-H).

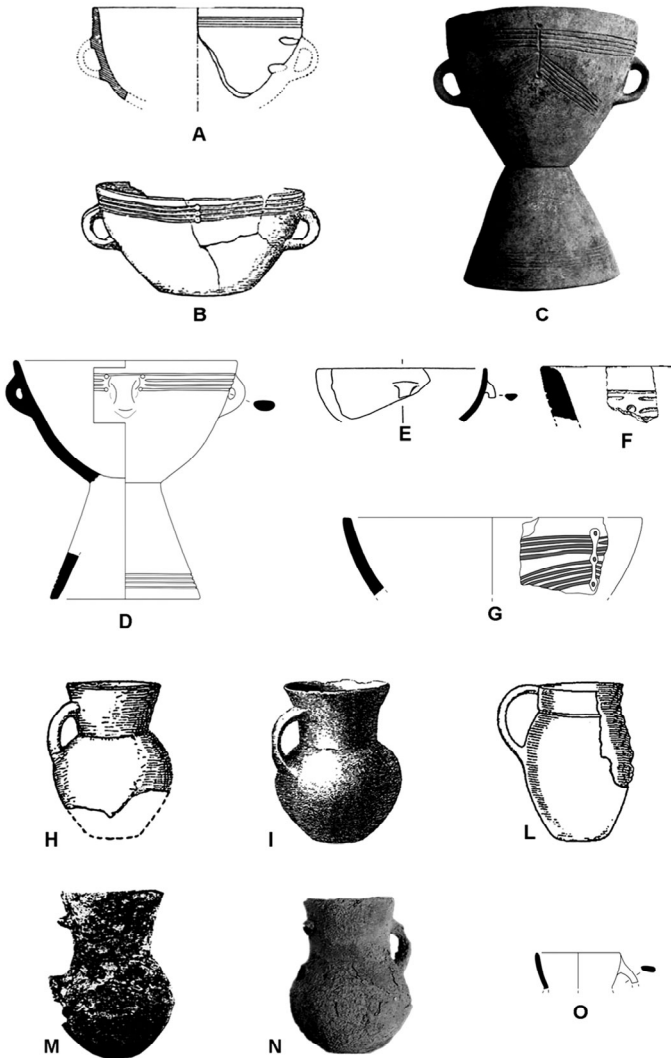


Figure 10.22. Borg in-Nadur pottery parallels: (A) Chiusazza (after Tinè 1965); (B, H) Thapsos (after Orsi 1895); (C, I) Matrensa (after Orsi 1903); (D, G, O) Borg in-Nadur temple (BN/P13, BN/P40, BN/P56 drawn by Maxine Anastasi); (E) Mtarfa (after Sagona 1999); (F) Xaghra Circle (Malone *et al.* 2009); (L) Ghar Dalam (after Ashby *et al.* 1916); (M) Tarxien (Evans 1971); (N) Ghar Mirdum (after Trump 2002).

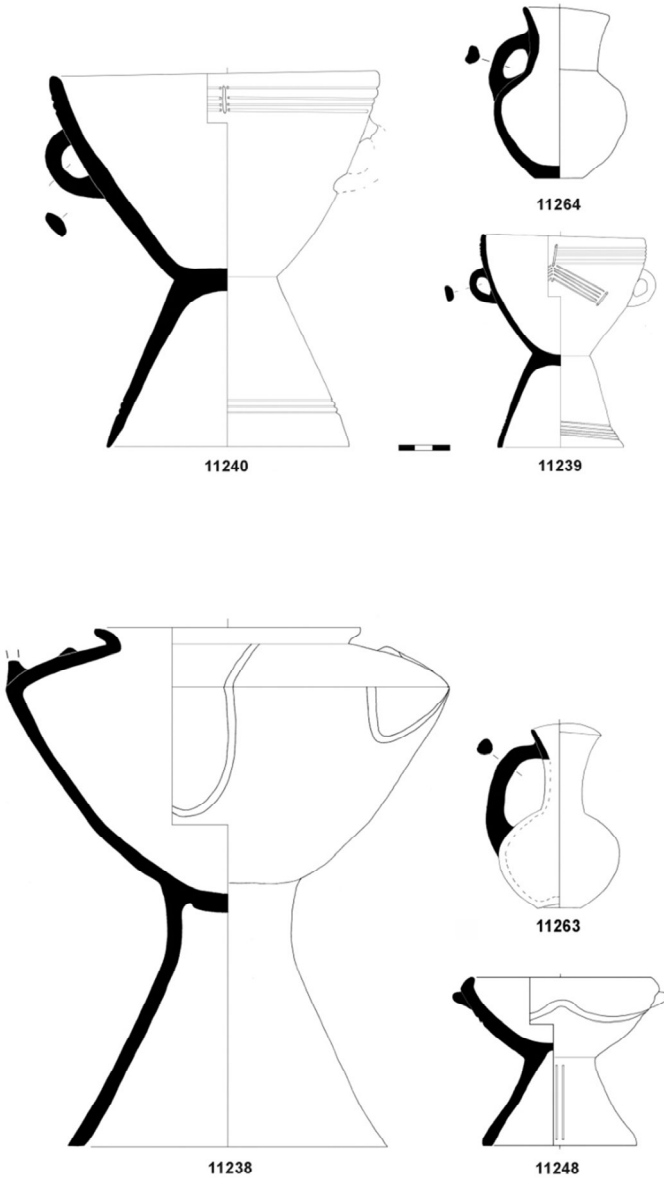


Figure 10.23: Tomb 23, Borg in-Nadur-type (11239, 11240, 11264) and Thapsos pottery set (1128, 11248, 11263) (1:4, drawn by Carlo Veca).