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CAPO GRAZIANO DECORATIVE MOTIFS AND MILAZZESE POTTERY MARKS: A PHENOMENON OF CULTURAL MEMORY?

Marco Bettelli, Sara Tiziana Levi, Andrea Di Renzoni, Maria Clara Martinelli, Valentina Cannavò

Summary

This paper focuses on the phenomena of continuity and discontinuity between the Capo Graziano facies and the subsequent Milazzese facies in the Aeolian Islands, observed principally through incised motifs on pottery. Between the end of 15th and the early 14th centuries BCE, after centuries of transmission and reproduction of the same cultural traits, especially in the field of pottery production, a new pottery trend eventually replaced the old one. The new Milazzese style shares many formal and decorative similarities with the Thapsos style of pottery – widespread from Sicily to southern Calabria – while apparently not preserving any formal elements typical of the previous Capo Graziano tradition. A thorough analysis of the general archaeological framework shows that the formal and decorative innovations in Milazzese ceramics nevertheless bear some features in common with the earlier Capo Graziano world. These are namely the numerous and various incised motifs, usually isolated on vessel bodies, known in the literature as ‘pottery marks’. We suggest that there was a continuity in the usage of specific incised marks which probably had a particularly important significance to the entirety of the Capo Graziano decorative repertoire, possibly linked to the seascape. We discuss the manifold connections between Capo Graziano decorative motifs and Milazzese pottery marks in the framework of the transmission of social memory.

The Bronze Age occupation cycle in the Aeolian Islands (Fig. 1) began toward the end of the third millennium BCE with the Capo Graziano facies, named after the eponymous village on the island of Filicudi. The Capo Graziano facies had a considerable duration (*ca.* 700 years) and the first contact with the Aegean world is attested in this period by the presence of imported objects (Martinelli *et al.* 2020).

Capo Graziano’s long-lasting continuity was finally broken by the appearance in the archipelago of a completely different archaeological facies: the so-called Milazzese, named after the eponymous village on the island of Panarea, which is datable mostly to the 14th century BCE but whose beginning may be traced back to the previous century (Calderoni, Martinelli 2005; Alberti 2008, 74-87; Martinelli, Fiorentino 2010).

A general picture of historical developments in the area is given by the occupation of its islands and the number of settlements present (Martinelli, Lo Cascio 2018; Martinelli *et al.* 2021) (Fig. 2). As the only facies present in the peripheral islands of Stromboli and Alicudi, Capo Graziano¹ represents the peak of the archipelago’s occupation; the two islands would no longer be inhabited during the Milazzese period and only Lipari would be inhabited in the following Ausonian phase. In terms of settlements,² Capo Graziano is the phase with the most villages (17) while the number of settlements decreases during the Milazzese period (6) (Fig. 2a).

Regarding continuity and discontinuity in occupation patterns, the Milazzese phase has the highest proportion of pre-existing settlements as opposed to newly founded ones (5 out of 6): clear evidence of strong continuity with the previous phase. Similar numbers can only be observed between the Pianoconte and Piano Quartara phases (5 out of 7). In all other phases, newly founded settlements are either more numerous than or equal in number to

1 In this general evaluation we do not divide Capo Graziano into sub-phases.

2 Aeolian settlements (excavations, test pits) or probable settlements (surveys, test pits); Capo Graziano: Alicudi-Fucile, Filicudi-Filo Braccio; Lipari-Contrada Diana, Piazza Monfalcone, Civita, Castellaro, Panarea-Piano Quartara, Punta Peppamaria, Salina-Punta Megna, Punta dell’Acqua, Stromboli-San Vincenzo, Ginostra Timpone del Fuoco; Capo Graziano and Milazzese: Filicudi-Montagnola, Lipari-Acropoli, Panarea-Punta Milazzese, Salina-Serro Brigadiere, Serro dei Cianfi; Milazzese: Salina-Portella.



Fig. 1. The Aeolian Islands in the lower Tyrrhenian sea.

previously founded ones (not considering the Ausonian phase, when only the Acropolis of Lipari was occupied) (Fig. 2b).

CAPO GRAZIANO MOTIFS

Generally speaking, the Capo Graziano phase is characterized by a certain uniformity of pottery styles, settlement organization, architecture and other cultural choices, although some distinguishing characteristics unique to each island can be observed in each of these areas. Pottery from this phase has formal typological qualities which are specific to the Aeolian Islands and, as such, can be seen as an expression

of cultural identity; the incised decorations typical of this phase are very distinctive and bear clear links to the maritime landscape (Martinelli 2018, Vidale *et al.* 2018).

Systematic investigations into production centers and decorated pottery finds from the islands of Lipari, Filicudi, Salina, Stromboli and from the Milazzo promontory on the northwestern coast of Sicily have been carried out. Archaeometric analyses indicate the existence of multiple production centers: each island can be distinguished by the composition of the pastes used by its potters to craft their wares (Brunelli *et al.* 2013, Levi *et al.* 2019).

Within the framework of this phase's general homogeneity and single cultural identity, stylistic analysis shows that it is nevertheless possible to distinguish a number of decorative styles and that specific decorative styles and motifs spread through some areas of the Aeolian archipelago. Moreover, we can also observe a slight change in taste over time.

The first classification looked at 68 well-preserved bowls – the most iconic pottery shape of this facies (Fig. 3 bottom) – and allowed for the identification of six distinct styles and the main motifs used. The styles have been defined according to the combination of motifs used, their spatial organization/layout and some technical characteristics such as regularity and depth of incised signs (Levi *et al.* 2014).

More recently, a new systematic classification focused on specific motifs chosen for their design, their isolation on vessels' bodies and a possible geographic significance: metopes (rectangles) and islands (circles) typical of the so-called Boetti style.³ The selection included approximately 50 islands and 50 metopes incised on different shapes of vessels and vessel fragments. This new classification of metopes and islands⁴ follows an open logic with the goal of designing an inclusive system that can be easily expanded with the (likely) discovery of new types in the future. The system is organized into two-dimensional grids and differs slightly for each motif, due to the probable different relevance of the various parts of each.⁵ Another aspect considered is that of the patterns present on approximately 50 incised bases: crossed, linear, round and random (Levi *et al.* 2020a).

3 For examples of the Boetti style, see Levi *et al.* 2014, figs. 7, 9, 15; Levi *et al.* 2020a, figs. 3.3, 3.4.

4 Islands and metopes are usually not found together on the same vessels, with some exceptions occurring primarily at Lipari. In some cases, islands are incised under vessel bases.

5 Islands: 12 types; numbers indicate motif's center: 1 = one dot; 2 = few dots (3-5); 3 = many dots; 4 = cross; letters indicate circles around motif's center: a = one circle of dots; b = one linear circle; c = two linear circles; d = one circle of dots and one linear circle; e = two linear circles and one circle of dots; f = alternating linear circles and circles of dots (Levi *et al.* 2020a, fig. 3.9). Metopes: 7 types; numbers indicate motif's center: 1 = alignments of dots; 2 = lines; 3 = wavy lines; letters indicate motif's frame: a = no frame; b = dots; c = lines (Levi *et al.* 2020a, fig. 3.8).

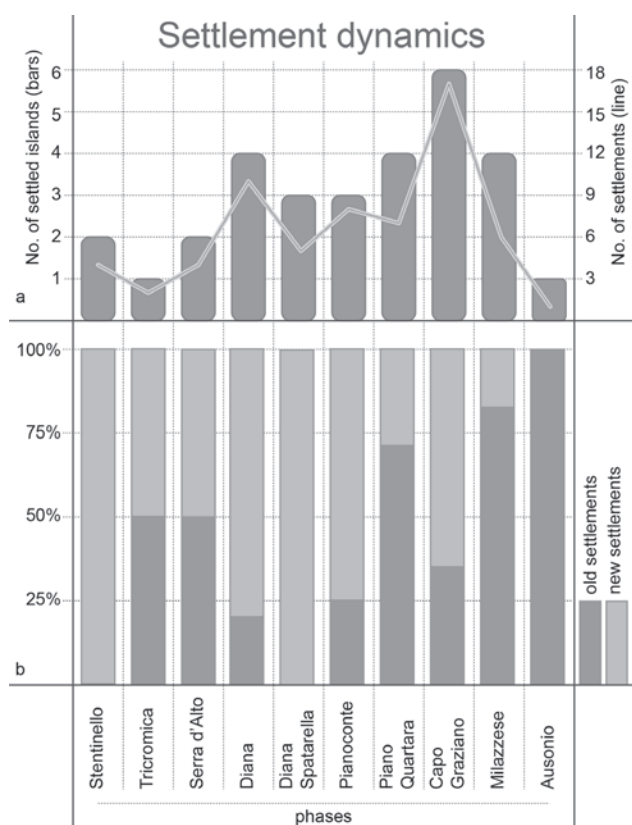


Fig. 2. a. Occupation of the Aeolian archipelago: number of islands and settlements in each phase. b. Settlement continuity and discontinuity in the Aeolian archipelago: % of new and old villages in each phase.

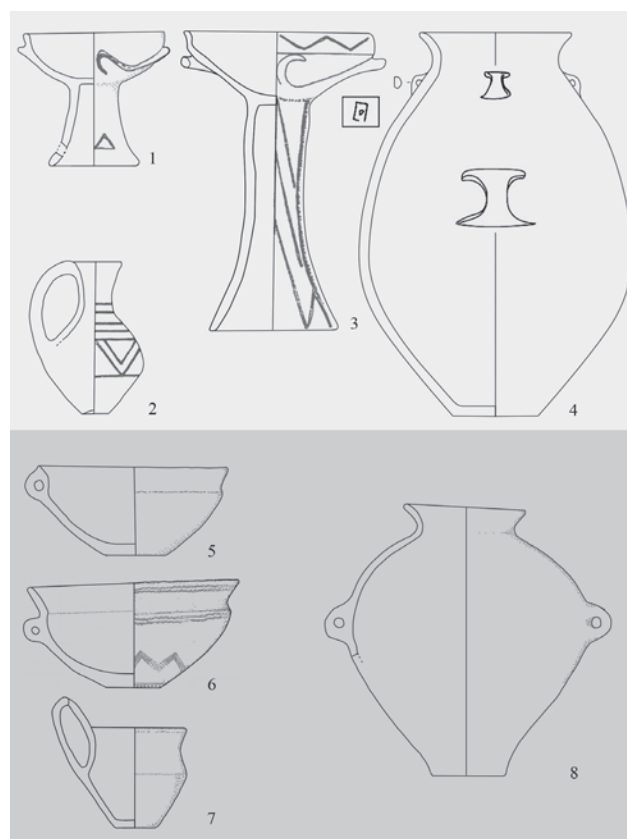


Fig. 3. Main pottery shapes typical of each facies: Milazzese (top); Capo Graziano (bottom). 1-3 and 5-7, scale *ca.* 1:12; 4, scale *ca.* 1:25; 8, scale *ca.* 1:16.

Altogether, the analyses of Capo Graziano decoration types suggest that the geographical distribution throughout the archipelago of the various styles, metopes, islands and base patterns could possibly be linked to different production/distribution networks.

MILAZZESE POTTERY MARKS: NEW OR OLD WAVES?

In this section, we will focus on the phenomena of continuity and discontinuity between the Capo Graziano and Milazzese facies, beginning with an analysis of specific incised 'decorative' motifs on pottery. After centuries of transmission and reproduction of the same cultural traits, especially in the field of pottery production, a new pottery trend eventually replaced the old one. The new Milazzese style shares many formal and decorative similarities with the Thapsos style of pottery – widespread from Sicily to southern Calabria – while apparently not preserving any formal elements typical of the previous Capo Graziano tradition.

New pottery shapes were introduced in this phase, namely pedestaled bowls of different sizes, jugs and jars with new types of handles (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1980, 163-215, 545-558; 699-704; Bernabò Brea 1991-1992; Alberti 2008) (Fig. 3 top). As mentioned, it is important to underline that this ceramic style shows close links to the Thapsos facies present throughout southeastern Sicily in the same period. The rich incised decorations of the Capo Graziano phase disappeared and were replaced by vertical or curved ribs on pedestaled bowls (Fig. 3 top)

often associated with incised motifs, but organized in simple zigzag schemes, different from the complex Capo Graziano patterns. Additionally, new architectural models and new settlement organization were also introduced in this phase. On the basis of these radical transformations in so many fields of material culture, L. Bernabò Brea and M. Cavalier proposed that new people, probably of Sicilian ancestry, may have arrived in the Aeolian Islands in this period, imposing a new lifestyle on local groups (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, 208-215; Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1980, 699-704; Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1991, 204-207; Bernabò Brea 1991-1992, 111-113).

However, a thorough analysis of the general archaeological framework shows that the formal and decorative innovations in Milazzese ceramics nevertheless bear some features in common with the earlier Capo Graziano world. These are namely the numerous and various incised motifs, usually isolated on vessel bodies, known in the literature as 'pottery marks'. L. Bernabò Brea and M. Cavalier proposed a detailed classification and, to some extent, interpretation of these marks on Milazzese vessels (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, 219-279; 1980, 557), which was used as a basis for further studies on the same subject (Marazzi 2001; Martelli 2005; Martinelli, Levi 2021). They classified the marks within at least four main categories (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, 222-224):

- the first consists of dots, either single or organized in rows, with a possible numerical significance;
- the second includes marks with a graphic or ideographic appearance bearing some similarity to Aegean characters;
- the third consists of rectangular or circular/oval marks, often filled with dots, lines, waves, zigzags, crosses or fishbone patterns; this last subgroup has been interpreted as a rough imitation of seal imprints;
- the fourth group includes marks with more complex designs; although marks in this group have the appearance of simple decorative elements, they may have a significance similar to the marks belonging to the previously described types.

The classification system proposed by Bernabò Brea and Cavalier clearly emphasizes the novelty represented by the appearance of pottery marks both in terms of the designs themselves and their possible meanings; furthermore, they place this phenomenon within the framework of the relationships with the Aegean world, which began with the Capo Graziano cultural horizon and intensified during the period in which the Milazzese facies flourished in the Aeolian archipelago. It is worth noting that they recognize the presence of marks in Capo Graziano pottery as well, usually limited to simple crosses or swastikas, along with a few other cases.⁶

The presence of crosses in Capo Graziano pottery, mainly isolated and incised below or on vessels' handles, is confirmed by a recent study in which nearly 40 crosses (and a few other possible marks) have been identified on Capo Graziano vessels (Martinelli, Levi 2021). In the new catalogue, more than 200 Milazzese marks have been classified and their distribution has been identified, showing the widespread diffusion of this phenomenon as well as some differences in their geographical and topographic distribution and in the selection of vessel shapes. The analysis also shows that the variability in the execution of marks on specific sets of vessels from the same contexts does not indicate individual potters but possibly different workshops.

As mentioned above, the classification of Capo Graziano decorative pottery motifs (Levi *et al.* 2020a) allows for a series of important considerations relevant to this topic. Among these motifs there is a number of types identical or similar to the aforementioned Milazzese categories. The cases of design continuity include simple marks such as crosses and swastikas – which have a long-standing tradition in southern Italy and the islands close to Sicily from at least the Early Bronze Age (Marino 2020) – as well as lines of dots; simple or concentric circles filled with crosses or dots; groups of horizontal segments at times bordered by dots; rectangles filled with simple, wavy or zigzagging lines. It is important to point out that many other Milazzese pottery marks can be traced back to the Capo Graziano decorative repertoire which don't find a precise correspondence in it. This is the case with the several

⁶ Dots, metopes and 'circle' from Filicudi (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1991, 178, pl. CL.i; Martinelli *et al.* 2010, fig. 14); island from Lipari (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1980, 530, pl. CXXIX.2a).

variations of the cross motif, filled circles and rectangles, or with the marks obtained by the juxtaposition of two or more filled rectangles.

Comparing the incised circles and rectangles of the two facies gives a good picture of their consistency and variability.⁷ Circles/islands can be divided into 5 main groups.⁸ Two of these groups are only found in the Capo Graziano phase while the other three are shared in both facies and include some identical designs (Fig. 4).

- Groups A (circles composed of wavy lines, only found on vessel bases) and B (circles surrounded by dots) are only attested in Capo Graziano, with many versions of these patterns at Lipari and Stromboli;
- Group C (concentric circles with one or more dots) is more frequent in Capo Graziano; in Milazzese it is found at Salina and Panarea.
- Groups D (circles filled with dots) and E (circles with crosses) are frequent and widespread throughout the archipelago and show a strong similarity between the two facies, including the recurrence of some identical types.

The main difference between the Capo Graziano and Milazzese phases is that, in the latter, circles are always surrounded by a line, while in Capo Graziano, several motifs are surrounded by dots or by wavy lines, basic elements typical of the 'abstract' mode. In group D, Milazzese examples are always framed by a linear circle, while Capo Graziano examples may be framed by a circle of dots or may have no frame at all. In group E, the Capo Graziano version of the cross motifs is generally incised on vessel bases, often with wavy lines and sometimes in complex compositions (Fig. 5).

Rectangles/metopes can also be divided into 5 main groups. Of these, two are only attested in the Milazzese phase and the other three are shared across both facies (Fig. 6).

- Groups K (rectangles with dots), L (rectangles with lines) and M (rectangles with waves) are widespread throughout the archipelago in both facies.
- Groups N (rectangles with crosses) and O ('frames'), including some combinations of the two patterns, are only attested in Milazzese, and abundant at Lipari and Salina.

	A	B	C	D	E
Milazzese					   
C.G. + M.					
Capo Graziano	 	    	  	 	    

Fig. 4. Circular (island) motifs in Capo Graziano and Milazzese pottery.

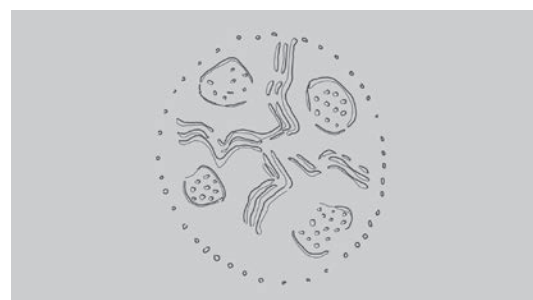


Fig. 5. Base of a Capo Graziano bowl from Lipari interpreted as a stylized geographical map of the archipelago. The wavy cross (sea) and the four circles (islands) are surrounded by a circle of dots close to the edge of the base, a general pattern attested in some Milazzese marks (group E, see Fig. 4).

⁷ Here the groups of motifs are labelled with capital letters in two separate series in order to avoid confusion. Circular motifs start with A and rectangles start with K.

⁸ For Capo Graziano, some base motifs (belonging to the round and cross patterns) are also included in this discussion, as the shape of the base is an actual, physical circular decorative space.

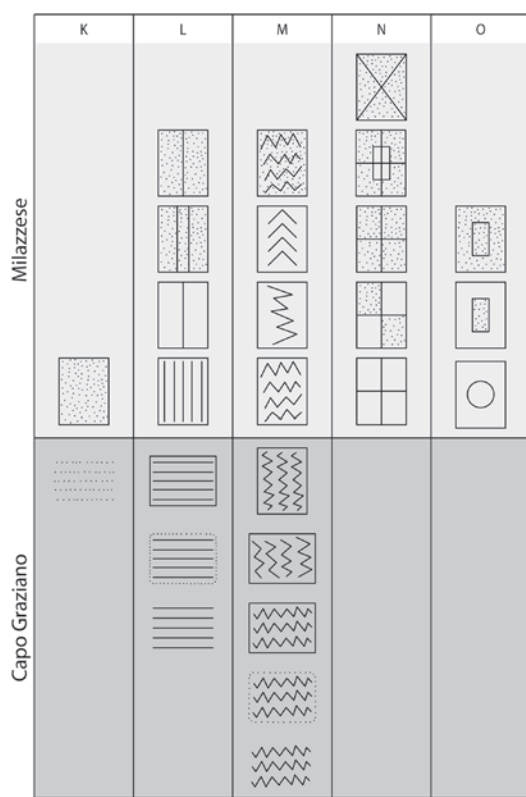


Fig 6. Rectangular (metope) motifs in Capo Graziano and Milazzese pottery.

not deal with the questions that arise from this group of new marks – thoroughly discussed in the past (Marazzi 2001; Martelli 2005) – but we will try to give a historical interpretation of what a phenomenon of partial cultural continuity would look like.

It is worth noting that only a few specific motifs from the Capo Graziano decorative repertoire were selected to be used on Milazzese pottery; they were apparently the most suitable for use as marks on ceramics. They are, as mentioned: single linear elements, including crosses; different types of filled rectangles/metopes; and circles/islands. Of course, these motifs appeared isolated on Capo Graziano pottery as well, although usually within complex decorative patterns. Scholars have often wondered about the possible meaning of these images, rigorously geometric and stylized, and they have hypothetically referred to them as the main elements of the local environment: the sea and its surrounding landscape. The zigzags and wavy lines have been interpreted as the wavy surface of the sea while the rectangles and islands, especially when organized in groups, have been interpreted as a schematic rendering of islands (see Fig. 5).

These interpretations, although plausible, ran the risk of remaining conjectural, but an important discovery at Filicudi-Filo Braccio has allowed scholars to confirm those hypotheses of symbolic interpretation to a large extent (Martinelli 2018). M.C. Martinelli proposed a thoroughly iconographic and iconological interpretation of the images represented on this vessel, also due to their more ‘naturalistic’ rendering and their mutual relationships within the scene. A maritime scene is represented, complete with waves, some boats and an anthropomorphic figure. Located in the middle of the wavy lines (*i.e.* the sea) there are also a couple of metopes filled in turn with wavy lines which, in this context, may be interpreted as islands (most likely those of the Aeolian archipelago) or stretches of coastline (the Italian peninsula? Sicily?) (Fig. 8).

In this scene, one of the earliest examples of Capo Graziano decoration according to Martinelli, some of the main decorative motifs of the facies appear. The motifs assume a clear symbolic function here in their representa-

The main difference between Capo Graziano and Milazzese is that, in the former facies, rectangles are usually horizontally oriented, with very few exceptions (Fig. 7), whilst in Milazzese they are usually vertical or, sometimes, square-shaped.

Another difference between the two facies is the existence of a large variety of dot-filled shapes and designs in the Milazzese phase. This is a design trait that can be easily compared to contemporary Apennine incised pottery, in which motifs are typically characterized by complex geometric forms filled with dots. This pottery was spread throughout the Italian peninsula in this period and was sometimes imported into the archipelago (Macchiarola 1987). However, as we have seen above, the usage of dots to fill other figures is well-attested in the Capo Graziano decorative style as well.

According to this view, it is not a question of considering the aforementioned Capo Graziano decorative motifs as pottery marks – of course they are part of the decorative patterns on vessel bodies – but of considering them, together with the identical or similar Milazzese marks, as part of the same local visual language.

At this point, the only group of marks in the Bernabò Brea and Cavalier classification that is brand new (from a design point of view) for the Milazzese facies is the second one, *i.e.* those with a graphic or ideographic design (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, 222-223, 227). In this paper we will

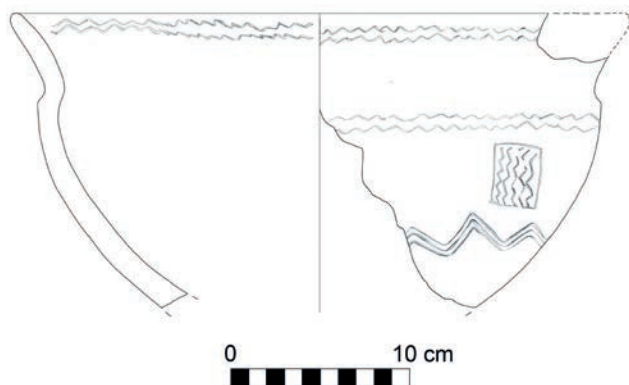


Fig 7. Vertical rectangular motif (group M) incised in a Capo Graziano cup from Filicudi-Montagnola. This cup (inv. 3701) is the only one with this element out of a set of identically decorated vessels (Fontana style) from hut I.

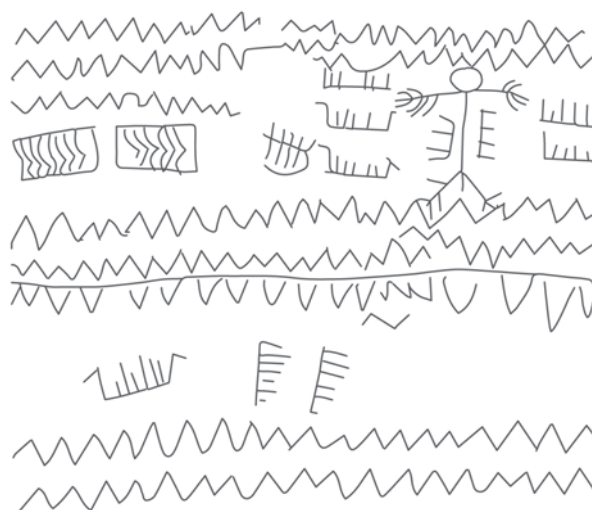


Fig. 8. Incised cup from Filicudi-Filo Braccio with a naturalistic narrative composition (so-called Michelangelo style).

tion of both natural aspects (the sea, probably islands) and anthropic ones (boats) within a maritime landscape. Some of these motifs would be used not only throughout the entire Capo Graziano phase but also, as discussed above, into the subsequent facies, albeit with a different function.

From our point of view, it is perhaps precisely in the significance that local people attributed to those designs, as emerges from the Filicudi vessel, that we must seek the reason why those symbols in particular were chosen, passed down and further developed. Moreover, on some other sherds from the same context at Filo Braccio, some types of linear marks are depicted which, on the basis of the cup decoration, can also be traced back to the seascape, representing in this case boats (Martinelli 2020a, fig. 40; Martinelli, Speciale 2017, fig. 18.134; Martinelli 2018, fig. 7.2-4). The same categories of marks also appear on Milazzese pottery (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, fig. 75.11; Martinelli, Levi 2021).

To sum up, we have identified several marks on Milazzese pottery which are comparable to isolated decorative motifs (less frequently as single marks) on Capo Graziano pottery. Even in cases where precise comparisons cannot be found, it is clear that potters made use of a visual language that was already firmly established within the previous Capo Graziano decorative style. On this basis, we suggest that there was a continuity in the usage of specific incised marks which probably had a particularly important significance to the Capo Graziano decorative repertoire, possibly linked to the seascape.

Furthermore, we must reconsider the trend of distribution of metope and island decorations on Capo Graziano pottery from this point of view. The diffusion of these 'geographic' motifs is not homogenous across the archipelago's different islands: at Lipari Acropoli and Contrada Diana, both metope and island motifs are well-attested (21 and 31, respectively) with almost all types represented (5/7 metope types and 9/12 island types). On Stromboli, approximately the same proportion (20 metopes and 20 islands) is attested, but with less typological variety (4/7 metope types and 7/12 island types). At Filicudi, only four metope motifs are attested, belonging to three of the seven types classified, and none of the island motifs has been recognized. A similar situation is found at Salina, where only two examples of the same type of metope motifs are attested. Outside the archipelago, at Milazzo, both metope (three examples pertaining to a single type) and island (three examples pertaining to three different types) motifs are known (Levi *et al.* 2020a). This pattern of distribution highlights how, at Lipari, the largest and most centrally located island, on the one hand a broad presence of both the main 'geographic' motifs is attested; on the

other, almost all the types of metopes and islands classified are present. This fact, along with the observation that Lipari exported pottery to other islands but, apparently, did not receive imports from them, support the idea that this island played a central role in the Aeolian archipelago starting at least from this phase. Moreover, the flow of communication, which clearly traveled from Lipari to the surrounding areas, involved information embedded in the decorative syntax that shaped the identity of Capo Graziano communities. Capo Graziano decorated vessels found outside the archipelago are often Liparian (petrographic) exports, underlining the central role played by this island (Levi *et al.* 2020a). In the subsequent Milazzese period, this central role played by Lipari appears to have been even further strengthened, with the settlement perched on the acropolis hill and the abandonment or decline in importance of other islands, such as Stromboli and Filicudi. It is worth noting that, in this rearrangement of the archipelago powerscape combined with a drastic change in material culture, from among the vestiges of the recent past only those specific decorative motifs characterizing mainly Liparian ceramics would survive and go on to become major figurative elements in Milazzese pottery.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION, A MATTER OF MEMORY?

In this section we will discuss the manifold connections between Capo Graziano decorative motifs and Milazzese pottery marks in the framework of the transmission of social memory (Halbwachs 1952; 1987; Assmann 1997).

Only recently within the discussion on social memory and its reflection in material culture have both J. Assmann's concept of communicative and cultural memory as well as the character of social memory as a field of competing interests of inner societal forces started to receive the attention they deserve (Carandini 1997, 637-641; Maran 2006; 2011). These studies consider memory to be a social and cultural phenomenon and, according to Assmann, culture itself is a medium of memory. The study of collective and social memory must not be restricted to written sources, texts or cognitive processes, but should be extended to multifarious cultural attitudes (Maran 2011). Relevant in this respect is the subdivision between communicative memory and cultural memory. The former involves individuals and their interactions as a transmission of experiences that constructs a short-term memory of society; the latter creates a sort of "storage of memory" (Assmann 1997, 23-33; Assmann 1999; 2006) that contains selected, symbolically relevant portions of the past. Cultural memory can be transmitted through forms of institutionalized communication, employing text, images and other material forms (Assmann 1997, 23-33; Maran 2011). Archaeological studies are especially based on past material culture and, by concentrating on material media such as monuments, groups of objects and images, they can analyze past social practices meant to build and transmit cultural memory.

Another important concept highlighted in Assmann's analyses of cultural memory is the distinction between 'hot memory' and 'cold memory' against the backdrop of Lévi-Strauss's theoretical models (Lévi Strauss 2015, 227-253; 1970).

Lévi-Strauss's distinction between hot and cold societies is based on a society's attitude towards change: cold societies have institutions that develop strategies that oppose changes promoted by historical factors; among these attitudes there is the systematic use of cold memory techniques, meant to maintain balance (stasis?) and the continuity of social order. Hot societies, on the contrary, embrace transformation, adopting strategies of memory that symbolically highlight breakage, change, novelty and flux. It is worth noting that, according to this view, what makes a society 'hot' are usually changes in power relationships, with an increasing social differentiation and the establishment of a more structured social hierarchy (Lévi-Strauss 1970; Assmann 1997, 44-45). Assman develops this concept beyond Lévi-Strauss's evolutionist assumptions, according to which there is a correspondence between 'cold' and primitive societies and between 'hot' and civilized ones.⁹ According to Assmann (1997, 42-43), both of

9 Speaking of the relationship between transformations and civilized societies, it is interesting to note that, in 1980, Claude Lévi-Strauss voted against the election of Marguerite Yourcenar as the first woman member of the Académie Française on the grounds that an institution which had excluded women for three centuries should not precipitately alter its ways.

these cultural options may be adopted by centralized and hierarchical societies as well as by communities organized in less complex social systems.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems to us that the concepts elaborated upon by Assmann concerning cultural memory, briefly summarized above, can offer a coherent interpretative framework for the observed continuity of specific depicted motifs between the Capo Graziano and Milazzese facies on the Aeolian Islands. It would be a case of preservation of particular cultural traits in the field of images represented on several ceramic supports. If so, it is probable that, whatever the cause of the development of the Milazzese archaeological facies was, it directly involved the previous, local Capo Graziano groups who actively took part in it. To corroborate this hypothesis there are some additional considerations to put forward.

Unlike the appearance of the subsequent Ausonian I facies – when the Milazzese villages on the archipelago's minor islands and at Lipari were abandoned or destroyed by fire (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1980, 705; Pacciarelli 2018, 143) – the beginning of the Milazzese facies is characterized by a good degree of occupational continuity (see Fig. 2). From an architectural point of view, no true break in continuity in the villages at Lipari and Filicudi-Montagnola can be detected between Capo Graziano huts and their Milazzese successors, as highlighted by Bernabò Brea; at Filicudi there are cases of continuity of use of the same structure over the two periods (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1980, 699; 1991, 204-207; Bernabò Brea 1991-1992).

Last but not least, according to L. Bernabò Brea and M. Cavalier, incised marks on Milazzese pottery, among other things, may have had the important function of distinguishing vessels belonging to different families or to different artisans, supposing a household or workshop level of pottery production. The former case may have been necessary to recognize different vessels fired in communal kilns; in the latter case, these marks might represent a sort of 'brand name' (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1968, 228-229). More recently, S. Levi and M.C. Martinelli have proposed that the social organization of Milazzese pottery production can be placed between the domestic workshop and workshop level, considering the standardization of both ceramic shapes and recipes (Martinelli, Levi 2021). According to this view, the logic of recurring pottery marks would have to be sought out in the production process as it would not be linked to the simple domestic sphere. In any event, at Lipari, they have observed that different types of pottery marks are exclusive to, or more frequently recurring in, specific areas or huts, often associated with specific pottery shapes. In this case, different behavior is observed at Lipari in comparison to the other islands, suggesting a certain importance of the context of usage, which would coincide with the productive context only in the case of the domestic workshop. The specific pattern of pottery marks distribution at Lipari again highlights the difference between this central place and the other islands (Martinelli, Levi 2021). Regarding the correlation between pottery marks and pottery shapes, a certain degree of coincidence among the former and tableware (as well as large storage vessels) has been observed; this could be indicative of the use of pottery marks limited to socially relevant types of vessels (Martinelli, Levi 2021).

In short, the idea of substantial continuity between the Capo Graziano and Milazzese facies, at least in terms of people, would be strengthened by the use of marks that identified local families, groups of craftsmen or both, with clear references to their recent past. In this case, the past, in the form of cultural memory, is developed in function of identity and legitimation (Assmann 1997, 40-41). Moreover, it must be underlined that these types of marks were limited to specific pottery shapes that were either economically relevant or aimed at forms of social display.

In light of the previous observations, how can we explain the passage – undoubtedly abrupt – from a long-standing pottery style which had essentially developed for centuries in the Aeolian archipelago to a new, completely different style with so many formal connections with Sicily and southern Calabria? Of course, it gives evidence of an increasing interaction between the Aeolian islands and these two areas of southern Italy, with the formation of a sort of southern Tyrrhenian koine enlarged to include Sicily (and not only its northern portion). Forms

of intense interaction with the opposite sides of the Italian peninsula and northern Sicily existed during the Capo Graziano phase as well, as testified by the high percentage of Rodi-Tindari pottery present at San Vincenzo-Stromboli,¹⁰ both imported and of local production (Levi *et al.* 2017; 2019). While we do not yet know if there might be a link between these two phenomena, the case of Stromboli nevertheless suggests that movements of people didn't necessarily take the form of invasions or mass migrations. The fact that both Capo Graziano- and Rodi-Tindari-style vessels were present in the same huts and structures in the village of San Vincenzo suggests that the people who produced and consumed ceramics so culturally different must have lived side-by-side (Bettelli *et al.* 2016). One possible hypothesis to explain this phenomenon is that of marriage exchanges between the local community of Capo Graziano and the neighboring ones of southern Calabria and northern Sicily, where Rodi-Tindari-type pottery was present (Levi *et al.* 2017).

In addition, we must consider that when the Milazzese facies developed, the Aeolian archipelago was part of the southern route of the Aegean/eastern Mediterranean long-distance trade network – in which Cyprus and possibly the Levant were involved (Sherratt 2001; 2009; Knapp 2014) – as attested by the Cypriot pithos fragments from Salina-Portella (Levi, Martinelli 2005, fig. 98, pl. VIII; Levi *et al.* 2019). This route, which was possibly managed by Cypriot or Levantine merchants, also passed along the southern coasts of Sicily (Vagnetti 1968; Marazzi, Tusa 2005; Marazzi 2016a; 2016b). Further evidence of this is provided by the fragment of a Thapsos/Milazzese jug from Beirut (Jung 2009, 135, fig. 3); the results of archaeometric analyses suggest that this vessel may be an import from southern Sicily (Boileau *et al.* 2010), even though both its shape and its decoration is well consistent with the Milazzese style. In this discussion we may also consider the presence of a Pertosa-type sword in the Uluburun wreck (Vagnetti 1996), since this same type of sword has also been discovered in the Milazzese village of Salina-Portella (Bettelli, Cardarelli 2010).

This comes as a significant change in comparison with the previous period, when Capo Graziano communities were apparently excluded from the abovementioned southern leg of the long-distance trade routes with the eastern Mediterranean, which included Pantelleria and the southern coast of Sicily up to Mozia (Marazzi, Tusa 2005; Marazzi 2016a; Nigro 2016). In that same period, the Aeolian Islands participated in the dynamics of trade and circulation that characterized the lower Tyrrhenian Sea, including the Phlegraean archipelago; in this system, Mycenaean and Mesohelladic-tradition pottery also reached the islands via a route that was probably managed by Mycenaean merchants.

Therefore, the period in which the Milazzese facies flourished appears to be characterized by the opening up of the Aeolian Islands to both medium- and long-range forms of trade, in all likelihood arriving from as far as the Levantine shores. This scenario probably also implies more intense interaction with Sicily and an increasing circulation of foreigners, some of whom might have been interested in settling in the islands. The possibility that these external groups might have held positions of power within the Aeolian communities of that period is currently under discussion (Pacciarelli 2018, 144).

Returning to J. Assmann's reflections on cultural memory, it is possible that these transformations in the strategic economic sectors that distinguished the Milazzese facies might have promoted an important process of social change, which might also have included the emergence of new elites. Archaeological evidence of this is scarce and burials from this period in the Aeolian archipelago are lacking. The Milazzese cemetery at Milazzo-Contrada Caravello has almost complex burials within pithoi (Bernabò Brea, Cavalier 1959, 3-30), some of which contain peninsular-type Apennine-style pottery – as often happens in many contexts within Milazzese settlements (Bernabò Brea 1991-1992; Martinelli 2012) – but this is not enough evidence to consider these burials as belonging to a social elite (Pacciarelli 2018, 150-151).

The presence of Mycenaean pottery and other precious exotic artifacts in Aeolian settlements may be more significant. Regarding pottery, it is apparently equally distributed throughout the various Milazzese dwellings (Kil-

10 Some Rodi-Tindari style pots are also attested at Filicudi-Filo Braccio and at Lipari-Acropoli, even though in amounts not comparable to the case of Stromboli (Martinelli 2020b).

ian 1994; van Wijngaarden 2002, 207-227; Martinelli 2012), but a thorough analysis of the shapes reveals that, both at Lipari and Panarea, craters are attested in just a scant few cases, sometimes associated with piriform jars; this fact may be an indicator that only a few families could have possessed certain socially significant Mycenaean vessels (van Wijngaarden 2002, 222-223; Bettelli *et al.* 2021).

The combination of these economic and social transformations might have contributed to the disappearance of the traditional local institutions, which had developed strategies for containing changes in order to maintain the status quo for quite some time. This phenomenon could have set a mechanism in motion that also encouraged progressive innovations in various fields of material culture, starting from the style of pottery. This reconstruction finds interesting correspondence in the correlation of typological and stylistic innovations with the technological data proposed in a *longue durée* perspective (Levi *et al.* 2020b). The results of this research – based on archaeometric data from hundreds of pottery samples from different periods of Aeolian pre-protohistory – suggest that Capo Graziano potters were conservative in terms of recipe choices. On the contrary, significant innovations were introduced by Milazzese potters, beginning with the importation of clays from external sources.

We believe that the processes which encouraged transformation developed with the inclusion and contribution of local people, who accepted and promoted change without completely giving up their identity. As discussed here, this fact also seems to be attested by the continued usage of a system of marks largely derived from the Capo Graziano visual language. Such a hypothesis can also help explain why this peculiar system of marks is only present on Milazzese pottery and not the whole of the very similar Thapsos ceramics present throughout Sicily, the opposite side of southern Calabria and on the island of Ustica. In the areas outside the Aeolian archipelago, the people who adopted this particular pottery style – typically Sicilian – in a mature phase of the Middle Bronze Age were not interested in using a system of marks that was extraneous to their own cultural tradition and of which they probably didn't understand function and, above all, meaning.¹¹

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11 It is worth noting that, from the Middle Bronze Age 3 levels at Taureana di Palmi (Reggio Calabria) distinguished by Thapsos-Milazzese pottery, the only sherd with an Aeolian-type pottery mark is a fragment of a pithos imported from the archipelago (Bettelli *et al.* 2007, fig. 4.3; 2017, 476).

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