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On colonial grounds: a comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement in first millennium BC west central Sardinia

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4 Exploring colonialism. Phoenician presence in Iron Age Nuragic Sardinia

*La questione dell' 'influenza' fenicio-punica sulla civiltà degli indigeni va posta, oggi, in termini ben diversi da quando, nella seconda metà del secolo passato, si consideravano ad esempio la produzione dei bronzetti figurati sardo-fenicia e fenicio il nome stesso dei nuraghi.*¹

G. Lilliu, *Rapporti fra cultura nuragica e la civiltà fenicio-punica in Sardegna* (1944), 326

4.1 Phoenician Colonialism and Nuragic Sardinia

When the Phoenician expansion in the western Mediterranean touched upon Sardinia in the second half of the 8th century BC, it certainly did not constitute the first experience with people coming from other parts of the Mediterranean. Only a few centuries earlier, Sardinians had received Mycenaean pottery and Nuragic products had found their way as far as Cyprus. The 'coming of the Phoenicians' nevertheless marks an important moment in Sardinian history, as it is commonly regarded as the first truly colonial encounter of the island. This period, which conventionally lasts until the mid 6th century BC, is the one under discussion in this chapter. As habitually represented, the significance of this period for Sardinia resides in that it contributed decisively to the structural integration of the island in the broader region of the Mediterranean. It is from this moment that the structural conditions of Sardinia were no longer set by internal developments in the first place; from then on they would much more be determined by events and processes taking place elsewhere in the Mediterranean. In Braudel's terms it is said that the 'windows' of Sardinia were opened up to the outside world and that the island was drawn out of its relative isolation, into the Phoenician sphere spanning the entire Mediterranean (cf. Braudel 1972, 149-151). In order to assess the impact and consequences of this development within Sardinia, however, it is first of all necessary to outline the wider context created by both previous internal developments in Sardinia and Phoenician colonial activities elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

Prior to the foundation of the Phoenician colonial settlements, Bronze Age Sardinia was characterized by the so-called nuraghi, huge dry-walled settlement towers which constitute the bulk of 'Nuragic' megalithic architecture (fig. 4-1).

Large communal tombs, known as *Tombe di Giganti* ('Giants' tombs') and so-called well-sanctuaries, largely subterranean monumental shrines, were also built in these megalithic traditions. The most common appearance of a nuraghe is a single tower of two or three storeys, each constructed as a pseudo-dome. A more elaborate version, the 'complex nuraghe', consists of a large central tower surrounded by smaller lateral ones. The whole is often enclosed by a defensive wall. Of the approximately 7,000 nuraghi known throughout Sardinia, the complex ones make up about one quarter. Nuragic society is usually characterized as one of petty chiefdoms, each of which occupied a small district and had a complex nuraghe as its central and principal place (Webster 1991). While the mean density of nuraghi is roughly 0.3 per km², much higher concentrations can be found in several regions; one of these is the Marmilla, where nearly one nuraghe can be found per square km.

This archetypical representation of Nuragic society and culture does not apply to the entire millennium spanned by it, however, as both the complex nuraghi and the well-sanctuaries did not appear before the so-called Third Nuragic period of the Recent and Final Bronze Ages (ca 1200-900 BC). During this period, which has been claimed as *la bella età dei nuraghi* (Lilliu 1988, 356), regional differences between the various parts of Sardinia gradually became more prominent and external contacts were more intensively maintained with Sicily and the Lipari islands. Mycenaean pottery at various Nuragic sites also demonstrates further reaching connections, which were perhaps indirect and which may have reached as far as Cyprus. It is in this period that the roots of the final Nuragic period (IV) of the First Iron Age are to be found (ca 900-500 BC). In these centuries, regional differentiation continued and external contacts shifted to the central Italian mainland. In order to understand the specific characteristics of indigenous Nuragic settlement in the 8th and 7th centuries BC, it is therefore necessary to review in closer detail regional developments in the last part of the Final Bronze Age as well as in the First Iron Age proper. Phoenician settlement on the Sardinian coasts in the course of the 8th century BC was similarly part of a wider and, in particular, older history of exploration and colonization by Phoenician sailors and merchants. Coming from the Mediterranean

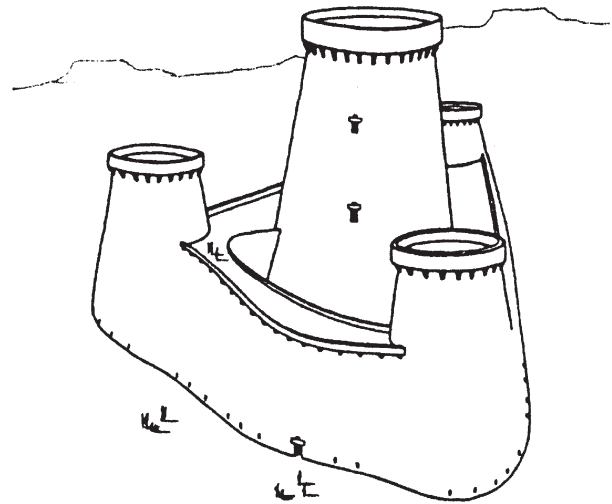
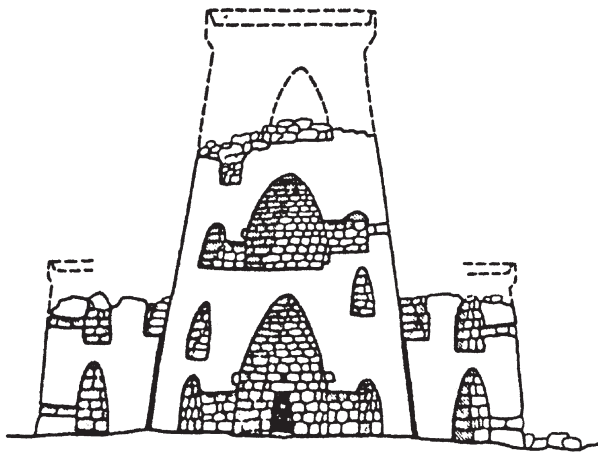


Fig. 4-1. Cross-section and reconstruction of the complex nuraghe Santu Antine near modern Torralba in northern central Sardinia (after Lilliu 1988, fig. 194).

coast of the Levant, where a distinct Phoenician culture can be distinguished from the 12th century BC onwards, Phoenician influence overseas has been attested as early as the second half of the 11th century, when some form of a protectorate was maintained on the eastern part of Cyprus. It was in this area that the first Phoenician colony, Kition, was founded around 820 BC. After that, it did not take long before Phoenician expansion extended over the entire central and western Mediterranean basin where the oldest finds dating to the early 8th century BC come from the central Mediterranean (Carthage) and the 'far West' (Doña Blanca near Cádiz: fig. 4-2). These places are also cited in the literary sources as the principal Phoenician foundations. Subsequently, the Spanish and Moroccan Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts were settled with many, often rather small Phoenician colonies; at the same time, i.e. in the later part of the 8th century BC, the islands of the central Mediterranean (Malta, western Sicily, Sardinia and the Balearic islands) and the central North African coast of modern Tunisia and eastern Algeria saw the foundation of a substantial number of Phoenician settlements (fig. 4-2).

Phoenician expansion has been explained in many ways, among which overpopulation in Phoenicia and Assyrian conquest are most frequently cited. The continued existence of Tyre and the prosperity of this city and other nearby settlements, however, show that this can hardly have motivated the Phoenician undertakings overseas. A more nuanced explanation (Frankenstein 1979) relates Phoenician commercial activities to their specialized artisanal production and to older trading circuits in the Levant. Neo-Assyrian military expansion cutting off Phoenician access to Anatolian sources

of raw materials and an increased demand for products at the same time are furthermore likely to have encouraged overseas explorations in search of new sources of silver and other minerals. The particular organization of production workshops and traders into kinship-based 'firms' represents a further important element in the explanation of the specific characteristics of the Phoenician expansion overseas.

The foundation of Phoenician settlements in Sardinia can only be examined in the light of the structural conditions of both Phoenician colonialism and Nuragic society at large, as it was the entanglement of these which gave rise to the particular context of Sardinia between the 8th and 6th centuries BC. In the second section of this chapter, I shall therefore outline Phoenician presence in the western Mediterranean, paying particular attention to the Sardinian situation and reviewing Phoenician colonial settlement in Sardinia in more detail. I shall also consider general developments in indigenous Iron Age Sardinia and attempt to situate west central Sardinia in that context. In the third section, I shall focus exclusively on west central Sardinia and review the available archaeological evidence of both colonial and indigenous settlement in this region. In the fourth section I shall discuss these data in the light of the Phoenician and Nuragic contexts outlined in the earlier sections in order to shed light on the characteristics of this particular colonial situation. In the fifth section, I finally draw some conclusions from these discussions, some of which have a direct bearing on specific archaeological and historical issues, while other more general points provide elements to be taken up in the concluding chapter.



Fig. 4-2. Map of the western Mediterranean showing the principal Phoenician foundations in the western Mediterranean.

4.2 Colonial Networks and Indigenous Developments

A vexed problem of Phoenician archaeology regards the chronological gap between the dates of the first colonial foundations in the central and western Mediterranean as provided by (later) Greek and Latin sources and those attested archaeologically. Although this issue may have lost much of its significance, it has raised the question of the so-called ‘precolonization’, which is of considerable relevance to the study of the early phase of Phoenician presence in the central and western parts of the Mediterranean. What is at stake here is not so much whether there might have been Phoenicians around in the western Mediterranean before the archaeologically attested dates of the earliest colonial foundations — implying that the literary sources could be right after all —, but rather whether the entanglement of colonial newcomers and indigenous inhabitants could have started well *before* these foundation dates. The implication is that even at this early stage where Phoenicians and Sardinians had not (yet) become colonizers and colonized preconceived dichotomies need to be avoided. To be sure, the Phoenicians *did* come from overseas and the Sardinians *had* to cope with foreigners settling on their island, but there is no obvious necessity to view that particular situation in dualist terms. My aim in this section is to provide a fitting background for

studying the west central Sardinian situation in detail, and in the first part I accordingly discuss the historical and archaeological evidence of Phoenician precolonial presence in the western Mediterranean at large and in Sardinia in particular. In the second part of this section I then move on to consider indigenous Nuragic society in Sardinia and its contacts with the surrounding regions of the western Mediterranean, reviewing developments from the 9th century BC onwards. In the third and final part of this section I shall deal with the archaeological evidence of Phoenician colonial foundations throughout Sardinia; I shall also take a closer look at the conventional representation of the role commonly attributed to the Phoenician colonial presence in indigenous Iron Age Sardinia.

4.2.1 PHOENICIAN EXPANSION AND COLONIALISM

The very first moments of Phoenician presence in the central and western Mediterranean are often referred to in terms of a ‘precolonization’ in the 11th to 9th centuries BC. This notion is used to describe the presence of foreign — in this case Phoenician — objects in otherwise indigenous contexts, in which the former appear to have been incorporated as exotic and perhaps precious items. In particular when foreign influences on the local culture can be observed, repeated contacts of a primarily commercial nature are brought forward

as an explanation of these situations. Since such contacts need not be accompanied by a more permanent settlement, the absence of more substantial archaeological remains is not considered a serious problem (Moscatti 1988a, 11). By definition, a precolonial phase is regarded as instrumental in the subsequent actual establishment of colonial settlements to the extent of representing a natural, if not necessary stage in the foundation of permanent colonies (Moscatti 1988a, 17-18).

Precisely because a precolonial phase does not leave extensive archaeological traces, the 'precolonization thesis' is generally proposed as a solution to the chronological dilemma of the first Phoenician foundations in the central and western Mediterranean. Basically, the problem consists of a discrepancy between the datings for the earliest Phoenician colonies in the 12th to 9th centuries BC as claimed by the literary sources and the archaeological chronology of the colonial settlements, which starts in the second half of the 8th century BC. The literary evidence for early colonial settlements consists of several explicit statements in later Greek and Latin authors, such as the claim of Velleius Paterculus (*Hist. Rom.* 1.2.1-3), repeated by most later writers, that Cádiz was founded eighty years after the end of the Trojan War; this puts the foundation to the year 1104 or 1103 BC.² Other sources are more implicit, such as the remark by Thucydides (VI.2.6) that the Phoenicians were already present in Sicily when the Greeks arrived to establish their colonies. None of these datings, however, can be matched by archaeological evidence. In the case of Cádiz, the earliest finds in the area date from the 8th century BC, while in the modern city nothing earlier than the 7th century has yet been found (Schubart 1995, 747-748). Likewise, the oldest finds from the Sicilian colonies date from the later 8th century BC, which is at best contemporaneous with the first Greek colonial foundations — which are attested both archaeologically and historically (Falsone 1995, 674-678). Further archaeological support for the so-called 'high chronology' advocated by the literary evidence is derived from a number of finds in the central and western Mediterranean which are dated to the 10th or 9th century BC. Some of these are isolated finds of possible Oriental origins, such as a 'Canaanite' statuette found off Sicily and a series of decorated ivories in the province of Seville. In Sardinia, the famous 'Nora *stele*' with a Phoenician dedicatory inscription conventionally dated to the 9th century BC also belongs to this group. More equivocal indications are some presumed Phoenician elements in the (proto-)Orientalizing pottery styles and metalwork decorations of Sicily and southern Spain in the Late Bronze Age (Blázquez 1991). Arguing that a precolonial phase would have left only limited and ephemeral archaeological traces most of which are likely either to have remained unnoticed in older excavations

or to still lie buried below later settlements, a Phoenician precolonization of the central and western Mediterranean is assumed to have occurred between the 11th or 10th and 8th century BC. In this way, the early datings proposed by the literary sources are accepted and at the same time reconciled with the apparently contradictory archaeological evidence (Moscatti 1988a).

Both the notion of precolonization itself and the way in which the archaeological evidence is matched to the literary evidence, however, are in need of critical scrutiny. The concept as usually defined (Moscatti 1988a, 11; cf. above) is disputable, because it lacks any theoretical foundation. Having originally been developed to describe the relationships between the Mycenaean presence and Archaic Greek colonization in southern Italy, it represents a highly specific concept which need not apply to other colonial situations (Bernardini 1986, 103-104). The significance attributed to the later Greek and Latin evidence also seems rather out of place: these sources all belong to different cultural traditions than the Phoenician one and postdate the supposed events by a millennium. There can therefore be no inherent necessity to regard this information as privileged or decisive with regard to the first Phoenician explorations in the central and western Mediterranean.

Finally, the archaeological evidence for the precolonization thesis is somewhat precarious: while a Phoenician dimension may be suspected in the Orientalizing nature of certain decoration styles, it can only be described in rather vague terms of 'influence' and nothing specific can be said about its distribution or chronology. In Italy, most of these influences appear to belong to the Iron Age (8th century BC) rather than to the Final Bronze Age and their Oriental appearance can also and more convincingly be related to contemporary Greek and indigenous southern Italian material culture, which sometimes ultimately derived from Mycenaean shapes (Falsone 1995, 677-678). The concrete finds all lack sound archaeological contexts, which means that dating is based on stylistic arguments, while local variations or archaisms cannot be excluded (see Aubet 1993, 172-184). Isolated Phoenician objects moreover do not necessarily imply Phoenician traders, let alone colonizers. The Nora *stele* is an illustrative example (fig. 4-3): despite its unambiguously Phoenician nature, it cannot securely be dated, because it has been found incorporated in the wall of a church at some distance from the site of Nora. Since the inscription itself does not give any secure clue other than a connection with Cyprus, the best chronological indications are provided by the shape of the letters: although Cypriot parallels suggest a dating around 830 BC, other inscriptions in the eastern Mediterranean do not preclude a dating in the later 8th century BC (Amadasi Guzzo 1987, 378-380).

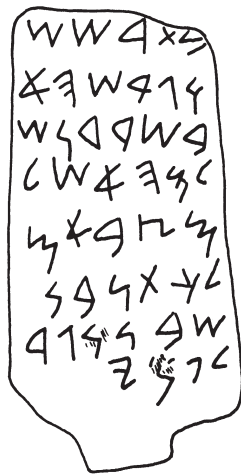


Fig. 4-3. The Nora stele representing the earliest Phoenician inscription in Sardinia the dating of which remains as yet disputed (Amadasi Guzzo 1987, tav. 1.1).

Whilst abandoning the notion of precolonization is the obvious conclusion of the foregoing, this does not rule out the possibility of Phoenicians calling at the coasts of the central and western Mediterranean before the mid 8th century BC. It does however entail the distinction between precolonization in a purely chronological sense and as an actual precursor to more permanent colonial settlements (Mazza 1988, 192-194). Isolated archaeological finds and more general 'influences', as far as archaeologically and chronologically relevant, can then be attributed to sporadic Phoenician contacts before the establishment of the settlements in the 8th century BC which largely remained without consequences.³ As the case of Sicily shows where Phoenician-style brooches have been found in the eastern part of the island while the later colonies were all located in the western half (Mazza 1988, 194-196), the alleged archaeological indications of a Phoenician presence in the 10th and 9th centuries BC mostly occur in different areas than the later colonial foundations. It must therefore be concluded that there are no convincing arguments to support the thesis of a general Phoenician precolonization in the 10th and 9th centuries BC which paved the way for the later establishment of permanent settlements (Bondi 1988, 243-249). The term 'precolonization', if it is to be used at all, should be reserved for those cases in which a direct relationship between temporary (precolonial) and permanent (colonial) presence can be substantiated. Merely 'having been there before' clearly does not justify the term 'precolonization'.

With regard to Sardinia, the archaeological evidence consists of single items or, at best, of a handful of sherds which are attributed a foreign origin. Most of these are isolated finds

without an archaeological context; frequently, even the exact provenance is not clear. The aforementioned Nora *stèle* is an obvious case in point, the problematic character of which is only exceeded by that of the Bosa inscription: while a 9th century dating seems probable for the latter, given the characteristic shape of a letter, the loss of the inscription impedes detailed examination. All that is left of the fragment is a drawing and the mention of Bosa as its generic find-spot. A third, equally enigmatic, inscribed fragment may or may not belong to the Nora *stèle*; its alleged provenance is the wider Nora area (Amadasi Guzzo 1987, 377). The lack of an archaeological context of precisely these finds is all the more regrettable, as these are the only ones of an undeniably Phoenician nature.

The bulk of the archaeological evidence of an early Phoenician presence consists of bronze objects and a number of sherds. Among these are nine bronze statuettes, none of which comes from a documented archaeological context. The proposed chronology spanning the 10th and 8th centuries BC is based on stylistic arguments only (tab. 4-1). Alternative, notably older datings have regularly been advanced, causing considerable confusion with regard to the question which objects could be classified as imports predating the earliest colonial foundations. A typical example is the bronze statuette from Galtelli (tab. 4-1, 3), which is relatively well documented as it is part of a well studied hoard. Although its find circumstances are unknown, the other 23 bronze objects of the hoard provide a dating for this complex in the 1st half of the 8th century BC (Lo Schiavo 1983, 465-467). Yet, Levantine parallels for the statuette suggest a late 10th or early 9th century date (Botto 1986, 130). The Phoenician origin of the objects has of necessity been inferred on the same stylistic grounds and is thus equally problematic.

Other non-figurative bronze objects are even more difficult to determine as they present less typical features. In the absence of metallurgical analyses, the provenance of most items is disputed as is their chronology: objects classified as Oriental (often Cypriote) originals are usually dated to the 12th or 11th century BC, while 9th and 8th century datings suggest a local reworking or imitation (see tab. 4-1). It is for this reason that only two tripod stands and a mirror have been included in table 4-1, leaving aside a number of associated buttons and nails. Other hoards, such as those of Monte sa Idda (Decimoputzu) and Forraxi Nioi (Nuoro) which have been reported to contain 9th or 8th century imports or imitations (in particular swords and daggers) have been ignored, as these hoards are as a whole generally dated to the Recent Bronze Age and must be considered in the context of earlier Mediterranean contacts (Lilliu 1988, 407-415; cf. Lo Schiavo/D'Oriano 1990, 105-115). Despite these problems, it is clear that all bronze objects included in table 4-1 have been found

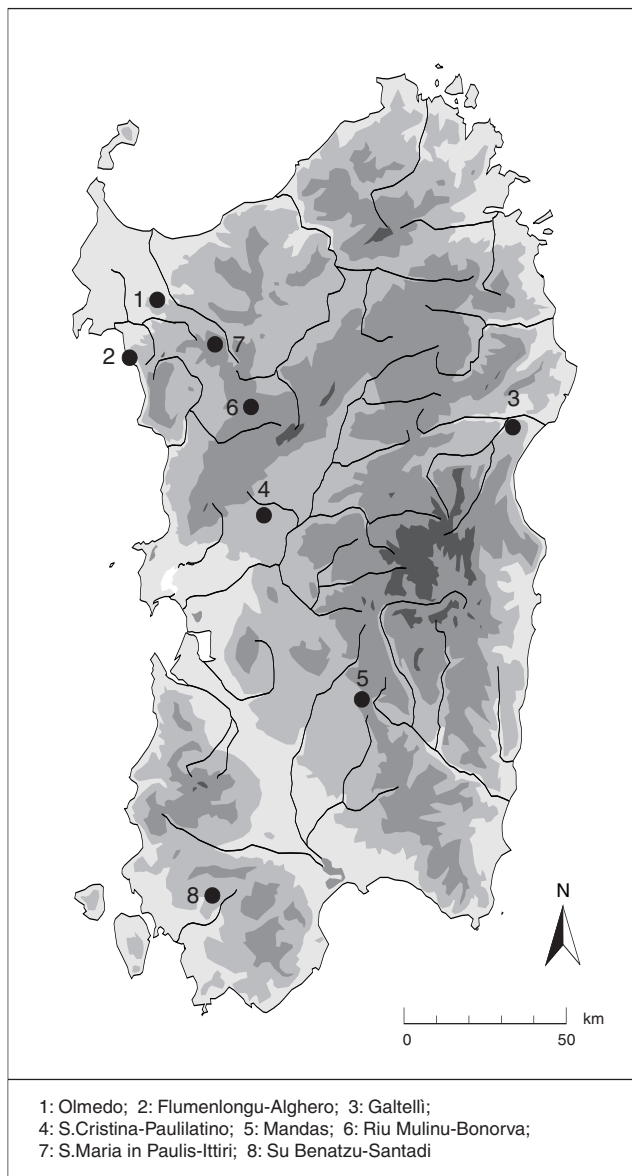


Fig. 4-4. Map of Sardinia showing the (approximate) provenance of 9th century B.C. 'precolonial' finds (see tab. 4-1).

in indigenous contexts and that they can be attributed to the early Iron Age. Whenever known, the archaeological context appears to be of a religious nature: the four statuettes from the S. Cristina well-sanctuary and the brooch and weapons from the cave shrine Grotta di Pirosu (Su Benatzu, Santadi) are exemplary in this respect (tab. 4-1, nos 4-7; 11-12; cf. Tore 1983, 458-459; Lo Schiavo/Usai 1995). Pottery is surprisingly uncommon among the 'precolonial' imports of the early first millennium, in particular when compared to the substantial quantity of Mycenaean ceramics

imported in the preceding centuries (see Ridgway 1995, 78-79 for an overview with references). In contrast with the bronze objects, the ceramic finds are usually well dated, both because most fragments can be ascribed to established type series and because they have been found in well-documented stratified contexts. The oldest first millennium finds come from Tharros, and consist of three sherds, two of which have been dated to the 9th century BC and one to the 13th century BC. All appear to be of Cypriote origin (Bernardini 1989, 285-287). Since they cannot easily be ascribed to either the Nuragic settlement of Su Muru Mannu, which was abandoned by the 14th century BC, or the colonial *tophet*, which was not inaugurated before the late 8th century (cf. below, p. 81), and since three fragments hardly constitute a basis for postulating an otherwise unknown Final Bronze Age settlement at the San Giovanni peninsula, their presence must remain isolated and without further conclusions.⁴ A far more consistent finds complex is that of nuraghe S'Imbenia near Alghero, where Greek and Phoenician pottery has been found in stratigraphical association with indigenous Iron Age ceramics (Bafico 1986, 1991). Most of these sherds, which include fragments of a Middle Proto-Corinthian skyphos and kotyle, must be dated to the late 8th century and earlier 7th century BC, while a number of fragments such as those of a Euboean skyphos can be attributed to the late 9th and early 8th century BC (Ridgway 1995, 80). Even more significant is the association with bronze ingots packed in Phoenician amphoras and local vessels. Other and possibly related Greek (Euboean) and Phoenician ceramics from the middle 8th century BC have been found in the earliest layers of the Phoenician colony at S. Antioco (see below, p. 80).

Several conclusions can be drawn from this brief survey of imports in Final Bronze Age and early Iron Age Sardinia. In the first place, the number of imports is limited and the absence of 'influences' on indigenous material culture underscores the lack of their impact. Secondly, nearly all possible pre-8th century evidence consists of metalwork, which is difficult to date with any precision. Third, pottery imports occur only from the 8th century onwards, which is the period of the earliest colonial foundations (cf. below, pp. 80-82). In the fourth place, all the bronze imports come from indigenous contexts, many of which carry religious connotations. Finally, the distribution of these finds (fig. 4-4) shows that relatively more imports have been attested in the north-western part of Sardinia and that there is a nearly complete misfit with the locations of the later Phoenician colonies. The only possible exception is Tharros, which presents a problematic case in its own right. Taken together, these conclusions rule out the likelihood of a Phoenician precolonization in Sardinia in the strict sense of the term, no matter of a high or low chronology: Tharros is

Table 4-1.
Early Iron Age (9th-8th centuries BC) imported bronzes in Sardinia (cf. fig. 4-4).

No.	Object	Provenance*	Context	Interpretation	Dating	Reference
1	statuette	Olmedo	well-sanctuary	standing god	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459
2	statuette	Flumenlongu	nuraghe (reused as a shrine)	standing god – Alghero	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459; Lilliu 1988, 434
3	statuette	Galtelli	hoard	warrior	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Lo Schiavo 1983
4	statuette	S. Cristina – Paulilatino	well-sanctuary	sitting goddess	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459; Lilliu 1988, 561
5	statuette	S. Cristina – Paulilatino	well-sanctuary	standing goddess	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459; Lilliu 1988, 561
6	statuette	S. Cristina – Paulilatino	well-sanctuary	standing god	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459; Lilliu 1988, 561
7	statuette	S. Cristina – Paulilatino	well-sanctuary	standing god	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459; Lilliu 1988, 561
8	statuette	Mandas	?	sitting goddess	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459
9	statuette	Riu Mulinu – Bonorva	?	standing god	end 9th-1st half 8th century BC	Tore 1983, 459
10	tripod stand	S. Maria in Paulis-Ittiri	?		end 9th-early 8th century BC	Botto 1986, 131
11	four fragments of swords and two of daggers	Su Benatzu – Santadi	cave shrine		9th-8th century BC**	Lo Schiavo and Usai 1995, 162-163
12	<i>fibula</i>	Su Benatzu – Santadi	cave shrine		9th-8th century BC**	Lo Schiavo and Usai 1995, 170

* Cf. fig. 4-4

** A hearth in the cave has been radiocarbon dated to 820±60 and 730±60 BC (R492 and R492± respectively). A tripod and a mirror which have also been found in the cave are now interpreted as local imitations reminiscent of Cypriote shapes (Lo Schiavo and Usai 1995, 170). Alternative interpretations, however, regard these as Late Cypriote III imports, i.e. of a 12th-11th century BC date. The tripod from S. Maria in Paulis (no. 10), which has a close resemblance to the one from the Grotta Su Piroso, has similarly been classified (see Ridgway 1989, 133 for an overview with references).

the only colonial foundation where earlier imports have been found but these are far too exiguous to merit serious consideration. Neither the site of S'Imbenia nor the surrounding region were subsequently colonized; nor do any other imports appear to bear any relationship to the later colonies. The finds in S. Antioco finally mark rather than precede the first colonial presence. This situation can therefore only be interpreted in terms of occasional exchange relationships, as 'contacts' of some sort between Sardinia and the eastern Mediterranean basin during the 10th to 8th centuries BC must be acknowledged. The nature of the imports (metal-work) and the general association of the find-spots with the

region of metal ores furthermore suggest that these contacts regarded metal products and raw materials (Bernardini 1986, 105-106). The finds of S. Imbenia are important in this respect, as they unambiguously (and exceptionally) demonstrate the association of both Phoenician and Greek objects with raw metallurgical materials. The available evidence, however, does not offer any arguments that the bronzes were imported by Phoenicians or Greeks. Considering that from the Recent Bronze Age onwards indigenous Sardinians maintained regular exchange relationships with the Lipari islands (Ferrarese Ceruti 1987; cf. Santoni 1995, 437-438) and Iberia (Lo Schiavo/D'Oriano 1990, 105-115), that there



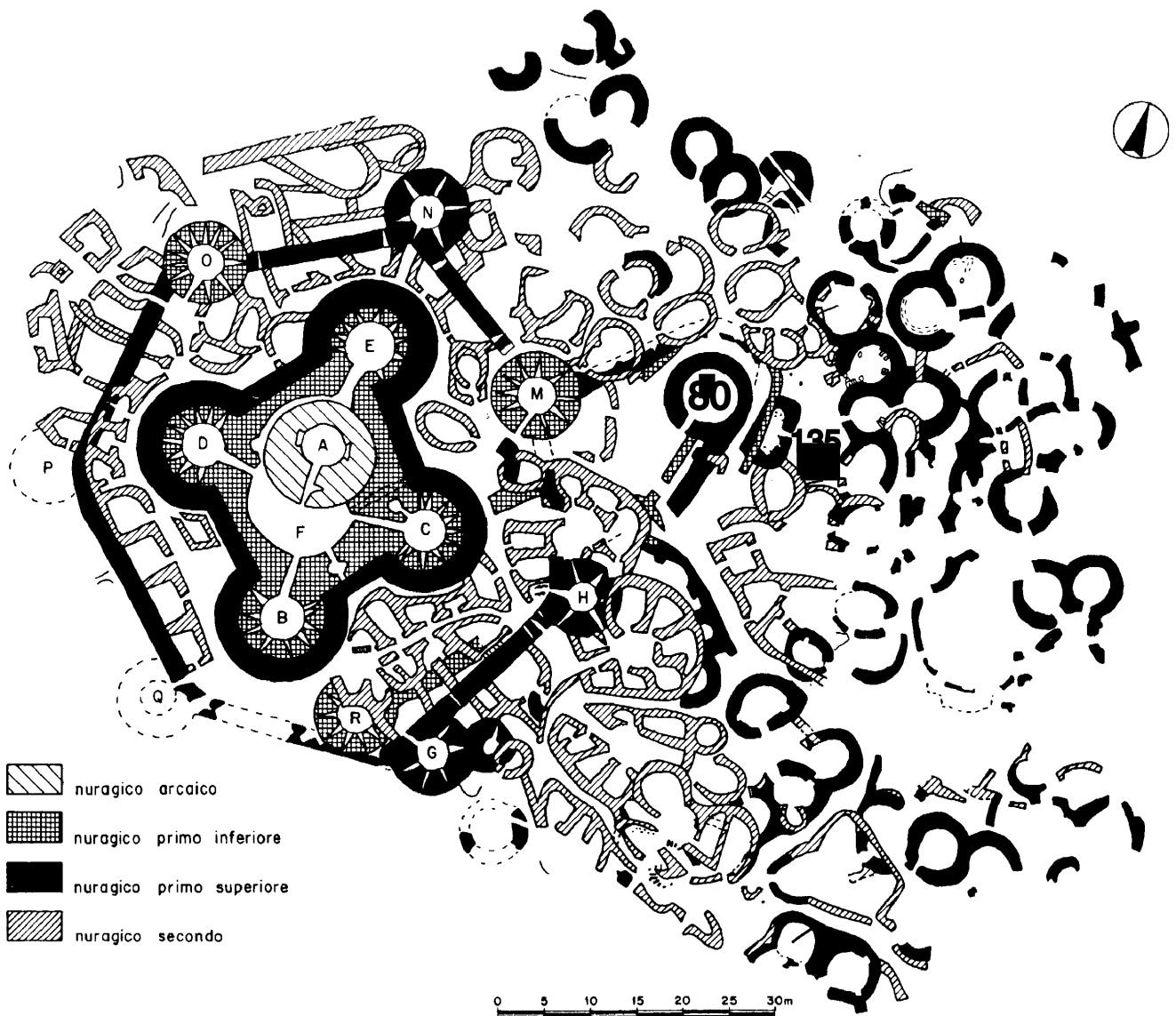
Fig. 4-5. Plan of the nuraghe and village of Su Nuraxi near Barumini showing the situation before (Final Bronze Age) and after the reconstruction of the 8th-7th century B.C. The rooms indicated by the nrs 80 and 135 respectively are the so-called 'Meeting-hut' and a probable shrine (after Lilliu/Zucca 1988, fig. 28).

are strong indications of regular contacts with Cyprus, involving pottery, metalwork and raw materials (Bernardini 1993a), and that the indigenous societies of Italy between the 10th and 8th century were involved in a series of rapid and dynamic socio-economic transformations (Bernardini 1986, 107), the question who exactly carried these objects has perhaps lost its significance; more prominence should instead be accorded to the relationships supporting these exchanges and

to examination of the imports in terms of the Nuragic society and its relationships with the surrounding Mediterranean.

4.2.2 INDIGENOUS SOCIETY IN IRON AGE SARDINIA

From the earlier part of the 9th century BC onwards, and thus in part coexistent with the imports and contacts described above, a number of important transformations occurred in the indigenous society of Nuragic Sardinia.



These developments mark the onset of the indigenous Nuragic Iron Age which is conventionally dated to 900 BC. Emblematic of these transformations is the changing role of the nuraghe in the indigenous settlements: whereas during the Bronze Age nuraghi had continuously been constructed and elaborated into multi-towered complexes, new ones were no longer erected from the 9th century onwards. More remarkably still, the existing nuraghi, which stood at the

heart of the Bronze Age settlement system, gradually lost their central defensive function and were incorporated in a new emerging regional settlement pattern (Lilliu 1988, 433-436). A characteristic feature of the latter was the so-called 'open village', which in contrast to its Bronze Age predecessor was not centered on a nuraghe nor enclosed by a defensive wall. While considerably larger, these new villages often lacked the characteristic monumental constructions of

the Bronze Age. In many cases, the typically inaccessible and easily defensible locations of nuraghi on ridges and crests were abandoned in favour of the more open transitional zones between hills and plains or valley bottoms. The innovative character of the Iron Age villages is particularly evident in those cases where the Bronze Age settlement site with its nuraghe was not abandoned but adapted to the new situation. A typical example is that of Su Nuraxi near Barumini, where in the early 7th century BC a new village was built in the open spaces between and outside the four-towered nuraghe and its heavy enclosure wall. Since the latter was incorporated in the new constructions, it was rendered useless for defensive ends (Lilliu/Zucca 1988, 43-51; cf. fig. 4-5). However, since most research on nuraghi has tended to overlook the less conspicuous villages, the shift in the regional settlement pattern is difficult to trace (Tronchetti 1988, 64-65).

The nuraghe itself was reused in various ways: in particular in those cases where it maintained a prominent position in the village, it was often transformed into a shrine. One such an example is nuraghe Flumenlongu near Alghero, where a bronze statuette was found in a pit in a chamber of the central tower (cf. tab. 4-1, 2). The central tower of the nuraghe of San Pietro near Torpè in north-eastern Sardinia has similarly yielded ritual pottery and numerous objects in bronze and silver, including fragmentary statuettes, which were found amidst large quantities of ashes. In many other cases, the nuraghe was sometimes reused for storage or simply abandoned and partly dismantled, as appears to have been the case in Su Nuraxi near Barumini (Lilliu 1988, 433-434; Lilliu/Zucca 1988, 67).

Excavated villages moreover show that the internal spatial organization differed considerably from that of their predecessors. Although the basic shape of the rooms and houses remained (semi-)circular, the Iron Age houses were composed of more carefully arranged rooms, each of which was used for a specific purpose, and a central open courtyard (Badas 1987). The houses were more or less regularly grouped together in blocks separated by 'public' spaces such as small squares and paved alleys. The presence of drainage systems as in Su Nuraxi near Barumini also points to some form of communal organization and planning (Lilliu 1986, 78-80). The absence of defensive structures and the use of small stones and mortar or even mud brick in a number of villages in the plains added to the innovative appearance of the Iron Age villages (Lilliu 1987, 115-116).

A further remarkable new feature of the Iron Age villages is the so-called 'Meeting-hut': as exemplified by room no. 80 of Su Nuraxi near Barumini (fig. 4-5), these are large isolated circular rooms which can be distinguished from normal house rooms by their size and the presence of a bench running along the entire wall; usually, one or more niches are



Fig. 4-6. The limestone model of a nuraghe found in the 'Meeting-hut' of Su Nuraxi, Barumini (Lilliu/Zucca 1988, fig. 63).

located in the wall above the bench. In the centre of the room stood in most cases a sculpted stone model of a nuraghe (fig. 4-6). In some of these rooms, as that of nuraghe Palma-vera near Alghero, a decorated stone seat without armrests ('throne') had been placed opposite the entrance. In all known rooms of this type, bronze statuettes have been found together with other bronze and iron objects. One or more stone or metal bowls were also part of the usual fittings (Lilliu/Zucca 1988, 118-120). Such rooms occur in a number of large Iron Age villages and are conventionally interpreted as sacral meeting places of the leading figures of the village. They are furthermore present in large sanctuary complexes such as S. Vittoria near Serri and S. Christina in Paulilatino which comprise various buildings for large gatherings besides the well-sanctuary itself. These 'Meeting-huts' are

generally interpreted in terms of the regional function attributed to these complexes as 'federal centres', i.e. as the place where local leaders ('chiefs', 'aristocrats') of a whole region convened in a ritual context of feasts and festival (Lilliu 1988, 453-460).

The shift in the regional settlement pattern and the emphasis on communal spaces in the newly laid out villages clearly indicate important changes in the social and economic organization of the population of Iron Age Sardinia. In particular, they point to an emerging leading social group, which was not only able to impose its authority on the entire village but which could also exert power over the surrounding district. It were presumably members of this new dominant social group who were buried in single pit and trench graves from the late 9th century BC onwards, as the presence of bronze statuettes, weaponry and ornaments in these graves suggests (Lilliu 1988, 430-431). Although the communal burials in the traditional *tombe di giganti* were not altogether abandoned, this change in burial rite nevertheless marks the end of the egalitarian ethos of the Bronze Age and the onset of a regionally dominant elite.

Metalwork in general, including swords and utensils, but more particularly small bronze statuettes of people and animals, are a hallmark of the Iron Age. They are intimately related to the transformations of this period. The well-known *bronzetti* (see Lilliu 1966; Webster 1996, 198-206) have nearly invariably been found in religious contexts such as well-sanctuaries, cave shrines and pits. The regular occurrence of these statuettes in the village 'Meeting-huts' underscores not only the ritual connotations of the latter but also relates the *bronzetti* to the dominant social group. This relationship is also evident from the representations of the statuettes, many of which portray warriors, including presumably the leaders themselves. Other persons, simply dressed as peasants, are depicted as worshippers offering a ram or just carrying a flask. The remarkably wide range of figures represented also includes probable priests, flute-players, mothers carrying a child, all sorts of animals, both domesticated and wild, and supernatural beings. A special recurrent category of bronzes is that of richly ornamented small boats (Lilliu 1988, 550-561). An outstanding category of statuary is constituted by the 25 fragmented stone statues discovered in the Monte Prama cemetery in the Sini. Because of their original sizes of over two metres, they are without parallel in Nuragic Sardinia but the representations of warriors nevertheless betray a relationship to the bronze statuettes. The association with a small cemetery of individual graves which contained among other things fragments of miniature models of nuraghi as found in 'Meeting-huts' relates these statues to the dominant elite. They can therefore be interpreted in the light of the attempts of the elite groups to distinguish themselves in order to legitimize their dominant position

(Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990a, 212-215). Since many statuettes are unfortunately not well dated, it is difficult to pinpoint their first appearance. A statuette in a late 9th century Villanovan tomb in the Cavalupo cemetery at Vulci nevertheless suggests that these bronzes must have emerged in the course of the 9th century BC. They continued to be produced in northern Sardinia until the 4th century BC (Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990a, 211-216).

The Cavalupo *bronzetto* is even more significant because it highlights the relationships between Sardinia and Etruria as well as the prominent place of these objects in both Iron Age societies: this particular statuette of a male warrior was found together with a miniature 'throne' of the type present in the 'Meeting-hut' of Palmavera (Alghero) in what must have been the grave of a high-ranking woman. These finds represent an early instance of regular exchanges between Iron Age Sardinia and Etruria from the 8th century BC onwards: in peninsular Italy, non-figurative bronze items of Sardinian provenance, which include all sorts of weaponry, so-called 'buttons', the small boats and pottery have been found in considerable numbers (Lo Schiavo/Ridgway 1987, 392-395; Nicosia 1981, 441-474). These imports occur throughout coastal Etruria but are especially concentrated in the mining districts of the Colline Metallifere in northern Etruria, where they are invariably part of rich burials (Gras 1985, 135-162; cf. Bartolini 1989, 165-170; Nicosia 1981, 456-457). The significance attributed to these imports in Etruria is illustrated by the occurrence of local imitations of Nuragic Iron Age jugs (*askoi*) in the richer burials in the local cemeteries of subordinate settlements in the territory of Vetulonia (2nd half 8th century BC: Giuntoli 1993, 121). In the course of the 7th century BC, the formative period of the Etruscan city states, Sardinian imports became restricted to the Colline Metallifere only, where three of the earliest and largest Etruscan 'circular tombs' (*tombe a circolo*) in Vetulonia contained several bronze boats (Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990b, 275).

Imports from the mainland, in particular Etruria, are equally well represented in Sardinia. Most of these consist of metal items, such as weapons and brooches: hundreds of Villanovan products have been attested throughout the island (Gras 1985, 113-135; Lo Schiavo/Ridgway 1987, 396-400). Pottery, in contrast, was not imported in substantial numbers before *bucchero* became available in the 7th century BC. From that time onwards, too, precious objects in the Orientalizing style of southern Etruria, in particular Cerveteri, reached Sardinia together with the continuing import of weapons and brooches from northern Etruria. The latter, however, remained largely limited to the central and northern parts of the island, which may well be related to the Phoenician colonial settlements which by that time had been founded on the southern coasts (Bernardini/Tronchetti

1990b, 266-267). As a result, in the 7th century BC there existed 'two Sardinias, the indigenous one of which was still oriented towards Tyrrhenian Italy in the tradition of the 8th century contacts, whereas the other one was part of the western Phoenician world' (Gras 1985, 126).⁵

During the period between roughly 900 and 600 BC Sardinia was thus clearly in a state of flux. Not only did Nuragic social structure and regional economic organization undergo profound changes but Sardinia also became more closely involved in Mediterranean exchange networks. While these developments were no doubt related to each other, it is not possible to identify one entirely with the other, as both rooted in the preceding Bronze Age. Iron Age social organization and the new settlement pattern for instance clearly go back on Nuragic predecessors and must therefore in the first place be regarded as indigenous achievements. Yet, the period is perhaps best characterized by the increased exchanges with the Italian mainland, as these were on the one hand part and parcel of a wider Mediterranean trend of intensified exchange networks; on the other hand, they also fitted in the existing contacts which Nuragic Sardinia had maintained with both the western and eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age. On the whole, therefore, the strong indigenous imprint on the transformations in Iron Age Sardinia must be acknowledged.

4.2.3 COLONIAL SETTLEMENT IN IRON AGE SARDINIA

The earliest Phoenician establishments in Sardinia are commonly assumed to date back to the middle of the 8th century BC, as part of the first Phoenician colonial expansion in the western Mediterranean. Three sites have been identified as belonging to this group, which are all situated on either a promontory or a small island off the coast which was the preferred location of early Phoenician foundations in the western Mediterranean. These three colonies are Nora, Sulcis and Tharros (fig. 4-7). The conventional explanation of Phoenician expansion in terms of a search for raw materials accords with the location of these three foundations, as they are all situated around the mineralogically rich Iglesiente mountains. The locations of Sulcis and Tharros in particular combine good anchorage with easy access to the interior through the southern Cixerri valley and Palmas plain for the former and the central Campidano plain for the latter. The location of Nora can similarly be viewed in relation to the southern Campidano (fig. 4-7). The vicinity of a large open plain thus appears as an additional recurrent feature of these three early foundations.

The site of Sulcis on the island of S. Antioco (fig. 4-7) has yielded reliable chronological evidence of its foundation by the middle of the 8th century BC, as Phoenician and Greek pottery of this date has been found in securely stratified desopits in the settlement area and the nearby *tophet*

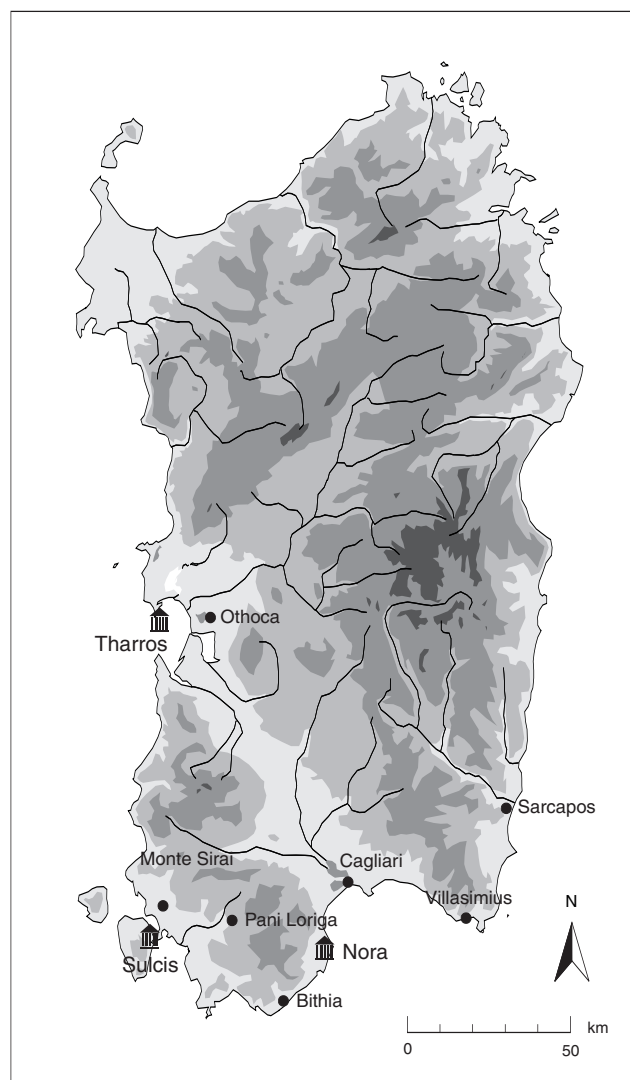


Fig. 4-7. Map of Sardinia showing the location of Phoenician foundations.

sanctuary (Bernardini 1991). The related cemetery may lie to the East of the settlement below modern S. Antioco but the oldest stray finds of this area are of the later 7th century BC. It is also possible that the necropolis was located further South towards the sea, where it has been obliterated by later Punic chamber tombs (Bartoloni 1989, 30-32). Although only a small sector of the settlement has been excavated, it has demonstrated the existence of houses aligned along a road. They were built of mud bricks on an ashlar pedestal and consisted of several square rooms opening onto a courtyard with pits and cisterns (Bernardini 1995). A remarkable aspect of the finds is the variety of the pottery: apart from Phoenician products ranging from red slip fine wares to

amphorae, there was a substantial number of Greek ceramics coming from Corinth, Euboea and Pithecusae (Bernardini 1991). These indicate that the settlement was closely involved in Mediterranean trading networks and suggest a substantial cooperation between colonizing Greeks and Phoenicians (Bernardini 1993b, 61-68; Docter/Niemeyer 1994; Ridgway 1992, 111-118).

The foundation of Tharros appears to have taken place slightly later at the end of the 8th century BC. The site is located at the rocky San Marco peninsula at the entrance of the Gulf of Oristano in west central Sardinia (figs 4-7, 4-8). A late Geometric shoulder fragment of a *stamnos* in the foundation layer of the *tophet* sanctuary at Su Muru Mannu supports that date stratigraphically (Bernardini 1989, 288-289). Two late Geometric *lekanai* of the same age seem to have been found during the 19th century explorations of the nearby cemeteries of the San Marco peninsula and would thus confirm the later 8th century foundation date. While the cremation necropolis of Cape San Marco (Torre Vecchia) has been completely devastated in the last century, recent excavations of the northern San Giovanni di Sinis necropolis have yielded reliable evidence of 7th and 6th century BC burials (Zucca 1989a). This period is also covered by the well-documented stratified sequence resulting from excavations at the *tophet* (Acquaro 1978, 67-68).

The archaeological evidence for the earliest phases of Nora is rather more scanty: for this partly submerged site at the south-western end of the wider Gulf of Cagliari, the disputed *stele* with foundation inscription represents the oldest Phoenician element, even when dated to the end of the 8th century BC. Support for such an early date is provided by several archaic Phoenician amphorae which have been found off the coast (Chessa 1988). Recent analysis of the finds from the destroyed cremation necropolis and excavations below the Roman and Punic layers of the settled area have produced substantial evidence for later 7th century burials and earthen floors; stratified traces of an 8th century BC presence, however, are still lacking (Bondi 1987a, 155-156).

A second phase of colonial expansion consisted in the establishment of several secondary settlements in the vicinity of the first sites (Barreca 1986, 25-30; see fig. 4-7). All of these foundations appear to have taken place in the course of the later 7th century BC and were presumably intended to facilitate contacts with the interior. In the case of Sulcis the establishment of a stronghold on the hilltop of Monte Sirai, some 15 km inland from the coast opposite S. Antioco, provided control over the coastal plain of Palmas and the southern Cixerri valley (Bartoloni 1995; Bartoloni/Bondi/Marras 1992). In this way, contacts between the rich mineral deposits of the southern Iglesiente mountains and the coast could be controlled. The apparently later addition of a settlement at the ridge of Pani Loriga towards the end of the

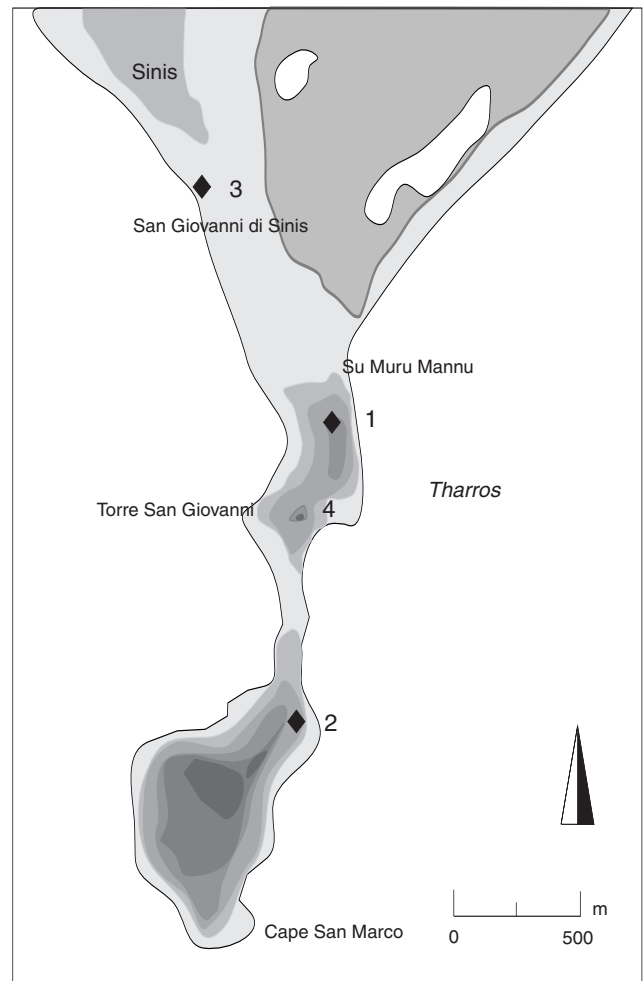


Fig. 4-8. Detailed map of the Cape S. Marco peninsula showing the sites of Phoenician presence.
Legend: 1: Su Muru Mannu *tophet*; 2: Torre Vecchia cemetery; 3: S. Giovanni di Sinis cemetery; 4: probable settlement area.

7th century BC can similarly be interpreted: located within sight of Sulcis, it overlooks the entire plain of Palmas and dominates the eastern entrance to it.⁶ A recently discovered Phoenician cremation cemetery west of Monte Sirai, near modern Portoscuso, indicates a third secondary settlement in the Sulcis region (Bernardini 1997; Tronchetti 1995a, 721, 724).

In west central Sardinia, it was not until the end of the 7th century BC that Othoca was established as a permanent secondary settlement at the inner shore of the Gulf of Oristano, securing easier and more direct access to the Campidano plain than was possible from Tharros (fig. 4-7). The two probable secondary foundations of Nora appear to have enabled a closer control of the south-eastern coast of

Sardinia, including the entire Gulf of Cagliari (fig. 4-7). Bithia was situated on a promontory in the now largely silted up lagoon of Chia some 15 km South-East of Nora. The excavations in the cremation cemetery indicate a later 7th century date for the establishment of this site (Barreca 1983, 296-298). The settlement of Cuccureddus near modern Villasimius was established around the middle of the 7th century BC, as shows the pottery found in the excavated house or storage rooms. It presumably represented a small port of call (Marras 1991). Situated at the mouth of the Riu Foxi, across the Gulf of Cagliari and within sight of Nora, its function would seem to have been to control the entrance to the Gulf of Cagliari and thus to the southern Campidano, as its immediate hinterland is mountainous and largely inaccessible. At the site of modern Cagliari, the existence of a substantial Punic settlement from the 5th century BC onwards and the presence of Phoenician products in the southern Campidano have fed the hypothesis of an older Phoenician settlement on the shores of the Santa Gilla lagoon. Only a handful of ceramic fragments, however, comparable to pottery attested in the nearby southern Campidano, and two short stretches of a mud brick wall have tentatively been ascribed to the 7th century BC. Although both are no doubt among the oldest (colonial) finds in Cagliari, the former have unfortunately been recovered in disturbed contexts and the latter can only be dated as predating the 5th century BC (Tronchetti 1992). While they may suggest a Phoenician presence in one form or another,⁷ whether temporary or in an indigenous setting, they certainly cannot account for a Phoenician settlement (cf. Tronchetti 1995a, 722). Exchanges with the southern Campidano can moreover have been organized by the joint settlements of Nora and Cuccureddus.

Finally, a Phoenician settlement has been located near modern Villaputzu on the east coast of Sardinia (fig. 4-7). Surface finds suggest a late 7th century date for this site, which may have been known in Antiquity under the name of *Sarcapos* (Tronchetti 1988, 45). Its location on the coastal plain of Muravera near the valley of the Flumendosa suggests that it may have provided access to the mountains of the Gerrei and the interior of Sardinia.

Despite the fragmentary evidence, it is clear from the excavations carried out in Sardinia and from comparison with research elsewhere that Phoenician houses were made up of rectangular rooms around an open courtyard, that they were built of mud brick and covered with ceramic roof tiles. The Phoenician burial custom was cremation; the ashes, often with personal ornaments of the deceased, were collected in urns which were placed in simple trench graves, sometimes lined with stone slabs. Several small items of pottery usually accompanied the urn. Occasionally, the urns were absent and cremation appears to have taken place in the burial pit itself

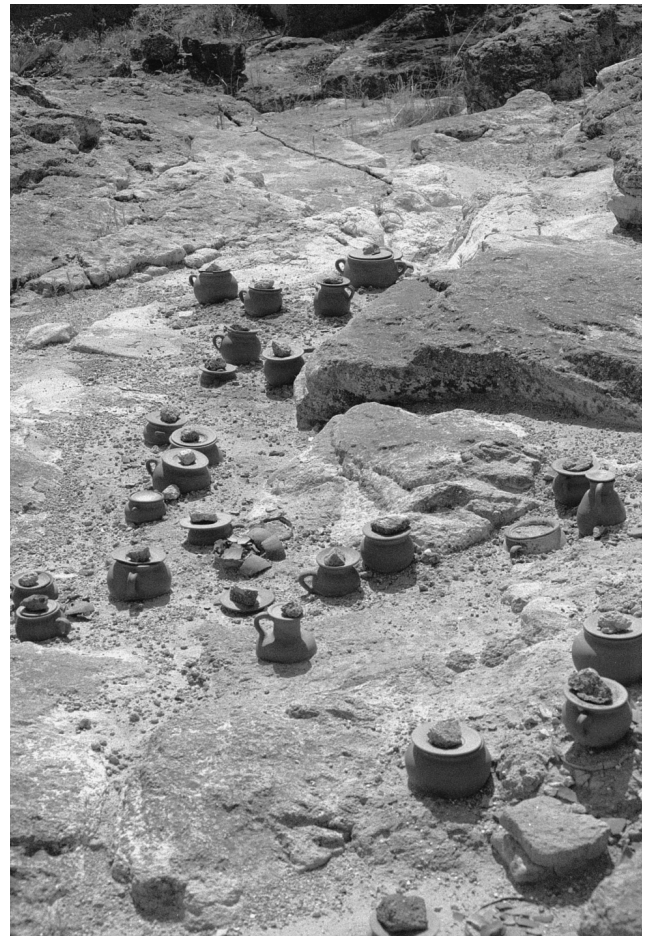


Fig. 4-9. View of the *tophet* of Sulcis as reconstructed *in situ* after excavation (photo P. van de Velde).

(Tronchetti 1995a, 724-726). Both Phoenician settlement architecture and burial customs thus contrasted considerably with contemporary Nuragic Iron Age traditions. The differences between the settlements of the second phase and those of the first one are not only chronological, but also include the larger sizes of the latter and the absence of a *tophet* sanctuary at the former sites.⁸ *Tophet* is the (Biblical) name given to an open-air walled enclosure which is invariably located at the periphery of the inhabited area, usually to the North of it. It constituted a sacred space, reserved for the performance of specific rituals. To this end, several altars were placed in the precinct. A large number of cremation urns with lid or reused bowls closed with a plate, a flat stone or a small *cippus*, *stelai* with human or symbolic representations and dedicatory inscriptions to Tanit or Baal filled the enclosed area (Moscati 1992a, 7-8). The urns contained the ashes of mostly young children and small animals, who had been incinerated at a pyre just outside the enclosure.

Amulets and personal ornaments, such as jewellery, could also be included in the urn. A characteristic feature of a *tophet* is its remarkable continuity of use from its foundation in the 8th, 7th or 6th century BC until the 2nd century BC, except in case of earlier abandonment of the settlement. The enclosure was nowhere replaced or enlarged, although some minor adaptations took place after 550 BC. These remained limited to the construction of a small temple to replace the altars (Monte Sirai), rebuilding of existing structures and a decrease in the number of animals offered. The most important change was probably the addition of *stelai* from the middle of the 6th century BC onwards: in the earlier Phoenician phases these were entirely absent. The large number of urns which were deposited over time resulted in a rather disorganized accumulation of these vessels, as they were simply placed on top of earlier ones. The area was also regularly levelled with additional soil (Gras/Rouillard/Teixidor 1991, 159-171; fig. 4-9).

The *tophet* can best be characterized as a child cemetery, as they closely resembled the regular cremation cemeteries, in particular in the earliest phase. It seems likely that it represented a peripheral place, both literally and metaphorically, for those individuals who had not (yet) been admitted to the community. Inscriptions show that an offering was made to Baal Hammon of a *stèle* or of an animal, the cremated remains of which frequently occur in the urns. The intention seems to have been the request of another child in place of the one buried. There is no indication at all of child sacrifices, which must be regarded as an anti-Semitic myth of Biblical and Graeco-Roman origin, as the custom to cremate (dead) children must have contrasted sharply with the burial practices of the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Gras/Rouillard/Teixidor 1991, 171-173).

The *tophet* is a basic feature of Phoenician settlements in the central Mediterranean: no *tophet* has ever been attested outside Sardinia and Sicily or farther West of Utica on the North African coast. Within these regions they were restricted to the major long lived towns, which also possessed other kinds of public buildings. The presence of a *tophet* may actually have contributed to the urban character of a town (Van Dommelen 1997b). It was an eminently public space, where the Phoenician inhabitants of an entire region celebrated the symbolic constitution and reproduction of their community (Bondi 1979, 141-145); as a corollary, it expressed the administrative and civic independence of their city. The absence of a *tophet* in the colonial foundations of the second phase in Sardinia therefore marks the dependence of these sites on the earliest settlements and asserts the regional authority of the latter. The importance of the *tophet* as a 'civico-religious institution' thus explains the inauguration of such sanctuaries when Monte Sirai and Bithia expanded and apparently gained independence from

Sulcis and Nora in the later 6th century BC (Aubet 1993, 215-217).

The role of the Phoenician settlements of Sardinia can best be examined through the distribution of imported pottery and other objects on the island outside the colonial foundations. As already indicated above (pp. 79-80), the situation which had emerged in the 8th century BC changed radically after the middle of the 7th century BC. Before that time, a distinction can be made between on the one hand Phoenician and Greek imports in the southern part of Sardinia and Villanovan or Etruscan ones in the central and northern areas on the other hand. Greek and Phoenician pottery were moreover always associated and appear to have been closely related to the Phoenician settlements. The well-sanctuary of Cuccuru Nuraxi di Settimo San Pietro in the southern Campidano is a case in point, as its location in the hinterland of the Gulf of Cagliari can be connected with the Phoenician presence in Nora and Cuccureddus (Bernardini/Tore 1987). The contemporary imports from northern Etruria circulating in the central and northern parts of Sardinia suggest in contrast direct exchange contacts between the elites of Villanovan and early Etruscan Tuscany and Iron Age Sardinia. By the third quarter of the 7th century BC, Phoenician, Greek and Etruscan pottery was increasingly distributed jointly throughout the island, as demonstrate the similar proportions of these imports in colonial and indigenous contexts (Tronchetti 1988, 81-88; see fig. 4-10). The implications of this development are twofold: in the first place, it suggests an increased involvement of the Phoenician settlements in the regional Sardinian situations as well as a decrease in the numbers of indigenous contacts outside the island. The secondary Phoenician settlements provide an additional argument, since they were established in precisely

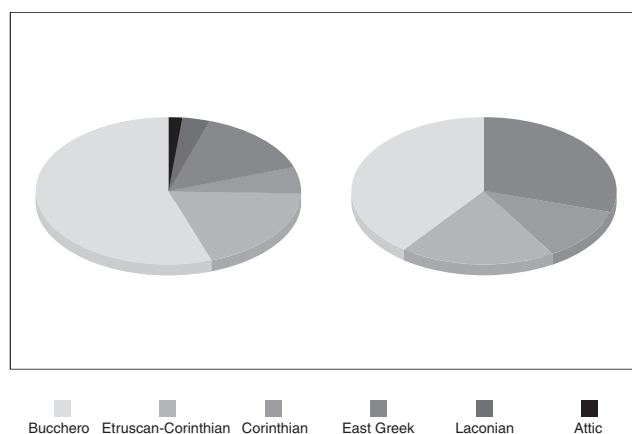


Fig. 4-10. Provenance of imported pottery in Sardinia in the later 7th and early 6th centuries BC as attested in the Phoenician settlements (left) and indigenous contexts (right) (after Tronchetti 1988, fig. 42).



Fig. 4-11. Map of the study area of west central Sardinia showing the (partially) excavated sites (cf. tab. 4-2).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Toponym</i>	<i>Periodization</i>
310	Genna Maria	Iron Age
311	S. Anastasia	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
312	Sa Costa	Iron Age
313	Mitza Nieddinu (S. Simplicio)	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
314	Ortu Comidu	Iron Age
317	Nurazzou	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
318	Sa Domu Beccia	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
319	S. Maria is Aquas	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
320	Motrox'e Bois	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
321	Corti Beccia (Su Mori sa Corti)	Iron Age

Table 4-2. Iron Age (partially) excavated sites in the study area (cf. fig. 4-11).

the same period and are regarded as indicative of closer Phoenician ties with the internal affairs of Sardinia. Secondly, an increased (southern) Etruscan role in at least Tyrrhenian exchange networks is implied. This point is supported by the observation that the Etruscan imports primarily came from southern Etruria, Cerveteri in particular, where Phoenician products are a regular element of rich burial contexts (Rizzo 1991). Since corresponding Nuragic products are absent in this region, it follows logically that the contacts between southern Etruria and Sardinia were maintained by the inhabitants of the Etruscan and Phoenician cities. Since these exchanges also included the distribution of Greek imports, the involvement of the Phoenician settlements of Sardinia in both these Tyrrhenian networks and the wider Phoenician ones across the entire eastern Mediterranean is evident. It moreover excludes a substantial Greek role (Tronchetti 1985).

These interpretations offer a plausible framework for relating the different imports in Sardinia to the wider Mediterranean situation, because they acknowledge chronological and regional nuances. They also go beyond merely mapping out all imported objects, as they point out how distributions of imports developed over time and varied in the regions of Sardinia. The 'two Sardinias' identified by Gras for instance (1985, 126) not only bring out a regional difference between the northern and southern parts of the island but also mark a chronologically limited phase, which did not outlast the end of the 7th century BC. A similar distinction is that between the imports from northern and southern Etruria, as it has led to conclusions about the wider exchange networks. The evidence discussed in this section also supports the instrumental role of the colonial settlements in both the distribution of imports in Sardinia and the Tyrrhenian and

Mediterranean exchange networks of the 8th and 7th centuries BC.

Yet, these interpretations fail to address the underlying questions of *how* and *why* these exchanges between the inhabitants of the colonial settlements and the indigenous population of Sardinia were organized. These relationships led to overlapping Phoenician and Nuragic interests which at one time resulted in a couple of imported ceramics, as for instance in the 8th century BC well-sanctuary of Cuccuru Nuraxi di Settimo San Pietro and which at a later time led to the deposition of Nuragic weaponry in a 6th century BC Phoenician-style cremation burial in the necropolis of Bithia (Bartoloni 1983, 58-60). The differences between these situations cannot simply be explained as the consequence of the 'impact of the Phoenician presence on the social structure of the indigenous communities which collapsed in the face of the newly arrived values' (Tronchetti 1995a, 728),⁹ as such an assertion not only indicates an evolutionist perspective but also one-sidedly plays down the indigenous part. The exclusive focus on the role of outsiders, whether Phoenicians, Greeks or Etruscans, is perhaps the principal bias of the interpretations discussed in this section, as they ignore the fact that a significant portion of the imports in Sardinia circulated in indigenous contexts.

In order to examine what exactly was at stake on both 'sides' involved in these situations, the specific socio-economic contexts of the regional situations in which the exchange relationships were maintained need to be considered in detail. In the following sections of this chapter I shall do so by focusing on the region of west central Sardinia in the period under discussion and by especially foregrounding the regional situation as made up of both indigenous and colonial inhabitants and their socio-economic organization. The regional and chronological variability of the exchange networks in the western Mediterranean as discussed in this section offers a suitable general framework for doing so.

4.3 Exploring west central Sardinia

Before embarking on an overview of the archaeological evidence and its biases in the study area of west central Sardinia, I want to draw attention to a general problem archaeological work on Iron Age Sardinia has to come to grips with. Apart from distortions caused by unsystematic fieldwork, which will be discussed below, the chronological indicators used for the period between the 9th and 6th centuries BC constitute a fundamental problem. The limited occurrence of distinctive features of Iron Age Nuragic pottery are the principal obstacles. The most reliable indications for an Iron Age date are associated with similar phases in central Italy and Greece and are based on specific decorations which can be described as 'Geometric' or 'Orientalizing'

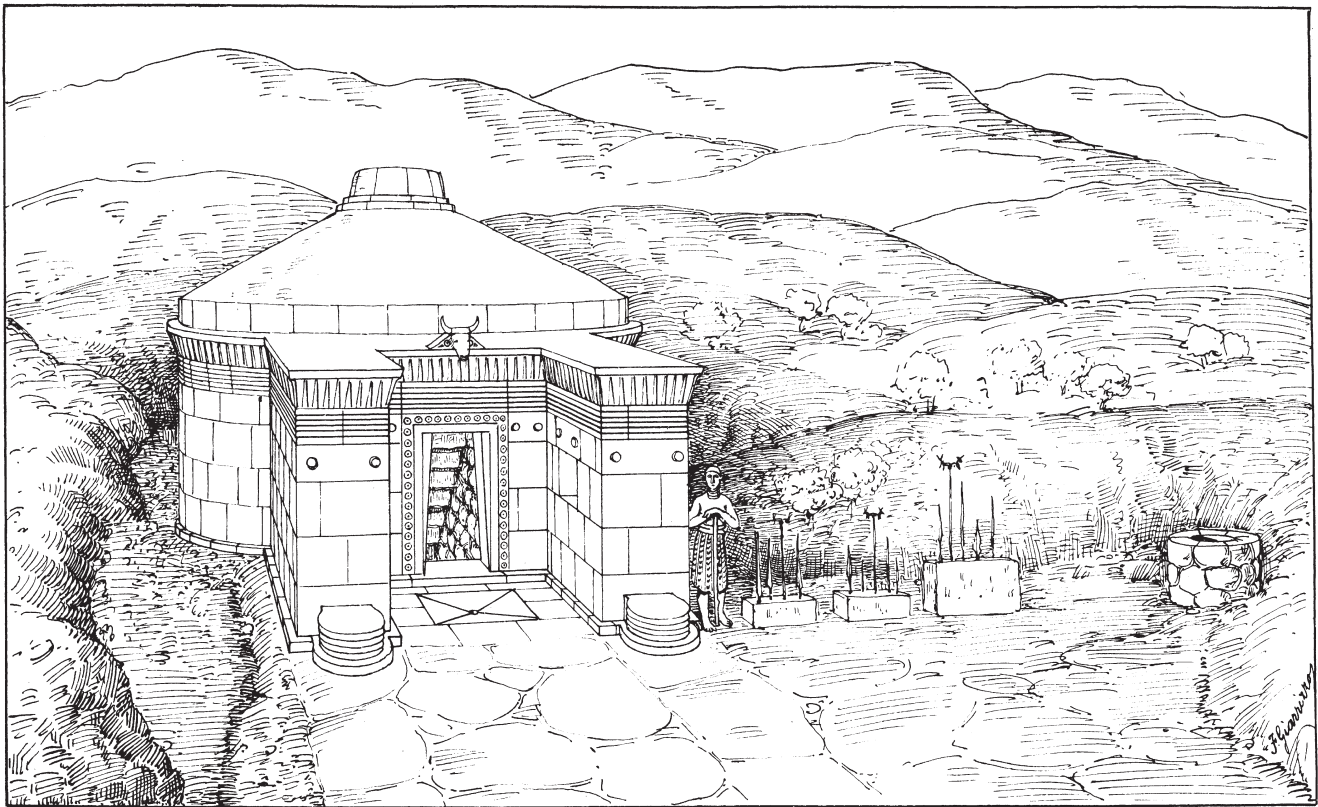


Fig. 4-12. Drawing of the well-sanctuary of S. Anastasia in Sardara as reconstructed by Taramelli (1918, fig. 39).

(Lilliu 1988, 445; cf. Gras 1985, 126-135). This type of pottery is always carefully burnished and clearly represents an indigenous fine ware; as such, it has not surprisingly a somewhat limited distribution (cf. Webster 1996, 171). The same holds for the appearance of alleged imitations of Etruscan and Greek pottery shapes (cf. Ugas 1986). As a consequence, dating of both colonial and indigenous sites in Sardinia has tended to rely heavily on imported ceramics and their well-established typo-chronologies. Since most excavations are carried out in major complex nuraghi or sanctuaries, where fine wares and imports are a regular feature, dating problems can usually be resolved. When dealing with minor domestic sites, however, or when relying on surface collections which often fail to produce any of these ceramic types, Iron Age domestic wares are notoriously difficult to distinguish from Final Bronze Age products, as the general Nuragic ceramic traditions were hardly affected by the circulation of imported pottery (cf. Lilliu 1988, 448-450). Only intensive study of carefully collected samples and comparison with stratigraphically excavated evidence in the same region may shed light on this problem (e.g. Sebis 1987).

Two major consequences follow from this: in the first place that fragments of imported pottery, which are usually readily recognizable and which are relatively abundant in Sardinia, have become the principal indicator of the 9th to 6th century BC period. This holds in particular for surface collections, despite the considerable difficulties to ascribe the often tiny fragments to a precise ceramic type and class. The absence of imported pottery and indigenous fine wares in the second place usually results in a lumping together several chronological ranges, in particular the Final Bronze Age and Iron Age. More often, however, only few undiagnostic fragments are available and indigenous sites cannot be dated more precisely than generically 'Nuragic'. Since this covers more than a millennium, such a 'chronology' is quite unhelpful. In this section, I present an overview of the archaeological evidence for Iron Age west central Sardinia. I have divided the discussion of the data in two parts, the first of which is restricted to the study area as defined in chapter three (p. 39). For this area I have listed *all* known evidence. The second part of this section covers the surrounding areas of the wider region of west central Sardinia, i.e. including the Sinis, northern Campidano, upper Marmilla and the southernmost

part of the central Campidano. For these areas, I have included only a selection of the more significant data which I regard as particularly relevant to this study. These two parts are accompanied by five tables and maps which summarize the evidence discussed and which are referred to by the bracketed identification number of each site. A complete listing of the site database can be found in the appendix. In the third and final part of this section I briefly evaluate the evidence presented and point out the biases and strong points of the data set.

4.3.1 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE STUDY AREA

The following overview of the archaeological evidence for the study area consists of three categories of finds, each with associated tables and maps. The first one comprises the excavations carried out in the study area, the second one presents the evidence of the *Riu Mannu* survey and the third category of finds is made up of the results of topographical explorations.

Excavations have been carried out at ten sites in the study area (fig. 4-11; tab. 4-2). The oldest excavations which are reliably documented are those carried out by Taramelli (311, 312, 314). Among these, the site of S. Anastasia in modern Sardara (311) was no doubt his most important undertaking in west central Sardinia. Taramelli brought to light a well-sanctuary of the classic Nuragic type consisting of a hall-way, stairway and domed room built of small irregular basalt blocks. Sculpted ornaments show that the façade of the building was decorated (fig. 4-12). Next to it was a votive pit full of pottery, which included askoi and specific votive shapes (Taramelli 1918a). These show that the sanctuary had been in use from the Final Bronze Age (11th century BC) until the end of the 8th century BC (Lilliu 1988, 462-465). Recent excavations in the adjacent area have revealed the remains of at least four circular huts separated from the temple and two other similar huts by a division wall. One of the four huts has yielded clear evidence of metallurgical activities. The one next to the well-sanctuary is a so-called 'Meeting-hut' with a circular bench, niches in the wall and a central base supporting a miniature nuraghe. In this room, 12 lead ingots were found, all showing incised marks (indicating weight?), and three bronze bowls, as well as minor bronze items and pottery. These finds attest occupation between the 9th and the end of the 8th century BC (Ugas/Usai 1987).¹⁰ A notable feature is the virtual absence of imported objects, as chemical analysis has suggested a local provenance for the bronze bowls: otherwise only two *fibulae* from the well-sanctuary have been identified as having been imported from Villanovan central Italy, whereas two more brooches are presumably Sardinian products (Lo Schiavo 1978, 28, 44-45). The shape and decoration of



Fig. 4-13. One of the two archer *bronzetti* recovered by Taramelli in Sardara at Sa Costa (312) (after Lilliu 1966, no. 24; drawing E. van Driel).

the bowls as well as of other bronze and ceramic objects and the presence of the lead ingots nevertheless point to contacts with the wider Mediterranean (Ugas/Usai 1987, 180-192). At Sa Costa, located at a short distance from S. Anastasia, Taramelli recovered a large burial of two persons (312) accompanied by bronze and iron weaponry and two archer *bronzetti* datable to the 8th century BC (fig. 4-13). An interpretation as an elite burial is the most obvious one. Just south of Sardara, near the Roman and later salutary well of S. Maria is Aquas, two circular rooms occupied in the 11th to 8th century BC have been documented (319). Originally, a nuraghe stood nearby (L.A. Usai 1987). Elsewhere between these sites in Sardara, generically dated 'Nuragic' walls and pottery have also been encountered but never studied nor published (Ugas/Usai 1987, note 8). The site of Genna Maria, located on the highest hilltop of the south-eastern Marmilla near Villanovaforru (310), is the only completely excavated settlement in the study area. It consists of a complex nuraghe surrounded by an enclosure wall, both datable to the Recent Bronze Age (13-12th century BC). In the 9th century BC, a village of houses with central courtyards was constructed around the nuraghe.



Fig. 4-14. Plan of the nuraghe and Iron Age village of Genna Maria near Villanovaforru (after Badas 1987, tav. 7).

At the north-east side of the nuraghe, where the hill slope permitted so, the old defensive wall was demolished and the houses extended across it. It was abandoned in the late 8th century BC (Badas et al. 1988, 15-17; fig. 4-14). The finds entirely consist of indigenous products of mainly pottery and stone for domestic and occasionally ritual purposes. Although indigenous decorated fine wares are a recurrent feature, plain domestic pottery is dominant (Badas 1987). In addition, metallurgical activities have been attested in the village (Atzeni et al. 1987). Genna Maria thus presents a classical case of the Iron Age development of organized villages discussed above.

All other excavations have yielded much less information, either because of a limited extent of the trenches or because of insufficient study and publications. The nuraghe of Ortu Comidu, located several kilometers South of Villanovaforru (314), has only provided evidence of Iron Age occupation of the nuraghe itself. There are slight indications of the presence of at least one attached hut or room but nothing can be said about the possible presence of a village. Recent excavations have largely confirmed Taramelli's earlier conclusions about the layout of the complex nuraghe, which consists of a central tower, a small courtyard and four minor towers (Balmuth 1986). At Sa Domu Beccia just outside Uras (318), there are clear traces of a sizeable village outside and partially inside the outer enclosure wall of the complex nuraghe (Lilliu 1975, 136). The current excavations only

explore the nuraghe itself, however. Iron Age occupation has similarly been demonstrated at the sites of Nurazzou (317) and Corti Beccia (321) but no details have been published. Non-domestic excavated contexts are represented by sites 313 and 320: the former, Mitza Nieddinu, is a small well-sanctuary which consists of a shallow well and a short flight of stairs (Koberstein 1993, 179-180). Although it has been carefully excavated, it remains unpublished, so that even its attribution to the Iron Age must remain generic. It is clear, however, that it was much smaller than the sanctuary of S. Anastasia. On the surface, there are no indications of other adjacent constructions (fig. 4-15). The tomb of Motrox'e Bois has also been explored with care and published as well (Contu 1958). Continuous reuse of the structure and a relative lack of grave goods have yet considerably complicated interpretation: it nevertheless seems clear that it remained in use until the 7th century BC and that some personal ornaments



Fig. 4-15. View of the small well-sanctuary of Nieddinu in the Campidano near Gùspini (photo P. van de Velde).

of amber, glass-paste, silver and iron were imports from the Italian mainland (Lilliu 1988, 469-470).

The second category of finds in the study area consists of the results of the *Riu Mannu* survey sample. While still incomplete, the 15 transects surveyed so far comprise six find-spots which can definitely be ascribed to the Iron Age, while three other sites were also probably occupied in this period (fig. 4-16; tab. 4-3).

The most significant of the *Riu Mannu* find-spots is a so-called 'open village' at Coddu su Fenugu of Terralba (323), which consisted of a substantial number of separate huts. Several of these could be identified in the field as discrete concentrations of pottery and boulders. All kinds of domestic pottery and storage jars (*dolia*), some of them repaired with lead strips, and stone artefacts such as grindstones have been found. There are no indications of the use of large stones as building materials. The size of the entire settlement is difficult to estimate because of modern constructions on two sides but may reach as much as 4-5 ha. Detailed study of the shapes and few decorations visible suggest occupation from the Recent Bronze Age (12th century BC) until the 8th century BC. Diagnostic finds demonstrating Final Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation have also been collected at Genna s'Egua on the southern shore of the S. Giovanni lagoon (626). Situated at a hill-top some three km inland overlooking the lagoon and most of the southern Arborèa, this site consisted of several round huts of mudbrick or wattle-and-daub on an irregular boulder base.

Typologically undiagnostic ceramic fragments of the same fabric as those collected at Coddu su Fenugu and therefore presumably also of Final Bronze and Iron Age date, have been found at four other places in the Riu Mannu estuary. In two cases (325, 327) the sherds have been found at the site of a later Punic and Roman farmstead, which means that nothing can be said about their original context. The other two (324, 326) consisted of a heap of small to medium-sized stones surrounded by mostly undiagnostic sherds of a fabric similar to that attested at Coddu su Fenugu. A few identifiable rims also suggest a Final Bronze and Iron Age date. Since in both cases the stones are likely to have been piled up by farmers (in the case of 326 perhaps with a bull-dozzer), the size of these sites is difficult to determine; it seems to have been rather limited as all finds cluster in an area of only several hundreds of square metres. The function and character of these sites is accordingly problematic to establish.

Iron Age occupation of the five nuraghi encountered in the transects examined has turned out to be much more elusive, as probable occupation of only three of these can be claimed. Two are complex nuraghi, named Siaxi and Brunchiteddus (329, 330). They are situated in the Marmilla on either side of the Riu Mògoro gorge, and they have yielded

clear evidence of a long sequence of pre-Nuragic and Middle Bronze Age occupation. A similar situation was encountered at the nearby single-tower nuraghe Sa Bingia Montis (440) where Bronze Age and Roman remains were abundantly present. Although at none of these sites diagnostic Final Bronze and Iron Age decorations have so far been identified, a number of less characteristic rims and the fabric of the coarse domestic pottery are likely to be of such a date. Future analysis of the fabrics of this pottery may decide this problem. Two more single-tower nuraghi examined by the *Riu Mannu* project have not yielded any indications of Iron Age occupation (nuraghi Arrubiu [328] and S'Egua de is Femmias [354]), as relevant finds were entirely lacking, presumably as a consequence of postdepositional processes.¹¹

The third category of Iron Age archaeological remains consists of surface finds documented by topographical explorations and stray finds of all kinds (tab. 4-4; fig. 4-17). The first overview of Nuragic remains in the region has been compiled by Antonio Taramelli. It concentrated on the central Campidano where, apart from his excavations in Sardara, he listed the complex nuraghi of Melas, Saurecci, S. Sofia and Bruncu e s'Orcu (339, 338, 332, 371). Several of these are illustrated by accurate plans and sections (Taramelli 1918a, 21-22). In the tradition of Taramelli's informant Lampis, Tarcisio Agus and other members of the *Gruppo Archeologico* of Guspini have continued to gather information about prehistoric settlement in the territory of Guspini. Their results have been brought together in a detailed distribution map of 39 nuraghi and 11 other generically 'Nuragic' sites (Agus 1995, 20; *Carta Storica*, sheet 'Nuragico'). Although the territory of Guspini seems to be the best examined part of the study area with over fifty sites on record, only nine of these have yielded reliable evidence of Iron Age occupation. The remaining 41 sites cannot be classified more precisely than generically 'Nuragic'. The variety of site types is nevertheless worth noting: apart from 27 single-tower and 12 complex nuraghi, 27 villages are on record, 22 of which are associated with a nuraghe. Seven wells are furthermore known, two of which have been interpreted as sacred wells.

Comparable results have been obtained for the territory of Terralba in the Arborèa which has been intensively explored by Gino Artudi and Sandro Perra (1996; cf. p. 60). Secure evidence of Iron Age settlement was found at four sites. In addition, three nuraghi (629, 630, 631) have existed in this area but cannot be classified chronologically as they have been completely destroyed. While two of the Iron Age sites (627, 628) are minor find-spots disturbed by later Punic and Roman occupation, the other two (323, 341) are large open villages. More detailed information about these has been provided by the detailed examination of the one at Coddu su



Fig. 4-16. Map of the study area of west central Sardinia showing the Final Bronze Age/Iron Age find-spots encountered by the *Riu Mannu* survey (cf. tab. 4-3).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Toponym</i>	<i>Periodization</i>
323	Coddu de su Fenugu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
324	Pauli Giuncu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
325	Casa Scintu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
326	Ingraxioris	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
327	Putzu Nieddu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
329	Nuraghe Siaxi	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
330	Nuraghe Brunchiteddus	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
440	Sa Bingia Montis	Final Bronze and Iron Age
626	Genna s'Egua	Final Bronze and Iron Age

Table 4-3. Final Bronze Age/Iron Age sites and find-spots encountered by the *Riu Mannu* survey (cf. fig. 4-16).



Fig. 4-17. Map of the study area of west central Sardinia showing Final Bronze Age/Iron Age sites, find-spots and stray-finds as compiled by topographical explorations in the study area (cf. tab. 4-4).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Toponym</i>	<i>Periodization</i>
331	Cugui	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
332	S. Sofia	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
333	Tuppa Cerbu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
334	Cungiau de Linnas	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
335	S. Elia	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
336	N. Crobus	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
338	Saurecci	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
339	N. Melas	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
340	S. Antiogu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
341	S. Ciriaco (S'Arrideli / Su Nuraceddu)	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
342	S'Arrideli	Iron Age
343	Sa Perra	Iron Age
344	Neapolis (S. Maria di Nabui)	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
345	Sa Grutta de is Caombus	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
346	Generic Usellus area	Iron Age
347	Is Carellis	Iron Age
627	Sa Ussa	Iron Age
628	Serra Erbutzu	Iron Age
629	Nuraci Mannu	Iron Age
630	Nuracciolu	Iron Age
631	Coddu su Fenugu	Iron Age

Table 4-4. Final Bronze Age/Iron Age sites, find-spots and stray-finds as compiled by topographical explorations in the study area (cf. fig. 4-17).



Fig. 4-18. Map of the study area of west central Sardinia showing the single tower and complex nuraghi in the study area without further chronological evidence (cf. tab. 4-5).

No.	Toponym	Periodization	No.	Toponym	Periodization
348	N. Casa Morelli	generically 'Nuragic'	424	N. Sa Fogaia	generically 'Nuragic'
349	N. Pruinis	generically 'Nuragic'	425	N. Molas	generically 'Nuragic'
350	N. Priogosu	generically 'Nuragic'	426	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
351	N. Cabis	generically 'Nuragic'	427	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
352	N. Frucca	generically 'Nuragic'	428	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
354	N. S'Egua de is Femmias	generically 'Nuragic'	429	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
355	N. Punta sa Rana	generically 'Nuragic'	430	Sa Domu s'Orcu	generically 'Nuragic'
356	N. Donigala	generically 'Nuragic'	431	N. Conca sa Cresia	generically 'Nuragic'
357	N. Sedda is Predis	generically 'Nuragic'	432	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
358	N. Monte Ois	generically 'Nuragic'	433	N. Su Sensu	generically 'Nuragic'
359	N. Peppi Tzappus	generically 'Nuragic'	434	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
360	N. Baccas	generically 'Nuragic'	435	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
361	N. Buiettu	generically 'Nuragic'	436	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
362	N. Crabili	generically 'Nuragic'	437	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
363	N. Mattiane	generically 'Nuragic'	438	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
364	N. Omini	generically 'Nuragic'	439	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
365	N. Gentilis	generically 'Nuragic'	441	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
367	N. Peddis (Nurecci)	generically 'Nuragic'	442	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
368	N. Peppi Ortu (Nurecci)	generically 'Nuragic'	443	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
369	N. Bauladu	generically 'Nuragic'	444	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
370	N.S. Temporada	generically 'Nuragic'	445	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
371	N. Su Bruncu 'e s'Orcu	generically 'Nuragic'	446	N. Nuratteddu	generically 'Nuragic'
372	N. Sitzerrì	generically 'Nuragic'	447	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
373	N.S. Sciori	generically 'Nuragic'	448	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
374	N. Terra Moi	generically 'Nuragic'	449	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
375	N. Bruncu sa Grutta	Bronze Age	450	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
376	N. Lana perda	generically 'Nuragic'	451	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
377	N. Sa Zeppara	generically 'Nuragic'	452	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
378	N. Sa Tribuna	generically 'Nuragic'	453	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
379	N. Pauli Planu	generically 'Nuragic'	454	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
380	N. Fenu	generically 'Nuragic'	455	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
381	N. Ptzurru	generically 'Nuragic'	456	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
382	M. Togoro	generically 'Nuragic'	457	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
383	N. Corti Baccas	generically 'Nuragic'	458	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
384	N. Maureddu	generically 'Nuragic'	459	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
385	N. Urralidi	generically 'Nuragic'	460	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
386	N. Acqua Sassa	generically 'Nuragic'	461	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
387	N. Zuddas	generically 'Nuragic'	462	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
388	N. Is Arais	generically 'Nuragic'	463	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
389	N. Nuracci	generically 'Nuragic'	464	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
390	N.M. Maniu	generically 'Nuragic'	465	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
391	N.S. Caterina	generically 'Nuragic'	466	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
392	N.M.S. Margherita	generically 'Nuragic'	467	S. Salvatore di Figus	generically 'Nuragic'
393	N. Cara (Sa Tella)	generically 'Nuragic'	468	S. Salvatore di Figus	generically 'Nuragic'
394	N. Terra Frucca	generically 'Nuragic'	469	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
395	N. Arrosu	generically 'Nuragic'	470	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
396	N.C. Marongiu	generically 'Nuragic'	471	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
397	N. Terra Maistus	generically 'Nuragic'	472	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
398	N. Su Guventu	generically 'Nuragic'	473	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
399	N. Nieddu	generically 'Nuragic'	474	Sa Corona Arrubia	generically 'Nuragic'
400	N.S. Barbara	generically 'Nuragic'	475	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
401	N. Pranu Aidu	generically 'Nuragic'	476	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
402	N. Chiccu Eccis	generically 'Nuragic'	477	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
403	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	478	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
404	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	479	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
405	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	480	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
406	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	481	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
407	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	482	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
408	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	483	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
409	N. Candela	generically 'Nuragic'	484	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'
410	N. Serrebi	generically 'Nuragic'	485	N.C. Tuveri	generically 'Nuragic'
411	N. Barumeli	generically 'Nuragic'	486	N. Bruncu G. Atzeni	generically 'Nuragic'
412	N. Colombus	generically 'Nuragic'	487	Is Trigas	generically 'Nuragic'
413	N. Camparriga	generically 'Nuragic'	488	N. Corongiu Pontis	generically 'Nuragic'
414	N. Maramutta	generically 'Nuragic'	489	N.S. Cosimo (1)	generically 'Nuragic'
415	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	490	N.S. Cosimo (2)	generically 'Nuragic'
416	N. Corti Marini	generically 'Nuragic'	491	N. Conca su Casteddu	generically 'Nuragic'
417	N. Pranu Casti	generically 'Nuragic'	492	N. Pauli Pardu	generically 'Nuragic'
418	N. Su Concali	generically 'Nuragic'	493	N. Jana	generically 'Nuragic'
419	N. Sa Corona Arrubia	generically 'Nuragic'	494	N. Arrubiu	generically 'Nuragic'
420	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	495	N. Otzi	generically 'Nuragic'
421	N. Corruardu	generically 'Nuragic'	496	N.S. Domini	generically 'Nuragic'
422	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'	497	N. Arigau	generically 'Nuragic'
423	[unknown]	generically 'Nuragic'			

Table 4-5. Single tower and complex nuraghi in the study area without further chronological evidence. In the Marmilla, many sites have remained unnamed, as the map provided by Badas et al. 1988, figure 1 is not accompanied by a site list (cf. fig. 4-18).



Fig. 4-19. Bronze statuette of a 'praying lady' which was part of the hoard found at S'Arrideli at the outskirts of modern Terralba (after Lilliu 1966, no. 79; drawing E. van Driel).

Fenu (323) by the *Riu Mannu* survey. Oral tradition has moreover preserved the memory of a destroyed nuraghe at this site (550). Just outside the other village at S. Ciriaco, alternatively named Su Nuraceddu (341), a remarkable hoard was found in 1951 at S'Arrideli (342). It consisted of 15 pieces of bronze weaponry and five bronze statuettes, four of which represented a standing woman; the fifth one is interpreted as a chief. Because some of the weapons and statuettes are badly damaged while others appear to be unfinished, the hoard has been interpreted as the collection of a bronze smith (Lilliu 1953, 25-79; cf. Lilliu 1966, nos 71, 79 and 81). On stylistic criteria the *bronzetti* must be dated to late 9th and early 8th century BC: the so-called *donna orante* ('praying lady': fig. 4-19) is very similar to the statuette found in the Villanovan tomb at Cavalupo (Vulci). Such a date also accords well with the characteris-

tics of the associated bronze axes and daggers (Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990a, 211-212). The items were packed in a ceramic container.

Whereas the archaeological record of the territories of Guspini and Terralba has yielded several secure indications of Iron Age settlement, in the Marmilla and in the remainder of the Campidano none of the nuraghi registered has been dated any more precisely than generically 'Nuragic'. Since these cannot simply be assumed to have been occupied continuously into the Iron Age, a distinction has been made between those sites where at least some indications exist for an Iron Age (or Final Bronze/Iron Age) occupation and those which are simply classified as nuraghi and which may but need not have been occupied in this period (tabs 4-4, 4-5; figs 4-17, 4-18). In the Marmilla, the evidence is limited to a single distribution map without further descriptions (Badas et al. 1988, fig. 1). It registers 87 sites, 66 of which are single-tower and 17 complex nuraghi as well as two communal tombs and two well-sanctuaries (468, 474). The evidence of the topographical explorations of Giovanni Lilliu and his students is unfortunately unusable, as the location of none of the 200 nuraghi listed in the Marmilla and 28 in the Campidano is given (Lilliu 1975, note 2).¹² As a consequence, only 148 nuraghi have been mapped (figure 4-18; cf. tab. 4-5) none of which, however, can accurately be dated.

4.3.2 THE WIDER CONTEXTS OF THE SÌNIS, CENTRAL CAMPIDANO AND UPPER FLUMINI MANNU VALLEY

Outside the study area proper, the wider region of west central Sardinia presents several noteworthy instances of Nuragic Iron Age and Phoenician occupation (fig. 4-20; tab. 4-6). Among these, the Phoenician foundations of Tharros and Othoca stand out as the only two settlements of undeniably colonial nature. Whereas Tharros (618) was established on an isolated peninsula, where indigenous settlement had already been abandoned in the Middle Bronze Age (Santoni 1985; cf. p. 81), Othoca (632) was located in the northern Arborèa on a small sandy knoll on the eastern shore of the S. Giusta lagoon (figs 4-7, 4-20). As shown by the well excavated burial evidence, the site was founded as a permanent settlement in the second half or last quarter of the 7th century BC. Older, late 8th/early 7th century, ceramic fragments are reported from the settlement area — but not documented. They may, however, suggest earlier, perhaps less permanent presence (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 56-57, 120). At the highest point of the knoll, below and next to the now standing cathedral, the remains of a single-tower nuraghe with adjacent village have been attested, which was occupied from the Middle Bronze Age until the early Iron Age (9th century BC). Some 700 m to the North, at the site called Is Olionis, another village was located, which has

yielded ample indigenous fine wares with 'Geometric' and 'Orientalizing' decorations, datable to the (later) 8th century BC (322, 366).

Despite the overlying modern town of S. Giusta, several limited excavations and stray finds brought to light during construction works have provided a general impression of the Phoenician settlement phase of Othoca. Spread over an area of roughly 10 to 15 ha, traces of square houses have been found which were constructed with mud bricks on an ashlar base of two rows. The remains of a wall and a moat probably postdate the 6th century BC (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 107-109, 118-121). The cemetery, located some 500 m downslope of the settlement, comprised predominantly cremation burials together with some inhumations. The cremated remains and grave goods were mostly deposited in simple trench graves (*a fossa*), which sometimes were aligned with stone slabs (*a cassone*). The inhumation burials were all of the latter type. More elaborate and exclusively used for cremations were burials in a stone coffin (*cista litica*). Exceptional are the two built chamber tombs, so-called *caveaux bâtis*, which were reused for later depositions until the 1st century BC (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 109-116). The finds from the cemetery and settlement area mainly consist of Phoenician pottery, but Etruscan products, Greek imports and indigenous objects are also well represented (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 177-179; Ugas/Zucca 1984, 127-131). Several seals, amulets and jewels come from the necropolis, most of which are imports; a number of seals, however, appear to have been manufactured locally of green diaster from the Monte Arci (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 171-172).

A special place in the region is occupied by the Sinis and northern Campidano, a low-land area situated between the Gulf of Oristano and the Monte Arci (fig. 4-20). Intensive research activities both by Taramelli (1929, 1935) and more recently (Sebis 1987; Tore/Stiglitz 1987a, 1992) have resulted in distribution maps and site gazetteers of nuraghi and other indigenous Late Bronze and Iron Age sites, listing some 136 nuraghi in the Sinis alone (which measures ca 260 km²). Detailed study of the southern Sinis has moreover demonstrated the existence of a number of villages, half of which were associated with a nuraghe. Nor did all of these present monumental constructions (Sebis 1987, 107). By studying the associated finds, it has been possible to distinguish between the various Nuragic phases and it appears that hardly any of these sites remained occupied in the Iron Age (i.e. after the later 9th century BC: Sebis 1987, 110-111). Although the adjacent northern Sinis and northern Campidano have been examined less intensively, Iron Age occupation could hardly be demonstrated in these areas either (Tore/Stiglitz 1987a, 97-99). At present, only one village and one nuraghe with definite Iron Age occupation have been identified in the northern Campidano, viz. at Su

Cungiau'e Funtà near Nuraxinieddu (498) and in the complex nuraghe of S'Uraki near S. Vero Milis (503).¹³ In the Sinis, only the site of Funtana Meiga (499) has certainly yielded 'Geometric' indigenous pottery (Ugas/Zucca 1984, 132).¹⁴ There is nevertheless one site which unequivocally demonstrates a firm indigenous presence in the Sinis during the earlier Iron Age: at the foot of a low hill called Monte Prama on the eastern shore of the Cabras lagoon a cemetery has been excavated which consisted of a row of small pits covered by large sandstone slabs (500). In all, 30 graves have been unearthed, in which the dead had been placed seated, mostly facing eastward and without grave goods. There were both men and women as well as probably five children. The graveyard was delimited by a row of vertically placed sandstone slabs (Tronchetti 1986, 41-43). Above ground, on or nearby the graves, at least 25 extraordinary over-lifesize statues of warriors had been erected. While unique in size and material,¹⁵ these statues are stylistically clearly related to the *bronzetti* (Tronchetti 1986, 43-46: fig. 4-21). Furthermore, a substantial number of small nuraghe models has been found, representing both single towers and complex ones. The cemetery has been dated as spanning the entire 7th century BC (Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990a, 214; Tronchetti 1986, 47). On the top of the hill stands the complex nuraghe Monte Prama and a village lies nearby. Since both the nuraghe models and the iconography of the statues are associated with the Iron Age elite just as the individual burials of the cemetery, which apparently comprised one single family group, the site has been interpreted as the 'heroic' cult place of an elite family group (Tronchetti 1986, 48-49, 1988, 74-77). The nearby nuraghi and villages remain unexplored, even if another nuraghe model has been found at nuraghe Cann'e Fadosu, which is only a few hundreds of metres away (Tronchetti 1988, 76). Stray finds from the northern Campidano worth noting are a fragment of an Etruscan inscription (505) and three bronze 'torch holders' found at or near S'Uraki (501) and Othoca (502). Presumably incense burners, the latter objects have been stylistically dated to the late 8th or early 7th century BC. They appear to represent imports from the eastern Mediterranean, most likely from Cyprus (Moscatti/Uberti 1988, 45; Tore 1986, 70-72).

In the central Campidano and the stream valley of the upper Flumini Mannu to the East of the study area a number of Iron Age contexts have been recorded which are of particular relevance to the Marmilla (506-529; cf. fig. 4-20). The complex nuraghe Su Nuraxi of Barumini (525) stands out among these because of the large-scale excavations which have extensively been published (cf. pp. 76-78). A survey of the archaeological remains in the territory of Gesturi in the upper Marmilla has identified twelve cases of continuing Iron Age occupation as well as the abandonment



Fig. 4-20. Map of the wider region of west central Sardinia showing Final Bronze Age/Iron Age sites and find-spots mentioned in the text (cf. tab. 4-6).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Toponym</i>	<i>Periodization</i>
316	Pinn'e Maiolu	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
322	Basilica di S. Giusta	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
337	Corti sa Perda	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
366	Is Olionis	Iron Age
498	Su Cungiau 'e Funta	Nuragic and Punic
499	Funtana Meiga	Final Bronze and First Iron Age
500	Monte Prama	Iron Age
501	S'Uraki	Iron Age
502	(generic S. Giusta area)	Iron Age
503	S'Uraki	Nuragic and Punic-Roman
504	Banatou	Iron Age
505	Via Re Ugone	Iron Age
506	N. Perda Niedda	Iron Age
507	N. Bau Romanu	Iron Age
508	N. Su Senu (Nerbonis)	Iron Age
509	Bruncu 'e Tana	Nuragic and Punic-Roman
510	N. Tana	Iron Age
511	Scacca	Iron Age
513	N. Cogotti	Iron Age
514	N. Brunku Cristollu	Iron Age
515	Cuccuru Ruinas	Nuragic and Punic-Roman
516	N. Pisconti	Iron Age
517	N. Sollargiu	Iron Age
518	Santu Brai	Nuragic and Punic
519	Is Bangius	Iron Age
520	Dom'e s'Abis	Iron Age
521	Argiddas	Nuragic and Punic-Roman
522	N. Su Mulinu	Iron Age
523	N. Tuppediti	Iron Age
524	N. S'Uraxi	Iron Age
525	N. Su Nuraxi	Iron Age
526	N. Pranu Amis	Iron Age
527	N. Marfudi	Iron Age
528	N. Bruncu sa Figu	Iron Age
529	N. s'Aneri	Iron Age
530	Tradori	generically 'Nuragic'
531	N. Melas	Iron Age
618	Tharros	Nuragic and Punic-Roman
625	Cuccuru S'Arriu	Iron Age
632	Othoca	Punic and Roman

Table 4-6. Relevant Final Bronze Age and Iron Age sites, find-spots and stray-finds outside the study area (cf. fig. 4-20).

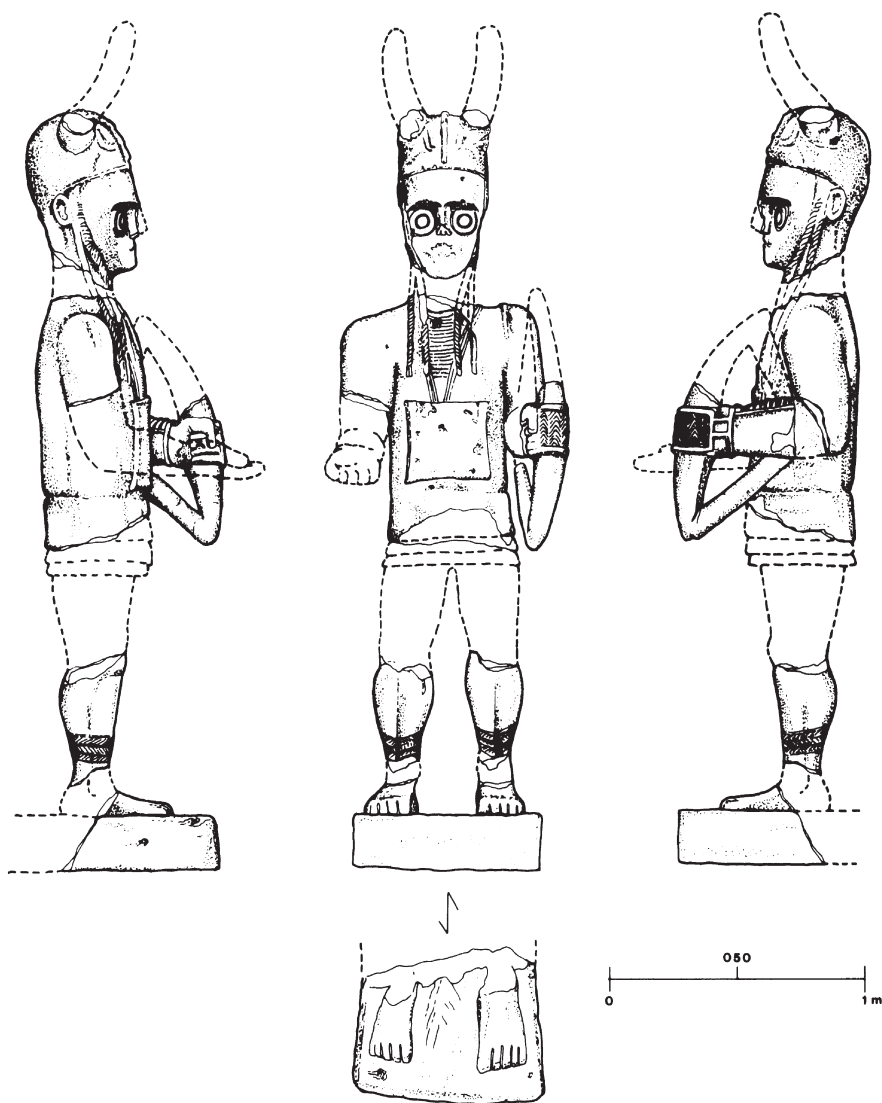


Fig. 4-21. Reconstruction of a monumental statue from Monte Prama representing an archer (after Bernardini/Tronchetti 1991a, fig. 204).

of 25 sites in the same period (Lilliu 1985, 271). Elsewhere in the central Marmilla, twelve Iron Age sites are known, all of which continue Final Bronze Age occupation (Usai 1987, 243). The importance of these sites is not only that they attest Iron Age settlement in the Marmilla but also that detailed study of the local coarse and domestic pottery has a great potential for distinguishing between earlier and later phases of Nuragic presence (cf. Usai 1987, 245). Among these sites, specific attention must be given to the site of Santu Brai of Furtei (518), where a rectangular house of mud bricks has been excavated, which has yielded an inter-

esting collection of imported *bucchero*. An amphora *à la brosse* and allegedly eastern Greek ('Ionic') imports have also been found. All of these must be dated in the late 7th and early 6th century BC. Below these finds was an earlier occupation layer characterized by exclusively indigenous pottery, including some fine wares decorated with so-called Geometric designs (Ugas 1989, 1065-1067). Etruscan and imported eastern Greek pottery, mostly cups and juglets, have also been found at several other sites in the central Campidano and upper Flumini Mannu valley (Ugas/Zucca 1984, 34-51; cf. fig. 4-20).

Slightly further East, finally, lies the Iron Age sanctuary of Su Mulinu at Villanovafranca (522), which reuses part of a complex nuraghe, which was originally constructed in the Middle Bronze Age and restructured at the beginning of the 9th century BC. A central position in the shrine was occupied by a large altar in the shape of a nuraghe. It was surrounded by various bronze items. A large number of oil lamps suggests that these played an important part during the rituals performed in the shrine. The whole complex was abandoned by the end of the 6th century BC (Ugas/Paderi 1990, 475-479).

4.3.3 TOWARDS AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF IRON AGE WEST CENTRAL SARDINIA

While the foregoing two sections show that there is no lack of archaeological evidence for late Nuragic settlement in west central Sardinia, it is also evident that the available data are of uneven quality. In this final part of this section I therefore identify the principal flaws of the data set presented above and I outline the major points which can reliably be claimed on the basis of the available information.

One of the major problems is constituted by the numerous nuraghi which have only generically been classified as 'Nuragic', as it is habitually assumed that nuraghi were continuously inhabited until the 6th or 5th century BC when historical sources suggest that southern Sardinia fell under Carthaginian rule (e.g. Lilliu 1975, 140-141; cf. pp. 122-125). Yet, the diminishing importance of nuraghi from the 9th century BC onwards implies that continuous occupation into the Iron Age cannot be taken for granted. Outside the study area, this trend is confirmed by the evidence from the territory of Gesturi, where only one third of the Late Bronze Age settlements and nuraghi remained occupied. The underlying issue is therefore that a generic classification as merely 'Nuragic' obfuscates the transformation of indigenous settlement which took place in the 9th and 8th centuries BC.

In the study area, settlement continuity has positively been demonstrated at a number of places, of which Genna Maria near Villanovaforru (310) is probably the best example.

In the whole of the Marmilla study area, however, evidence of Iron Age occupation has been recorded at only nine nuraghi.¹⁶ This contrasts sharply with the percentage of continuously settled sites in the Gesturi area: if the Gesturi evidence can indeed offer an indication of the measure of settlement contraction, then some 60 or 70 of the over 200 generically 'Nuragic' sites in the Marmilla might be expected to have remained occupied. The statistical sample of the *Riu Mannu* survey, in which two out of three nuraghi have yielded indications of protracted presence, suggests likewise that continuous occupation of nuraghi on the one hand cannot be taken for granted but that on the other hand it was also a recurrent phenomenon. With regard to the

distribution map of Iron Age sites in the study area (fig. 4-22), it can therefore safely be assumed that is a gross under-representation of the settlement pattern in that period and that a substantial number of dots on the distribution map of the nuraghi (fig. 4-18) should be added to it.

The cause of these problems is the paucity of diagnostic finds in surface collections made in and around nuraghi. While the limited presence of fine wares at small sites should not be underestimated, part of the problem is also caused by the nuraghi themselves, as they prevent ploughing and on the contrary have often stimulated farmers to accumulate rubble from surrounding fields. Thick overgrowth, especially thorn-bushes, also frequently complicates fieldwork, while erosion is common at the exposed ridges where many nuraghi are situated. The scale of the problem is illustrated by the experiences of the *Riu Mannu* project: it has taken eight full days of work by five to six persons to collect a systematic sample of surface finds on and around the three nuraghi included in the sample (328, 329, 330) and to draw the standing remains. The importance of the intensity of fieldwork is illustrated when these *Riu Mannu* results are compared to those of the survey of the same nuraghi by an American team examining between four and eight nuraghi per day: whereas the latter detected only a few pieces of obsidian and coarse pottery or nothing at all (Dyson/Rowland 1992a, 181), the intensive *Riu Mannu* survey has collected considerable quantities of finds suggesting densities ranging between 2 and 1.5 fragments per square metre.¹⁷ With regard to the distribution map of Iron Age settlement in the study area (fig. 4-22), even a brief glance cannot overlook the clustering of sites on either side of the central Campidano. Since these areas roughly coincide with the territories of Guspini on the one hand and those of Sardara and Sanluri on the other hand, where Taramelli's activities in the region were concentrated, these clusters must to a considerable extent be regarded as the product of biased fieldwork started by Taramelli and continued by both amateur and professional archaeologists in more recent years.¹⁸ The same distribution map (fig. 4-22) also shows that during at least the early Iron Age the coastal lowlands were far from uninhabited. Both the survey data and the topographical evidence collected by Artudi and Perra (1996) suggest that settlement in this area might have been somewhat different from that in the hills of the interior. In combination with other evidence, the villages of Coddu su Fenugu (323), S. Ciriaco (341), Su Cungiau e' Funtà (498) and S. Elia (335) may denote a settlement pattern which was not dominated by nuraghi and which consisted mainly of open villages without complex monumental constructions.¹⁹ The size of the villages and the hoard of S'Arrideli show that these need not have been secondary or peripheral. The registration of several small find-spots by the *Riu Mannu* survey (324-327) and the



Fig. 4-22. Map of the study area of west central Sardinia showing all sites and find-spots dated to the Final Bronze Age/Iron Age (cf. tabs 4-2, 4-3, 4-4 respectively).

Terralba explorations (627, 628) may also indicate additional smaller settlement sites. With regard to chronology, it should be noted that the relatively well studied villages of Coddù su Fenugu and S. Elia, the *bronzetti* of S'Arrideli (342) and the finds from pre-classical Neapolis (344) cluster in the earlier part of the Iron Age: it would appear from the admittedly incomplete evidence that the coastal area was more or less abandoned by the later 8th or perhaps 7th century BC. Such a development is corroborated by the stratigraphic evidence from the excavations in Sardara: both the well-sanctuary of S. Anastasia (311) and the settlement near S. Maria is Acquis (319) were abandoned at the end of the 8th century BC. Just outside the study area, the excavations in S. Giusta (in the cathedral [322] and at Is Olionis [366]) lend further support to this interpretation. Continuous occupation during the later Iron Age is exclusively known at a number of sites in the central Campidano and upper Flumini Mannu stream valley, which are largely outside the study area. Within the study area, only the sites of Corti Beccia (321) and nuraghe Sa Perra (343) remained certainly inhabited, while several burials were deposited in the communal tomb of Motrox'e Bois (320).

By and large, several general points can thus be made on the basis of the available evidence. First, the entire study area, including the coastal lowlands, remained inhabited during at least the initial centuries of the Iron Age and participated in the wider development of increasing social stratification: in all parts of the region traces of the newly emerging elite such as the single burials and the *bronzetti* have been found. Secondly, an additional withdrawal of settlement into the interior Campidano and Marmilla appears to have taken place in the course of the 7th century BC. In the third place, the settlement pattern was fairly diversified and all elements (nuraghi, villages, shrines) were well represented throughout the region. The impressive quantity and quality of monumental settlements in the Guspini territory at the foot of the minerally rich Iglesias mountains suggest a substantial indigenous presence in that area. Yet, given the uneven covering of the study area, this concentration may be more apparent than real. In the fourth place, remarkably few imported objects have been found in the study area: the *Riu Mannu* survey has not detected a single imported fragment predating the 6th century BC and the excavated finds are not numerous either. A few pieces of imported jewellery have been recovered in the tomb of Motrox'e Bois (320) and Genna Maria (310) has yielded one isolated Phoenician sherd, which was out of context and which postdates the abandonment of the Iron Age village. Only in S. Anastasia (311) a substantial quantity of imports has been found, viz. a Villanovan brooch and three Oriental-style bronze bowls. This picture changed radically by the late 7th and early 6th century BC, when substantial numbers of eastern Greek and

Etruscan pottery were imported to the central Campidano where indigenous settlement had largely become concentrated by then. The only other place in the study area where such finds have been encountered is Neapolis.

4.4 Divided Lands in Iron Age West Central Sardinia

Notwithstanding its fragmentary and biased state, the archaeological record of Iron Age west central Sardinia offers more relevant information than just site locations and chronological pointers. The evidence for various site types ranging from single-tower and complex nuraghi to well-sanctuaries and cave shrines and the repeated occurrence of most of these allow a more profound analysis of the regional settlement system than has so far been undertaken. Such an approach may in particular contribute to alternative interpretations of imported objects and local imitations of these, because more insight in the characteristics of indigenous contexts will enhance understanding of local perceptions and usages of foreign items. This may shed new light on the colonial situation of west central Sardinia.

The conventional representation of Phoenician presence in Sardinia as outlined in the second section of this chapter (pp. 80-85) has focused attention on colonial 'achievements' and their contribution to indigenous developments. Looming large among these is the notion of urbanization: since the Phoenician settlements are conventionally considered in urban terms, they are tacitly assumed to stand at the basis of the urban development of Sardinia. In this view, urbanization is a primarily colonial achievement, which Nuragic society was apparently unable to reach. By marking the colonial presence as of primary importance throughout the island it is assumed that new colonial core areas were created on the coast, while the interior was reduced to a peripheral role. Because of implicit associations with civilization, however, such a representation can be suspected of colonialist bias. It consequently needs critical scrutiny. A second point regards the distribution of colonial objects in the interior of the island, which conventionally is interpreted in colonial terms as denoting the acceptance of Phoenician norms and values in Nuragic society (e.g. Bondi 1987a, 160-161).

These two points constitute the topics of this section and I shall examine them on the basis of the archaeological evidence discussed in the previous section and with reference to the conventional representation of these themes as outlined in the second section of this chapter. In the first part of this section, I shall thus look into the issue of urbanization in west central Sardinia by reviewing the relevant data. In the second part I shall take up the colonial imports and their distribution in the indigenous contexts of the interior.

4.4.1 COLONIAL TOWNS AND INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPES
 Establishing a colonial settlement in the Mediterranean is generally equated with the foundation of a city and, as a corollary, urbanization is often associated with colonization. The origins of this line of thought are to be found in the Greek colonies of southern Italy which were explicitly referred to by (near-)contemporary and later authors as 'cities' or rather 'city-states' (πόλεις). This label has been adopted without further questioning in studies of Greek colonialism and it has by extension also been applied to its Phoenician counterpart. Conventionally, urbanization is defined in terms of the presence of certain features in one single site, viz. the emerging town. It is widely accepted that public buildings, nucleated settlement, fortifications and (standardized) town planning constitute essential indicators of urbanization; interestingly, these differ little from Pausanias' criteria for deciding whether a settlement might be termed a 'city' (cf. Finley 1977, 3-4). In most cases, these criteria are met by the archaeological evidence of Greek colonial settlements. With regard to the Phoenician foundations in general and those in Sardinia in particular, however, the available evidence is often too fragmentary to meet the conventional criteria. A positive exception is the Sicilian settlement of Motya (Isserlin 1982). In Sardinia, however, no fortifications are known and not much can be said about town planning. Yet, there is a good reason to regard the major Phoenician settlements of the island as urban, if only in Phoenician terms. The distinctive feature, which also sets them apart from the minor settlements, is the presence of a *tophet*. While a *tophet* might also be regarded as belonging to the category of 'public buildings', it must in the first place be considered as being an essential element of a ritual and institution which define a town as being independent and as having a distinctive identity (cf. p. 83). The *tophet* of Su Muru Mannu can therefore be accepted as marking the independent status of Tharros. This approach has been criticized, however, because it effectively reduces urbanization to the appearance of certain 'urban traits' in a single settlement and because it ignores the relationships of the emerging city with its hinterland. Urbanization has therefore alternatively been presented in terms of the *regional* settlement pattern encompassing both the emerging town and other, usually minor, settlements (Van Dommelen 1997b). In this way, more weight is given to the relationships that an emerging town maintains with the surrounding region, because, once it exists, 'a town is defined by its political, economic and social relationships to the surrounding countryside' (Morris 1991, 27). The motivation for such an approach is that the transformation of one particular settlement into a town must have had a wider relevance outside the settlement alone, suggesting that the emerging town was only one — although admittedly significant —

instance of a regional transformation process but that it was by no means the only one involved. From this point of view, the allegedly essential 'urban features' are mere epiphenomena that only become apparent in the final stages of a wider process. This alternative approach elaborates on the study of so-called 'proto-urban' settlements, which examines the nucleation process of settlement in its regional context, paying attention to the development of both major and minor sites (Guidi 1982, 280-281; cf. Colonna 1983, 433). With regard to west central Sardinia, the issue at stake is not so much how and why one particular site developed into a 'proto-urban' centre and eventually became a city, but rather if and how a foreign colonial town could become part of an otherwise largely indigenous settlement system and play a dominant role in it. More specifically, the question to be answered is whether Tharros, perhaps together with the nearby Sinis district, can be regarded as assuming a central role in the region in the 7th or early 6th century BC. Is it possible that despite differences between colonial and indigenous settlements, Tharros and the southern Sinis attained a central role in the entire region? A first observation in this respect regards the identification of indigenous central places and elite centres in west central Sardinia: generally, these are characterized by the presence of a so-called 'Meeting-hut', which is assumed to have constituted a central place for elite gatherings where important decisions were taken. In west central Sardinia, only one example is known near the well-sanctuary of S. Anastasia in Sardara (311). This association must have added considerably to its status: the combination of political and religious authority in a highly restricted number of places which stand out by architectural elaboration suggests that these sites were the highest ranking central places where the regional elites met. It is not clear, however, whether there was a separate religious elite (the 'priests' represented by various *bronzetti*) or whether the political elite also performed religious tasks (Webster 1996, 203). Since the nearest comparable complexes are those of S. Vittoria of Serri and S. Cristina near Paulilatino in central Sardinia, it is likely that these 'federal centres' commanded very large regions, albeit presumably not directly. The absence of any comparable complex in west central Sardinia therefore need not be a construct of the biased archaeological record but may be a genuine representation of the situation. Other 'Meeting-huts' than the one at S. Anastasia are unknown in the study area. Yet, given the existence of several complex nuraghi with an associated village of a size comparable to that of Su Nuraxi near Barumini, where a 'Meeting-hut' is present (525; cf. p. 78, fig. 4-5), it cannot be excluded — and may even be likely — that more 'Meeting-huts' still await discovery. Likely candidates are Sa Domu Beccia of Uras (318) in the Campidano, Melas (339) and perhaps

Terra Moi (374) in the Guspini district. The general lack of research in the Marmilla, where virtually no villages are known, precludes any statement about that area.²⁰ Outside the study area, S'Uraki (503), the Monte Prama and Cann'e Fadosu complex (500) and Tradori (530) are sites in the northern Campidano which might possess a 'Meeting-hut'. Despite the complete lack of any other information, the discovery of a nuraghe model indicates Cann'e Fadosu as a likely site of elite residence, as such models have only been encountered in either 'Meeting-huts' (as e.g. Su Nuraxi) or shrines. The nearby presence of the Monte Prama cemetery which has been interpreted as containing elite burials and a place of elite worship lends additional support to this interpretation.

Other indicators of elite presence than 'Meeting-huts' are nevertheless far from absent in the study area (fig. 4-23): *bronzetti* have for example been found at Is Carellis (347) and Usellus (346), apart from the ones at Sa Costa in Sardara (312).²¹ Smaller wells with a (probable) ritual function are also known throughout the region: Mitza Nieddinu (313) and Cugui (331) in the Guspini area and S. Salvatore di Figus (468) and perhaps Sa Corona Arrubia (474) in the Marmilla. The cave shrine of Sa Grutta de is Caombus (345) can be added to the latter two. Just outside the study area, the shrine of Su Mulinu (522) is situated on the hills across the Flumini Mannu valley, while in the northern Campidano and Sinis the shrines of Banatou (504) and Monte Prama (500) can be found. Given the absence of any secure information about these sites, however, their elite connections must largely be inferred by analogy with the large sanctuaries. An interpretation as lower-level (secondary) centres of civic and religious authority is nevertheless supported by the fairly even distribution of these sites (fig. 4-23).

On the whole, the S. Anastasia sanctuary clearly stands out as the highest ranking place of west central Sardinia. The exceptional single burials of Sa Costa only reinforce this interpretation, as do the associated archer *bronzetti*, which have been interpreted as elite warriors but also as being related to ritual contexts (Webster 1996, 202). The distribution of the other indications of elite residence suggest that west central Sardinia was further divided into several districts (fig. 4-3). The burials of Motrox'e Bois (320) which were deposited in a communal *Tomba di Giganti* but nevertheless were accompanied by Iron Age elite grave goods can be related to a lower-level elite, who apparently could not dissociate themselves from the local community as strongly as the warriors buried at Sa Costa (Sardara). Possible parallels for this situation are provided by the communal tomb of Bruncu Espis of Arbus on the other side of the Iglesias mountains (Lilliu 1988, 468-469). The difference between the elite resident in Sardara and those elsewhere need not simply have been one of socio-political rank, as only at S. Anastasia

religious and political power seem to have coincided, which is presumably what gave the site its prominence. At the same time, however, the significance of S. Anastasia may well have been primarily religious and of limited political consequence, if it depended on the consent of the local elites.

At the lower end of the settlement hierarchy a distinction can be made between the complex nuraghi on the one hand and the single-tower ones and isolated villages on the other hand (Webster 1996, 110-125). The numerous complex nuraghi represented the local foci of political and economic organization throughout the region. The latter aspect is demonstrated by the relatively abundant evidence for metal working which appears to have taken place at sites of all levels, including the isolated villages and single-tower nuraghi. These, however, produced only tools and small weapons, and the production of *fibulae*, *bronzetti* and other more elaborate items (e.g. tripods, large swords etc.) was restricted to the larger sites, usually complex nuraghi (Webster 1996, 171-174). Evidence of specialized bronze production is for instance only known at Genna Maria (310) and S. Anastasia (311). The hoards containing scrap metal found at S'Arrideli (342) and nuraghe Crobus (336) and the remains at S. Antiogu (340) show that at the lower-ranking sites only relatively simple metal working was carried out. A second point regarding regional organization in west central Sardinia is a chronological one: the foregoing representation of the indigenous settlement pattern basically applies to the 9th and 8th centuries BC, as many of the sites discussed were abandoned by the 7th century BC, including the well-sanctuary of S. Anastasia. In the study area, definite 7th century occupation has in fact only been documented at the sites of Corti Beccia (321), nuraghe Sa Perra (343) and the tomb of Motrox'e Bois (320) and it is only the latter site which includes indications of elite presence. It is nevertheless not clear whether the abandonment of S. Anastasia implies the demise of regional organization. The continuity attested in other sanctuaries, as for instance at S. Vittoria, as well as in nearby lower-level centres such as Su Nuraxi (525) and in shrines as Su Mulinu (522) shows that the settlement hierarchy in the interior essentially remained intact. The abandonment of S. Anastasia must therefore rather be regarded as a regional phenomenon, which correlated with the general shift of indigenous settlement into the interior of west central Sardinia.

A third point concerning the role of Tharros in west central Sardinia regards the virtual absence of colonial products in the region. Othoca is in fact the only site in the region which bears a close resemblance to Tharros in terms of material culture such as house types, burial customs and pottery. Because of the absence of a *tophet*, the foundation date of the late 7th century BC and the correspondences in material



Fig. 4-23. Map of west central Sardinia showing (possible) elite centers and a hypothetical division of the region in districts.
 Legend: Large triangle: regional elite center; small triangles: (possible) secondary centers; stars: cult places; crosses: elite burials).

culture, Othoca evidently represents a secondary Phoenician foundation which was dependent on — although not necessarily established by — Tharros (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 56-57).

From the above it follows that there are no compelling reasons to suppose that Tharros maintained intensive relationships with the wider region which might be interpreted as those between a city and its hinterland, let alone that it functioned as a central place in west central Sardinia. Nor is there any evidence to support the thesis of a Phoenician 'reordering' of the region. Despite the problematic state of the archaeological evidence, an independent indigenous settlement system with both socio-political and religious dimensions can instead be discerned in the region. It was moreover evidently ranked, being headed by a paramount centre in which political and religious spheres coincided. This place (S. Anastasia) was centrally located in the region. At lower levels, political organization must have been much more fragmented; economic centralization was similarly limited, as most economic activities were carried out at all levels of the settlement hierarchy. Compared to the one paramount indigenous centre, the secondary central places and the numerous other local foci through which the landscape of west central Sardinia firmly retained its Nuragic appearance, Tharros obviously occupied a peripheral rather than central place.

Diachronically, the indigenous settlement system clearly rooted in the Late Bronze Age, as show several of its better documented constituents. Because it already emerged in the 9th century BC, that is well before the foundation of Tharros, it represented an indigenous development which evolved independently of colonial interference. The same holds for its subsequent transformation at the turn of the 8th-7th centuries BC, as Othoca was not established as a permanent settlement before the late 7th century BC, that is well after the disappearance of most indigenous settlements from the coastal areas. There can therefore be little doubt that Tharros did not become part of the indigenous settlement system. The foundation of Othoca rather marked the creation of an independent colonial settlement system in the coastal area which was not integrated with its indigenous counterpart in the interior.

While the contraction and hierarchization of the indigenous settlement pattern can to some extent be interpreted in terms of a gradual urbanization process in which the regional well-sanctuaries functioned as 'proto-urban' nuclei, the colonial contribution to this process was negligible. The urban traits of Tharros must therefore be explained in the colonial context which on the one hand did not go beyond the immediate vicinity of the city but which on the other hand also included other colonial settlements elsewhere in the western Mediterranean.

4.4.2 PRECOLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

The foregoing conclusion that colonial and indigenous settlement remained basically separated, does not mean that there were no contacts between the inhabitants of the region.

The questions about the nature of Phoenician-Nuragic relationships therefore remain open. In order to provide answers, the distribution of colonial objects in indigenous contexts and *vice versa* needs to be reviewed in detail. While surveys of imported objects have regularly been compiled since the days of Pais — in recent years, the work of Lo Schiavo (1978), Lo Schiavo and D'Oriano (1990), Ugas and Zucca (1984), E. Usai (1991) and Tore (1991; 1992) must be mentioned —, what is lacking in these overviews is a consideration of the specific contexts in which these imports have been encountered. A suitable framework for identifying these contexts is now constituted by the foregoing description of the indigenous settlement system of west central Sardinia.

Starting with the few imports in the study area, the first thing to be noted is that, with the exception of the isolated out-of-context sherd of Genna Maria, they have been found at only two places (viz. S. Anastasia [310] and Motrox'e Bois [320]), both of which are associated with elite presence, while the former in addition carries religious connotations. Secondly, all imported items found at these places are luxury goods such as metalwork, glass-paste beads etc. In the third place, while the imports do not include pottery, indigenous fine wares present a wide range of more or less freely imitated foreign decoration schemes and vessel shapes. These local imitations were moreover much more widely distributed than imported objects as they also occur in substantial numbers at lower-level settlements.

This picture is confirmed by the evidence from the wider region: the bronze incense burners which presumably come from S'Uraki (501) and Othoca (502) are precious imports by any standard. While the latter context was a colonial one, at least S'Uraki represented an important indigenous secondary centre. Comparable finds have been encountered in the 'Meeting-hut' of the S. Vittoria sanctuary of Serri, which like S. Anastasia displays strong elite and religious connections (cf. p. 87). In the Monte Prama cemetery (500), moreover, bronze, faience and ivory fragments of necklaces have been found with some of the burials. One of these was an ivory seal in so-called 'pseudo-Hyksos style' which must have been imported from the eastern Mediterranean (Tronchetti 1986, 47). In the Marmilla, a *fibula* from the village of Su Nuraxi has been attributed a Cypriote origin (Lo Schiavo 1978, 261). The house in which it was found has been interpreted as a shrine because of the exceptional foundation offerings found below the various floor levels and the high quality of the other finds (Lilliu/Zucca 1988, 133-134). It is moreover situated next to the 'Meeting-hut' (fig. 4-5).

From a chronological point of view, most of these finds date from the 8th century BC, as none of the sites where they have been found remained occupied in the 7th century BC. This later period is only covered by the finds at Monte Prama and Su Nuraxi, which are both located outside the study area. As was noted above (p. 103), this situation changed significantly by the end of the 7th century, when considerable amounts of East Greek and Etruscan pottery were imported into the central Campidano and Flumini Mannu valley. In the study area, these imports are known from Sa Perra (343) and Corti Beccia (321). Important find-spots outside the study-area are Su Nuraxi (525), Is Bangius (518), Tuppediti (523) and Su Mulinu (522).²² In the northern Campidano, fragments of Etruscan and possibly East Greek imported pottery have been reported from at least two sites: the complex nuraghe S'Uraki (503), and nuraghe Melas (531). In contrast to the 8th century situation, this group of imports consisted entirely of pottery, most of which can be classified as drinking vessels and related jugs (Ugas/Zucca 1984, 66). In addition, the find-spots comprise a substantial number of lower-level domestic sites. At most of these, locally produced imitations of Etruscan and East Greek pottery shapes were a regular feature. Alongside with more strict reproductions of imported pottery,²³ a more diffuse Etruscan and Greek influence on indigenous pottery has also been noted, although on the whole these products clearly go back on earlier Nuragic traditions (Ugas 1986, 45-46). This new situation existed until approximately the later 6th century BC, even if a gradual prominence of East Greek pottery at the expense of Etruscan products has been suggested for the southern and central Campidano (Ugas 1986, 48). With regard to the earlier 8th century situation, the contexts of all imported objects in west central Sardinia have been identified as bearing strong elite connotations. They have most prominently been encountered, both in quality and quantity (bronze bowls and *fibulae*), in the high-ranking centre of S. Anastasia, where political and religious authority converged. In all of these cases, the elite or religious nature of the sites was primarily defined by a wide range of indigenous finds with which the colonial imports were associated. At both S. Anastasia and Motrox'e Bois, the imported items were grouped together with various indigenous products as if part of one and the same category of objects. Although the evidence is more elusive elsewhere, this may similarly have been the case at lower-level sites. Several conclusions can be drawn from these observations. In the first place it means, as has frequently been pointed out (Tronchetti 1988, 19-39; Webster 1996, 175-176), that the apparently limited exchange relationships were a prerogative of the indigenous elite; it has also been concluded that they were on an equal footing with the inhabitants of the Phoenician settlements. In short, these relationships are commonly

interpreted as gift exchanges (Tronchetti 1988, 82-83). In the second place, the association with local products suggests that the imported items were regarded as equally precious and prestigious and that they were just one among various kinds of 'prestige goods'. This counters the interpretation that political authority rested on a monopoly of *imported* prestige goods for the display of status and wealth; it also argues against the suggestion that the circulation of imports in Sardinia was responsible for intensified social competition and, ultimately, for the transformations occurring in the indigenous communities of the 8th century BC (Webster/Teglund 1992, 455). From this conclusion it follows that the limited number of imports circulating in Sardinia was entirely subsumed under the much wider indigenous category of elite status goods and that they were exchanged on primarily indigenous terms.

The profound changes in the west central Sardinian settlement system in the early 7th century BC and the subsequent shift to the interior thus need not be ascribed to a 'collapse of indigenous society in the face of the newly arrived [Phoenician] values' (Tronchetti 1995a, 728; cf. p. 85). The principal argument for this is not only that a small number of imported items do not imply the wholesale adoption of other social values but also that the contexts in which the imports were circulated suggest that they were 'adapted to' and handled in accordance with indigenous values of prestige and authority. As a consequence, it makes much more sense to seek the reasons for the shift in settlement in internal competition and warfare. There are no indications whatsoever for supposing Phoenician involvement in this development; nor should it be forgotten that there was no question of a break-down of indigenous settlement and society but rather a shift of its main foci, among which in the first place the primary central place of S. Anastasia. Complete abandonment of settlement is likely to have occurred in the coastal Arborèa only.

A rather different situation emerged by the late 7th century BC, as suggest the more widespread occurrence and different choices of imported items. In the first place, the distribution of 7th century BC imported pottery did not essentially differ from that of 8th century indigenous fine wares, as both are generally found in secondary local centres. At the same time, bronze and increasingly iron objects as well as the 'Meeting-huts' remained a distinctive feature of the Nuragic elite, as is unequivocally shown by the quantities of bronze and iron finds at the political centre of Su Nuraxi near Barumini and in the sanctuary of S. Vittoria of Serri. Yet, there are surprisingly few imported bronzes among these: a brooch of presumable Cypriote provenance is the only imported item found in the 7th century village of Su Nuraxi. This suggests that the replacement of bronze items by ceramics as imports did not affect the indigenous appreciation of

these categories of material culture as such, as bronzes continued to be highly valued and pottery remained less conspicuous.

It can also be concluded that the indigenous elite had not lost power but that by the 7th century BC lower ranking groups of Nuragic society had succeeded in gaining access to exchange relationships with the Phoenician settlements. The pottery which they imported was apparently regarded as appropriate to their standing as lower-level elite, as bronzes remained distinctive of the highest ranking groups.

A further point regards the increased intensity of contacts between the indigenous and Phoenician inhabitants of 7th century BC Sardinia, which is underscored by the establishment of Othoca in the northern Arborèa. Intensified relationships between the Phoenician and Nuragic communities are also demonstrated by several instances of indigenous presence in colonial contexts. Since Phoenician settlement evidence is virtually non-existent, it is inevitable that only burial evidence can be cited. In west central Sardinia, the cemeteries of both Tharros and Othoca have yielded several Nuragic objects. At Tharros, they consist of a number of Iron Age *bronzetti*, including a pair of oxen and a boat, various pins, buttons and dagger sheaths. Since both the provenance and dating of these objects are uncertain, however, their evidential value is somewhat feeble.²⁴ Reliable evidence has instead been discovered in Othoca, where one cremation burial contained Phoenician plates and juglets, an Etruscan Corinthian-style cup, a Phoenician iron dagger and sword and three Nuragic Iron Age iron pins. The burial has been dated between 625 and 600 BC (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 58, 115).

While most Phoenician cemeteries have yielded some traces of indigenous involvement, substantial evidence has only been encountered at Bithia on the south coast of Sardinia, where several Nuragic bronze and leather sheaths have been found as gravegoods in later 7th century BC cremation burials. In four cases, the urns used in the otherwise wholly Phoenician burials were of a clearly Nuragic shape and make (Bartoloni 1983, 58-60). The implication of these finds must at least be that contacts between the Phoenician and Nuragic communities had considerably intensified. They also pose the question whether these finds must be interpreted as the burials of Phoenicians with foreign, perhaps exotic, gravegoods or as those of Nuragic people who had settled in the colonial settlements and had adopted their customs and rituals. There is no reason, however, to regard isolated items of Nuragic material culture as indicative of Nuragic inhabitants, let alone high ranking persons, as has repeatedly been claimed (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 58; Tronchetti 1988, 86-87). The predominance of Phoenician burial customs suggests on the contrary a fully Phoenician context of values and rituals into which the foreign objects had been incorporated. The

parallelism between this situation and that of the equally rare Phoenician imports in Nuragic contexts springs to mind and suggests that the interpretation of the latter as having been perceived and treated in primarily indigenous terms might *mutatis mutandis* also apply to the former objects. This view is supported by a cremation burial at Othoca which closely resembles the above-mentioned one with Nuragic pins: in both cases, the deceased had been deposited with the same Phoenician rites and was accompanied by a similar set of Phoenician pottery and iron weaponry (Nieddu/Zucca 1991, 115). The only difference between the two burials is constituted by the three Nuragic pins which do not suffice to label their deceased holder as being of Nuragic descent.

With regard to the 8th and 7th century colonial imports in west central Sardinia, the largely independent existence of two settlement systems and communities, each with its own values and traditions, provides ample reason to interpret these imports as being of a 'precolonial' nature, despite their occurrence in a period conventionally understood as colonial (Bartoloni 1990). This paradox arises from the persistence of phenomena which may be labelled as precolonial (cf. p. 71) and by the contemporary appearance of a properly colonial situation embodied by the permanent settlements. The paradox is resolved when the different regions involved are taken into account: while the colonial foundations occupy a restricted area and appear to have had a limited direct influence, the 'precolonial' phenomena occurred in the interior. The intensification of contacts in the later 7th century BC accords well with this interpretation as it demonstrates how the earlier and more restricted circulation of imports preceded and 'paved the way' for the later wider acceptance of colonial goods. Similarly, the early phase of elite contacts can only with hindsight be understood as contributing to the acceptance in Nuragic society of relationships with the colonial settlements.

4.5 Exchange and Identity in Iron Age West Central Sardinia

A fundamental issue which has hitherto remained virtually unexplored is that of *exchange*. In the previous section the early relationships between Phoenicians and Nuragic inhabitants of west central Sardinia have been characterized as an instance of 'gift exchange'. It was also concluded that later developments were closely connected to shifts in the nature of the exchanges between the two communities. Exchange has thus implicitly been assumed to have played a crucial role in both maintaining relationships and defining identities. The claim that 'exchange relationships seem to be the substance of social life' (Thomas 1991, 7) consequently rings a bell in the colonial situation under discussion.

The centrality of exchange is widely recognized in anthropology, because

the particular transactions at once reflect and constitute social relationships between both groups and individuals: affines, strangers, enemies, lovers. Evaluations of entities, people, groups and relationships emerge at the moment of a transaction.

Thomas 1991, 7

This awareness goes back to Marcel Mauss's influential *Essai sur le don*, in which he presented exchange as a 'total social fact' (1990, 78; original emphasis). This phrase refers in particular to the interconnections between the giving subject and the object given and to the embeddedness of the economic dimension of exchange in the wider domain of political and social relationships (Barraud et al. 1984, 425). Basic to the entire notion of gift exchange is that the act of giving creates a relationship of indebtedness of the receiver to the giver, which needs to be made up through a counter-gift. The debt arises from what is called the 'inalienable' nature of the object given, which is derived from the intimate relationship between the item and its owner: 'inalienable possessions are imbued with affective qualities that are expressions of the value an object has when it is kept by its owners and inherited within the same family or descent group' (Weiner 1985, 223). It is at this point that the distinction between subjects and objects, between people and things involved in an exchange relationship becomes blurred, as the degree of indebtedness does not only depend on the relative status of the two persons but also on the degree of inalienability or 'rank' of the gift presented. Since the relationships between people and objects are not fixed but shaped by the history of both the object and its owner, the perception of the items received is likely to be different from that of the giver; it may also change over time. The instrumental role of material culture in the creation of people's identity through the various ways it is used or rather 'appropriated' (see Miller 1987, 1-130) has highlighted this aspect in a more general sense (Thomas 1991, 22-27).

Although much more can of course be said about exchange and its role in society (cf. Bazelmans 1996, 57-107), it may be clear that gift exchange cannot be regarded as a straightforward transaction in which intrinsically precious items change owner and automatically add to the status and power of the receiver as 'status goods'. From a Maussian perspective, the entire complex of values and status in both societies is involved and in order to understand the subtleties of the gift exchanges and the perceptions and intentions surrounding them it is necessary to consider the objects in their respective contexts.

With regard to the colonial situation of west central Sardinia, the conclusions of the previous section can in this way be taken somewhat further. Basically, the colonial situation of Iron Age west central Sardinia has been characterized by the coexistence of two communities which in the course of the 8th and 7th centuries BC became more closely interrelated.

It was argued in particular that not only in the 8th and earlier 7th century BC but also in the later 7th century the foreign objects circulating in indigenous contexts were perceived in predominantly, if not exclusively, indigenous terms (pp. 108-109). From the perspective on gift exchange outlined above, this provides ample proof to assert that 'indigenous interests in trade are not presumed to be straightforward or predictable' and to suppose that they 'must instead be contextualized in prevailing ideas of what foreign visitors and their goods represented' (Thomas 1991, 88). The implications of this contention are significant: for one thing, it means that there is no obvious reason to assume that archaic Etruscan or Greek drinking vessels by themselves denote the concomitant adoption of a 'symposium ideology' (Tronchetti 1988, 85);²⁵ but it also implies that foreign goods in Nuragic contexts must first of all be regarded as having been appropriated by the indigenous communities. It seems doubtful, therefore, that these imports ever played an important part in the construction and maintenance of indigenous identities. There actually is only one — significantly late — case, where foreign influences can be discerned to have contributed to such a process: the over life-size statues of Monte Prama which marked an extraordinary indigenous cemetery at a relatively short distance of the colonial settlement of Tharros (fig. 4-24; cf. fig. 4-21). The combination of individualized burials, the statues emulating the conventional *bronzetti* and the nuraghi models all denote political power and religious authority and support the interpretation of the site as a *heroon*, in which an elite status was claimed for the family involved (Tronchetti 1988, 75-77). The identity thus constructed was similarly unique, as it rested on both indigenous and colonial features: both the size and orientalizing guise on the one hand betray colonial inspiration and exclude them from conventional Nuragic categories, while style and technique on the other hand associate the statues with the traditional *bronzetti*. Although a unique exception in Nuragic Sardinia, the Monte Prama case neatly fits in the development of an increasing entanglement of the indigenous and colonial communities. It is particularly important in this respect that no direct parallels for the statues can be found in the Mediterranean (Ridgway 1986), which precludes a wholesale adoption of this kind of statuary from elsewhere, in particular Etruria. The creative combination of both colonial and indigenous features marks the statues instead as an instance of entangled categories, the outcome of which can be captured by the term 'hybrid' (cf. p. 25). In a less far-reaching and less spectacular way, something similar can be discerned in the so-called indigenous burial of Othoca (p. 109), which adheres entirely to Phoenician conventions, except for the three indigenous pins. Similarly foreign objects, usually of Etruscan provenance, occur in several tombs — including

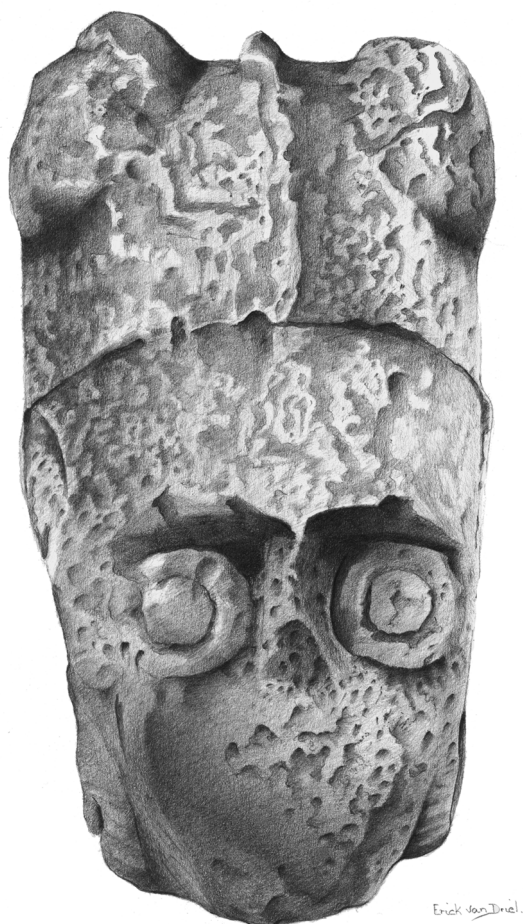


Fig. 4-24. Drawing of a monumental head of one of the Monte Prama archer statues (after Tronchetti 1988, fig. 30; drawing E. van Driel).

the 'indigenous one' — and appear in all cases entirely appropriated by the Phoenician community. Just as the Etruscan imports suggest regular personal contacts with Etruria or familiarity with Etruscan products, the Nuragic pins can best be interpreted as a demonstration of increased interaction between the Phoenician and Nuragic inhabitants of west central Sardinia.

A final question to be addressed is that of the aims and nature of colonial presence in west central Sardinia. Whereas the ultimate motivation of the Phoenician expansion must be sought in the structural context of the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age Levant and eastern Mediterranean (pp. 69-70), the Phoenician presence on Sardinia has usually been explained as a search for minerals. Given the export of obsidian to the Italian and French mainlands since the Neolithic, it seems plausible that the rich silver and copper ores of the island, and perhaps the iron and tin resources,

were exploited and exported throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages, even if the evidence of mining in these periods is flimsy. The absence of Phoenician traces in the mining districts and the abundant evidence for metal working in Nuragic settlements stands in stark contrast to the virtual absence of these activities in the colonial settlements, which suggests that mining and the first stages of metal working were Nuragic affairs. The nearly complete misfit between the distributions of colonial presence and the metal ores underscores this point further. Yet, the finds of S. Imbenia (p. 74) clearly show a Phoenician interest in indigenous metal production, as does perhaps the location of the secondary colonial establishment of Monte Sirai in the southern Iglesias mining area (p. 81). If metal was exchanged between the Phoenician and Nuragic communities, this could apparently only take place through the indigenous elite. In west central Sardinia, this interpretation is supported by the copper ingots in S. Anastasia and perhaps also by the admittedly fragmentary indications of the Guspini district. As a corollary, it can be doubted whether the Phoenician presence in (west central) Sardinia has rightly been classified as 'colonial', since the second clause of the definition of colonialism about asymmetrical economic relationships does not seem to have been met (p. 16). This classification is in fact based on conventional terminology, in which the term 'colonization' merely refers to the establishment of permanent settlements termed 'colonies'. As was already suggested by the application of the label 'precolonial' to the foreign imports in the interior of Sardinia, the Phoenician presence in (west central) Sardinia does not meet all requirements of the definition of colonialism and should perhaps more appropriately be termed 'precolonial'.

To sum up, in the discussion of the Phoenician 'colonial' situation I have particularly emphasized the indigenous contribution to its characteristics, insisting in particular that the distribution pattern of colonial goods in the interior has more to do with the values and norms of indigenous society than with the allegedly superior quality and desirability of colonial products, let alone with the values of their producers. I have thus tried to nuance the impact of the Phoenician presence by highlighting the indigenous mediation of foreign influences. Societies do not simply 'collapse' in the face of 'superior values' but are transformed through the decisions made by people, who (or rather their *habitus*) may be influenced by contacts with other people and traditions. There is nevertheless a great deal of overlap with a nativist point of view and the risk of polarizing the situation into a dualist representation looms large. Definitely over the top is for example the 'nativist' suggestion that Nuragic bronze statuettes and certain ceramic fine wares might have been exchanged in their own right (Webster 1996, 178): not unlike as often assumed of colonial imports, it implies an

intrinsic unchangeable value of these items, which cannot be accepted in the light of the arguments about different perceptions of such objects in different social contexts.

An alternative postcolonial view, as I have tried to present, stops well short of such claims. It instead centres around the process of a gradually increasing mutual involvement of the two communities and a concomitant gradual and partial entanglement of their values and traditions. The redefinition of foreign objects in another context is a central notion in this respect, as it describes how relationships between the communities were literally 'conceivable' and could become part of the *habitus* of different social groupings. The changes of attitude towards colonial goods and relationships in the course of the 7th century BC may in part be attributed to developments originating in the internal structures of Nuragic society, as is probably demonstrated by the shift in indigenous settlement. It must also in part be ascribed to the changing structural context of the western Mediterranean, which was redefined by communities able to mobilize larger numbers of people and goods, and which inevitably involved Sardinia. Yet, representing Nuragic society as the passive recipient of the imposing superior Phoenician and Etruscan cultures would be a gross underestimation of the extent to and the ways in which the indigenous inhabitants of the island dealt with them. Although exceptional, the Monte Prama statues are emblematic in this respect and forcefully represent what elsewhere on the island remained more low-key.

notes

1 The question of Phoenician-Punic 'influence' on the indigenous civilization needs to be considered today in terms quite different from when, in the second half of the last century, the production of bronze figurines for example was regarded as Sardinian-Phoenician and the name itself of the nuraghi was considered as Phoenician.

2 A detailed overview and discussion of Classical, Biblical and epigraphic evidence is offered by Bunnens (1979).

3 Whether such a sporadic presence could correspond with the literary evidence seems doubtful. As mentioned above, there is moreover no obvious necessity (other than philological) to explain these statements.

4 Although it is possible that such older layers exist unexplored beneath the late Punic and Roman remains of the settlement area of Tharros, the dating of such isolated and minute fragments is not without problems: the reinterpretation of two supposedly early Greek sherds as late Medieval and late Roman is symptomatic in this respect (Bernardini 1989, 287).

5 '... deux Sardaigne, dont l'une — indigène — regarde encore vers l'Italie tyrrhénienne dans la tradition du VIII^e siècle alors que l'autre n'est qu'une partie du monde phénicien d'Occident.'

6 This site has remained virtually unexplored except for the necropolis; only the cremation burials and the associated pottery (mostly rather undiagnostic urns and some plates and juglets) show the Phoenician character of the settlement (Barreca 1986, 313-314; Tore 1995a).

7 It should be noted that the mud brick wall cannot be regarded as intrinsically 'Phoenician', as these have also been found in contemporary indigenous settlements (e.g. San Sperate near Cagliari). Significantly, various fragments of Nuragic decorated 'Geometric' fine wares, datable to the 8th or 7th century BC, have also been found (Santoni 1995, 441-442; Tronchetti 1992, 25).

8 At least of a Phoenician date: at both Monte Sirai and (presumably) Bithia a *tophet* was established at a later stage after the Carthaginian take-over of Sardinia.

9 '... l'impact de la présence phénicienne sur la structure sociale des communautés indigènes, mises en crise par l'arrivée de nouvelles valeurs'.

10 Occasional traces of later (7th-early 6th century) non-systematic (temporary?) reuse have been found, too (Ugas/Usai 1987, 201).

11 At nuraghe S'Egua de is Femmias Roman Imperial pottery was relatively abundant but prehistoric pottery of whatever period was completely absent.

12 No map has been added to the site list and many of the toponyms listed do not occur on the topographic maps of the area.

13 Next to the nuraghe, a Phoenician cremation cemetery has been claimed (Tore 1991, 1264; Tore/Stiglitz 1987b, 167) but the few indications are far too generic and confused, given the apparent presence of a Punic and Roman settlement/burial area (Tore 1984, 708).

14 Another possible Iron Age site is the well-sanctuary of Banatou (504) near Narbolia which must date back to the Recent Bronze Age but which was reused in the Punic period (Barreca 1986, 304). The fill of the stairway which consisted mostly of Punic pottery fragments included also a characteristic sculpted head, datable to the 7th century BC. Although the indications admittedly are slight, continuous use of the sanctuary throughout the Iron Age can of course not be excluded.

15 The only parallel is the head from Banatou (Narbolia), which comes from a heavily disturbed (illegally 'excavated') nuragic well (cf above; Bernardini/Tronchetti 1990a, 213; fig. 19).

16 Of these, the site of Pinn'e Maiolu (316) at the outskirts of Villanovaforru is currently being excavated by Ubaldo Badas; judging from the preliminary but promising results, it may in future shed light on later Iron Age settlement in the lower Marmilla.

17 At nuraghe Arrubiu (328), the American survey has registered the presence of obsidian, prehistoric pottery and 'included wares' (i.e. coarse wares?); at nuraghe Siaxi (329), obsidian and 'included wares' are reported and at nuraghe Brunchiteddus (330) nothing was found (Dyson/Rowland 1992a, 178, 181, 191, 193). The *Riu Mannu* survey has in contrast collected at these sites more than 3, 16 and 4 kgs of finds respectively (corresponding to 378, 1295 and 392 fragments of pottery and obsidian). The finds at the latter two sites in particular included several diagnostic fragments reliably

demonstrating occupation from the Eneolithic (*Monte Claro* phase) right through the Bronze Age as well as reuse of the settlement area in the Punic period (cf. Annis/Van Dommelen/Van de Velde 1996, note 52).

18 While the contribution of Tarcisio Agus and other Guspini amateurs has already been mentioned, professional work carried out on the eastern side of the Campidano on behalf of the *Soprintendenza* and the local councils of Sanluri and Villanovaforru has likewise followed the paths set out by Taramelli (see in particular Badas et al. 1988; Paderi/Putzolu 1982; Paderi/Ugas 1988; Ugas/Usai 1987).

19 The destroyed nuraghe (550) nearby the village of Coddu su Fenugu suggests that the contrast with the interior need not have been a very sharp one. The lack of monuments in the plains and coastal area nowadays may in fact largely be the consequence of the destruction of nuraghi for obtaining building material. Road building has probably had a similarly destructive effect, perhaps from Roman times onwards: at least in the 1820s various nuraghi are known to have been demolished for the construction of the *Carlo Felice* highway.

20 The current excavations at Pinn'e Maiolu near Villanovaforru (316) have exposed part of a 'Meeting-hut' but at present nothing can be said about its chronology, context or interpretation.

21 The *bronzetti* from S'Arrideli (342) probably present a slightly different case, as they were all broken and part of a hoard. They must perhaps simply be considered as just scrap pieces of bronze (cf. below).

22 A more detailed and more extensive overview has been compiled by Ugas and Zucca, who also list similar finds in the southern Campidano (1984, 9-57).

23 It should be pointed out that in the absence of fabric studies, the distinction between import and strict imitation may be more difficult to draw than often assumed.

24 Now kept in various museums, they have been discovered in Tharros during the excavations conducted by Spano in 1852 and the destructive explorations of Cara in 1853 (Barnett 1987a). According to the fieldnotes and finds register they came from Punic rock-cut chamber tombs which cannot predate the 5th century BC because of both the type of burial and the other grave goods (Barnett 1987b, 40-41). Most of the burial contexts kept in the British Museum are moreover relatively coherent, except for later Roman reuse of tombs (see Barnett 1987b). Stylistic study of the objects has however suggested 8-7th century BC dates, which suggests that they may actually have been found in Phoenician trench graves (Zucca 1987b). Since the southern Cape San Marco cemetery (Torre Vecchia) does comprise Phoenician cremation burials, it is very well possible that the bronzes were part of these 7th century BC burial contexts. It cannot be excluded, however, that they come from outside Tharros and that they have been inserted in the Cara collections of the British Museum by mistake.

25 As has convincingly been argued for Iron Age (Celtic) western Europe, where complete sets of all the necessary symposium vessels have been found (Dietler 1990).