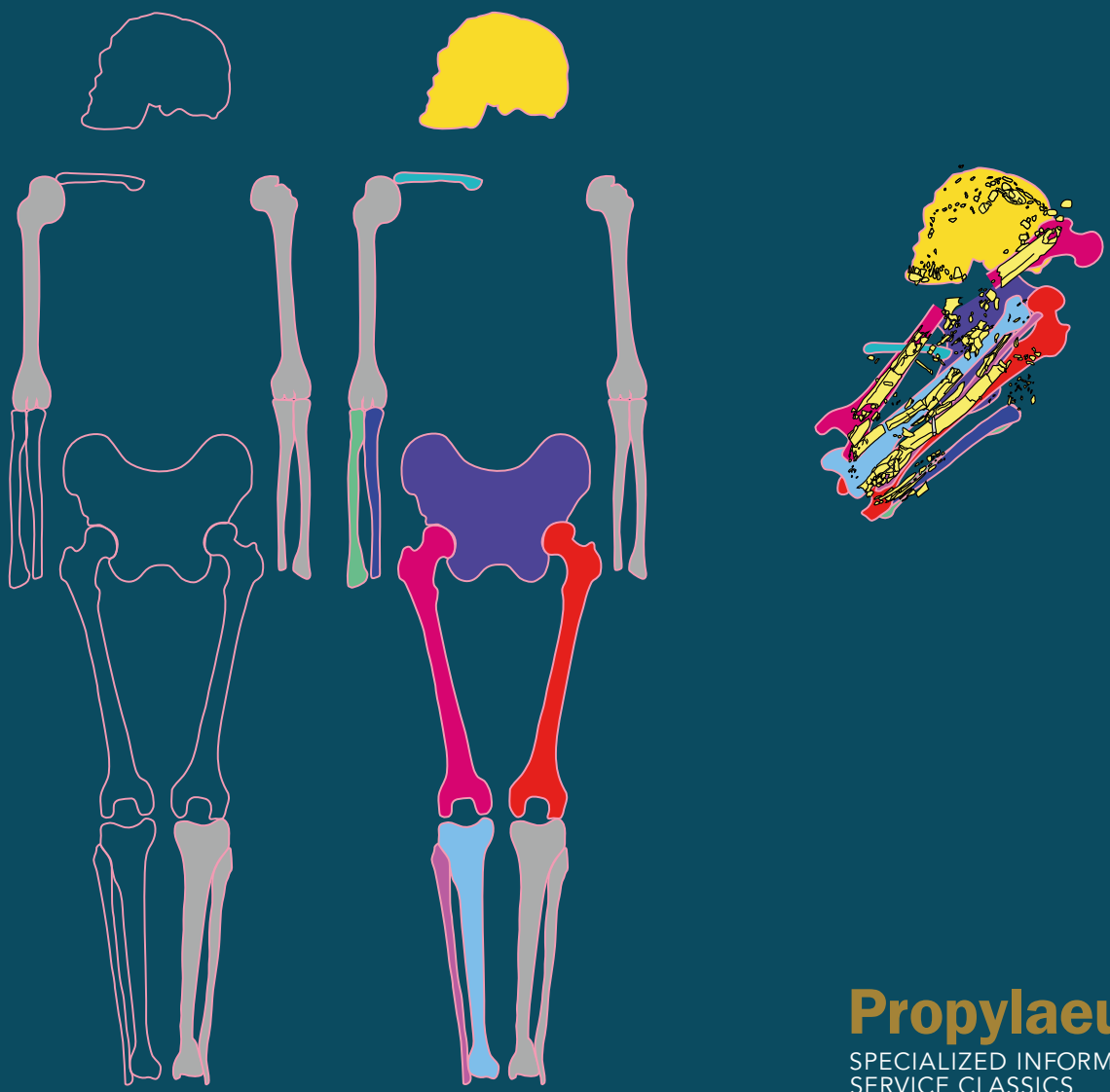
Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy

Problems and Perspectives

Edited by
Martin A. Guggisberg
Marta Billo-Imbach



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Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach (eds.)
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Papers of the International Workshop held at the University of Basel, January 12th, 2021

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Publiziert mit Unterstützung des Fonds zur Förderung der Studien auf dem Gebiet der ägyptologischen, orientalischen und klassischen Altertumskunde, Basel.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

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The electronic open access version of this work is permanently available at https://www.propylaeum.de
urn: urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-propylaeum-ebook-1211-1
doi: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211

Published by
Heidelberg University / Heidelberg University Library, 2023
Propylaeum – Specialized Information Service Classics
Grabengasse 1, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany
https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/imprint

Lektorat: Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach
Redaktion: Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach
Layout und Satz: Simone Hiltscher

Cover illustration: Francavilla Marittima, Grave Strada 7: Identification of the tightly packed skeletal remains (Francavilla-project Basel)

ISBN 978-3-96929-239-6 (Softcover)
ISBN 978-3-96929-226-6 (PDF)

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Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy – an Introduction

Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach

In the recent past, funerary taphonomy has become a fundamental pillar of the archaeology of death[1]. Its goal is to reconstruct funerary behavior in premodern societies by analyzing the taphonomic evidence, with regard to both the decomposition of the human body and the degradation of other material objects associated with it in the grave. Moreover, the "biography" of graves themselves has more and more become a focus of research, which attests to a growing interest in the post-funeral history of monuments in more general terms. In accordance with this broadening view on funerary and post-funeral practices, archaeologists have become increasingly aware that burials are not necessarily closed and permanently sealed contexts but can be subjected to a variety of changes and alterations from the moment of the funeral up to the present day. Investigating the treatment of the body in the grave, its arrangement and presentation at the funeral, and the process of its decomposition thereafter contributes to a better understanding not only of a specific archaeological context but also of the cultural and religious ideologies involved in funerary behavior in general. Moreover, careful study of the archaeological record in combination with taphonomic observations makes post-funeral interventions in and around graves visible. The reuse of graves is perhaps the most prominent expression of such a practice, but the extraction and redeposition of grave goods in secondary contexts are equally frequent. In both cases, the intentional dislocation or disassembling of human remains and of grave goods attest to an intentional redefinition of the deceased's social and personal identity by human agents of later periods.

The present volume unites a series of articles that were presented at a workshop held in Basel on January 12, 2021—albeit in an online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic—and is supplemented with a study by *Norma Lonoce, Serena Viva, Stefano Vassallo*, and *Pier Francesco Fabbri* on cremation burials in the Western necropolis of Himera. Starting from our own archaeological research in the early Iron Age and Archaic necropolis at Francavilla Marittima in Northern Calabria, the workshop aimed to exchange insights and firsthand results from recent excavations regarding taphonomic and post-funeral processes in pre-Roman burial contexts in Italy[2]. In addition to specific case studies from throughout the Italian peninsula, the volume also contains more general discussions of transformational phenomena involved in funerary and post-funeral practices in pre-Roman Italy. We thereby hope to contribute to the growing awareness of the importance and explanatory power of archaeothanatology with regard to both taphonomic processes and post-funeral practices.

1 See the introductions to archaeothanatology and funerary taphonomy by Duday 2009; Duday 2006; Knüsel – Robb 2016. For a discussion of the relationship between ancient funerary taphonomy and forensic human taphonomy, see the introductory remarks by Vincent Varlet and Negahnaz Moghaddam in this volume.

2 Due to the workshop's integration in our SNF-funded research project "Investigating Colonial Identity: Greek and Native Interaction in Northern Calabria (800–500 BC)" (grant number 175613: https://francavilla.philhist.unibas.ch/de/home/), its focus was deliberately set on the archaeological aspects of funerary taphonomy. Anthropological and bioanthropological research—which are, of course, crucial to the success of archaeological analyses and feature as a basis in most of the contributions—could not be integrated in due form because of time and space limitations.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 7–10.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16912

The initial article by *Vincent Varlet and Negahnaz Moghaddam* provides an anthropological introduction to human taphonomy. While the following articles focus on an archaeological-anthropological perspective and are largely written from an archaeological point of view, specialists from the field of anthropology were recruited for the first article to offer insights into forensic taphonomy.

Despite the large geographical, cultural, and chronological area covered by the case studies presented in this volume, several corresponding lines emerge with regard to the treatment of the body both at the moment of death and during its deposition in the grave as well as in later stages of the funerary "biography." It is tempting to assume that these congruences reflect corresponding concepts of death and the way it is pragmatically and ritually confronted by the burial communities in different periods of time and in different cultural settings. Among these congruences, two aspects that are closely interlinked seem crucial: the function of the grave as a space of memory and the perception of the decomposition, disintegration, and fragmentation of the body in funerary ideology.

Due to our lack of evidence and historical information, assessing both these aspects is difficult, as most of the authors emphasize in their studies. In most cases, it is difficult if not impossible to pinpoint the precise motivation for a specific treatment of the body in the grave. As an example, we would like to refer to the case of a densely packed bundle of bones in grave Strada 7 at Francavilla Marittima, which *Martin Guggisberg and his co-authors* interpret to be a reburial on the basis of anthropological and taphonomic observations. The fact that we are dealing in this case with an isolated phenomenon in the necropolis supports the idea of an intentional event. The reasons for the unusual treatment of the body remain, however, in the realm of speculation.

Funerary ideology certainly plays an important role in the way a dead body is treated. We must be aware, however, that practical or economic needs can also be responsible for specific arrangements of corpses. The complexity of the issue becomes best apparent at Megara Hyblaea. In her study, *Reine-Marie Bérard* underlines the difficulties involved in classifying the motivations for the frequent attestation of "collective" burials (meaning graves in which several persons were buried *successively*). In cases where several children or adults were buried at close intervals in one single grave or sarcophagus, family ties might be an argument. In cases where the preserved grave goods attest to a longer time span of use, economic considerations could be involved. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that a grave was reused because of some specific memory of the original owner(s) of the grave. Whatever the motivation was in each single case, one gladly follows the author in her statement that the reuse of graves is situated "halfway between post-funeral and funerary practices" (p. 147).

Renegotiating identity: The grave as a space of memory

Memory clearly plays an important role in many cultures with regard to the reuse of graves and the treatment of the remains of former grave owners. While the case of Megara Hyblaea is rather exceptional for Greek cities in the Magna Graecia, the relocation of bones and grave goods in floor cavities and niches inside as well as outside of graves is a common feature of Italian burial traditions. The custom is largely attested in South-Eastern Italy from the fifth to the third centuries BC, as well as in Campania (Pontecagnano) and Etruria from the Orientalizing period onwards. *Matthias Hoernes*, *Carmine Pellegrino*, *Antonella Massanova*, *Anna Rita Russo*, *Luca Cappuccini*, and *Giulia Peri* present ample evidence of this widespread custom, a tradition that all the authors agree in identifying as a sign of a conscious culture of remembrance.

In his paper, *Matthias Hoernes* underlines the fact that the relocation of older burials in a new place was often accompanied by a careful selection of the human remains to be redeposited and the grave goods that followed them. He convincingly concludes from this observation that the reduction of human remains and grave goods followed a deliberate choice to renegotiate the status of the deceased sometime

after their death by reinforcing certain aspects of their social identity and personhood while dissolving others. Similar ideas might be involved in other cultural areas too, where redepositing corpses was generally accompanied by a reduction of human remains and grave goods. In this regard, we would like to refer to the famous grave 4461 at Pontecagnano, which is mentioned by *Carmine Pellegrino and his co-authors* and has received much scholarly interest for its exceptional composition and the absence of the skull. Similar selection practices are also attested in Etruria, where bone assemblages consisting primarily of long bones and skulls were deposited in cavities in the Tomba dell'Iscrizione of the Poggio Renzo necropolis near Chiusi as well as in the well-known Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri at Tarquina, as is pointed out by *Luca Cappucini and Giulia Peri*.

Skulls and long bones might have been chosen for special treatment simply because they are the most easily recognizable and manipulable remains of a human corpse. However, their respectful relocations—sometimes in pots and vessels—in several graves at Pontecagnano (e.g., graves 788, 8396, and 8398) and the careful treatment of the skull in grave Strada 7 at Francavilla Marittima may point to some deeper meaning related, perhaps, to a respect for death, its symbolic power, and the identity of the deceased.

Decomposition and fragmentation: The grave as a space of transformation

Another aspect that we would like to mention—one that is related in some respects to the phenomenon of reduction discussed in the previous paragraphs—concerns the fragmentation of objects and skeletal remains. In his paper dealing with the post-funeral practices in Picenum, *Joachim Weidig* refers to a big impasto container from cenotaph grave 410 at Bazzano, which was ritually broken and carefully arranged around the body of a presumed eminent warrior. Similar cases of ritually broken pottery are attested in funeral contexts all over Italy. The reasons behind this phenomenon may vary. Still it is tempting to compare the intentional fragmentation and defunctionalization of objects in a funerary context with the transformation of a person from a living being to a dead corpse, a transformation that may also be partly reflected in the ritual of cremation adopted at different times and places in pre-Roman Italy. *Norma Lonoce and her co-authors* present a case study from the Western cemetery at Himera that is a good example of the latter. Despite considerable variation in the technicalities of cremation, on-site incineration of corpses in burial pits prevails. Contrary to what we know from other sites, incinerated remains were only collected entirely in urns in exceptional cases. In most cases, they were left untouched in the burial pits. To a certain extent, this reflects the integrity of the human body that was generally respected in inhumations, which also exist at Himera.

Beyond the past: Taphonomy and modern intervention

Of course it is not possible to address all the issues discussed in the articles included in the present volume. However, among them, one specific issue should be briefly mentioned here. It concerns the impact of modern land use on the preservation and transformation of ancient funerary landscapes. In the case of the Monte Del Bufalo necropolis at ancient Crustumerium, *Barbara Belelli Marchesini and her co-authors* from the Dutch–Italian research team investigating the site rightly insist on the severe damages that the funerary landscape has suffered from centuries of (deep) ploughing and from more recent illicit excavations. In particular, Early Iron Age graves, which were dug as shallow trenches in the topsoil, are almost completely gone. Similar developments are threatening many archaeological sites. As they have an immediate impact on the preservation of funerary remains, both agricultural and illicit interventions into ancient burial grounds form an important though easily overlooked part of a holistic approach to funerary taphonomy.

In conclusion it must be stated that the taphonomic study of burial customs in pre-Roman

Italy is still at its very beginning. Many peculiarities presented in the papers of this volume remain isolated phenomena and cannot be fully interpreted. Hopefully, however, intensified archaeothanatological research in combination with anthropological, archaeological, and bioarchaeological studies will lead to a better understanding of the treatment of the deceased. Considering the complexity of the issues involved in this debate, the contributions of this volume are hardly more than a drop on a hot stone; if they provide, however, an impetus for intensive research in the field of archaeothanatology and for the development of new approaches toward the conception of death and how it was dealt with in pre-Roman times, a major goal of the editors would be achieved.

As mentioned above, the workshop from which the present volume evolved was inspired by our current research on the necropolis of Francavilla Marittima in Northern Calabria. It was, however, Claudia Gerling's and Céline Zaugg's idea to dedicate the volume to the topic of funerary taphonomy, and we would like to thank them for proposing this particular emphasis. Further inspiration is owed to the anthropologists Laura Rindlisbacher, Jessica Fäh, and Sandra E. Pichler, who are working on the project in Calabria with us. In order to make the results available to a worldwide readership as quickly and easily as possible, we decided for the open-access format offered by Propylaeum eBooks as a suitable medium. We would like to thank Katrin Bemmann, Frank Krabbes, and their team for their efficient and inspiring collaboration and support. Special thanks are due to Simone Hiltscher for the careful ediotorial supervision of the volume. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the colleagues that helped improve the scientific quality of the publication by anonymously reviewing the papers.

Basel, August 2022

Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach

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Introduction to Human Taphonomy – Human Taphonomy Begins when Life Ends

Vincent Varlet, Negahnaz Moghaddam

The term "taphonomy", which was introduced earlier in the last century by the palaeontologist Ivan Efremov, is based on the Greek terms "taphos" meaning "grave / burial" and "nomos" referring to "law". Taphonomy as a scientific discipline focuses on the decomposition of organic material from the cessation of vital functions (death) to the fossilization and the discovery of the remains[1].

Human taphonomy, in particular, refers to the study of the human body decomposition through the ages. Generally, forensic institutions in Switzerland consider human remains with a postmortem interval (PMI) of more than 70 years (approx. two generations) as archaeological remains. If the time since death is estimated as more recent (< 30 years in Switzerland), the case has to be investigated from a forensic point of view as legal actions can be taken and responsibilities can be prosecuted in a court of law.

Consequently, the interpretation of taphonomical signs as interpreted by the first analyses of the taphonomical status help the specialists to prepare and choose the correct methodological and instrumental skills to investigate the case(s). Indeed, according to the category of the case(s), i.e. forensic or archaeological, the methodologies and technologies applied are not the same – mostly due to their costs and the quality of expected results.

Early and forensic human taphonomy

Analysis and research in forensic human taphonomy aims to investigate and document the cause and circumstances of death. This investigation is known as early taphonomy, also called thanatology. Depending on the state of preservation of the remains, the forensic examiners and pathologists mainly assess the cause and circumstances of death. The estimation of the postmortem interval is based on macroscopic external examination, thermal approach, and postmortem body reactions. Depending on the possibilities, internal examinations can be completed by imaging methods and radiological examinations (Multi Dimensional Computed Tomography – MDCT, Magnetic Resonance Imaging – MRI, 3D-scanning, etc.). A full autopsy is necessary in order to finalize the conclusions on the estimation of the time, the cause and the circumstances of death.

The various decomposition processes of a human corpse cannot be identified as specific steps but must rather be understood as continuums, as they may sometimes occur simultaneously (Fig. 1).

Decomposition processes are very well known and details of the different stages are described in the literature[2]. The decomposition stages include pallor mortis as the first stage of death, which is a paleness that occurs shortly after death[3].

Livor mortis refers to the settling of the blood in the lower portion of the body, causing a purplish red discoloration of the skin[4]. This postmortem characteristic is important for forensic specialists, as a potential indicator that the dead body was moved, since these lividities are mobile until six hours postmortem but are

1 Schotsmans et al. 2017.

2 e.g. Madea 2016.

3 Schäfer 2000.

4 Madea 2016.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 11–18.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16913

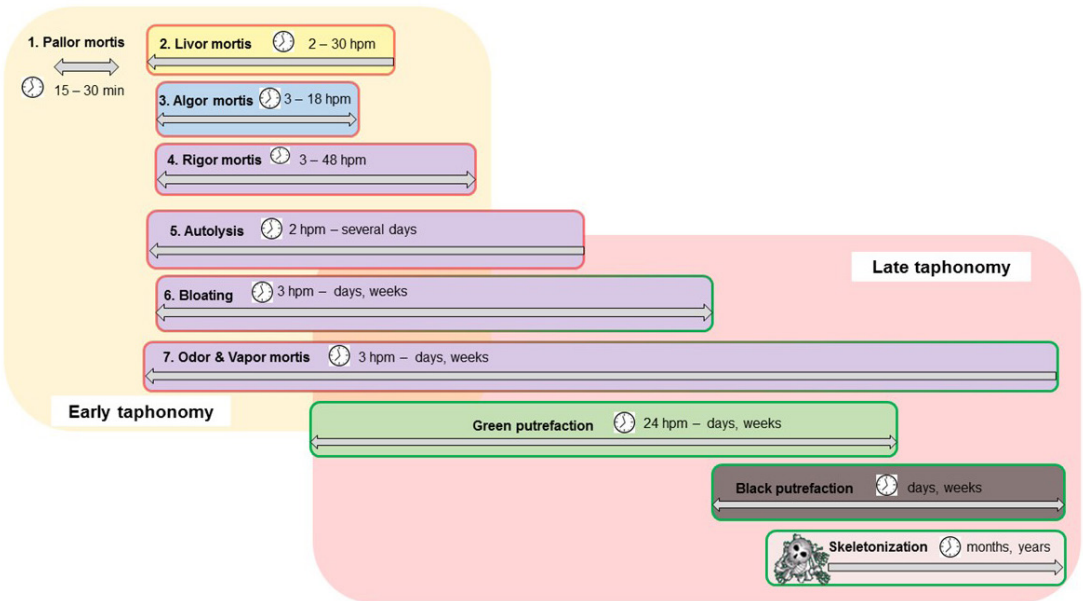

Fig. 1 – Human decomposition processes from early to late taphonomy.

considered fixed after 10 to 12 hours postmortem.

Furthermore, thermal measurements of dead bodies are taken and reported into diagrams to assess a PMI, by relying on the process of algor mortis. This is the change of the body temperature until its alignment to the environment[5].

Rigor mortis is characterized by stiffening of the limbs of the corpse caused by postmortem chemical changes in the muscles[6]. After death, calcium in the organism accumulates, causing a general stiffening of muscular fibers. This postmortem rigidity can last until two days after death. The rigidity decreases gradually as time goes by with autolysis, which corresponds to a cellular breakdown. To estimate a PMI within the first two days after death, thermal methods are therefore mainly used, completed by other observations based on the skeletal muscle electrical and mechanical excitability and pharmacological excitability of the iris[7].

Hospitals and forensic institutes are nowadays able to use additional innovative methods, requiring advanced technologies, such as modern imaging tools. Thanks to Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy, it is possible to perform thanatometabolomics[8]. The generation of compounds after death could be correlated to a PMI. Various scientists have proposed to analyse the composition of vitreous humor as it is relatively well protected in the eye[9]. However, these approaches are only valid for early taphonomy because these compounds can also be produced by external microorganisms.

As the postmortem interval grows, cellular integrity is lost, and the endogenous cellular content is no longer organized. Additionally, enzymes may attack body cells. This process is called the endogenous biochemical autolysis[10]. Similarly, the endogenous microorganisms begin to "eat" the body internally as they no longer receive sufficient substrates through the usual living human metabolism. This invasion

5 Wardak – Cina 2011.
6 Krompecher 1994.
7 Balci et al. 2010; Larpkrajang et al. 2016.
8 Ith et al. 2002.
9 Girela et al. 2008.
10 Shimizu et al. 1990.

is referred to as endogenous biological autolysis and rapidly leads to the so-called bloating and green putrefaction.

The bloating of the body is caused by an accumulation of intracadaveric gases due to microbial development. The intracadaveric gaseous composition can be measured, leading to the vapor mortis stage[11]. By the start of putrefaction, the body releases a volatile profile composed by odorant or non-odorant volatile compounds. This is called the odor mortis[12]. Odor and vapor mortis can start shortly after death and last a long time. Changes in their composition can inform us on taphonomical stages, because green and black putrefaction do not release the same compounds.

Due to the above-described characteristics, early taphonomy is mostly investigated by forensic examiners and pathologists. The cause and circumstances of death are studied through "cadaveric sciences", including forensic medicine, imaging, anatomy, anthropology, ballistics, etc., i.e. sciences focused on the dead human body.

Late human taphonomy

With an increasing postmortem interval, the thanatological signs vanish. Green and later black putrefaction appear on the bloating body, and then eventually proceed until skeletonization (Fig. 1), which mostly starts with the head and face[13]. These processes are also described as late human taphonomy.

Simultaneously with bloating, microbial ecology begins to grow in the right flank of the intestines. This area turns green after one or two days[14]. The greenish discoloration gradually spreads to the abdomen until it involves the entire body in later stages, and marbling occurs (outlining of the superficial blood vessels). Bacteria generate hydrogen sulfide, which reacts with the hemoglobin and forms sulphhaemoglobin, giving a marbling aspect to the skin.

Once the bloating reaches its maximum stage, the pressure becomes too important and cadaveric fluids are drained through body weaknesses, openings, wounds, and lesions caused by animal scavenging or microbial processes[15]. This is called the cadaveric purge.

Depending on the ambient parameters and individual factors, the body skeletonizes more or less rapidly[16]. Furthermore, depending on the environment where the body is found, desiccation and mummification may occur. In peat bog, the acidity can promote hard tissue destruction and skin tanning. In badly aerated soil with high moisture, the soft tissue may turn into adipocere. In this case, fat turns into a "soap" of sorts, giving the body a waxy appearance[17].

With an increase in PMI, analyses of the body become more and more difficult and specialized examiners are consulted. When dealing with highly decomposed bodies, such as skeletonized remains, forensic anthropologists get involved.

Cadaveric Decomposition Island (CDI)

However, the environment surrounding the cadaver is full of important contextual evidence. This so-called Cadaveric Decomposition Island (CDI) includes the volume of air, water and soil surrounding the body in decomposition[18]. The CDI is investigated through various disciplines, and these analyses can be used to characterize the CDI or the body itself. Investigations of the CDI includes toxicological, genetical (human, vegetal, animal and environmental), macro- and microbiological analyses (Fig. 2). Indeed, cadaveric fluids are released into the CDI, whose biochemical and physical properties eventually change completely. It results in physicochemical and ecological changes, which can be monitored to document the time, cause and circumstances of death.

11 Varlet et al. 2015.
12 Vass 2012.
13 Damann – Carter 2014.
14 Pinheiro 2006.
15 Prahlow – Byard 2012.
16 Bell et al. 1996.
17 Pokines – Baker 2014.
18 Fancher et al. 2017.

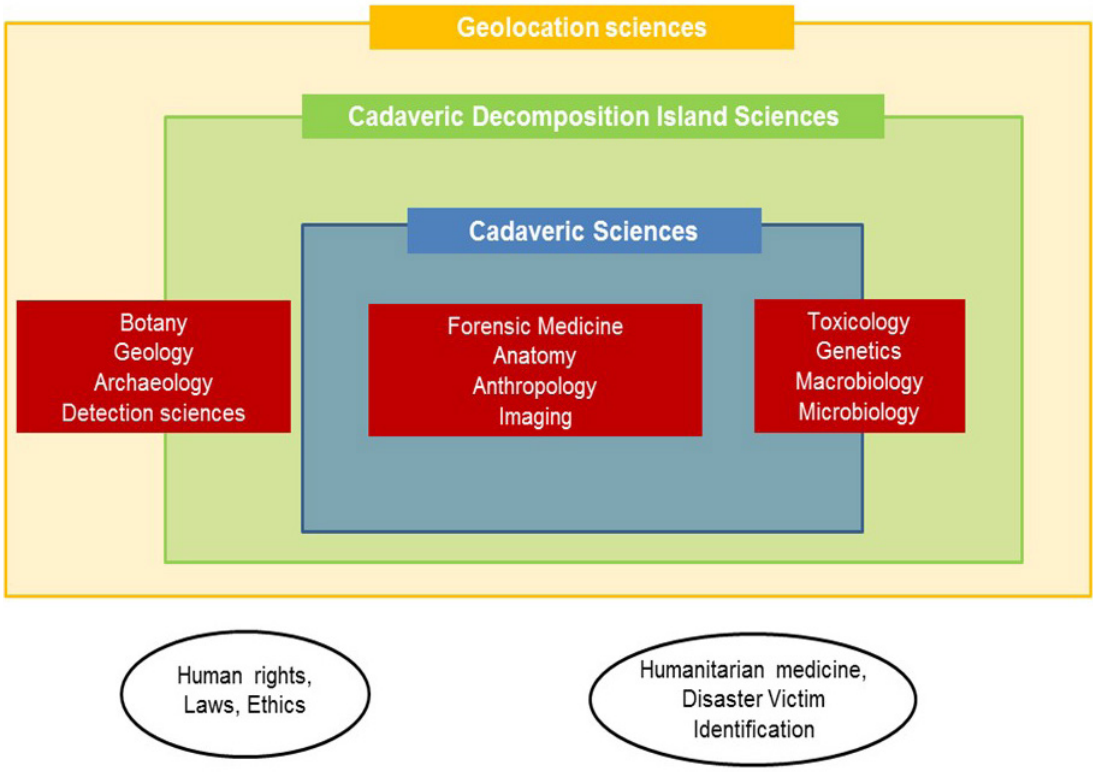

Fig. 2 – The tridimensionality and interdisciplinarity of taphonomy.

Finally, according to the geopolitical and historical context of the case(s), it is sometimes necessary to localize the CDI with remote technologies. This is the case for clandestine individual or mass graves related to war conflicts or homicides. CDIs can be identified thanks to geolocation (drones), aerial photogrammetry, forensic botany and geology, and finally archaeological research.

Human taphonomy must be understood as concentric spatial volumes, which must be carefully investigated beginning from the center, i.e. the human cadaver, thanks to cadaveric sciences, then to the CDI thanks to environmental sciences and finally to the place of the CDI in its environment thanks to geolocation sciences (Fig. 2). This tridimensional structure of techniques must also integrate the human dimension of taphonomy. Indeed, the study of the human body is ruled by specific judicial, ethical and social frames as well as operational emergencies (in specific disaster and humanitarian cases), which must be respected at all time.

As it stands, cadaver sciences are part of CDI sciences, which themselves are embedded in localisation sciences. This multi-layered tridimensional structure evolves with the PMI, and as time goes by evidence might be collected away from the cadaver as its surroundings becomes loaded with forensic interest thanks to cadaveric fluid soaking into the soil. Human taphonomy, however, is also subjected to other external and intrinsic parameters. Indeed, each taphonomy is different as it is influenced by external environmental and climatic conditions[19]. The taphonomic processes will not progress similarly under different climatic conditions (rain, snow, sun, etc.). Moreover,

19 Carter et al. 2007; Cockle – Bell 2015.

the taphonomy of every individual is different due to internal and external intervariability. According to the initial body composition (proportion of fat, etc.), medication, pathologies, habits (smoking, etc.), sex, and age, the taphonomic processes will be intrinsically different among humans.

Every human taphonomy, however, needs to be investigated with the same methodological approaches and tools. To estimate and document the circumstances and the cause of death, several methods related to various disciplines can be applied. Some of them are related to body analysis with cadaveric sciences, and others are focused on the environment and CDI.

Taphonomy in an archaeological context

Within the last decade, taphonomy has become more and more important to forensic and physical anthropologists[20]. However, for both archaeologist and anthropologist, understanding the differences in environmental settings and its impact on the preservation of the body is crucial to obtain a clear picture of the depositional context and the taphonomic changes[21]. As stated by Haglund and Sorg "It is only when viewed through the interdisciplinary lens that the full value of forensic taphonomy can be realized"[22].

Taphonomy plays a major role in archaeological research, however its study within the archaeological realm is a challenge. As mentioned for example by Mickleburgh and Wescott, archaeological remains represent a snapshot of the final stage of the taphonomical processes, deriving from a great number of factors[23]. Archaeological remains, such as findings dating to the Iron Age Europe (such as the burial sites discussed within this special issue), mostly present a very advanced taphonomic stage. Archaeologists, anthropologists, and archaeozoologists are mainly confronted with skeletonized human and animal remains. Depending on burial environment (especially soil characteristics and climatic factors), the state of preservation of the skeletal remains may vary from excellent to bad, and sometimes diagenetic changes may lead to bone dust as the only trace left of human remains within a grave. A large number of human decomposition processes can no longer be detected in archaeological findings. Hence, analyses of human bones dating to prehistoric times, for example, can be extremely challenging. Furthermore, as described by Forbes, the recovering of faunal and human remains may sometimes be biased, and researchers may apply different methods for sampling and recording the archaeological data based on their personal expertise[24]. Research concerning burials of historic and prehistoric populations is indispensable in order to gain knowledge on the past. Understanding human decomposition processes is fundamental when studying human remains in archaeological context. It is correctly noted by Allison and Bottjer that extensive laboratory and field-based research in the last decades has helped to expand our knowledge of taphonomic processes[25]. This knowledge includes a better interpretation of bioarchaeological data in order to understand past populations, as demonstrated by various specialists in that field[26].

The presence of anthropology specialists at archaeological burial sites is therefore vital to ensure that the potential of the site in terms of taphonomic processes is correctly asserted, and that their determination and analysis can proceed. This in turn will lead to a better understanding of the past from a holistic point of view, englobing all information that can be derived from taphonomic, archaeological, and anthropological evidence.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Claudine Abegg for her fruitful comments and English editing.

20 Pokines – Symes 2014.
21 Baxter 2004; Dirkmaat – Cabo 2016; Surabian 2012.
22 Haglund – Sorg 2002.
23 Mickleburgh – Wescott 2018.
24 Forbes 2014.
25 Allison and Bottjer 2011.
26 e.g. Hoogland and Hofman 2013; Knüsel and Robb 2016; Mickleburgh and Wescott 2018; Moreno-Ibanez et al. 2022.

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Alcuni casi di sepolture secondarie in Etruria: problemi di spazio e rituali funerari

Luca Cappuccini, Giulia Peri

Introduzione

Tra il 2011 e il 2019 l'Università di Firenze ha intrapreso un progetto di ricerca sulla necropoli vetuloniese di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR, Fig. 1), afferente ad un abitato localizzato su un rilievo adiacente del quale si conosce, al momento, una fase di rioccupazione in età tardo ellenistica[1] (Fig. 2). La necropoli è estesa sui due versanti della valle del Sovata, nella parte nord-occidentale del territorio di Vetulonia; essa era già nota a Isidoro Falchi[2] ed è stata oggetto di ricognizioni e scavi intrapresi già alla fine degli anni sessanta del secolo scorso[3]; tuttavia, fino agli anni duemila, poche erano le informazioni conosciute.

Gli scavi e le analisi delle testimonianze, svolte su più fronti, hanno ad oggi permesso di precisare vari aspetti sulle tombe e sui loro occupanti. Tra questi, uno dei più singolari riguarda la manipolazione dei defunti, avvenuta molto probabilmente in un momento successivo alla deposizione, evidente in due delle strutture indagate, il tumulo 9 e il piccolo tumulo 6A e ipotizzabile in altre; ciò permette alcuni confronti con alcuni particolari contesti noti in Etruria.

Da alcuni anni i principi dell'archeologia funeraria e dell'archeotanatologia sono correntemente applicati anche ai contesti etruschi di nuova scoperta. Ciò ha permesso di ottenere nuove informazioni sulle pratiche funerarie adottate da questo popolo; tuttavia, restano da definire molti aspetti, dato che la gran parte delle informazioni derivano da scavi datati nei quali difficilmente si osservava la giusta attenzione ai reperti osteologici. Questo nuovo tipo di studio porta con sé molte sfide: non è difficile intuire che ricostruire le azioni e i probabili rituali svolti all'interno di strutture funerarie non sia semplice e scontato sia a livello culturale, in quanto ci troviamo di fronte ad usi e costumi che possono essere anche molto lontani da quello odierni, sia perché occorre leggere e interpretare vari aspetti legati alla deposizione del defunto nonché alla stratigrafia del deposito archeologico.

È dunque importante, prima di parlare dei casi oggetto di questa ricerca, comprendere i criteri che distinguono una sepoltura primaria da una secondaria. Nel primo caso la decomposizione del cadavere avviene nel luogo di sepoltura definitiva; il defunto non subisce alcun tipo di manomissione al momento della sepoltura così come nel periodo successivo[4]. Una delle caratteristiche principali di queste deposizioni è il mantenimento delle continuità articolari. Nel secondo caso la decomposizione avviene in un altro luogo rispetto a quello del rinvenimento, e l'individuo è spostato in seguito. Le pratica delle sepolture secondarie concerne le ossa secche prive di organi e legamenti; alla base di queste azioni vi è una volontarietà e, in molti casi, anche una premeditazione. Un criterio per individuare queste sepolture è il «disordine» nella disposizione delle ossa. Il ragionamento è il seguente: se il cadavere è posto prima a decomporsi in un luogo apposito e in seguito le ossa sono raccolte e deposte altrove, allora queste non saranno più in connessione. Tuttavia, il disordine può essere dovuto anche

1 Per le ultime ricerche nella necropoli di San Germano, Cappuccini 2015; Cappuccini 2016; Cappuccini 2018. Sull'abitato, solo parzialmente indagato, Cappuccini – Pesenti 2019.

2 Dani 2012, 22, nt. 25; Paciscopi 1987, 135–157.

3 Curri et al. 1971, 175; Curri 1978, 68– D–76; Dani 2012, 5–52.

4 Duday 2005, 54–60.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 19–31.

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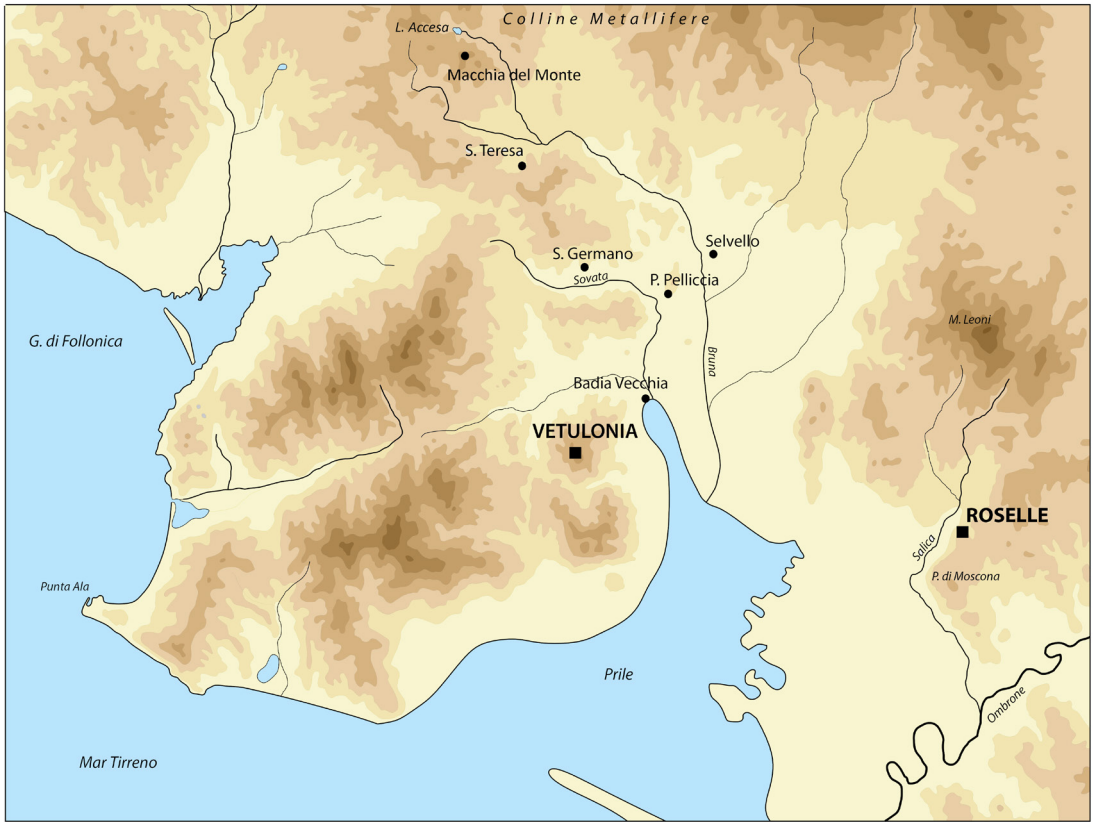

Fig. 1 – Carta del territorio di Vetulonia con indicazione dei principali siti di epoca etrusca (autore: Luca Cappuccini).

al passaggio di acqua o animali e dunque non è di per sé sufficiente a dimostrare il carattere secondario di una sepoltura. Un altro criterio citato frequentemente è l'assenza di ossa, in particolare quelle di piccole dimensioni. Ciò può essere spiegato con la dimenticanza, con una selezione volontaria delle ossa nel *pourrissoir* o con la loro caduta accidentale durante il trasporto; tuttavia, perché l'osservazione sia significativa bisogna eliminare le cause più banali. Ad esempio, non setacciare il sedimento terroso può disperdere alcuni elementi scheletrici, specialmente i più piccoli. Un altro criterio spesso menzionato riguarda le tracce di scarnificazione, cioè segni da taglio rinvenuti sulle ossa, chiaro segno di smembramento volontario. Infine, sono spesso citati gli indicatori della cremazione, cioè del trattamento del cadavere con il fuoco. Una sepoltura è infatti secondaria nel caso in cui un defunto sia bruciato su una pira, le sue parti molli spariscano e le ossa vengano poi recuperate e inserite nell'urna, che può essere deposta in un loculo anche distante dal luogo del rogo[5].

I casi di San Germano

Le indagini al tumulo 9 della necropoli di San Germano sono iniziate nel 2011 in continuità con un intervento di emergenza teso a scongiurare i ripetuti scavi clandestini[6]. Esse hanno rivelato una tomba con grande camera a pianta quadrata e pilastro centrale a cui si accede da uno stretto corridoio che, prima del *dromos*, si apre in due celle laterali, strette e profonde

5 Duday 2005, 140–141. Su questi aspetti, anche Ortalli 2010, 23–37.

6 Per l'edizione completa del contesto, Cappuccini 2016.

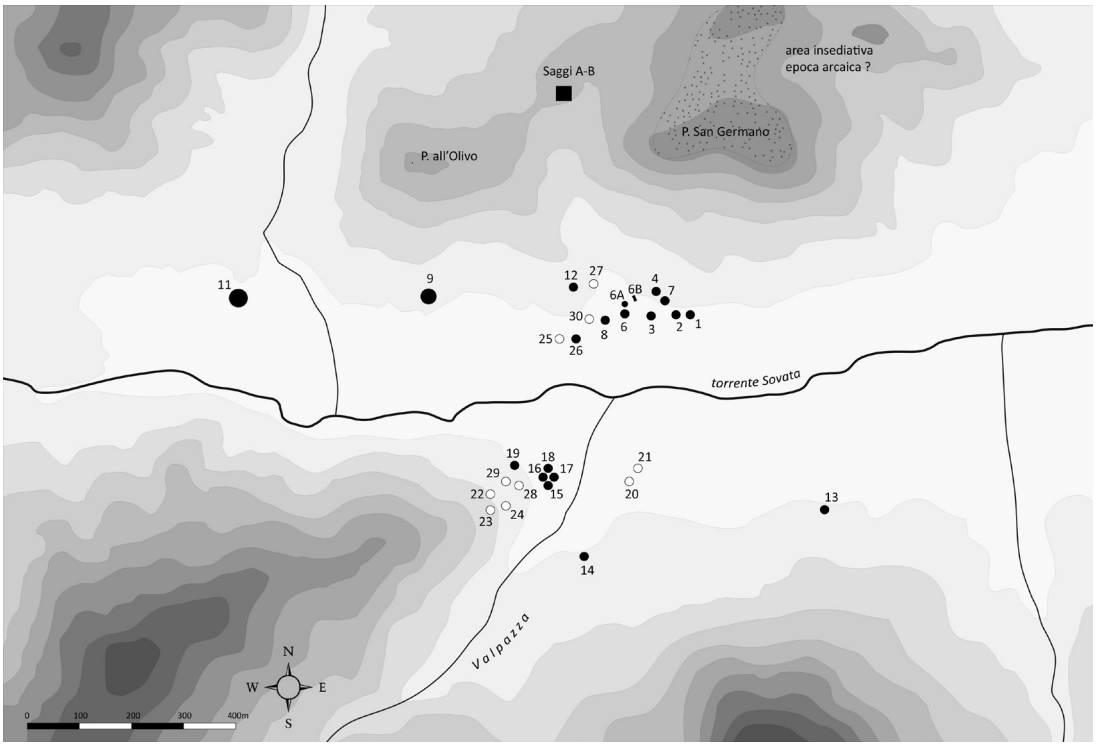

Fig. 2 – Planimetria della necropoli di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR) posta sui due versanti della valle del Sovata con localizzazione delle tombe (autore: Luca Cappuccini).

(Fig. 3). I resti osteologici, recuperati in tre differenti settori della struttura, ovvero nella camera, nella cella nord e nel vestibolo/cella sud, hanno permesso di riconoscere almeno dodici individui: undici adulti e un sub-adulto. Il rituale di sepoltura è, per tutti, l'inumazione[7]. I resti e le analisi ad essi associate hanno consentito, insieme allo studio dei reperti e alla sequenza stratigrafica di scavo, la ricostruzione delle varie fasi di vita della struttura funeraria e alcune ipotesi sui rituali svolti.

Nello specifico, in una prima fase, tra l'Orientalizzante Recente e la metà del V sec. a.C., la tomba accoglie almeno quattro deposizioni. Oltre ad oggetti e vasi in bronzo, gli ultimi corredi comprendevano anche numerosi vasi di ceramica attica a figure rosse. Tra questi si ricorda uno stamnos, probabilmente riferibile al Pittore di Pan[8], un'anfora nolana, un grande cratere a colonnette e almeno quattro *kylikes* attribuibili alla Cerchia del Pittore di Penthesilea e databili tra 470 e 450 a.C.[9].

Intorno alla metà del V sec. a.C. il monumento venne abbandonato e solo dopo quasi un secolo, intorno alla metà del IV sec. a.C., ripresero le deposizioni. Probabilmente in questa fase che, i resti umani e vari oggetti dei corredi – non più integri – furono spostati nella cella nord e, probabilmente, anche in quella sud come confermerebbero i pochissimi resti umani individuati in questo settore, purtroppo assai danneggiato dagli scavi clandestini. Una piccola parte di frammenti, pertinenti a

7 Nella cella nord sono stati individuati anche piccoli frammenti calcinati in prossimità di un'olla. La loro esiguità non ha permesso di accertare che si riferiscano ad un'incinerazione e non è stata possibile nessuna identificazione tassonomica o anatomica.

8 Cappuccini 2015.

9 Per queste ceramiche, Cappuccini 2016, 48–75.

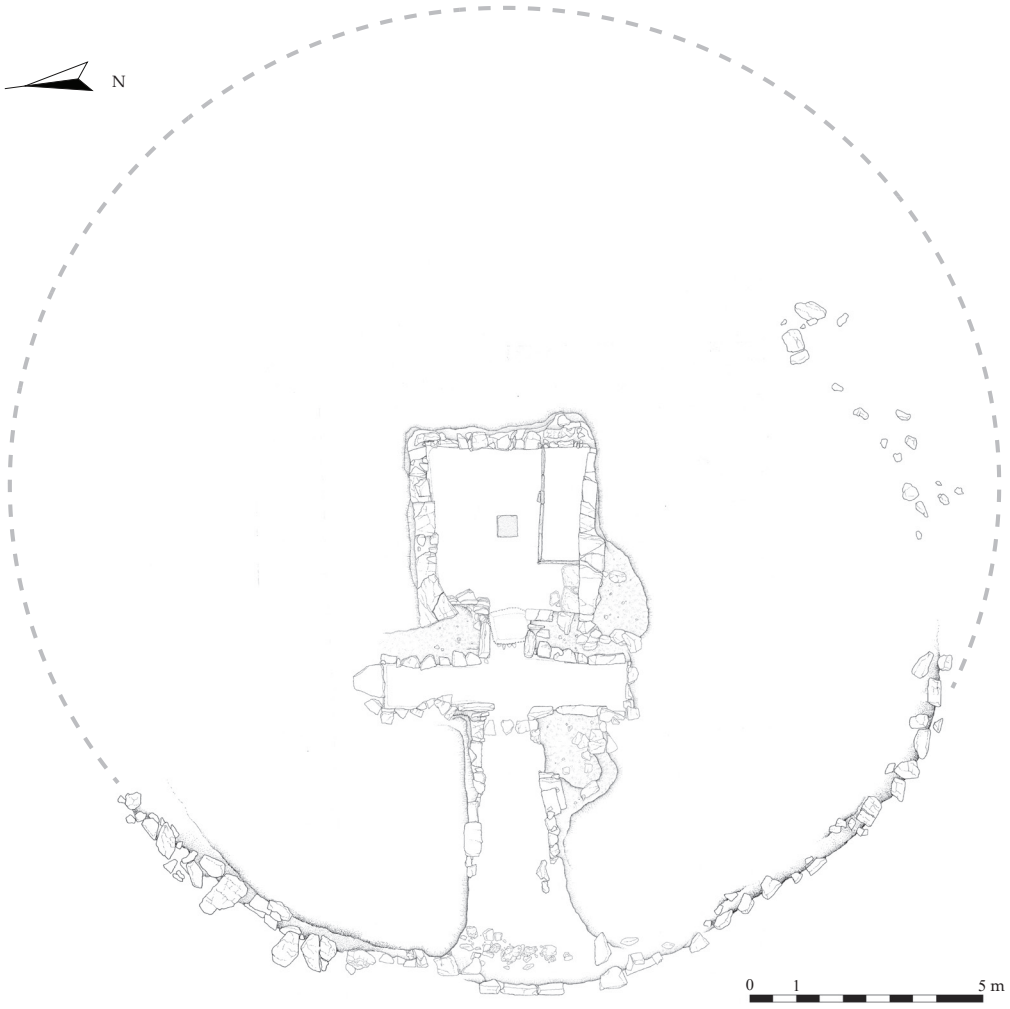

Fig. 3 – Planimetria del tumulo 9 di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR) (autore: Luca Cappuccini).

vari oggetti di epoche differenti, furono invece inseriti in una piccola fossa quadrangolare praticata nel breve corridoio che separa il vestibolo dalla camera funeraria (Fig. 4). Sigillata con uno strato di argilla, la fossa venne «chiusa» attraverso una libagione: a questa pratica si riferisce il set costituito da uno *skyphos*, una *kylix*, una ciotola e un piattello, tutti rinvenuti in posizione rovesciata sopra ai frammenti più antichi secondo un'usanza variamente attestata e connessa alla chiusura di fosse e depositi rituali.

Nello specifico, l'analisi dei frammenti restituiti dalla fossa ha evidenziato la pertinenza di questi con alcuni degli oggetti appartenuti ai corredi rinvenuti in altre parti della tomba (soprattutto nella cella nord ma anche della camera). Ciò è testimoniato, ad esempio, dal frammento del labbro dello *stamnos* attico prima citato, così come dai frammenti della bocca di un'anfora tirrenica e di un'altra in bucchero, portando ad ipotizzare un criterio di scelta pars pro toto. È dunque possibile che il deposito abbia accolto quelle parti o quei frammenti di oggetti che, al momento del ripristino del monumento, apparivano più rappresentativi; in questo modo, probabilmente, si intendeva sacralizzare tutti i manufatti oggetto dello

Fig. 4 – Fossa rituale posta al centro del corridoio di accesso alla camera funeraria del tumulo 9 di San Germano, in corso di scavo (autore: Luca Cappuccini).

spostamento[10]. Un grande chiodo in ferro, rinvenuto nella fossa, potrebbe essere letto come ulteriore elemento del rituale; esso sanciva, con la sua presenza, l'immutabilità dell'evento compiuto[11]. Dopo la traslazione dei corredi e la chiusura della parte anteriore della struttura (cella nord, fossa centrale e probabilmente anche cella sud), le deposizioni si susseguirono solo nella camera principale.

A partire dalla metà del IV sec. a.C. la camera principale del tumulo 9 ospita nuove deposizioni: stando allo studio sui resti osteologici, si tratta di almeno sette individui adulti e un sub-adulto. L' elevato numero delle sepolture in uno spazio ristretto e l'assenza di determinati distretti che, per conformazione anatomica e per la struttura del tessuto osseo si conservano piuttosto bene nel tempo[12] come ad esempio le mandibole, lasciano pensare ad una riduzione delle ossa. Nonostante lo stato lacunoso e frammentario dei reperti, questa seconda fase

10 Potrebbe trattarsi di un rituale di purificazione eseguito disperdendo i frammenti di ciò che era diventato *sacer* su tutta l'area interessata. Aspetti simili sembrano ravvisabili nel *piaculum* effettuato a seguito della ristrutturazione di una piccola area di culto presso la villa dell'Auditorium di Roma risalente al IV sec. a.C.: nello scarico sigillato da tegole e schegge di tufo, furono deposti frammenti isolati di vari tipi ceramici, qui interpretati come indizio del vasellame funzionale al rituale (D'Alessio – Di Giuseppe 2005).

11 La presenza del chiodo in questo particolare contesto, privo di reperti osteologici, non è certo riferibile alla pratica rituale che mirava a immobilizzare il defunto impedendone il ritorno tra i vivi (Ortalli 2010, 28); ma dovrà essere letta come funzione profilattica, impedendo profanazioni da parte di viventi e spiriti malvagi e sancendo l'immutabilità dell'evento compiuto; nella pratica, esso sanciva l'obbligo di fare o non fare una determinata azione (Pellegrino 1999, 20–21; Bevilacqua 2001, 133–134; Le Glay 1987, 248). Sull'utilizzo rituale del chiodo in epoca romana, Maioli 2010, 163–166.

12 Bello – Andrews 2009, 7–10.

Fig. 5 – Foto aerea dei tumuli 6 e 6A nella necropoli di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR) (autore: Paolo Nannini, SABAP-SI).

di utilizzo del monumento si protrae fino alla fine del III sec. a.C. o poco più tardi[13].

Il riutilizzo dello spazio funerario con la conseguente manipolazione delle inumazioni precedenti, riscontrato nel tumulo 9, è attestato anche in altri contesti della necropoli. Il più significativo tra questi è il piccolo tumulo 6A, posto poco a nord del tumulo 6 e a questo probabilmente legato (Fig. 5). La tomba 6A, costituita da una piccola camera con ingresso sul lato nord e circondata da un modesto circolo di pietre di soli quattro metri di diametro (Fig. 6), ha evidenziato la presenza di almeno due soggetti adulti. Un'inumazione femminile era ancora sulla banchina addossata al lato ovest della camera. Il corpo era stato adagiato supino con le gambe rivolte a nord e la testa a sud. Le ossa presenti, ancora in connessione anatomica, hanno permesso la stima del ses-

13 Nel II sec. a.C. la struttura non è più utilizzata come luogo di sepoltura. Lo scavo del riempimento della camera ha evidenziato comunque una terza fase di utilizzo, purtroppo in gran parte sconvolta dagli scavi clandestini. Dopo il crollo della copertura, si accumula uno strato composto da resti di animali, vasi miniaturistici e una lucerna. È possibile che il luogo sia diventato sede di un culto: le analisi delle faune hanno rivelato una precisa scelta delle parti di animale (con una netta preferenza per gli arti) portando ad ipotizzare una loro destinazione come offerta. In questa direzione sembrano condurre anche le specie individuate, tra cui i cani, spesso utilizzati, anche insieme ad altri animali, in sacrifici e rituali agresti oltre che in ambito funerario. Su questo, Peri – Vacca 2016, 163–167; Cappuccini 2016, 138–140.

Fig. 6 – Camera funeraria del piccolo tumulo 6A nella necropoli di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR) (autore: Luca Cappuccini).

so[14], dell'età[15] e dell'altezza[16]: inoltre, sono stati rilevati anche alcuni dati che hanno fornito informazioni aggiuntive[17]. Infatti sia l'indice metrico del femore che quello cnemico delle tibie hanno mostrato un appiattimento, forte per quanto riguarda il terzo superiore della diafisi del femore e di entità più leggera in senso trasversale su entrambe le tibie, dovuti probabilmente a stress biomeccanico oppure ad una dieta povera[18]. Una dieta povera di nutrimenti era stata riscontrata anche per i resti più recenti rinvenuti nella camera del tumulo 9[19]. Il secondo individuo della tomba 6A non si trovava sulla banchina ma le ossa attribuite con certezza a questa sepoltura giacevano sparse sul piano di calpestio. Al secondo individuo sono stati attribuiti solo due femori molto frammentari e mal conservati. Il femore sinistro è stato trovato nel lato ovest della camera funeraria mentre il destro era situato presso il lato est. Nel piano di calpestio della struttura funeraria sono state individuate altre ossa – frammenti e denti sciolti – che non è stato possibile attribuire con certezza a nessuno dei due individui.

L'analisi della ceramica a vernice nera recuperata a ridosso della lastra di chiusura della camera, ancora *in situ*, indica che la tomba fu riaperta in epoca ellenistica (fine IV–inizi III sec. a.C.). Nonostante i pochi reperti ceramici rinvenuti, è assai probabile che l'individuo rinvenuto sul piano di calpestio, dati i pochi resti attribuiti al suo scheletro, abbia subito una riduzione e una selezione delle ossa: ciò per consentire una nuova deposizione sulla banchina in una camera di dimensioni assai esigue (1,6 mq).

Oltre al tumulo 9 e al tumulo 6A, grazie alle analisi effettuate su campioni osteologici condotte dal Dipartimento di Biologia dell'Ateneo fiorentino e guidate da David Caramelli, è stato possibile accertare che anche all'interno del tumulo 8, già scavato da Claudio Curri[20], erano presenti inumazioni distribuite su un ampio arco temporale (Fig. 7). Tra i veri resti osteologici provenienti dai vecchi scavi è possibile distinguere un'inumazione arcaica e almeno tre inumazioni la cui cronologia è fissata tra IV e III sec. a.C.; a questa fase si riferisce anche una lucerna, avvicinabile a tipi attici diffusi tra la seconda metà del IV e gli inizi del III sec. a.C. Nonostante non si disponga di dati stratigrafici attendibili si osservano le stesse fasi di frequentazione del tumulo 9; la ridotta superficie disponibile della camera (circa 3 mq) porta ad ipotizzare, anche in questo caso, processi di traslazione o riduzione del materiale più antico.

Alcuni confronti

Limitando la ricerca di possibili confronti all'Etruria propria, la manipolazione dei resti delle inumazioni è una pratica attestata anche in altri contesti. Il caso più eclatante ed emblemati-

14 Pearson – Bell 1919, 56; Black 1978, 229–230.
15 Canci – Minozzi 2005, 120–133.
16 Trotter – Gleser 1977; Canci – Minozzi 2005, 133–138.
17 Lovejoy et al. 1976, 489–505.
18 Baynes – Bothwell 1990, 133–148.
19 Peri 2016, 157–162.
20 Curri 1978, 76.

Fig. 7 – Tumulo 8 nella necropoli di San Germano (Gavorrano, GR) (autore: Paolo Nannini, SABAP-SI).

co di sepoltura secondaria nel mondo etrusco rimane ancora oggi la tomba 4461 di Pontecagnano[21]. Datata all'ultimo quarto dell'VIII secolo a.C., la tomba è la più antica deposizione principesca della necropoli occidentale. La sepoltura, con tumulo, presentava una cassa di travertino con un piano deposizionale in ciottoli. Il corpo, appartenente ad un uomo di circa cinquanta anni con muscolatura potente e un'altezza media, è stato molto probabilmente inumato una prima volta e poi riesumato dopo un certo tempo. Le ossa furono separate e, in due casi, frammiste ad ossa di ovicaprino; i gruppi furono poi collocati in tre luoghi diversi della camera. Più precisamente: in un lebete in bronzo, raccolte dentro un drappo trattenuto da due fibule, erano presenti vertebre, coste, porzioni del cinto pelvico e degli arti; sul piano deposizionale della camera furono rinvenute coste, frammenti del cinto scapolare, degli arti e del cinto pelvico; in una situla tipo Kurd erano presenti frammenti del cinto pelvico e del pube e, solo in questo caso, non erano presenti ossa animali[22]. Del tutto assenti erano cranio e denti. I resti sembrano esser stati oggetto di rituali eccezionali: alla riesumazione seguì la scelta di particolari porzioni che, separate dalle restanti, furono probabilmente oggetto di sacrifici e libagioni come dimostrerebbero le ossa di ovicaprino e la phiale rinvenuta all'interno della situla. È molto probabile che questi rituali siano da collegare all'alto rango sociale dell'individuo inumato e alla sua importanza per la comunità che, evidentemente, conservò memoria nelle generazioni successive attribuendogli un particolare valore[23].

Le vicende della tomba 6A di San Germano sembrano in qualche modo avvicinabili a quelle della tomba tarquiniese 6326[24]. Si tratta di una

21 Cuozzo 2004–2005, 145–150.

22 Mallegni 1984, 148.

23 Cuozzo 2004–2005, 145–154.

24 Cataldi 2003, 213–225.

Fig. 8 – Tomba dei demoni Azzurri di Tarquinia: in basso a sinistra, la fossa aperta sul piano pavimentale (autore: Giulia Peri).

struttura funeraria posta nel settore orientale della necropoli dei Secondi Archi. La tomba, datata all'età ellenistica, è orientata NE-SW con entrata a NE a cui si accede tramite un *dromos* a gradini. La tomba presenta quattro blocchi di chiusura ancora *in situ*. La camera, di piccole dimensioni, ha una banchina ad angolo sul lato destro e sul fondo. Sulla banchina destra era posto uno scheletro con il corredo appoggiato sul fianco destro; sul pavimento erano presenti frustoli di ossa umane ed un'olla d'impasto mentre, sulla banchina di fondo, sono stati individuati oggetti di un corredo femminile (specchio e strigile). Le analisi antropologiche condotte da Rita Vargiu[25] hanno rivelato aspetti di indubbio interesse: sulla banchina laterale era adagiata una donna circa 30–40 anni, della quale rimanevano in connessione anatomica la parte inferiore dello scheletro, dal bacino alle ossa delle gambe. Erano del tutto assenti le ossa del torace. Il cranio, invece, era in posizione prossima a quella anatomica, alla fine della banchina. La mandibola è stata recuperata nello strato di terra infiltrata dal soffitto della tomba. Pochi frammenti di radio e di omero sinistri sono stati individuati nel corridoio centrale, probabilmente slittati in basso insieme a l'olla d'impasto a causa dell'acqua infiltratasi nella tomba. Il dato più interessante riguarda il rinvenimento di due patelle di maggiori dimensioni rispetto a quelle della deposizione sulla banchina destra e concrezionate allo scheletro di questa deposizione. Probabilmente queste ossa e i frustuli rinvenuti nel corridoio centrale appartengono all'inumato a cui era riferito il corredo posto sulla banchina di fondo. La presenza di un manico in osso proveniente dalla banchina destra e appartenente allo specchio collocato sulla banchina di fondo fa pensare che, in un primo momento, questa deposizione a cui appartengono le seconde rotule, sia stata spostata per far posto alla successiva deposizione[26]. I due corredi sono coevi, quindi la manipolazione dei corpi sarebbe avvenuta in tempi piuttosto ravvicinati. Molte sono le assonanze tra la tomba tarquiniese e la tomba 6A di San Germano. Oltre le ridotte dimensioni della camera, la presenza di un individuo adulto femminile non perfettamente conservato sulla banchina; in entrambe erano poi presenti altre deposizioni probabilmente antecedenti a quelle rinvenute sulle banchine.

Sempre a Tarquinia esiste un altro caso in cui, molto probabilmente, le prime deposizioni sono state manipolate, ridotte e spostate dalla prima giacitura. Si tratta della tomba dei Demoni Azzurri, rinvenuta nella necropoli di Monterozzi in località Calvario nel 1985[27]. La tomba presenta un'ampia camera quadrangolare con un tetto a doppio spiovente ed è accessibile tramite un lungo *dromos*. L'ultima fase di utilizzo della struttura è datata agli anni finali del V sec. a.C. In questo monumento non sono presenti banchine, ma il ritrovamento di quattro fori nel piano di calpestio hanno fatto ipotizzare la presenza di letti funebri deperibili. Nell'angolo tra la parete di fondo e la parete sinistra è stata scoperta un'ampia fossa dove sono venute in luce alcune ossa forse appartenenti alle prime deposizioni (Fig. 8). L'ipotesi che si tratti di resti più antichi è dovuta alla compresenza di frammenti di anfore panatenaiche. Questi frammenti ceramici portano ad

25 Vargiu 2003, 230–231.

26 Cataldi 2003, 215.

27 Adinolfi et al. 2005, 431–453.

ipotizzare che la tomba sia stata utilizzata una prima volta antecedentemente agli anni finali del V sec. a.C. quando venne riaperta e decorata con pitture (tra cui i demoni che le danno nome) e quindi chiusa definitivamente.

Un confronto stringente con la tomba dei Demoni Azzurri è la Tomba dell'Iscrizione nella necropoli di Poggio Renzo a Chiusi dove, lungo la parte di accesso alla camera sepolcrale destra, è stata individuata una fossa contenente resti scheletrici e alcuni frammenti ceramici[28] (Fig. 9). La tomba è stata riportata alla luce nel 1997 dopo essere stata scoperta alla metà del XIX secolo e solo parzialmente indagata[29]. La tomba, fondata intorno alla metà del VI sec. a.C., accolse sicuramente varie deposizioni; verso la fine del V sec. a.C. un evento straordinario portò allo sconvolgimento dell'intero complesso, con lo scavo della fossa e l'interramento del *dromos*[30]. Nella fossa, in sepoltura secondaria, erano deposti ordinatamente uno sull'altro nove scheletri incompleti. Rispetto alla tomba dei Demoni Azzurri le ossa non erano combuste ma, per tutte le deposizioni, era stata praticata una scelta dei distretti da conservare e poi interrare, soprattutto crani e arti. L'azione di scelta e conservazione delle ossa più caratteristiche e riconoscibili non lascia spazio a dubbi sulla volontarietà. Le analisi condotte su questi resti hanno aiutato a comprendere alcuni dati su questi individui[31]: si tratta esclusivamente di adulti con probabili legami parentali come dimostrerebbe il metopismo presente nella maggior parte dei crani; in tre crani è stata poi rilevata iperostosi porotica, che potrebbe indicare una condizione anemica, tra l'altro rilevata anche nei crani del tumulo 9 di San Germano.

Fig. 9 – Fossa scavata sul piano pavimentale nella Tomba dell'Iscrizione a Chiusi (da Martelli-Nasorri 1998).

Considerazioni

I dati raccolti nella necropoli di San Germano e i relativi confronti qui presentati apportano qualche novità su alcuni aspetti delle pratiche funerarie e sui rituali ad esse connesse. Il dato più importante riguarda la manipolazione post-mortem dei defunti. Scendendo nel dettaglio, nel tumulo 9 possiamo innanzitutto distinguere due momenti distinti in cui i corpi sono stati alterati. Un primo spostamento degli scheletri è avvenuto probabilmente intorno alla metà del IV secolo a.C., quando nella cella nord e in quella sud vengono introdotte, oltre ai resti dei corredi, anche le ossa umane che dovevano trovare una collocazione originaria nella camera centrale. Si tratta di porzioni scheletriche piuttosto esigue di ossa lunghe, cranio e bacino. Un elemento di interesse è la presenza, nella cella nord, di due metatarsi posizionati specularmente, uno all'ingresso e uno

28 Martelli – Nasorri 1998, 83.
29 Martelli – Nasorri 1998, 84.
30 Martelli – Nasorri 1998, 100.
31 Pacciani – Sonego 1998, 103.

sul fondo[32]. Il posizionamento potrebbe non essere dovuto agli agenti tafonomici ma legato ad un rituale di chiusura suggerito anche dal set di vasi (*skyphos*, *stemless cup*, piattello, ciotola) analogo a quello emerso nel deposito rituale al centro del corridoio di ingresso della camera principale. Una volta sigillate, le celle non dovevano essere riaperte e l'ineluttabilità del divieto potrebbe essere testimoniata anche dal chiodo recuperato nel deposito. Da questo momento le attività deposizionali si limitano alla camera dove possiamo ipotizzare che, in un momento successivo, sia avvenuta una seconda manipolazione. Grazie all'analisi dei resti e dei corredi si può ragionevolmente sostenere che, con il susseguirsi delle inumazioni, siano state scelte le ossa rappresentative dei corpi più antichi, conservate probabilmente sul piano di calpestio, mentre il resto sia stato tolto dalla camera[33]. Si può inoltre ipotizzare che la riduzione dei corpi sia avvenuta per il poco spazio deposizionale in relazione al cospicuo numero di defunti. Purtroppo, a causa dei successivi rimaneggiamenti, nessuno degli individui presenti in questo spazio del tumulo 9 presentava connessioni anatomiche tali da accertare la presenza di ultime deposizioni non manipolate, come invece è rilevabile nelle tombe 6A di San Germano e 6326 di Tarquinia.

Queste due ultime sepolture presentano varie similitudini: due corpi inumati per tomba; una deposizione più antica selezionata e ridotta, trovata in entrambi i casi sul piano di calpestio; la totale assenza di resti animali; una deposizione femminile più recente ancora presente sulla banchina. Nella tomba tarquiniese vi è inoltre un'altra banchina dove trovavano posto gli oggetti del corredo della prima deposizione ma non le sue ossa, fatto che lascia supporre una volontarietà nel deporre la sepoltura più antica in basso, sul terreno.

Nella Tomba dell'Iscrizione, lo scavo della fossa e il successivo interramento delle ossa selezionate mostra una chiara volontarietà e testimonia come la pratica della riduzione scheletrica e dell'utilizzo di sepolture secondarie fosse ben conosciuto. La pratica di ridurre le sepolture più antiche era probabilmente più diffusa di quanto si possa pensare; d'altra parte, ancora oggi essa è parte della nostra tradizione funeraria, attestata dagli ossuari presenti nei cimiteri moderni, sedi dei resti di defunti raccolti successivamente all'inumazione in una fossa. Contrariamente a quanto si è portati a credere, ridurre – ma non eliminare – le deposizioni più antiche fa presupporre una volontarietà nel non dimenticare gli antenati a cui, probabilmente, erano riservate pratiche rituali specifiche. Sia nel tumulo 9 che nella tomba principesca di Pontecagnano è possibile che gli eredi abbiano messo in pratica dei rituali concernenti resti animali e particolari forme ceramiche utilizzate spesso per libagioni o, come nel caso dei piattelli, per offrire un obolo alle divinità[34]. Tali pratiche, ad oggi, restano di difficile lettura e solo il progredire delle analisi tafonomiche sui reperti osteologici aiuterà a chiarirle.

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32 Peri – Vacca 2016, 158.

33 Al momento in nessun tumulo studiato nella necropoli di San Germano è stato possibile identificare fosse simili a quelle della tomba dell'Iscrizione di Chiusi o della tomba dei Demoni Azzurri a Tarquinia.

34 A questo proposito si possono ricordare i *Parentalia*, rituali che venivano celebrati durante il mese di febbraio a Roma. Il ciclo festivo si apriva il 13 febbraio e proseguiva per nove giorni. In questo periodo la comunità si metteva in lutto, chiudendo i templi, non celebrando i matrimoni e le autorità dovevano deporre le insegne del potere. Nelle case venivano spenti i focolari, mentre presso i sepolcri si accendevano candele, ceri e fiaccole (Ov. Fast. II, 562). Il 21 febbraio si concludevano i riti con i *Feralia*, nome che potrebbe richiamare l'uso di portare (*fere*) offerte ai defunti; la festa prevedeva un banchetto (*emplum*) consumato dai parenti presso la tomba (Ov. Fast. II, 269–270).

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Grabritus, Tradition und Zerstörung. Überlegungen zum Umgang mit den eigenen und fremden Toten im eisenzeitlichen Apennin

Joachim Weidig

Borgorose, Riesengrabhügel mit Nachbestattungen und Zentralgrab einer jungen Frau

An das Thema unseres Workshops möchte ich mich mit einem der eindrucksvollsten Beispiele von Traditionsbildung heranwagen, das die vorrömische Archäologie im mittelitalischen Apennin zu bieten hat: dem Riesengrabhügel von Corvaro di Borgorose an der Grenze der heutigen Regionen Abruzzen und Latium. Dieser Grabhügel besaß ursprünglich eine Höhe von 4 m und einen Durchmesser von 50 m und wurde in vielen Kampagnen seit 1984 unter der Leitung von Giovanna Alvino vollständig ausgegraben[1]. Im und neben dem Riesengrabhügel entdeckte man 368 Bestattungen, die von der frühen Eisenzeit (Grab 8) bis in die hellenistisch, römisch-republikanische Epoche datieren (Abb. 1a). Darunter befand sich auch ein Pferdeskelett, dass in einer eigenen Grube eingebracht worden war[2].

Der Grabhügel verbarg allerdings sein größtes Geheimnis bis zuletzt: im Zentralgrab befand sich nicht, wie lange vermutet worden war, ein mächtiges Kriegergrab aus der frühen Eisenzeit, sondern die Bestattung einer jungen Frau aus dem späten 7. bzw. dem Beginn des 6. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. (Zentralgrab, T. 4), die laut anthropologischer Bestimmung der Zähne mit circa 22 Jahren verstarb. Ihr wurden zwei goldene Ketten etruskischer Machart, zehn Eisenfibeln und ein bronzenes Perlrandbecken beigegeben. Besonders auffällig sind zwei bronzene Gürtelbleche mit Bügelverschluss und mit je sechs durchbrochenen Fenstern mit dem für die Abruzzen typischen Motiv eines drachenähnlichen Fabelwesens, während je 12 kleine plastische Entenfiguren die Schmucknieten bilden (Abb. 1b). Dass diese junge Frau bereits zu Lebzeiten eine besondere Stellung innehatte, evtl. eine Priesterin oder Zauberin war, bezeugen die vielen im Grab gefundenen Tierknochen, die von Schlangen, Nagetieren und kleinen Vögeln stammen[3].

Über die Bestattung wurde ein kleiner Grabhügel errichtet, den man im Schnitt des großen Tumulus gut erkennt, der mit den nachfolgenden Bestattungen sukzessive anwuchs. Dabei wurde auch ein älteres Grab aus dem 8. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bedeckt, das beweist, dass das Gräberareal nicht erst durch die Frauenbestattung im Zentralgrab, sondern bereits im späteren Abschnitt der Frühen Eisenzeit erschlossen worden ist.

Gefunden wurden im Riesenhügel relativ wenige Frauengräber mit Gürtelblechen aber viele archaische Kriegerbestattungen mit Fibeln, Antennengriffdolchen oder Schwertern; Keramikgefäße kommen dagegen fast gar nicht vor, was auf eine besondere Grabsitte in diesem Gebiet zurückzuführen ist. Aus hellenistischer

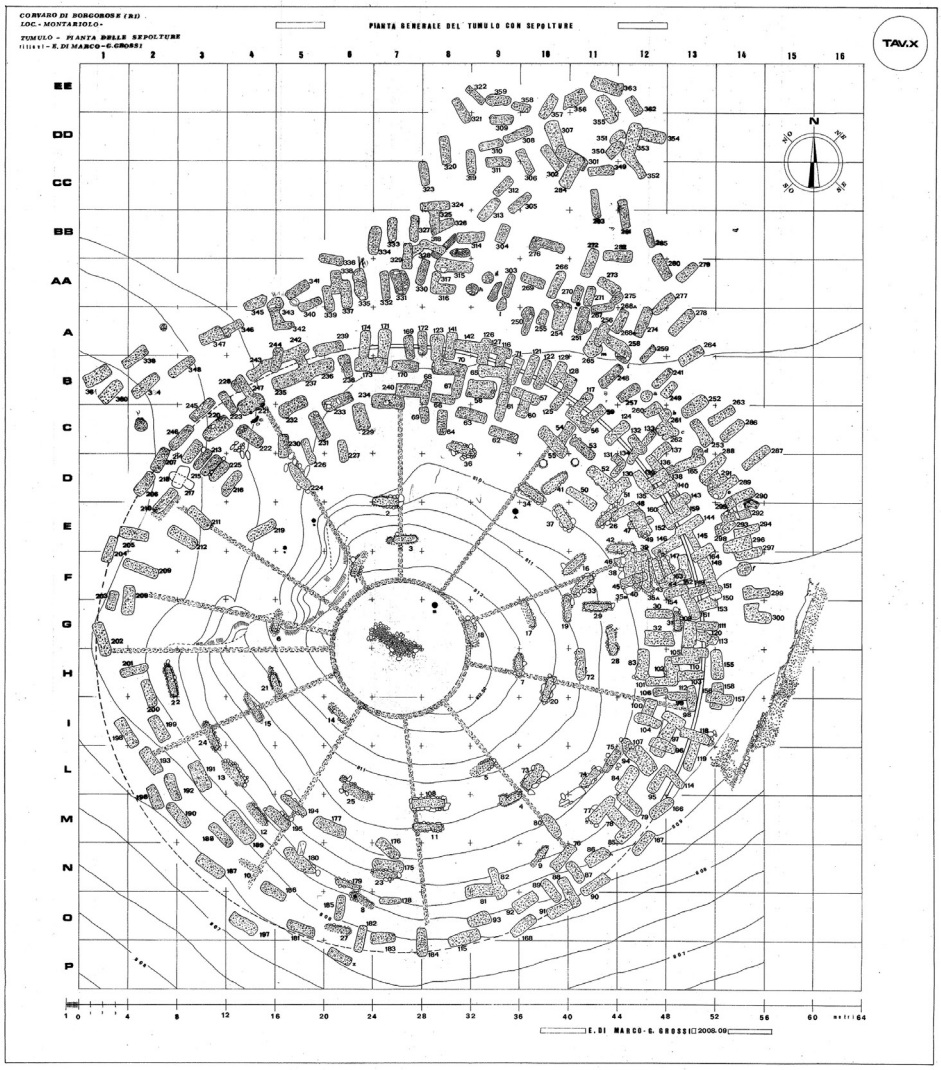
1 Alvino 1996 (mit Angaben der älteren Lit.); Alvino 2004a; Alvino 2004b; Alvino 2007; Alvino 2014, 44–47, Abb. 3–4; Alvino 2017 (aktueller Forschungsstand).

2 Santini 2007.

3 Die Frauenbestattung ist bisher nur partiell publiziert: Alvino 2017, 9–10, Abb. 17–18 (beide Halsketten aus Gold oder Elektron) und Titelbild sowie Abb. 10 (bronzene Gürtelbleche); zum Gürteltyp Weidig 2014, 199–222. Alle weiteren Angaben sind den Ausstellungstexten im Museo Archeologico Cicolano in Corvaro di Borgorose entnommen, wo das Grabinventar komplett ausgestellt ist. Für unpublizierte Auskünfte zu den Ausgrabungen und Funden dankt Verf. sehr dott.ssa Giovana Alvino (ehem. Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Lazio und Direktorin des Museo Archeologico Cicolano). Dieser Befund relativiert auch einige Angaben aus früheren Publikationen, z. B. das vermeintliche Fehlen von anderen Tierknochen außer dem Pferdeskelett (Santini 2007, 121 Anm. 3), welches allerdings stratigraphisch nicht im direkten Bezug zu dieser Frauenbestattung steht.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 33–47.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16915



a

b

Abb. 1 – Der Riesengrabhügel von Corvaro di Borgorose (RI). a: Übersichtsplan (Alvino 2014, Abb. 4); b: Bronzene Gürtelbleche mit Bügelverschluss und durchbrochenen Fenstern mit drachenähnlichen Fabelwesen sowie kleine plastische Entenfiguren als Schmuckniete (Alvino 2017, Titelbild).

bzw. republikanischer Zeit stammen vor allem verzierte Bronzespiegel, Fingerringe und tönerne Parfumfläschchen[4].

Diese lange Bestattungstradition, die sich an einer herausragenden Persönlichkeit über mehrere Jahrhunderte orientiert, ist nicht einzigartig im archäologischen Spektrum. Im Gebiet, welches mit dem literarisch überlieferten italischen Stamm der Equi bzw. im Valle del Salto mit den Equicoli verbunden ist, befinden sich weitere ähnliche Grabhügel, die zwar nicht ganz so groß sind, aber ebenfalls über mehrere Generationen belegt wurden[5]. Es handelt sich demnach um Gemeinschaftsgrabhügel mit einer sehr langen Belegungszeit, in denen wahrscheinlich die Angehörigen einer Sippe, einer Großfamilie, eines Stammes oder Mitglieder besonderer Verbünde bestattet worden waren. Dass zum Teil andere Zugehörigkeitskriterien als reine familiäre Bindungen für die Ehre im Tumulus beigesetzt zu werden, ausschlaggebend gewesen sein könnten, lassen die vielen archaischen Kriegergräber im Tumulus von Corvaro vermuten.

Für Italien zwar ungewöhnlich, ist das Phänomen von Riesengrabhügel in der europäischen Eisenzeit nicht unbekannt; man denke nur an die hallstattzeitlichen Grabhügel in Slowenien oder an den Großgrabhügel des Magdalenenberges bei Villingen[6]. Allen gemeinsam ist, dass hier eine fortlaufende Tradition der Gemeinschaften angezeigt werden soll, die sich auf eine herausragende Persönlichkeit bezieht, welche nicht unbedingt der Ahnherr oder im Fall von Borgorose die Ahnfrau gewesen sein muss. Vielleicht entsprach die Nähe zur älteren Bestattung einem magischen oder religiösen Schutzbedürfnis.

4 Alvino 2004a; Alvino 2004b; Alvino 2007.

5 z. B. Tumulo I und Tumulo II der Nekropole von Cartore di Borgorose mit mehreren Bestattungen sowie mit einer Ritualgrube, in der sich zerscherbte Keramikgefäße befanden: Alvino 2004a, 18–19; Alvino 2007, 99–102.

6 Müller 1994.

Fossa, Sekundärbestattung im eisenzeitlichen Grabhügel

Pure Machtdemonstration, die in keiner erkennbaren Tradition steht, bezeugt das zweite Beispiel aus der Nekropole von Fossa bei L'Aquila in den Abruzzen. Durch Überschwemmungsschichten des Flusses Aterno blieben die Grabhügel fast unversehrt erhalten und konnten von V. d'Ercole ab den 1990er Jahren freigelegt werden[7].

In dem größten Grabhügel aus dem 8. Jh. v. Chr. (T. 300), der durch einen Steinkreis und eine Reihe von Menhiren hervorgehoben ist, wurde in späthellenistischer Zeit zentral ein Kammergrab mit Dromos angelegt (Abb. 2). In diesem fand man drei Bestattungen, die von der 2. Hälfte 2. Jh. v. Chr. bis zum 1. Jh. n. Chr. datieren[8]. Mit der Inbesitznahme des ältereisenzeitlichen Grabhügels, sollte wohl ein Führungsanspruch demonstriert werden, der sich auf eine erfundene Tradition beruft[9].

Das Phänomen von Sekundärbestattungen in älteren Gräbern ist vor allem dort anzutreffen, wo eine architektonische Grundlage besteht. Das ist nicht nur bei etruskischen Kammergräbern der Fall[10], sondern z. B. auch bei den sog. loculi-Bestattungen der Sabiner. Wie die vom CNR unter der Leitung von P. San-

7 Die Grabfunde sind vollständig vorgelegt: Fossa I 2001; Fossa II 2004; Benelli 2008; Fossa IV 2003. Die anfänglich sehr hohe, umstrittene (und falsche) Datierung der früheisenzeitlichen Phase ist durch E. Benelli (2008) und durch die umfangreiche Neuauswertung von V. Acconcia (Acconcia 2014, bes. 29–76; Acconcia 2019) berichtigt worden. Damit sind wichtige italische Materialgruppen, wie z. B. die eisernen und bronzenen Schmuckscheiben der Frauentracht, nun auch überregional miteinander vergleichbar, vgl. Weidig 2021.

8 Zum hellenistisch-republikanischen Kammergrab 63: Fossa IV 2003, 181–194. Zum zerstörten Grabhügel mit Steinsetzung 300: Fossa I 2001, 130–131.

9 Anders wird die Situation von den Ausgräbern beurteilt, die annehmen, dass der eisenzeitliche Tumulus in hellenistischer Zeit aufgrund von mehreren aufgelagerten Schwemmschichten des Aterno nicht mehr sichtbar gewesen sei. Zwar werden auch andere eisenzeitliche Grabhügel mit Steinkreisen von hellenistischen Kammergräbern geschnitten (vgl. Abb. 2), aber die Position des Kammergrabes 63 in der Mitte des Grabhügels 300 scheint doch mehr als zufällig zu sein.

10 Vgl. den Beitrag von L. Cappuccini in diesem Band.

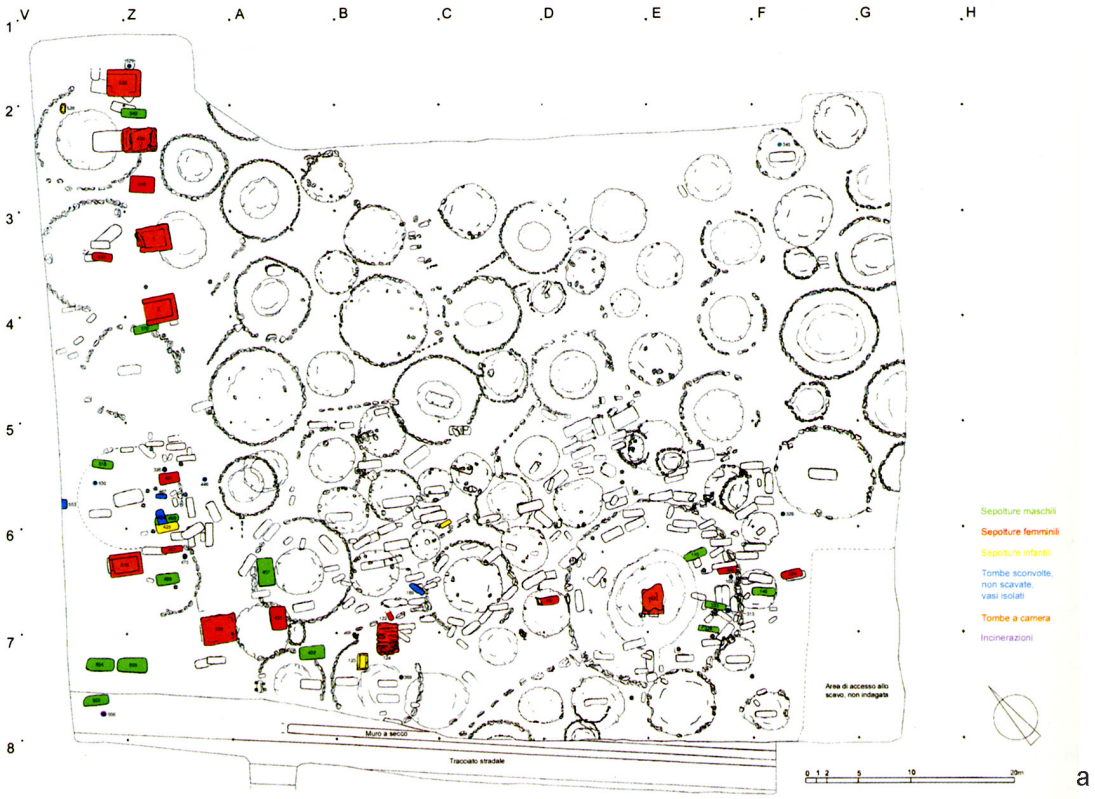


Abb. 2 – Die Nekropole von Fossa (AQ). a: Gräberfeldplan, in rot die hellenistischen Kammergräber, unten rechts der eisenzeitliche Steinkreis mit der Menhirenreihe (t. 300), in dessen Zentrum Kammergrab 63 (Fossa IV 2003, 326 Taf. 2); b: Das hellenistische Kammergrab 63 im früheisenzeitlichen Grabhügel (t. 300) (Fossa IV 2003, 329 Foto 8).

toro und E. Benelli vollständig ausgegrabene Nekropole von Colle del Forno, dem antiken Eretum, zeigt, wurden die Primärbestattungen einfach an die Seite geschoben oder die älteren Beigaben in den Dromos geworfen, um Platz für den neuen Leichnam zu machen[11]. Die Datierung der einzelnen Bestattungen kann somit nicht nach dem Gesetz des geschlossenen Fundes erfolgen; auch chronologische Seriationen sind unter diesen Bedingungen kaum möglich. In den in Grabgruben eingelassenen, oder unter Tumuli gelegenen Einzelbestattungen, wie das die Regel bei den eisenzeitlichen archäologischen Kulturen im Apennin und im mitteladriatischen Gebiet war, sind Sekundärbestattungen dagegen weitaus seltener anzutreffen.

Bazzano, absichtlich gestörte Bestattung mit wiederverwendeten Grabbeigaben

Umso außergewöhnlicher ist der Fall einer partiellen Sekundärbestattung, die im eisenzeitlichen Gräberfeld von Bazzano, der Nachbarnekropole von Fossa entdeckt wurde. Nur unter großen Kraftanstrengungen ist es möglich, in den anstehenden Flussschotter auszugraben, wie Verf. selbst feststellen konnte. Dennoch sind Überschneidungen innerhalb der archaischen Bestattungen selten. Das ändert sich erst in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit, als ältere Grabgruben gerne wiederverwendet wurden[12].

Am Ende des 6. Jh. v. Chr. wurde ein Kriegergrab (t. 890) rechtwinklig orientiert über einem ca. hundert Jahre älteren Kriegergrab (t. 885) angelegt, welches nur partiell zerstört wurde. Dabei wurden anscheinend zwei Gegenstände aus der älteren Bestattung als eigene Beigaben wiederverwendet[13]. So lagen unterhalb der Füße des Skeletts aus Grab 890 ein vierhenkliger Kelch mit Stengelfuß aus Impasto und eine lokale Variante eines Filtergefäßes mit Stöpsel, welches seine Vorbilder in etruskischen Filtergefäßen aus Bucchero besitzt (Abb. 3)[14]. Beide Gefäße können chronologisch viel besser mit der älteren Bestattung verbunden werden, befanden sich aber in der jüngeren. Entscheidend bei der Deutung dieses seltsamen Befundes dürfte der herausgehobene soziale Status beider Bestattungen sein. Der Inhaber des älteren Grabes 885 gehörte zur Führungselite des späten 7. bzw. frühen 6. Jh., die sich in Bazzano durch die Beigabe eines großen Doliums auszeichnet, für das im Grab ein separater Bereich aus Steinquadern errichtet wurde. Beim Grab 890 aus dem späten 6. oder frühen 5. Jh. handelt es sich dagegen um eine der wenigen, wenn nicht sogar um die einzige Kriegerbestattung spätarchaischer Zeit in Bazzano, die eine gehobene Ausstattung enthielt: neben einer bronzenen Kanne, einer Situla und einem Becken, sind Bratspieße und zwei eiserne Feuerböcke zu nennen[15]. Es dürfte somit Machtanspruch bzw. die Anknüpfung an eine echte oder erfundene familiäre Traditionslinie gewesen sein, die zur absichtlichen Störung der älteren Bestattung führte. Die rechtwinklige Überlappung ist dagegen durch die Änderung der allgemeinen Orientierung der Gräber in

11 Benelli 2014; Benelli 2015 mit älterer Lit. Das Problem wurde erst durch die neuen Ausgrabungen von E. Benelli und P. Santoro erkannt, welche eindeutig belegen konnten, dass die bronzenen Gürtelbleche tatsächlich zu Frauenbestattungen gehörten, selbst wenn im loculo noch ein Antennengriffdolch (aus einer Männerbestattung) lag. Damit kann die lange Zeit vorherrschende Forschungsmeinung, die Gürtelbleche des Typs Capena würden im sabinischen Gebiet in Bestattungen von Männern vorkommen und nur in den Abruzzen in Frauengräbern, endgültig als widerlegt gelten.

12 Zu den für die relative Chronologie nutzbaren Überschneidungen in Bazzano: Weidig 2014, 629–640, Beilagen 10–13. In Bazzano, Fossa und anderen abruzzesischen Nekropolen, die eine lange Belegungszeit aufweisen, ist die Stratigraphie aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Grabstrukturen, auf dem Kopf gestellt: Die ältesten Gräber befinden sich weiter oben, da sie nur flach unter den Tumuli angelegt gewesen waren, die archaischen Gräber sind weiter eingetieft, die hellenistischen Bestattungen liegen am tiefsten, während die Kammergräber und die römischen Ziegelgräber dann wieder obererdig liegen.

13 In der Grabgrube des jüngeren Kriegergrabes 890 befand sich ein weiteres, allerdings beigabenloses Skelett (t. 855). Zum Fundkontext: Weidig 2014, 1182–1187, Taf. 308–315.

14 Zu den mehrhenkligen italischen Kelchen („calici tetransati“ und „calici a corolla“) vgl. die Fundliste in Weidig 2014, 510–524, Abb. 159 mit Lit. Zum Filtergefäß mit etruskischen Vgl.: Weidig 2014, 601–603, Abb. 188.

15 Zur sozialen Interpretation der Bestattungen: Weidig 2014, 747–748.

Abb. 3 – Bazzano (AQ), Grab 890 schneidet das ältere Grab 885. Das Filtergefäß und der vierhenklige Kelch mit Stengelfuß werden als eigene Beigaben wiederverwendet (überarbeitet nach Weidig 2014, Taf. 311, 314 und Fotos Verf.).

spätarchaischer Zeit zu erklären[16]. Merkwürdig aber bleibt, warum ausgerechnet die beiden älteren Keramikgefäße in der jüngeren Bestattung unterhalb des Bankettsets intentionell niedergelegt wurden.

Der fehlende Tote. Grenzfälle der Archäologie. Beigabengruben ohne Skelette

Seit den Ausgrabungen der Prunkbestattungen von Pitino di San Severino Marche und Tolentino hat man sich die Frage gestellt, warum in einigen der überaus reichen Grabgruben keine menschlichen Skelettreste gefunden wurden[17]. Auch beim neu entdeckten Grab von Corinaldo (AN)[18], einigen Gräbern aus Matelica (MC)[19], Morrovalle (MC)[20], Serravalle del Chienti (MC), loc. Taverne[21] sowie dem Zeptergrab (T. 8) und dem Waffengrab mit Pferdetrensen und figürlich verzierten Ritualgefäßen (T. 14) aus der Nekropole von Piazza d'Armi in Spoleto (PG) fehlt jegliche Spur des Leichnams. Das Phänomen reicht mit Grab 9 von San Giovanni in Compito (FC) sogar bis in die Emilia-Romagna[22], ist aber vor allem entlang des Apennins in Umbrien und in den Marken bekannt.

Auf dem ersten Blick könnte man meinen, dass es sich um Kenotaphe handelt, also um Scheingräber für Individuen, die vielleicht im Krieg oder in der Ferne verstarben[23]. Grab 410 von Bazzano ist z. B. so ein Kenotaph, dennoch wurden darin ein Antennengriffdolch und eine Lanzenspitze in üblicher Trachtlage beigegeben. Das Besondere ist, dass sich alle in der Grabgrube gefundenen Scherben zu einem einzigen großen Impastogefäß mit konischem Hals und vier Henkeln zuordnen lassen: das Gefäß wurde eindeutig rituell zerbrochen und die Scherben fein säuberlich um den vermeintlichen Toten gelegt[24].

Bei den Bestattungen ohne Skelette mit Beigabengruben aus den Marken und Umbrien handelt es sich aber um ein anderes Phänomen, das dem Bereich der Taphonomie zuzuordnen ist. Um zu verstehen, was möglicherweise mit dem Toten nach seiner Bestattung geschah, lohnt sich ein kurzer Blick auf die Gräber, in denen der Leichnam enthalten war (Abb. 4).

a) Leichnam liegt in der großen Beigabengrube (Typ Villa Clara)[25]
b) Leichnam liegt partiell auf Holzbohlen über einer kleinen Beigabengrube (Typ Spoleto Di Marco)[26]
c) Leichnam liegt auf Holzbohlen vollständig über der Beigabengrube (Typ Recanati)[27]
d) Leichnam liegt neben der Beigabengrube in höherer Schicht (Typ Matelica Crocifisso)[28]

16 Zum Wechsel der Orientierung der Gräber: Weidig 2014, 714–717, Abb. 244.

17 Zu Pitino, t. 31 mit Vgl.: Moretti Sgubini 1992; Sgubini Moretti 2022; Sena 2022. Die Gräber von Pitino di San Severino, loc. Monte Penna, sind Gegenstand der Doktorarbeit von Alessandra Sena (Neapel), der ich für weitere Informationen danke (Sena 2021). Zum reichen Wagengrab von Tolentino zuletzt Pauselli 2022 mit älterer Lit. Zur älteren Forschungsdiskussion vgl. Naso 2000, 164–168

18 Boschi 2020.

19 Matelica 2008

20 Morrovalle, contr. Burella, t. 10: Finocchi – Fazzini 2020, 57–63.

21 Serravalle del Chienti, loc. Taverne (wenige Kilometer von Colfiorito di Foligno, Umbrien entfernt): Frapiccini 2017, 78 Abb. 16; Frapiccini 2022.

22 Pozzi 2020, 763–764.

23 Zu den Kenotaphen in Bazzano: Weidig 2014, 46–47. Vgl. auch das Kenoptaph aus Capestrano, loc. Fontanelle, t. 42: Ferreri 2014, 281–284 mit Lit.

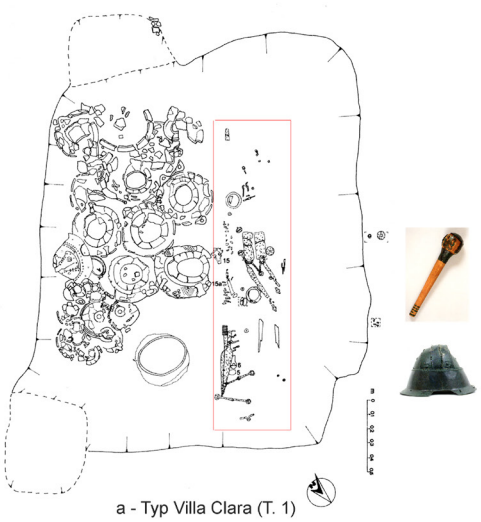
24 Zur rituell zerscherbten Keramik in Mittelitalien mit Fundlisten: Weidig 2014, 696–700; Weidig 2015b.

25 Matelica, Villa Clara, t. 1 (Langknochen und Zähne gefunden, 20–30 Jahre alt), Dat. 2. V. 7. Jh. v. Chr. Zum Grab: E. Biocco – T. Sabbatini in Matelica 2008, 72–81; Zu den Zeptern vgl. auch Weidig 2015c, 35 Kat. 4–5 mit Lit., Abb. 13.

26 In der Nekropole von Piazza d'Armi, ist der Typ fünfmal nachgewiesen: in zwei Männergräbern (t. 46, t. 48) aus der 1. H. 7. Jh. v. Chr. mit Waffen, Werkzeugen und Symposiumsgeschirr und in drei Frauengräbern (t. 3, t. 6, t. 49). (Spoleto 2014; Weidig 2015a, 59–61, Abb. 5; Weidig – Bruni 2015, 549–550, Abb. 6d. 8–10).

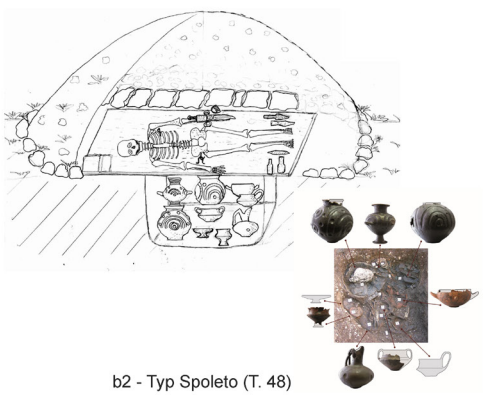
27 Recanati, loc. Fontenoce, t. : Finocchi et al. 2017, 140–155, Abb. 3–6.

28 Matelica, loc. Crocifisso, t. 182 (T. Sabbatini et al. in Matelica 2008, 199–244; Biocco 2018), Dat. letztes V. 7. Jh. v. Chr. Das Skelett des Kriegers mit einem Keulenkopfzepter und Dolch lag zusammen mit zwei Hundeskeletten neben der Beigabengrube in einer viel höheren Schicht. In der Beigabengrube befanden sich dagegen zwei Wagen, Panzerscheiben, zwei Helme, zwei Schwerter, zwei Antennengriffdolche, weitere Waffen, Feuerböcke und sehr viel Prunkkeramik aus Impasto. Sowohl die Beigabengrube als auch das eigentliche Lager des Bestatteten waren von

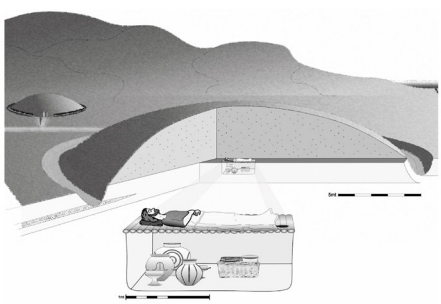


a - Typ Villa Clara (T. 1)

b1 - Typ Spoleto (T. 46)



b2 - Typ Spoleto (T. 48)



c - Typ Recanati (tomba in loc. Fontenoce

d - Typ Matelica Crocifisso (T. 182)

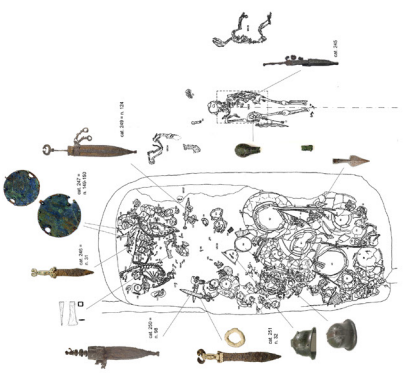


Abb. 4 – Position des Leichnams in den Prunkgräbern mit (b–d) und ohne (a) Beigabengrube. a: Typ Villa Clara (Matelica 2008, 73 Abb. 41 nachbearbeitet in Weidig 2015c); b: Typ Spoleto, Gräber 46 und 48 (Spoleto 2014, 39 Abb. E; Zeichnung Laura Scarinci); c: Typ Recanati (Finocchi et al. 2017, Abb. 4); d: Typ Matelica Crocifisso (Biocco 2018, Abb. 8; Matelica 2008, 201 Abb. 83 nachbearbeitet in Weidig 2015c).

Den glücklichen Fundumständen von Matelica, Recanati und Spoleto ist es zu verdanken, dass die italischen Prunkbestattungen mit Beigabengruben, aber ohne Skelettreste aus der orientalisierenden Zeit heute als das gedeutet werden können, was sie wahrscheinlich wirklich sind: eine post-funeräre, wohl unbeabsichtigte Zerstörung von Grabhügeln, bei der die obersten Schichten, die den Leichnam enthielten, im Laufe der Zeit komplett abgetragen worden sind, während die große, tiefer liegende Beigabengrube erhalten blieb.

Die Frage, wo und wann diese Grabstruktur das erste Mal verwendet wurde, ist noch Gegenstand der Forschung. Die ältesten gesicherten Nachweise einer kleinen separat unter dem Skelett angelegten Beigabengrube, in denen sich ausschließlich Impastogefäße für das Symposium befanden, stammen aus Gräbern von Spoleto, area Di Marco (Typ B), mit Steinkreisen, die in die Phase Spoleto 1A, wahrscheinlich noch in das 1. V. 7. Jh. v. Chr. zu datieren sind (Abb. 4b)[29]. Gleichzeitig oder etwas später treten große Beigabengruben in den älteren Gräbern des 7. Jh. v. Chr. von Matelica mit und ohne Kreisgraben auf, ohne dass allerdings die ursprüngliche Lage des Leichnams bekannt wäre[30].

Die Beigabengruben, bei denen der Leichnam entweder komplett darüber (Typ C) oder in einer höheren Schicht daneben (Typ D) liegt, erreichen ab der 2. Hälfte des 7. Jh. v. Chr. übergroße Dimensionen. Sie sind dann tatsächlich nur der höchsten sozialen Schicht vorbehalten, wie die überaus reichen Beigaben zeigen, die nun nicht nur Keramikgefäße sondern auch zweirädrige Wagen, Waffenausstattungen und Bronzegefäße enthalten, und in denen Statussymbole wie die prächtigen Keulenkopfzepter zu finden sind[31]. Diese Grabstruktur wird mit dem Ende der orientalisierenden Epoche aufgegeben. Eine Erinnerung daran, die wohl an die alte italische Tradition anknüpfen sollte, findet sich in den verschiedenen Beigabengruben der Tomba della Regina in Numana vom Ende des 6. bis zum Beginn des 5. Jh. v. Chr.[32]. Die Besonderheit, mehrere Gruben für eine Bestattung anzulegen, ist aber möglichweise hundert Jahre älter, wenn die neue Interpretation der Gräberpaare aus Pitino di San Severino zutrifft[33].

Antiker Grabraub, *damnatio memoriae* oder rituelle Handlungen: Die „Königsgräber" von Spoleto

Lässt sich das Fehlen der Skelette in den oben dargelegten Beispielen mit neuzeitlichen, wohl meist unbeabsichtigt erfolgten Eingriffen in die ursprüngliche Bestattung erklären, so gibt es in dieser Gruppe mindestens einen Fall von einer absichtlichen Zerstörung, die wohl noch in der Antike geschah: das Zeptergrab (T. 8) von Piazza d'Armi in Spoleto, aus einem der wichtigsten Gräberfelder der orientalisierenden Zeit, das in den letzten Jahrzehnten in Umbrien entdeckt wurde[34].

Ausgerechnet die Bestattung, in der die vier Zepter lagen, die sowohl in ihrer Machart als in ihrer Ikonographie zu den wichtigsten Statussymbolen der etruskischen und italischen Elite Mittelitaliens gehören und mit ihrer Verbreitung deutlich die Verbindungen der großen Familien der Zeit aufzeigen, wurde sonst zum größten Teil zerstört und ausgeraubt vorgefunden (Abb. 5b). Die in den Verfüllschichten entdeckten Fragmente eines Antennengriffdolches mit Elfenbeingriff und Silbernägelchen, das figürlich verzierte Elfenbeinbruchstück einer Elfenbeinpyxis und prunkvoll verzierte

einem großen Kreisgraben umgeben und dürften beide unter einem Tumulus gelegen haben.

29 Weidig 2015a; Weidig – Bruni 2015.

30 Matelica 2008; Biocco 2018.

31 Weidig 2015c.

32 Zur Tomba della Regina: Landolfi 2001; Bardelli – Volmer 2020. Bardelli – Milazzo – Vollmer 2022.

33 Möglicherweise gehörten die t. 14–15 und die t. 16–17 zu je einem Grabkomplex. Vgl. Landolfi – Moretti Sgubini 2008; Sena 2021; Sena 2022; Sgubini Moretti 2022.

34 Allgemein: Spoleto 2014; Weidig 2015a. Zu den Kleinkinder- und Säuglingsgräbern, die Statussymbole der politischen, militärischen und religiösen Führungsschicht enthielten, die im Falle des sog. „piccolo principe" aus Grab 17 sogar kindgerechte Miniaturausgaben darstellen, wie die kleinen Panzerscheiben aus Bronze und der für ein imaginäres Symposium bestimmte kleine bronzene Kantharos: Weidig 2015a; Weidig 2017; Weidig – Bruni 2018. Zu den Zeptern: Weidig 2015c; Weidig 2019; Weidig 2020. Zu den Frauenschmuckscheiben: Weidig 2021, 158–164.

Ritualkeramik aus Impasto beweisen, dass die Bestattung zu den großen italischen Elitengräbern gehörte, wie sie in Matelica, Pitino di San Severino, Tolentino, Campovalano und Terni zum Vorschein kamen[35].

Drei der vier Zepterknäufe lagen zusammen mit zwei Lanzen am äußersten Grubenrand und könnten von den Räubern übersehen worden sein. Oder war es Absicht, hatte man etwa Angst vor der Rache des Grabinhabers und nahm die Zepter deswegen nicht mit? Es gibt kaum Hinweise darauf, wann die Zerstörung und Ausraubung stattfand. In der Nähe sollen hellenistische Schwarzfirnis-Scherben gelegen haben, ein Zusammenhang zum Grab kann aber nicht nachgewiesen werden.

Zudem verwundert der hohe Zerstörungsgrad der Bestattung im Gegensatz zu den anderen Gräbern. Selbst die prunkvoll verzierte Impastokeramik wurde so stark zerscherbt vorgefunden, dass kein einziges Gefäß mehr vollständig rekonstruiert werden konnte[36].

Wie der ursprüngliche Inhalt der zerstörten Bestattung ausgesehen haben dürfte, wird uns von dem benachbarten Grab 14 mit großer Beigabengrube und Kreisgraben vermittelt (Abb. 5c): Die Ritualkeramik besteht aus großen bauchigen Ollae und Amphoren mit Deckeln, die mit Doppelpferdeplastiken und Vogelfiguren geschmückt sind – ganz so wie die zerscherbten Gefäße aus Grab 8. Die Bestattung war zum Teil in der Mitte der Grabgrube angegraben, wo die Steinabdeckung fehlte, die sich sonst an den Rändern massiv erhalten hatte. Während die eisernen Waffen, die in den oberen Schichten lagen, wie der Antennengriffdolch und mehrere Lanzenspitzen mehrfach zerbrochen waren, blieben die Gegenstände, die seitlich unter den Steinblöcken lagen, wie die beiden eisernen Trensen, das Eisenbeil, das Messer sowie die Situla und der Bronzekessel ausgezeichnet erhalten[37].

Das dritte recht stark zerstörte Grab, die Tomba A/1982, ist das älteste Prunkgrab in der Reihe und wurde bereits zwischen dem Ende des 8. Jh. und in der 1. Hälfte des 7. Jh. v. Chr., also ca. eine Generation vor dem Zeptergrab angelegt (Abb. 5a)[38]. Es befand sich zwar nicht in der 2009 freigelegten Fläche aber ganz in der Nähe der kleinen Familiennekropole, und könnte als die Bestattung gedeutet werden, in der der Dynastiegründer bestattet gewesen war[39]. Trotz der zu einem unbekannten Zeitpunkt erfolgten Zerstörung, fand man neben einer eisernen Lanzenspitze, bronzenen Armreifen, bronzenen Navicellafibeln mit zwei Seitenknöpfen und vielen großen Bronzeringen unbekannter Funktion auch noch ein bronzenes etruskisches Räuchergefäß und Keramikgefäße, die Ähnlichkeiten zu Formen aus Spoleto und zu Impastotassen aus der Umgebung des Bolsenasees aufweisen. Der wichtigste Fund aber ist ein dreibeiniges Tischchen aus Bronze in Durchbruchverzierung, das seinen besten Vergleich im etruskischen Prunkgrab von Sassi Grossi bei Roselle besitzt[40].

Wie können diese Befunde erklärt werden? Eine unabsichtliche Zerstörung durch landwirtschaftliche Tätigkeiten ist zumindest für die Gräber 8 und 14 ausgeschlossen, da es sich um gezielte Eingriffe handelt. Für die These eines bereits in der Antike erfolgten Grabraubes würde das Fehlen von Bronzegefäßen im Grab 8 sprechen, die Zepter wären dann übersehen worden, da sie so nah am Grubenrand lagen. Warum hat man dann aber weder Grab 14 noch Grab A/1982 komplett beraubt und den großen Bronzekessel und die Bronzesitula bzw. den massiven bronzenen Dreifuß und das Räuchergefäß zurückgelassen, wenn doch die Suche nach Bronzen einer der Hauptgründe für eine antike Beraubung gewesen

35 Weidig 2020 mit Lit.

36 Es handelt sich vor allem um Grabkeramik, wie die große mit Reitern gestempelte Olla aus Impasto (Spoleto 2014, Abb. S. 98–99; Weidig 2014a, 64–65, Abb. 7). Daneben kommen Vogelplastiken aus rotem und schwarzem Impasto vor, die z. T. mit Zinnfolien verziert sind.

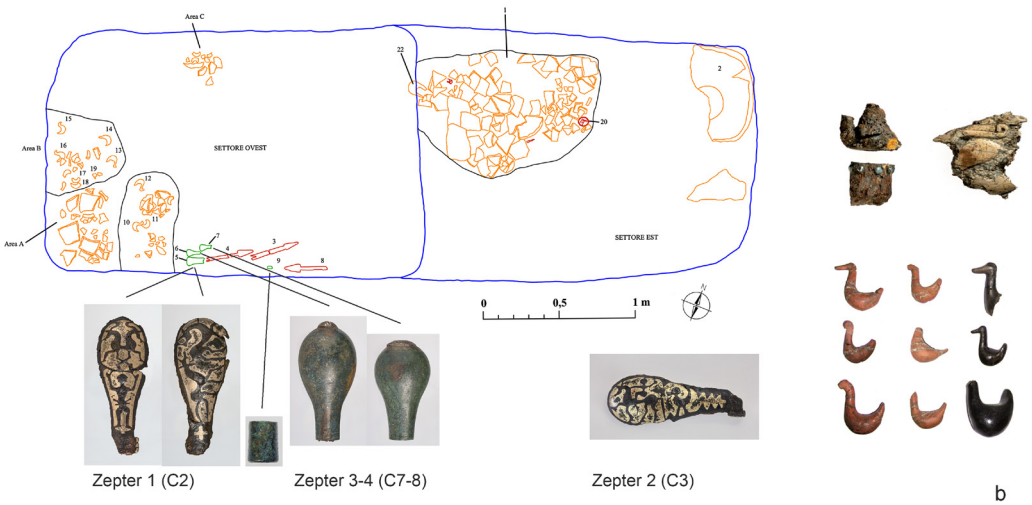
37 Zum Grab 14: Spoleto 2014, 75–78; Weidig 2015a. Die Beigaben aus Grab 14 wurden 2021 vollständig von Giacomo Perna (Rom) restauriert. Darunter befand sich auch die größte im Apennin bekannte Olla aus Impasto mit Furchenverzierungund einem großen figürlich verzierten Deckel.

38 Zum Grab A/1982: Manconi 2010, 197–202; Spoleto 2014, 21–22; Weidig 2015a, 48–49.

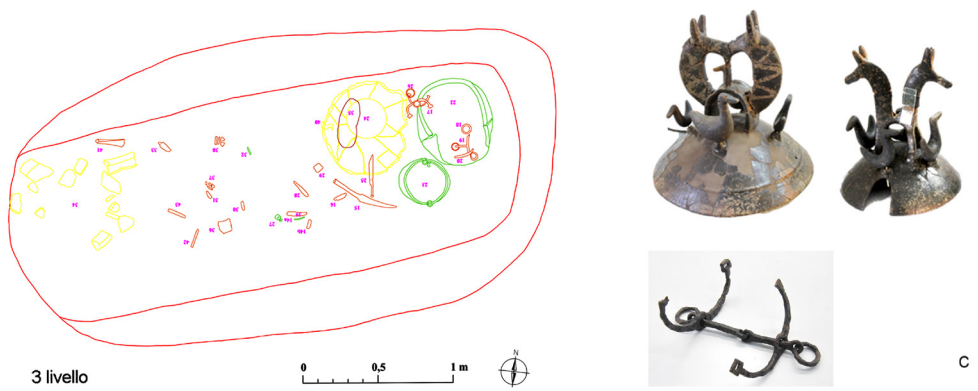
39 Zur Hypothese der Dynastie: Weidig 2020, 23–24, Abb. 1.

40 Cygielman et al. 2020, 607–609, Abb. 16–18.

1. Generation - Tomba A/1982 (Ende 8. - Anfang 7. Jh. v. Chr.)



2. Generation - Tomba 8 (um Mitte 7. Jh. v. Chr.)



3. Generation - Tomba 14 (2. Hälfte 7. - Anfang 6. Jh. v. Chr.)

Abb. 5 – Die ge- und zerstörten «Königsgräber» von Spoleto mit Auswahl der erhalten gebliebenen Beigaben. a: Tomba A/1982 (Manconi 2010; Spoleto 2014); b: Tomba 8 (Zeptergrab) (Weidig 2019; Weidig 2015c); c: Tomba 14 (Spoleto 2014).

sein dürfte[41]? Gegen die These eines profanen Grabraubes spricht außerdem, dass keines der wohl noch sichtbaren Tumuligräber mit Steinkreisen im südlich gelegenen Areal Di Marco in der Antike beschädigt wurde.

Auch ein anderes Szenario wäre vorstellbar, das allerdings bislang aufgrund fehlender Parallelen in Mittelitalien nur schwer zu belegen ist: die absichtliche Zerstörung von Grab 8 und die zumindest versuchte partielle Zerstörung von Grab 14 und vielleicht auch von Grab A/1982 aufgrund einer *damnatio memoriae*. Sollte vielleicht das Andenken an eine aristokratische Familie ausgelöscht werden, die spätestens im 7. Jh. v. Chr. in Spoleto eine Dynastie zu gründen versuchte? Auffällig ist allerdings, dass die reiche Bestattung des letzten männlichen Sprosses der Familie (Grab 17), dem mit 9–12 Monaten verstorbenen „piccolo principe", unberaubt vorgefunden wurde[42].

Ein drittes, weniger spektakuläres Szenario wäre ebenfalls denkbar: die Aufsuchung der älteren Bestattungen im 5.–4. Jh. v. Chr. im Rahmen von profanen oder sogar religiösen Handlungen, die mit den in der Nähe entdeckten Gebäuderesten mit Dachziegeln in Verbindung stehen könnten[43]. Warum gezielt die älteren „Königsgräber"[44] angegraben wurden, lässt sich allein über den archäologischen Befund nicht feststellen. Dass dies noch in der Antike geschah, ist allerdings durch die Scherben aus hellenistischer und römischer Zeit, die verteilt auf dem Gräberfeld gefunden wurden, sehr wahrscheinlich.

In Spoleto scheint der Versuch einer Dynastiebildung im 7. Jh. v. Chr. nur eine kurze Episode gewesen zu sein, wohl, weil die Kinder und erbberichtigten Nachfolger frühzeitig verstarben, und damit die Erinnerung daran mit ihren Traditionen unterbrachen. Ganz anders in Borgorose, wo das Andenken an eine wohl besondere Frau, zur Aufschüttung eines Monumentalhügels mit vielen Nachbestattungen führte. Die echten und vermeintlichen Ahnen konnten nicht nur instrumentalisiert werden, um politische Machtansprüche zu demonstrieren, sondern dürften im Jenseitsglauben und als überirdische Schutzmächte eine wichtige Rolle für die antike Gesellschaft gespielt haben.

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41 Zusammenfassend zum Grabraub in der Vorgeschichte: Kümmel 2009.

42 Spoleto 2014, 50–54; Weidig 2015a, 67–71, Abb. 8.

43 N. Bruni, Area strada. In: Bruni et al. 2014, 298–301, Abb. 3.

44 Der gewählte Begriff könnte insbesondere in der von der theoretischen Diskussion zu „Fürstensitzen" und „Fürstengräbern" geprägten mitteleuropäischen archäologischen Forschung als unangemessen aufgefasst werden. In Mittelitalien sind allerdings Könige im früheisenzeitlichen Etrurien und im Latium nicht nur im archäologischen Fundspektrum auszumachen (z. B. Bartoloni 2003; Guidi 2008, 118), sondern sind auch schriftlich überliefert, so dass deren Existenz ebenfalls in ähnlich ausgestatteten Prunkgräbern in Umbrien und in den Marken angenommen werden darf. Für diese Hypothese sprechen nicht zuletzt die ähnlichen Zepterformen (Weidig 2015c, 27–28 mit Lit.).

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Landscape Processes, Taphonomy and the Reconstruction of Tomb Architecture and Mortuary Practices at Protohistoric Crustumerium (Rome)

Barbara Belelli Marchesini, Peter A. J. Attema, Walter B. Pantano, Paola Catalano

Introduction

This paper takes into account all factors that affected the preservation of tombs and their inventories in the burial grounds of ancient Crustumerium, a Latin settlement 13 km north of Rome, inhabited between the 9th and 5th c. BC[1] (Fig. 1A). Its aim is to highlight the combined effect of two main processes;

a) the severe erosion of the topsoil and the underlying soft volcanic bedrock caused by centuries of ploughing that has profoundly affected the preservation of tomb architecture, i.e. landscape processes;

b) post-depositional processes affecting organic materials (wood, textiles, human bone) and inorganic materials (pottery, metal) in the tombs as a result of flooding, collapse and the acidity of the soil, i.e. taphonomy.

The burial grounds at Crustumerium are characterized by different tomb types that over time were affected by these processes in different ways. Preservation of both organic and inorganic materials depended primarily on whether the funerary space was filled with soil immediately after burial had taken place, as in the case of Iron Age trench tombs, or was left empty of soil, as in the case of chamber tombs. In addition, we found that, due to local variations in the quality of the local bedrock, there were considerable differences in the degree of preservation among tombs of the same type. Recording and understanding this range of factors affecting the preservation conditions within tombs is fundamental for the reconstruction of Crustumerium's original tomb architecture, tomb inventories and the eventual interpretation of the mortuary practices at the site.

The settlement of Crustumerium and the burial grounds surrounding it, are located on a complex of dissected low hills next to the Tiber river plain at 90 to 120 m above sea level. The hills consist of a thick series of pyroclastic volcanic rocks, largely originating from the Sabatini volcanoes, that overlie prevolcanic fluvial deposits[2]. The volcanic rocks range from well-consolidated tuffs, mostly ignimbrites, formed by glowing avalanches or pyroclastic flows to loose ash fall deposits. In the Crustumerium area, the latter type of deposits prevail over tuffs, due to Crustumerium's rather distal position relative to the volcanic regions of the Monti Sabatini and Alban Hills. The porous tuff rock weathers easily, giving rise to the development of the typically reddish brown top soils found at Crustumerium and in its surroundings. After the settlement's abandonment around 500 BC, these soils were subject to substantial erosion due to two main cycles of intensive ploughing. One occurred during the Roman period, from the fifth century BC to the fifth century AD; the other is linked to the post-First World War period when heavy machinery was used to deep-plough the soils, resulting in subsoil disruption and massive surface transport. Our knowledge of landscape and archaeology is the result of multidisciplinary research conducted since 2001 by Italian, Dutch, Finnish and German researchers. Such research was accelerated by an extensive collaboration between

1 See for a general introduction, Crustumerium 2016. According to the ancient sources, Crustumerium was from its very start under the influence of Rome until it was conquered by the Romans around 500 BC after which its lands were added to the Roman territory to form the first tribus rustica around 495 BC. After this date the settlement was abandoned.

2 On the geology of Crustumerium, see Sevink et al. 2020.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 49–63.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16916

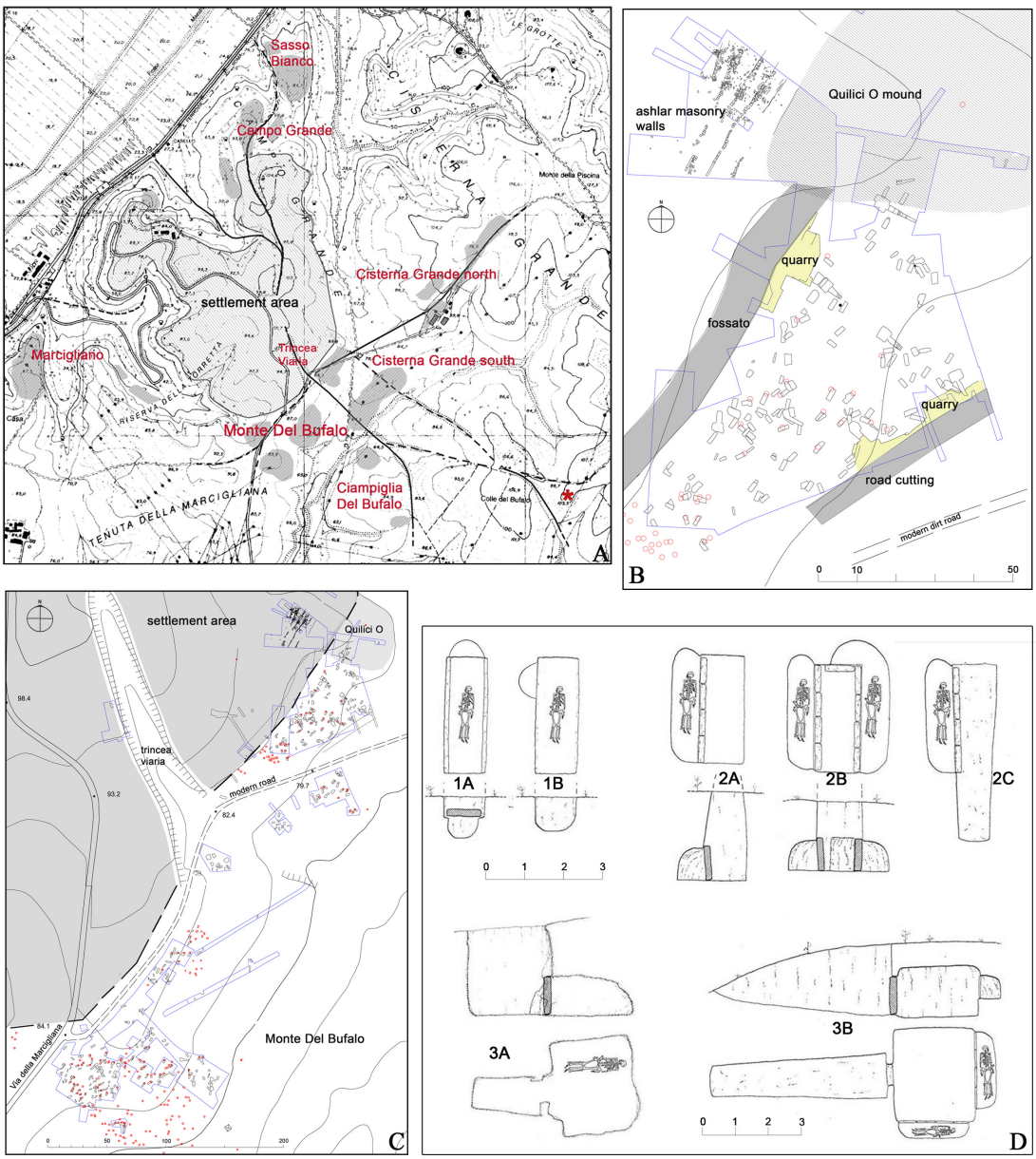

Fig. 1 – A) Crustumerium: distribution of the burial grounds around the settlement area; B) Map of the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground; the red dots indicate the robbers' pits; C) Map of the North-Eastern district of the Monte Del Bufalo burial area and the settlement's infrastructural works; D) Orientalizing architectural tomb types documented at Crustumerium: trench tombs with an axial (1A) or lateral (1B) niche; loculus tombs with a shaft (2A-B) or a corridor (2C) entrance; chamber tombs with a shaft (3A) or dromos (3B) entrance.

the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma and the Groningen Institute of Archaeology, within the People and the State research project[3].In the latter project, the effects of landscape changes were studied on the landscape scale covering the settlement, the surrounding burial grounds and the rural landscape, but in a general way. In the framework of the present paper, we concentrate in greater detail on the burial grounds of Monte Del Bufalo. Here, ca. 400 tombs, partly robbed and partly intact, have been documented since the first formal excavation in 1987. The tombs cover Latial periods IIB2 to the end of the Archaic period. In the Early Iron Age, the Monte Del Bufalo cemetery contained simple trench tombs dug only shallowly into the bedrock. In the Orientalizing period, more architecturally elaborate, and at times very deep tombs occur, either with a niche for the grave goods or with a loculus holding the deceased as well as the grave goods. These tombs were accessible through a deep rectangular shaft. Around 630 BC, chamber tombs were introduced that remained in use throughout the Archaic period[4]. In the next two paragraphs, we first comment on the effects of landscape erosion on the funerary landscape, discuss the differential preservation of the tomb types mentioned, and look at natural post-depositional processes active within the tombs. After that we will discuss what can be said about treatment of the body based on osteological observations, objects and the funerary space, despite the adverse natural conditions for their preservation. Finally, we will look into evidence for human-induced post-depositional changes in tombs and for post-funerary mortuary practices.

Landscape erosion and the reconstruction of the burial ground

Erosion on account of agricultural activities has substantially changed the morphology of the funerary landscape of the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground. The overall effect is evident from plough scratches in the bedrock directly below the plough soil and particularly from the exposure of the lower parts of originally much deeper tombs. Based on our observations, we estimate that the tuff bedrock in some places may have been lowered by up to 2 m. Plough erosion will therefore have erased all above ground tomb architecture that remained in the landscape after Crustumerium's abandonment, like earthen mounds and grave markers. It will also have erased paths and fences that once marked the boundaries of the burial ground and the tomb clusters of family groups within them. From our recent excavations of a huge artificial mound present in the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground, erected around 500 BC (for its location see Fig. 1B), we know that small mounds, in Italian 'tumuletti', existed. The huge mound has uniquely preserved part of the original funerary landscape showing how individual Early Iron Age tombs were protected by small heaps of soil overlapping each other (tumuletti), and how tombs were marked by heaps of selected stones, or were fenced. The use of proper grave markers made of tuff is documented from the Early Iron Age by scattered or reused exemplars: several of these have been found in the fills or closing systems of graves in the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground. How the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground may have been spatially articulated can be gleaned from the burial grounds at nearby Fidenae offering a good parallel from a contemporary cemetery[5].

At Crustumerium, the distribution of tombs, shown on the overview map, highlights empty strips of soil in between clusters of tombs (Fig. 1B–C). In the case these empty strips

3 See Attema – Bronkhorst 2020. The inhabited area was systematically surveyed and investigated with geophysical methods and by trial trenches. This showed that features only survive when cut in the bedrock well out of reach of the plough or if covered by colluvium, accumulated in valleys or at the foot of the slopes. Examples of preserved negative features are the broad and deep fossato defending the Southern side of the settlement, the main access road going up the urban plateau on two opposite sides and a number of V shaped ditches that were part of the drainage system of the settlement, and quarries. Direct evidence of buildings inside the settlement area has rarely been encountered even though domestic pottery and roof-tiles abound.

4 For a recent overview see Belelli Marchesini 2020.

5 The evidence consists of three aligned trench tombs from the Orientalizing period included in a circle of tuff chunks (di Gennaro 2006, 231). For an overview of the delimitation of pre-Roman tombs and burial areas in Italy, see Della Fina 2015.

acommodated paths and trees, all traces thereof will have been lost. The alignment of tombs and the distribution of tomb clusters in delimited burial areas does, however, suggest that a division of the burial ground into lots was implemented already at an early stage. There are two reasons why we can assume that the small groups of Orientalizing and Archaic tombs that we have documented were fenced. Direct evidence is formed by the presence of slightly curvilinear slabs found in the fillings of later tombs. These slabs were originally placed upright and embedded in the soil. They would have lined a family's funerary property[6]. Such properties would have grown overtime. To groups of initially two to three early tombs, others were added, often cut at different depths. Eventually, chamber tombs, potentially accommodating several generations, were added, filling up the area of a family's property that, being a restricted space in between other clusters, could become fully occupied and used.

While the physical traces of the more subtle infrastructural elements can only be reconstructed hypothetically, we have good archaeological evidence for the presence of major contemporary infrastructural works in the burial ground cut deeply into the bedrock. Geophysical prospections and excavations brought the course of the defensive ditch (fossato) of the settlement to light, that formed the boundary between the settlement and the burial grounds, as well as roads linked to the settlement's main access road (Fig. 1A). Excavations in 2013 produced evidence for the presence of a hollow road, dividing the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground in two large districts that were subdivided into smaller areas, as described above (Fig. 1B) [7].

Factors accounting for differences in the preservation of tomb types at Crustumerium

In addition to plough erosion, illicit excavation is another factor in the degree of preservation of tombs at Crustumerium (Figs. 1C, 2A). The combined effect has had consequences for half of the tombs, with erosion responsible for about one-fifth of the cases. Erosion especially affects the Early Iron Age tombs as they are rather superficial trench tombs (Fig. 2B). The small number of them, so far 28 in total, is partly the consequence of these adverse circumstances. Many of the tombs have been ploughed out. However, we must also keep in mind that not all members of the community were entitled to a formal burial in this early period of the burial ground. For the subsequent Orientalizing period, the effect of erosion on the preservation of the tombs is variable due to the different depths to which tombs may be preserved. In the case of the shallower Orientalizing trench tombs, the niche for the pottery may be exposed while the closing system and pottery itself may be ploughed out. In the case of loculus tombs, erosion may have completely removed the ceiling of the loculus (Fig. 2C) and damaged its closing slabs. Damage by erosion and illicit excavation may result in misunderstandings about tomb architecture and chronology[8].

The floors of some Orientalizing tombs were found very near the bedrock surface, only just preserving human skeletal remains and grave gifts, while others were very deep, up to 4 m below the surface. We do, however, acknowledge the fact that differences in depths of the tombs in the Orientalizing period may also reflect the fact that tombs were originally dug to different depths. This is often attributed to variable investments in labour expenditure[9], since tomb architecture was a way to express wealth and social power. We think, however, that pragmat-

6 Such slabs may have been used for encircling the burial area as well as for supporting a tumulus.

7 Noorda – Attema 2020, 77–82.

8 This is the case with interpretations of robbed loculus tombs, that may appear as a couple of parallel trench tombs divided by a dry masonry wall; on the other hand, in case of the loss of the niche for the pottery, trench tombs may be considered late examples of tombs lacking a grave inventory.

9 For the estimation of energy expenditure in the digging of loculus and chamber tombs, see Willemsen 2014, 163–167.

Fig. 2 – Effects of ploughing and illicit excavation on the preservation of tombs: A) Filling of a robber's pit (black spot) cut through the trench tomb MDB 268; B) The ploughed out Early Iron Age male tomb MDB 339; C) The male loculus tomb MDB 377, once provided with a ceiling, but eroded to the level of the deposition.

ic considerations may also have played a role. The first consideration is the variable quality of the bedrock caused by the possible stratification of several inclined layers of different hardness. This stratification can change from one place of the burial area to the other over quite small distances. Gravediggers would excavate down until they cut through a hard and compact layer that could serve as a safe ceiling while carving the underground loculi or chambers in the softer layers below. A second consideration that would have played a role was an efficient exploitation of the spatially limited burial areas, prompting gravediggers to cut tombs at different depths to avoid mutual damage, as for instance in the case of elaborate loculus and chamber tombs. These digging principles provided the necessary stability to the underground and the above ground funerary environment and thus are essentially safety measures. Differential preservation of tombs was also dictated by landscape morphology, since plough erosion may have levelled originally undulating terrain. This explains why we may come across very deeply and very shallowly preserved tombs of the same typology at only a short distance from each other. Finally we note how erosion of the bedrock may provoke the collapse of the ceiling of chamber tombs, filling up the funerary space in areas where the bedrock on top becomes too thin to withstand the weight of agricultural machinery.

Natural post-depositional changes in tombs/funerary contexts of the different periods

In this section we look at post-depositional processes affecting the preservation of the human remains and artefacts in the tombs at Crustumerium. The friability of the volcanic rock and the acidity of the soil are the main causes for the poor preservation of the human skeletal remains, the organic materials, such as wood and textiles, and the metal and ceramic artefacts. We will discuss the adverse effects for the prevailing tomb types of the Early Iron Age, the Orientalizing period and the Archaic period respectively. For each period, we give a description of the tomb type and present examples of post-depositional changes.

Early Iron Age tombs are shallow trenches of small dimensions, sometimes roughly cut into the topsoil and only slightly deepened into the bedrock. Depositions are accompanied by no more than five to six pottery shapes that are found along and on top of the skeletons. The poor preservation of the body and the preservation of these tombs in most cases makes it difficult to arrive at a full reconstruction of the original burial context. Sometimes we find alignments of small tuff chunks on the sides and on top of the deposition, suggesting intentional filling of the trench and delimitation of the deposition within the grave. In general, traces of organic remains are rarely preserved and the main information about the treatment of the body and the tomb structures must derive from osteological analysis.

Tomb MDB339 is an example of a badly eroded trench belonging to a man aged 25–35 years and buried with a dagger and a spearhead (Fig. 2B). Pottery items had been almost completely ploughed out. The skeleton is incomplete and is not articulated, but its transverse compression suggests that the body most probably had been wrapped in a sudarium. The spread out position of the bones indicates that decomposition happened in an empty space, so the body had not been covered with earth. Additionally, there are no traces of a wooden container. In this case, we may assume that the trench had been protected with wooden boards and covered up with a heap of soil or tuff chunks, based on the evidence from other cemeteries in Latium.

Orientalizing tombs have a more complex architectural layout compared to the Early Iron Age tombs and the natural erosion of the bedrock plays an important role in the preservation of funerary contexts. We discern two types: loculus tombs and trench tombs.

Loculus tombs consist of a shaft and a lateral loculus, or sometimes two loculi in lateral position (Fig. 1D: 2A–B). It is an architectural model adopted from the Etruscan and Faliscan areas. The loculus houses both the deposition and the grave inventory and is carefully closed off from the shaft by means of upright slabs or blocks (Fig. 2C) that lean against the vertical wall of the shaft. The corpse and artefacts in

Fig. 3 – A) Loculus tomb MDB 349 with partially preserved ceiling housing a male deposition once inside a tree-trunk; B) Example of a loculus tomb eroded to the level of the closing slabs; cracks in the bedrock indicate a collapsed ceiling; C–D) Closing system and deposition of the Orientalizing trench tomb MDB 365, provided with a niche for the pottery.

Fig. 4 – A) Interior of chamber tomb MDB 321 with a collapsed ceiling causing the displacement of the human bones as well as of the rooftiles that originally closed the lateral loculi; B) Detail of a deposition from the same tomb.

this open space undergo the combined effects of flooding, which causes displacement of the artefacts from their original position, and the formation of clay deposits embedding them. As with niches, the flaking and progressive collapse of the ceiling of a loculus (Fig. 3B) affects the stability of the closing system and allows substantial infiltration of soil from the shaft.

As a rule, the shafts were probably completely filled after the burial, since this tomb model is usually meant for individual depositions. There are a few examples of tombs where shafts have been reopened for an additional loculus on the opposite side of the shaft. In some cases we have evidence for grave markers and huge tuff chunks at the bottom of the filling that, combined with the tapering section of the walls of the shaft, suggests that some of them were left empty and were covered at ground level with wooden platforms surmounted by stones and soil. So far we have not performed specialised soil analysis to confirm such a hypothesis. The tombs were definitely marked and visible at ground level, since they rarely cut each other, even when closely packed. In some cases shafts appear to have been partially reopened and used as trenches for subsequent depositions of members of the same family. Human skeletal remains are very poorly preserved and often only a thin black layer survives, suggesting that the bodies were placed on a wooden bier or buried inside a tree-trunk (Figs. 2C and 3A); clear evidence of tree-trunks and lids is however exceptional. The use of wooden coffins was rare since only two Orientalizing tombs yielded iron nails.

In the earliest *Orientalizing trench tombs* we find that corpses often must have been buried in tree trunks and that the floors of the trenches were sometimes deepened to accommodate the deposition. The latter was protected by horizontal slabs held in place by a lateral indentation of the walls of the tomb or by tuff chunks (Figs. 1D:1A and 3C–D); in later tombs the protection of horizontal slabs is missing. Niches for the pottery are mainly carved on the short side of the trench and beyond the head of the deceased and less frequently on the long side and beside the head; they are closed off with tuff blocks or chunks, sometimes resting on the deposition itself. The cracking up and subsequent collapse of the horizontal slabs and the closing system of the niche may severely damage the skeleton. Damage to the artefacts in the niche is caused by the flaking and collapse of the ceiling, followed by infiltration of ground from the trench's filling. Throughout the Orientalizing and Archaic period a few simple trench tombs are documented in the cemetery.

In *chamber tombs* damage is mostly caused by erosion of both the ceiling and the entrance wall, causing collapses (Fig. 4A), flooding and infiltration of soil from the filling of the entrance, at Crustumerium either a shaft or (stepped) dromos. Major collapses occur when chambers are excavated below earlier tombs. Where depositions inside loculi are sometimes disturbed by the collapse of the closing system (Fig. 4B), the preservation of depositions on the floor are directly affected by post-depositional events. The corpses found in chamber tombs also appear to have been wrapped in sudaria. Scanty traces of dark soil suggest that the burials on the floor of the chamber were placed either on wooden biers, that may have been used to transport the bodies, or inside tree trunks. In the Archaic period, we have a possible example of a wooden bed supported by tuff props. Fragments of iron nails suggesting the use of coffins have been found in one tomb only.

The osteological analysis of the human remains presented below provides further insight into the conditions under which burial took place (in an open or filled space) in the various tomb types discussed. Such a discussion requires an analysis of the taphonomical processes affecting the preservation of the human bodies in the tombs of Crustumerium.

Taphonomy and human skeletal remains

The preservation of human skeletal remains at Crustumerium depends on the funerary environment and architecture of the different periods and is affected by various factors. Above, we have already discussed to some extent the circumstantial evidence for the use of sudaria

Fig. 5A

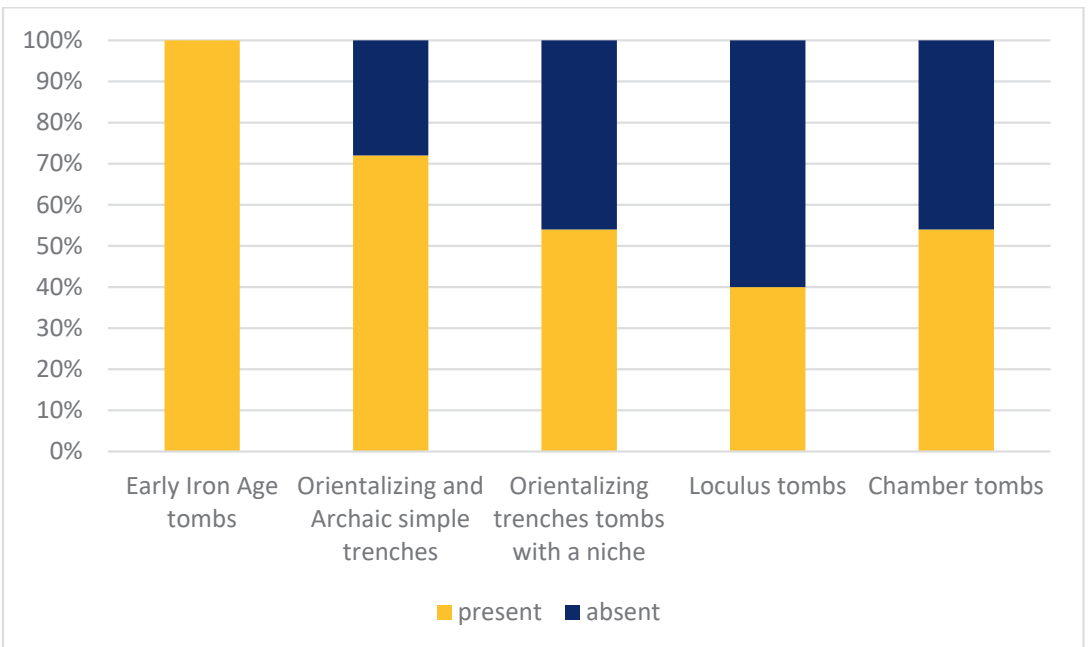

Fig. 5B

Fig. 5 – Osteological analysis: A) State of conservation of bones; B) Evidence for shrouds.

to wrap the body, and oak trunks and coffins to contain the deceased. We also mentioned the use of biers placed on the floor in the context of chamber tombs and loculi closed off by tiles. Here we go further into the topic of the treatment of the body of the Early Iron Age, Orientalizing and Archaic periods, with a focus on the osteological remains. We take into account a sample of 164 depositions for which we have comparable excavation and laboratory data. The depositions belong to 127 tombs from the North-Eastern part of the necropolis, next to the artificial mound labelled site QO (Fig. 1B). These tombs are currently being prepared for full publication. They were excavated between 2008 and 2017 and date to between Latial period III and the 6th century BC[10].

The poor preservation of the skeletal remains may be ascribed to three different types of processes; physical, chemical and biotic. Physical degradation processes acting on the bone cause micro cracking and fragmentation due to pressure exerted by sediment weight, exposure of the bone to atmospheric agents (water) and variations in temperature. The chemical damage is especially evident from the dissolution of the cortex of the bone, generally in line with the characteristics of the sediment (such as pH of the soil and drainage patterns). Lastly, biotic degradation, caused by plants, animals or humans is evident from heterogeneous traces having both physical and chemical characteristics. For example, fungi and bacteria dissolve calcium phosphates (chemical process) and at the same time produce microlesions causing erosion (physical process).

While the preservation of the skeletal remains in the tombs of Crustumerium is poor across all periods, the degree to which they are preserved is heavily influenced by the type of funerary architecture that forms the environment of the body's decomposition (i.e. filled or empty space). The classification of the state of preservation to which we refer in fig. 5A is comprised of four evaluation levels of the condition of the bones upon excavation[11]: good (intact bones, measurable without restoring), mediocre (partly deteriorated epiphysis and/or fractured bones, some of them measurable after restoring), bad (all deteriorated epiphysis and/or fractured bones, only occasionally measurable after restoring), very bad (the bones fall apart during removal).

According to the taphonomic markers recognizable on the bones, it can be concluded that the decomposition of all the depositions in the sample from the Early Iron Age to the Archaic period took place in an empty space; with the exception of six simple trench tombs[12]. Lacking any form of grave inventory, these tombs are datable between the late Orientalizing and the Archaic period (or even later) and likely pertained to individuals of low social status.

The generally very bad state of preservation of the depositions in empty space in the loculus tombs and chamber tombs (Fig. 5A) is primarily caused by the crushing and subsequent fragmentation of the human remains caused by the collapse of the ceiling of the structure and / or the exposure of the bones to natural agents, such as flooding, roots and animals.

Another factor to be considered is the presence of wooden structures (biers, but also stretchers that may have been used for transport of the body and as a support base for deposition) that, in combination with high humidity, favoured the proliferation of micro-organisms (fungi and bacteria) having negative influences on the physical-chemical composition of the bone tissue.

The presence of wooden containers, largely tree trunks, is putatively responsible for the loss of 22% of the depositions in the trenches of the Early Iron Age and the Orientalizing period: progressive wood rot would provoke the collapse of the sediment on top, causing the crushing and the fragmentation of the bones.

In the few aforementioned examples of simple trenches attributed to the most recent phas-

10 Depositions have been divided according to funerary architecture and chronology as follows: Early Iron Age trench tombs (5); Late Orientalizing and Archaic simple trench tombs (12); Orientalizing trench tombs provided with a niche for the pottery (43); loculus tombs (63); chamber tombs (40).

11 Canci –Minozzi 2015.

12 MDB tombs 253, 261, 265, 285, 315, 393.

es of the necropolis, the slightly better physical-chemical condition of the bone is due to its decomposition in a filled space: the deceased were directly covered with soil that, in spite of the latter's high acidity, did not lead to the formation of a humid environment damaging the conservation of the skeletal remains.

Despite the bad preservation of bones, it is possible to state that bodies were usually buried in a supine position. An exception is the lateral and crouched position of the male individual in Tomb MDB 265, lacking a grave inventory and probably dating to the latest phase of the preroman burial ground.

The use of bandages or shrouds to wrap the deceased (Fig. 5B), which happened to individuals of both sexes and all age classes, is recorded in all of the tombs of the Early Iron Age. This custom is also widely attested in the tombs of the Orientalizing period, although it occurs somewhat less in loculus tombs (40% of cases).

In what concerns the type and mode of deposition, all of the excavated tombs contain primary burials, according to the definition of Duday[13], which states that a deposition is primary when the burial of the corpse takes place immediately after death on the spot of the definitive deposition. Shifting and displacement of skeletons is almost always caused by natural phenomena (e.g. flooding, collapse of the structure). While for the earlier period we exclusively deal with individual burials, collective burials are documented from the second half of the 7th century BC. These not only include family tombs but also a few individual loculus tombs (three examples). Only in seven cases has human manipulation of skeletal remains been recorded, which was done to create space for new depositions[14]. So far not a single tomb seems to have been desecrated in antiquity.

Human-induced post-depositional changes in tombs and post-funerary mortuary practices

In the case of individual tombs that were closed after burial and not meant to be reopened, we do not assume intentional human induced post-depositional changes to have occurred due to manipulation of human skeletal remains or objects and/or addition and displacement of objects and skeletal remains. Indeed we have no indications for post-burial and/or ritual post-mortem practices in individual graves. In the case of the Orientalizing tombs with two lateral loculi, we must assume that the shaft had to be reopened to carve out, or get access to an already carved out, second loculus. Chamber tombs intended for multiple generations – at Crustumerium there are also single-individual chamber tombs – do have evidence for human-induced post-depositional change. In general, the funerary space is fully used by placing depositions both inside the loculi and on the floor, and we have recorded a few cases of manipulations of bones or the use of loculi for multiple depositions. Regarding the architectural layout, changes such as the addition of loculi are not easy to document because of the scant preservation of tool marks due to the erosion of the walls. One such example is the large Archaic chamber tomb MDB 378, which has a small loculus in the back. Three female depositions were placed on the floor, while the loculus accommodated the subsequent depositions of two women and two men, alternately oriented and slightly displaced to free up space for another corpse.

Finally, we make a remark on contemporary rituals and post-mortem manipulation of the funerary landscape. We expect funerary processions to have taken place from the settlement to the cemeteries during all periods discussed. During the Orientalizing period, these must have been quite ostentatious, given the fact that some tombs contain many objects, a large part of which point to practices of communal drinking (the so-called circumpotatio ritual) but do not contain intentionally broken pottery hinting to ritual funerary ceremonials. However, we have no material evidence that

13 Duday 2006.

14 MDB tombs 108, 257, 321, 378.

such practices took place around the tombs. While landscape taphonomy may play a role here, we would, if such practices were common, expect a signal in the plough soil in the form of surface ceramics or ritual pits in our open area excavations.

One major intervention in the funerary landscape, however, needs to be mentioned here. At some point in time, when chamber tombs were already common at Monte Del Bufalo, a significant part of the burial ground, just outside the then still existing defensive works, was covered up in layers of soil. These layers were first put on the overlapping 'tumuletti' of the Early Iron burials at the same time covering the entrances of later Orientalizing and Archaic tombs. The resulting artificial mound, site QO already described above (see fig. 1B), also came to include part of various phases of the defensive earthwork (agger) and the defensive ditch. This intriguing instance of the manipulation of an apparently meaningful part of Crustumerium's funerary landscape is currently under study[15]. The intentional preservation of the original funerary and defensive landscape in the past, suggests that the location had ritual and commemorative connotations for the community living at Crustumerium before the mound was transformed in what we, on account of the presence of walls in the highest archaeological stratum, believe was a defensive bulwark erected in the very last phase of the settlement's existence.

Conclusion

At Crustumerium, landscape taphonomic processes, especially due to deep-ploughing have had a serious impact on the preservation of the funerary landscape and have resulted in the almost total erasure of above ground articulation of tombs in their setting, such as mounds, fences and paths. Major access roads, however, escaped destruction since they were constructed in adapted natural depressions in the terrain. Geophysical mapping and excavation have shown that these roads, including lateral drainage ditches dug into the bedrock, are well preserved. These roads delineate the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground into districts that in themselves were articulated in clusters of tombs with intermediate empty spaces that likely accommodated paths. Tombs were indicated at ground level by mounds, stone fences and grave markers. We found that the preservation of the tomb architecture itself is variable and dependent on tomb type, location in the burial ground and the variable quality of the bedrock. In this scenario, Early Iron Age tombs and their contents are the most vulnerable. Despite adverse circumstances, such as collapse, flooding and acidity of the soil, the large sample of excavated tombs at Crustumerium supports an increasingly detailed reconstruction of the original funerary landscape, the architecture of the tombs through time, as well as the prevailing mortuary practices in relation to the treatment of the body and nature and function of the grave gifts. Regarding the human skeletal remains, we conclude on the basis of a large sample that the conditions at Crustumerium do not favour their preservation due to a combination of natural agents, which were especially active when bodies had been deposited in empty spaces. Nevertheless, the careful recording of the articulation of remains *in situ* by osteologists and the interpretation of the influence of taphonomic processes has resulted in useful observations on and reconstructions of the original position of the body, the possible shrouding or bandaging of the body and the presence of tree trunks, or wooden casings in which the body had been placed, or the presence of biers or other supports on which the body had been placed. While an understanding of the various landscape processes, taphonomy and human manipulations influencing the burial record is key to the reconstruction of the initial actions taken by the community members of Crustumerium to provide an individual with a proper burial, the study of such processes also leads to insights in the transformation of the settlement's burial grounds through time. In the final part of our paper we pointed to the erection in the Monte Del Bufalo burial ground of a huge artificial mound that appears to rep-

15 Site QO was partly excavated in the field seasons of 2014–2018.

resent such a transformation, currently under study. We may conclude this paper with a question that merits further study: how visible and significant were the remains of Crustumerium's burial grounds to the peasants belonging to the tribus clustumina who settled Crustumerium and its countryside in the Republican period after Crustumerium had been abandoned and the burial grounds were left? To what degree were the burial grounds respected?

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Martin Guggisberg and Marta Billo-Imbach for the invitation to participate in the workshop Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy and for the ensuing fruitful discussions. We like to thank Francesco di Gennaro and Paola Filippini, former inspectors of the Soprintendenza, for the fruitful scientific collaboration in the Crustumerium project and for their fundamental administrative support.

Last but not least, we like to thank the anonymous reviewer for their very useful suggestions and dr. Anna Moles of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology for additional expert comments and language corrections.

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Presenze/assenze, traslazioni, riduzioni: pratiche funerarie, processi tafonomici e manipolazione dei resti scheletrici nelle necropoli preromane di Pontecagnano (SA)

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Introduzione

L'insediamento etrusco-sannitico di Pontecagnano ha restituito circa 10000 tombe databili dagli inizi del IX al pieno III secolo a. C.[1] Si tratta di una documentazione acquisita a partire dagli anni '60 del '900, quando Bruno d'Agostino imposta una strategia di tutela del patrimonio archeologico del sito minacciato dalla frenetica espansione della città attuale[2]. Sin dall'inizio lo scavo delle necropoli ha previsto un avanzato livello di documentazione, che comprende rilievo grafico in scala 1: 10, foto e descrizione delle tombe, planimetrie dei sepolcreti e loro puntuale posizionamento. Sono documentati e recuperati anche i resti ossei, secondo una prassi non sempre perseguita negli scavi di quegli anni in Italia.

Questo straordinario dossier documentale ha consentito di approfondire lo studio della ritualità funeraria e dei processi sociali che caratterizzano le diverse fasi dell'insediamento. I dati delle necropoli e dell'abitato consentono di individuare cinque fasi principali, scandite da momenti di radicali ristrutturazioni[3]. Un primo riassetto interviene al passaggio tra la prima età del Ferro e l'Orientalizzante, riflesso a livello archeologico dall'abbandono delle precedenti necropoli e dall'impianto di nuovi sepolcreti più vicini all'abitato. All'inizio del VI secolo l'impianto dei santuari segnala una svolta nel processo di urbanizzazione, che culmina agli inizi del V secolo con la costruzione delle mura e la realizzazione di un impianto urbano regolare. Dalla seconda metà del V secolo l'arrivo di contingenti «italici» avvia il processo di trasformazione della città etrusca in un centro sannitico[4], la cui vita si protrae fino alla conquista romana della piana del Sele nel secondo quarto del III secolo. In età romana su parte dell'abitato si sviluppa l'insediamento di Picentia.

Rispetto al livello raggiunto nell'analisi degli aspetti più propriamente archeologici, non è ancora valorizzato appieno il potenziale informativo dell'oggetto principale della ritualità funeraria, cioè il corpo del defunto[5]. Una vasta campionatura dei resti scheletrici è stata sottoposta a indagini di base, tese a stabilire il sesso e l'età del defunto; limitati sono gli approfondimenti su aspetti relativi alla dieta e alle patologie; appena avviata su ristretti campioni di tombe è l'applicazione di metodologie più innovative come lo studio del DNA e le analisi isotopiche per la ricostruzione della dieta e l'individuazione di individui di provenienza allogena.

Limitata è stata anche l'attenzione riservata ai processi tafonomici. La documentazione di scavo registra il tipo di rituale, la disposizione complessiva dello scheletro (supina, contratta, ecc.) e le macroscopiche alterazioni subite dai resti scheletrici, ma di rado la descrizione si sofferma su quei dettagli nella posizione delle ossa utili a cogliere le dinamiche tafonomiche. A tale proposito le informazioni sono quelle recuperabili dal rilievo e dalle foto delle sepolture.

In questa sede, nell'impossibilità di approfondire le diverse questioni che attengono la tafonomia, sarà delineato un primo quadro di sintesi sul rapporto tra il defunto e lo spazio

1 Le datazioni a seguire si intendono a. C.

2 Sulla storia della ricerca: Cerchiai et al. 2018, 582–592.

3 Per quadri di sintesi sullo sviluppo dell'insediamento: Pellegrino – Rossi 2011; Cinquantaquattro – Pellegrino 2017.

4 Pellegrino – Petta 2020.

5 Cerchiai et al. 2018, 590–591, con bibliografia.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 65–79.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16917

della sepoltura e sui trattamenti dei resti scheletrici successivi alla prima deposizione. L'analisi si concentrerà sulla documentazione funeraria relativa all'insediamento etrusco-sannitico (IX–III secolo), ma occorre ricordare che il sito ha restituito significative testimonianze anche per l'età preistorica, romana e medievale[6]. Per gli aspetti tafonomici particolare interesse rivestono le tombe eneolitiche della facies del Gaudo[7]: sono del tipo a grotticella, con sepolture multiple e progressiva dislocazione dei resti ossei sul fondo della camera per far posto a successive deposizioni.

Occorre infine ricordare che le necropoli della fase etrusco-sannitica non accolgono tutti i defunti della comunità. Per la prima età del Ferro sono documentati cinerari rinvenuti vuoti e interpretati come cenotafi[8]; per l'età orientalizzante è stata ipotizzata anche una selezione su base sociale nell'accesso alla sepoltura formale, la cui entità va forse ridimensionata[9]. Rilevante, invece, è la questione del seppellimento delle classi di età inferiori, la cui incidenza nelle necropoli varia in maniera significativa tra le diverse fasi, seguendo strategie di rappresentazione di tipo comunitario o legate a costumi specifici nei casi dei gruppi di provenienza allogena[10].

Carmine Pellegrino

Lo spazio del defunto

In tutte le fasi di vita dei sepolcreti, indipendentemente dal rituale e dalla tipologia tombale, al defunto è riservato uno spazio «vuoto». L'ambiente del defunto è chiuso rispetto al resto della struttura tombale da elementi lapidei o tegole; in assenza di questi occorre immaginare casse o soppalchi in legno, di cui restano a volte tracce in negativo. In superficie le sepolture erano segnalate da cumuli di ciottoli o di terreno, in alcune fasi contenuti da strutture lapidee di rincalzo[11].

Nella prima età del Ferro il rituale prevalente è la cremazione secondaria di tipo villanoviano, con i resti combusti del defunto raccolti in un vaso biconico d'impasto; già nel IX secolo alla cremazione si affianca l'inumazione in fossa, che diviene prevalente nel corso dell'VIII secolo.

I cinerari villanoviani, insieme al corredo che di solito li accompagna, sono deposti nel sottosuolo, in pozzetti circolari o in grotticelle alle quali si accede da una buca che funge da vestibolo (tombe «a ricettacolo»). Il ricettacolo è rinvenuto solitamente chiuso da lastre di travertino o tufo, riempito da terreno d'infiltrazione; nel caso dei pozzetti è forse lecito immaginare un elemento di separazione in legno tra la parte inferiore della fossa, che accoglie il cinerario e il corredo, e il riempimento soprastante. Rari sono i casi di deposizioni doppie, che presuppongono la riapertura dei ricettacoli, come accade nella tomba 201 della necropoli del Picentino, che accoglie una deposizione femminile della prima metà del IX secolo e una maschile della seconda metà del secolo[12].

Dalla metà dell'VIII secolo per le cremazioni è usata anche la tomba a cassa, con i resti combusti del defunto raccolti nel cinerario biconico o sparse, alla maniera greca, sul piano di deposizione. La cassa è chiusa da un coperchio in lastroni di travertino, su cui si imposta la struttura che segnala la tomba in superficie.

L'inumazione è praticata in tombe a fossa, che sono sovradimensionate rispetto al defunto, con una lunghezza che in genere si aggira tra 2,5 e 3,5 m, con picchi di oltre 4 m. Spesso scavate nel banco di travertino, presentano in genere il piano di deposizione e le pareti rivestite in ciottoli fluviali; in ciottoli era anche il piccolo tumulo allungato che le segnalava in superficie. La distinzione di uno spazio infe-

6 Un campione significativo di sepolture della piena età imperiale (inumazioni del tipo a fossa, a cassa, «a cappuccina» e a *enchytrismos*) è presentato in Giglio 2004–2005, con riferimenti ad altre sepolture di età imperiale e dell'alto medioevo; per ulteriori esempi si veda Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 187–188. Per l'età repubblicana sono da ricordare 7 ollette cinerarie rinvenute lungo una strada in uscita dall'abitato (Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 221).

7 Bailo Modesti – Salerno 1998.

8 De Natale 2016, 109. Per possibili cenotafi di età orientalizzante si veda Cuozzo 2004–2005, 147, nota 8.

9 Pellegrino 2015, 40. Una maggiore incidenza della selezione di tipo sociale nell'accesso alla sepoltura formale è ipotizzata in Cuozzo 2003, 23–24, 125, 163, 204, 223.

10 Pellegrino 2021.

11 C. Pellegrino in Cuozzo – Pellegrino 2015, 446–465.

12 d'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 122, 137–139.

riore riservato al defunto e al corredo, isolato tramite una struttura verosimilmente in legno, è indiziata dal crollo del tumulo nella fossa in seguito al cedimento dell'elemento di separazione[13].

Il passaggio all'Orientalizzante, che segna un importante momento di riorganizzazione dell'insediamento, è contrassegnato nel rituale funerario dall'abbandono della cremazione di tipo villanoviano e dall'adozione generalizzata dell'inumazione. Le cremazioni sono riservate a poche figure maschili di altissimo rango: le ossa combuste sono raccolte in calderoni di bronzo secondo il rituale «eroico» derivato dal mondo greco[14]. Rare sono anche le cremazioni primarie[15].

Le inumazioni sono praticate in tombe a fossa, a volte con rivestimento e/o piano di deposizione in ciottoli, e in casse di lastre di travertino. Le tombe presentano dimensioni più contenute, non superando nel caso degli adulti la lunghezza di 2 m.

Lastroni di travertino di solito chiudono le casse, più raramente la parte inferiore delle fosse riservata al defunto. Nelle tombe a fossa semplice, in quelle con ciottoli di rivestimento, ma anche in qualche cassa priva di coperchio, occorre immaginare un soppalco ligneo di separazione rispetto al riempimento soprastante: tale elemento era alloggiato su una sorta di risega di 10–20 cm circa, che veniva a crearsi con il rivestimento in ciottoli della fossa o con il restringimento della parte inferiore riservata al defunto rispetto a quella superiore. Tale controfossa era presente, per esempio, nella tomba 8381 del sepolcreto Baldi, pertinente a un bambino di circa 1 anno e databile al primo quarto del VI secolo (Fig. 1)[16]: lo scheletro e il corredo erano ricoperti da terreno d'infiltrazione, sul quale erano collassati, in seguito al cedimento dell'elemento ligneo di separazione, il riempimento soprastante e i ciottoli del tumuletto che segnalava in superficie la tomba.

A partire dalla metà del VI secolo il materiale lapideo è sostituito nella costruzione dell'ambiente di deposizione dalle tegole, utilizzate per costruire la cassa e il coperchio, spesso solo quest'ultimo. In genere il coperchio è realizzato con tegole disposte in piano, alloggiate su un'apposita risega e spesso rinvenute spezzate e in crollo nell'ambiente di deposizione. Rare sono le coperture a doppio spiovente, attestate entro la prima metà del V secolo: le falde, poco inclinate, si impostavano ai lati in una risega della fossa e dovevano essere sostenute al centro da un travetto di colmo in legno, poggiato sulle testate, a volte su scaglioni di travertino[17]. In questa fase per gli infanti in età perinatale sono spesso utilizzati gli *enchytrismoi*: il contenitore è in genere un'olla di argilla grezza, adagiata su un fianco in una buca, con la bocca chiusa da scaglioni lapidei o pezzi di tegole o grandi contenitori[18]. Le poche cremazioni sono soprattutto di tipo primario, con la pira allestita sopra la fossa destinata ad accoglierne i resti. Rare sono le cremazioni secondarie, attestate nel pieno VI secolo[19]: il cinerario è costituito da un cratere corinzio, in due casi alloggiato in grandi blocchi di travertino appositamente incavati; nella tomba 8396, come vedremo, esso è alloggiato in una cassa allestita per una precedente deposizione.

Nella fase sannitica, dai primi decenni del IV secolo, è usata la struttura «a cappuccina»: le falde sono costituite da coppie di tegole contrapposte, impostate sul piano di deposizione; coppi coprono spesso il giunto di colmo, più raramente quelli delle falde.

Dalla metà del secolo è introdotta anche la tomba a camera, costruita in blocchi di travertino nel banco naturale. Le deposizioni avvengono sulle banchine poste lungo le pareti, in genere una, al massimo tre; nella seconda metà del III secolo alcune di esse sono riaperte e ri-

13 Per un esempio si rimanda al caso della tomba 2157 (d'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 202–203, figg. 92 e 100): la fossa era rivestita da un muretto in ciottoli e scaglie di travertino, sul quale doveva essere collocata la struttura in legno che la separava dalla soprastante copertura monumentale della tomba.

14 d'Agostino 1977.

15 Pellegrino 2004–2005, 179.

16 Pellegrino 2021, fig. 8.

17 Si vedano gli esempi in Pellegrino 2004–2005, 181–182.

18 Sugli *enchytrismoi* e sulla rappresentatività delle classi inferiori si veda Pellegrino 2021.

19 d'Agostino 2003; Pellegrino 2004–2005, 177–178.

Fig. 1 –Tomba 8381 (600–570 a. C.). Direzione regionale Musei Campania (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Pontecagnano).

utilizzate, con manomissione e riduzione delle precedenti deposizioni.

Il corpo e la tomba

A Pontecagnano l'inumazione prevede la deposizione del defunto in posizione supina, con le braccia solitamente lungo il corpo e gli arti inferiori distesi. Rare sono le inumazioni rannicchiate in posizione fetale su un fianco (Fig. 2) e quelle supino-rattratte, con la parte superiore del corpo distesa sulla schiena, le braccia lungo il torace e gli arti inferiori piegati su un lato. Si tratta di forme di seppellimento che rinviano al versante adriatico, dalla Puglia fino al comparto bradanico, passando per l'area medio-ofantina e nord-lucana, che a Pontecagnano consentono di riconoscere l'origine allogena dei defunti[20].

La conservazione dei resti scheletrici è variabile, condizionata dalla tipologia tombale e dalla composizione chimica del terreno. Le strutture che maggiormente ne compromettono la conservazione sembrano essere quelle che prevedono l'impiego dei ciottoli fluviali come piano di deposizione, attestate nella prima età del Ferro e nell'Orientalizzante. Lo stato di conservazione è ulteriormente pregiudicato quando nell'ambiente di deposizione e, dunque, sui resti scheletrici sono collassati i ciottoli della copertura.

Quando i resti scheletrici sono conservati, sono riscontrabili i processi tafonomici derivanti dalla decomposizione in ambiente vuoto. Nelle tombe in cui lo spazio riservato al defunto doveva essere ampio, si distinguono i movimenti delle ossa successivi alla decomposizione delle parti molli, quali l'appiattimento della cassa toracica e del bacino, con la caduta delle coste e l'apertura della sinfisi pubica, la rotazione laterale dei femori e la caduta delle rotule.

20 Cinquantaquattro – Cuozzo 2002, 124; Pellegrino – Rizzo 2018, 155. Per un recente quadro di sintesi si veda Pellegrino *in stampa*.

Fig. 2 – Tomba 9214 (prima metà del VII secolo a. C.). Pellegrino et al. 2021, fig. 24.

Nelle tombe a fossa e a cassa strette, documentate soprattutto nella fase sannitica, il processo di decomposizione in spazio vuoto può avvenire con una maggiore conservazione della posizione delle ossa o del volume dei corpi dei defunti. È quanto accade, per esempio, nella tomba 8052, indagata durante i lavori di ampliamento dell'autostrada e databile tra la fine del IV e i primi decenni del III secolo[21]. L'«effetto parete», determinato dalla stretta cassa in lastre di travertino, e il riempimento differito dei volumi del corpo hanno contribuito a mantenere inalterata la posizione di alcuni elementi scheletrici. Del defunto, deposto supino, si conservano in buona connessione anatomica la parte superiore del torace, con lo sterno, le clavicole e le scapole in posizione originaria, le coste, che sembrano conservare in parte il loro volume, il bacino leggermente appiattito e le rotule ancora poggianti sulle estremità dei femori, lievemente ruotati.

Problematica è la lettura delle inumazioni rannicchiate, che sembrano essere avvenute in spazio vuoto. Il mantenimento della posizione del defunto, in posizione fetale su un fianco, con le gambe a volte iperflesse, rende probabile l'impiego di elementi di contenimento dei corpi, quali legacci, sudari, sacchi, o contenitori di altro tipo, di cui non rimane traccia. Per esempio, nella tomba 9214, databile alla prima metà del VII secolo, l'uso di elementi di contenimento è suggerito anche dall'allineamento delle scapole e del bacino (Fig. 2)[22].

Quanto ai fenomeni di perturbazione dei resti scheletrici, accanto a quelli di natura antropica – per i quali si veda *infra* il contributo di Russo –, si possono distinguere sia quelli determinati dal naturale decadimento della struttura tombale, sia quelli causati dall'azione di animali sotterranei, come talpe e topi. Nella prima tipologia rientrano i danni provocati, per esempio, dal cedimento dell'elemento di separazione tra l'ambiente di deposizione e la parte superiore della tomba: le lastre di travertino e le tegole spezzate e crollate, il soprastante riempimento e i ciottoli della copertura collassati – soprattutto nelle tombe della prima età del Ferro – determinano a volte dislocazioni e danni ai resti scheletrici. Un'altra causa di perturbazione è costituita dalla decomposizione di un piano di alloggiamento del defunto in materiale deperibile. Non sembra trovare riscontri significativi l'impiego della cassa lignea, mentre ricorrente doveva essere l'uso di letti funebri in legno, funzionali anche a calare il defunto all'interno della tomba. In alcuni casi, a partire dalla prima metà del VI e soprattutto tra V e IV secolo, sono predisposte buche agli

21 Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 153–154, con scheda e foto della tomba nel CD allegato.

22 Pellegrino – Rizzo 2018, 155; Pellegrino *in stampa*.

Fig. 3 – La tomba 8935 (IV secolo a. C.) dopo la rimozione della copertura e dopo lo scavo del riempimento. Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, appendice foto in CD allegato.

angoli del piano di deposizione per accogliere i piedi di questi apprestamenti. Il loro impiego è a volte indiziato dal sedimento presente tra il fondo della fossa e la deposizione (resti ossei e corredo) e dalla posizione «in crollo» di alcuni distretti scheletrici.

Ulteriori perturbazioni possono essere causate dalle infiltrazioni di acqua. Un esempio emblematico è fornito da una tomba «a cappuccina» indagata in un sepolcreto a nord-est dell'abitato (tomba 8935, del pieno IV secolo) (Fig. 3)[23]. La zona era interessata dal passaggio di un corso d'acqua, oggi canalizzato; le divagazioni e l'infiltrazione delle acque, a forte contenuto carbonatico, hanno nel tempo concrezionato di calcare le deposizioni. Al momento dell'apertura della tomba lo scheletro era coperto solo da un sottile livello di sabbia calcarea. Le ossa del defunto, deposto supino con gli arti inferiori e superiori in estensione, presentavano una superficie color ruggine per l'ossidazione ed erano dislocate dalle infiltrazioni d'acqua, che avevano causato la perdita delle connessioni anatomiche: il cranio era ruotato nel senso opposto alla deposizione, le ossa del torace e degli arti erano scomposti dall'azione dell'acqua. A ciò si aggiungeva lo stato del femore destro, rinvenuto spezzato e alzato quasi in verticale dal crollo di un pezzo di tegola della copertura.

Per quanto riguarda l'azione degli animali, non sempre è agevole distinguerle rispetto agli altri fattori di disturbo in assenza di analisi tafonomiche specifiche. La difficoltà è ancora maggiore nelle tombe a camera, che possono essere state interessate da diverse dinamiche di perturbazione difficili da definire nel dettaglio. Nella tomba a camera 4436 (Fig. 4), per esempio, i resti di quattro adulti deposti nei decenni a cavallo tra IV e III secolo furono rinvenuti sconvolti: sull'unico letto funebre erano gli arti

23 Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 151.

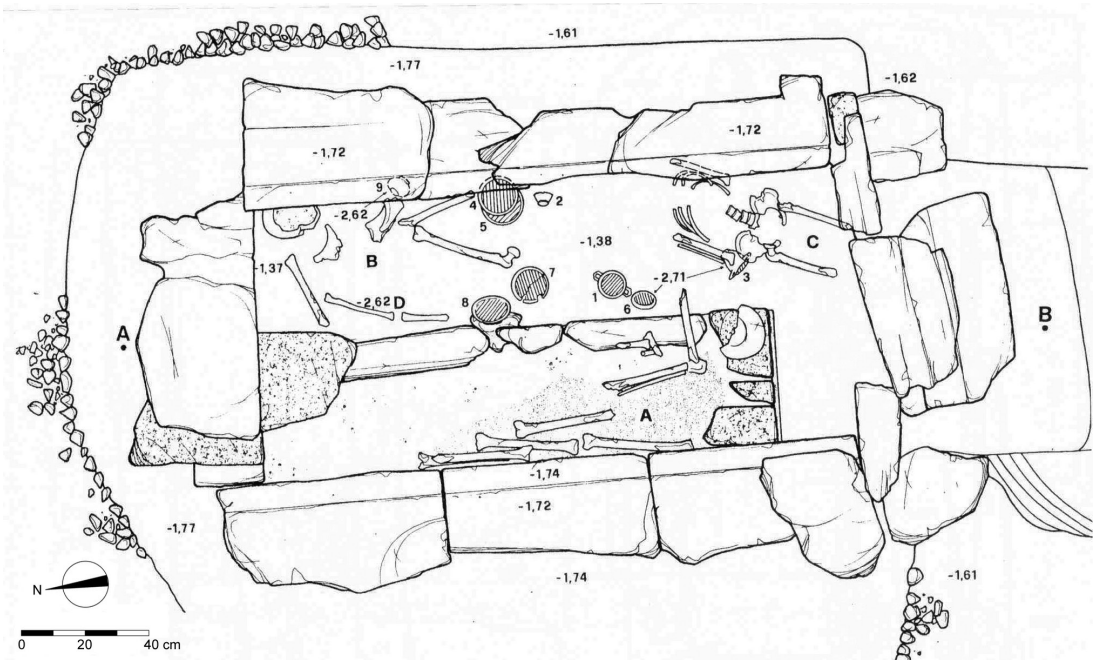

Fig. 4 – Tomba a camera 4436 (III secolo a. C.?). Serritella 1995, tav. 35.

rimaneggiati di un defunto (A), ai piedi del letto si distribuivano in varie posizioni i resti parziali degli altri scheletri[24].

Un diverso rapporto tra il corpo e la tomba ricorre nelle sepolture a cremazione.
Un recente studio su un campione funerario della necropoli occidentale offre un quadro aggiornato sulle cremazioni della prima età del Ferro[25]. Esse sono praticate subito dopo la morte, quando sono ancora presenti i tessuti molli, che determinano particolari fratture e deformazioni delle ossa durante il processo di combustione. Le temperature raggiunte dal rogo sono generalmente comprese tra 300° e 700°, documentando un processo di combustione non particolarmente efficiente; rari sono casi in cui la temperatura si attesta su valori più elevati, che raggiungono 900° e 1000°[26].

L'analisi della conservazione dei distretti scheletrici evidenzia una sufficiente rappresentazione degli individui sia maschili sia femminili, indice di una raccolta non selettiva dei resti cremati. Significativa è l'alta percentuale di conservazione del cranio, presente in tutte le tombe del campione analizzato e degli altri sepolcreti della prima età del Ferro[27]. Il dato è da collegare a fattori relativi alla conservazione di questo distretto scheletrico, ma anche al significato che esso rivestiva come espressione dell'essenza del morto[28].

Insieme al cranio, le ossa maggiormente rappresentate sono quelle degli arti inferiori e superiori, mentre le parti assili sono documentate in percentuali minori. Tale differenza è da connettere alla frammentarietà del materiale osteologico, che può comportare una raccolta meno rigorosa o la mancata identificazione in fase di analisi.

Pochi sono i dati relativi alle cremazioni della fase etrusco-sannitica.

Le incinerazioni secondarie sembrano essere eseguite con le stesse modalità adottate nella

24 Serritella 1995, 18–20.
25 Sperduti et al. 2016, 126–135.
26 d'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 252–254.
27 d'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 254–256; De Natale 1992, 149–157; De Natale 2016, 130–133.
28 d'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 254; cfr. anche *infra*, 72.

prima età del Ferro. Esemplificativo è il caso della tomba 8396 del sepolcreto Baldi, databile alla metà del VI secolo[29]: il corpo è cremato subito dopo la morte su un rogo che raggiunge temperature elevate; la raccolta dei resti interessa tutti i distretti scheletrici, ben rappresentati.

Delle incinerazioni primarie, allo stato attuale delle analisi, si può soltanto segnalare il crollo all'interno della fossa dei resti della pira e delle ossa cremate, la cui disposizione rispecchia la posizione supina del defunto sulla pira[30].

Singolare è il caso di una tomba del sepolcreto di età sannitica a nord-est dell'abitato (tomba 8037, dell'ultimo quarto del IV secolo), pertinente a un adulto deposto supino[31]. Nella cassa era stato appiccato un fuoco per bruciare il defunto: il fuoco era rimasto accesso anche dopo la messa in posto dei lastroni di copertura, al centro della quale era praticato un foro per favorire la combustione, che comunque dovette presto arrestarsi, investendo in maniera limitata le spoglie e il corredo.

Antonella Massanova

Presenze / assenze, traslazioni e riduzioni dei resti scheletrici: alcuni esempi

Numerose e diversificate sono a Pontecagnano le azioni antropiche che hanno portato alla manipolazione dei resti ossei dei defunti. La rassegna presentata fornisce un'esemplificazione delle pratiche attestate, che può essere considerata significativa, ma non esaustiva, basandosi su livelli di approfondimento diversificati dello studio dei diversi settori della necropoli.

L'analisi si concentrerà sugli interventi operati in antico, durante le fasi di vita degli spazi sepolcrali, tralasciando gli scassi intervenuti dopo la fine dell'insediamento etrusco-sannitico, dall'età romana all'età contemporanea, connessi soprattutto ai lavori agricoli che hanno interessato l'area dell'insediamento antico. Allo stato attuale di analisi, soprattutto per le tombe a camera di IV–III secolo, non sempre è agevole precisare i tempi e le modalità degli sconvolgimenti, che possono essere connessi a manomissioni, depredazioni o azioni di animali intervenuti nelle fasi finali della vita dell'insediamento o anche successivamente.

Rientra nella casistica esaminata la riapertura delle tombe per il riutilizzo funerario, documentato per diverse tipologie tombali. La necessità di fare spazio per i nuovi seppellimenti comporta in alcuni casi la riduzione delle precedenti deposizioni. Nelle tombe a camera, come per esempio la 1559/1562[32], l'utilizzo si protrae dal terzo quarto del III ai primi decenni del II secolo, nella fase ormai romanizzata dell'area, a volte dopo significativi intervalli di tempo[33]. In questi casi sarebbe auspicabile verificare se il recupero della tomba sia operato da discendenti della famiglia originaria o in discontinuità con essa.

Indicazioni potrebbero essere ricavate combinando le analisi specifiche sui resti ossei alla verifica del trattamento riservato alle deposizioni già esistenti nella tomba.

È documentato anche qualche caso in cui la camera sembra essere stata utilizzata come ossuario, raccogliendo resti traslati di molteplici deposizioni. La tomba 4437, per esempio, presentava una camera molto stretta, con un solo letto di deposizione: in essa furono recuperati i resti di circa 15 inumati, sparsi in maniera incoerente sia sul letto che ai suoi piedi e non accompagnanti da corredi[34].

Sin dall'Orientalizzante è documentato, sebbene in maniera episodica, l'utilizzo per più deposizioni di strutture tombali predisposte per singole sepolture. Si tratta per lo più di seppellimenti simultanei, ma non mancano casi di deposizioni avvenute in tempi diversi, con riapertura della tomba e inevitabili interventi sui precedenti resti. Di particolare interesse sono i casi in cui le nuove deposizioni sono ricavate immediatamente sopra le sepolture precedenti, a volte nello spazio «vuoto» riservato al defunto: si possono richiamare gli esempi editi della tomba a cassa 2146/2147, che intorno al 570

29 Pellegrino 2004–2005, 217–220.
30 Pellegrino 2004–2005, 179–181, 186–192.
31 Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 153.
32 Serritella 2017, 839.
33 Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 155–156 (tomba 8048).
34 Serritella 1995, 20, tavv. 8.2 e 39.

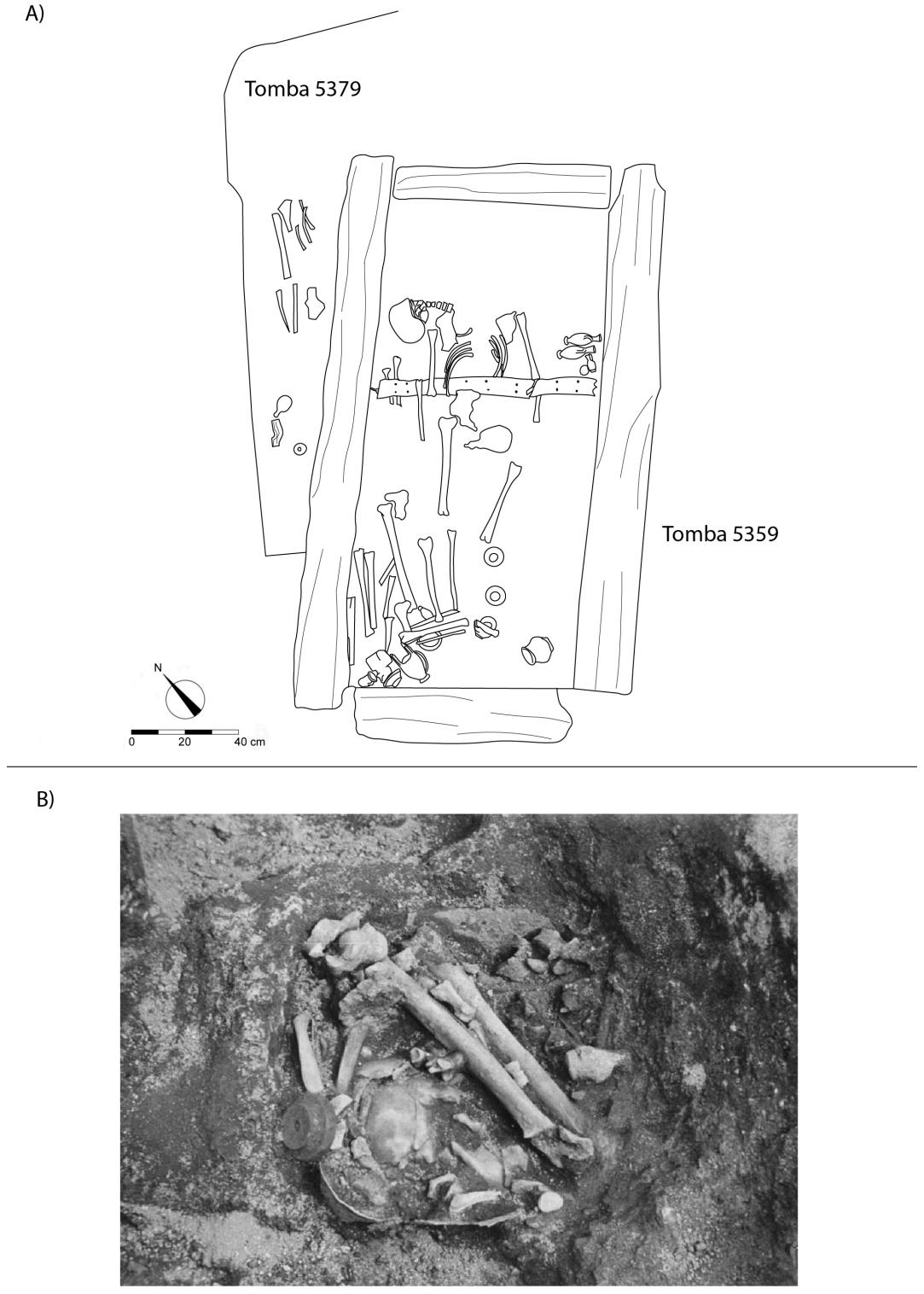

Fig. 5 – Riduzione dei resti ossei: A) tomba 5359 (350 a. C.); B) tomba 788 (380–370 a. C.). Direzione regionale Musei Campania (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Pontecagnano).

accoglie 4 individui in due livelli sovrapposti[35], e delle tombe a fossa successivamente presentate dello scavo Baldi (tombe 8389, 8398). Per queste attestazioni occorre forse immaginare dei soppalchi o letti funebri di separazione tra i due livelli di seppellimento, il cui disfacimento, con conseguente collasso delle deposizioni più recenti, deve aver comportato effetti sui processi tafonomici.

Frequenti sono i casi di manipolazioni dei resti scheletrici effettuate quando lo scavo di una sepoltura intercetta deposizioni più antiche. Il fenomeno è diffuso soprattutto a partire dall'età arcaica, quando la continuità d'uso degli spazi sepolcrali impiantati in età orientalizzante determina l'addensamento delle sepolture in spazi ristretti[36].

L'interferenza può avvenire dopo un lungo lasso di tempo e in forme che evidenziano la discontinuità rispetto alle preesistenze. In questi casi le deposizioni più antiche possono essere appena intaccate o tagliate del tutto, con conseguente sconvolgimento dei resti scheletrici e del corredo. In taluni casi l'accidentale azione di disturbo comporta una cura nella manipolazione dei resti e genera pratiche di risarcimento[37].

Quando la sovrapposizione si verifica nell'ambito della continuità d'uso dell'appezzamento funerario si registra un maggiore rispetto delle preesistenze, evidentemente ancora visibili in superficie o rimaste nella memoria del gruppo. Le nuove tombe sono scavate nello spazio di risulta tra le sepolture esistenti, delle quali sono eventualmente intaccate le strutture tombali ma non le deposizioni (corredo e soprattutto defunto). Spesso la nuova sepoltura impatta su tombe precedenti, senza però raggiungerne il piano di deposizione.

Non mancano, tuttavia, casi in cui anche nella continuità d'uso dell'appezzamento funerario si verificano interventi più invasivi. In genere questa eventualità si riscontra in relazione a tombe non vicine cronologicamente, facendo presumere che della deposizione più antica non restasse traccia nel paesaggio sepolcrale. Un esempio è restituito da una tomba a cassa della metà del IV secolo (tomba 5359), pertinente a un giovane con cinturone e lancia[38]. La sepoltura rompeva due tombe, una non databile (tomba 5324), l'altra del 380–370 circa (tomba 5379) (Fig. 5A): nell'intaccare quest'ultima, si effettuò la riduzione dello scheletro del defunto intercettato e la traslazione di parte delle ossa nell'angolo della cassa, ai piedi del defunto.

Più problematico è un caso proveniente dalla necropoli di Via Sicilia[39]. La tomba di un maschio di circa 30 anni (tomba 784), databile al secondo quarto IV secolo, intaccava su un lato tre tombe: della più antica (tomba 787), databile al pieno V secolo, restava solo un'olpetta del corredo; all'ultimo quarto del V secolo risaliva la sepoltura di un'anziana donna (tomba 789) il cui livello di deposizione era in parte sottoposto alla tomba 784 e pertanto da questa non sconvolto; una tomba era appena intaccata, rinvenuta completamente vuota e non numerata. La presenza delle sepolture più antiche condizionò la costruzione della tomba 784: scavata nel banco di travertino, essa presentava lastre di travertino solo sui due lati contigui interessati dalle tombe preesistenti, in modo da ricomporre la continuità delle pareti. Inoltre, sul fondo della fossa, sotto la deposizione, era scavata una fossa che accoglieva la riduzione di una precedente sepoltura, forse identificabile con quella intaccata rinvenuta vuota. Nella fossa (tomba 788) i distretti scheletrici più significativi di un maschio di circa 40 anni, tra cui cranio e ossa lunghe, erano raccolti all'interno di un cinturone, con una coppetta a vernice nera addossata, capovolta, a quest'ultimo (Fig. 5B).

Un'ampia casistica di questi fenomeni è stata riscontrata in un settore funerario indagato nel 2003–2004 nella necropoli posta a sud dell'abitato (scavo Baldi)[40]. Lo scavo ha restituito nella sua interezza un appezzamento funerario in uso dagli inizi del VI al terzo quarto del V

35 Pellegrino 1999, 45–46.

36 Per una sintesi delle modalità di occupazione delle necropoli di Pontecagnano si veda Bonaudo et al. 2009, con bibliografia.

37 Si veda il caso delle tombe 3501 e 3498 in Russo 2016, 116–117 e Russo 2018, 188–189.

38 Pellegrino – Petta 2020, 96–97, fig. 3b.

39 Età e sesso dei defunti sono in Pardini et al. 1982, 287.

40 Pellegrino 2004–2005; Pellegrino 2021.

A)

B)

Fig. 6 – A) tomba 8398 (550 a. C.); B) tomba 8396 (550 a. C.). Pellegrino 2004–2005, figg. 7 e 19.

secolo, trasmesso di generazione in generazione nell'ambito di una famiglia ristretta. Le tombe rinvenute sono 69, di diversa tipologia: inumazioni in tombe a fossa, a cassa di lastre di travertino o di tegole, *enchytrismoi* per infanti di età perinatale, cremazioni primarie (*busta*) e una secondaria. Nella prima fase le tombe si dispongono ravvicinate in un'area rettangolare di m 16x7, che restituisce la dimensione del lotto nella fase di assegnazione, articolandosi in relazione a una piattaforma centrale che accoglie la sepoltura di una giovane di 15–18 anni probabilmente morta di parto (tomba 8390). La struttura è ampliata alla metà del VI secolo in occasione del seppellimento di due maschi di età avanzata (tombe 8356 e 8386). All'inizio del V secolo, esaurito lo spazio disponibile nel lotto iniziale, è acquisita all'uso funerario la fascia a est. L'appezzamento è caratterizzato da diverse strutture a servizio del sepolcreto, funzionali allo svolgimento delle pratiche rituali, quali canali, pozzi, un altare, una vasca, un recinto quadrangolare.

Nel lotto rettangolare utilizzato nel corso del VI secolo, soprattutto nella parte centrale monumentalizzata, le tombe si addensano in maniera fitta, spesso sovrapponendosi, portando talvolta alla manipolazione dei resti scheletrici e dei corredi più antichi.

La realizzazione delle tombe 8356–8386 comporta il restringimento della cassa in lastra di travertino della tomba 8390, in corrispondenza dei piedi della defunta. La parte del corredo intercettata è oggetto di pratiche rituali che prevedono l'uso del fuoco, mentre i resti scheletrici sono in parte risistemati: alcune falangi dei piedi e un frammento di tibia sono deposti all'interno di tre vasi collocati nella parte superstite della cassa.

Modalità di rimaneggiamento simili sono osservabili nella tomba 8398. La sepoltura, a fossa con lastra di travertino di chiusura, accoglie nel primo quarto del VI secolo la deposizione di un bambino ed è riaperta dopo pochi anni per la sepoltura di un altro bambino. In tale occasione parte del corredo più antico è ricollocato sulla controfossa o è bruciato e gettato in frammenti nel successivo riempimento. La parte superiore del corpo del primo bambino mostra evidenti segni di rimaneggiamento: una particolare cura è prestata al cranio, che è posto all'interno di un piatto italo-geometrico pertinente al suo corredo, deposto ai piedi (Fig. 6A).

Un'analoga manipolazione del cranio ricorre nella tomba 8396, a cassa in lastre di travertino, con lastrone di copertura in analogo materiale (Fig. 6B), realizzata nel secondo quarto del VI secolo per l'inumazione di un bambino di 4 anni, con il corredo vascolare deposto ai piedi. Non molto dopo, in una fase in cui la decomposizione dei tessuti molli non doveva essere completata, i resti del bambino furono addossati alle pareti della cassa per fare posto a un cratere corinzio contenente i resti cremati di un uomo di 20–30 anni[41]. In tale occasione il cranio del bambino fu riposizionato in una coppa di bucchero del suo corredo; una coppa contigua presenta tracce di bruciato, probabilmente determinate dall'esecuzione di un rituale con l'uso del fuoco.

La particolare cura dedicata al cranio nelle tombe 8396 e 8398 è stata interpretata alla luce del «valore metonimico e simbolico» della testa, al centro di specifiche pratiche rituali di manipolazione e seppellimento in diversi ambiti culturali[42]. Essa trova un significativo antecedente nella tomba «principesca» 4461, risalente agli inizi del VII secolo[43]. La tomba, a cassa in lastre di travertino e piano di deposizione in ciottoli, accoglieva la deposizione secondaria di un uomo di circa 50 anni, eseguita con modalità non altrimenti attestate nel centro picentino. Le ossa, recuperate dopo una prima fase di inumazione, erano collocate in gran parte in un lebete di bronzo, insieme a resti di ovicaprino, probabilmente raccolte in un panno chiuso da due fibule di bronzo. Alcune ossa, in particolare del torace e del bacino, erano poste in una situla di bronzo o direttamente sul piano di deposizione, in quest'ultimo caso insieme a resti di ovicaprini. Non vi erano tracce del cranio, evidente-

41 Nello studio presentato da G. Tartaglia e A. Nava in Pellegrino 2004–2005, 216–220, i resti combusti sono ritenuti con maggiore probabilità pertinenti a un individuo di sesso femminile. Più recenti e approfondite analisi condotte da Alessandra Sperduti hanno consentito l'attribuzione a un maschio (Pellegrino 2021).

42 Pellegrino 2004–2005, 196, con bibliografia.

43 Cerchiai 1985; Cuozzo 2004–2005.

mente selezionato e destinato a un trattamento differenziato.

Per Mariassunta Cuozzo il trattamento riservato alle spoglie del defunto, con il frazionamento delle ossa e la moltiplicazione dei contesti di deposizione, informa di un rito secondario riassumibile nelle seguenti fasi[44]: riesumazione del corpo; selezione di porzioni di scheletro da deporre in maniera differenziata, con un trattamento particolare riservato al cranio; deposizione alla maniera «eroica» della parte principale del corpo del defunto nel lebete, accompagnata da un sacrificio cruento (resti di ovicaprini); deposizione di alcune ossa nella situla, con esecuzione di una libagione, indiziata dalla *phiale* d'impasto rinvenuta insieme a esse; spargimento sul piano di deposizione dei residui delle spoglie e dei sacrifici.

Anna Rita Russo

Criticità e prospettive della ricerca

Le circa 10000 tombe di Pontecagnano formano un dossier di straordinario interesse, che non è stato ancora approfondito in maniera sistematica per quanto riguarda gli aspetti relativi alla tafonomia. In questa sede sono state messe a fuoco le questioni principali che riguardano il rapporto tra il corpo del defunto e la struttura tombale e gli interventi successivi al momento del seppellimento. La presentazione non ha potuto valorizzare la vasta gamma di situazioni attestate, l'incidenza statistica di ciascuna, le variazioni legate a strategie differenziate tra i vari gruppi sepolti o determinate da scelte situazionali.

L'analisi si fonda sull'evidenza fornita dalla documentazione redatta in fase di scavo. Sebbene di alta qualità, essa scaturisce comunque da indagini non finalizzate alla ricerca, condizionate dai tempi ristretti dello scavo di emergenza, con attenzione ai processi tafonomici limitata alle manifestazioni più eclatanti. Per ovviare a tali contingenze il progetto di collaborazione tra l'Università di Salerno, gli enti ministeriali per la tutela e valorizzazione (Soprintendenza e ora Direzione Regionale Musei) e la sezione di antropologia del Museo delle Civiltà di Roma, finalizzato all'analisi dei resti scheletrici di Pontecagnano, contempla anche indagini programmate nelle necropoli, che consentiranno di mettere in campo le professionalità e gli strumenti più aggiornati per lo scavo, la documentazione e lo studio delle sepolture.

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44 Cuozzo 2004–2005, 147–150.

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Deposits and Debris: Tomb Reuse, Secondary Deposition and Object Selection in Pre-Roman South-East Italy

Matthias Hoernes

Depositional pathways in pre-Roman South-East Italy

Graves have conventionally been regarded as "closed" finds and static assemblages which fixed one moment in time[1]. With the implementation of taphonomy and archaeothanatology[2], that idea has been dismissed, but in fact it has always failed as a premise for how the archaeological record came about when tombs were reopened and reused over time. As opposed to the logic "one body, one grave, one episode"[3], multi-use tombs witnessed highly transformative dynamics[4]. Later burials involved interference with earlier ones, pertaining both to the human remains and the grave goods, and besides these post-funeral manipulations, a wide array of non-anthropogenic, taphonomic processes affected the dead bodies, grave structures and funerary assemblages. In order to analyse how social practices and natural processes, separately and together, materialize in reused tombs, this chapter presents cases from pre-Roman South-East Italy and discusses the re-deposition of materials from previous burials, focussing on features that point to the deliberate selection of particular grave goods for relocation with the human remains.

Tomb reuse was ubiquitous in South-East Italy from the fifth to the third century BC (Fig. 1), and it formed part of a social reality of "living with the dead" that was also expressed in the way residential and funerary spaces converged. The funerary landscape of the region is much more diverse than might be suggested by the ethnic map drawn by ancient authors, with the "Daunians" in the north, the "Peucetians" in the middle and the "Messapians" in the south of what is now Apulia[5]. Pit graves are common throughout the region, as well as sarcophagi and cist graves in the central and Southern areas, and larger tomb types emerged in the fourth century BC. In the Northern and central part of the region, inhumation in flexed position was the norm for most of the period, as was supine deposition in the south. Although the inconsistent state of research impedes quantification, about twenty to thirty per cent of all tombs appear to have been reused at many sites in Northern and central Apulia[6], whereas in the Salento multi-use tombs often outnumber single burials[7]. The frequency of reuse correlates with its intensity: reused tombs in the north mostly took one later deposition, in central Apulia up to five, while in the south, many tombs were

1 Cf. Lucas 2021, 87–88; Olivier 1999, 111; Hoernes in press.

2 E.g., Schmitt – Déderix 2018; Aspöck 2018; Bérard 2017b; Aspöck – Banerjea 2016; Knüsel – Robb 2016; Nilsson Stutz 2003; seminal introductions to archaeothanatology are Duday 2009; Duday 2006.

3 Knüsel – Robb 2016, 667.

4 For the recent interest in post-funeral, or post-depositional, phenomena, see Klevnäs et al. 2021; Aspöck – Klevnäs – Müller-Scheeßel 2020 and Noterman – Cervel 2020 with ample bibliography; cf. also Kerner 2018; Brent 2017; Fahlander 2016; Kümmel 2009; Gleize 2007.

5 For archaeological overviews of the region, see Yntema 2013; Burkhardt 2013; Carpenter – Lynch – Robinson 2014; for the regional funerary landscape, Peruzzi 2016; Kelley 2013; Greiner 2003 (Peuketia); Iacono 2007/2008 (Messapia); Obojes 2016; Obojes 2018 (Daunia).

6 E.g., Ordona, Ascoli Satriano and, just over the regional boundary, Lavello, in Northern Basilicata, but the intensity of reuse can vary considerably between local areas; cf. Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 281.

7 For tomb reuse in Messapia, see Giannotta 2015, 27–28; Giannotta 2014, 187; Giannotta 1997, 179–180; Lombardo 1994, 31.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 81–111.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16918

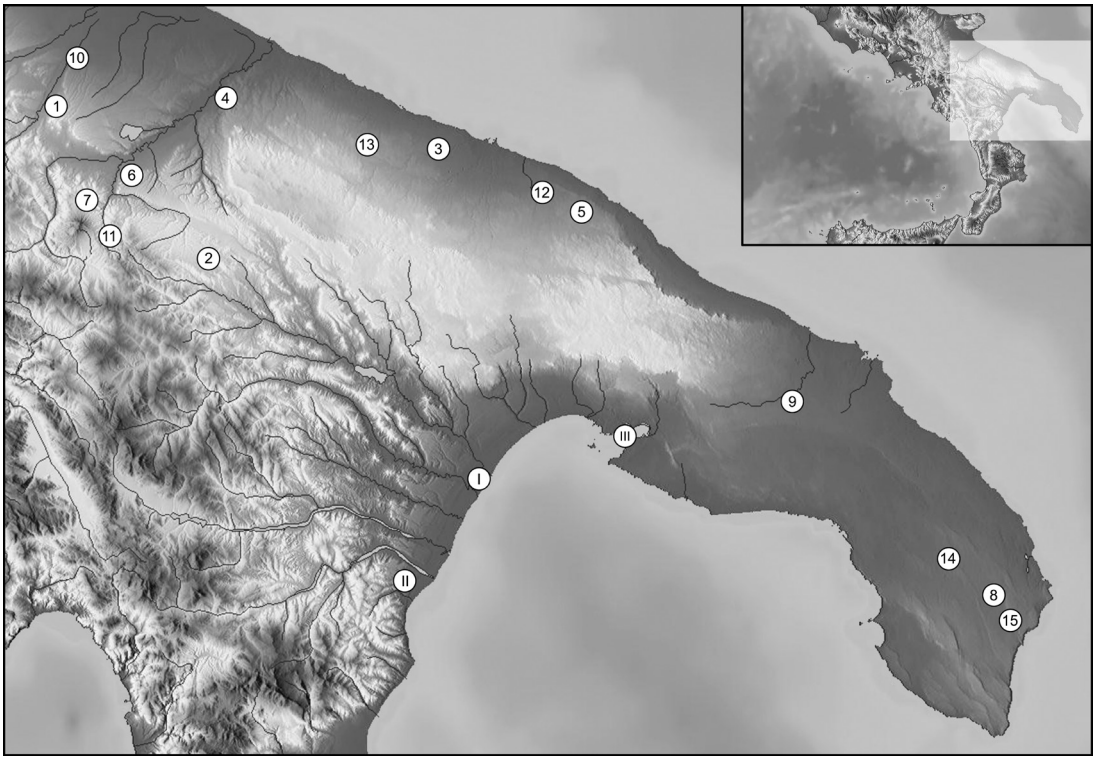

Fig. 1 – Map of sites mentioned in the text and appendix, together with the Greek coastal cities Metaponto (I), Siris (II) and Taranto (III): Ascoli Satriano (1), Banzi (2), Bitonto (3), Canosa (4), Conversano (5), Lavello (6), Melfi (7), Muro Leccese (8), Muro Tenente (9), Ordona (10), Ripacandida (11), Rutigliano (12), Ruvo (13), Soleto (14), and Vaste (15). The author, based on https://maps-for-free.com/.

reused ten times or more. Graves could be re-opened either shortly after their installation or after a considerable interval, with tomb types having little bearing, if any, on whether and how a tomb was reused.

In Northern Apulia, preparation for subsequent interments consistently involved the remains of previous burials being relocated within the burial pits, either moved aside or gathered into cavities in the floor (Fig. 2). In the other parts of the region, the remains were usually re-deposited outside the tomb structures, often placed alongside their coverings or in the surrounding area, but sometimes transferred to other features or removed from the burial ground altogether. In secondary depositions, both within and outside the tombs, the association between the deceased and the grave goods created in the original burial underwent changes[8]. New grave goods could be added in sets or accumulated over time, pottery entombed with earlier burials was regularly re-deposited with the human remains or disposed of and replaced, and from time to time, objects from previous assemblages were merged into more recent ones. Relocated remains in secondary deposits could therefore be accompanied by all of the original grave goods, some, or none of them, and the choice of what was to be re-deposited and what removed could be highly selective.

8 Cf. Bérard 2017a, 279–285; Bérard 2014, 111–118 on the movement of grave goods in the reused tombs at Megara Hyblaea; Klevnäs 2015 on grave goods and their removal in reopened and "robbed" medieval tombs.

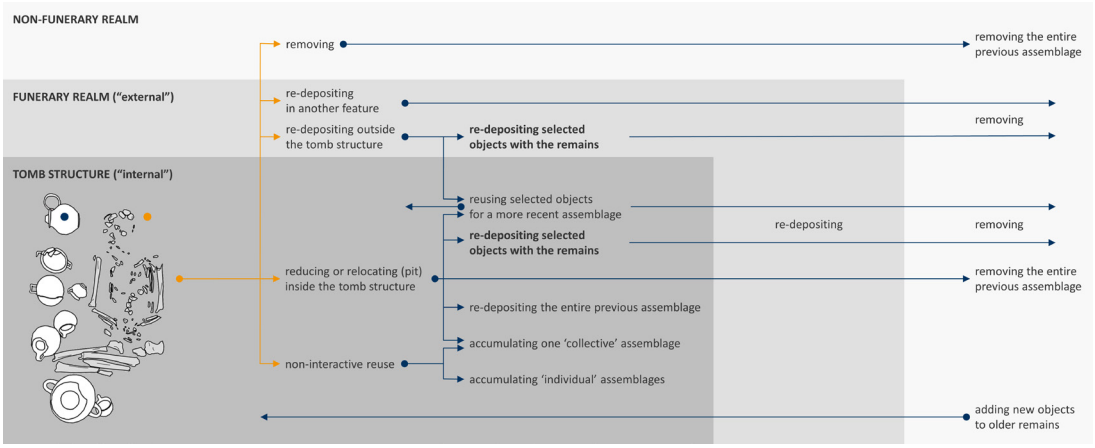

Fig. 2 – Depositional pathways of remains (orange) and objects (blue) in reused tombs, with selective object re-deposition set in bold. Own work, drawing of tomb 3/12 at the Giarnera Piccola/Ascoli Satriano based on Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 279 fig. 17.

Secondary deposits between practices and processes

Secondary deposits in multi-use tombs are complex features that, by definition, contain human remains but also discarded artefacts and soil matrix. These features are the result of both short-term, anthropogenic events and taphonomic processes that occurred over various time scales, e.g., soft tissue decay and skeletal disarticulation, water infiltration, bioturbation, and sedimentation[9]. Before focusing specifically on a number of case studies from pre-Roman South-East Italy, it is helpful to conceptualise this twofold formation of the archaeological record in theoretical and methodological terms.

Relocating bones

French archaeothanatology offers a terminological framework for describing depositions of remains[10]. A deposition – an act with a deposit as its outcome – is "secondary" when it completes the intentional movement of remains in various degrees of disarticulation from an original to a final resting place. Secondary depositions represent a subset of post-funeral practices, i.e., the various kinds of human intervention that occur after all the steps of the original deposition have been conducted. In the case of inhumations, this original deposition is called "primary" when the body, or a part of it, is placed in the ground with the anatomical articulations still intact[11]. Among secondary depositions, "internal" and "external" variants are distinguished, depending on whether they occur inside the feature in which the corpse was originally deposited or outside it. In the former case, a distinction is made between "reduction", performed within the same space, e.g., a pit or sarcophagus, as the primary deposition, and "relocation" to a sub-space within it, e.g., a cavity or niche[12].

As it refers to the moment of past deposition and not of archaeological excavation, the terminology is interpretative, or reconstructive, and not merely descriptive. Secondary deposition is inferred when remains show disarticulation, lack small or fragile bones, indicate

9 Gleize 2020 with a discussion of "N-" and "C-transforms" in reused graves.

10 For bibliography, see note 2 above.

11 Knüsel – Robb 2016, 657–658; Kerner 2018, 52–58.

12 Duday 2009, 72; cf. Kerner 2018, 67–70. 150–172, who also categorizes external secondary depositions as reductions ("reduction avec transfert" versus "reduction repoussée").

a patterned, i.e., non-random spatial arrangement, or, conversely, appear to be commingled. Archaeothanatological protocols allow types of deposition to be distinguished by paying attention to the relative chronology in which labile and more persistent skeletal joints dissolve, to the formation and infilling of mortuary features, and to how bones move depending on these two sets of parameters. Nevertheless, it can be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to differentiate secondary depositions from primary ones that have undergone taphonomic or anthropogenic disarrangement and *in situ* bone loss later in their post-depositional history[13]. Moreover, it is very difficult to prove that secondarily deposited remains decomposed in the same feature in which they were archaeologically recovered – the precondition of the overall scenario of tomb reuse – rather than having been transferred there after they had become dry bones[14].

Even if the depositional character of a feature is transparent, the timing of its formation may not be. It is generally assumed that secondary depositions were conducted at the time of a subsequent burial, yet they could also have taken place at some intermediate stage or have had nothing to do with the reuse of the tomb. For instance, re-deposition could have formed a distinct stage in the "funerary cycle"[15] or "chaîne opératoire funéraire"[16] of the original burial, or have occurred as a side effect of tomb looting, ancient or modern. The period between burial and secondary deposition can be narrowed down based on the degree of decomposition and disarticulation at the moment of manipulation[17]. Yet the speed of decomposition and disarticulation depends on a number of factors, both natural and anthropogenic, such as the state of the corpse, its clothing or wrapping, local soil chemistry, the depth of the burial, the construction and filling of the mortuary feature, as well as the existence of organic components within it[18]. The analysis of secondary depositions is therefore premised on negative arguments[19], ruling out other depositional pathways, temporal patterns and post-depositional processes that would tend towards equifinality in the archaeological record.

Discarding Artefacts

The formation processes of secondary mortuary deposits, particularly with regard to objects, resemble the discarding of refuse in non-funerary spaces[20]. In so far as they indicate repetitive, formalized or ritualized practices, they fulfil the criteria for what has been extensively discussed, in relation to such non-funerary contexts, as "structured deposition"[21]. Highly selective deposits of grave contents, such as those on which this chapter focuses, imply patterned depositions and suggest the intentional creation of "places with histories, places that structured and were structured by ritual practices that occurred over multiple discrete episodes"[22]. As the debate on refuse disposal warns, however, intentional practices do not necessarily result in recurrent material patterns, and conversely, assemblage patterning can result from practices which, though indeed culturally structured, are simply habitual.

Two intensively used tombs from the Salento epitomize the problem of assessing patterns in secondary deposits (Fig. 3). The first tomb was located in the courtyard of an early Hellenistic house at Soleto and received eleven successive burials[23]. The last, or primary, deposition (A) occupied the cist, while the remains of the earlier ones were either reduced (B), relocated

13 Robb 2016, 689–690; Duday 2006, 46.

14 Lauwerier et al. 2015, 37–38 prove such a post-funeral transfer in the case of a Merovingian-period tomb in the modern Netherlands that could be easily mistaken for a reused tomb with a floor pit.

15 Weiss-Krejci 2018; Weiss-Krejci 2011.

16 Valentin et al. 2014.

17 Aspöck 2011.

18 Cockle – Bell 2005; Aspöck 2011, 304. 306.

19 Duday 2006, 46.

20 For recent attempts to bridge various depositional contexts conventionally discussed in isolation, such as tombs and hoards, see Cooper – Garrow – Gibson 2020 and Hofmann 2020.

21 For overviews of the debate, see Garrow 2012 and Joyce – Pollard 2010.

22 Nilsson Stutz 2003, 153.

23 Soleto, Fondo Fontanella, tomb T: Van Compernolle 2012, 49–55 for the tomb; Gabellone – Chiffi 2015, 105–108 for the objects.

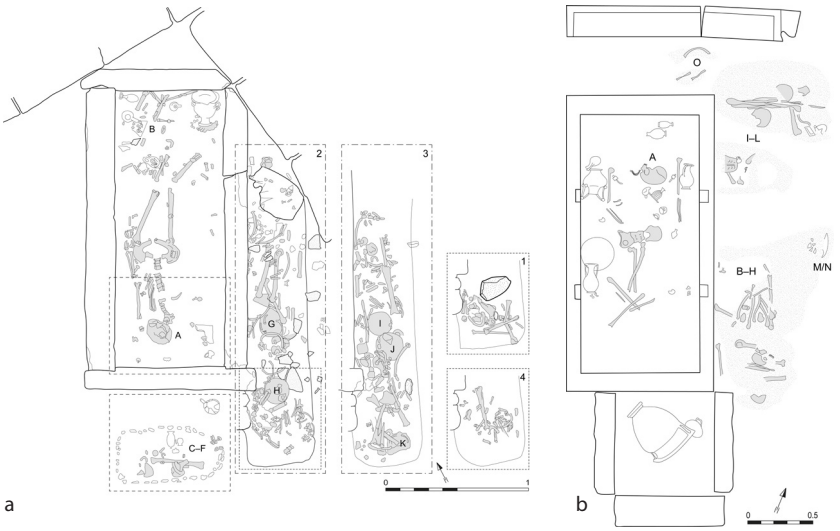

Fig. 3 – a) Soleto, Fondo Fontanella, tomb T and b) Vaste, Fondo Melliche, tomb 544 with secondary deposits. a) after Van Compernolle 2012, 50 fig. 68. 52 fig. 72. 53 fig. 73; b) after Semeraro 1990, 70 fig.

to a cavity in the floor (C–F), or re-deposited in a pit alongside the tomb (G–K). It was not possible to deduce a coherent use-life for the external deposit or to map it onto a timeline, as the remains had been stripped of their grave goods, except for a single coin[24].

The second example comes from Fondo Melliche in Vaste and represents both the earliest and the most recent phase of this burial ground, in which almost all tombs saw extensive reuse[25]. The assemblage from inside the sarcophagus indicates an early-third-century date for the last burial (A), whereas the vessel set from the attached stone cist probably refers to the initial burial in the second quarter of the fifth century BC. Within this time span, extensive burial activities were evident from several external secondary deposits which contained the remains of fourteen individuals (B–O). Moreover, these deposits held random fractions of the original grave contents, almost all of which were fragmented, incomplete and commingled.

In more general terms, the depositional practices oscillated between adding to previous materials and subtracting from them, with the result that the archaeological assemblages represent a sliding scale between "cumulative palimpsests" and "true palimpsests"[26]. In the former, material from successive depositions is preserved without loss but so mixed together that it is difficult, or impossible, to reconstitute the events that led to the archaeological record. In the latter, all or most evidence of earlier depositions has been erased or removed, leaving only the most recent. In the archaeological record, both the total retrieval of grave contents and their fragmentation, dispersal and mixing result in material patterns. These variants in past depositional practices were as much structured by cultural knowledge and regulated by social conventions as selective object re-depositions[27]. Though what follows focuses on the latter, it would be reductionist to create a dichotomy between structured as opposed to unstructured secondary depositions, or between "ritual" and "regular" ones; instead, they should be placed in a continuum of social practices.

24 For coins in Hellenistic tombs in Messapia, see Semeraro 2013.

25 Vaste, Fondo Melliche, tomb 544 with *ripostiglio* 567 and deposits 562, 565 and 577: Semeraro 1990, 69–85 for the tomb; Mastronuzzi – Melissano 2015, 22–24 for the objects.

26 Bailey 2007 on the terms and concepts.

27 For a practice-based approach to depositions, see, e.g., Gramsch – Meier 2013.

Bones and belts: object selection and secondary deposition

Across pre-Roman South-East Italy, secondary deposits occur that indicate the selection, whether intentional or habitual, of specific grave goods to be re-deposited with the human remains. In the cases presented, the non-random character of the re-depositions is inferred from three parameters: (1) the composition of the re-deposited grave goods, i.e., the smaller number of objects re-deposited compared with average assemblages of primary depositions, as well as the presence or absence of particular grave-good categories; (2) the narrow spectrum of object types represented overall in this kind of post-funeral treatment, both locally and regionally; and (3) the spatial placement of both the bones and the objects in the deposits. Those parameters particularly apply to metal objects, such as belts, weapons, knives, and adornments. As opposed to pottery, which formed a standard feature of every burial in the region but rarely of highly selective deposits, metal items were regularly extracted from the original grave-good sets, transferred to secondary deposits together with human remains, and arranged there in non-arbitrary ways. The discussed examples derive from a regional survey of tomb reuse, comprising a dataset of c. 200 tombs at eighteen sites.

Re-depositing belts

The most conspicuous depositional pattern emerges for bronze-sheet belts. These artefacts were widespread in fifth- to third-century Southern Italy, circulating all over Apulia, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, and Molise[28]. The so-called *cinturoni* are broad bands which were adjusted with clasps, mostly decorated or figuratively designed, and padded with leather on the inside[29]. Belts have long been classified as military equipment, but this interpretation has come under scrutiny[30], since the thin metal bands seem unlikely to have afforded effective protection in combat. Moreover, they do not regularly appear in association with armour or weaponry in funerary assemblages, and when they do occur along with, e.g., cuirasses, the items often do not allow for combination as actual armour. The military interpretation has strongly relied on Campanian tomb-paintings, particularly from Paestum, where return-of-the-warrior scenes show mounted soldiers wearing belts and dangling other belts from their spears as trophies[31]. By contrast, Southern Italian vase-paintings do not depict belts exclusively in combination with military accoutrements but, more generically, as emblems of the non-Greek, Italic identity of their wearers[32].

Rather than being functional pieces of armour, belts appear to have served as elements of dress, for the most part worn by men. Although their wearers were not necessarily warriors in life, however, belts may possibly have alluded symbolically to warrior identities[33]. The conventionally assumed association of belts with male gender has been substantiated at some sites, but there is still no sound empirical basis for generalization. Likewise, local to micro-regional conventions seem to have regulated whether belts were restricted to adult age, perhaps marking coming-of-age or a gradual transition to adulthood[34], or could be bestowed upon subadults. As many pieces show multiple repairs, they were evidently worn over a long period of life before being deposited in the tombs. There, belts continued to embellish their wearers, placed with care around the waist, spread out over the legs or upper part of

28 For belts and their typology, see Romito 1995; Sannibale 1995; Bottini – von Kaenel 1991; Suano 1986; Bottini 1983; for overviews and interpretations, see Herring 2018; Mannino 2004, 701–713; Suano 2000; Suano 1991; Robinson 1995.

29 For textile and organic residues on belts from Ascoli Satriano, see Tinkhauser – Töchterle – Heitz 2020 and Töchterle – Heitz 2020.

30 Heitz 2021, 88–89.

31 Pontrandolfo – Rouveret 1992, 42–44.

32 Nowak 2018.

33 Robinson 1995, 156.

34 Herring 2018; Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021, 17. 19 for Ascoli Satriano.

the body, rolled up on or next to the corpse, or unfurled alongside it[35].

The close association between belts and bodies tends to be sustained in post-burial practices. In the Giarnera Piccola area of Northern Apulian Ascoli Satriano, reused tombs account for about twenty per cent of the total[36]. Re-deposited remains, found mainly in floor cavities, come with, if any, a very limited number and spectrum of objects, restricted to adornments, spearheads, knives or belts, or a combination of these. Overall, nine belts or belt parts have been recovered from fourth-century burials, and where the context was clear and sexing conclusive, they adorned men over twenty years of age, only one individual being, potentially, female, and one morphologically adolescent[37]. Three of the *cinturoni* stem from secondary deposits. The first, a fragmentary piece, was placed in a floor cavity with the fully disarticulated remains of an adult male, possibly also accompanied by other dress items [AS1/08][38]. The individual that succeeded to occupancy of this tomb was accompanied by a belt as well and represented the only potentially female individual from local tombs with belts[39].

The second re-deposited belt at the Giarnera Piccola comes from a ground-carved *grotticella* tomb [AS5/07; Fig. 4a], which housed four successive inhumations, whose ceramic grave goods were accumulated on both sides of the entrance. While the last interment (A) occupied the centre of the chamber and also wore a belt, the preceding burials had been reduced in different ways. One individual (B) was slightly pushed aside, while the remains of another (C) were split, with the cranium being relocated to one side of the final, primary deposition and the long bones to the other. Whether the missing postcranial skeleton parts of these two individuals had completely decomposed or were removed upon reduction remains unsettled. The remains of the fourth individual (D) had been heaped up in the corner of the open chamber. Selected for re-deposition with the bones, perhaps by then already completely disarticulated, were a belt and a spearhead[40].

The third secondarily deposited belt belonged to a large pit grave that saw at least five depositions, though with a significant time gap between the earliest and the latest [AS3/10; Fig. 4b]. The earliest inhumations (C–E), with associated adornments dating from the sixth century BC, were found relocated along the edge of the covering, while the pit itself contained the primary deposition of an adult male (A), whose grave goods dated from the early fourth century BC. Beneath the skeleton and covered by a thin layer of earth lay the relocated remains of another adult male (B). The fully disarticulated bones were arranged in a bundle, with the long bones positioned in parallel and the cranium placed on one side. The remains had been stripped of their original grave goods, except for a spearhead and an iron knife, placed beneath the bones, and a belt, which was carefully rolled out alongside them. Immediately adjacent was another tomb with a convergent use-life[41], in which the re-deposited remains of a male individual, gathered into a tight bundle of bones in a floor pit, retained only a knife [AS3/12]. A re-deposited belt was also found in a fourth-century tomb in another zone of Ascoli Satriano; again, it had been placed with the bones in a floor deposit [AS3].

Re-deposition of belts also occurred in nearby Ordona, where reuse affected a similar share of the tombs as at the Giarnera Piccola. Here, belts were found in twelve fourth-centu-

35 E.g., Ascoli Satriano, Valle Castagna, tomb 4 (Corrente – Liseno 2010, 265–267); Ascoli Satriano, Giarnera Piccola, tomb 3/11 (Larcher – Laimer 2013, 46–48); Ordona, Belgian excavation areas, tombs 91, 97, 106, 123, 130, 137, 144, 149, 173 (Iker 1986, 782–783 with a synthesis); Ordona, Contrada Cavallerizza, tomb 382 (Catalli et al. 2018); Ripacandida, San Donato, tomb 82 (Heitz 2021, 64. Catalogue: 134–136); Canosa, Piano San Giovanni, Ipogeo dei Vimini, lateral chamber, both depositions (De Juliis 1990); Gravina in Puglia, Padreterno, tombs 4/1988 and 10/1999 (Ciancio 2003, 28–34).

36 Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 265.

37 Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021, 17.

38 Cf. appendix with additional data and full references for each tomb discussed or mentioned.

39 For this second belt, see Tinkhauser – Töchterle – Heitz 2020 and Töchterle – Heitz 2020.

40 For the belt, Töchterle – Heitz 2020.

41 Both tombs formed part of an architectural precinct which was perhaps dedicated to commemorative ceremonies; see Laimer 2016 and Heitz in preparation.

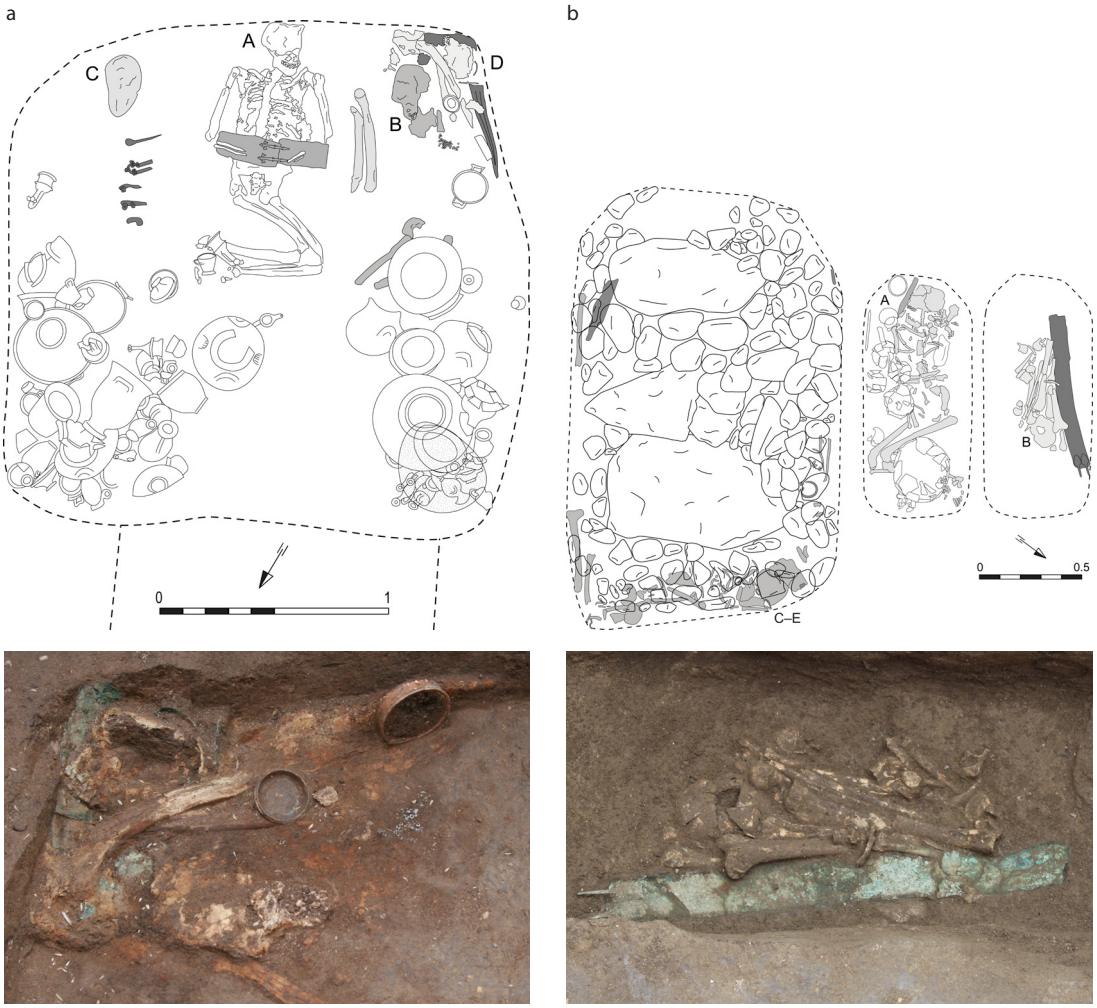

Fig. 4 – a) Ascoli Satriano, Giarnera Piccola, tomb AS5/07, with a photo of the secondary deposition of individual D, and b) Ascoli Satriano, Giarnera Piccola, tomb AS3/10, with a photo of the secondary deposition of individual B. a) drawing after Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021 2019, 273 fig. 11; photo after Heitz – Hoernes – Laimer 2018, 335 fig. 7; b) drawing after Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021 2019, 277 fig. 15; photo after Heitz – Hoernes – Laimer 2018, 339 fig. 14.

ry tombs[42]. Two of them originated from secondary depositions, which in Ordona sometimes retain dress items but have often lost all of their grave goods[43]. In the first case, a pit grave [ORD127; Fig. 5a], the partially articulated remains (B) were transferred to one side, with the skull still resting on a head rest, to make room for the subsequent burial of a female individual (A). An iron knife was placed above the cranium of the relocated remains, and a patched belt, as in the Ascoli tomb, was rolled out and placed next to them. The second case comes from a tomb installed in a natural trench, closed at one end with a mud brick wall and at the other with a tile which could be removed, allowing three burials to be introduced over the second half of the fourth century BC [ORD164; Fig. 5b]. The remains of the two earlier burials were re-deposited, one (B) at the edge of the chamber and the other (C) in

42 Iker 1986, 782–783 with an overview of the finds from the Belgian excavations.

43 Cf. appendix with references.

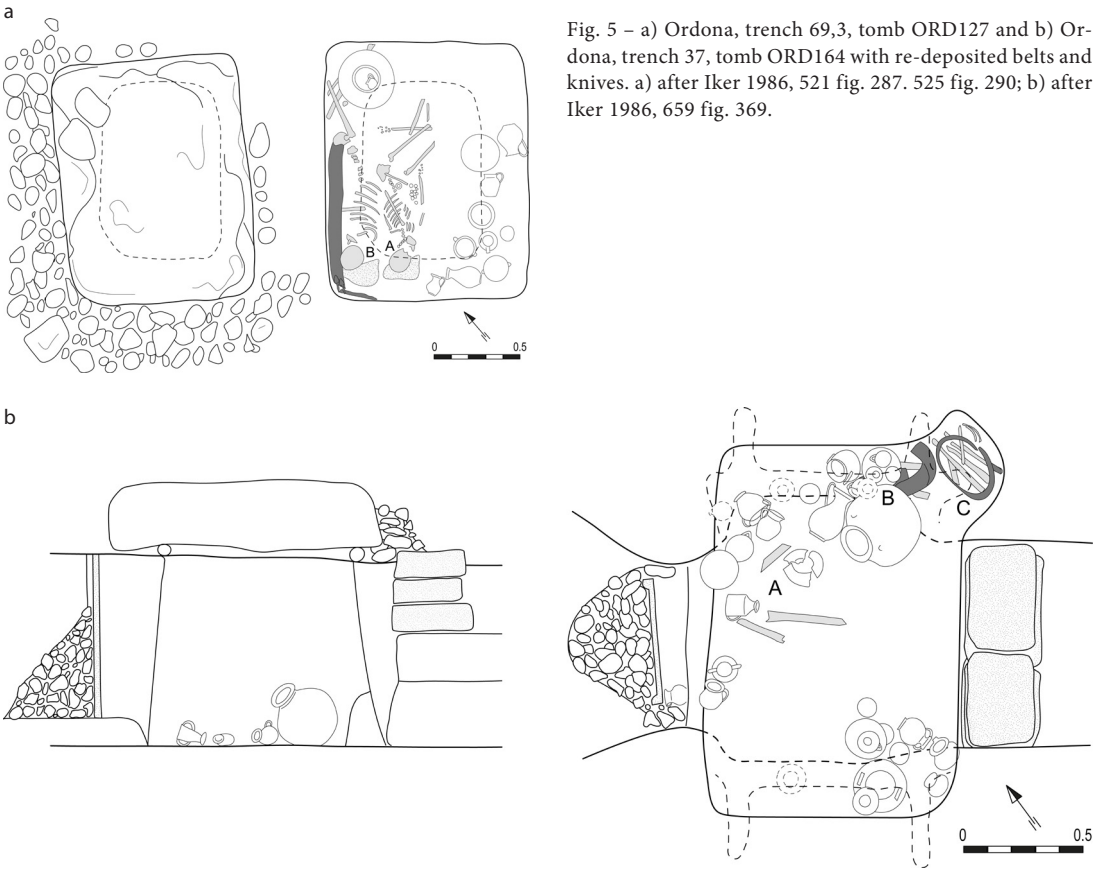

Fig. 5 – a) Ordona, trench 69,3, tomb ORD127 and b) Ordona, trench 37, tomb ORD164 with re-deposited belts and knives. a) after Iker 1986, 521 fig. 287. 525 fig. 290; b) after Iker 1986, 659 fig. 369.

a niche in the corner. Bronze belts, again with multiple repairs, were placed curled up on top of both, and in the niche, a knife was laid beneath the bones. A fragment of an iron spit had been rusted onto the blade, but the spit itself did not find its way into the deposit.

Belts also followed bones in multi-use tombs in other parts of the region. In Muro Leccese in the Salento, a fourth-century cist grave took seven successive burials, exclusively of male adults [ML2]; some of the external depositions adhered to a pattern in which the long bones were positioned in parallel with the skull between them, and one of them was covered with a belt spread out. In Vaste, a cist grave gathered six successive burials and held both external and internal secondary deposits, one of the latter reduced and another relocated to a cavity in the floor [VA84.12; Fig. 6]. The relocated remains were those of a male of over sixty years of age, the only one of the previously deposited deceased to retain any grave goods – a belt in two pieces, placed next to the skull. Further evidence points to the post-funeral preference given to belts; for instance, a deposit in Vaste with belt clasps and a helmet crest [VA191], another two features, also in Vaste, in which two or more depositions were superimposed, assembling small sets of items including belts [VA584 and VA1/1968], deposits with belts in Soleto in the Salento [SO1981], and small selections of items with belts in Conversano [CO3/1988 and CO1/1990] in central Apulia[44].

44 In other deposits in Conversano, metal items such as spearheads and belts are accompanied by further, fragmented, grave goods, including pottery, which renders their composition arbitrary, rather than selective; e.g., Via Torino, tomb 4/1991 and Via D. Ramunni, tomb 4/1991 (Ciancio – L'Abbate 2013, 309–312. 320–325).

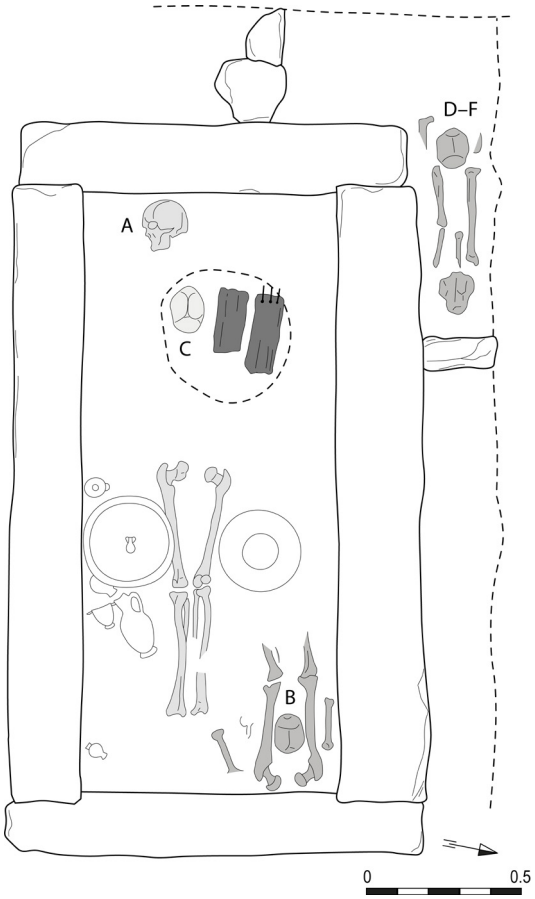

Fig. 6 – Vaste, Fondo Pizzinaghe, tomb VA84.12 with re-deposited belt. After Lamboley 1996, 415 fig. 43.

All of these secondary deposits with belts attest to selectivity in the items re-deposited and formality in the way they were placed.

Re-depositing spearheads

Like belts, spearheads tended to stay with relocated bones. Since they show little typological consistency in Southern Italy, spears are defined here as all pointed weapons with long shafts[45]. In Northern and central Apulia, they are the most frequently represented class of weapon among the grave goods, and often the only one, whereas tombs in the Salento do not include weapons of any kind[46]. Spears often occupy prominent positions in the tombs, particularly Daunian ones, e.g., lying next to the deceased's head or the upper part of the body, propped against the wall of the pit or inserted into it, and may represent the last object deposited outside the tomb after sealing[47]. Given their prominence in funerary display and an assumed link to warfare or hunting, spears have been stereotypically ascribed to elite male identities, but this gendered interpretation, at least in its generalized form, is less clearly supported by the archaeological evidence than in the case of belts[48].

Re-deposited spearheads appeared in two of the Giarnera Piccola deposits already discussed, one along with a belt and the other with a belt and a knife [AS5/07; Fig. 4a and AS3/10; Fig. 4b respectively]. Spearheads are also rare in Ordona [ORD71] but frequently occur in Lavello in Northern Basilicata. In the Contrada Casino necropolis[49], almost a quarter of the tombs saw reuse, but as most of the re-depositions were reductions and the documentation is coarse-grained, it is hard to correlate grave goods with distinct depositions. Based on the

45 Inall 2014; Small 2000; Bottini – von Kaenel 1991.

46 As for armour, the single exceptions are helmets, helmet crests and terracotta skeuomorphs thereof; see Mannino 2004, who, however, also includes bronze belts in her discussion of military accoutrements.

47 E.g., spearheads deposited next to the head or upper part of the body of the deceased: Ordona, trench 59, tomb 95 (Iker 1986, 385); Canosa, Piano San Giovanni, Ipogeo dei Vimini, lateral chamber, both depositions (De Juliis 1990, 81 no. 48. 49; 110 no. 75) – spearheads fixed in the wall of the pit: Ordona, Southern extraurban area, tomb 50 (Iker 1984, 196) – spearheads deposited on the coverings of the tombs: Ascoli Satriano, Giarnera Piccola, tombs 9/03 (Laimer – Larcher 2006, 52–53) and 3/11 (Larcher – Laimer 2013, 47); Ordona, trench 79,2, tomb 79.OR.54 (Maes 1997, 90); Ordona, Belgian excavation areas, tombs 53, 93, 149 (Iker 1984, 208; Iker 1986, 376. 617); Lavello, urban area, tomb 71 (Giorgi et al. 1988, 77) – spearheads fixed in the ground outside the tomb: Ascoli Satriano, Cimitero Vecchio, tombs 36, 46 (Tinè Bertocchi 1985, 49. 69) – spearhead deposited in front of the vertical entrance slab: Ascoli Satriano, Colle Serpente, tomb A 4 (Larcher – Defranceschi 2012, 18. 33–34); Canosa, Piano San Giovanni, tomb 1/08 (Corrente 2014, 179); Ordona, SS 161, tomb 12 (Corrente et al. 2008, 395 n. 48).

48 Kelley 2013, 288–289. 337 arguing for a non-gender-specific association in central Apulia.

49 Giorgi et al. 1988.

Fig. 7 – Muro Leccese, Masseria Cunella, tombs ML1/2 with re-deposited spur und strigil. After Giardino – Meo 2008, 20–21 fig.

publication, spearheads nevertheless seem to have been among the classes of object most often re-deposited with the remains, after adornments and followed by knives [e.g., LA223].

Spears already loomed large in the assemblage of one of the seventh-century "princely tombs", in which a bundle of spears was deposited next to the body[50]. These two Archaic *tombe principesche* formed the focal point of the Contrada Casino necropolis, and particularly of one tomb cluster in the centre of the area. This central cluster contained a concentration of spearheads, found both in the sixth-century tombs that were installed in the vicinity of the *tombe principesche* and which saw reuse after some time, often with spears accompanying both earlier and later depositions, and in the fifth- and fourth-century tombs that adjoined them. Both their position and their assemblages suggest that the tombs clustering around the "princely tombs" could have been those of a status-affiliated group[51], and that spearheads served as markers of social identity that were selected for post-funeral re-deposition precisely because of this symbolic value.

In another zone of Lavello, Località Cimitero, a pit grave was apparently reopened and human remains transferred into the horizontal shaft that linked the tomb to an adjacent one, constructed some decades later in the first half of the fourth century BC [LA599/600]. The commingled remains were piled up with an extensive set of metal objects, including at least five belts, two swords, crests, a pair of cuisses, and several spearheads, but it remains unclear how this weapon re-deposition came about.

In central and Southern Apulia, spearheads also occur among sets of metal items selected for re-deposition. In Conversano, for instance, an external deposit assembled five spear parts, a belt, an iron spit and one strigil [CO3/1988], another held a belt and, again, a spearhead, and was associated with carbonized olive stones [CO2/1987], and a third deposit had a spear- and an arrowhead [CO1/1990]. In a tomb in central Apulian Bitonto, a previous occupant's remains had been reduced and placed above the later deceased's head, along with five spearheads and sockets, two knives, and a bronze arrowhead [BI3/2003].

Re-depositing strigils, adornments and other metal items

Evidence for post-funeral re-depositions of other metal items is provided by two large adjacent tombs in Muro Leccese in Messapia, which together contained the remains of 27 individuals [ML1/2; Fig. 7]. The bones were deposited in floor cavities and in an external feature, but as both tombs had been disturbed by clandestine excavators, many remains surfaced in the backfills. Those reliably associ-

50 Bottini 1982.
51 Cf. Osanna 2008, 150.

ated with the tombs, however, still indicated intense burial activity, mainly in the fifth to mid-third centuries BC. The Southern tomb, which included only early Hellenistic artefacts, featured a secondary deposit in the floor and four cavities arranged in a square which had served to anchor the legs of a wooden bier. As this structure decomposed, both the tomb's last occupant (A′), placed in a supine position, and the grave goods arranged on top of the body sank to the floor without major displacement or breakage, therefore reflecting a taphonomic telescoping effect rather than anthropogenic deposition[52].

The Northern tomb contained mainly fourth-century material and was thus the older of the two. Its floor featured three secondary-deposition pits, one of which was untouched by the raiders and contained the remains of two males, one of them adult (A), the other morphologically adolescent (B). Their grave goods had been removed at the time of the post-funeral transfer, except for a strigil and one spur, deposited on top of the bones[53]. The spur matches the fact that the older male's femora (A) showed morphological variations ascribed to habitual riding[54]. It is not possible to date either the secondary depositions or the original burials with confidence, but the latter could correlate with an early phase of the tomb's use in the fifth century BC[55]. This phase is evidenced by the fragment of a bronze kantharos and especially by an exquisite Attic black-figure volute krater, attributed to the workshop of the Antimenes Painter, which depicts departing warriors, mostly in chariots, on its neck[56]. Parallels appear to be extremely rare among the Attic imports in Messapia, in terms both of shape[57] and of the non-mythological warrior scenes[58]. Perhaps the krater marked the elite status of the individual equipped with the spur, with whose lifestyle the imagery may have resonated.

Strigils are sometimes to be found in secondary deposits both in Messapia and Peuketia, often, again, as part of limited sets of relocated items[59]. A tomb in Bitonto, for instance, featured reduced remains, partially covered under the more recently buried body, which were accompanied by a knife, a fork and a set of roasting spits, as well as two strigils [BI7/2003]. One of the strigils, made of lead, was a non-functional substitute exclusively made for funerary display, a common practice in central Apulia[60]. As for the other items, tools for roasting and preparing meat occur in several local funerary assemblages in association with coarse-ware pottery. Placed on stands and showing traces of fire, these barbecue sets accompanied deceased of both genders[61]. The artefacts selected for re-deposition therefore seem to have been assigned a symbolic valence that continued to inform post-funeral practices. A similar rationale might have underlain the selection of knives, both alone and with other items, in deposits in Daunia, Peuketia and Northern Basilicata[62].

52 For the taphonomic implications of biers, see Bérard 2017b, 54–55 and Iacono 2004/2005, 329–330.

53 Robinson 2021, 134 no. 5 as part of a wide overview of spurs in the region.

54 Giardino et al. 2014, 421; Giardino 2014, 217; Giardino – Meo 2011, 35.

55 Robinson 2021, 134 dates the spur to the fifth century BC, based on comparison with other finds from the Salento.

56 Giardino 2014. The excavator assumes that the krater remained part of the funerary assemblage until the final deposition in the tomb, but since some of the fragments surfaced between the two tombs, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the vessel had been re-deposited there some time earlier in the use-life of the tomb.

57 Mannino 2014.

58 Mannino 2006, 248–252 with a statistical analysis; Mannino 2004, 716–721 for the scarcity of warrior scenes also among the Southern Italian red-figure pottery found in the Salento.

59 Cf. appendix with references.

60 From Bitonto, tripods, roasting spits, tongs, hooks, a fork, and cosmetic tools are attested in the form of non-functional lead substitutes; see Depalo – Fioriello – Mangiatordi 2003, 147 no. 138. 139 (tomb 2/1983); 160–161 no. 184–192 (4/1981).

61 Riccardi 2003; Riccardi 2008. For a female individual buried in a semi-chamber tomb (4/1981) and equipped with a broad range of grave goods, including a barbecue set, see Depalo – Fioriello – Mangiatordi 2003, 148–161 and Riccardi – Depalo 2003, 102–104. For cooking ware in the assemblages and potential funerary banqueting, see Kelley 2014 and Peruzzi 2018.

62 Heitz 2021, 219–220 with a site-based typology of knives. At least at the Giarnera Piccola, knives seem to be restricted to male individuals.

The objects that most often found their way into secondary deposits all over the region were dress items and adornments. As they were attached to the body being manipulated, this association is, for the most part, a corollary of re-deposition, but adornments appear to have been specifically selected in some Archaic tombs from the Melfese in Northern Basilicata. In the cemetery of Ripacandida[63], consisting of 134 tombs, only one tomb apparently saw reuse. Before the final occupant was interred in the second half of the sixth century BC, the skull, at least, of a previously deposited individual had been transferred to a cavity in the floor, along with a tightly packed cluster of metal artefacts [RIP45]. Comprising fifteen fibulae, some of them with amber and bone components, as well as amber pendants, rings and further items, this set seems to have derived from one of the earliest and most conspicuous assemblages of the necropolis[64]. Similarly, a small pit with bones and eight dress items surfaced in a funerary area in Banzi, though without a corresponding tomb [BA670], and in a tomb in Lavello, a torque, bronze pendants, rings, bracelets and fibulae from an earlier deposition had been gathered beneath a 'Ionian' cup deposited during the more recent burial [LA287].

In the *grotticella* tomb at the Giarnera Piccola [AS5/07; Fig. 4a], the individual (C) whose femora and skull were re-deposited separately was associated with five fibulae, which had been carefully arranged in a row below the dislocated cranium after the remains had been manipulated. This accurate placement of dress items has its local parallel in a slightly earlier grave in the Valle Castagna burial ground [AS8]. Here, nine fibulae, a knife and a hairpin were aligned in a row next to a bundle of bones that had been heaped up in the corner of the pit. Among the remains, a glass-paste pendant and a tubular sheet-gold ring were uncovered. Rings of this type, known as "Apulian rings", are thought to have served as hair fasteners, rather than as earrings, and usually occur in pairs[65]. The absent second ring may had been removed from the Valle Castagna grave ahead of the re-arranging of the other metal items and the reduction of the human remains[66]. On top of the remains, as in the *grotticella* (on deposition D), a vessel was placed, perhaps indicating a libation after the bones had been re-deposited together with selected items from the original grave-good assemblage.

Making sense of secondary depositions

Practices of dislocating, disassembling, and discarding human remains and objects, in parallel or separately, give the lie to the expectation that the formation of the archaeological record was linear and that funerary assemblages correspond to a particular burial and mark one moment in time. Tomb reuse, rather, "extends the timeframe in which burials were places of transformation" and "interactions with materials associated with the dead" occurred, and hence offers insights into how both funerary and post-funeral practices "connect, display and transform different bodily and artefactual materialities on various timescales, creating, maintaining and fragmenting social personhood"[67]. This paper has focussed on one aspect of this extended engagement, viz. the extraction of objects from existing grave-good sets and their re-deposition with relocated remains. Such selective object re-depositions offer a perspective for exploring notions of the deceased and the grave goods associated with them, past experiences of tomb reuse, and methodological potentials.

If grave goods represent a selection of objects to be buried with the deceased[68], objects that followed the dead into secondary deposits represent selections from these selections. In the cases presented, with their limited number and spectrum of artefacts, this second-order selection revolved around metal items such as belts, weapons, strigils, knives, and adornments.

63 Heitz 2021.
64 Heitz 2021, 72.
65 Montanaro 2015, 177 with extensive literature.
66 Corrente – Liseno 2010, 275; Liseno 2012, 185.
67 Klevnäs et al. 2021, 1022.
68 Cf. Hofmann 2013, 272.

These classes of artefact figured prominently in funerary rituals, as demonstrated by their spatial association with the corpse, suggesting that they were, physically and conceptually, closely bound to the deceased, their bodies and social identities. Like the worn belts and the spur from Muro Leccese [ML1/2], some of these items bear evidence of pre-funerary use and thus evince enduring human-object entanglements in life and death. Such entanglements may have informed the post-funeral preference given to these items, whether tactically or tacitly, reflecting the social significance, or effectuality, they retained on the posthumous stage.

Selective re-depositions were arguably employed as a means of re-negotiating the deceased's status some time after death and burial by reinforcing certain aspects of their social identity, memory and personhood while dissolving others. For the group that performed the post-funeral transfer, this practice might be understood as form of enchainment in which pars-pro-toto objects represented social relationships and established connections between the past and the present[69]. Interactions with the dead appear most prominently in the Valle Castagna grave [AS8], where one of a pair of gold rings was re-deposited with the reduced remains and the second one removed, following a re-arrangement of other dress items [cf. AS5/07]. As opposed to these items still deemed significant, the large remainder of grave-good assemblages fell into disuse and were disposed of, the transitory funerary function of pottery being particularly apparent.

Post-funeral practices coalesce with natural processes in producing an archaeological record that would not have been the outcome of either of them alone[70]. Besides its methodological pertinence, this interplay must have affected how reusing tombs was experienced in the past. Firstly, earlier human actions structured those which occurred later in the use-life of a tomb, not necessarily performed by the same social group. This involved engagement with previously entombed grave goods but also with grave structures, starting with the act of opening a pre-existing tomb. Although only a few graves [cf. ORD164] had devices designed to facilitate reopening, most tomb types provided a covered burial feature, thus allowing direct re-access and affording a void for new depositions, unless filled with sediments. Similarly, as in the case of the graves in Vaste and Solento, the process of opening a tomb could also involve having to clear the space outside of burial features which had been backfilled and covered during preceding burial activities.

Secondly, taphonomic processes preconfigured post-funeral practices by assisting or allowing some and hindering or preventing others. Conversely, the inherent logic of these practices relied on the natural transformation of the body. Stratifying bones in floor pits, for example, presupposed advanced disarticulation, as did the reallocation of artefacts with remains, unless the latter were mechanically dismembered. Natural processes were anticipated in the construction of funerary furniture such as the wooden bier in the Muro Leccese tomb [ML1/2]. Widespread in early Hellenistic Salento, this model allowed burials in close succession, as a new bier could be constructed above the collapsed earlier one, with materials from previous depositions sometimes still lying on the floor (Fig. 8).

Thirdly, while most taphonomic processes are independent of human agency, some can be affected by it. This applies to the effects body preparation and tomb characteristics have on the decomposition of the body, a process which is sped up by oxygen diffusing into a grave on reopening[71]. The transfer of remains to another environment or their mechanical manipulation can yield similar effects, while the removal of metal objects originally associated with the body stops the process of bone staining[72].

69 For the concept, e.g., Rebay-Salisbury – Sørensen – Hughes 2010.

70 Cf. Gramsch – Grosskopf accepted.

71 Aspöck 2011, 306.

72 Dupras – Schultz 2013, 325–328; Kümmel 2009, 143–145. Removed objects were also indicated, for example, by the fragment of a spit in the Ordona tomb [ORD164], and by the handle of a bronze vessel in a deposit in Vaste, Fondo Melliche, with the remainder of the artefact missing; Semeraro 1990, 98 no. 116.

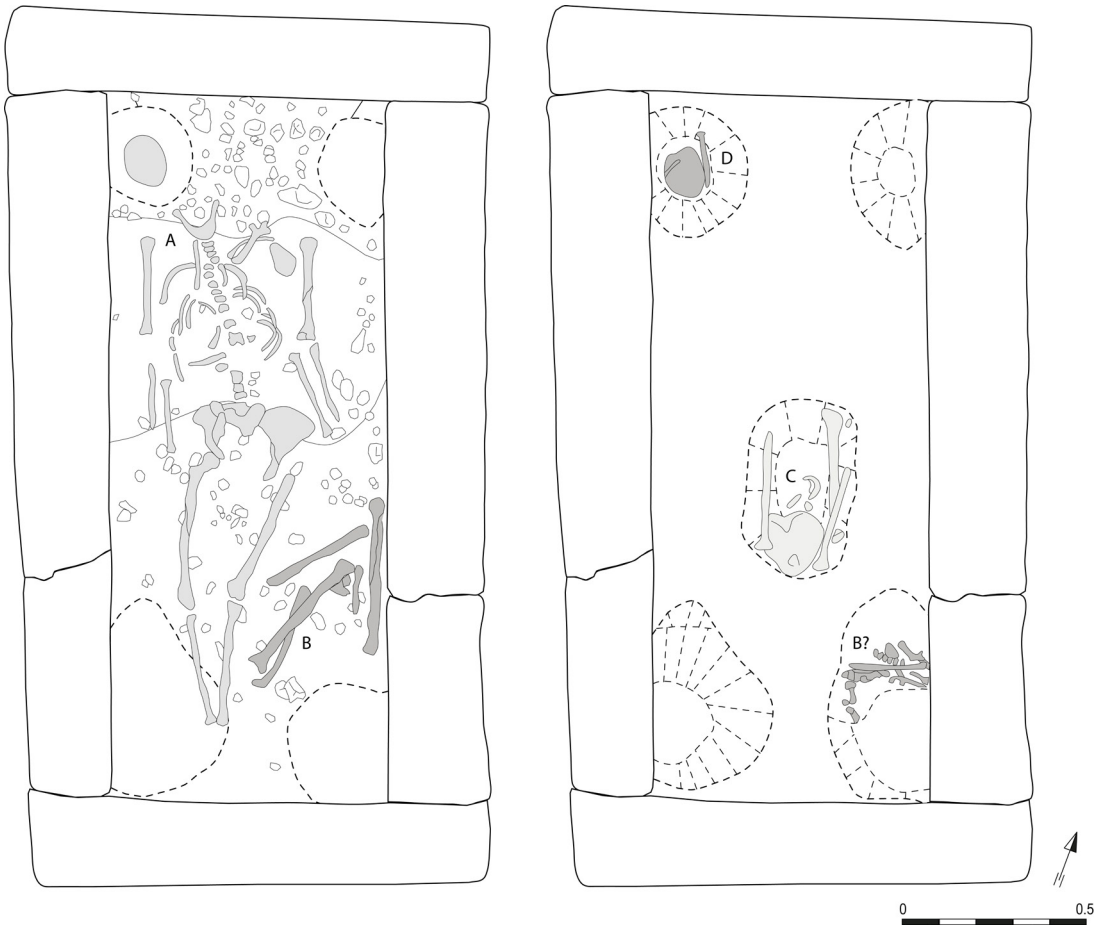

Fig. 8 – Muro Tenente, Saggio 37, two levels of tomb 2 with cavities for anchoring a bier. After Napolitano 2010, 75 fig. 21. 76 fig. 23.

In order to unravel the parts played by social practices and natural processes in the formation of secondary deposits, future studies on regional multi-use tombs should be devoted to the processes undergone by the body, i.e., depositional sequences, bone preservation, movement, loss and removal. Field data on bone position and articulation, post-excavation bone censuses, observations of mechanical manipulations, and refitting or conjoining studies can contribute substantially to this objective. For tracing object itineraries, minute recording is key, paired with attention to whether objects belonged to secondary deposits, derived from later interments, underwent taphonomic displacement or were removed intentionally. Both strands promise to widen the scope for relating the static archaeological record to the dynamics that produced it, as well as to the experiences of those who dealt with mortuary materials in the past.

Acknowledgements

I warmly thank Martin Guggisberg and Marta Billo-Imbach for inviting me to the Basel-based workshop, which stimulated debate despite isolation during the pandemic, and for commenting on my paper. I am grateful to Christian Heitz and

Naoíse Mac Sweeney, who encouraged me to develop more argumentative rigour, to Alexander Gramsch for sending me an unpublished manuscript, to Ted Robinson for sharing his thoughts on the Muro Leccese tombs, and to the anonymous reviewer, whose constructive comments significantly improved the paper. My thanks go to Christian Heitz, Manuele Laimer, Giovanni Mastronuzzi and Francesco Meo for permitting me to use images, to Andrea Sulzgruber for re-drawing one of the images, and, last but not least, to Isabel Aitken for revising the paper linguistically. The chapter arises from my finished PhD project on tomb reuse and post-funeral practices in pre-Roman South-East Italy.

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Appendix: catalogue of tombs referred to in the text

ID	Site	Area	Tomb no.	Tomb type	MNI	Deposition types	Anthropological data	
AS1/03	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	1/03	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	(A) sex undeterminable, infans I, 2–3; (B) sex undeterminable, infans I, 1.5–3	
AS1/08	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	1/08	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	(A) perhaps female, adultus, 30–40; (B) male, adultus/maturus, 35–55	
AS3	Ascoli Satriano	Colle Serpente, trench V	3	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
AS3/10	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	3/10	pit grave	5	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C–E) external secondary deposition	(A) male, adultus, 30–40; (B) male, adultus, 20–30; (C) sex undeterminable, iuvenis, 13–20; (D) probably male, adultus, 20–40; (E) probably female, adultus, 20–40	
AS3/12	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	3/12	pit grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit; (C) external secondary deposition	(A) male, adult, ≥40; (B) probably male, adultus/maturus, 30–60; (C) probably male, adultus/maturus, 30–60	
AS5/07	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	5/07	*grotticella* grave	4	(A) primary deposition; (B–D) reduction	(A) probably male, adultus, 20–40; (B) sex undeterminable, adultus/maturus, 20–60; (C) sex undeterminable, adultus, ≥20; (D) sex undeterminable, adultus/maturus, ≥40	
AS8	Ascoli Satriano	Valle Castagna	8	pit grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B, C) reduction	n/a	
AS9/03	Ascoli Satriano	Giarnera Piccola	9/03	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	(A) sex undeterminable, iuvenis, 14–18; (B) probably female, adultus, ≥20	
BA669	Banzi	Piano Carbone	669	cist grave	4	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C, D) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	(A) female, adultus, (?); (B) male, adultus, 30–35; (C) probably female, adultus, 25–35; (D) female, adultus, 25–35	
BA670	Banzi	Piano Carbone	670	depositional feature; corresponding grave unknown	1 (?)	external secondary deposition in pit	sex undeterminable, adultus, 25–35	
BI3/2003	Bitonto	Via Traiana	3/2003	sarcophagus	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
BI7/2003	Bitonto	Via Traiana	7/2003	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
CO1/1990	Conversano	Via Verdi	1/1990	cist grave	2 (?)	(A) primary deposition; (B) external secondary deposition	n/a	
CO2/1987	Conversano	Via Vanvitelli	2/1987	pit grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C) external secondary deposition	n/a	
CO3/1988	Conversano	Via Torino	3/1988	pit grave	2 (?)	(A) primary deposition; (B, C?) external secondary deposition	n/a	

	Date	Belts	Knives	Spear-heads	Weapons & armour	Adornments	Spits & forks	Strigils	Spurs	Further material	References
	6th c., 2nd h.					1 bronze bracelet					Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021, 8. 12. Supplementary material; Laimer – Larcher 2006, 49
	4th c., 2nd h.	1				dress items (?)					Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021, 17–18; Tinkhauser – Töchterle – Heitz 2020; Töchterle – Heitz 2020; Larcher – Laimer 2010a, 28–29
	4th c., 2nd h.	1									Osanna 2008, 161–164; Fabbri – Osanna 2005, 226–227
	4th c. (first phase of use: 6th c.)	(B) 1	(B) 1	(B) 1		(C–E) various adornments and dress items					Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021. 8. Supplementary material; Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 276–277; Heitz – Hoernes – Laimer 2018, 323–324; Obojes 2018, 356; Laimer 2016, 220; Larcher – Laimer 2013, 40–41. 44–45
	4th c. (first phase of use: [?])		(B) 1								Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 277; Heitz – Hoernes – Laimer 2018, 323–324; Laimer 2016, 220; Larcher – Laimer 2013, 50–51
	4th c., 2nd h.	(D) 1		(D) 1		(B) 69 glass-paste beads; (C) 4 silver fibulae, 1 iron fibula				(D) vessel deposited on top of remains	Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 272–274; Heitz – Hoernes – Laimer 2018, 321–322; Larcher – Laimer 2010a, 32–41; Larcher – Laimer 2010b, 247–248; Rückl 2012
	5th c., late/4th c., early		(B) 1			(B) 7 silver and iron fibulae, 1 silver ring, 1 silver hair pin, 1 gold-sheet ring, 1 glass-paste bead				(A) cup-skyphos deposited on top of remains	Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 274–275; Liseno 2012; Corrente – Liseno 2010, 267–272. 275–278; Corrente et al. 2008, 388–389
	4th c., 2nd h.					(B) 1 bronze ring, 3 iron fibulae					Hoernes – Laimer – Heitz 2021, 13. Supplementary material; Hoernes – Heitz – Laimer 2019, 271; Laimer – Larcher 2006, 52–53
	5th c./4th c., 1st h.		(B) 1								Mutino – Bruscella – Patriziano 2018, 19–23. 25–27
	7th c., 4th q.–6th c., 3rd q.					3 fibulae, 2 bronze bracelets, 2 bronze rings, 1 amber bead				fragments of two vessels outside pit	Mutino – Bruscella – Patriziano 2018, 23–27
	5th c., late		2	5 (heads and sockets)	1 arrowhead					1 eyelet ring	Riccardi 2008, 15. 20–21. 61–65
	4th c., 4th q.		1				6 spits, 1 fork	2			Riccardi 2008, 13. 15. 27–31. 78–86
	4th c., 2nd h.	1		1							Ciancio – L'Abbate 2013, 373–374
	4th c., late			(C) 1	(C) 1 arrowhead	(B) 1 fibula					Ciancio – L'Abbate 2013, 370; L'Abbate 1990, 101
	4th c., 2nd h.	(B/C) 1		(B/C) 5 (various parts)			(B/C) 1 spit	(B/C) 1		(B/C) 3 fragmentary metal items	Ciancio – L'Abbate 2013, 307–309

ID	Site	Area	Tomb no.	Tomb type	MNI	Deposition types	Anthropological data	
LA223	Lavello	Contrada Casino	223	pit grave	4	(A) primary deposition; (B–D) reduction	n/a	
LA287	Lavello	Contrada Casino	287	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
LA599/600	Lavello	Località Cimitero	599/600	*pozzo* grave and *grotticella* grave	2 (?)	(A) primary deposition; (B) external secondary deposition in shaft between graves	n/a	
ME114A	Melfi	Pisciolo, zona B	114A	cist grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ML1/2	Muro Leccese	Masseria Cunella	1/2	cist graves	[t. 2] 11 (?); [t. 1] 16 (?)	[t. 2] (A, B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit 800; (C, D) internal secondary deposition in floor pit 900; (E) internal secondary deposition in floor pit 700; (F–K) commingled remains from backfill [t. 1] (A′) primary deposition; (B′–D′) internal secondary deposition in floor pit 100; (E′–G′) internal secondary deposition in floor pit 300; (H′–P′) external secondary deposition	[t. 2] (A) male, adultus/maturus, 40–44; (B) male, iuvenis, 18; (C) male, adultus/maturus, 39–44; (D) male, adultus, 26–29; (E) sex undeterminable, adultus, (?); (F) male, adultus, (?); (G) male, adultus, (?); (H) sex undeterminable, adultus, (?); (I) sex undeterminable, infans II, 10; (J) sex undeterminable, infans I/II, 6–10; (K) sex undeterminable, infans I, 0–0.5 [t. 1] (A′) male, adultus, 35–39; (B′) male, adultus, (?); (C′) sex undeterminable, infans II, 9 ± 2; (D′) sex undeterminable, infans I, 0–0.5; (E′) female, adultus/maturus, 36–44; (F′) female, adultus, (?); (G′) sex undeterminable, infans I/II, c. 5 ± 16 months; (H′–L′) male, adultus, (?); (M′–O′) sex undeterminable, adultus, (?); (P′) sex undeterminable, infans I, 0–0.5	
ML2	Muro Leccese	Via Martiri d'Otranto	2	cist grave	7	(A) primary deposition; (B–G) external secondary deposition	(A) male, adultus, (?); (B, C) male, adultus, 30–40; (D–F) male, adultus, (?); (G) sex undeterminable, adultus, (?)	
ORD44	Ordona	–	44	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
ORD56	Ordona	trench 78,5	56	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	

	Date	Belts	Knives	Spear-heads	Weapons & armour	Adornments	Spits & forks	Strigils	Spurs	Further material	References
	5th c., middle		(B–D) 2	(B–D) 3 (heads and sockets)		(B–D) 1 bronze torque, 1 iron fibula, 1 bronze bracelet, 1 bronze ring	(B–D) 1 spit				Giorgi et al. 1988, 108–109
	(A) 6th c., 3rd q.; (B) 7th c., late/6th c., 1st h.					1 bronze torque, 2 bronze pendants, 3 iron fibulae, 2 bronze bracelets, 2 bronze rings, 2 bronze items					Giorgi et al. 1988, 131–132
	5th c., late/4th c., 1st h.	5 (+)	1 (?)	4 (?)	2 swords, 4 helmet crests, 2 cuisses					1 horse bit, 1 bone flute, several ivory appliqués, further minor items and fragments	Bottini – Fresa 1991, 35–43
	5th c., 1st h.		1 (?)								Mitro – Notarangelo 2016, 54–57
	[t. 2] 5th c.–4th c., 3rd q. (use-life) [t. 1] 4th c., 3rd q.–3rd c., middle (use-life)							(A, B; dep. 800) 1	(A, B; dep. 800) 1	fragmentary and disturbed materials from other features not included	Robinson 2021, 134; Calvaruso 2016, 86–87; Lonoce 2016, 93–94; Giardino et al. 2014; Giardino 2014; Giardino – Meo 2013a, 168; Giardino – Meo 2013b, 315–316; Giardino – Meo 2011, 33–39; Giardino – Meo 2008, 20
	4th c., 2nd h.	(D?) 1								potential material from other unknown deposits	Calvaruso 2016, 83 fig. 1. 88 fig. 10; Lonoce 2016, 96 fig. 6
	6th c., 1st h.		1			1 bronze fibula, 1 bronze-wire ring					Iker 1984, 170–174
	6th c., late/5th c., early					1 ivory ring					Iker 1984, 219–224

ID	Site	Area	Tomb no.	Tomb type	MNI	Deposition types	Anthropological data	
ORD62	Ordona	trench 6	62	pit grave	4	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C, D) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ORD68	Ordona	trench 34	68	pit grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B, C) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ORD69	Ordona	southern extraburban area, trench 75,4	69	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ORD71	Ordona	southern hill, trench 71,2	71	pit grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B, C) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ORD125	Ordona	southern hill, trench 71,15	125	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
ORD127	Ordona	trench 69,3	127	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction	n/a	
ORD161	Ordona	southern extraburban area, trench 74,1	161	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
ORD164	Ordona	trench 37	164	burial chamber installed in a trench	3	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit; (C) internal secondary deposition in corner niche	n/a	
RIP45	Ripacandida	San Donato	45bis	pit grave	2	(A) primary deposition; (B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
RUT6	Rutigliano	Contrada Purgatorio	6	*a muretti* grave	(?)	(A) primary deposition; (B–?) external secondary deposition	n/a	
RUV1/1993	Ruvo	–	1/1993	sarcophagus	3	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C) external secondary deposition	n/a	
SO1981	Soleto	Via Colombo	1981	cist grave	(?)	(A) primary deposition; (?) internal secondary deposition in floor pit; (?) external secondary deposition	n/a	
SOC	Soleto	Contrada Rángali (Palmisano)	C	cist grave	3	(A) primary deposition; (B, C) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	(A) male, adultus, 20–25; (B) female, senilis, ≥60; (C) sex undeterminable, infans I, 3–5	
VA1/1968	Vaste	Fondo Aia	1/1968	cist grave	2 (secondary dep.)	(A, B) internal secondary deposition in floor pit	n/a	
VA191	Vaste	Via Principe Umberto	dep. 191	depositional feature; corresponding grave unknown	1 (?)	external secondary deposition in pit	n/a	
VA325	Vaste	Via Enrico Toti	325	cist grave	5 (secondary dep.)	(A–E) external secondary deposition	n/a	

	Date	Belts	Knives	Spear-heads	Weapons & armour	Adornments	Spits & forks	Strigils	Spurs	Further material	References
	5th c., middle					(C) 2 iron fibulae; (D) 1 bronze-sheet pendant, 3 bronze-spiral fragments				(D) 1 iron spit	Iker 1984, 242–248
	5th c., late/4th c., early					(B/C) 1 bronze fibula					Iker 1984, 270–274
	5th c., 4th q.					2 iron fibulae					Iker 1984, 274–281
	5th c., late			(B/C) 1 (?)	(B/C) 1 sword	(B/C) 1 bronze bracelet					Iker 1984, 283–285
	4th c., middle					2 bronze fibulae, 3 bronze rings, 1 bronze bracelet					Iker 1986, 514–519
	4th c., middle	1	1								Iker 1986, 520–526
	4th c., 2nd h.					1 bronze ring, 1 bronze fibula					Iker 1986, 648–654
	4th c., 2nd h.	(B) 1; (C) 1	(C) 1							(C) 1 fragment of an iron spit	Iker 1986, 658–667
	6th c., 2nd h.					15 fibulae, 2 bronze rings, 1 amber pendant, 1 bronze spiral				1 bronze grater (?)	Heitz 2021, 72. Catalogue: 67–68
	4th c., 4th q.			1							Natali – Palmentola 2006, 26–30
	4th c., 2nd h./3rd c., early							(C) 1			Riccardi 2014, 142–144
	6th c., 2nd h. (?)–4th c., 2nd h. (use-life)	(external dep.) 1						(external dep.) 1		potential further material	Stifani 2015, 75. 88–89 no. 54; Donateo – Giannotta 2015, 128–140
	3rd c.							(B/C) 1			Van Compernolle 2012, 43–45
	4th c., 2nd h. (secondary dep.)	(A/B) 2			(A/B) 2 helmet crests	(A/B) 1 bronze fibula				(A/B) 1 one-handled cup	Delli Ponti 1996, 103–105
	4th c., late (secondary dep.)	3 belt hooks			1 helmet crest					further bronze items	Melissano 1995, 243–249; Mastronuzzi – Melissano 2015, 35
	4th c., 2nd h./3rd c., 1st h. (secondary dep.)					(dep. 373) 2 iron fibulae		(dep. 375) 1		(dep. 371) 1 terracotta statuette, 3 unguentaria	Melissano 1995, 229–243; Mastronuzzi – Melissano 2015, 34–35

ID	Site	Area	Tomb no.	Tomb type	MNI	Deposition types	Anthropological data	
VA584	Vaste	Fondo Melliche	dep. 584	sarcophagus	5 (secondary dep.)	(A–E) external secondary deposition in pit	(A) female, adultus, c. 33; (B) male, maturus, ≥ 50; (C) male, senilis, ≥ 70; (D) sex undeterminable, infans I/II, 6–8; (E) sex undeterminable, infans I, c. 2	
VA84.12	Vaste	Fondo Pizzinaghe	84.12	cist grave	6	(A) primary deposition; (B) reduction; (C) internal secondary deposition in floor pit; (D–F) external secondary deposition	(A) male, adultus, (?); (B) female, adultus, c. 35; (C) male, senilis, ≥ 60; (D) male, senilis, ≥ 60; (E) female, senilis, ≥ 60; (F) sex undeterminable, infans I/II, (?)	

	Date	Belts	Knives	Spear-heads	Weapons & armour	Adornments	Spits & forks	Strigils	Spurs	Further material	References
	4th c., 1st h. (?) (secondary dep.)	1								1 lekane, 1 fibula	Semeraro 1990, 126–132; Mastronuzzi – Melissano 2015, 27–28
	4th c., late/3rd c., early	(C) 1									Lamboley 1996, 414–422; Becker 1996; Mastronuzzi – Melissano 2015, 33

Norm and Deviance in the Funerary Practices of Iron Age Francavilla Marittima, Calabria

Martin A. Guggisberg, Marta Billo-Imbach, Laura Rindlisbacher, Jessica Fäh, Sandra L. Pichler

Introduction

The way in which the human body, or rather corpse, is buried, is defined by many determinants: social as well as religious, hygienic, climatic, and cultural ones. Diverse ritual practices serve the purpose of overcoming grief and loss, but also of illustrating the relationship between the deceased and those left behind. Besides the burial event itself, these practices also strengthen the social and cultural cohesion of the funerary community. Thus, graves are complex semantic systems that must be read and interpreted as such[1]. Often, however, this issue is addressed more superficially: from valuable gifts, conclusions are drawn about the high social position of the deceased, specific objects are related to his or her activity in life. An essential reason for this construction of a direct link between the deceased and their position in life is the uniformity of burial customs within individual necropolises or entire regions, suggesting a strong social and ideal standardization of the respective communities.

Corresponding concepts of funerary "norms" have also been shaping the methodological research approach to the necropolis on the Macchiabate terrace of Francavilla Marittima in Calabria[2]. About two thirds of the known 183 inhumations can be assigned to the Iron Age, the others date to the 7th and 6th centuries BC. Inhumations are the rule throughout. In the Iron Age, large grave-pits lined with river pebbles and filled with stones, round to oval in shape, define the burial landscape. In most cases, the corpse was deposited in a crouched position[3]: with the legs bent, sometimes flexed tightly, sometimes less so, the upper body of the deceased was placed flat on its back, the arms were bent so that the hands came to rest on the pelvis. Andreas Kinne, in his manual of excavation techniques (2009), labels this specific type of burial, i.e., in a crouched position with the legs bent to the left or right and the torso being arranged in a supine position, the Beinhocker scheme (*posizione semiranicchiata* in Italian). As such, it deviates from the true crouched Hocker burial, where the body is positioned entirely either on the right or left side[4].

Based on the grave goods, the different positioning of the lower extremities on the left or right side is generally understood as gender-specific, whereby men were buried with their legs bent to the right and women with their legs bent to the left[5]. In the near-complete absence of reliable anthropological data and the risk of circular reasoning, this distinction must, however, be met, with caution: while one may speak of a certain tendency with regard to the gender-specific arrangement of the burials in the Macchiabate necropolis, it should not be considered an over-

1 Hofmann 2013; Augstein 2013.

2 For a comprehensive overview of recent research on the Macchiabate necropolis see Guggisberg – Colombi 2021. For a more general discussion of the burial customs based predominantly on the graves excavated by P. Zancani Montuoro in the 1960s see Brocato 2011 and Brocato 2014. The vast majority of the known graves was excavated and published by P. Zancani Montuoro, see Zancani Montuoro 1970/1971; 1974–1976; 1977–1979; 1980–1982; 1983/1984. In her excavation reports, Zancani Montuoro published some photos but mostly sketchy drawings of the burials, which – although giving a good general impression of the archaeological context – are somewhat difficult to assess with regard to their accuracy and completeness.

3 Luppino et al. 2012, 651.

4 Kinne 2009, 59. For a detailed discussion of the terminology in the English-language research see Knüsel 2014, esp. 39–42.

5 Ferranti – Quondam 2006, esp. 583.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 113–128.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16919

arching norm. Among the significant exceptions is grave Strada 14[6]. Contrary to most female burials, in this case an adult woman, identified by both archaeological and anthropological criteria, was deposited with her legs bent to the right.

Burials of the Beinhocker scheme are widespread in indigenous contexts of Southern Italy and particularly along the coastal zone of the Ionian Sea, from the Iron Age onwards[7]. Next to Francavilla Marittima, the custom is attested at Torre Mordillo[8]. To the northeast of the Sibaritide, Beinhocker are the predominant burial scheme at Santa Maria d'Anglona[9] and Incoronata[10] in Basilicata as well as at Ascoli Satriano[11] and Ripacandida[12] in Apulia, the latter cemeteries dating from the 7th to the 5th century BC[13].

In the Archaic period the crouched body position was gradually replaced in some areas, such as the Sibaritide, by an extended supine position. Despite such local developments and because of its popularity, the Beinhocker scheme represents, an "intrinsic" characteristic of the Iron Age communities living in present day Apulia, Basilicata and Northern Calabria. But how uniform is this burial custom, and can it really be viewed as a reliable "reflection" of social norms and supra-regional cultural identities? Or, to put it in another way, what is the significance of those burials that do not fit into this scheme, that, either consciously or unconsciously, seem to deviate from the "norm"[14]? It is of course difficult to assess this question on a case-by-case basis; especially with regard to older excavations, such as those that Paola Zancani Montuoro carried out in the Macchiabate necropolis of Francavilla Marittima in the 1960s[15]. Nevertheless, it seems worthwhile to take a closer look at the burials of the Macchiabate necropolis regarding this topic. In this contribution, we focus on the graves of the Iron Age, dating between the 9th and the 8th centuries BC.

The anthropologic and taphonomic perspective

Similar to a life course approach – which draws the focus of research away from the moment of death towards an individual's entire life span[16] – the interpretive methodologies of funerary taphonomy and archaeothanatology allow the reconstruction of "biographies" of grave structures in their entirety[17]. By taking into account information beyond the archaeological findings themselves, a more nuanced reconstruction of mortuary contexts as well as the taphonomic processes affecting them becomes possible[18], adding an additional layer of insight into the ancient community.

In the Macchiabate necropolis, most inhumations exhibit a high degree of fragmentation. Joints or fragile bones like the scapula, ribs, vertebrae or the bones of hands and feet are rarely observed and hardly ever recovered. These missing elements and the poor bone preservation in general limit the scope of archaeothanatological analysis. Nevertheless, we can still gather valuable evidence on the taphonomic processes affecting burial and grave by observing placement, preservation and fragmentation

6 Guggisberg – Colombi 2021, 74–77 (S. Billo).

7 The burial custom is rooted in a longstanding funerary tradition attested from the late Bronze Age onwards in different parts of South Italy, possibly ultimately depending on influences from Epirus and the Western Balkans: Pacciarelli 1999, 67 (we owe this reference to Francesco Quondam, Basel). See also Kurtz – Boardman 1971, 308f.; Mercuri 2010.

8 Vanzetti 2014, 65–66.

9 Frey 1991.

10 Chiartano 1977; Chiartano 1994.

11 Laimer – Larcher 2006; Hoernes et al. 2019.

12 Heitz 2021.

13 For general remarks see Burkhardt 2013.

14 For a discussion of the problematic related to the concept of funerary norms see: Müller-Scheessel et al. 2020. Burials that do not correspond to the "norm" exist in many periods and cultures. From the end of the 20th century onwards they have become the focus of increased scholarly research: Shay 1985; Cunliffe 1992; Murphy 2008; Tsaliki 2008; Mastronuzzi – Tulumello 2016; Quercia – Cazzulo 2016; Nizzo 2015, 511–542; Nizzo 2018; Hoernes 2019; Hoernes et al. 2019; Betsinger et al. 2020.

15 The assessment of norm and deviance based on old excavations is of particular difficulty because of the often insufficient photographic or planimetric documentation. In Francavilla Marittima, the assessment is further complicated by the fact that the excavation reports were not published until 20 years after the excavation.

16 Sofaer 2006, 74–75.

17 Knüsel – Robb 2016.

18 Duday 2009.

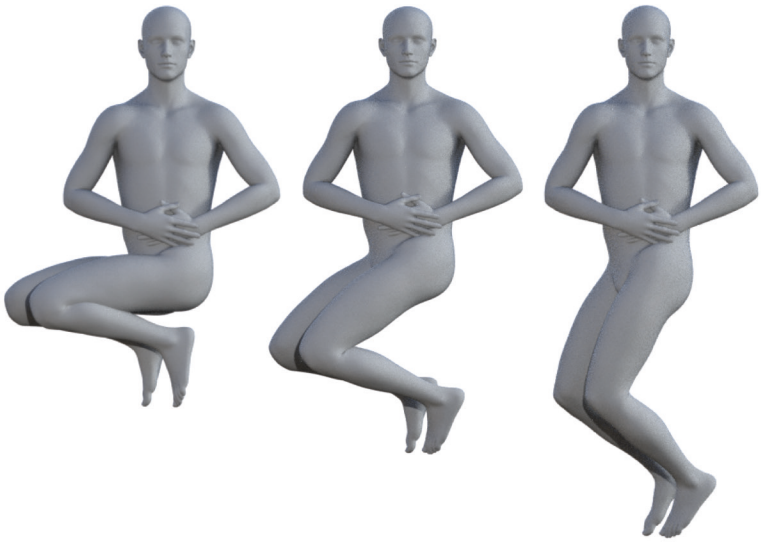

Fig. 1 – Three-dimensional scheme of the "narrow", "medium" and "wide" flexed positions of burials in the Macchiabate necropolis of Francavilla Marittima based on the results of Paola Zancani Montuoro (Zancani Montuoro 1974–1976; 1977–1979; 1980–1982; 1983/1984) and the excavations of the University of Basel (Guggisberg – Colombi 2021).

of the human remains in their specific contexts. The detailed *in situ* analysis of the position of individual bones as well as of their location in relation to the skeleton and to other finds and features can hint at the presence of decomposed organic materials (e.g., wooden structures, clothing or wrappings) or the secondary deposition of human remains. Voids left by either decomposing flesh or the collapse of cists or coffins permit individual bones or the whole skeleton to rotate and "move" within the grave. Deviation of skeletal elements from their anatomical order, deposition of partial skeletons or aberrant preservation suggest multi-stage mortuary rituals and secondary depositions, where histological analysis may aide in recognizing prior exposure or mummification[19]. Identifying such anthropogenic and natural taphonomic processes allows us not only to envision the original set up of the grave at the moment of burial but also to reconstruct the biography/history of the mortuary structure since its construction[20].

Ideally this analysis should be conducted on site by a field anthropologist with extensive prior training[21]. Retrospective archaeothanatological assessments based on photographs or drawings are possible but usually pose many challenges even if excavations adhered to an up-to-date standard of documentation. Yet even in the case of older and less well documented archaeological excavations, such an approach may still deliver new insights. Overall, an assessment of the social determinants and meanings behind funerary and/or mortuary practices is only feasible after anthropogenic influences as well as the initial situation inside a grave are painstakingly reconstructed, as this will provide a more plausible view towards the cultural projection manifest in the archaeological structures.

Beinhocker in the Macchiabate necropolis

All but a few of the Iron Age adult burials in the Macchiabate necropolis for which anthropological data are available[22] follow the Bein-

19 Booth 2016; Knüsel – Robb 2016.

20 Knüsel – Robb 2016, 657.

21 Knüsel 2014, 27.

22 In many cases, the layout of the body is impossible to assess because of the lack of skeletal remains. Where bone was preserved, the original arrangement of the body can often only be approximated because of possible taphonom-

hocker scheme. In contrast to this apparent homogeneity, there is, however, considerable divergence regarding the flexion of the legs (Fig. 1). While in approximately one third of the burials the angle between the upper and lower leg is between 40 and 140 degrees (= medium flexed position), there are some cases in which the legs are clearly more narrowly angled and drawn close to the upper body (= narrow flexed position). In a few cases, the lower limbs are almost straight (= wide flexed position)[23] approaching an entirely stretched – or supine – layout of the body, which is also attested in a few instances among the Iron Age burials of the Macchiabate necropolis (Fig. 8)[24]. This then becomes the rule in the entire Sibaritide in the subsequent Archaic period.

Detached from the question whether the positioning of the legs is of any significance in the burial customs in the Macchiabate necropolis, the arrangement of the body is clearly independent of the size of the burial pit. In most cases the burial pits themselves are much bigger than the corpses, leaving much space for the deposition of grave goods of all sorts. Because of its relation to the true Hocker scheme it is generally assumed that the legs of the Beinhocker burials were placed sideways. Although resulting in a somewhat "unnatural" twist between the upper and the lower body, this position can be physically achieved by a deliberate bending of the corpse once rigor mortis disappears. Positive evidence for such a treatment of the body is seen in grave Strada 14, where a slight inclination of the pelvis attests to the torsion of the body in the hip area (Fig. 2)[25].

While in most burials the parallel position of the long bones suggests that the legs lay on the ground from the start, there are a few cases where an upright position of the legs seems equally possible. This applies in particular to the X- and O-shaped arrangement of the leg bones in graves Temparella 86 and Uliveto 1, where the legs – still in articulation – might have fallen inwards and outwards[26]. It cannot be excluded, however, that the unusual position of the leg bones is due to physical handicaps of the two adult individuals, as it was suggested by P. Zancani Montuoro[27]. We must

Fig. 2 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Strada 14 (photo Francavilla-project Basel).

ic dislocations of bones and the rather schematic character of the drawings published by P. Zancani Monutoro. We refrain therefore from giving exact numbers in this place.

23 For the terminology see Knüsel 2014.

24 Supine position: Temparella 27 and Strada 15: Zancani Montuoro 1980–1982, 88–91 fig. 32; Guggisberg – Colombi 2021, 77–80 pl. 60 (C. Colombi).

25 Apparently similar: Temparella 57.

26 If the joints of the upright legs had separated first, the long bones might have fallen on top of each other rather than sideways. See a burial (grave 347) with legs originally drawn to the body in an upright position from Apollonia Pontika: Hermary et al. 2010, 114 pl. 49 (we owe this information to Reine-Marie Bérard, Aix-en-Provence).

27 Temparella 86: Zancani Montuoro 1983/1984, 92–99 esp. 93 and fig. 29. Uliveto 1: Zancani Montuoro 1977–1979, 49: The excavator assumed that the two women suffered from natural deformations of the legs. With regard to grave Uliveto 1 she referred to the fragility of the tibiae and the fibulae. Moreover, she found two big stones be-

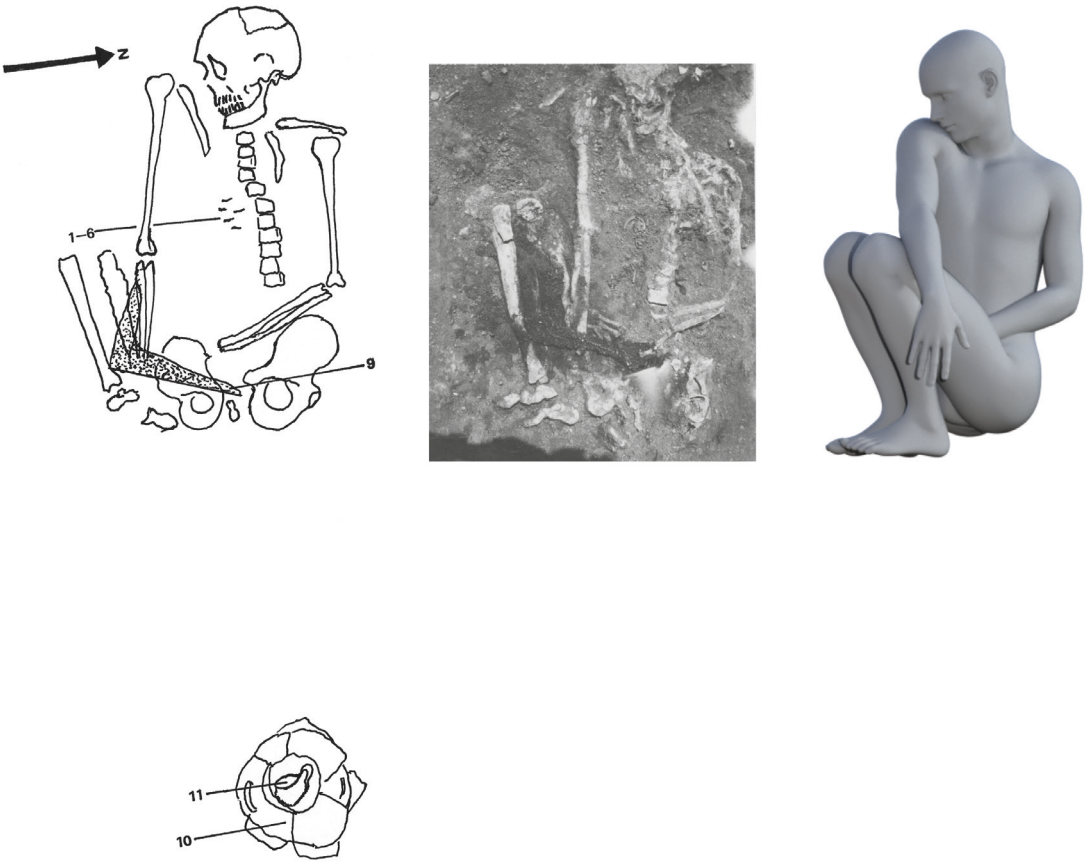

Fig. 3 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Temparella 40 (sketch and photo after Zancani Montuoro 1980–82, 108 fig. 38, pl. LXVII b; three-dimensional scheme based on the skeletal remains).

refrain therefore from a final classification of the two graves at this point.

Whatever the original setting of the lower part of the body of the Iron Age burials from the Macchiabate necropolis was, it seems evident that the legs were usually arranged freely and without the use of tight bandages or other physical restraints. No rule, however, is without exception, as is confirmed by the three graves Temparella 40, Lettere F and Strada 7, which differ considerably in their layout from the majority of graves just discussed.

tween the legs. Alternatively, she considered a ritual motivation for the unusual deposition of the corpse in grave Temparella 86.

"Deviant" burials in the Macchiabate necropolis

Graves Temparella 40 and Lettere F

Grave Temparella 40 was excavated by P. Zancani Montuoro in 1967[28]. The skeleton was well preserved, much better than in most other instances in the Macchiabate cemetery (Fig. 3). The bones are quite robust, thereby supporting the conclusion based on the archaeological data that we are dealing with a male individual. Several iron fibulae were found in the area of the thorax, two iron objects, an awl and a knife, were deposited to the right of the body,

28 Zancani Montuoro 1980–1982, 107–112.

while a chain-like hanging made of countless small bronze elements came to light in the pelvic area. An analogous hanging is known from a warrior's grave at Guardia Perticara, where it apparently belonged to the baldric, which was stretched diagonally across the torso[29]. The Francavilla Marittima hanging could have had a similar function, although the sword as such is missing. In any case the hanging would not have been deposited in its original position, as it was draped over the pelvis and the right forearm of the deceased. While the dress ornaments and grave goods correspond to the ordinary equipment of the dead in Francavilla Marittima, the arrangement of the corpse is most exceptional. It was buried in an extreme flexed position with an open torso and legs bent to the right and drawn close to the body. The left, slightly bent arm lies on the pelvis, as is customary in Francavilla Marittima, while the right arm is straight down to the hip. The extreme flexed position of the legs already prompted P. Zancani Montuoro to consider possible explanations. She pondered both a physical anomaly and a physical mutilation, but discarded the ideas based on the archaeological evidence. Rather she assumed, because of the oblique orientation of the right clavicle, the slight curving of the backbone as well as the asymmetrical position of the right and left arms that the corpse had been pushed "down" and "to the right" by the pressure of the stones of the backfill shortly after it was deposited and had thus been compressed.

As far as one can tell from the published photos and drawings, P. Zancani Montuoro's interpretation of the anthropological data seems convincing. There are no hints of a physical anomaly or mutilation of the body; the deceased was most probably buried in the traditional Beinhocker position with the exception of the legs that were drawn extremely close to the body. From the peculiarities of the upper body, it becomes evident that the torso was slightly bent. In particular, the oblique orientation of the clavicle and the asymmetrical position of the right arm are best explained by a torsion of the upper body, most likely in connection with the adjustment of the corpse in a crouched position. Interestingly the right arm was positioned so as to overlap the legs in a rather unnatural way. Thus, the corpse is arranged in an extraordinary position. In contrast to the mostly freely draped bodies that predominate in the Macchiabate necropolis, the corpse in grave Temparella 40 must have been bound with some sort of bandages and straps made of organic material or other means.

The bereaved probably consciously distanced themselves from the funerary "norm" prevailing in the Macchiabate necropolis in this case, which they however adhered to in the deposition of the ordinary vessel set of olla and cup exactly where they were traditionally placed: at the feet of the deceased, in this case albeit at a remarkable distance from the body[30].

The reasons for the special treatment of the deceased from grave Temparella 40 can no longer be determined. However, this handling does not appear to have been singular. P. Zancani Montuoro reports at least one other case, grave F in Area Lettere, of a skeleton with particularly tightly bent legs turned to the right of the body (Fig. 4)[31]. Again, the deceased individual was presumably male, as suggested by the absence of bronze jewelry and the presence of two iron tools, one of them an iron sickle, deposited to the left of the head. Contrary to grave Temparella 40, the traditional ceramic set of olla and cup were in this case deposited below the hips. Unfortunately, the grave is documented only by a sketch in P. Zancani Montuoro's diary, which, however, underlines the extreme crouched position of the body. Despite the poor preservation of the burial and its sketchy documentation, it seems likely that the body was again fixed in this extreme position with bandages or straps of some sort.

29 Bianco 2011, 38. We owe this reference to Francesco Quondam, Basel.

30 In fact, the set was located where we would expect it to be in a *Beinhocker* funeral according to the "norm".

31 Zancani Montuoro 1977–1979, 18: "lo scheletro del deposto molto rattrappito".

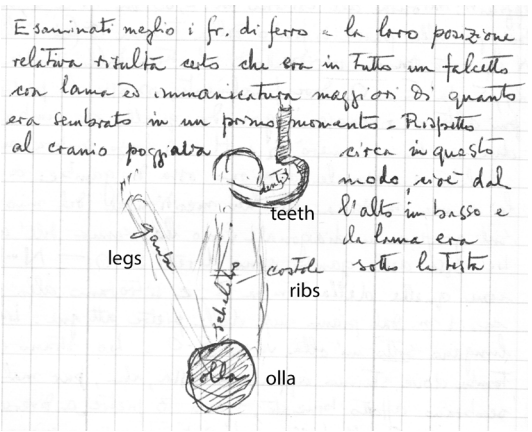

Fig. 4 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Lettere F (drawing, P. Zancani Montuoro diary 1963, courtesy of the Archivio dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei).

Grave Strada 7

A third grave, discovered more recently, is of particular interest: grave Strada 7, situated at the Southern edge of this burial plot (Fig. 5. 6). On an area of ca. 70 × 45 cm, the bones of an adult and, according to the anthropological analysis, presumably once again male individual, lay densely packed. The grave was a simple shallow pit filled with stones[32]. Grave goods are limited to two ceramic vessels, a jug and a cup lying next to each other.

Because of the poor bone preservation, the identification of the skeletal remains proved challenging (Fig. 7)[33]. Clearly visible, however, are several long bones, arranged approximately parallel to and on top of one another. The skull, lying on its right side, emerged slightly below and north of the long bones. This peculiar situation warrants a detailed archaeothanatological analysis.

Among the long bones, the two femora and a tibia are readily identified, as well as an ulna and a radius parallel to the tibia. In addition, remains of the pelvis and possibly a clavicle[34] are represented. No other parts of the upper body were identified[35].

The bone ensemble therefore consists primarily of long bones, the pelvis, and the skull. These all show considerable taphonomic change, as exemplified by the impact of the thick root visible in Fig. 5. The fact that the proximal end of the displaced femur came to lie above the skull is indicative of the forces involved in such processes, while at the same time suggesting a void, an empty space permitting of such movement.

In view of the dense packing of the skeletal remains, two funeral scenarios appear possible: either we are dealing with a burial crouched in the extreme, or the body was already partially or completely decayed upon deposition. In the latter case, grave Strada 7 represents a secondary funerary deposit. If not, then the relation of leg bones and pelvis may indicate that some articulation persisted at the time of burial[36]. In that case, however, the position of the head near the pelvis is hard to explain, as this would come to rest facing the knees had the body been deposited in a narrow crouched position (cf. graves Temparella 40 and Lettere F).

If, however, the body was still intact at the time of interment, it would then have to have been seated upright, so that the head could descend onto the pelvis after decomposition[37]. However, the lateral position of the skull and the fact that the mandible was still in an anatomical position, argue against this assump-

32 The burial was just below the modern surface, covered by a layer of stone and approximately still ca. 30 cm deep.

33 Here we rely primarily on the anthropological report written by Negahnaz Moghaddam, who documented the skeleton in the field. Cornelia Alder later excavated the skull, which had been block lifted, and re-examined the skeletal remains in the lab.

34 Information by C. Alder in: Guggisberg – Colombi 2021, 209 note 1466.

35 Torso elements such as vertebrae and ribs are very rarely found in the Macchiabate necropolis due to poor bone preservation.

36 Histological analysis, carried out on a femur fragment, confirmed the poor bone preservation: the cortical surface is completely destroyed and only in the center of the bone some structures are still preserved. There are signs of intense bacterial degradation indicating that the corpse was probably not mummified prior to inhumation. Thus, in case of a secondary burial, one would have to assume, that the remains were already skeletonized when reburied.

37 In this scenario the arrangement of the legs remains unexplained.

Fig. 5 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Strada 7 (photo Francavilla-project Basel).

tion. Unless attached by external means, the mandible normally separates quickly from the cranium after death – especially in a situation where gravity comes to bear, such as when the corpse sits upright.

Also, the grave was located at only a shallow depth of max. 30 cm below the present-day surface. Had the body been in a sitting position, one might expect that the burial pit had to be at least 80 cm high, which in turn would have been covered by at least 20 cms of earth and stones. Although erosion on the Macchiabate terrace since antiquity is difficult to assess, it seems unlikely that the terrain at this point was eroded by more than half a meter, given the situation with the other graves in the cemetery.

As a consequence of these considerations, the thesis arises that the body in grave Strada 7 was at best partially articulated at the time it was deposited. The skull in particular seems to have been placed separately and with a certain degree of attention, so that the mandible did not detach from the cranium. Likewise, the legs may still have been in partial articulation when they were placed in the grave. Alternatively, one could also imagine that the bones were deposited individually and with intention in the *in situ* arrangement, which could also explain why the skull was found somewhat underneath the long bones[38]. Depending on the model assumed, the body would either have to have been buried dismembered or already skeletonized. If the latter, grave Strada 7 represents some form of secondary burial[39].

The decision between the various models presented here cannot be made unambiguously. Overall, however, the assumption of a sec-

38 Similar "bone packages" are known from the younger graves of Ascoli Satriano, where the bones of older burials were neatly collected and deposited in pits before subsequent use of the grave: Grave AS06: Hoernes 2019, 62–63 fig. 11.12; Hoernes et al. 2019, 270 fig. 7.8. Grave AS16: Hoernes 2019, 80 fig. 25; Hoernes et al. 2019, 279 fig. 17.

39 For a definition of secondary burials see Knüsel 2014, 47–50; Knüsel – Robb 2016, 3.

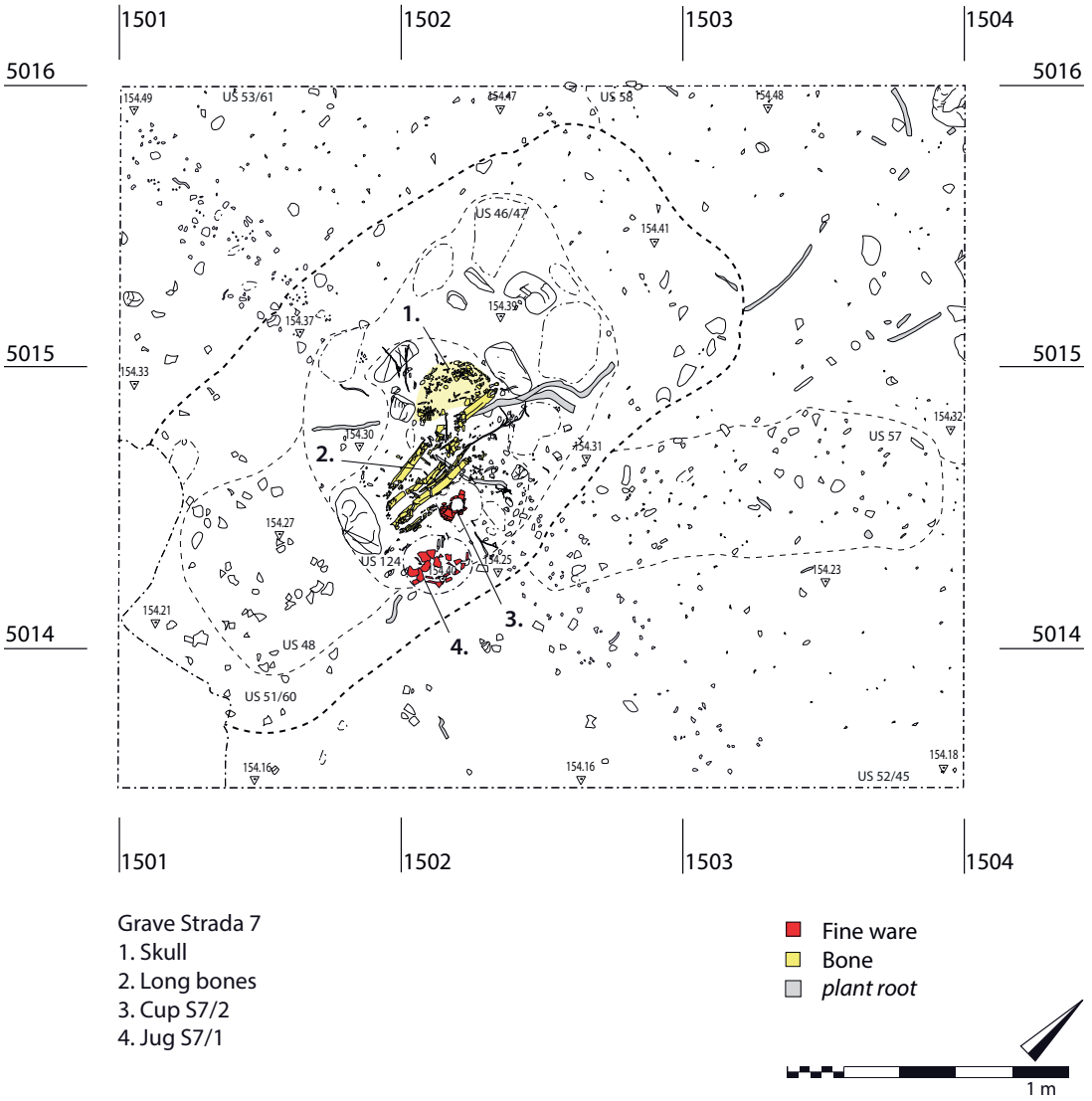

Fig. 6 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Strada 7 (drawing Francavilla-project Basel).

ondary burial appears more plausible, not least because there are no convincing comparisons in Iron Age Italy for either the seated crouched burial or that of the dismembered body[40]. The closest similarity is with a grave at Incoronata[41]. Its stone grave pit is divided by a "partition". In the larger chamber, the skeletons of several adults and one adolescent individual lie in what appears to be a mess; in the smaller one, the remains of two more adults were found, again with evidence of post-mortem manipulation. Here, too, the exact mortuary process is difficult to assess, but the excavators

40 See for instance the burials of young men in the ritual complex of Mont'e Prama, Sardegna: I riti della morte 2015; Rubino et al. 2018 (with further bibliographical references).

41 Grave 441: Chiartano 1994, 162–163 tomb 441 Taf. 23.

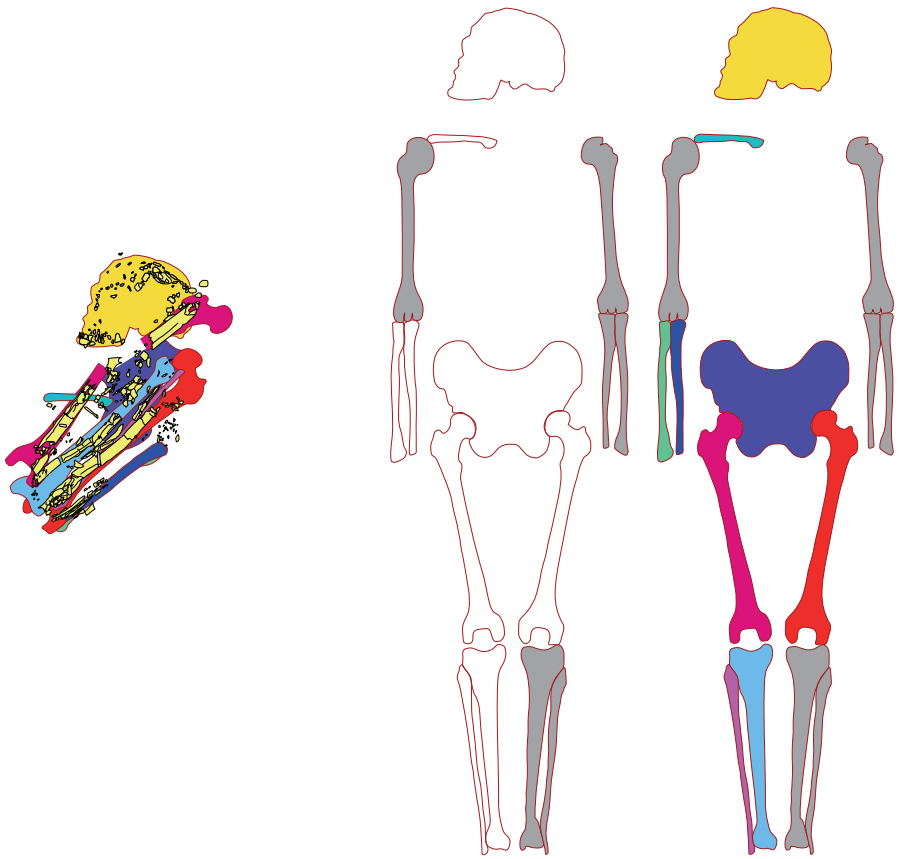

Fig. 7 – Grave Strada 7: Identification of the tightly packed skeletal remains (all coloured skeletal parts have been identified; the grey skeletal parts have not been identified) (drawings Francavilla-project Basel).

assume that the "mass grave" is connected with the redeposition of older burials, necessitated by a change in the use of the necropolis [42].

If the thesis formulated here for grave Strada 7 is correct and the head and body were actually deposited separately, their different treatment deserves special attention. While the body was buried as a "package", the skull seems to have been treated with special care and laid down in such a way that – following the custom for men's graves on the Macchiabate – it lies on the right side and facing west. Whether specific ideas were behind this differentiated treatment of the skull must remain open. At least indirectly, however, the process is reminiscent of the handling of isolated skulls to be observed both in native burial grounds as well as in the necropolises of various Greek colonies of Magna Graecia.

With regard to native contexts, grave T 4461 at Pontecagnano – dating to around 700 BC – is of special interest. In this case the skull is missing completely, while the bones of the body were deposited both on the floor of the grave and inside a bronze basin and a situla [43]. In two Archaic children's graves in the Southern necropolis of Pontecagnano, the skulls were separated from the bodies and placed in a bowl in the same

42 Chiartano 1994, 18.

43 Cerchiai 1984, 411–413. 418–419; Cerchiai 1985; Cuozzo 2004–2005. Although the grave was only partially excavated, the excavators assume that the skull was not deposited in the same grave, since any traces of it are lacking.

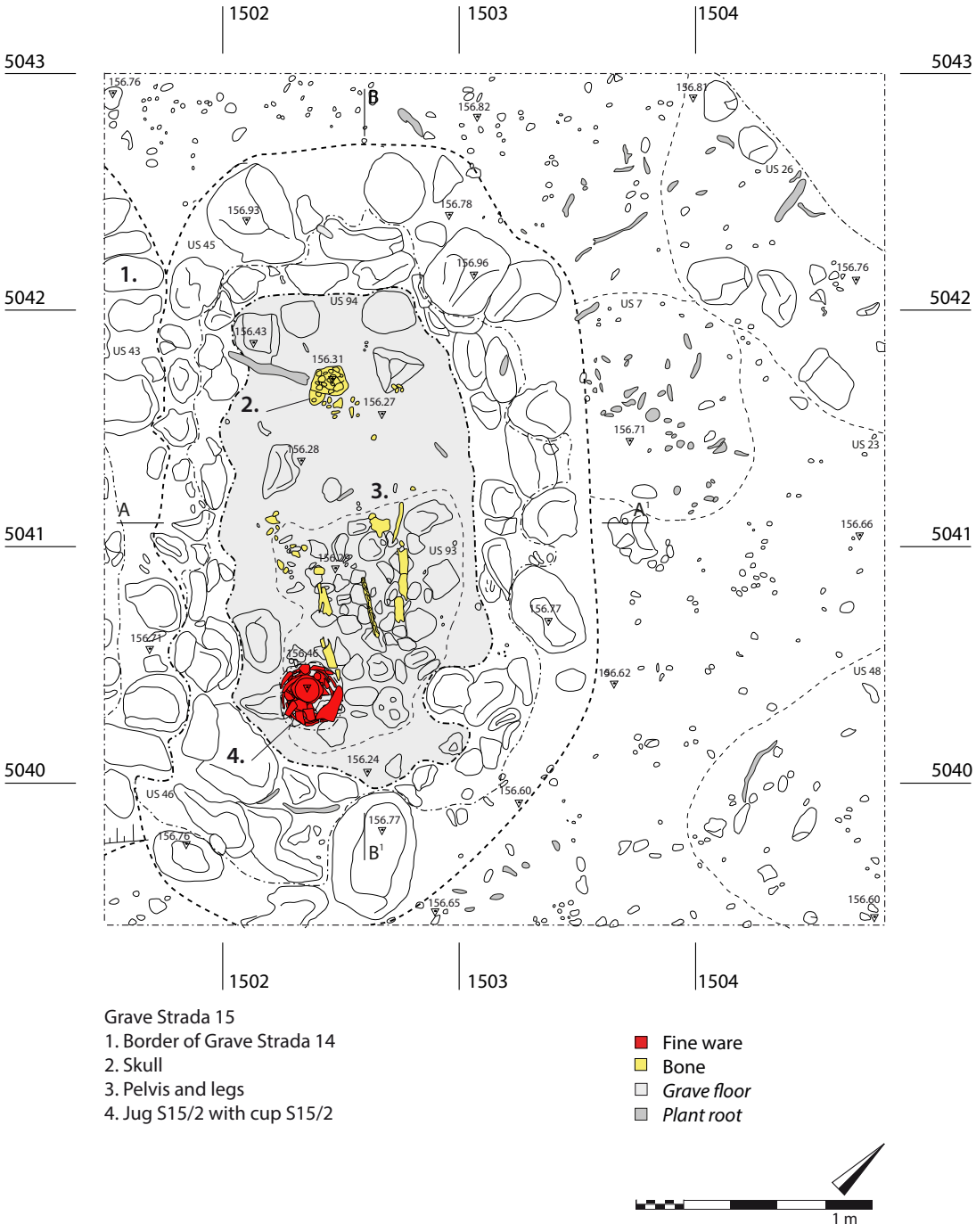

Fig. 8 – Francavilla Marittima, Macchiabate, grave Strada 15 (supine inhumation; drawing Francavilla-project Basel).

grave in connection with secondary burial rituals[44]. Among the hundreds of graves in Pontecagnano, the three cited findings form a small sample. They should therefore not be overinterpreted with regard to the Strada 7 grave. However, such findings do not represent an isolated phenomenon. Rather, as mentioned above, in various native as well as Greek sites, in Southern Italy and Sicily skulls may receive special treatment in mortuary rites, as recently pointed out by G. Shepherd and L. Mercuri[45]. The phenomenon likely relates to the special perception of the human head, without necessarily suggesting an overarching ritual context. Rather, the various evidence shows that "deviations from the burial norm" are possible everywhere.

Norm and variance in Oinotrian burial customs

Like elsewhere, deviant burials represent a tiny minority in Francavilla Marittima. They add, however, to a funerary landscape which was much more heterogeneous than is commonly assumed, especially with regard to the positioning of the body and its extremities. As stated above, the medium flexed position predominates among the Beinhocker burials of Francavilla Marittima, followed by a smaller number of burials in a narrow flexed and some corpses deposited in a wide flexed position. To these three schemes we may add three smaller but still significant groups: burials in an extremely flexed position on the one hand, Beinhocker burials in a wide flexed position and supine burials on the other. Among these the extremely flexed position, attested by the two graves Temparella 40 and Lettere F discussed above, differ from the rest insofar as they required the use of bandages or straps made of textile or some other perishable material. Whether grave Strada 7, presumably a secondary deposition, represents yet another variant of the Oinotrian Beinhocker scheme or should rather be excluded from considerations of burial typology on the grounds of being unique, remains open to debate. What becomes clear, however, is the considerable variability of the burial tradition itself, which corresponds with similar observations in other Oinotrian cemeteries such as Santa Maria d'Anglona and Incoronata. Interestingly, however, two of the six burial schemes just discussed are either largely or entirely absent in those two neighbouring burial grounds: there is just one supine burial at Incoronata and none among the graves of Santa Maria d'Anglona, while the Beinhocker wide position is so far unique to the Macchiabate necropolis.

The varied treatment of bodies in the three reference burial grounds of the Ionian coast may have diverse causes. Chronological differences may play a role as well as diverging social parameters. External impulses may also have shaped the burial customs of the three regions in different ways, if we think of the growing Greek presence and the subsequent change to burials in supine position. Especially in the Sibaritide, where the Greek presence is felt particularly early and strongly, this hypothesis seems quite plausible. However, we should not forget that the supine position is widespread in the Oinotrian culture as well, for example in the necropolises of Roggiano Gravina[46] and Torrano[47], in the hinterland of Sybaris, but also in more remote areas such as Guardia Perticara[48] in Basilicata. Rather than to attribute the supine burials to Greek influence exclusively, it seems reasonable to assume that indigenous burial traditions from the Tyrrhenian area manifest themselves in these instances too. The two cases from the Macchiabate cemetery, Temparella 27[49] and Strada 15[50] (Fig. 8), conspicuously lack any "Greek" markers among the grave goods, which on the contrary stand in a pronounced local or indigenous tradition.

44 Pellegrino 2004–2005, 177–178 fig. 7 (grave 8396). 192–197 fig. 19 (grave 8398); see also Pellegrino et al. in the present volume p. 71–72 fig. 6A. B.; Hoernes 2019, 6.

45 Shepherd 2005, esp. 123–129; Mercuri 2001; Mercuri 2010, 521. See also the particular case of Castiglione on Sicily, grave 12 where the skulls of seven individuals were aligned along the wall of the burial chamber: Di Stefano 2006; Duday 2006.

46 Carrara – Guzzo 1981.

47 de La Genière 1977.

48 Nava – Bianco 2000.

49 Zancani Montuoro 1980–1982, 88–91 fig. 32.

50 Guggisberg – Colombi 2021, 77–80 pl. 60 (C. Colombi).

Thus, the Macchiabate necropolis of Francavilla Marittima seems to be situated at the intersection of two indigenous burial traditions, the supine burials we know from inland and from the Tyrrhenian area, and the flexed bodies, which predominate along the Northern Ionian coast. This special placement, reflecting influences from different cultural areas, may have contributed to the community of Francavilla Marittima cultivating a comparatively liberal approach in burying the deceased. The suspected secondary burial Strada 7 differs from all other burials in the Macchiabate cemetery in probably having been transferred from an unknown primary burial ground to its final resting place at the Area Strada. In this context, it seems worthwhile recalling the observations made by Luca Cerchiai and Mariassunta Cuozzo with regard to this practice in the Greek and Roman world. In both cultural settings, according to literary evidence, the reburial of the mortal remains of actual or presumed ancestors and "heroes" served as a means of identity formation among the respective communities as well as constituting a self-affirming act by aristocratic elites to increase their own social cohesion and political power[51]. According to the Roman Twelfth Amendment the translocation of such remains was permitted only for relatives killed in war or deceased abroad[52]. In the case of Strada 7, we cannot assert either of these reasons, nor can an outstanding social status of the deceased be deduced from the grave goods. Nevertheless, the afore-mentioned historical traditions provide an indication that the unusual treatment of the body deposited in grave Strada 7 can by no means be interpreted only as an expression of neglect and social inferiority, but just as well as an indicator of a special rank of the deceased individual.

Conclusion

Norm and deviance – this concept of majority and minority, of standard and deviation, of rule and exception – discussed in the title of this article, seems to be only partially viable to explain the specific burial customs in the Macchiabate necropolis of Francavilla Marittima. Rather, the burial customs there are shaped to a greater extent than elsewhere by local and intersecting lines of tradition and cultural diversity. Against this background, it seems disproportionate to exclude Temparella 40, Lettere F and Strada 7 as "deviant burials" from the "standard graves" in the Macchiabate necropolis. Rather, it is precisely their distinctiveness in relation to the treatment of the body that gives them an exclusive status within the burial community.

Acknowledgement

For discussions of various aspects of the paper we are greatly indebted to Francesco Quondam and Norbert Spichtig, Basel.

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51 Cerchiai 1985, 29; Cuozzo 2005, 152–153.

52 Cic. Leg. 2,60. See: Das Zwölftafelgesetz – Leges XII tabularum. Herausgegeben und übersetzt von Dieter Flach, in Zusammenarbeit mit Andreas Flach (Darmstadt 2004) 150.

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The Practice of Cremation in the Western Necropolis (7th – 5th Cent. BC) of the Greek Colony of Himera (Sicily, Italy)

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Introduction

The Greek colony of Himera was founded in 648 BC on the Northern coast of Sicily, near the mouth of the river Imera, by Greek people from the colonies of Zancle (Messina), Syracuse and probably the island of Euboea. The colony flourished, as attested by archaeological research. The town had an extension of ca. 120 ha and was structured on two different levels: the lower city on the coastal plain and the upper on the hills above. Three necropolises have been identified at Himera, outside the city and along the routes connecting the colony to the surrounding territory, specifically: the Eastern (necropolis of Pestavecchia) and Western necropolis (necropolis of Buonfornello) on the coastal plain, and the Southern necropolis (necropolis of Cozzo Scacciapidocchi) on the route towards the hinterland[1]. Two battles with a significant impact in Sicily's history were fought below the city's walls: in 480 BC a coalition of Himerans, Acragantines and Syracusans were victorious against the Carthaginian forces; in 409 BC the Carthaginians conquered and destroyed the city, massacring its population[2].

Over 13 000 burials have been currently investigated from the necropolises. Among these, there are the skeletal remains from Himera's mass graves (labelled FC1+2, FC3, FC4, FC5, FC6, FC7, FC8+FC9) related to the two battles[3]. As in other Greek colonies on Sicily, both funeral practices are found at Himera[4]: simple burials, cappuccina tile burials, pot burials, sarcophagi inhumations and both *in situ* and secondary cremations, but the rite of inhumation is more attested. The burials cover the complete period of the colony's life (648–409 BC)[5]. Both funeral rites are found: the inhumations are the great majority (88% in the W necropolis; and 90% in the E necropolis) whereas the cremation rite (12% in the W necropolis; and 10% in the E necropolis) presents much lower percentages[6]. Regardless of the burial type, single burials are the vast majority of the sample, conforming to what is commonly attested in Greek funerary customs[7].

Cremation is the treatment of the deceased's body with fire. It is a process of oxidation and dehydration, influenced by several related factors: enough fuel, temperature, oxygen and time[8]. The degrees of combustion not only depend on temperature but reflect a complex interaction of factors: pre-combustion state of the remains, position of the body in relation to the heat source, bone composition and presence of "insulating" material that preserves some parts of the body[9]. Bone alterations due to heat can be observed: coloration, fracture patterns and structural changes[10].

Cremation was a common burial custom in Greece from prehistory through the Roman

1 Vassallo – Valentino 2010; Vassallo 2017.
2 Vassallo 2010.
3 Vassallo 2010; Lonoce et al. 2018; Viva et al. 2020a.
4 Holloway 1991; Shepherd 2005; Sulosky Weaver 2015.
5 Vassallo 2009; Vassallo – Valentino 2012; Vassallo 2017.
6 Fabbri et al. 2006; Fabbri et al. 2012; Vassallo 2005; Vassallo 2009; Vassallo – Valentino 2012; Vassallo 2017.
7 Kurtz – Boardman 1971.
8 Holck 1997; McKinley 1994; Bohnert 2004; DeHaan 2008.
9 Herrmann 1977; Shipman et al. 1984; Brain 1993; Holck 1997.
10 Krogman 1943; Baby 1954; Binford 1963; Thurman – Willmore 1982; Buikstra – Swegle 1989; Mayne Correia 1996; Mays 1998; Symes et al. 2008; Walker et al. 2008; Gonçalves et al. 2011; Gonçalves et al. 2015.

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age[11]. It is currently not documented in Sicily in prehistoric times. Only in the last phases of the 2nd millennium BC, in the Final Bronze Age, are incinerations attested in Milazzo and Lipari, where Sicilian cinerary urns from the Ausonio I and II phase have been found, probably influenced by contacts and exchanges with the Italian peninsula[12].

Cremation and inhumation coexisted. Funeral practice of cremation is attested all over the Greek world, although methodology and frequency varied considerably[13]. An important factor in the use of cremation was its costs because of the use of wood for fuel. Its quality is an important feature, depending on the available environmental resources. The choice to cremate or not, had to be personal or taken by the family, depending on the meaning of death or to the wealth, but it could also depend on practical reason: for example, when someone died abroad, he could more easily be taken home[14]. It is assumed that the children's cremation was rare in ancient Greece[15], as it is only referenced in later sources. Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD) wrote that children could be cremated after they had developed their first teeth (*Nat. Hist.* VII 72). Juvenal (50/60–127 AD) mentioned the custom of burying children who were too young to be cremated (Sat. XV 139/140). Fulgentius (5th–6th cent. AD) wrote that children who had not reached forty days of age could not be cremated because of the lacking of the bones to be burnt and the volume of the corpse was not enough to make a mound *in situ* (*Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum*, 7).

The aim of the present work is to study the funerary ritual of cremation in Himera, highlighting the variations and peculiarities of this ritual that have never before been classified. Furthermore, some demographic aspects are examined.

Materials and methods

This paper will examine the cremations found in the Western necropolis of Himera, where a total of 9 547 burials were excavated from 2008 to 2010. The cremations found in the site are 1 126 (11.79%), of which 51 reveal no data, thus only 1 075 cremations will be analyzed. More in-depth analyses were carried out on a sample of 213 cremations.

According to rather schematic and partly outdated definitions, two types of cremations are known in archaeological contexts: the primary and the secondary one, often defined with simplifying descriptions[16], for this reason, we have avoided interpretative categories, such as primary and secondary cremation, preferring descriptive types, as noted in previous articles[17].

We discarded the hypothesis that the empty cinerary urns could contain inhumated bones of children by observing the position of the urn (lying or standing), calcareous deposits in the inner side of the vase and traces of cutting on the body of the vase[18].

Six descriptive types were observed (Tab. 1).

Out of 1 075 cremations analyzed, 1 035 were on pyres (types 1 to 4). The distinction between types 1 and 2 was made on the basis of the number of anatomical regions preserved, with eight being considered: skull, spine, thoracic region, right and left upper and lower limbs and the pelvis. Only 189 pyres (types 1 and 2) had enough osteological remains preserved to make taphonomic observations. In 784 cases (type 3), however, the pyres contained very few fragments of burnt bones (621) or contained none at all (163). In 62 cases the pyre also contained the cinerary urn (type 4), which in 53.2% cases (33) contained all the bones, while in the remaining 46.8% (29), a part of the bones was in the cinerary urn and a part still on the pyre.

In Himera the base of the pyre was usually built inside a pit which is on average ca. 1.8–

11 Kurtz – Boardman 1971; Morris 1987; Ubelaker – Rife 2007.

12 Mannino 1997, 309.

13 Robinson 1942; Childe 1945; Kurtz – Boardman 1971; Popham et al. 1980; Garland 1985; Morris 1987; Ubelaker – Rife 2007.

14 Robinson 1942; Irion 1968; Ubelaker – Rife 2007.

15 Kurtz – Boardman 1971; Garland 1985.

16 Duday 2006; Bel et al. 2008.

17 Herrmann et al. 2014; Le Goff 2002; Le Goff et al. 2007; Konsa 2013; Duffy – MacGregor 2008 ; Pankowská et al. 2016.

18 Duday et al. 2013.

Table 1 – Total and studied samples classified into descriptive types.

				Total sample			Studied sample		
Type	**Description**	**Subtype**	**Description**	**n**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**n**	**%**
1	Pyre with skeleton *in situ* (all or almost all anatomical regions are represented, 5 to 8)	1a	Skeletal remains in anatomically coherent position	42	38	3.53	1	1	0.47
		1b	Skeletal remains grouped in an area on the pyre		4	0.37		0	0.00
2	Pyre with skeleton partially present in an anatomically coherent position (up to 4 anatomical regions present)				147	13.67		11	5.16
3	Pyre without bone remains or with very few fragments	3a	Few bone fragments	784	621	57.77	163	104	48.83
		3b	Without bone remains		163	15.16		59	27.70
4	Pyre with cinerary urn inside	4a	Bones only in cinerary	62	33	3.07	23	11	5.16
		4b	Bones in cinerary and on pyre		29	2.70		12	5.63
5	Cinerary not on pyre				31	2.88		13	6.10
6	Burnt bones in small pit				9	0.84		2	0.94
	Total				*1 075*	100.00		*213*	100.00

2 m long and ca. 1 m wide. The degree of conservation of the pyres is mostly influenced by the depth of the pit and disturbance by subsequent burials, deeper pits are well defined by the presence of charred logs, grave goods and bones. The most commonly used type of wood was cork oak (*Quercus suber*)[19], a species very common around Himera. Shallower pits are in a very poor state of conservation: traces of charcoal are not particularly evident and there are often very few bone remains[20]. From the analysis of the deeper pits we have observed the size and construction method of the pyre. Stratification of pits appears clear: first the bone remains, then the fragmentary grave goods, finally charcoal fragments and ash on the charred logs. For this reason, we suppose the use of a "funeral bed" placed over the grave goods, testified also by the presence in several burials of long iron nails[21].

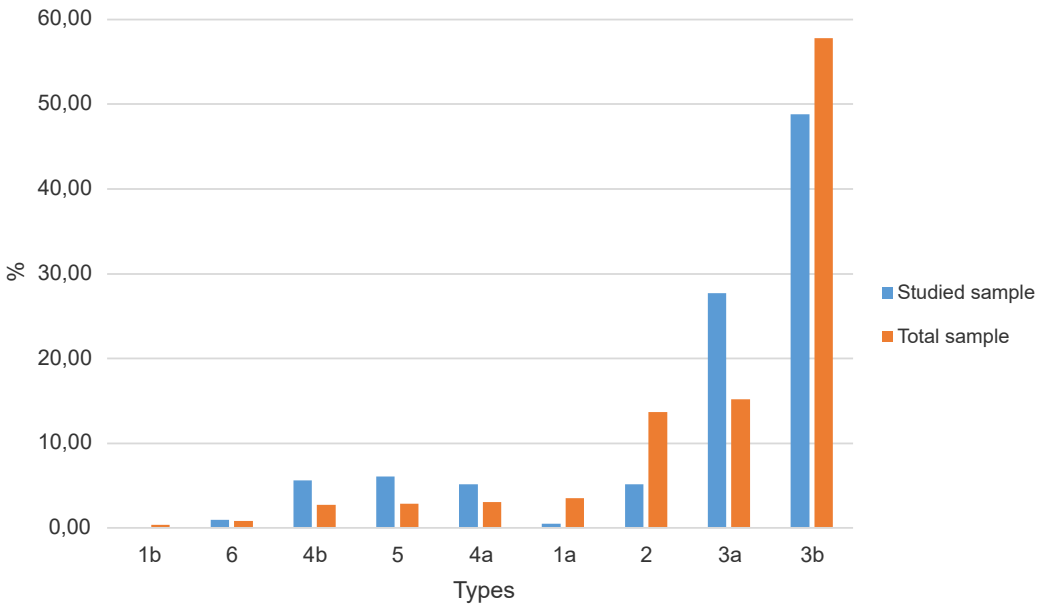
In 31 cases the cinerary urns were not on pyres and in 9 cases the remains were contained in small pits. Among different types of cinerary urns, generally deposited vertically in the soil, the kraters are the most frequent[22].

The choice of osteological material for the anthropological study was not selective, but progressive according to the time of excavation. Thus, the first 213 cremations excavated were studied, divided into the different types as shown in table 1.

The sample studied and the total number of cremations in Himera are similarly distributed in the various types of cremation, (Graph 1, test U Mann-Whitney $p>0.05$).

Considering that the sample studied relates to the area investigated at the beginning of the excavations, we can therefore assume that the spatial distribution of the various types is homogeneous throughout the necropolis and that

19 Di Pasquale personal communication.
20 Vassallo et al. 2018.
21 *Ibidem*
22 Vassallo et al. 2018; Valentino 2020.



Graph 1 – Distribution of the various types of cremation (see table 1) in the total and studied sample.

the sample itself is indeed representative of the total number of cremations found.

Each burnt bone was washed and identified, if it was possible. This is necessary to determine the NMI, i.e. to establish how many individuals are present by identifying supernumerary bones or skeletal elements differing in size or age. Determining the sex and age of the burnt remains is difficult because cremation affects morphology and bone size: there are many limitations but in the majority of cases it should be possible to at least distinguish between "juvenile" and "adult"[23]. Due to the poor state of preservation it was not possible to determine the sex from the pelvis or by considering some diagnostic measurements of the cranial and postcranial skeleton[24], while the aged skeletons are very few. Age estimation was based on dental development[25], the degree of fusion of the epiphysis of long bones[26] and the comparison with juvenile aged skeletal remains. When none of the methods could be used we considered the general dimensions of the bones and the fusion of the epiphysis to produce a generic definition of an adult (20+ years old). It was possible to perform the stratigraphic micro-excavation for 18 out of 36 cinerary urns.

Results

Burnt human remains found in cremations show a high degree of fragmentation, have undergone morphological alteration, volumetric reduction and show transverse, longitudinal and curved transverse fractures (conchoidal pattern)[27].

As already seen, out of 973 excavated burning sites of 1 075, only in 189 cases were burnt skeletal remains found *in situ* (types 1 and 2) at the site where the deceased was cremated. Conservation is not homogeneous: in more than 60% of cases (117/189; 61.9%) the pyre was cut by graves that had removed part of it, or it was disturbed by erosion phenomena, often with consequent damage to the skeleton,

23 McKinley 2013.

24 Gejvall 1969; Nugent 2010; Kurila 2015; Cavazzuti et al. 2019; Masotti et al. 2019.

25 Ubelaker 1978.

26 Ferembach et al. 1980.

27 Walker et al. 2008; Symes et al. 2008; Gonçalves et al. 2015.

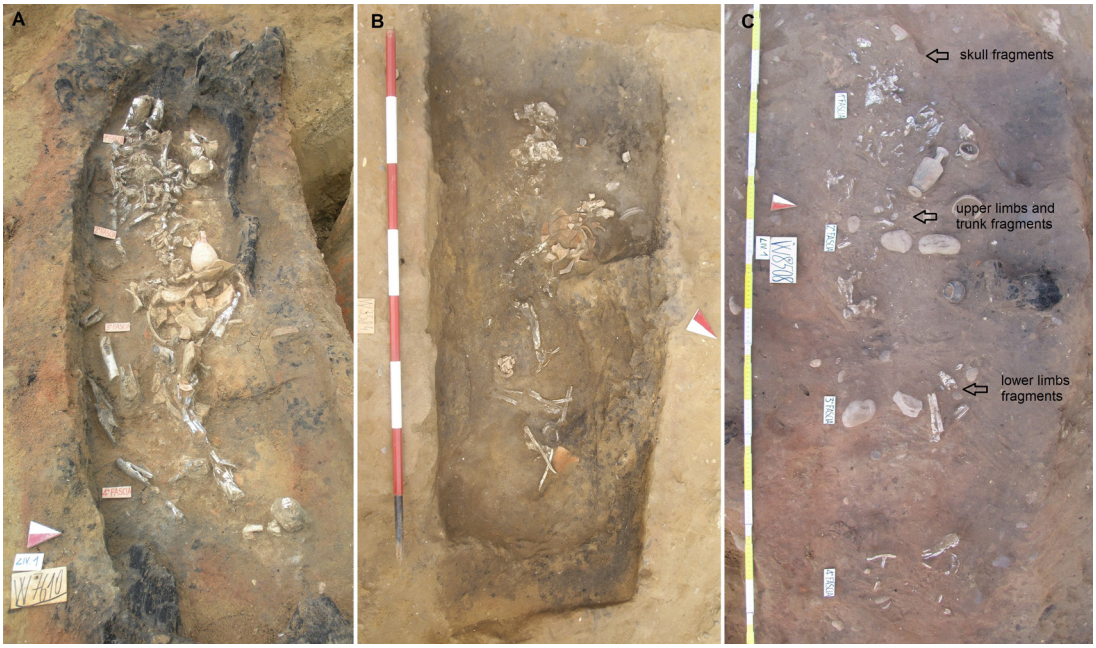


Fig. 1 – Pyre with skeletal remains in an anatomically coherent position. A: type 1a (W7610); B e C: type 2 (W3584, W8508). Images author: Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. di Palermo. All images subject to copyright.

limiting taphonomic observations. The preservation of skeletal remains also depends on the degree of combustion resulting from the temperatures reached by the pyre and its duration. In most cases (168/189), often even when the pyre was not intact, it was possible to identify the bone remains in order to determine the orientation of the body during cremation. This was possible even in cases of poor conservation conditions, sometimes due to the position of skull fragments in relation to those of other skeletal parts in an anatomically coherent position, or to the presence of only the lower limbs in a certain area of the pyre. In all cases the pyre was oriented along the E-W axis: in 73.2% cases (123/168) the bodies were oriented W-E, i.e. with the skull to the west, in the remaining 26.8% (45/168) they were E-W (these percentages also include slight variations in WSW-ENE or ENE-WSW). Instead, the prevailing orientation of inhumation burials is E-W, i.e. with the skull to the east (67.1%)[28].

Only in 38 cases (38/189; 20.1%) were the skeletal regions almost completely represented (type 1a), so that a lying position could be clearly observed, in which the skeleton occupied the entire length of the pyre in anatomical order, with the lower limbs lying down. Among these, in 20 cases, thanks to the observation of the laterality of some bones, it is possible to identify the dorsal decubitus (Fig. 1A).

In four cases (4/189; 2.1%) it is not possible to determine the orientation because there was a group of bones in one area of the pyre, without the apparent displacement of parts outside the pyre, in fact all anatomical regions were well represented.

In most cases (147/189; 77.8%) skeletons with few preserved anatomical regions (1 to 3) are observed (Fig. 1B/C). Taking into account only those cases in which the pyre was intact (72/189), we assume that, in at least 21 of them (21/72; 29.2%), partial bone harvesting took place, which would have left out only some parts of the skeleton.

The demographic data shown refer to 153 of the 213 cremations analyzed. In all cremations

28 Viva et al. 2020a.

Table 2 – Distribution of age in the cremated human sample from the Western necropolis of Himera. The age group 1–9 includes four individuals aged 3, 6, 8 and 8.5 years ca.

Years	n	%
0	1	0.65
1–9	4	2.58
10–19	0	0.00
20+	47	30.32
Unknown age	103	66.45
Total	155	100.00

Fig. 2 – Pyre with cinerary urn inside. A: type 4a, bones only in cinerary urn (W2732); B: type 4b, bones in cinerary urn and on pyre (W7640).

the remains can be traced back to one individual, except for the double cremation. W4062. We know the quantitative age of 5 juvenile individuals and the qualitative age of 47 adults (20+ years). For 103 individuals we have no indication of their age-at-death (Tab. 2).

The five juvenile individuals came from two cinerary urns on a pyre (W1104, W6204, type 4), a cinerary urn not on a pyre (W8335, type 5), a pyre cremation (W1359, type 3a) and a double cremation in a small pit (type 6) (W4062) (Fig. 4). Individual W1104 was an infant, whose remains were poorly burnt (natural and black coloring).

Table 3 shows the total weight of the bone fragments found in 31 cremations in cinerary urns (type 4a, 4b, 5). The average weight of the bones contained in the urns, 1 155.9 g, is greater than that obtained in all other types. In the sample of cremations, excluding the 31 in cinerary, the average weight is 179.0 g (n=115), most likely due to the protection offered by the urns themselves.

Compared to cremations in cinerary urns, the average weight of modern cremations, between 1 842 g and 3 379 g for males and between 1 271 g and 2 350 g for female individuums, is higher, as is the rule in archaeological samples[29]. Dividing the weights in the various types considered, we see that the highest average weight, 1 492.7 g, is found in type 4a, a pyre with a cinerary urn inside (bones only in cinerary) (Fig. 2A), where the weight of the fragments found never falls below 741.0 g. In the other two types (4b and 5) the average weights are lower and there are cases with very few fragments found (Graph. 2): 3 out of 10 in type 4b (pyre with cinerary urn inside - bones in cinerary and on pyre; Fig. 2B) and 3 out of 12 in type 5 (cinerary not on pyre; Fig. 3) are urns with less than 500 g of fragments.

For comparison with other contemporary sites, we have considered only single cremations. The average weight of the cremations from Pithecusa (n 100) is 284.4 g (min 2.0 g – max 1 988.0 g)[30], in the sample from the Buchner excavations 1965–1967 (n 10) it is 281.4 g (min 53.0 g – max 432.0 g)[31]. At Megara Hyblaea the average weight of a sample of 8 cremations is 257.4 g (min g 42.0 – max 512.0 g)[32]. The comparison cases are not pyre cremations and are comparable with HIM-W types 5 and 6 (n 13) (mean 1 101.8 g – min 8.0 g –

29 Herrmann 1977; McKinley 1993; Bass – Jantz 2004.

30 Becker 1995.
31 Gigante et al. 2012–2013.
32 Bérard 2017.

Table 3 – Average weight of bone fragments in cinerary urns. In type 4b we weighed the bones in the cinerary and those left on the pyre together.

Type	Description	n	min	max	mean	sd
4a	Pyre with cinerary urn inside (bones only in cinerary)	9	741.0	2704.0	1492.7	614.09
4b	Pyre with cinerary urn inside (bones in cinerary and on pyre)	10	30.0	1336.0	822.4	517.50
5	Cinerary not on pyre	12	8,0	2610.0	1181.3	853.26
	Total	31	8.0	2704.0	1155.9	720.56

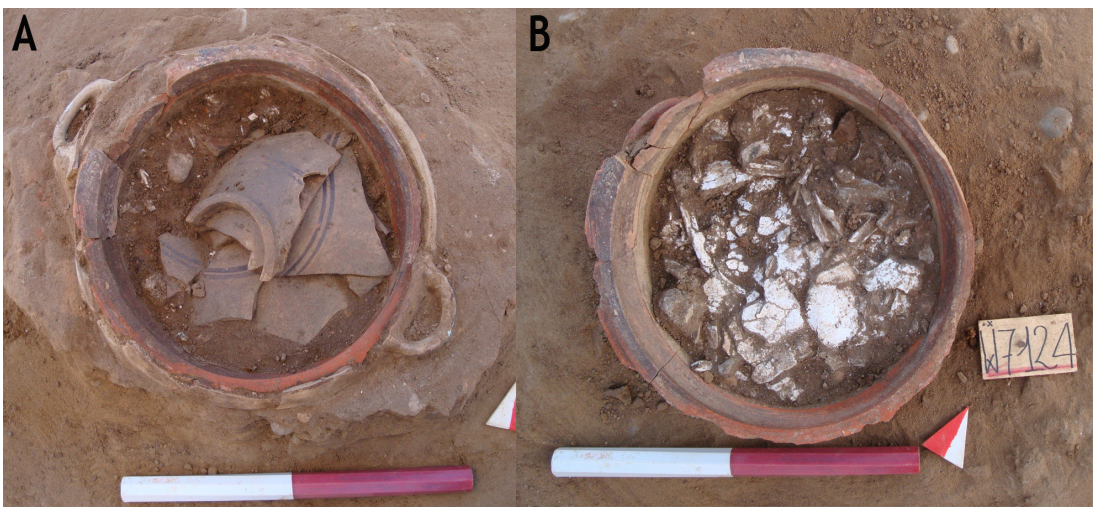
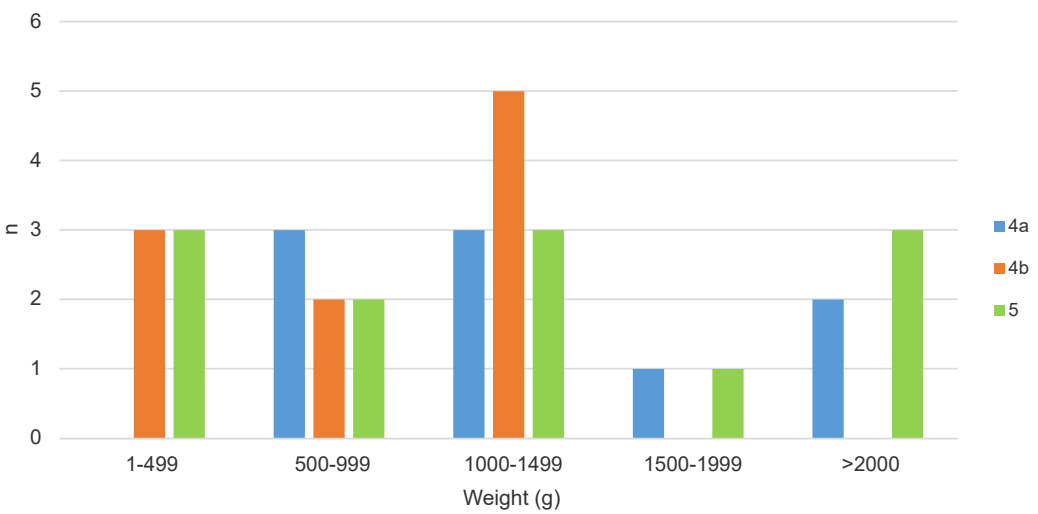


Fig. 3 – Cinerary urn not on pyre, type 5 (W7124).



Graph 2 – Weight of bone fragments found in the three analyzed types of incineration.

max 2 610.0 g). A considerable difference between the mean of the Himera sample and the comparison sites is evident, which could be explained by a different cremation method or by a more accurate harvest of the burnt remains from the pyre.

18 cremations in cinerary urns were excavated in the laboratory: 11 on a pyre (type 4), and 7 not on a pyre (type 5). In two cremations (W6829 and W7850) the bones of the skull, torso and upper limbs were in the upper levels and the bones of the lower limbs in the lower levels. W7124 seems to have the same arrangement, but in this case portions of the diaphysis of the lower limbs were laid vertically in the urn. In W5807 we observed the inverse anatomical order, with the bones of the lower limbs on top and the skull on the bottom: the peculiarity of this cremation is that it is the only cinerary urn laid upside down, with the mouth on the ground and the bottom on top. In the remaining 14 cremations the skeletal districts are mixed as if the burnt bones at the end of the cremation were first grouped in the center from the sides and then collected and stored in the urn in several stages. The different case histories suggest variability in the collection of the remains, a choice made by those attending the cremation, although the most common ritual is to store the remains in no anatomical order.

Discussion and conclusion

In a previous contribution analyzing a smaller sample of cremations[33], the same evaluations emerged on the variability of the quantity of burnt remains on the pyre. This study made it possible to extend the analyses, thanks to the larger number of cremations on pyres taken into account. Thanks to taphonomic observations, it can be stated that the orientation of the body during cremation was predominantly W-E and in one out of four cases it was oriented E-W, which is opposite to inhumation burials, where most skeletons have an E-W orientation[34]. If we add to this observation that, on average, all cremations returned a richer trousseau, in terms of the number of objects deposited during the rite, it seems likely that this differentiation could be attributable either to particular groups within the Himeran population, or to individuals of different social or economic levels. It is certainly important to note that Himera was a mixed foundation, with Doric and Chalcidic elements from Zankle and probably from the Chalcidic peninsula, two groups that in many ways maintained, during the 240 years of the colony's life, a coexistence that was not without tension, as in the first thirty years of the 5th cent. BC, but mainly peaceful[35]. It can be hypothesised that one of the two groups, specifically the Chalcidian one, may have predominantly chosen the rite of cremation for adults, which appears to be prevalent, both as primary and secondary cremation, in Euboea, the area of origin of the first Himeran settlers, together with the Chalcidians of Zankle[36]. To our knowledge, there is a lack of studies on the orientation of the deceased's body on pyres for the Archaic and Classical Greek world.

Cremations with the best preserved cremated remains on a pyre (type 1a) show skeletons lying in a dorsal decubitus position, indicating a cremation method in which the pyre serves as

33 Fabbri et al. 2012.

34 Viva et al. 2020a. About problems related to the orientation of the body in the Greek world from the motherland and Sicily see: H. J. Rose, Orientation of the Dead in Greece and Italy, in: The Classical Review, 34, 7/8, 1920, 141–146 and G. Nenci, Qualche considerazione sulla necropoli come fonte storica nell'Antichità, in: J. de La Genière (ed.), Nécropoles et sociétés antiques, Actes du Colloque International du Centre de Recherches Archéologiques de l'Université de Lille III, Lille, 2–3 décembre 1991, Cahiers du Centre Jean Bérard 18 (Naples 1994) 9–14.

35 About the sources related to Himera's foundation and composition of the first groups of settlers, see S. Vassallo, La colonia dorico-calcidese di Himera. Dai dati storici di Tucidide e di Diodoro Siculo all'archeologica, in: M. Congiu – C. Micchiché – S. Modena, Dal mito alla storia. La Sicilia *nell'archaiologhia* di Tucidide (Caltanissetta 2012) 149–151, 158.

36 There aren't general works about 5th cent. BC archaic rituals for Greek Sicily yet: even if dated, they are still current and a lot of the observations are made by Paola Pelagatti and Georges Vallet in: P. Pelagatti – G. Vallet, Le necropoli, in: E. Gabba – G. Vallet (eds.), La Sicilia antica, I, 2 (Naples 1980), 355–396, in particular 365–374.

Fig. 4 – Detail of the double cremation, type 6 (W4062), in the yellow circle some of the juvenile bones.

a tomb, i.e. as a final preservation structure[37]. In some, we assume that the removal of the bones was partial, having observed only some skeletal parts in primary storage on the pyre (type 4b); this means that these cremations underwent further treatment, a secondary burial probably in a cinerary urn, but that the harvest was not complete. A not always complete skeletal harvest may have several reasons, one of which may be the visibility of the skeletal remains at the time of removal from the pyre. Finally, in a very few cases (type 1b), bones were collected in a limited area of the pyre. It is remarkable that we find 784 pyres without skeletal remains (type 3) or with very few fragments, but in contrast only 31 cinerary urns not on pyres and 9 burnt bones in small pits (type 6). The absence of bones in many of the pyres may be partly due to poor preservation, but we cannot exclude that cremations were carried out to transport the deceased remains elsewhere[38].

As for the cinerary urns, in some cases they were found on the pyre (type 4), in others in the ground (type 5), not directly related to a place of combustion. The reasons for this distinction may be different, one being certainly the poor preservation of the combustion layer, in cases where the pit was missing, due to the small thickness of the covering mound, or because of other graves being made, etc. Less likely is the hypothesis of burning in another place and burial in the necropolis. An area dedicated only to burning has never been found, identified by substantial burnt traces, without bone and pottery fragments[39]. The study of cremations from these points of view is currently very poor for the Classical Greek world, more widespread are the studies for earlier and later periods.

It seems that cremation in Himera was not a rite reserved exclusively for adults, in fact remains of adults and sub-adults have been found, in one case even in the same double cremation (W4062). Cremation of infants and young children was probably an acceptable, but not usual, practice. Children appear to have been normally inhumed rather than cremated, even in communities that preferred cremation[40]. At Himera we have a qualitative or quantitative age determination for 52 individuals, table 3, of which just under 10% (n=5) are juvenile, a percentage that cannot be considered negligible, even taking into account the fact that children's bones, especially very young ones, are very easily destroyed. This has been verified for the children inhumations in pots[41] and even higher will be the degree of destruction of burnt remains which are more fragile and less recognizable than non-combusted ones.

At Pithecusa, 3 of the 110 cremations found contained the remains of children (8, 10 and 14 years old)[42], while in Buchner excavations 1965–1967 11 cremations with only adult individuals of both sexes were found[43]. At Megara Hyblaea of the 35 cremated individuals 4 were juvenile (aged between 5 and 15 years)[44]. That the cremation of children was not customary

37 Witteyer 1993; Blaizot – Tranoy 2004; Bel et al. 2008.
38 Bel et al. 2008.
39 Valentino 2020.
40 Kurtz – Boardman 1971; Bérard 2017.
41 Unpublished data.
42 Becker 1995.
43 Gigante et al. 2012–2013.
44 Bérard 2017.

and widespread in the ancient Greek world is currently an archaeologically undeniable fact[45]. Considering the problems of preservation and recognisability of the burnt remains of children and the presence of about 10% of cremations of juveniles at Himera and Megara Hyblea, we propose that the cremation of non-adults was not as unusual as is believed.

At Himera there is an interesting case of a double cremation in a small pit (W4062), the remains of which are of an adult male and a juvenile (Fig. 4). The bones of both were white in colour, suggesting that they were burnt at the same time or in different pyres at similar temperatures. The percentage of double cremations in the Western necropolis of Himera is 1.17% (1/85) if we consider cremations with burnt remains weighing more than 100 g. In the case of inhumations, the percentage of double burials is also low (0.77%; 12/1554)[46]. In the Greek colony of Pithecusa, 2 double cremations out of 110 cremations in cinerary vessels are attested (1.81%), although one is uncertain, one of a young woman and an older adult man and one of two women[47], while one double cremation out of 11 (probably a man and a woman) are found in the Buchner excavations 1965–1967[48]. Of the 22 secondary cremations found at Megara Hyblaea two are bisected (9.09%): in both cases the remains are of a male and a female[49].

In conclusion, in the archaeological literature the most frequent evidences are just two: cremation in which the human remains were left in place on the pyre together with the grave goods, and the secondary rite in which the bones of the cremated individual were grouped together and collected in a container. At Himera, instead, thanks to taphonomic and anthropological analysis it has been possible to identify many variables linked to the way in which the remains were collected from the pyre and the dislocation of the urns, up to the very order of the burnt bones within them. This is why we believe it was essential to overcome the clear-cut categorisation between primary and secondary cremations, and interpretative categories in general, preferring a descriptive approach capable of highlighting all the possible variables, ritual acts and intermediate aspects linked to the funerary practice of cremation. All these observations testify to the great diversification of human actions, of which we can only see a small part, sometimes dictated by subjective choices, sometimes by contingent events, indicating that cremation in Himera was not a highly standardized ritual.

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45 Bérard 2017.
46 Viva et al. 2020b.
47 Becker 1995.
48 Gigante et al. 2012–2013.
49 Duday – Gras 2018, Bérard 2017.

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Funeral or Post-Funeral Practices? Taphonomy of Grave Reuse in Archaic Megara Hyblaea

Reine-Marie Bérard

Introduction

What are the possible anthropic interventions on a grave after the dead has been buried? And what are our means, as archaeologists, to identify these possible post-funeral practices? These are the two main questions we were invited to deal with by the organizers of this encounter. Indeed, although graves are often said to be closed archaeological contexts, there are many occasions in which they can be reopened, re-managed or disturbed after the funeral. These "post-funeral practices" (in the sense that they happen after the funeral of the dead, or at least of one dead) may have a funerary dimension themselves, when they concern the care of the dead, memorial or cultic ceremonies, or a rearrangement of the grave in order to insert new corpses into it. But they can also be deprived of any funerary dimension, that is withheld of any positive intentionality towards the deceased. Operations such as plundering, cleaning and removing of the human remains to reuse the funerary plot for other goals, may all be part of these post-funeral practices without funerary intentions. Taphonomy, that is the study of all the processes, anthropic or not, that have affected the archaeological deposit from its constitution in the past until its discovery by the archaeologist is a key element to reassemble the history of the grave and distinguish between funerary and non-funerary practices. The methods of archaeothanatology, developed from the end of the 70s onwards[1], are directed towards the reconstruction of these events. They imply a careful excavation, examination and recording of the stratigraphy of the tomb (from the surface of the necropolis until the preparatory level of its settlement), of the respective localization of the artefacts and human remains it contained, and of the preservation or not of the anatomical connections of the skeleton.

In this communication, I want to discuss a custom in which the line between funeral and post-funeral, funerary and non-funerary practices is not so easy to draw: the deployment of collective burial and grave reuse in Archaic Greek Sicily. By "collective burials", according to a distinction that is now well established in French archaeological literature[2] – though less in other countries – I intend graves in which several persons have been buried successively, with an interval of time from a few months to many decades[3]. Collective burials are opposed to "multiple burials", that is graves that also contained more than one dead, but all put together simultaneously. Both collective and multiple burials are "plural burials", in so much as they gather more than one dead, but collective burials imply one or more reopening and reuse of a same grave and so, necessarily, post-funeral practices. How can we, as archaeologists, recognize collective burials? What are our means to reconstruct the chronology of the different phases of their utilization? Is it possible to understand who were the persons reus-

1 Duday 2009.

2 First proposed by Leclerc – Tarrête 1988.

3 It may be difficult, if not impossible, to identify successive depositions when the interval of time between each phase is very brief. Indeed, it is the beginning of the decomposition process of the first dead that allows perturbations of the bones connections when another dead is added, perturbations that can be spotted by the archaeologist. If the first corpse is still fresh when another one is added, its anatomical logic will not be disturbed and it will not be possible to identify two different phases of depositions from a mere taphonomic examination.

M. A. Guggisberg, M. Billo-Imbach (eds.), Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy. Problems and Perspectives (Heidelberg 2023) 143–152.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1211.c16921

ing the grave? Why would they choose to bury their dead with other ones? Did they belong to the same family or social group? How did they affect the organization of the artefacts and human remains already present in the tomb, and did they conceive these manipulations as funerary or merely practical gestures? Are we actually able to distinguish between funerary and non-funerary interventions on the grave from the archaeological clues? These are the questions I want to ask, and try to answer, studying collective burial and grave reuse in Archaic Greek Sicily.

Corpus

Plural burials of Megara Hyblaea

This paper will deal mainly with the city of Megara Hyblaea, located on the Eastern Coast of Sicily, 22 km north of Syracuse. There are two reasons to that choice. Firstly, because Megara Hyblaea is the colony I know best, having worked on it for my PhD and postdoctoral research. Besides, it is very well documented. Three cemeteries have been unearthed, south, west and north of the site. The Western necropolis has been largely exhumed at the end of the 19th c., by the famous Italian archaeologist Paolo Orsi who uncovered around 1000 graves[4]. The Southern necropolis has been mainly explored in the second half of the 20th c., during rescue excavations led by the French School at Rome in collaboration with the archaeological services of the Superintendency of Syracuse. Of the 700 graves unearthed (of which I considered 507 for my PhD), 132 were subject to anthropological analysis led by Henri Duday in the 80s, representing at least 272 dead[5]. Megara Hyblaea is thus one of the rare Greek colonies, and the only one of first generation, which underwent high-scale anthropological examinations. The possibility to confront archaeological and anthropological data and to apply, up to some point[6], the methods of archaeothanatology to this corpus, thus constitute an exceptional opportunity for a detailed study of the taphonomy of the graves.

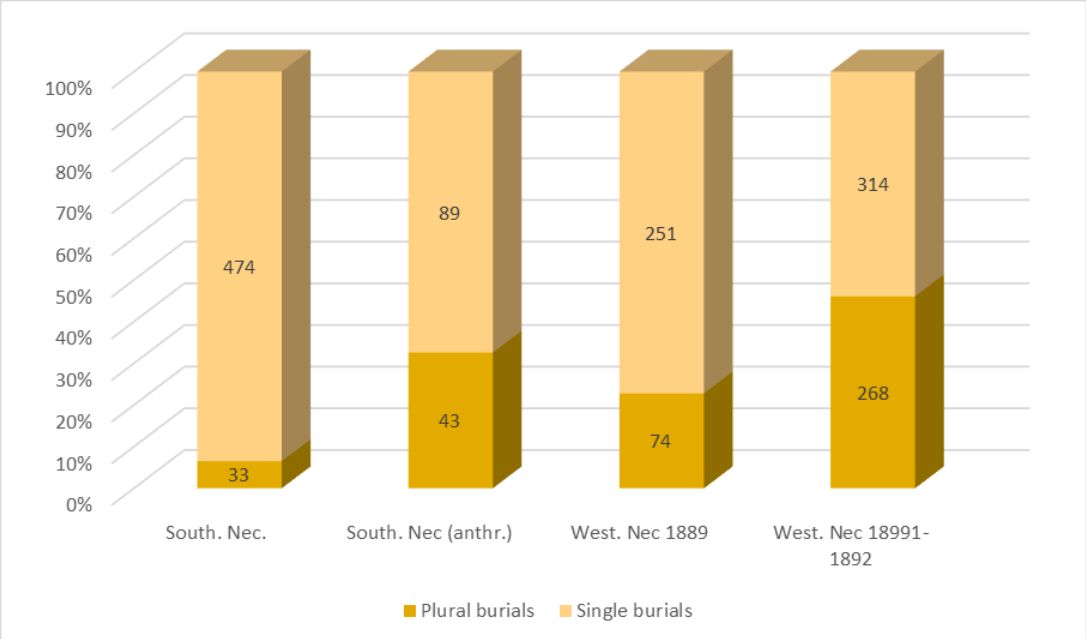
Fig. 1 – Sarcophagus P 19 (©EFR).

As it happens, around 10% of the graves of the Southern necropolis are plural burials, that is to say that they yielded more than one dead (up to ten dead were identified in the sarcophagus T 908). This proportion rises up to 30% when considering only the burials whose bones have been reviewed by H. Duday. Indeed, while even untrained archaeologists are able to acknowledge several adult skulls when they see them, computing the dead in a grave can be quite tricky when the bones are in a poor state

4 Only a third of which are published in Orsi – Cavallari 1892.

5 About the Southern necropolis, see: Bérard 2017; Duday – Gras 2018. Part of the archaeological and anthropological data is already available online here: https://www.efrome.it/publications/ressources-en-ligne/coll-efr/megara-hyblaea-6-la-necropole-meridionale-de-la-cite-archaique-1.

6 The limitations come from the fact that, though the quality of the data acquired afterwards is great, there still was no anthropologist (nor any archaeologist specifically trained to grave digging and osteology) directly on the field. Some data was thus irremediably lost.



Graph 1 – Proportion of single and plural burials in the Southern and Western necropolis

of conservation or when dealing with children whose tiny bones are actually harder to identify. In the small sarcophagus P 19 for example (Fig. 1), which internal length is only 96 cm, archaeologists recorded only one child, while the anthropological examination revealed that they were at least nine immatures! The counting was made on the basis of the number of petrous parts of the temporal bone, which is very dense and often well preserved in burials, but also very difficult to recognize for a non-specialist. Actually, the confrontation of the field diaries and the lab results for the 60 graves studied by H. Duday which yielded at least one child, showed that 58 out of the 105 children (more than a half of them!) these graves really contained would not have been identified in the absence of anthropological investigations.

This means that the proportion of plural burials in Megara Hyblaea was probably much higher than what it is possible to reconstruct now. The proportion of 30%, drawn from the graves with anthropological analysis, can rather safely be extended to the rest of the Southern necropolis, but may even be underestimated. Indeed, around 20% of the graves of the Western necropolis unearthed by Orsi in 1889 and more than 40% of those excavated in 1891–1892 also yielded more than one dead, and none of these graves underwent anthropological analyses (Graph 1). The original number of plural burials in the Western necropolis was thus probably higher, close to 40, or maybe even 50%[7].

A Megarian specificity?

The second reason why I will focus on Megara Hyblaea is that there are actually very few Sicilian colonies with collective burials. When I was asked to take part in this encounter, I was very enthusiastic because I thought it would be a good opportunity to confront the Megarian data with other *poleis*, since I had occasionally

7 This higher proportion is probably related to the dating of the two necropolises. While the Southern necropolis is in use already from the first decades of the 7th century BC onwards, the Western necropolis seems to have been mainly used during the 6th century. The practice of plural burial may thus have developed mainly during the 6th century BC.

read about tombs with more than one deceased in other colonies such as Syracuse, Gela, and Himera. But a close reading of the publications and interviews of colleagues working on these sites proved that these collective burials are actually very scarce: six are known from Syracuse and just one in Gela. In Himera, Stefano Vassallo told me that he had observed a few contexts with the bones of more than one dead in a same tomb, but the taphonomy of these graves strongly suggested that they were not collective burials, but secondary deposition either of older remains intentionally displaced, or of other graves incidentally perturbed by the setting of the new one. I was not able to identify collective burials (or even just plural burials) in any other Sicilian Greek city.

At first, it came as a disappointment. Then it appeared to me that it was all the more interesting to look for the origin of this Megarian specificity. Some authors[8] have argued that the practice of collective burials in Megara Hyblaea may have been influenced by Indigenous funerary practices. Indeed, collective burials are very common in Archaic times in the indigenous settlements of Eastern Sicily such as Villasmundo, Pantalica, etc. Since the legend has it that the Sicule king Hyblon offered the Megarian the land they occupied, it seemed tempting to suggest that they may have had a closer link to Indigenous populations than other Greek colonists and may have been more influenced by them. But Indigenous collective burials have nothing to do with the graves of Megara Hyblaea: they are mainly "tombe a groticcella", that is chamber tombs dug in the sides of cliffs or hills. They have one or more compartments, sometimes with benches dug inside the walls to ease the deposition of the dead, who could rise up to several dozen[9]. On the contrary, as we will see in detail below, Megarian plural graves are usually monolithic sarcophagi of moderate dimensions, of a type very popular in the whole Greek world, especially in Corinth and in the metropolis of Megara Hyblaea itself, Megara Nisaea.

As it happens, plural burials also represent around 30% of the graves of Megara Nisaea, recently studied by Iannis Chairetakis[10]. Plural burials may thus actually be a common trait between Megara Hyblaea and its mother city, some kind of Megarian characteristic. A famous quote from Plutarch, in the Life of Solon (10.3), could support this hypothesis. Reporting the debate between the Athenian lawmaker and the Megarian Hereas, quarrelling over the possession of Salamis, he explains how funerary practices became an argument to determine who should own the isle:

"*Solon, wishing to refute the claims of the Megarians still further, made the point that the dead on the island of Salamis were not buried after the Megarian, but after the Athenian fashion. For the Megarians bury their dead facing the east, but the Athenians facing the west. However, Hereas the Megarian denies this, and says that the Megarians also turn the faces of their dead to the west. And what is still more important than this, he says that the Athenians use one tomb for each body, whereas the Megarians (like the early inhabitants of Salamis) place three or four bodies in one tomb.*"

The high proportion of plural burials observed both in Megara Nisaea and Megara Hyblaea could confirm this Megarian characteristic. We will now try and understand how this practice was put into action, and, possibly, why.

How? A Megarian user guide to collective burial

Inside the grave: identifying successive depositions

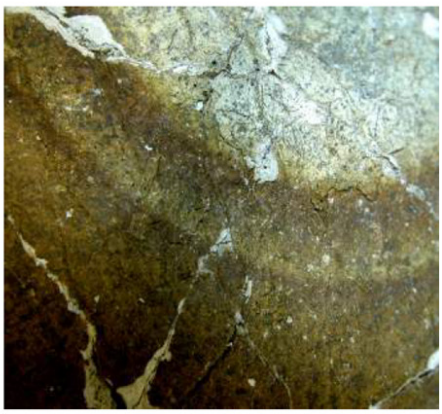
As I briefly underlined in the last section, the main type of grave employed for plural burials in Megara Hyblaea was monolithic sarcophagus, representing around half of our corpus. What is interesting, though, is that these sar-

8 Shepherd 1995, 67.

9 Up to 14 dead have been counted in the chamber tombs of Pantalica (Orsi 1899, 55), and more than 20 in some *grotticella* tombs di Castiglione di Ragusa (Mercuri 2012, 31).

10 Chairetakis 2016, 221).

a



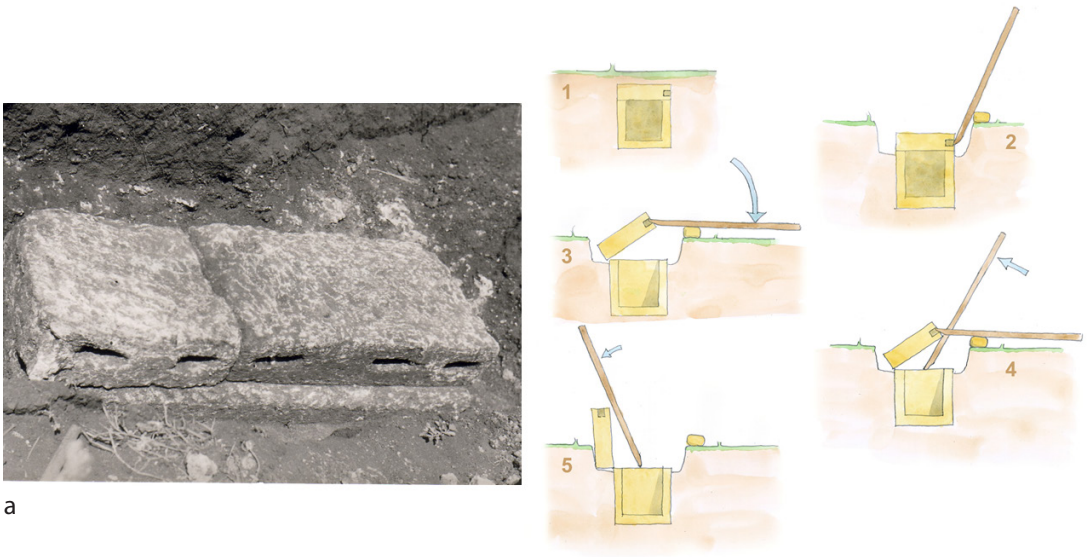
b

Fig. 2a.b – Sarcophagus P 11 (©EFR) and close-up of the dark lines marking the level reached by water inside the skull of one of the dead (©H. Duday).

cophagi are not especially spacious: they actually do not differ from the sarcophagi used to receive just one dead. This particular feature of Megara Hyblaea is one of the primary keys that allows establishing that a plural burial was undoubtedly a collective one: the inner dimensions of the grave are simply usually not large enough to enable the deposition of more than one fresh corpse at a time[11]. After inhumating a first cadaver, it was thus necessary to wait till the process of decomposition of the body was sufficiently advanced to permit manipulations of the bones, or at least body parts. Such manipulations are clearly visible in the graves, mainly through the practice of reduction. In most collective burials, the last dead buried was found in primary, usually supine position, while the remains of the previous occupants had been piled up on the sides or at one extremity of the tomb. In a lot of cases, this operation appears to have been made without great care: the bones are often just swapped away, and there is no sign of selective arrangement of the bones (long bones together skull on top, etc..) as is sometimes seen in different cultures practicing reduction. One must remain cautious, though, since water infiltration probably played a role in the apparent disorder inside many Megarian sarcophagi. It is surely the case in the sarcophagus P 11 for instance, in which the remains of three women were found, one in primary supine position, the other two mainly reduced at one extremity of the sarcophagus but also strewn everywhere. H. Duday interpreted two dark lines inside one of their skulls as a sign marking the level reached, and durably maintained by water within the sarcophagus on two occasions (Fig. 2). This is a good example of the importance of a thorough taphonomic examination of the remains and their context to apprehend the different phases of constitution and perturbation (anthropic or not), of the graves[12].

11 Only in the cases when there are only two dead, placed head-to-toe, is there a slight possibility that they may have been buried. simultaneously.

12 Some holes found at the bottom of a dozen sarcophagi from the Western necropolis may have been dug to limit the effect of such water infiltrations, and maybe fasten the



a

b

Fig. 3a.b – The sockets on the cover slabs of sarcophagus W 3 (©EFR) and proposition of restitution of their mode of use (©G. Chapelin).

Yet the fact that the greatest part of the Megarian plural burials were collective (and thus implied reuse over a long period of time) is not only proved by the manipulations of human remains, but also by the artefacts placed near the bodies. Indeed, though not all the dead had funerary offerings in Megara Hyblaea, many of them at least received one or two small vases. The chronology of these vases in a same plural burial can thereby be a major clue to determine the duration of use of the grave. In the already mentioned sarcophagus P 19 for example, there were both a Corinthian ovoid aryballos from the second quarter of the 7th c. BC, and a rounded aryballos dated around 590–570 BC. It means that the depositions of the nine children span over a period of at least 75 years, maybe even more given that the first or the last dead that were placed in the grave may not have received any object at all. In many cases, a duration of use of about a century for a single tomb seems highly probable. During this period, the grave could be reopened up to a dozen times.

decomposition of the bodies in prevision of later reuse. See Bérard 2021.

Outside the grave: markers, reopening systems and circulation in the necropolis

These observations made inside the grave have consequences for the outside of it, its structure and insertion in the material and symbolic space of the necropolis. Indeed, reusing a grave over a century implies that you were able to locate and recognize it, which necessarily indicates the use of grave markers. Yet, only around 60 grave markers – all made of stone, some inscribed and some sculpted[13] – are known up to this day, for more than 1700 graves excavated in Megara Hyblaea, probably a third of which were reopened at least once. One must conclude that there no doubt existed many other types of perishable grave markers like wooden

13 Among the most famous are the *kouros* of the Southern necropolis (Bernabò Brea – Pugliese Carratelli 1946) and the *kourotrophos* of the Northern one (Gentili 1954, 99–101).

Fig. 4 – Sarcophagus P 12 (©EFR).

poles or structures, maybe plants and bushes, as some ancient texts suggest[14]. The practice of grave reuse thus indirectly gives us precious information about the funerary landscape of the Megarian necropolis.

Once the grave was located, you had to reopen it, which was not an easy task considering that monolithic sarcophagi were generally closed by one or several stone slabs, which could weigh many hundred kilos. Some kind of sockets observed on the sides of some of the cover slabs of the graves were probably meant to facilitate the work of the persons in charge of reopening the graves (Fig. 3). One can only wonder who they were. Indeed, if the funeral is usually a private event, led by the family in the Ancient Greek World, such stone slabs adjustments certainly exceeded the forces of many individuals. It may have been the quarrier who carved the sarcophagus who was leading its settlement in the funerary pit, and was in charge of the consecutive manipulations of the cover slabs.

Some examples suggest that not all the cover slabs were removed if not necessary. The sarcophagus P 14, for instance, yielded the remains of at least seven adults. Five of them had been successively buried (two were found in primary positions, and three reduced on the sides of the container). The last two adults whose remains were placed in the grave were cremated, and their ashes presumably spilled out of an Attic amphora at one side of the grave, just under one of the smallest of the 4 cover slabs. It is probable that the undertakers or familiars of the dead reopened just this one slab to ease the process.

In other cases, on the contrary, all the slabs were removed when there was no urgent need for it. The sarcophagus P 12, accurately closed when discovered, yielded the bones of two dead, neatly reduced at one side of the grave, but no primary inhumation at all (Fig. 4)[15]. Opening the grave and preparing it like that was not an easy business, and one would expect that such work was accomplished only when required to bury another dead. These original post-funeral interventions nonetheless were not connected to any new burial, but rather appear to be some kind of "maintenance operations". They thus inform us about types of circulations and procedures in the necropolis that were not strictly linked to funerary ceremonies, questioning the existence of a possible specialized profession dedicated to the opening and management of the graves in the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea.

Why collective burials?

Economic or symbolic?

Other kinds of original post-funeral grave modifications observed in Megara Hyblaea may give us precious clues on why would a group (familial or social) choose to bury several dead in the same grave. One curious example is that of the small sarcophagus Z 130 (Fig. 5) which yielded the remains of at least seven immatures, aged between 0 and 6–7 years at death. The last child who was placed in the

14 Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, II.841–844; Quintus of Smyrne, *Posthomerica*, II.580–592; Vitruvius, De architectura IV.1.

15 Two similar examples are known, one from the Western necropolis of Megara (T 738), and possibly one from Syracuse (Fusco necropolis, T 472, see Orsi 1895, 181–182).

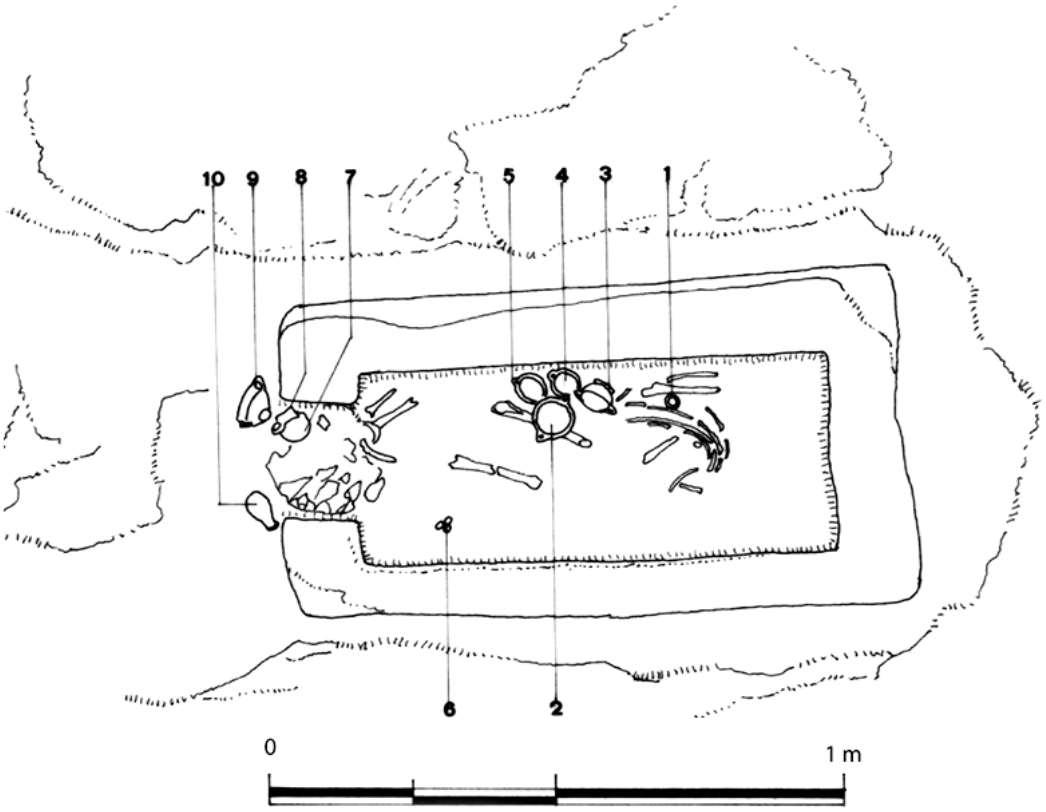


Fig. 5 – Sarcophagus Z 130, showing the opening cut in one of the small sides (©EFR).

grave was around 7 years old at death and was too tall to fit in the 85 cm-long inner space of the container. To solve this problem, the persons who inhumed him, maybe his parents, decided to cut open one of the small sides of the sarcophagus to let the feet of the child out, so that he could still be buried in this grave. We know that the operation took place while the sarcophagus was already in the ground and in use since tiny stone fragments were found inside the sarcophagus and the pit dug in front of it on this occasion, mixed with the skeletal remains of the other children.

This case is particularly interesting since not only was it not an easy work to do, but it appears to us a someway disturbing and inadequate solution to bury a child with his feet strangely going out of the tomb. This probably means that, however weird this may sound to us today, it was of special significance for the persons responsible for this burial to place this child in this grave. It may have been for symbolic reasons: a tempting -though unprovable- emotional interpretation would be to imagine that all these children were brothers and sisters, or maybe cousins[16], and that it was important for their parents to reform their familial unity beyond death so that the little ones would not face Hades on their own. But one could also think of a less romantic and more pragmatic explanation: it would have cost more to build a new sarcophagus, or maybe even just to dig another grave, if it meant buying another fu-

16 Two multiple burials in clay pot (Z 1 and Z 87), each containing two children who were buried simultaneously, but who were less than 9 months apart in age at the moment of their death inform us that two children buried together in Megara Hyblaea did not necessarily have the same biological mother.

nerary space. Such instances of grave remodelling could thus indirectly hint at the existence of funerary plots in the cemeteries of Megara Hyblaea.

Funerary plots in the necropolis?

In this perspective, the grave Z 105 could exemplify a change of owner of the funerary structure. Indeed, it was a small monolithic sarcophagus, which dimensions were suitable for the inhumation of a child (internal length: 122 cm), but which actually yielded the mixed cremated remains of two adults with only two vases from the mid-6th c. BC. Along one side of the sarcophagus though was found a secondary deposit of some bones pertaining to five children aged between 0 and 12 years old and five ceramics, from the mid till the end of the 7th c. BC. A possible, though unprovable reconstruction of the funeral sequence for this grave would thus be that this small sarcophagus was used in a first time to bury five children over a period of time of about 50 years, between 650 and 600 BC. Then, around 50 years later, it was emptied and reused to receive the cremated remains of the two adults. The fact that the burned bones were not just added inside the tomb, but that the container was totally cleared before this reuse, may suggest that there was no direct link between the children and the adults. Nonetheless, the remains of the previous occupants were not thrown away yet kept and placed with respect just outside the grave. It could thus be the sign of a pragmatic operation, but not deprived of respect and some kind of ritualization – both post-funeral and still somehow funerary, even while removing human remains and offerings from the grave.

Reverence seems indeed to have prevailed in the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea when accidentally disturbing other burials. Another proof of it is the existence of various pits that enclosed fragments of ceramics, some small vases but also many parts of ollas, amphoras, hydrias, etc., that were often used as containers for child inhumation. Our hypothesis is that these pits may have been dug to gather the relics of such inhumations in vases – fragile and easily dismantled – when they were destroyed incidentally while settling another grave. If economic or pragmatic reasons may have played a role in choosing to reuse a grave in the necropolises of Megara Hyblaea, the rearrangement of the remains thus seems to have always been made with respect and care, showing that post-funeral practices may still have retained some kind of funerary and ritualized dimension.

Conclusion

To conclude, the graves of Megara Hyblaea are all but closed immutable contexts and show the signs of many disturbances, some of anthropic origin and some not, some deliberate and some incidental, whether after a decade by the same social group or centuries later by totally different people. Reconstructing the various types of perturbations and their chronology is a challenge which demands a high attention to taphonomy, and a great humility in our hypothesis. Nevertheless, it appears quite clear from our corpus that the post-funeral alterations of 'older' depositions, though they may occasionally have been motivated by pragmatic and maybe even economic concerns, were not deprived of a certain ritualization, that can, somehow still be considered a part of the funerary process. Grave reuse thus implies manipulations halfway between post-funeral and funerary practices, marking a possible evolution of the status of the human remains and objects as they were handled, displaced and remodeled.

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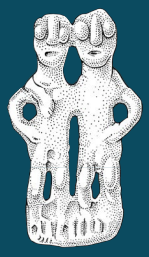
The international workshop "Burial Taphonomy and Post-Funeral Practices in Pre-Roman Italy: Problems and Perspectives" held on January 12th, 2021, at the University of Basel was dedicated to the post-funeral "biography" of graves across the entire Italian peninsula from the Iron Age to the Classical period. Scholars of both physical anthropology and archaeology reflected from different perspectives on the effects of burial taphonomy in a variety of case studies providing new and innovative insights into the conception of death in pre-Roman times. In the present volume nine papers resulting from this interdisciplinary exchange are published.



ISBN 978-3-96929-239-6