Vase Shapes from Picenum Funerary Contexts: Imports and Local Production of Numana

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As it is well-known, the ancient Numana was located in a privileged position. In ancient texts, its territory is described as a fertile countryside opening to a rocky coast, the Conero promontory, where Numana was the most important natural harbor of the Median-Adriatic coast. We do not have a complete topographical perspective of Ancient Numana: until now, the greatest part of the archaeological findings which were published are related to the necropolis spread on this territory – the widest one is known as "Quagliotti-Davanzali", on which this contribution focuses.

As we have scarce evidence of the settlement and cult places for the 1st millennium BC of Numana, our knowledge mainly relies on funerary documentation, pertinent to differing necropolis (fig. 1). The Davanzali area was excavated in detail during the 1970s when more than 300 tombs were brought to light, while the Quagliotti area consists of 186 tombs. These two parts, with other recently excavated nearby areas, form a unique

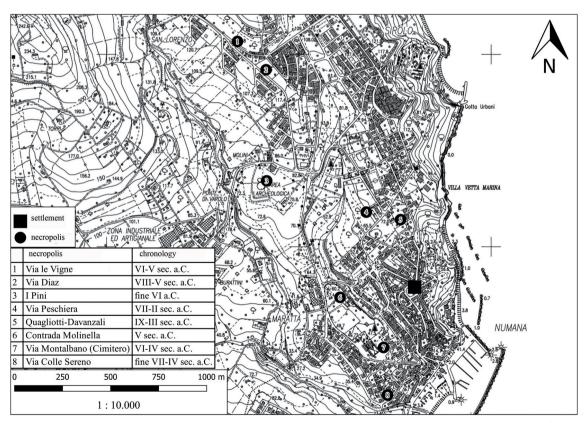


Fig. 1: Ancient Numana territory (now Numana-Sirolo, Ancona), with locations of necropolis and inhabited area.

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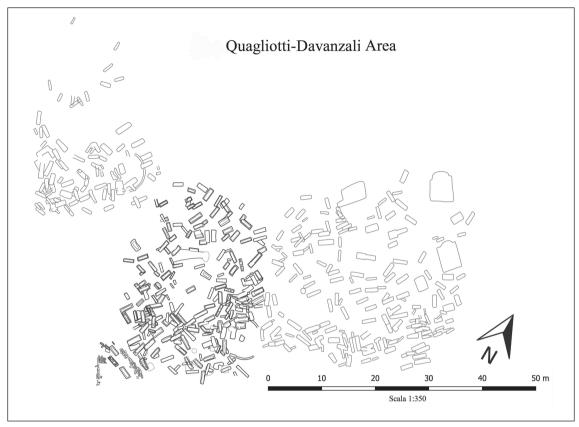


Fig. 2: Plan of the Quagliotti-Davanzali necropolis; on the right, the Davanzali area; in the middle, central sector of the Davanzali necropolis studied by the équipe of Bologna University.

and large necropolis (fig. 2). Despite the abundance of finds, few contexts have been published as yet, while there is a lack of systematic study of consistent and topographically homogenous groups of burials. On the other hand, the available documentation for these excavations is very detailed.

In recent years, a research project on the Davanzali necropolis has been taken up by the University of Bologna; the project aims to study the large central part of the necropolis (241 tombs in total). The Davanzali area had been in use for a long period (9th-2nd centuries BC) and has a complex stratigraphy nowadays. In light of the complexity of this excavation, it is thus necessary to adopt a recording methodology and to interpret that archaeological palimpsest in its historical development.

The data management is carried out by a GIS implemented with a data-base;² this allows to co-relate all the information on tombs and funerary sets in a dynamic way, along with spatial data. It is therefore possible to investigate many aspects of the occupational dynamics of the necropolis and of the funerary rituality, through a necessary diachronic and spatial perspective.

With the view opened by this investigation methodology, this contribution aims to give attention to some aspects connected to the distribution and use of Attic pottery in Numana's funerary sets, from the second half of the 5th to the 4th century BC, with particular reference to the distribution of various vase shapes. Basing on the large amount of available data and the investigation methodology, it is possible to consider Attic vase shapes in connection with many other aspects, such as the funerary rituals, the arrangement of the tombs in the necropolis, the composition of funerary sets, the presence of other locally produced or imported pottery, with particular regard to fine pottery, as for example south Italian or the so-called Alto-Adriatic wares.³ The topics I am going to analyze are extremely wide and controversial and it is difficult to examine them fully in this contribution, but I will try to point out some of the most relevant phenomena emerging from the investigation in process, being aware that my reflections might be reconsidered upon the completion of this research project.

First of all, it is necessary to point out that I am here examining data from 241 tombs, belonging to the Davanzali area and for the greatest part unpublished; in addition, I take into consideration some other finds, already known in literature from the Numana necropolis.⁴

I believe it is possible to start with some general quantitative data, related to imports of Attic pottery in Numana. The Beazley Archive Pottery Database (BAPD) lists 77 Attic vases from Numana, dating from the end of the 6th to the 4th centuries BC, 90% of which are in the red-figure technique. Previous studies concentrated mainly on figured vases, omitting the black-glaze ones, which were extremely abundant in the period we are concentrating now. It is thus fundamental to consider these vases as we are reflecting on the use of vase shapes.

It is immediately clear that the number of Attic red-figure and black-glaze pottery is larger than we thought before, once we consider all the Attic vases from Numana (including the Davanzali area). We deal with a total of about 200 vases,⁷ a number meant to increase further when the research continues. We can observe two interesting phenomena: the predominance of certain shapes (skyphoi, kylikes, cups, stemmed plates and kraters) and a variation in documented forms within the end of the 5th century as opposed to the situation during the 4th century BC. In the 5th century we can detect numerous shapes, but around the beginning of the 4th century their number decreases (only some kylikes detected); from the central decades of the 4th century BC on, we find for the most part skyphoi and bell-kraters, with little else.

This reduction in the number of shapes only partially mirrors the Athenian production trend:⁸ as a matter of fact, it is relevant to compare what happens in the Adriatic area and in Spina, where there are far more attested shapes during the 4th century BC, a phenomenon that appears more and more clear from another project we are carrying out in the Valle Trebba necropolis with the Bologna University.⁹

We think that the Picenians' choice of Attic shapes only partially depends on the offer from the Athenian Kerameikos, while the picture sketched above is also the re-

sult of intentional choices made in order to meet the requirements for the composition of funerary sets. We shall see how this hypothesis can be confirmed by the analysis of other elements characterizing burials. Besides, a clear element discernible in the data for the whole period in question is the adoption of the Greek banquet set as a basis for the composition of many funerary sets, in a typically Greek fashion. This phenomenon is evident mainly from the second quarter of the 5th century BC on,¹⁰ and becomes even more visible in tombs dated toward the end of this century. Three monumental tombs of the Quagliotti area (tombs no. 64, 178, 185) dating from the end of the 5th century BC display particularly rich banquet sets.¹¹ One should point out that a restricted élite of this type was probably responsible for managing banquet rituality within the society in Numana, since these tombs contain extremely articulated sets for wine-mixing and food consumption. The exceptional monumental structure of these tombs – with no comparison in Numana – is another distinctive feature, among many, marking them apart from the rest of the tombs in the necropolis.

Scholars have pointed out that the Hellenization of choice funerary sets of the 5th century corresponds to a change in the Numana society and reflects upon tomb arrangements, being coupled with the rearrangement of several aspects in the funerary record noticed in the previous period, as for example the exhibition of the warrior status in men's tombs, where several weapons were buried. Besides the three tombs already mentioned, other tombs showing this change in the composition of the funerary sets appear at the end of the 5th century BC: these tombs are situated in the internal part of the Davanzali area – like t. 407, containing only a spear, but many imported and locally produced vases. The same shape occurs in numbers in a funerary set, according to a practice, documented not only in Numana, but in other funerary contexts as well, for example in Spina. Up until this period, the duplication of specific vase shapes linked to the banquet sphere was found on a limited number of funerary contexts only; this particular aspect needs to be investigated further in the funerary sets of the entire Davanzali necropolis, in order to understand its meaning.

Other unpublished tombs from the same necropolis – coeval to or a little more recent than tomb 407 – show wide banqueting sets, with different solutions in the composition of the funerary set: these are characterized by the presence of a prestigious element, a transport amphora. No. 471 (fig. 3) contains the rests of a male. It was realized with exceptional care: there was a wooden coffin, with pebbles under its bottom, according to an ancient Picenian ritual; the body was given some ornamental objects on (three fibulae an one ring), while an iron spear was found on the right of the head. Although partially lost due to the superimposition of a later tomb which cut part of no. 471 – the funerary set was placed outside the wooden coffin, at the dead's feet: there was a transport amphora of type B, possibly Corinthian or from the eastern Adriatic area (fig. 4), underlining the use of a large quantity of prestigious wine to which only one red-figured vase is associated, a stemless kylix. The other vases belonging to the funerary set are locally produced and the same shapes appear in numbers: These are functional

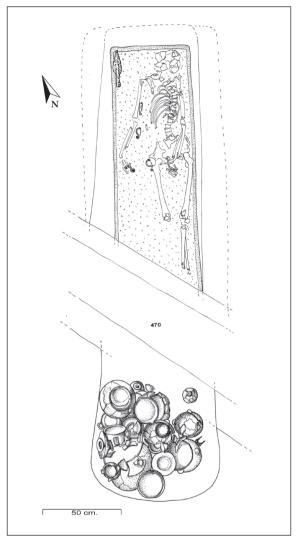


Fig. 3: Plan of the tomb 471 Davanzali, partially cut by the superimposition of a later tomb.

vases for ritual feasting, possibly a funerary banquet; the presence of the amphora instead of a mixing bowl such as a krater (either local or imported), in association with local vase-shapes, may suggest a specific local practice.¹⁸

A similar criterion to compose a funerary set is found in other tombs, such as t. 360, a male's tomb, where there is only one Attic black-glaze skyphos from the first half of the 4th century BC, along with a Corinthian amphora type B, or t. 466, with black-glaze Athenian vases (a skyphos and two bowls with outturned rim), a transport amphora, a rich sympotic set, along with typically female objects (spindels).

In the period between the last decades of the 5th century and the beginning of the 4th century BC, south Italian vases began to arrive in quantities. The specific frequency

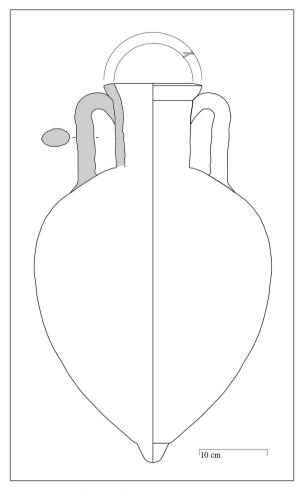


Fig. 4: Corinthian transport amphora from tomb 471 Davanzali, Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 75618.

of these importations in Numana is a phenomenon interpreted by some scholars as an attempt of south Italian workshops to enter the Picenian market in a weak moment for Athens. On the other hand, some scholars more convincingly argued that the south Italian workshops exploited already established Athenian commercial routes directed to Picenian emporia. On the other hand, some scholars more convincingly argued that the south Italian workshops exploited already established Athenian commercial routes directed to Picenian emporia.

The research on the Davanzali necropolis increased the number of south Italian vases known from Numana, and it has confirmed the importance of Piceno as a market for south Italian pottery starting from the end of 5th century BC: following the results of our research, there are at least 40 South-Italian vases, some of them still unpublished, in the Davanzali tombs. The earliest south Italian pottery imported in Numana is of Lucanian manufacture. These vases were belonging in the more articulated funerary sets: kraters, skyphoi, some small plates. The latter shape is correctly interpreted as a special commission, ²¹ since it was not a well-known shape in the south Italian repertory, while it

was widely spread in the Adriatic area, both in locally produced versions and in Attic imports.²²

In the richer funerary sets we can observe the association between south Italian and Attic vases, for example in the aforementioned tomb 407,²³ where a Lucanian skyphos attributed to the Schwerin Group was found in association with several Attic red-figured and black-glazed vases, or in the three tombs no. 64, 178, 185 – Quagliotti area, mentioned above, with vases from the workshop of the Creusa Painter and from the Schwerin Group (the later in tombs 176 and 185).²⁴

During the 4th century BC, some products from Apulian and Campanian workshops were added, sometimes in association with Attic pottery, as for instance in the unpublished tomb no. 219 – Davanzali, where a rich male funerary set includes an Apulian skyphos by the Group of Altenburg 331 (fig. 5)²⁵ and an Attic stemless cup;²⁶ an owl skyphos, most likely of south Italian origin²⁷ and a transport amphora (mentioned in the excavation notes, but now lost), were also included. In the rich set, alongside a unique spear, there are some fibulae, a ring and several locally produced vases; again, we find the repetition of some shapes functional to the symposium.

As opposed to the situation during the 5th century BC,²⁸ the only large Attic vase found in the funerary sets in the Davanzali area in the 4th century is the red-figured bell-krater. Tomb no. 195 – a female one – is an exception in the scenario coming from this period's tombs of the Davanzali necropolis, since there are many vases of different provenance (Attic, south Italian, Alto-Adriatic),²⁹ thus presenting a funerary set comparable to those richest burials already commented above.

The remaining four funerary sets (tombs 353, 362, 368, 377) from the Davanzali necropolis with Attic kraters from the second half of the 4th century BC are much different, since the krater is the only ceramic vessel included, other objects being ornaments or weapons.³⁰ A glance at the necropolis plan reveals that all these tombs are associated: as a matter of fact, all these tombs are located closely in the eastern sector and, inside them the krater is systematically put at the dead's feet (figs. 6–7). In these tombs – dating



Fig. 5: Apulian Red-Figure Skyphos, Group Of Altenburg 331 from tomb 219 Davanzali.

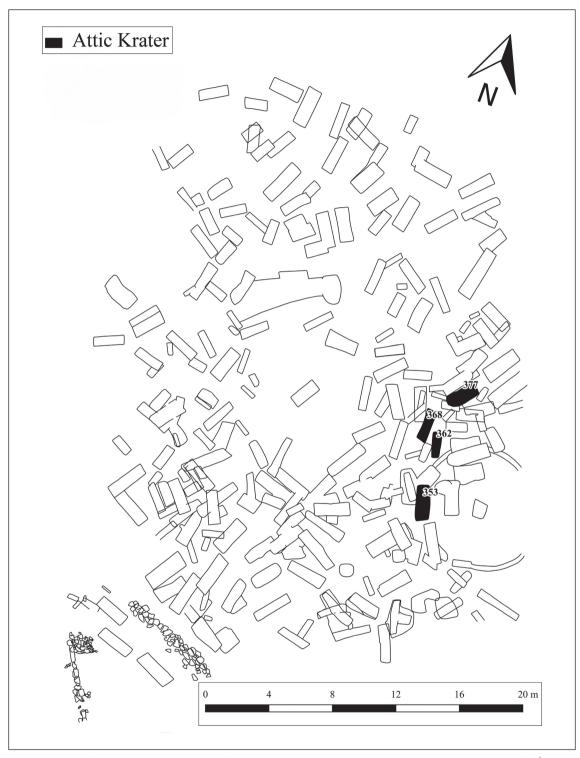


Fig. 6: Plan of the central sector of the Davanzali necropolis, with localization of $4^{\rm th}$ century BC tombs with Attic red-figure kraters.

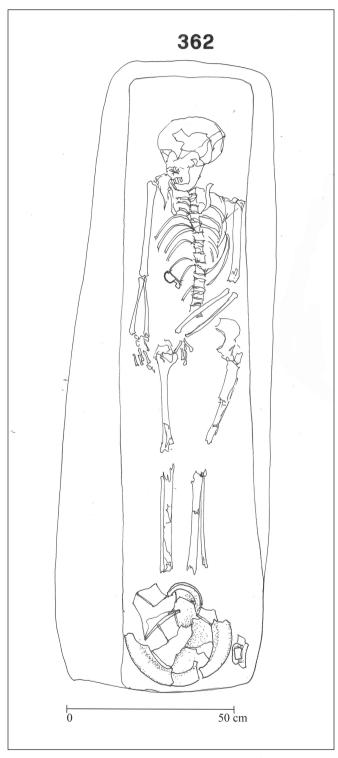


Fig. 7: Plan of the tomb 362 Davanzali, with an Attic red-figure krater as unique vase of the funerary set.



Fig. 8: Attic red-figured bell-krater from t. 362 Davanzali.

from around the middle of the 4th century BC – the presence of the Attic krater (fig. 8) as unique vase could be interpreted as a signal of modesty, or even poverty, of the funerary sets. However, it is more convincing to think that the choice of this unique shape and its preeminent position in the funerary set is linked to specific ritual action, according to which the krater is entrusted with the task of evoking the adhesion to the symposium and its system of symbolic meanings, in a way we may define synthetic and essential.³¹ As the central element of the symposium, the krater can evoke the status of the dead, through his participation to the social feasting, but it could possibly also refer to his adhesion to a salvation belief.³²

A further confirmation of the high symbolic value of the krater is given by the analysis of other late funerary sets, in which the Attic krater is replaced by an Alto-Adriatic one: what really matters is the shape and its figurative meanings. This relevance is confirmed by the fact that the Alto-Adriatic krater or a similar shape – such as the skyphoid krater in the Gnathia – is the only vase buried in a few tombs until the last Picenian phase of the necropolis, at the beginning of the 3rd century BC, at a period when Attic pottery has not been imported to Numana for several decades.³³

Generally, Alto-Adriatic figured pottery in Davanzali necropolis seems to be chosen in a limited number of funerary sets,³⁴ thus having a precise meaning. We must also point out that Alto-Adriatic pottery is produced in a limited number of shapes in Numana: bell-krater, chous and skyphos. Apparently those are the shapes believed to be indispensable, as we already noticed for Athenian imports.³⁵

Alto-Adriatic shapes from Numana should be investigated in the light of the context of all the locally produced vase shapes, in order to understand the significance of the selection. As a matter of fact, there are some typical Picenian shapes of coarse ware, persisting for a long time: these shapes are likely to recall different or complementary social (or funerary) rituals, rather than the typical Greek symposium.

Going back to the repertory of Attic shapes in the 4th century BC in Numana, even the skyphos seems to enjoy a ritual role, at least in the funerary sets, when it is the only ceramic vessel included. This is significantly recorded in at least three child burials (tombs 515, 513, 347). Between the end of the 5th and the middle of the 4th century BC the ritual significance of the skyphos is also confirmed in tombs where an Alto-Adriatic or a locally produced skyphos is found as being the unique object of the funerary set. Starting from the third quarter of the 4th century BC, the ritual becomes more and more frequent: locally produced black-glazed and red-figured skyphoi are found, systematically placed at the dead's feet.³⁷ The relevant number of children's tombs, in which the ritual is repeated, allows one to think that there was a specific relation of the skyphos with this particular age range or with a liminal condition, as it had been recently pointed out. 38 Furthermore, it seems that the presence of the skyphos may be linked to some form of participation in the symposium, ruled by social norms or depending on the social role of the deceased. This is one of the topics requiring further investigation in the Davanzali necropolis, as the anthropological analysis undertaken in cooperation with colleagues from the Bologna University evolves.³⁹

To sum up: Attic, Alto-Adriatic and local – both figured and black-glazed – vase shapes were carefully chosen for inclusion in the funerary sets, according to diversified rituals, and in different combinations, following the various chronological phases.

Evidence for continuity in terms of ritual between the 5th and the first half of the 4th centuries BC is clear. Several funerary contexts are characterized by a definite recalling of the ideology of the symposium and of wine consumption. In general, however, different articulations of the ritual characterize the burials in the 4th century BC, following the relevant historical and social transformations of Numana – and more in general of the Picenum, in that period.⁴⁰ While some tombs still show composite banqueting sets, as was mentioned above, there are also burials in which the adhesion to the symposium is represented by a unique and meaningful vase, a krater or a skyphos, either locally produced or imported: this is particularly noticed in the second half of the century.

In conclusion, I would like to focus briefly on the methodology adopted in this research and to list its future goals. As we tried to demonstrate in this study, it is necessary to take into account various elements observed in the funerary record, in order to deal with a complex topic such as the diffusion, reception and use of Attic pottery in Numana funerary sets, its several meanings and its role within the funerary sets. Aspects like the composition of funerary sets, the relationship of vases with other classes of material, the geographic distribution of the tombs within the necropolis, the chronology of the tombs (to sum up with one word the context in its different meanings) are indispensable tasks of study. It is also fundamental to consider other parameters, which I can only mention in this contribution. First of all, the iconographies are crucial, because

they contribute to define the meaning of figured vases along with shapes and they can shed light on the reasons behind the selection of vases for funerary sets. In the future, the studying of Numana Attic pottery should be extended as much as possible to other funerary areas and to the settlement, in order to ground the investigation on the broadest possible data base. Besides, the analysis should not only consider the vase style, as it has often been done in the past.

The documentation on Attic pottery from Numana offers many opportunities to think about: among these, I would like to mention the theme of influences or connections among productions, especially in relation to the Alto-Adriatic vases from Numana. Among the goals of our work is the experimentation of new technologies to document vase shapes, carried out through image-based photogrammetry and laser scanning, necessary to reach the most objective determination of the profiles of shapes for imported and locally produced vases. The study of these elements should lead to a more documented analysis for the relationship between Attic, southern Italian and locally produced vases (both figured and black-glazed ones) and for a deeper understanding of the functioning of the local pottery workshops. As a matter of fact, vase shape – on which scholars have been particularly concentrating their attention recently deserves our greatest consideration, since it conveys important information on the role and functioning of decorated pottery in closed contexts, as this study tried to document.

Notes

- ¹ The project is coordinated by the author and carried out in cooperation with the Soprintendenza Archeologica, Belle Arti e Paesaggio delle Marche (S. Finocchi) and the Polo Museale delle Marche (N. Frapiccini). For an overview of the project and its goals: Finocchi Baldoni 2017; Baldoni forthcoming; Finocchi et al. forthcoming.
- ² The GIS has been designed by E. Zampieri using open source software.
- ³ The study of the distribution of locally produced or imported fine pottery in the Davanzali necropolis is carried out by the author in collaboration with M. Natalucci, S. Seccamonte, E. Zampieri (Bologna University). For a first presentation of research results, Natalucci et al. forthcoming and Baldoni forthcoming. ⁴ Fabrini 1984; Baldelli et al. 1991; Landolfi 1992; Percossi Serenelli 1998; Landolfi 2000b; 2001; Lefèvre Novaro 2001: Antoniucci 2007.
- ⁵ Beazley Archive Pottery Database consulted on May 2018.
- ⁶ A larger amount of imported Attic vases is estimated in a growing trend from the first imports of 530–520 BC to the half of the 5th century BC, while in the second half of the century, especially towards the end, the amount of Attic vases decreased: this is due to the Attic trade in the Adriatic area passing through a crisis; only during the central decades of 4th century BC a new recovery for this trade in the north-central Adriatic area, especially in Numana and Spina is observed: Landolfi 2000b, 78; Lefèvre Novaro 2001; Giudice 2004.
- ⁷ A similar evaluation in Giudice 2004, 174 fig. 4.

- ⁸ For the general production of Attic pottery shapes: Giudice et al. 2015, 293–312.
- ⁹ The project focuses on the entire Valle Trebba necropolis (over 1220 tombs) and it is carried out by an équipe of the Bologna University coordinated by Elisabetta Govi: for an overview of the research, see Govi 2017.
- ¹⁰ For example, in the rich funerary set of the "Giulietti-Marinelli" tomb: Antoniucci 2007.
- ¹¹ Lefevre Novaro 2001 pointed out that these tombs surely belonged to a very restricted Numana élite, probably involved in trade activity.
- 12 See Landolfi 1992.
- 13 Curti 2004, 126; Govi 2006, 124; 2017, 106.
- ¹⁴ In some of the richest coeval tombs of Numana (185 and 64 Quagliotti) we found a couple of transport amphoras, accompanied by very articulated banqueting sets: Percossi Serenelli 1998, 140 f.
- ¹⁵ For production of wine in Pharos (Hvar, Croatia), its trade in transport amphorae type B and their diffusion in the Western Adriatic coasts (Spina, Adria, Numana) in see Kirigin 2018.
- ¹⁶ The shape of the kylix recalls closely those Attic ones, belonging to the late 5th century BC, but some aspects make it similar to the early South-Italian or Etruscan red-figure productions.
- ¹⁷ Eight stemned bowls, four stemned plates, a mortar, a cinerary urn and finally six pocula, which is a typical shape in the Picenian repertoire. Three of these pocula contained selected animals' bones (swine, sheep and goat) as food offering. We must keep in mind, though, that the tomb was partially cut by a subsequent tomb whose filling showed some pottery fragments, maybe belonging to the more ancient tomb.
- ¹⁸ For different sets pertaining to diverse rituals of wine consumption in tombs of italic people in Magna Graecia, see Colivicchi 2004, 54 n. 185, with previous references. On the different rituals of the banquet, see Esposito 2015.
- ¹⁹ Landolfi 2000c, 117 f. On the other hand, recent researches on the commerce of Attic and South-Italian pottery clarified that Attic pottery was actually present in Spina and Adria in the same period.
- ²⁰ Baldoni 2015, 79–80, with literature; see also Gadaleta Todisco 2015.
- ²¹ Gadaleta-Todisco 2015, 9.
- ²² Curti 2001.
- ²³ Landolfi 1992, 312-325.
- ²⁴ Silvestrelli 2003, 290–292.
- ²⁵ Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 27416; cf. New York, Metropolitan Mus. inv. 06 1021 213
- ²⁶ Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 27414; the cup can be assigned to the Workshop of the Jena painter.
- ²⁷ Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 27424; the skyphos is similar to Silvestrelli 2018, 642 fig. 51. 52.
- ²⁸ Fabrini 1984, 103–117; Landolfi 1987, 187–191; Landolfi 2000a, 125–148; Lefèvre Novaro 2001, 71–93.
- ²⁹ Landolfi 1997, 91–96. The funerary set can be dated to the third quarter of the 4th century BC and includes an Attic bell-krater by the Group G three skyphoi by the Fat Boy Group, black-glazed pottery (cups, plates and a lekanis), an Alto-Adriatic chous, among the earliest known of the ware and a Campanian olla attributed to the Kemai Group.

- ³⁰ There is a similar composition of the funerary sets in tombs 23, 37 and 119 Quagliotti, with Attic red-figure bell-kraters of the Filottrano Painter. For the kraters by the Fiolottrano and Amazon painters and by the Group G from the Quagliotti-Davanzali necropolis, see Landolfi 2000b, 79–89.
- ³¹ Natalucci et al. forthcoming.
- ³² Cf. Pontrandolfo 1995.
- ³³ Alto-Adriatic kraters are buried in tombs 411 and 457; Gnathia skyphoid kraters of the RPR Group are placed in tombs 224 and 247.
- ³⁴ In the investigated area of the Davanzali necropolis, the earliest Alto-Adriatic pottery (second half of the 4th century BC) appears in only four tombs (no. 192, 195, 199, 395).
- ³⁵ Such a phenomenon could only partially be ascribed to the brevity of the production of local figured pottery, from the middle of the 4th to the beginning of the 3rd centuries BC: Landolfi 1997, 28; Landolfi 2000c, 115 f. On the contrary, the repertory of Alto-Adriatic shapes in Spina is wider; as already noticed, Attic vase shapes are also very diversified in Spina, as opposed to the situation in Numana.
- ³⁶ Tombs no. 513 and no. 515 have a black-glazed skyphos each (first half of the 4th century BC); tomb 347 has an Attic red-figure skyphos by the Fat Boy Group (second-third quarter of the 4th century BC; for the chronology of the Group, see Langner 2016, 145).
- ³⁷ The same rituality is documented in the Quagliotti area too (tombs no. 16, 24, 51).
- ³⁸ Batino 2002; Bertesago Garaffa 2015, 107 n. 51.
- ³⁹ Prof. M. G. Belcastro and Dr. S. Fusari.
- 40 On the last phase of the Picenian Civilisation ("Piceno VI": beginning of the 4^{th} -first half of the 3^{rd} century BC), see Landolfi 2000, 36, with previous references. For the Davanzali necropolis in this period: Baldoni forthcoming; Finocchi et al. forthcoming.
- ⁴¹ A specific research project has been developed to investigate these themes: "Dal reperto al paesaggio: analisi archeologica e modellazione virtuale nelle necropoli picene di Numana (AN)". The project is coordinated by the author, conducted in collaboration with scholars of the University of Bologna (S. Garagnani, A. Gaucci, M. Silani) and funded by the "AlmaIdea Grant Junior" of the University of Bologna.
- ⁴² See for example Eschbach Schmidt 2016.

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