

# The regional Scale: a new Perspective on Ceramic Exchanges in Campania (8<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC)

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Circulations of goods between Campania (fig. 1) and the whole Mediterranean world between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, as well as along the Tyrrhenian coast, are well attested, making them a very interesting case study for a history of archaic exchanges.<sup>1</sup>

The archaeological documentation is incomplete and fragmentary, even for sites extensively excavated and the vast majority of the known contexts are graves, which complicates the matter even further. It was however possible to conduct a statistical and spatial analysis of the local distribution of some allogenous ceramics<sup>2</sup>, thanks to the extensive publication of some areas of the necropolis of Pithekoussai and Pontecagnano.<sup>3</sup>

This article will focus on allogenous ceramics, especially from the regional area.<sup>4</sup> Allogenous means that, on a given site, the researcher has identified with a certain degree of certainty the nature of local production, in terms of paste, technique, ornaments, forms, etc. Some vases that do not fit into this local production may simply be a minor local production influenced by others traditions, whereas some other are identified as allogenous. An allogenous vase had to arrive, at some point, at the site, and this circulation could be interpreted in many different ways. The study of allogenous vases can therefore lead to some very interesting anthropological issues, of economic anthropology as well as of cultural anthropology.<sup>5</sup>

This article aims at exploring some of those complicated issues by focusing on a specific sample of allogenous vases: the *impasto*<sup>6</sup> productions from Campanian sites during the early Iron Age<sup>7</sup>. I will first clarify the limits assigned here to the Campanian regional space, as well as the importance of this regional scale to study the circulation of ceramics. I will then present the considered sample from Pontecagnano and then conclude with some more general observations.

## A regional scale for the study of ceramics

The regional scale, in between the Mediterranean scale and the monographical study of a single site, is a good first step toward synthesis, while allowing for a close analysis of the contexts. This scale can be used in two different ways at least. First, one can study the circulation of some productions from the sites of one region within a regional space. Secondly, the circulation and the reception of foreign goods can demonstrate similarities or differences in the consumption patterns between the regional sites.

The regional scale remains a very subjective geographical level, especially during the Archaic period, when no clear political boundaries existed.<sup>8</sup> The first occurrence of the name *Campani* was referring to people living in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC around Capua<sup>9</sup> and the first

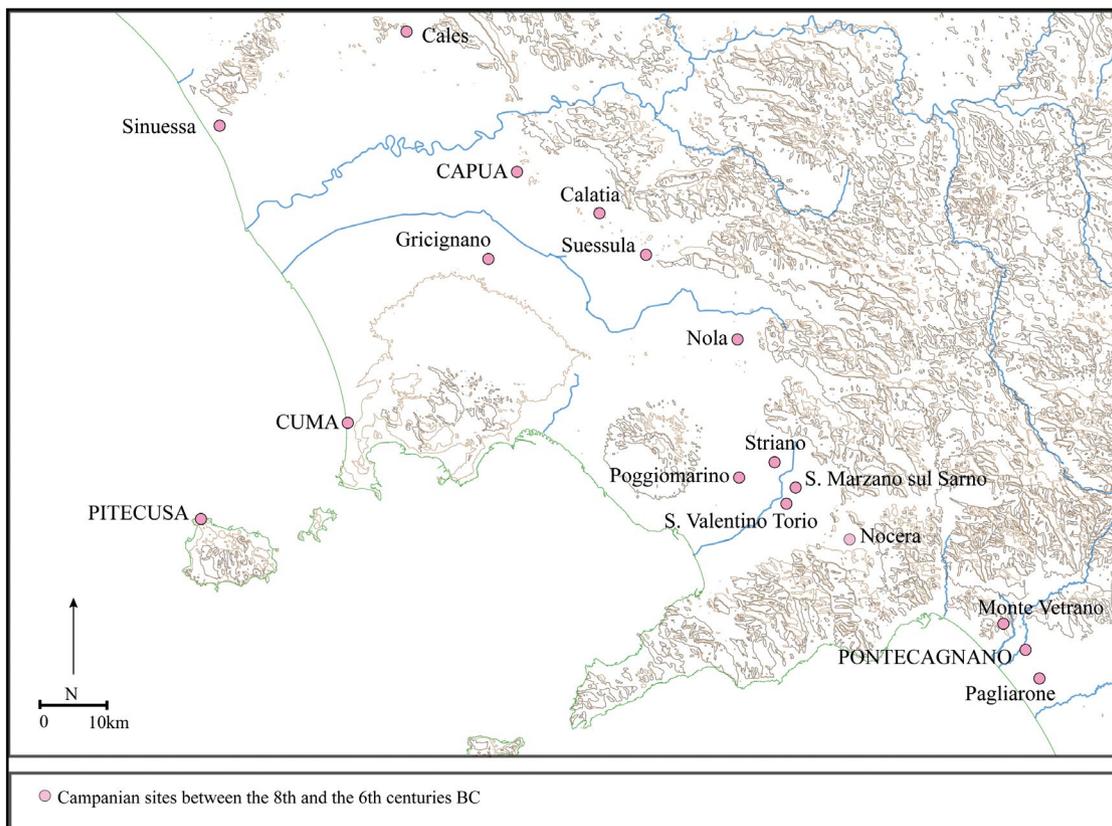


Fig. 1: Campania in the Early Iron Age.

official delimitation of Campania as a region can be traced back to Augustus in the first century. The pertinence of such a regional study between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC has been demonstrated by various scholars based on archaeological evidence.<sup>10</sup> Cuma, Capua and Pontecagnano share many similarities in material culture and stylistic traditions. The spatial analysis of the circulation of some ceramics could be a way to dynamically define “a” regional space, as I will explain later in this article.

### **The impasto vases from other regional sites in Pontecagnano during the early Iron Age**

Studies on allogeneous ceramics have focused for a long time on Greek vases, especially in Campania. The foundation of Pithekoussai and Cuma led to an increasing number of Greek vases arriving in Campanian sites, from those two sites but also from the Aegean area.<sup>11</sup> The regional circulation of those vases from Pithekoussai and Cuma is today well known.<sup>12</sup> Those vases are very different from the previous local impasto production and therefore easy to identify as allogeneous in the indigenous sites of Campania.

Here, I would rather like to focus on a less known collection of allogenous ceramics: the impasto vases made in a specific Campanian site but found in some others. I will take Pontecagnano in the early Iron Age<sup>13</sup> as a case-study, since we have a well-established typology of the local production<sup>14</sup> as well as an identification of impasto vases as allogenous in the various publications.

D'Agostino and Gastaldi choose to separate the local types from the allogenous ones in the first publication of three sectors of the western necropolis of the ELA, Greek vases belong to this allogenous category, along with vases from southern Italy with a decoration 'a tenda'.<sup>15</sup> However, we can also find some allogenous vases within the typology of the local production. Gastaldi defines a subtype named 'RNL'<sup>16</sup> for some amphorae, a jug, a pyxis and cups<sup>17</sup> in the publication of the Pagliarone sector. The amphora type 70RNL refers to the 70A2 type or 7A2 type in the 1988 typology<sup>18</sup> (fig. 2)<sup>19</sup>. The information on the specific exemplars<sup>20</sup> seems to show that all of the 70RNL or 7A2 class has an allogenous character, indicating close affinity with productions from sites of the 'Fossakultur'<sup>21</sup>, in Campania or in Latium<sup>22</sup>. A pyxis from the Pagliarone sector could also come from Cuma.<sup>23</sup>

The type 7E identifies amphorae probably produced in the Sarno Valley (fig. 2).<sup>24</sup> Three anforischi<sup>25</sup> (fig. 2), but also a jug<sup>26</sup>, a goblet<sup>27</sup> and a scodella<sup>28</sup> have probably the same origin.

D'Agostino and Gastaldi attributed some cups with a specific handle to a Capuan production<sup>29</sup>, except for one vase of the same type attributed to a Cuma production. An isolated amphora is also attributed to Cuma.<sup>30</sup>

In the absence of archaeometrical analysis, it can be very difficult to precisely identify the origin to those impasto vases, with regional productions looking sometimes much alike.<sup>31</sup> It would also be necessary to study each vase specifically, as well as to revisit the whole sample. New publications have indeed extended our knowledge of impasto production in Campania, especially for Capua<sup>32</sup> and Cuma<sup>33</sup>.

It would also be useful to study the presence of this kind of circulation in other Campanian sites. It however implies that the local production is already well defined. In Pithekoussai, the identification of impasto vases was for a long time mostly linked with the issue of an indigenous presence on the island at the time of the arrival of the Greeks<sup>34</sup>, or with an indigenous component in the Greek society in Pithekoussai.<sup>35</sup> It was however difficult to distinguish between a local production and impasto vases from other Campanian sites, or even from Etruscan or Latin sites.<sup>36</sup> The striking similarities between the impasto vases of Gricignano, cemetery recently discovered, and those of Pithekoussai, have led to a better understanding of the material culture of the indigenous group of Pithekoussai.<sup>37</sup>

The study of this specific kind of material can give many indications on the regional dynamics in early Iron Age Campania.

First, the proximity between the impasto productions of Pontecagnano, the Sarno Valley, Cuma or Capua can actually be a sign of closeness between those sites. The single fact that it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between a vase made in Pontecagnano with allogenous influences or a vase made in the Sarno valley, for example, shows how close the material cultures are. To the contrary, vases from the Etruria region or from southern Italy present clearer

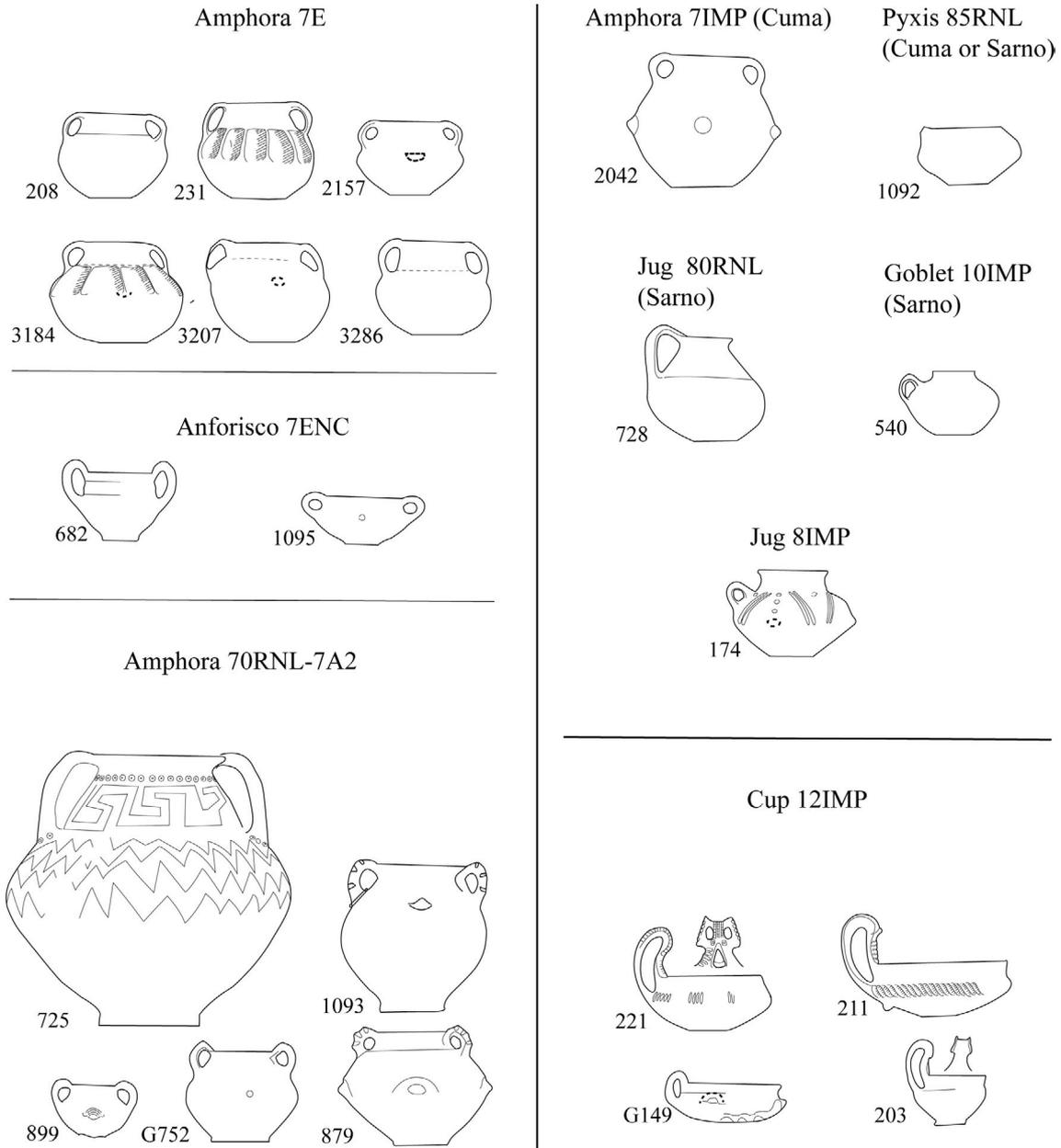


Fig. 2: Impasto EIA vases from Campania in Pontecagnano and Pagliarone.

differences. In a way, this material proximity could be seen as a relative definition of a regional space, where the sites are close enough to have such common traditional handcrafts. This raises the issue of the boundaries of such a regional space. The close affinity between the productions of Cuma and of some sites in Latium is well known, as well as the links between Capua and some proto-Etruscan sites, or even between Pontecagnano and some proto-Etruscan sites. We choose here to consider that the geographic proximity defines a first regional area, from Cuma

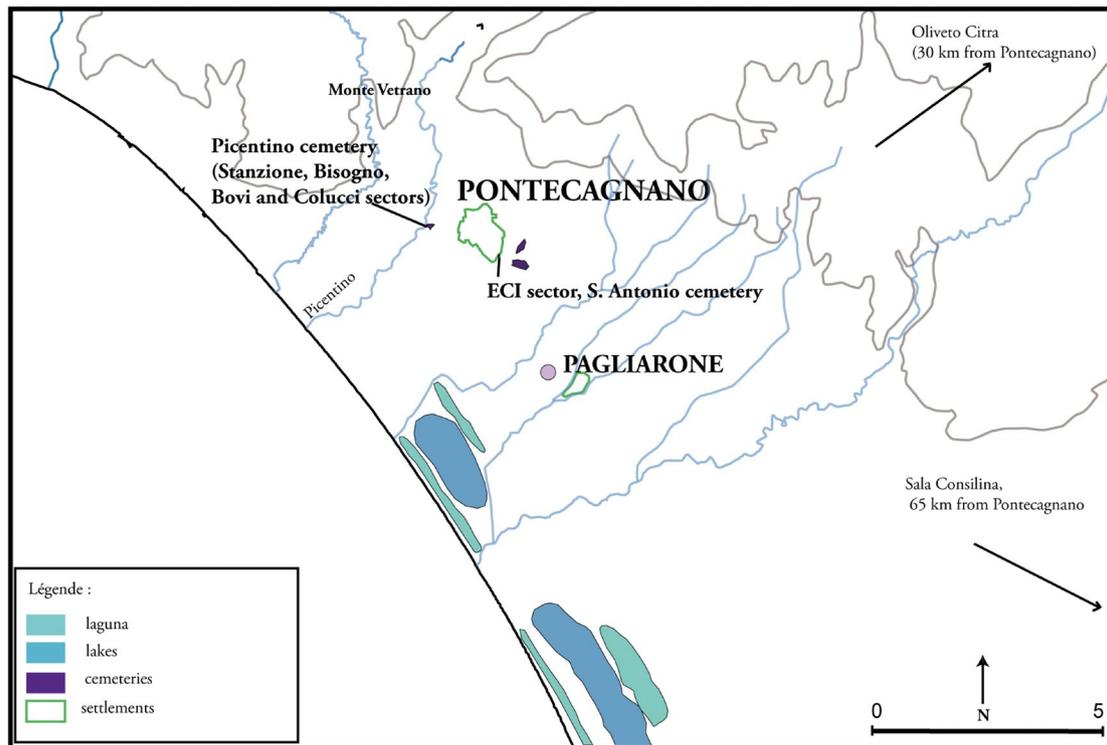


Fig. 3: Pontecagnano and its surroundings in the EIA.

to Pontecagnano. The links between the Campanian sites and other sites such as Sala Consilina, Osteria dell'Osa or Cerveteri are very strong, but a close analysis of the vases circulations between those sites and the Campanian ones showed a different pattern.<sup>38</sup>

The study of the graves, in which such vases were found, and their chronology gives some interesting insights on a micro scale. In the first phase of the EIA in Pontecagnano, between the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>, only one grave in the Pontecagnano site had a regional impasto vase: the 2042 feminine inhumation in the Bisogno sector. A personal mobility might explain it: a young woman from Cuma came to Pontecagnano. The other graves containing such impasto vases from the regional area are in the Pagliarone sector and are mostly feminine graves.<sup>40</sup> It is however difficult to stress a specific pattern: the graves all contained little material aside from the impasto vase and were disseminated in the whole sector.

Because these vases are handmade and without a specific ornamentation, archaeologists have considered that they were of little economic value, and therefore that they cannot have been exchanged for themselves.<sup>41</sup> In this case, a personal mobility could explain the arrival of such a vase. The presence of allogeous individuals in the Pagliarone sector is also attested, with graves attributed to people from Calabria, and also a more mixed pattern in the funerary rituals than in Pontecagnano itself.<sup>42</sup> The Pagliarone area, located near a lagoon, was maybe more opened to strangers, from Calabria, but also from the regional area. The

tradition of weddings as a way to establish and reinforce links between communities is well known, a phenomenon that could explain why most of the concerned graves are feminine. The presence of an allogenous vase is however not necessarily the sign of a person's mobility. Interpretations must take all elements into account, as always with funerary evidence.<sup>43</sup> One significant example is the 725 grave from Pagliarone, attributed to an allogenous woman from the north of Campania or from Latium. An amphora of the 70RNL type was used as a cinerary urn: it is extremely rare to find an allogenous vase used for such a function, which is why an allogenous origin of the defunct is a possible explanation.<sup>44</sup>

We can trace different forms of regional circulations in the second phase of Pontecagnano, between 780–770 and 740–730 BC. The cups from Capua were in graves showing signs of distinction. Here, it is believed that they are a sign of the economical exchanges between Pontecagnano and Capua, maybe placed in the graves of people belonging to groups engaged in such relations. Capua was indeed a very important site for economical exchanges, located on the road between Campania and Latium. Similar cups have been found in Monte Vetrano<sup>45</sup>, a little site close to Pontecagnano, where many allogenous objects were part of the funerary deposits.

The amphorae from the Sarno Valley were located in relatively wealthy graves and were systematically associated with drinking vases.<sup>46</sup> In one case, the 3223 grave of the ECI sector, the amphora was intentionally broken, therefore probably used during a funerary ritual. It is possible that those amphorae were exchanged<sup>47</sup> for their content, maybe a drink. The excavation of Poggiomarino in the Sarno Valley, a site with an important craft component, could bring more information.<sup>48</sup>

In conclusion, the study of those impasto vases from Campania demonstrates the importance of the regional space for economic and social circulations. The identification in progress of those regional impasto vases in each site will soon allow a more complex reconstitution. The presence of an allogenous regional vase in a grave does not mean automatically that it belonged to an allogenous individual. Every abnormality<sup>49</sup>, in the deposit or in the funerary ritual, as well as the location of the grave, must be considered. Such circulations of regional vases are mostly confined to the 9th and the 8th century. This chronological limit has to do with a vast modification of the ceramic production in Campania, but also, maybe, to a more global change in the ways of exchanging in the regional space.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Verena Gassner for giving me the opportunity to present this research in her panel.

<sup>2</sup> Maudet 2016, under revision.

<sup>3</sup> Buchner – Ridgway 1993; D'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988; De Natale 1992; Gastaldi 1998; De Natale 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Perlès 2005, 201. The circulation of metallic ornaments or weapons is also well documented, Maudet 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Perlès 1992; Dietler 2010.

<sup>6</sup> We use here the Italian term “impasto” to refer to a type of coarse pottery, hand-worked, produced in Italy at that time, in opposition to fine pottery, made using a wheel.

<sup>7</sup> EIA in the rest of the text. The EIA in central Italy runs from the middle of the 10th century to the end of the 8th century, when the Orientalizing period begins, Fulminante 2014.

<sup>8</sup> The bibliography on regional spaces delimited thanks to archaeological evidence is extremely vast. On the Italian peninsula, see Bourdin 2012; Blake 2014 and Fulminante 2014. Reger 1994 proposed to study the economy of Hellenistic Delos in such a regional perspective : see Le Quéré 2015, 14–17, referring to Feyel 2006 for a dynamic and network-based definition of a regional space. In the wake of Horden – Purcell 2000, the idea of micro-regional areas has also be highlighted, promoting a relational and connected conception.

<sup>9</sup> Cerchiai 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Beloch 1890; Frederiksen 1984; Cerchiai 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Bailo Modesti – Gastaldi 1999, see also D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 44–48; D’Agostino 1979; Melandri 2011, 298–316.

<sup>12</sup> Mermati 2012.

<sup>13</sup> A general map of the cemeteries is given in Fig. 3, inspired by Pellegrino – Rossi 2011, 206 fig. 125 and Rossi 2004, 229 fig. 3.

<sup>14</sup> D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 17–42.

<sup>15</sup> D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 42–48.

<sup>16</sup> Gastaldi 1998, 59.

<sup>17</sup> The 120RNL type is represented by one vase, a cup from the 2035 grave in the Pagliarone sector, Gastaldi 1998, 133. The cup has very close affinities with vases from Capua but also from Sala Consilina, Gastaldi 1998, 133 note 292.

<sup>18</sup> D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 22–23. Gastaldi 1998, 59, explains in the note 7 that the 70RNL type used to be classified as 70A2, or 7A2.

<sup>19</sup> This original figure was made redrawing vases from the illustrations in D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988; De Natale 1992 and Gastaldi 1998. The relative heights of the vases have been respected, but there is no uniform scale for the reduction of size. The bibliographical references concerning each vase can be found in this article. The mention of “Sarno” as an origin refers to productions from sites from the Sarno river Valley.

<sup>20</sup> Vases from this type have been found in the following graves : 725, 879, 899, 1093 (Pagliarone), as well as the group of vases found outside a grave, G752, Gastaldi 1998, 59 for the 725 and 879; D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 23 mentioned the presence of the 7A2 amphora type in graves G752, 879, 899 and 1093.

<sup>21</sup> The expression ‘Fossakultur’ was originally forged in Säflund 1938. It refers to a number of sites of the EIA central and southern Italy, where pit burial is the funerary norm. These sites also share some aspects of material culture, especially in their ceramic production. In Campania, the Sarno Valley, Cuma, Suessula, Calatia, Nola...have been interpreted as ‘Fossakultur’ sites, Cerchiai 1995, 9–12.

<sup>22</sup> Gastaldi 1998, 103 note 162, referring to the amphora of the 725 grave, explains that this type of amphora is particularly close to some vases of the Osteria dell’Osa cemetery, Bietti Sestieri 1992. The amphora from the 879 grave seems a production from Cuma or, once again, from the Latin area, as indicated in Gastaldi 1998, 122, note 241.

<sup>23</sup> The pyxis from the 85RNL type was found in the 1092 grave, Gastaldi 1998, 131. The vase shows close affinities with exemplars from Cuma but also from the Oliveto-Citra culture.

<sup>24</sup> The type 7E is named “Anfora tipo Cultura delle Tombe a Fosse”, but it is immediately explained that the vases are very probably from the Sarno valley, D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 24. The distribution of this type is established as follow in the same page: graves 208, 231 (Stanzione), 610 (unpublished), 2157 (Bisogno). The publication of the ECI sector from Pontecagnano in 1992 added some information: the 7E type is separated in two sub-types, referring to the typology of the Sarno sites established in Gastaldi 1979, 39. New vases are related to this type, from the graves 3207, 3184 and 3286, De Natale 1992, 17. Two new vases from the graves 6523 and 6543 in the Colucci sector have been published in De Natale 2016, 78. 87.

<sup>25</sup> From the 581, the 682 and the 1095 graves. The 581 is unpublished, but the 682 and the 1095 graves are from the Pagliarone area, Gastaldi 1998, 87. 133 (see Fig. 2).

<sup>26</sup> The jug from the 728 grave in Pagliarone belongs to the 80RNL type. The attribution to a Sarno production is made in Gastaldi 1998, 105 note 174.

<sup>27</sup> The goblet from the 540 grave is attributed to a 10IMP type, “from the Sarno Valley”, in D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 27. The grave is unpublished.

<sup>28</sup> The scodella from the 727 grave is from the 15IMP type, “probably an importation from the Sarno Valley”, D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 34. This grave is published in Gastaldi 1998, 104, with a more nuanced opinion on a Sarno valley origin of the vase.

<sup>29</sup> The 12IMP cup type is described in D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 31, with two vases from Capua (graves 203, 211) and one from Cuma (G149), see Fig. 2.

<sup>30</sup> The amphora from the 2042 grave (sector Bisogno) belongs to a 7IMP type in D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 24, “probably an importation from Cuma”, see also 168–169 for the description of the grave.

<sup>31</sup> In the case of the olla of the 3231 grave in the ECI sector, the vase seems allogeous, but it is difficult to identify a specific origin. The form is close to a production from ‘Fossakultur’ sites, such as those in the Sarno valley, but the decoration is closer to a Capuan production, De Natale 1992, 15; referring to Johannowsky 1983.

<sup>32</sup> See especially Melandri 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Brun et al. 2009; Nizzo 2011 and Criscuolo 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Buchner identified in 1936 an indigenous settlement on the Castiglione hill, that could have been contemporary of the arrival of the Euboeans, Buchner 1936; Buchner – Gialanella 1994, 39–40.

<sup>35</sup> D’Agostino 1999; D’Agostino 2011.

<sup>36</sup> D’Agostino 1999; Cerchiali 1999. The impasto production from Pithekoussai has been revisited in Pacciarelli 1999, in relation with new studies on the prehellenic Cuma. Cerchiali identified some vases from Pontecagnano in the Pithekoussan cemetery, for example a scodella in the 705 grave, Cerchiali 2017, 230.

<sup>37</sup> De Caro 2011; Cerchiali 2017.

<sup>38</sup> See Maudet 2016.

<sup>39</sup> D’Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 110–115.

<sup>40</sup> It must however be precised that the determination of the gender was mostly based on the funerary deposit, since the remains did not allow the anthropological analysis to determine the biological sex,

D'Agostino – Gastaldi 1988, 258; also Gastaldi 1998, 153. The use of an exclusion principle has improved the results of such objects-based gender determination, see Vida Navarro 1992. I thank Reine-Marie Bérard for this reference.

<sup>41</sup> D'Agostino 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Gastaldi 1994; also Cerchiai 2013, 140–141.

<sup>43</sup> See the method delimited in D'Agostino 1985; recently D'Agostino 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Gastaldi 1998, 103–104.

<sup>45</sup> Gobbi 2011; Cerchiai 2013, 143.

<sup>46</sup> See Maudet 2016 for a more detailed analysis.

<sup>47</sup> De Natale 1992, 17 explains that the scarcity of the attestations of those vases in Pontecagnano makes it very plausible that those amphorae have been imported.

<sup>48</sup> Albore Livadie – Cicirelli 2012 is only a partial publication of those excavations.

<sup>49</sup> In a statistical sense, considering the funerary variability of the graves: see Cerchiai 1999 or recently Cinquantaquattro 2012.

## Image Credits

Fig. 1–3: by author.

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