Nursing Mothers, Maternity and Fatherhood in Pre-historic and Archaic Europe/Mediterranean with a special focus on central and Southern Italy

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1. Introduction[1]

This paper focuses on the evidence of nursing mothers, maternity, and fatherhood in Pre-historic and Archaic Europe/Mediterranean with a special focus on central and Southern Italy. In particular, together, the two authors will discuss the potential reasons for the presence and absence of indicators of nursing mothers and motherhood (mainly iconography of nursing mothers and children and material culture/objects) in different time periods and/or in different types of contexts: ritual versus funerary or domestic, urban versus sub-urban or extra-urban. The adoption of a diachronic perspective allows a deeper investigation and understanding of maternal grief in Pre-Roman Italy. However, the consideration of two different time periods, the Early Iron Age and the Archaic/ Hellenistic period, focalises the discussion on different types of objects, depending on which grave goods were normally deposited with the deceased

in these different periods: suspension rings and spatial analysis for the Iron Age, and mother/child statuettes for the Archaic/Hellenistic period.

In the Prehistory of Europe and the Mediterranean Basin, from East to West and from South to North, the 'mother goddess' is ubiquitously present in statuettes, but rarely depicted with nursing babies. The traditional interpretation of these statuettes as expressions of cults of fertility and motherhood, linked to a matriarchal society, as proposed by Gimbutas,[2] is generally now rejected. Another, alternative overall frame of interpretation to that proposed by Gimbutas is still missing, and the statuettes have been interpreted in various ways: children's toys; decorative art; trade objects; votive figurines representative of deities and/or the worshippers themselves; ancestral spirit figures/figures representing the members of a family; goddesses of sexuality, women, beauty, love/marriage, motherhood, and the home; nature/mother earth; and tokens to facilitate healing.[3] While all these interpretations are plausible and possibly true in one context or another, it is also very probable that, similarly to the nursing statuettes of the Archaic Period in Italy, which this paper will focus on, they represent religious objects asking for the protection of the gods during the dangerous and difficult periods of childbirth and early infancy, which were especially challenging in antiquity. With the Bronze and Iron Age, depictions of mothers, and particularly nursing mothers, seem to disappear, with the exception of the Aegean[4] and Egypt,[5] as has been illustrated on multiple occasions by several presenters in the *From the Breast* Seminar Series (University of Birmingham, 2022-2023).

This paper aims to explore alternative interpretations of motherhood iconography and material culture in two separate periods, the Late Bronze and Iron Age/Orientalising Period, and the Archaic/Hellenistic Period, through the study of funerary goods. With the Bronze and more distinctively with the Iron Age, burial evidence in Europe and the Mediterranean represents a binary society made of 'powerful warriors' and 'beautiful weavers',[6] but the roles of fathers and mothers seems not to be represented. Already in the 1990s, John Robb provided a comprehensive overview of the development of gender symbolism and ideology in Prehistory. As Robb argued, during the Neolithic

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[2] For example Gimbutas 2001.
[3] Cohen, C. 2003; Augereau, A.,2021; Cirotteau et al., 2022.
[4] Budin 2011.
[5] E.g. Feutch 2016, Teeter 2017.
[6] Robb 1994, 1997, Harris & Robb 2017.

Era, gender representation seems to be much more ambiguous and blurred. With the Copper-Bronze Age and more distinctively with the Iron Age and Archaic Period, a binary ideology seems to emerge, especially from funerary evidence, between male warriors and beautiful female weavers.[7] While Robb & Harris' model partially still holds today, many scholars have challenged this binary conception.[8]

The recent paper 'To Gender or not To Gender? Exploring Gender Variations through Time and Space' by Gaydarska *et al.* is the most up-to-date discussion on the topic.[9] In this paper several authors, drawing from different case studies, demonstrate the presence of some binary representation of gender in the Neolithic as well, while highlighting the formerly unrecognised complexities of gender representation in the Bronze and Iron Age.[10] In fact, the Gaydarska *et al.* paper and other studies brought attention to the association between gender and biological sex, revealing that the interplay between indicators of different personhood and identity aspects, such as age, status, class and even ethnicity, is much more complex than the old binary suggests, now including the emergence of different, ambiguous or miss-matched gender and sex association in prehistoric data.[11]

Looking more closely, themes of motherhood and mothering occur in several different forms of iconographic and material culture. For example, mothers can also be indirectly present through vessels which probably indicate substitute feeding with animal milk, since traces of ruminant fat acids have been found in pottery vessels in Neolithic and Bronze Age Germany, with their shapes resembling modern feeding bottles.[12] Similar analyses however have not been performed on analogous vessels in Iron Age Italy yet.[13] Another object that might be an indicator of motherhood is the well-known suspension ring, associated with fibulae in female burials. This object is often located on the abdomen of the deceased and, as will be illustrated in this paper

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[7] Robb 1994, 1997, Harris & Robb 2017.
[8] Whitehouse 1998; Pope & Ralston 2011; Koch & Kirleis 2019; Coltofean & Arizancu *et al.* 2021.
[9] Gaydarska *et al.* 2023.
[10] Gaydarska *et al.* 2023.
[11] The combinations might vary: biologically female individuals with 'male objects' such as weapons, biological males with conventionally 'female objects', such as jewellery; some individuals both male and female with mixed objects; or with ungendered objects; see Bicke 2020, Pope 2022, Fulminante *et al.* (in prep.).
[12] Dunne *et al.* 2019.
[13] The function of *askoi* as feeding bottles in middle tyrrenhian Italy has been suggested by di Gennaro during a conversation. Opposing that is the interpretation of these vessels as libation vessels (Cerasuolo 2013), which only scientific analysis will be able to confirm or dispute.

through a contextual and spatial analysis of the finds, it might be associated with pregnancy and motherhood, particularly of heirs of high-status families or even the ruling family of the community. This will be the focus of research by Francesca Fulminante, who will explore funerary evidence in Central Italy during the Early Iron Age and will search for expressions of maternal grief or maternal presence in Latin and central Italian buried communities. Besides this, potential signs of maternal and paternal presence will be investigated and found in the spatial distribution of burials, where sometimes couples with children are buried together to form family or larger kinship groups.

With the Archaic Period nursing mothers are present again, with statuettes depicting women with infants found in sanctuaries and mainly religious contexts, mostly in Greece and in Italy. Giulia Pedrucci will focus her research on the presence of statuettes depicting women with infants in tombs. They are rather rare objects in tombs in central Italy, but more common in Magna Graecia and Sicily. She will try to investigate, on one hand, the reason for this almost total absence in the northern territories and, on the other hand, why some of these objects are frequently attested in funerary contexts of southern territories, but not in sanctuaries, unlike in central Italy.

As will be shown, both analyses converge in concluding that grief over infants and children can be considered present in Italian funerary contexts already since pre-Proto-history, with continuity into the archaic and Hellenistic periods, although in different forms and through different means. Motherhood, as well, previously only marginally discussed in funerary contexts, is present in pre-Roman, Archaic, and Hellenistic Italy. Nevertheless, there is some variability in relation to regionality and/or contexts (funerary versus religious versus public), which is only now becoming evident and requires further investigation to be properly assessed and interpreted.

2. Early Iron Age and Orientalising Period in Central Italy

As mentioned in the Introduction, gender roles appear to be prominent in Iron Age central Italy, with males generally characterised as warriors and deposited with offensive or defensive weapons, and females, framed as beautiful weavers, with their jewellery and textile-related tools.[14] Contrarily, the role of mothers appears more

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[14] As mentioned in the Introduction, this sort of binary gender representation of Bronze and Iron Age Italy and Europe has been largely discussed by Robb and Harris (Robb 1994, 1997 and Robb & Harris

hidden and alluded to rather than openly expressed. Looking more deeply, mothers are indirectly present with vessels which probably indicate substitute feeding with animal milk (which will be the topic of future work).[15] This shows alternative means of nursing and mothering in antiquity, while suggesting that substitute feeding was acceptable and practiced in exceptional and rare cases. Of course, breastfeeding from mothers or wet nurses remained dominant until the invention of substitute substances, such as the formula milk, introduced only in the nineteenth century.

Another object that might hint at motherhood is, as stated above, the suspension ring, for which scholars have provided several explanations, such as an ethnic marker of Latin female individuals,[16] or connected to motherhood and birth,[17] but remains still not fully understood. Present in different sizes and materials, and with varying decorative elements, suspension rings are often associated with fibulae in young and adult female burials and located on the chest and/or abdomen. They appear to be more prominent and characteristic of the Latin region, as opposed to the Etruscan, hence the connection with ethnicity suggested by Cristiano Iaia.[18] However, some examples might also be present in Abruzzo or Southern Italy, as I am currently investigating and will present in future work.

Besides this potential sign of motherhood, maternal and paternal presence can also be investigated and found in the spatial distribution of burials, where sometimes couples with children are buried together to form family or larger kinship groups. In this paper, the difference in sex, gender, and age distributed among buried individuals will be investigated through GIS analysis, in a case study of Osteria dell' Osa, a Bronze and Iron age Latin centre located on the Via Praenestina to the east of Rome.

2017), while the connection of femalehood with textile-production tools has been largely studied also from an iconographic point of view by Margarita Gleba (2008). However, recent studies such as Gaydarska *et al.* (2023) challenge traditional binary stereotypes and show the presence of a much more complex gender-identity relation in the past. In a new project and forthcoming article, one of the authors will show that the gender representation of Iron Age communities was, in fact, much more complex than previously thought, and ethnicity, status, gender, and even sex are much more blurred and variously and inextricably interwoven (Hodos & Fulminante, forthcoming).

[15] See note 13 above.
[16] Iaia 2000, 2007.
[17] Bartoloni 2008, Bartoloni & Pitzalis 2011.
[18] Iaia 2000, 2007.

Data: Latium vetus database, including Osteria dell' Osa, cemetery of Gabii

The following is a contextual analysis of suspension rings from burial assemblages in Latium *vetus* between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the end of the Orientalising Period (Latial Periods I-IVB, ca. 1050-580 B.C.E.). The bulk source of data was compiled in the late 1990s for the contextual study of Orientalising princely burials in Latium *vetus* (Latin burials database, compiled for my MA Thesis in Italian).[19] The database has been updated through the years, with more recent discoveries and publications. To date it includes about 1253 records from the sites shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Latin Sites with number of burials included in the database.

Location	Total of tombs
Ardea	11
Caracupa	87
Castel Gandolfo	5
Colli Albani	1
Colonna	12
Crustumerium	31
Decima	41
Ficana	47
Fidenae	5
Gabii	611
Grottaferrata	12
La Rustica	4
Lanuvio	1
Laurentina	9
Le Caprine	5
Marino	32
Nomentum	5
Palestrina	10
Pratica di Mare	8
Quadrato di Torre Spaccata	2
Rocca di Papa	2
Roma	195
Santa Palomba	4
Satricum	74
Tivoli	21
Tor de Cenci	11
Torrino	3
Velletri	4

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[19] Fulminante 2003.

The database consists principally of two tables: tombs (1253 records) and grave goods (9267 records). Each record in the tomb table corresponds generally to one single burial but several multiple burials were included in the same table if distinguishing the different grave good assemblages was not possible. In addition, some single depositions within chamber tombs have been considered separately in different records where it was possible to distinguish the different individuals and their accompanying grave goods. This is the case for chamber tomb 62 at Osteria dell' Osa, hence 608 records rather than the 602 featured in the original publication. Each record in the tomb database is linked to one or more records from the table of grave goods, in which each record corresponds to one object or occasionally more objects of the same type. Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix show a list of the fields included respectively in the tombs and grave goods tables with the type of information collected and recorded in them.

Figure 1: Gabii and Osteria dell' Osa in central Italy

Type of burial	Location	Map Number	Latial Phase II (950-850 BC ca)	Latial Phase III (850-750 BC ca)	Latial Phase IV (750-580 BC ca)
Cemetery	Castiglione	3	X		
Cemetery	Osteria dell'Osa	4	X	X	X
Cemetery	Prenestina vecchia-nuova	5	X	X	X
Cemetery	Fosso S. Giuliano	6	X	X	X
Cemetery	Pantano Borghese	7	X	X	X
Intra-mural burials	S. Primo Church	2			X
Intra-mural burials (Sub-adults)	South-West Margin	1	X		

Osteria dellOsa	Dating	Number of individuals
Latial Period IIA	950/925 - 900 ca. BC	156
Latial Period IIB/IIIA	900-800 ca. BC	287
Latial Period IIIB/IV	800-580 ca. BC	88

One of the most important contexts present in the database is the cemetery of Osteria dell' Osa, one of the several necropolis of the Iron Age settlement of Gabii (Figure 1).[20] Gabii is one of the many large proto-urban centres of Latium *vetus*, founded probably by the end of the Late Bronze Age but more certainly by the beginning of the Early

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[20] Bietti Sestieri 1992b, a.

Iron Age, starting to develop into an urban centre by the mid-eighth century BC, and becoming a fully monumentalised city in the Archaic Period.[21]

The cemetery of Osteria dell' Osa is where the (probably) oldest existing Greek inscription known so far has been found, and literary tradition mentions that Romulus and Remus were sent there to learn the letters.[22] Recent excavations have revealed the presence of an assumed regal building of the Archaic Period,[23] and a monumental public Mid-Republican building, located at the important intersection of the roads from Tibur, Praeneste and Rome.[24] Geo-magnetometry has detected a regular plan of the urban centres certainly dated to the Republican period but possibly existing even earlier, possibly from the Archaic Period.[25]

The Osteria dell' Osa burials of Iron Age, dating between the Latial phase IIA and the Latial Phase IVB (c. 950-600 BCE), are mostly single trench inhumation burials and pit cremation burials in hut-urn or vase-urn, mainly reserved for adult males. Some multiple trench inhumations (mostly for couples) and a chamber tomb have also been discovered. Collectively, there are 605 grave assemblages,[26] with remains of 611 individuals.[27] The cemetery publication provides a comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between palaeo-demographic data, archaeological data, and ritual elements.[28] The size of the assemblage and the methods of excavation and analysis render Osteria dell' Osa one of the most complete records available at the moment for contextual and demographic studies, complete with a comparative perspective.

For the present analysis, the database of the Latium *vetus* burials was created by one of the authors, based on the information provided in the final publication on the cemetery.[29] This includes detailed information about each tomb and its structural and ritualistic elements; associated grave goods; associated osteological information, including age and sex determination, bone preservation, dental health and stature. Anthropological examinations and analyses of the bone remains have been conducted

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[21] See synthesis in Fulminante 2003, pp.51-57 with previous references.
[22] See Ampolo 1997.
[23] Fabbri 2017.
[24] Johnston *et al.* 2018.
[25] Becker, Mogetta, and Terrenato 2009.
[26] Bietti Sestieri 1992a: 219-438; 551-878.
[27] Becker and Salvadei 1992; see also Macchiarelli & Salvadei 1994.
[28] Bietti Sestieri 1992a; 1992b: 119-220.
[29] Bietti Sestieri 1992b.

by Loredana Salvadei and Marshall John Becker. The preservation of bone remains at Osteria dell' Osa is rather poor. The determination of age and gender was mainly based on the evaluation of dentition and long bones that were more likely to survive.

As mentioned above, there are several complications regarding the determination of gender, mainly provided by the objects deposited with the deceased, and sex, generally determined anthropologically. However, as declared by anthropologists, 'given the extent of damage of these remains, and the wide variation in surviving material (sometime teeth, sometime long bones, rarely both) no single analytical procedure could be used to determine either age or sex. The analyst, therefore, used 'multiple independent techniques' employing whatever material was available to evaluate these skeletons'.[30] In the report, Marshall J. Becker and Loretana Salvadei provided detailed data and methods on which the determination was based, and in the database we reflected the greater or lesser degree of certainly of the determination with a grades from 1 (certain) to 2 (possible) and 3 (uncertain). A further step would be the use of bio-archaeological markers such as peptides[31] and/or DNA,[32] to establish the sex of not perfectly preserved individuals with more certainty.

According to a classification by H. Vallois (1960) followed by Becker and Salvadei the age classes indicated in Table 2 have been considered significant. In fact, as already noted by Bietti Sestieri and confirmed also by some of our own analyses, infant (below 4-5 years of age) seems to be distinguished from children (5-11), and elderly (40 years and above) from adults (20-40) at least in some aspect of rituality, such as the presence/absence of certain objects and/or the use of certain rituals. In particular, grave goods associated with gender or gender-roles, such as arch fibulae and textile tools for females and weapons and *serpeggiante*/*drago* fibulae for males, are generally absent from individuals below 4-5 years of age, with the exception of richer/high status burials[33]. Similarly, cremation seems to be reserved for male adults in the age class between 20 and 40.[34]

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[30] Bietti Sestieri 1992b, p. 58.
[31] Stewart *et al.* 2016.
[32] Skoglund *et al.* 2013.
[33] Fulminante 2018a, b.
[34] Bietti Sestieri 1992b, p. 203, ff. 1992b, p.128.

As partially shown in this paper, it is possible to study sex, gender, ritual, types of burials, and finds patterns contextually through the association of certain objects/rituals with certain age, sex or gender classes.

Table 2: Age Classes used for the Database and the case study (from Bietti Sestieri 1992).

CLASS	DEFINITION	AGE
INF	INFANTS	0-5
CHI	CHILDREN	5-11
ADO	ADOLESCENTS	12-20
ADU	ADULTS	20-40
ADUM	ADULTS MATURE	40-60
SEN	ELDERLY	ABOVE 60

Contextual data about the suspension rings were firstly analysed through pivot tables, then analysed in comparison with wealth indexes,[35] and finally imported into a GIS system to be visualised and analysed spatially.

Analysis and Discussion of the Data

It has already been suggested that suspension rings, often pending from the pin of a fibula, are typical of the Latin funerary equipment and might indicate a specific ethnic belonging, as suggested by Cristiano Iaia.[36] In particular, large flat suspension rings seem to be associated with important female burials in Latium *vetus*, and might be related with motherhood and pregnancy, according to Gilda Bartoloni.[37] In this paper, we conduct a systematic analysis of this object category, including the very large (Figure 2) but also the medium and smaller suspension rings (Figure 3) in Latium *vetus*, which confirms but also adds more nuances to that interpretation. It has to be observed that suspension rings are not unknown in other regions, such as Abruzzo, Basilicata, and other central and southern regions, but a comprehensive multi-regional study is still missing and indeed they seem to be characteristic of the Latin dress and ornament parure.

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[35] For which I refer to Fulminante 2003.
[36] Iaia 2000, 2007.
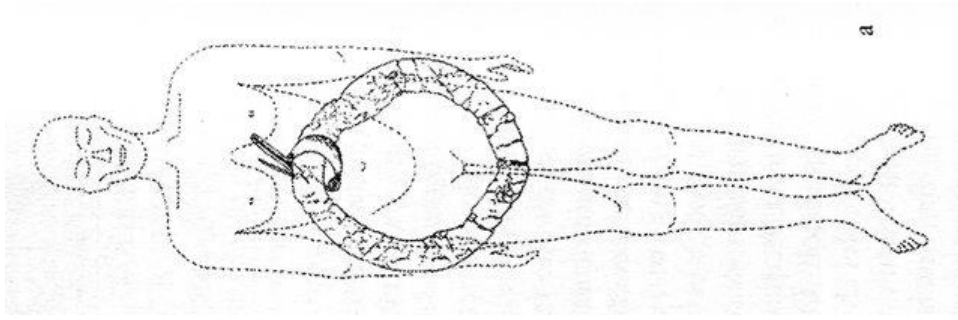[37] Bartoloni & Taloni 2009; Bartoloni 2008; Bartoloni & Pitzalis 2011.

Figure 2: Castel di Decima, Tomb 153, female adult, Latial Period IVA2, 660 BC ca. From Bartoloni 2008, fig. 2.

Figure 3: Caracupa, female adult 24-27 years, Latial Period IIIB, 750-730 BC (Excavation 1996). From Bartoloni 2008, fig. 4.

Firstly, large (Table 3) but also medium and small suspension rings (Table 4) were analysed in relation to the gender and age class of the deceased. As can be seen from table 3, large suspension rings are mainly associated with adult women both in Latial Period I-II and Latial Period III-IV. Interestingly, in Latial Period I-II, the oldest phase of the cemetery, only a few medium and large rings are found, located in Rome and Gabii, the two major proto-urban settlements of the region. Table 4, instead, referring to medium and small size suspension rings, presents a more varied picture. Again, these objects are mostly associated with adult females. However, in the earliest phases they are also found in a high number of female pre-adult burials, while in the later phases they are also found in male burials, both adult and pre-adult, albeit in very small numbers.

Table 3: Large suspension rings related to Age Class (B < 12 years > A) and Sex in Latium *vetus*: A) Latial Period I-II; B) Latial Period III-IV.

A)

Age Class	A
Sex	F
Gabii	2
Roma	2
Total	4

B)

Age Class	\	A	A,A	B	B
Sex	F	F	F, M	\	F
Ardea		1			
Caracupa		2			2
Crustumerium		5			
Decima		3			
Fidenae		3			
Gabii	1	1			
La Rustica		1			
Laurentina		2			
Marino		5	2	1	
Rocca di Papa		1			
Roma		3			
Satricum	1	2			
Velletri			1		
Total	2	29	3	1	2

Table 4: Small and medium suspension rings related to Age Class (B < 12 years > A) and Sex in Latium *vetus*: A) Latial Period I-II; B) Latial Period III-IV.

A)

Class Age	\	A	A	A	A,A	B
Sex	F	\	F	M	F,F	F
Caracupa			11	2	1	
Decima			1			
Gabii	4		187	5		26
Roma			3			
Tivoli		1	5			1
Total	4	1	207	7	1	27

B)

Age Class	\		\,\	\,\,\	A	A	A,A	A,A	A,A,A,A,A	B	B	B
Sex	F	M	F, M	\,F,\	F	M	\,\	F,M	F,M,M,M,M	\	F	M
Ardea					4							
Caracupa					19	2					4	
Colonna		1			3	1					1	
Crustumerium					5							
Decima	1				4	1						1
Ficana											2	
Fidenae					2							
Gabii	2				24	5				1	1	1
La Rustica		1			5							
Laurentina					3							
Marino					8			2		1		
Palestrina	3		1			1						
Rocca di Papa					1							
Roma	1				36	7					7	
Satricum	2			1	8		1	3	1			
Tivoli					5						1	
Tor de Cenci					2							
Torrino					1	2						
Velletri								2				
Grand Total	9	2	1	1	130	19	1	3	1	2	16	2

With particular reference to the position of the rings within the burial, it has been possible to further investigate this only in the cemetery of Osteria dell' Osa, where this information is available (Table 5). Medium and small suspension rings are mostly found on the chest and/or abdomen of the deceased, often attached to a fibula. Sometimes they can also be found near the head. The positioning of rings on the lower abdomen of female children and infants might indicate the role that these special girls would have had, had they grown. In this sense, they may also be indicative of parental grief and sorrow for the loss of the child's potential role and life in adulthood, taken away by a premature death. A similar concept has been specifically suggested by V. Nizzo with reference to infant/children that show objects or prerogatives that might suggest a behaviour typical of an adult rather than an infant/child. For example, in a male child burial, there was a typical symposium drinking cup in his hand. According to Nizzo this peculiar position of the object indicate that the parents are grieving for the loss of the future life and role that the child would have had, if his life was not

interrupted. A similar concept can be attributed to the suspension rings on the abdomen of the female child.[38]

Table 5: Osteria dell' Osa: position of the small and medium suspension rings within the burial. A) Latial Period II; B) Latial Period III.

A)

Age Class	\	A	A	B
Sex	F	F	M	F
\	3	5	1	2
Pelvis		10		
In the urn		2		
In a double-handled pot		1		
Femur		1		
Legs		2		
Humerus				2
Feet		15		
Shoulder		1		
Left Shoulder		1		
Head		8	3	3
Chest	4	267	2	32
Total	7	313	6	39

B)

Age Class	\	A		B		
Sex	F	F	M	\	F	M
\	2	1	2		1	
Femur			1			
Knee		1				
Burial niche						1
Feet		1	1			
On the skull			1			
Head		3		1		
Chest		18				
Total	2	24	5	1	1	1

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[38] Nizzo 2011.

Subsequently, the association of large flat suspension rings has been related to the wealth displayed in the tomb, according to the richness index elaborated by Alessandro Guidi for Veii and already used by one of the authors in her first monograph (See Appendix 1, Table 3 for value equivalences). As shown in Figure 4, in Latium *vetus* during the Latial Period IVA, large suspension rings are associated with most wealthy burials, in red rectangles. The analysis of Latial Period III and IVB yielded similar results but are not presented for brevity.

Figure 4: Female Burials Latial period IVA. Wealth Diagram and Burials with Large Suspension Rings.
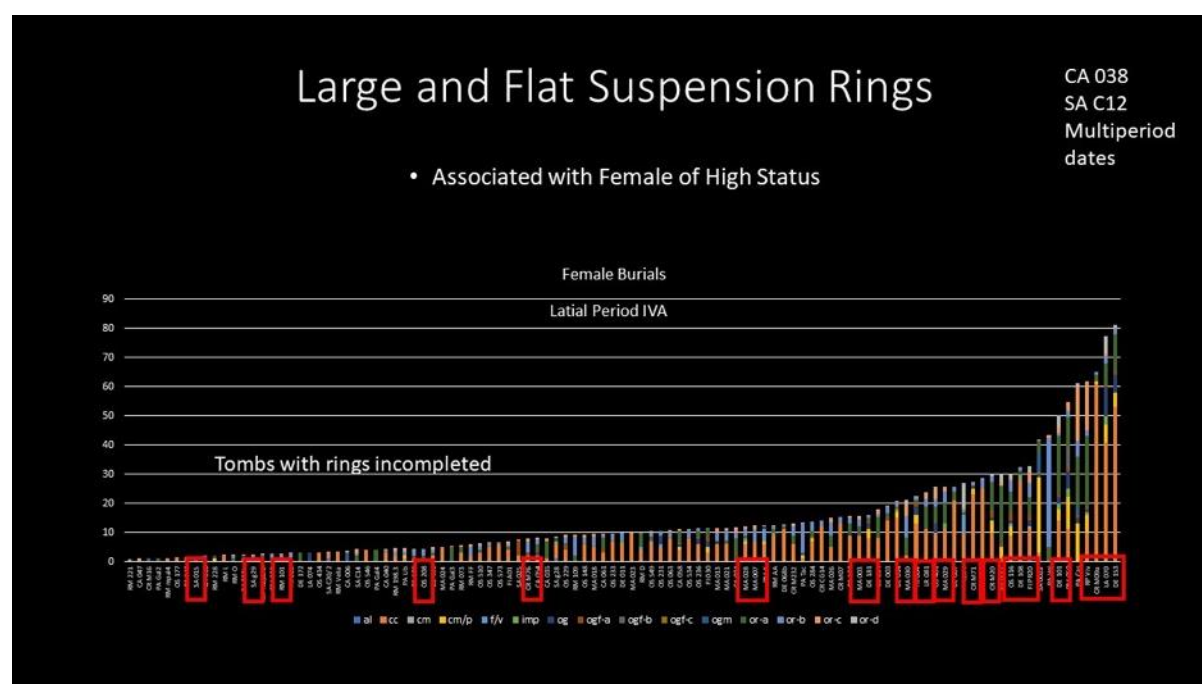
Finally, some spatial analyses were performed both on a microlevel within the cemetery of Osteria dell' Osa, and on a macrolevel within the region of Latium *vetus*, in order to investigate the association of rings with family and/or age or social groups, and, regionally, with primary or secondary centres of settlement. As shown in Figure 5, at Osteria dell' Osa, female tombs with large suspension rings are generally associated with the group where most of the pre-adult burials are located, both in the earlier phase, II, and in the later phases III and IV. Similarly, Figure 6 shows how small and medium suspension rings are again associated with the groups where most pre-adults are and where most wealthy burials are (large dots in green).

Figure 5: Osterial dell' Osa: association between Large flat rings and sub-adult burials. A) Latial Period II; B) Latial Period III-IV.

A)

B)

503–578 (k)

340–579 (i)

71–435 (j)

458–517 (h)

64–206 (g)

402–450 (f)

88–497 (c)

NORD (b)

92–410 (e)

SUD (a)

165–193 (d)

Legend

Large Suspension Ring

Sub-adults

38
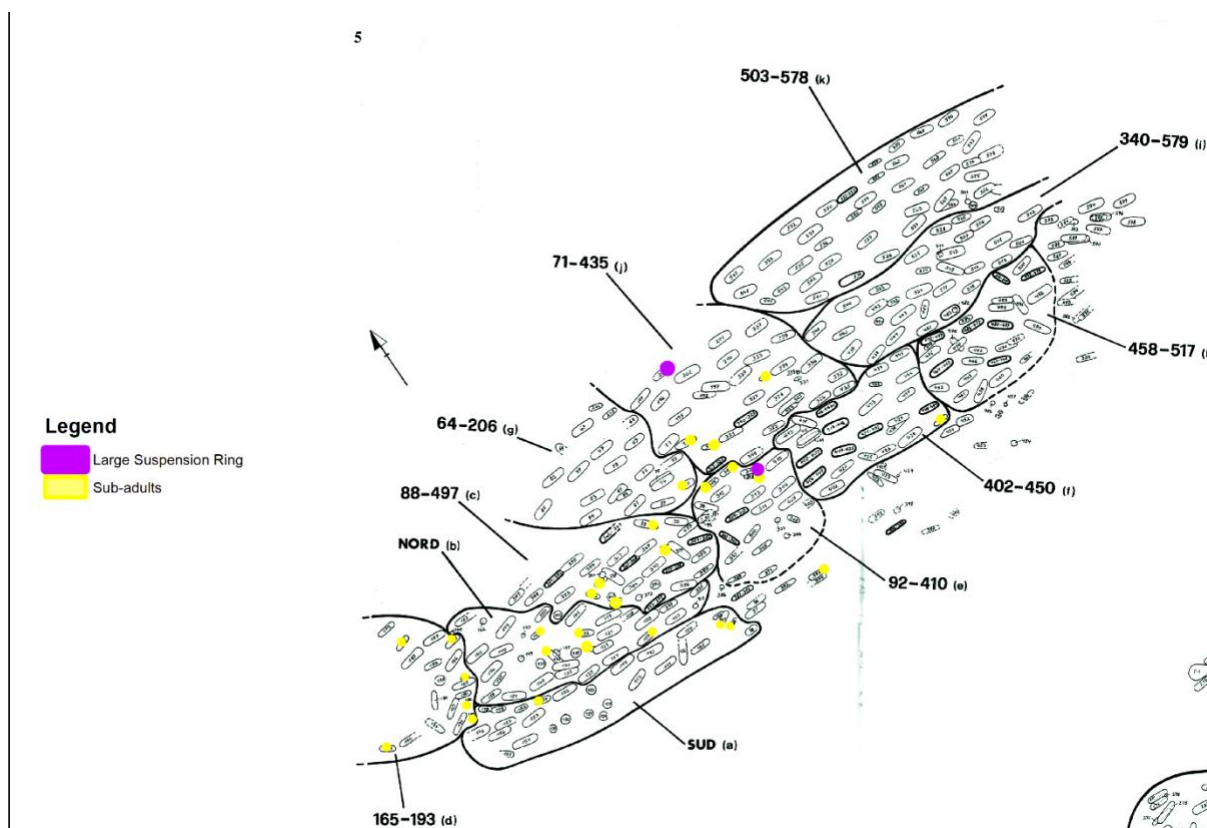
Figure 6: Osterial dell'Osa: association between medium and small flat rings, sub-adult burials and rich graves. A) Latial Period IIA; B) Latial Period IIB; C) Latial Period III-IV.

A)
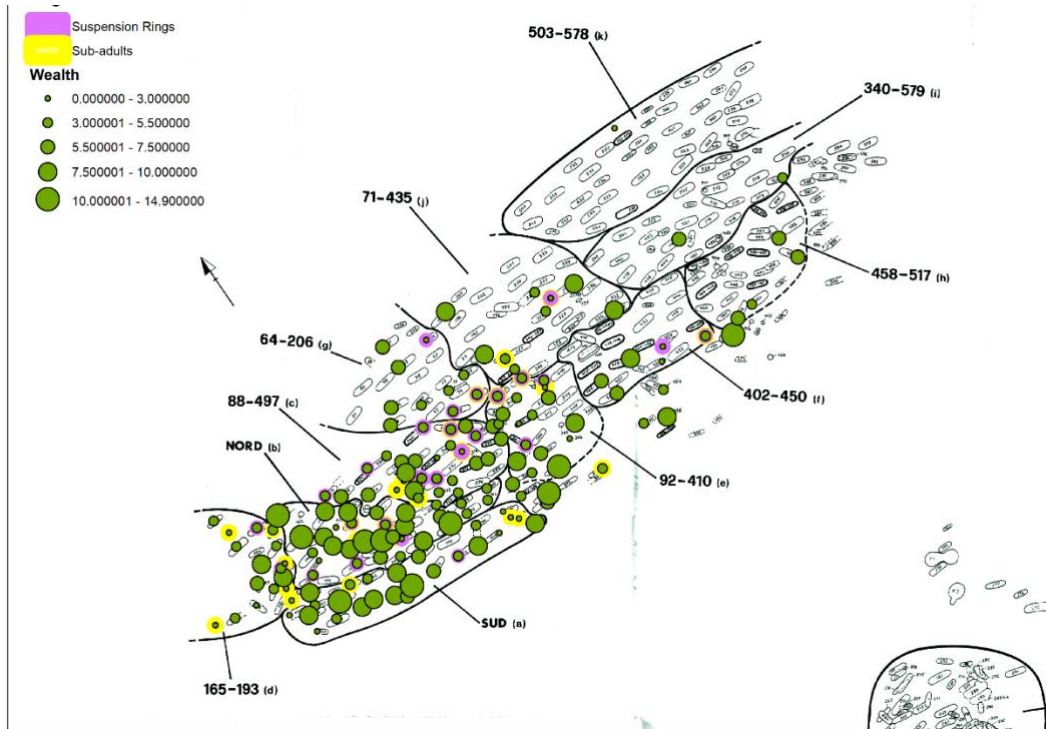
B)
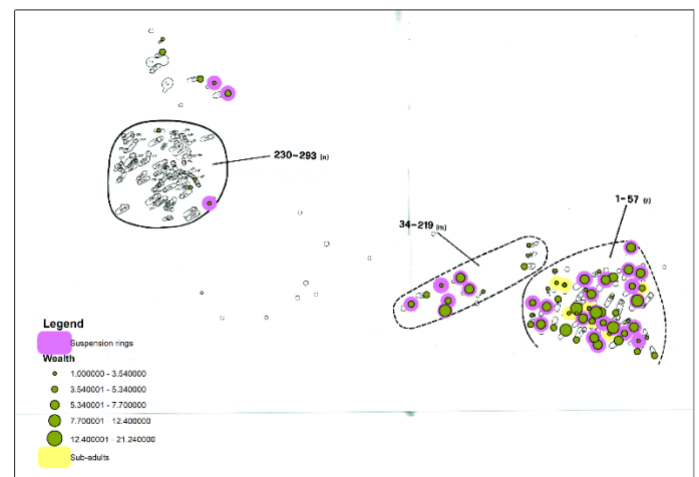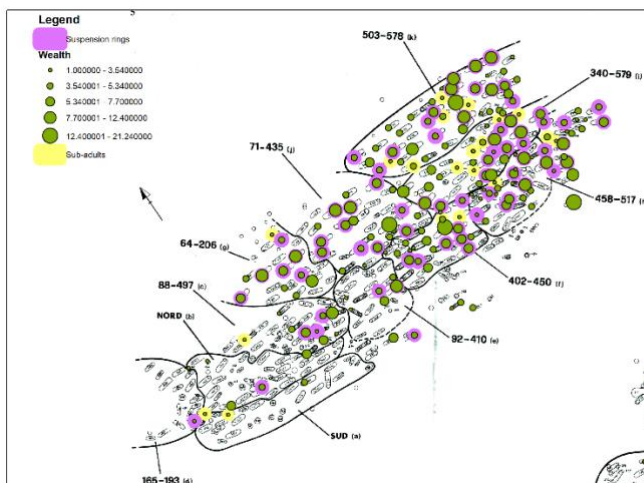
C)
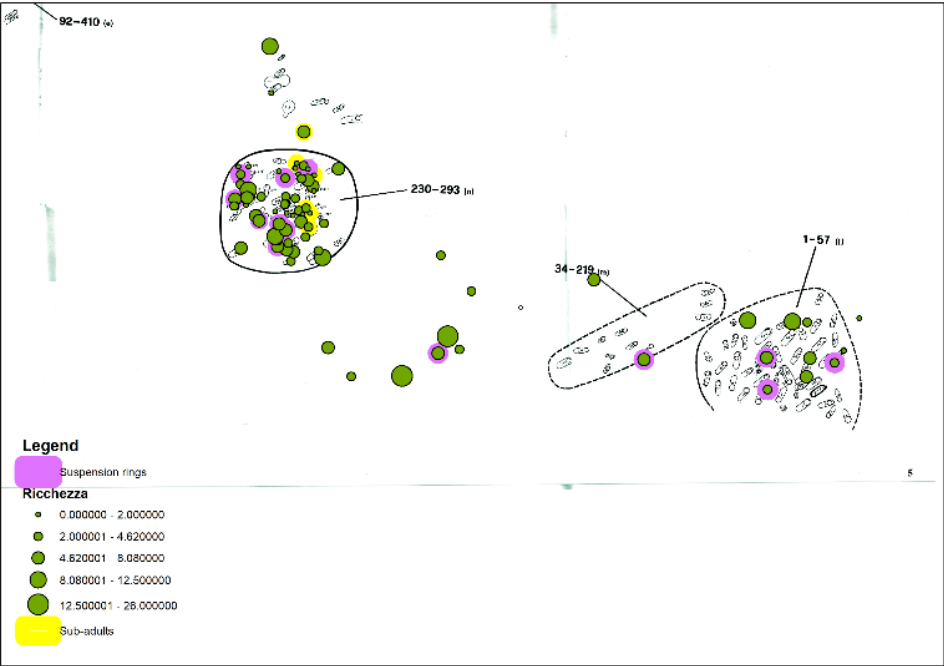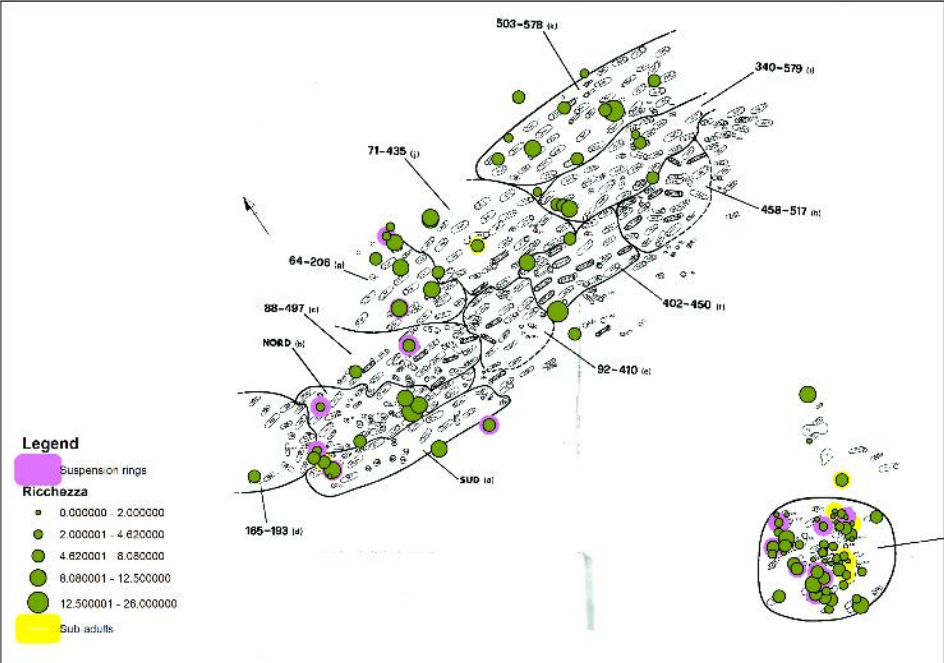
This seems to confirm Bartoloni's ideas that large suspension rings are associated with the most eminent women of society, possibly even the mother of the heir of the chief of that community. Similarly, medium and small suspension rings are associated with wealth and pre-adults, also potentially bearing some relation to motherhood, status, and transmission of inheritance. The connection with motherhood seems to be further reinforced by a comparison with objects found in sanctuaries dedicated to female deities in Southern Italy. They are flat and rounded ivory plaques, possibly fibula decorations, which a very similar decoration to the flat bronze rings of Latium *vetus*. They are found, for example, in sanctuaries of Megara Hyblaea, dedicated to Demeter, the mother goddess, and other deities — hence the link with maternity.[39]

The distribution of tombs with large flat rings and medium or small rings has been analysed at a regional level. As shown in figure 7A, large flat rings are associated only with primary centres in the Latial Period III and with secondary centres from the Latial Period IV. When we consider medium and small rings, we find them again in primary centres in the Latial Period II and III and in secondary centres in the Latial Period IV. It is important to notice that, in the Latial Period III, the only secondary settlements with rings are the satellites of Rome. The Latial Period IV is also the time when we find aristocratic houses and small settlements in the country side, arguably hinting at a sort of migration/colonisation on behalf of urban elites of the countryside, as already suggested by various scholars.[40]

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[39] Guzzardi *et al*. 2009, pp. 693-702.; Gras et al 2005, p. 442, figg. 421-422.

[40] Initially suggested by De Santis 1997 and then confirmed also by Iaia & Mandolesi 2010, Pacciarelli 2001 and Fulminante 2003.

Figure 7: Regional distribution of tombs with rings: A) Large Flat rings; B) Medium and Small rings.

A)
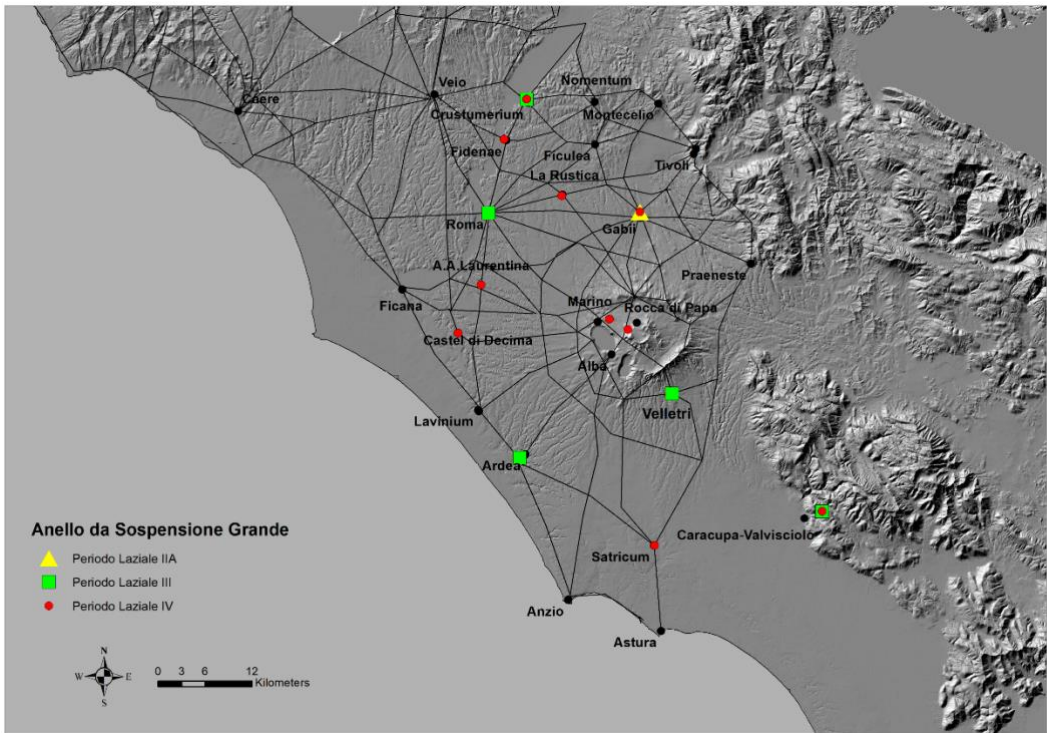
B)
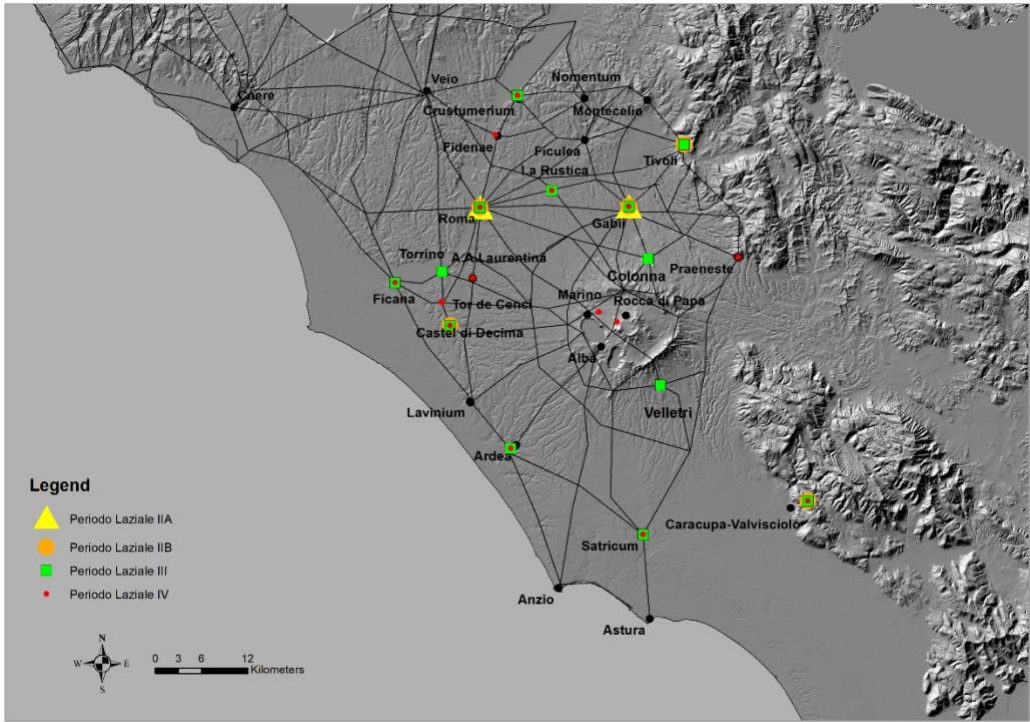
Finally, a spatial distribution of individuals according to class, gender, sex, and age has been performed to gain further insights into class, gender, sex and demographic trends and their various combinations. Figure 8 shows the spatial distribution of individuals according to class. Individuals with a wealth index lower than 4.6 are generally located at the margins of the group identified by Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri as 'lineage groups', all around the burials with higher wealth index. This trend seems present in all periods from earlier and later phases, especially in the group of the Latial Period III and IV, identified by Bietti Sestieri as the beginning of the '*gens*' at Osteria dell' Osa.[41]

A)

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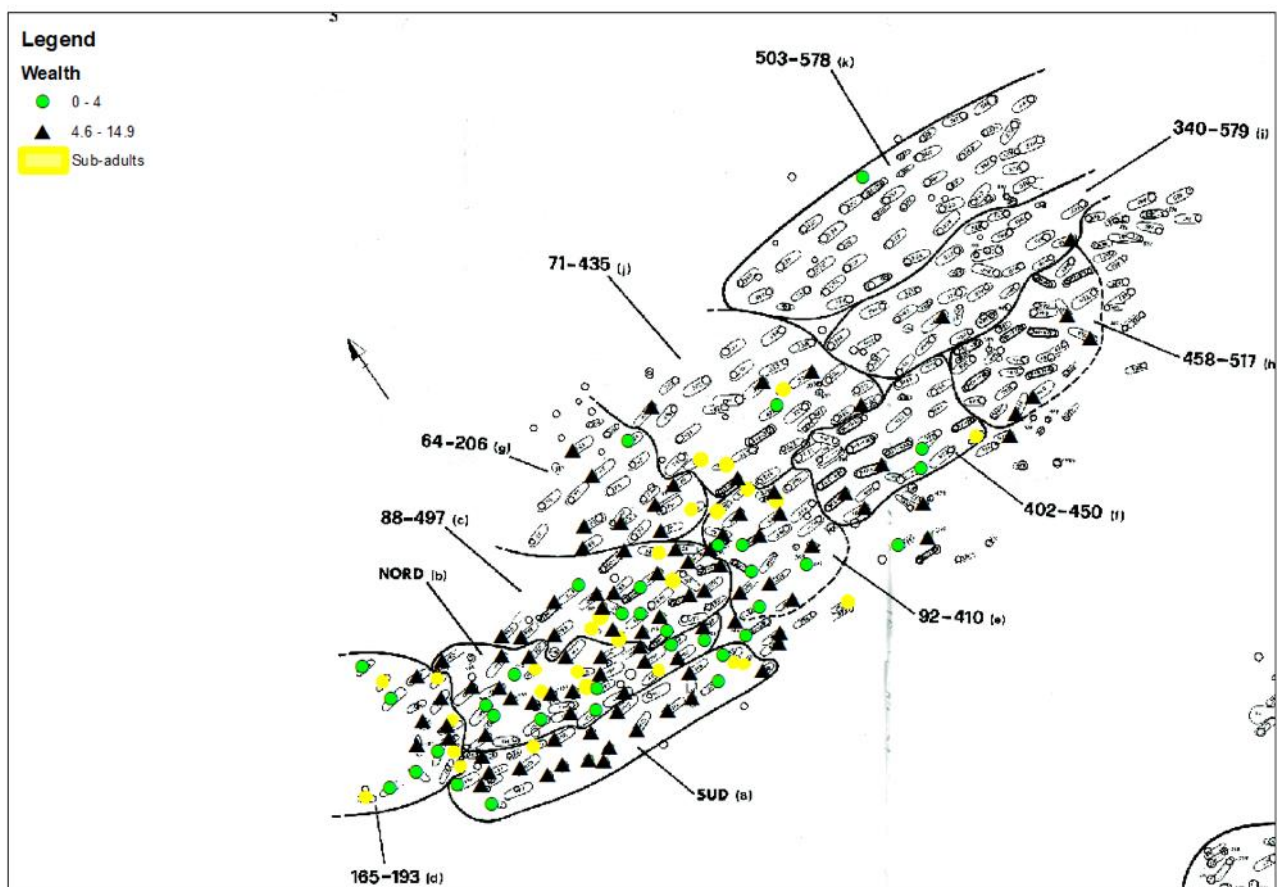
[41] See discussion section above.

B)
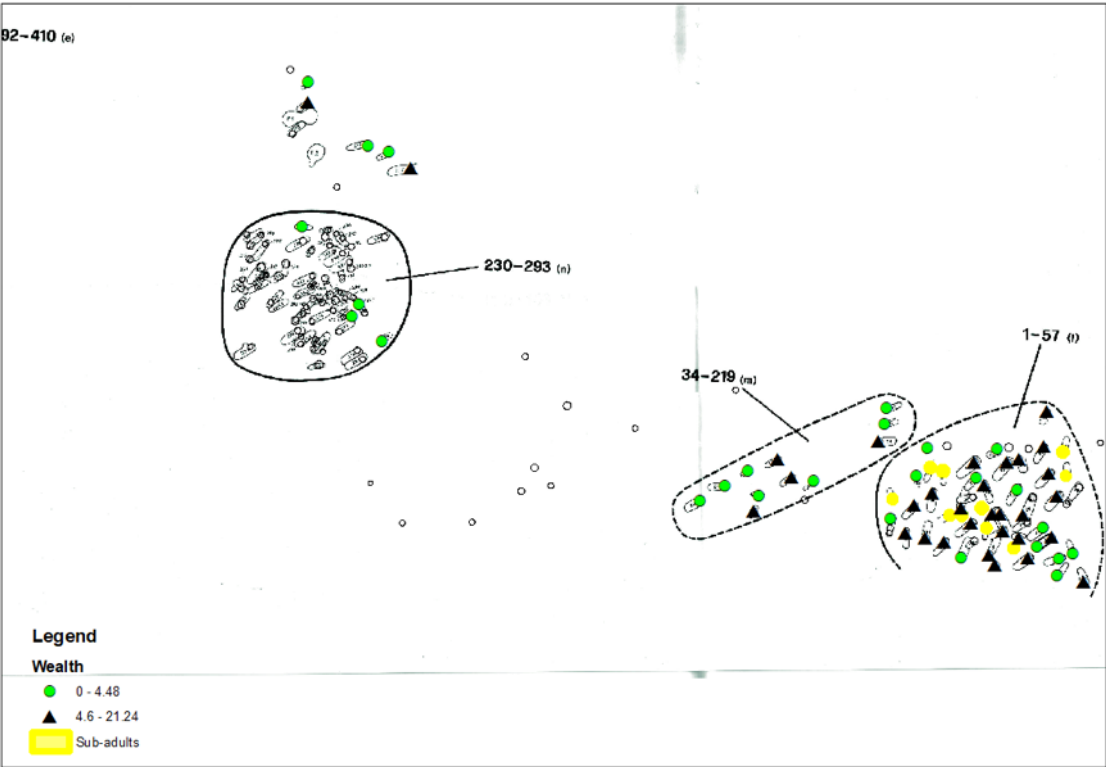
C)
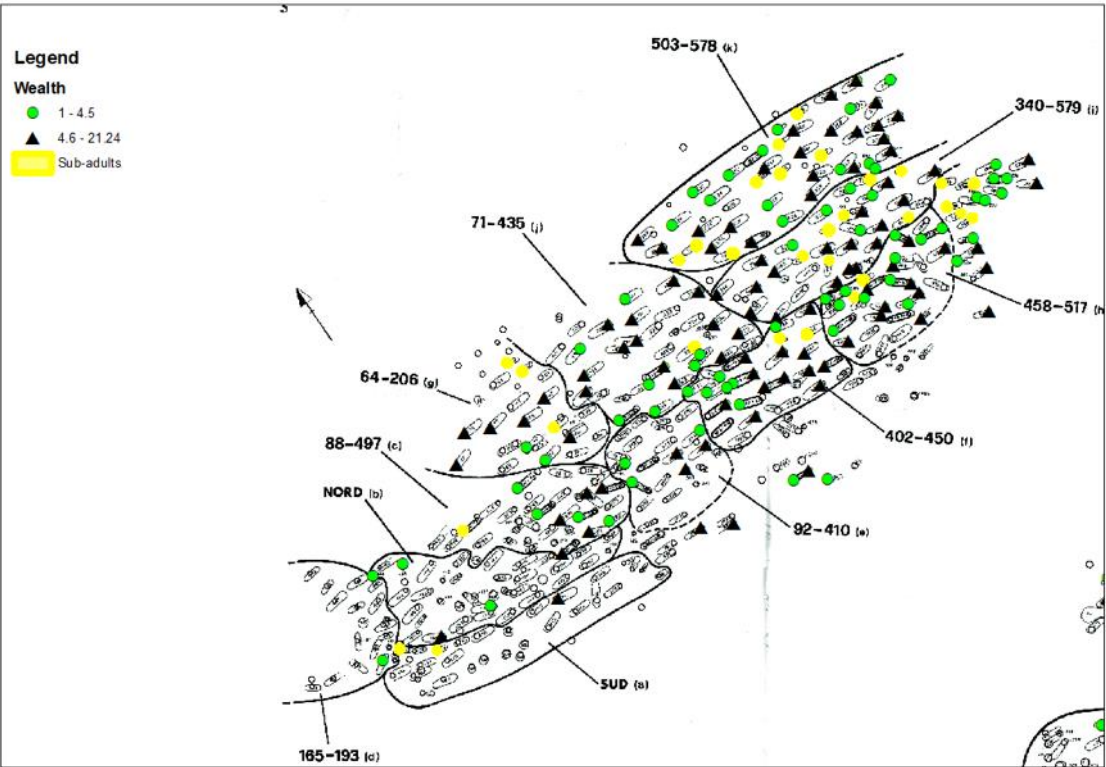
D)
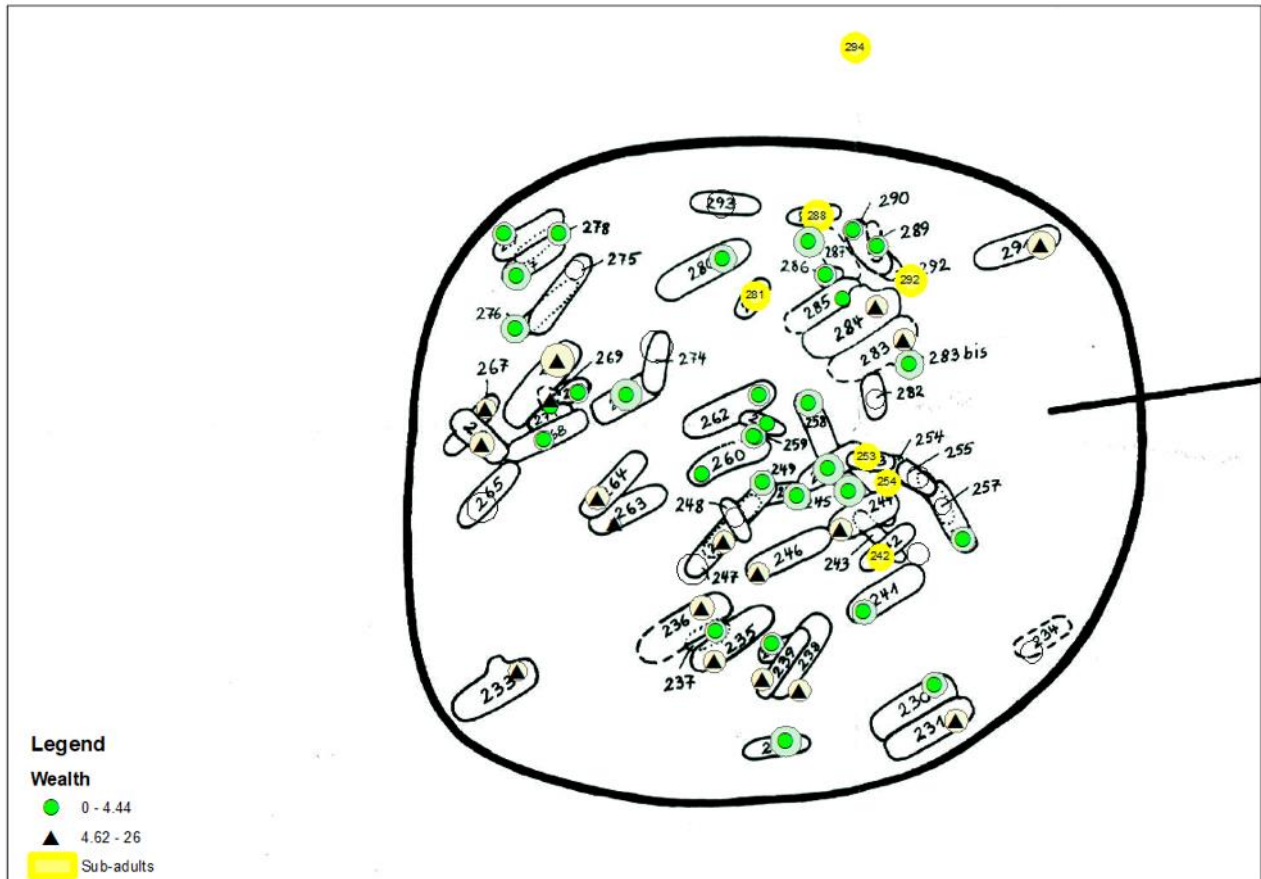
Figure 8: Osteria dell'Osa. Spatial Distribution according to Class and Age. A) IIA; B) IIB1; C) IIB2; D) III-IV.

Of particular interest here is whether couple and/or family groups are present in the cemetery in either or both of the class groups (higher status and lower status), identified empirically at a threshold below and above 4.6 of the wealth index illustrated above. In this way, it will be possible to understand whether the role of mothers and fathers, indicated by the presence of distinct family groups (with adult (warrior) male, adult (rich) woman, children and eventually some affiliates), is relatively hidden in the spatial distribution of the cemetery, and whether this changes depending on class or status. As mentioned earlier, in Figures 9-12 sex is defined anthropologically, while gender is indicated by grave goods associated with the deceased: weapons for male and textile tools and jewels for females, although there are exceptions to this binarity. The maps in Figures 9-12 show that couples and family groups tend to be more neatly defined among the individuals of the higher class, especially

45

in the later phases of the cemetery. In particular, in the Latial Phase III and IV, in the group identified as *gens*, there seem to be two or three prominent male and female figures, with a few other male associates, children, and a prominent number of individuals of lower class.

A)
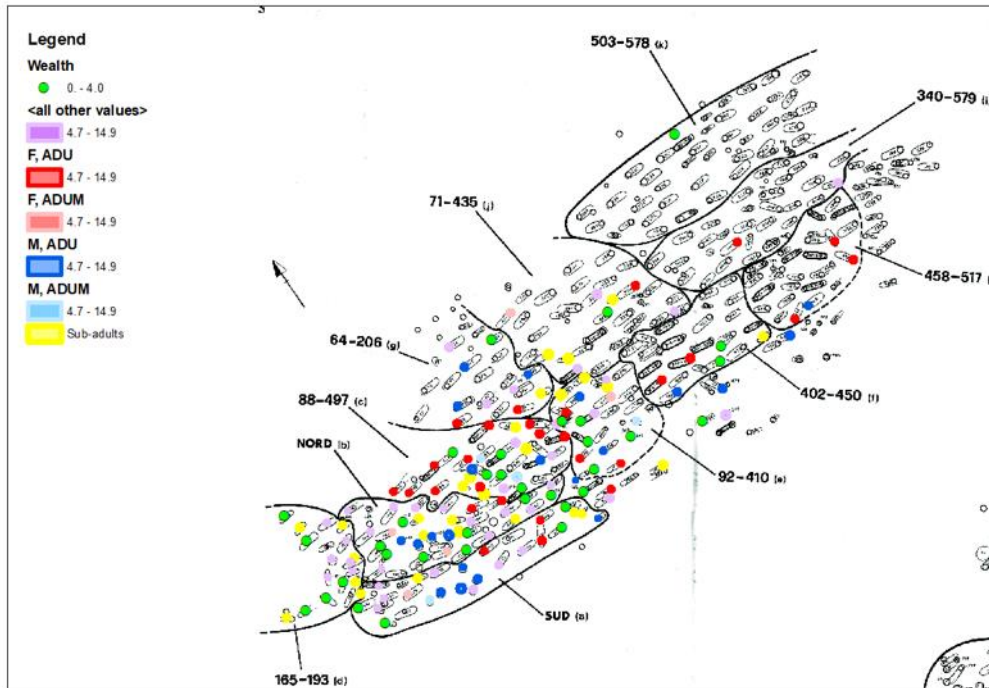
B)
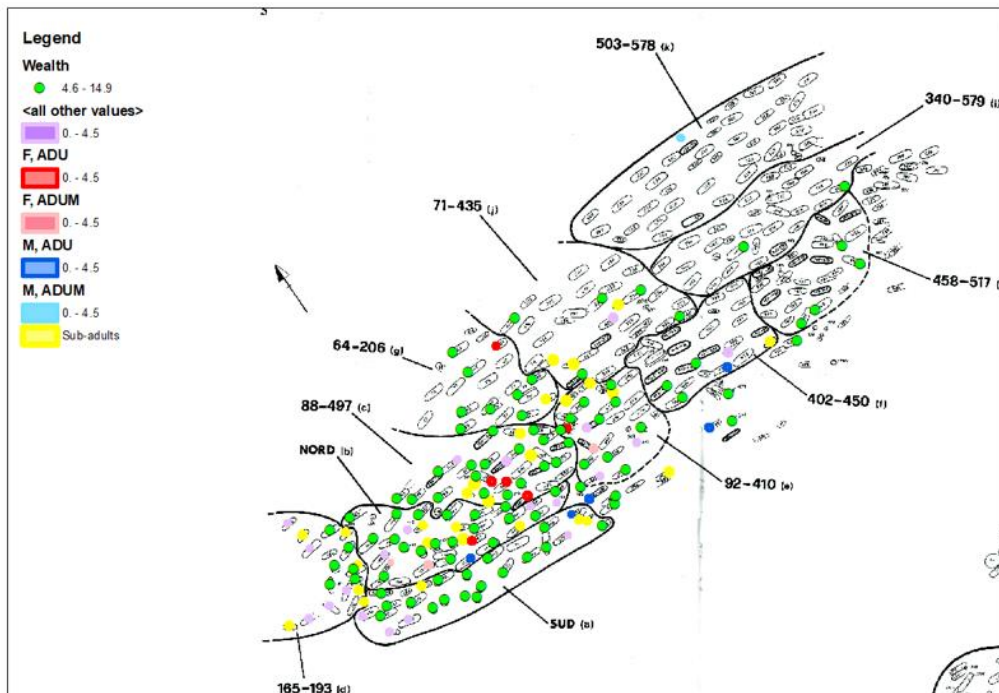
C)
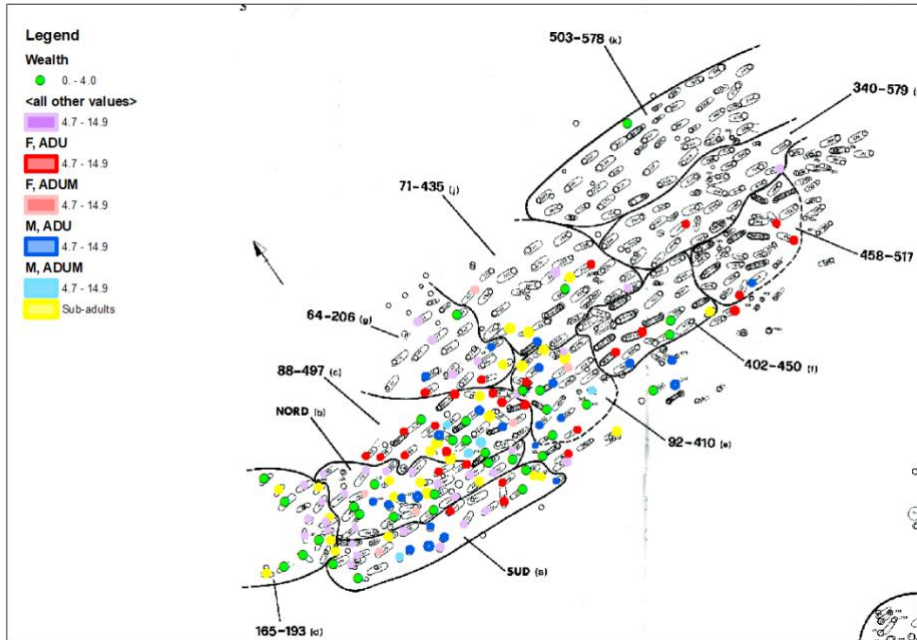
D)
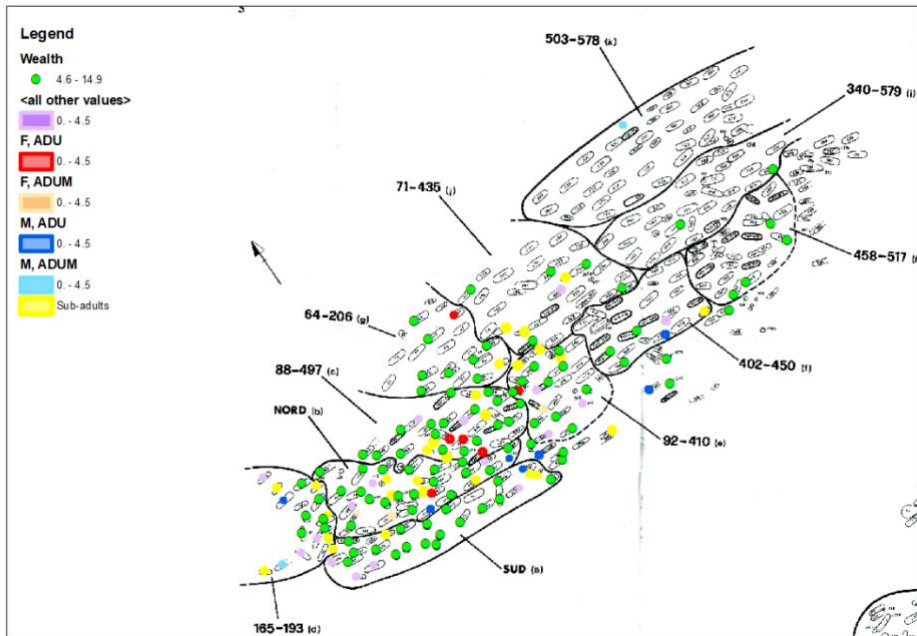
Figure 9: Osteria dell' Osa. Latial Period IIA. Spatial Distribution according to Class, Gender, Sex and Age. A) Gender, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; B) Gender, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5; C) Sex, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; D) Sex, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5.

A)

B)

48

C)
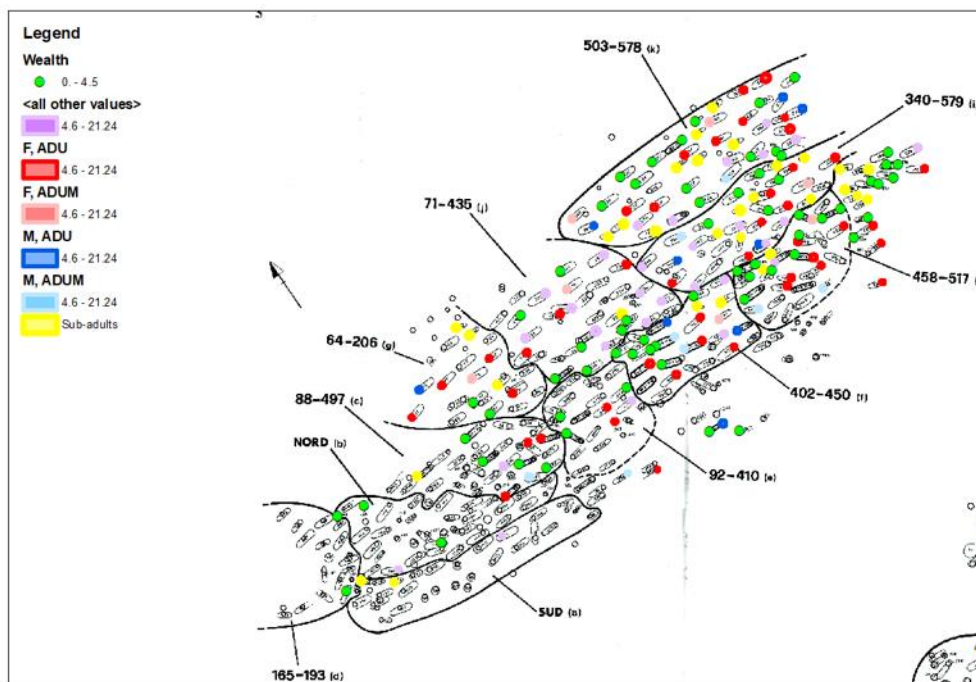
D)
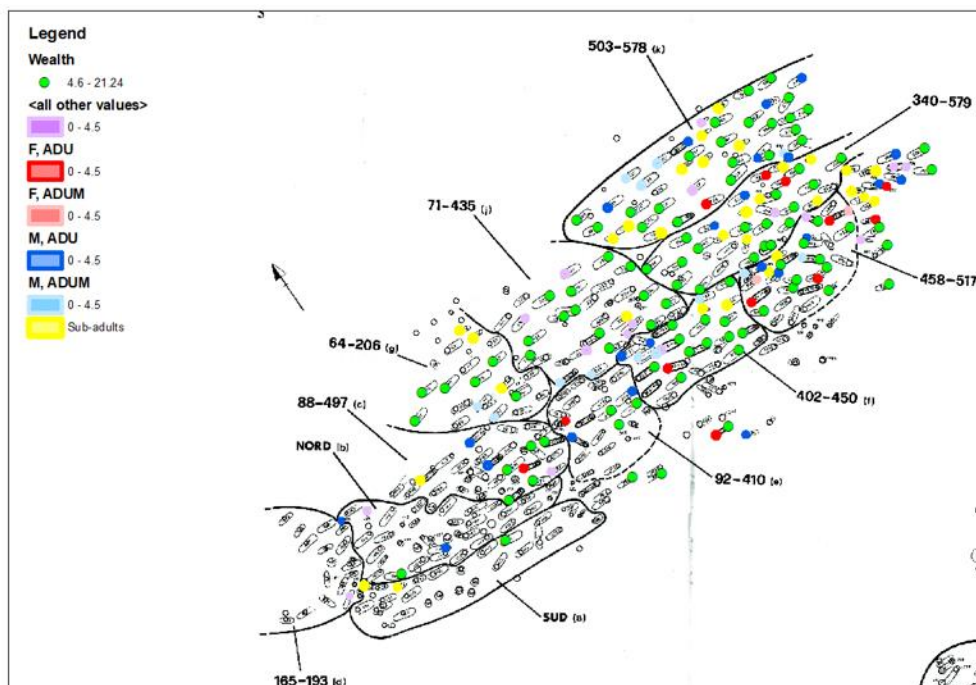
Figure 10: Osteria dell' Osa. Latial Period IIB1. Spatial Distribution according to Class, Gender, Sex and Age.
A) Gender, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; B) Gender, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5; C) Sex, Higher
Class: Wealth index > 4.5; D) Sex, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5.

A)
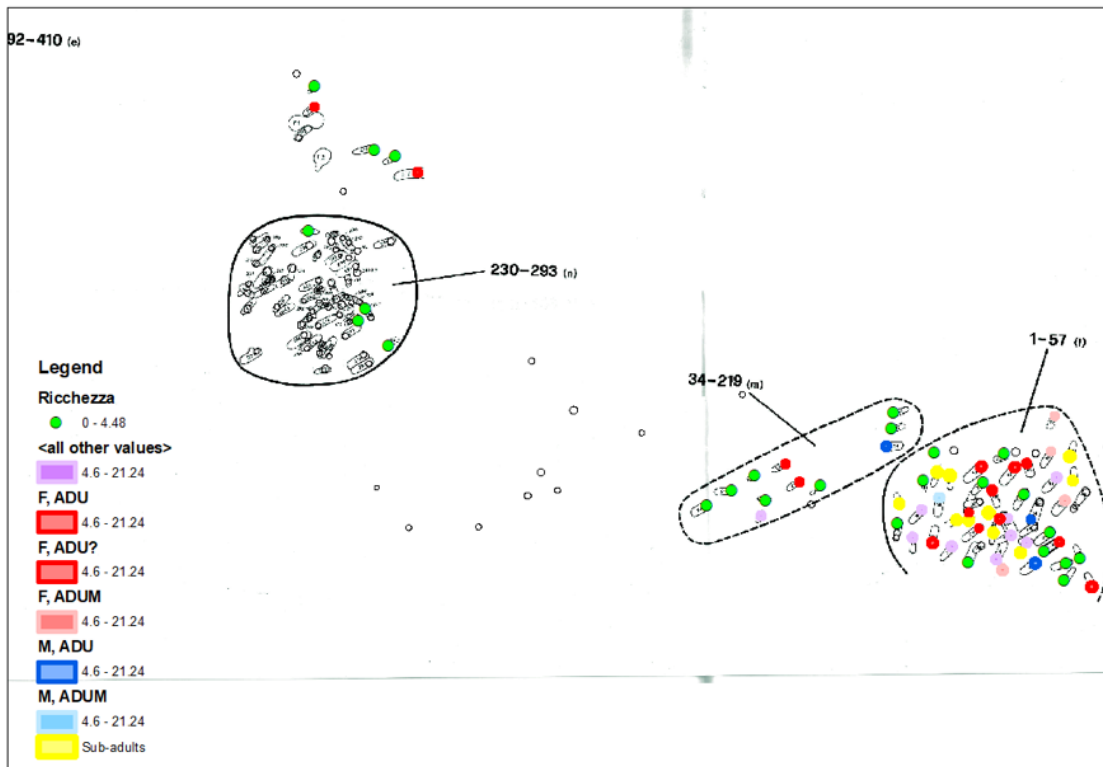
B)
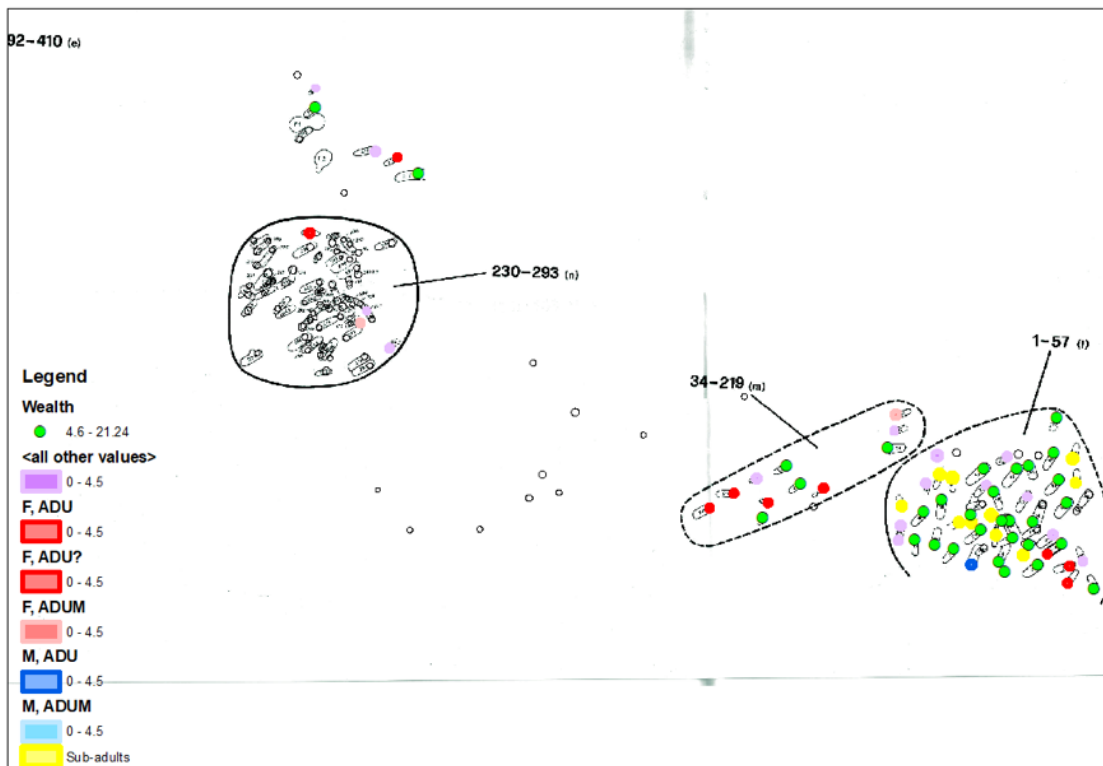
C)
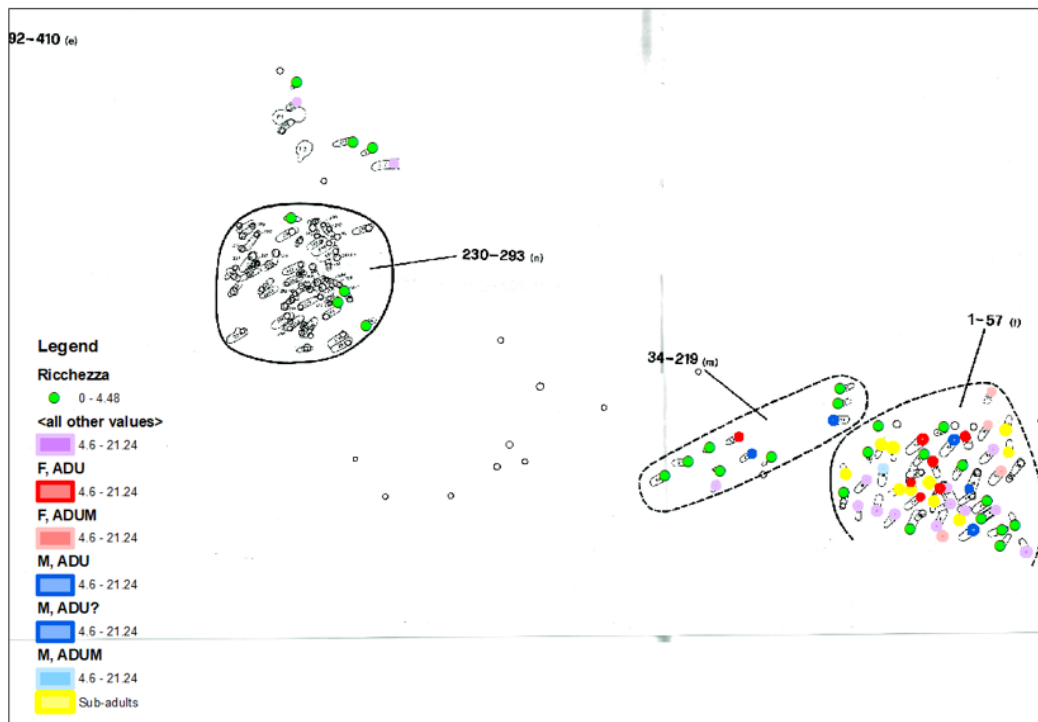
D)
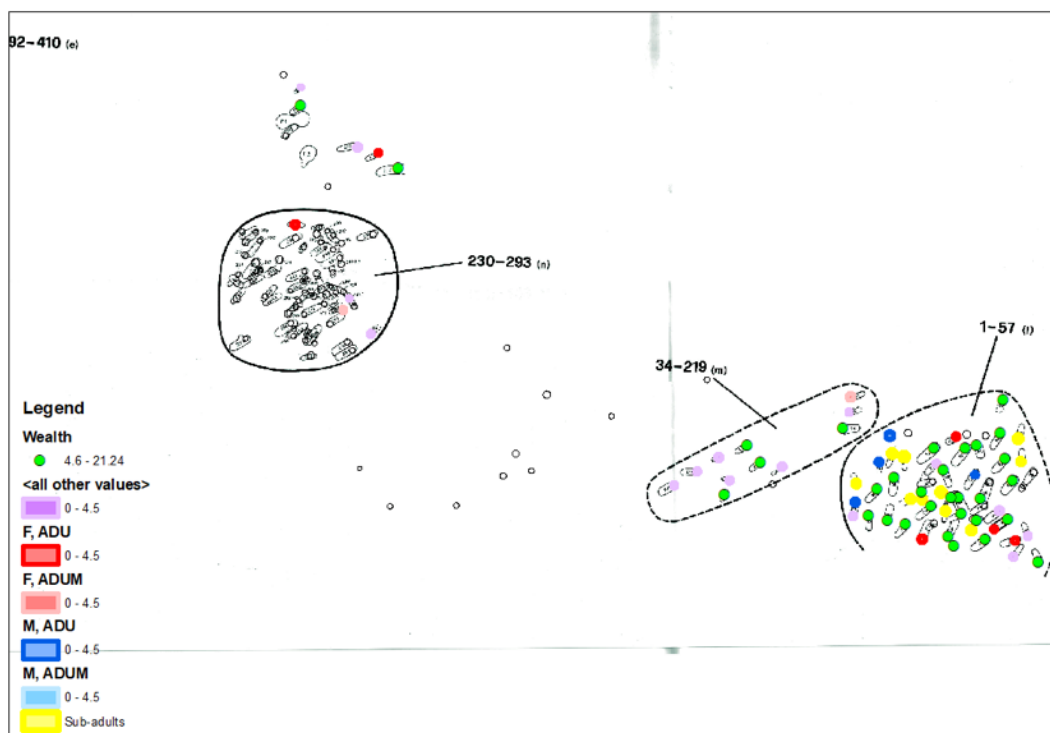
Figure 11: Osteria dell' Osa. Latial Period IIB2. Spatial Distribution according to Class, Gender, Sex and Age. A) Gender, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; B) Gender, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5; C) Sex, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; D) Sex, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5.

A)

B)

52
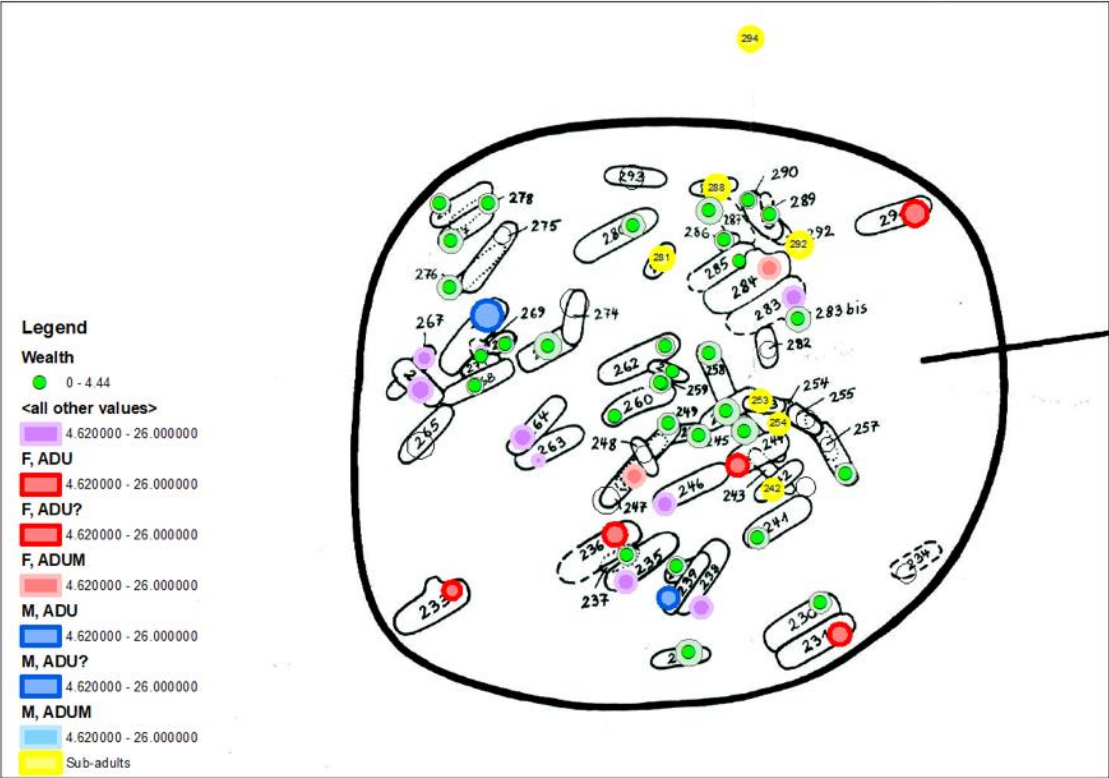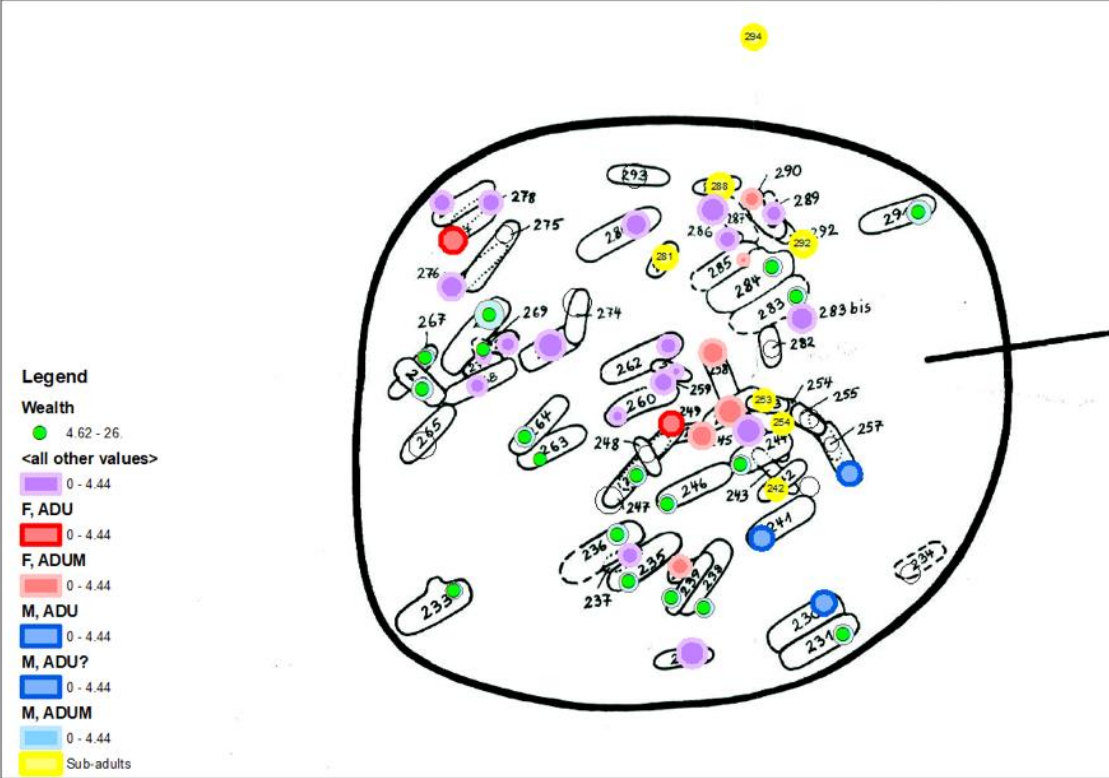
C)
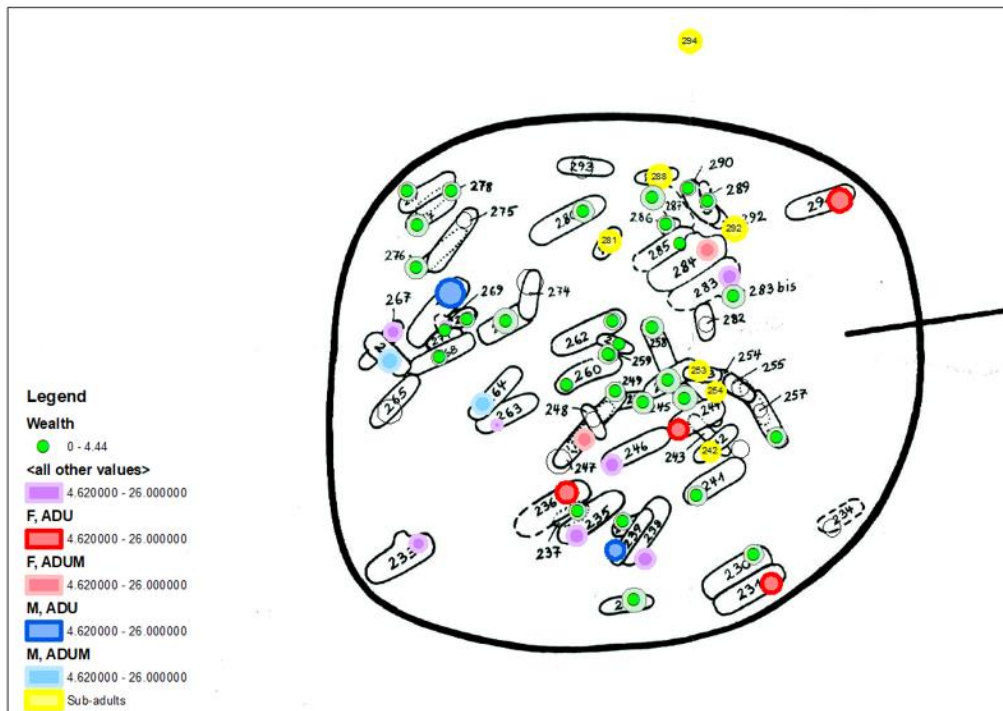
D)
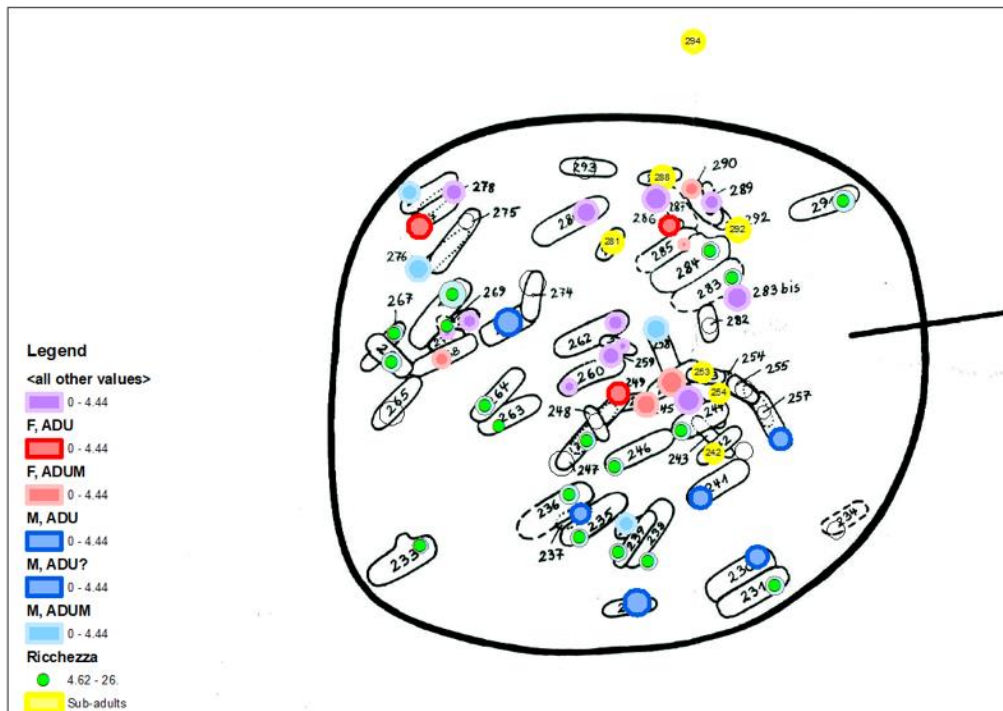
Figure 12: Osteria dell' Osa. Latial Period III-IV. Spatial Distribution according to Class, Gender, Sex and Age. A) Gender, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; B) Gender, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5; C) Sex, Higher Class: Wealth index > 4.5; D) Sex, Lower Class: Wealth index < 4.5.

3. From the Early Iron Age Period to the Archaic and Hellenistic Period

Introduction

From the Early Iron Age period we now move on to the Archaic and Hellenistic period. The time frame is very large and spatially mutable. Furthermore, the type of documentation changes significantly; despite this, we think that these different materials share the potential of unveiling some aspects of the pain of losing an infant, especially but not exclusively for the mother, about some strategies for overcoming it, and about the status of women (as was the case with the suspension rings above).

Within broader research on votive statuettes representing adult/s with infant/s in ancient Italy,[42] I will focus in the second part of this article on those that come from funerary contexts. Narrowing the research on this group is very interesting as regards the different use of sacred space and the different use of these objects, usually found within votive contexts, in Central and Southern Italy (including Sicily).

Statuettes representing a woman with infant/s — in Southern Etruria and Latium *vetus* also representing pairs of two women or a man and a woman with infant/s — are objects typically used in ancient Italy to communicate with Supra or non-human entities about issues regarding mothering, childhood, coming of age, well-being, and family belonging. They are particularly frequent in the Latial-Etruscan-Campanian area.[43]

In Southern Etruria and *Latium vetus*, the offering of these votive objects often took place in sanctuaries within urban areas. The central position made the ritual performance very visible

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[42] I distinguish between statuettes of breastfeeding *(kourotrophoi*, KT) and baby-carrying (*kourophoroi*, KP) women. This distinction and, as a consequence, the use of two different words, is often neglected by scholars. Normally, statuettes of women with children are labeled as *kourotrophoi* as a whole¸ even though they potentially represent different social roles: in fact, only biological mothers, wet-nurses, and, within Roman culture, possibly the maternal aunt (*matertera*) can breastfeed, but any woman (aunts, grandmothers, other relatives, and attendants, besides, of course, the mother and the wet-nurse) can carry a baby on her knees, in her arms, or on her shoulder. This distinction can provide insights into religious agents and the reasons for, and the degree of involvement in such ritual practices. Any of these figures might have had an interest in performing a ritual for the child, either in a disinterested way or simply out of affection. See Pedrucci 2013, pp. 71-73; Pedrucci 2018, pp. 70-117. Cf. Parisi Presicce 1986.
[43] Comella 1981.

and, therefore, we can argue that it was important not only for individual members of a family but for the entire community.

If we move south, the number of statuettes not only decreases significantly (except for Capua), but they are more frequently found in sacral contexts in suburban or extra-urban areas, not rarely near sources of water. There is also an increasing number of findings inside tombs. The use of these votive objects seems to be in Magna Graecia and Sicily, on one hand, more relegated to the feminine dimension, and on the other, more private. Campania seems to be somehow in-between (as indeed it is, geographically speaking).

I will start with a brief catalogue of the material found in graves, which is regrettably often devoid of the context of the findings (especially the age and gender of the deceased); therefore, working assumptions and conclusions will be highly speculative.

4. Catalogue

4.1. Latium *vetus*

1. **Praeneste 1**, moulded terracotta (extremely well-worn mould), beige clay, with black inclusions, H 16,5 cm, W 6 cm. Colombella necropolis. Rome, Museo Nazionale etrusco di Villa Giulia, inv. n. 13550. 3rd c. BCE.
    Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman, suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle; her head is covered by the mantle; she has a central parting. She is holding her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding; the naked baby is touching the woman's left knee. Her feet are on a footrest.
    Bibliography: Pensabene 2001, p. 393f., pl. 107.11.
    Image from: Pensabene 2001, pl. 107.11.

4.2. Southern Etruria

2. **Caere 1**, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), H 25 cm, W 10,5 cm, Necropolis of La Banditaccia, Tomb of Teste votive. Cerveteri, Museo Nazionale Cerite, inv. n. 2013.4.410. 3rd c. BCE.
    Description: double *kourophoros*, two enthroned women with a child seated between their legs on the ground. They are wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle, which covers their heads. Their left hand is on their left knee; they are holding a *patera* with their

right hand. They have curly hair with a diadem. The infant has its hands on its knees; it is wearing a tunic, which leaves its torso uncovered. Their feet are on a footrest.

Notes: the exact place of the finding is unknown. The statuette was found together with two female busts with *polos* and a draped figurine in a context already widely looted. It was located inside a monumental complex called Tomba delle Teste Votive. Nearby, a small lithic sarcophagus with few grave goods inside was found. This is an extremely fine object that was usually put in a votive deposit; it is typical of this area.

Bibliography: *Mater et matrona* 2014, p. 124.

Image from: *Mater et matrona* 2014, p. 125.

3. Volterra 1, moulded terracotta, yellowish clay, H 17 cm, Necropoli del Portone, Tomb D, Volterra, Museo Etrusco Guarnacci, inv. n. 228 (or 22?). 3rd c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman holding a swaddled baby with her left arm. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantel, which covers her head.

Notes: it is likely a miniaturized copy of the so-called *Kourotrophos* Maffei. It is likely a local artifact. Possibly part of rich female grave goods .

Bibliography: Maggiani 1985, p. 128, n. 154.

Image from: Maggiani 1985, p. 128, n. 154.

4. Vetulonia 1, Egyptian greenish glass past statuette, H 6,2 cm, Vetulonia's necropolis, Poggio al bello tomb.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated goddess of the type *Isis lactans*, but the attributes and a hieroglyphics inscription indicate that she is Mut breastfeeding her son Conm. Other Egyptian objects were found in archaic tombs in this necropolis.

Notes: part of rich female grave goods.

Bibliography: Falchi 1887, p. 508f.

Image from: Falchi 1887, pl. XIX, fig. 6.

5. Falerii Veteres 1, *kernos* made of three small jars; three *kourotrophoi* are attached to the jars. From Falerii Veteres, Valsiarosa's necropolis, tomb 12 (XCV.) Last quarter of the 4th c. BCE. Civita Castellana, Museo Archeologico dell'Agro Falisco, inv. n. 1071.

Description: *kourotrophos*, an enthroned woman with an almost frontal baby on her knee. The head of the infant rests on the woman's left arm. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a long mantel, which covers her head and the infant's body. She is wearing a diadem. Her feet are on a footrest. The throne usually has ears.

Notes: this vase belongs to the so-called silvered pottery, previously known as Volsinian pottery. This highly specialised ware, characterised by the tin outer coating, imitating metal, and usually enriched by applied figured decorations, is one of the utmost interests in the Etrusco-Italic *koiné* of the early Hellenistic period. This typology of KP is very widespread in Etruria.

Bibliography: Michetti 2003, p. 204, n. 355.

Image from: Michetti 2003, pl. LXXVII.

4.3. Campania

6. Nola 1, moulded terracotta (used single mould), yellow-reddish clay, H 15 cm. Nola, pre-Roman necropolis, Tomba II.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a big mantle; she is wearing round earrings. She has shoulder length braids. She is holdings her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding. Her feet are on a footrest. The naked baby is reaching for the right arm of the woman with its left hand.

Notes: it might come from the tomb of a man.

Bibliography: Bonghi Jovino & Donceel 1969, p. 41, pl. III.1.

Image from: Bonghi Jovino & Donceel 1969, pl. III.1.

7. Cumae 1, moulded terracotta, traces of white and red painting, H 19 cm, Cuma (Kyme/Cumae), necropolis, sep. CLXXI. 4th c. BCE.

Description: a seated woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a big mantle; she is wearing round earrings (separately moulded). She has shoulder length braids. She is holdings her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding. Her feet are on a footrest. The naked baby is reaching for the right arm of the woman with its left hand.

Notes: the statuette was found close to the skull of a young boy. Cumae was the first ancient Greek colony on the mainland of Italy.

Bibliography: Gabrici 1913, p. 635f., pl. CXI.5.

Image: Gabrici 1913, pl. CXI.5.

8. Grigignano 1, moulded terracotta, Grigignano (Atella). Succivo, Museo Archeologico dell' Agro Atellano. From tombs. 4th-3rd c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a big mantle; she is wearing round earrings. She has shoulder

length braids. She is holdings her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding. Her feet are on a footrest. The naked baby is reaching for the right arm of the woman with its left hand. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: 2 items.

Bibliography: Petrillo 2018, p. 686; Pedrucci 2022, p. 231.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 231.

9. Teanum 1, moulded terracotta, H 19 cm. Teano (*Teanum Sidicinum*), Hellenistic necropolis (Gradavola), T. 42.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a big mantle; she is wearing round earrings. She has shoulder length braids. She is holdings her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding. Her feet are on a footrest. The naked baby is reaching for the right arm of the woman with its left hand. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: 3 items. In Pedrucci 2022, p. 234, is wrongly labelled as Tea 3 ter. It should be Tea 3 bis. These figurines, together with Teanum 2 (below), were found inside the same tomb. The grave goods (six female terracotta statuettes, one female bust, *lekythoi*. One of the statuettes represents a woman with folded arms while sleeping: death as eternal sleep?) might suggest that a woman was buried there.

Bibliography: Gabrici 1910, pp. 87-88.

Image from: Gabrici 1910, fig. 56.

10. Teanum 2, moulded terracotta, h 12 cm. Teano (Teanum Sidicinum), Hellenistic necropolis (Gradavola), T. 42.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a standing woman suckling a swaddled baby at her left breast. She is probably wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and her shoulders.

Notes: this figurine should be Tea 3 ter in Pedrucci 2022, p. 234, but it is unfortunately missing.

Bibliography: Gabrici 1910, pp. 87-88.

11. Pontecagnano, moulded terracotta, Pontecagnano, Tomb 908, proprietà del Mese, inv. n. 16292-94, and Tomb 894, proprietà Russomando, inv. n. 36514. Second half of the 4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with an infant in her arms. The infant is held with the woman's left arm in an almost vertical position. It is covered by the woman's mantle. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle and a diadem; she is holding a

round object (a *patera*?) with her right hand. Her feet are on a footrest. Throne with ears.

Notes: 2 items.

Bibliography: Miller Ammerman 2002, p. 129, n. 8.

4.4. Magna Graecia

12. Paestum 1, moulded terracotta. Paestum, Tomb 19. Before 380 BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with an infant in her arms. The infant is held with the woman's left arm. It is covered almost entirely by the woman's mantle. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle and a diadem. She is putting her right hand on the baby. Her feet are on a footrest. Throne with ears and leonine paws.

Notes: 2 items. They were found in a tomb with extremely rich female grave goods.

Bibliography: Pontrandolfo 1977, pp. 53-56, fig. 29.2.

Image from: Pontrandolfo 1977, fig. 29.2.

13. Taras 1, moulded terracotta, H 23 cm. Taras, tomb. Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 20088. End of the 4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a naked infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its left hand. The infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle on her shoulders; she is wearing a crown; the curled front hair parted at the middle of the forehead. The statuette has a round base.

Bibliography: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 36, n. 280.

Image from: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, fig. 24.

14. Taras 2, moulded terracotta. Taras, Contrada Corti Vecchie (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n 208411. 2nd c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a naked infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its left hand. The infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle on her shoulders; she is wearing a tubular *stephane*; the curled front hair parted at the middle of the forehead. The infant is winged. The statuette has a round base.

Bibliography: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 36, n. 281.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 300.

15. Taras 3, moulded terracotta. Taras, Via O. Argentina (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 208403. 2nd c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos,* a seated woman suckling a naked infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its left hand. The infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle on her shoulders; bareheaded. The statuette has a round base.

Bibliography: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 36, n. 282.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 300.

16. Taras 4, moulded terracotta, H 21 cm. Taras, Via D. Peluso (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. I.G. 52068.?

Description: *kourotrophos,* a seated woman suckling a naked infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its left hand. The infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle on her shoulders; she is wearing a diadem.

Bibliography: De Juliis & Loiacono 1985, p. 370, n. 452; Ducaté-Paarmann 2003a, Grande Grèce 24, 69, 70, 71.

Image from: De Juliis & Loiacono 1985, pp. 370-371.

17. Taras 5, moulded terracotta. Taras, Contrada S. Lucia, Giardino Ramerino (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 1752. End of the 4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros,* a seated woman with a swaddled infant in her arms. The infant is held with the woman's left arm in an almost vertical position. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle (?). She is holding a round object in her right arm (a flat bread or a jug?). Caricatural style.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 322.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 322.

18. Taras 6, moulded terracotta. Taras, Contrada S. Lucia (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 1685. 6th–5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros,* a standing (headless) woman holding a swaddled infant in her arms. The infant has its head on the woman's left arm. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 323.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 323.

19. Taras 7, moulded terracotta, traces of red/pink paint on the woman's tunic. Taras, Contrada Pizzone (tomb). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 135284. 3rd c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros,* a standing woman with a standing girl beside her; she is holding its left hand with her right hand. The woman is looking toward the child; the

child is holding a piece of her tunic with her free hand. They are each wearing a *plissé* tunic; the woman is wearing a shawl. They are represented in the act of walking. The statuette has a round base.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 323.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 323.

20. Taras 8, moulded terracotta, traces of white englobe. Taras, H 17 cm. Contrada Corvisea, tomb 22 (scavi di fondazione per il secondo padiglione della nuova Caserma Marinai). Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 20096. 3rd–2nd c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman with a standing girl beside her; she is holding its left hand with her right hand. Tanagra figurine. On an oval plinth.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 324.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 324.

21. Taras 9, hand-modeled terracotta group, dark hazelnut clay, H 7,6 cm, base 9,2 x 5,2 cm. Taras, va Mezzacapo/via Minniti, Tomb 18 April 1936. Taranto, MArTA, inv. n. 50325. 350-325 BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an old (headless) woman looking after a baby in cradle together with a dog.

Bibliography: Graepler 1996, pp. 243-244, n. 186.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 325.

22. Thuriae 1, moulded terracotta, H 10,5 cm. Thuriae, in the area of the city on the plain west of the acropolis, insula III, t. 7/2004 with an external deposit in a tomb. Gioia del Colle, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. n. MG 4873. End of the 4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos* (?), a seated woman probably suckling an infant (missing) at her left breast. She is probably holding her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially the infant. She has curly hair; she is wearing round earrings.

Notes: it was part of the grave goods of a five-year-old girl along with two other statuettes representing a seated woman with a goose on her lap and 19 miniature-sized artifacts.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 302.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 302.

23. Bauste 1, moulded terracotta, hazelnut clay, H 9 cm, Bauste, Fondo Melliche (necropolis). Lecce, University, Laboratorio di Archeologia, inv. n. (sc.): V85 575.I.G145710. First half of the 4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a seated woman with an infant in her arms. The infant is held with the woman's left arm in an almost vertical position. It is covered by the woman's mantle. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: votive deposit related to the burial of an old woman (about 70 years old) and an infant 2–4 years old.

Bibliography: D'Andria 1990, p. 120, n. 170; Mastronuzzi & Mellisano 2015b, pp. 24, 26.

Image from: D'Andria 1990, p. 120, n. 170.

24. Lokroi 1, moulded terracotta, H 7,8 cm. Lokroi, necropolis in Contrada Lucifero, sporadic. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (MArRC), inv. n. MRC 723 (ex 8005, 4371).

Description: *kourophoros*, the upper part of a woman with a young girl seated on her right shoulder and one young boy seated on her left shoulder. The girl is wearing a tunic, a diadem (or a conical bonnet?), round earrings; she has a central parting. The boy is naked with a conical bonnet. The woman is wearing a V-neck tunic; she is probably moving toward the viewer's right. Her hair is waved. The girl is holding a round object (a fruit? Or the right hand of the woman?) with her right hand; her left hand is resting on the woman's head. The boy is holding a lyra with her left arm; his right hand is resting on his left thigh.

Image from: Meirano 2018, p. 133.

Bibliography: Meirano 2018, fig. 1.

25. Lokroi 2, moulded terracotta. Lokroi, necropolis in Contrada Lucifero, sporadic. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (MArRC), inv. n. MRC702 (ex 7996, 4370).

Description: *kourophoros***,** a squatting (pregnant?) woman. Her breasts are drooping down. She is holding with her left arm a swaddled baby in a vertical position. She is wearing a belt over her rounded belly. Her head is missing.

Notes: possibly, she's giving birth or just gave birth.

Bibliography: Meirano 2018, p. 133.

Image from: Meirano 2018, fig. 1.

26. Lokroi 3, moulded terracotta. Lokroi, necropolis in Contrada Lucifero, sporadic. Reggio Calabria, MANRC, inv. n. MRC 726 (ex 8001, 4368).

Description: *kourophoros,* the upper part of an enthroned woman. She is probably holding an infant on her left side. She is looking in the opposite direction. Likely, she is not breastfeeding since her breasts are covered by a V-neck tunic. She is wearing a crown and round ornaments on either side of her face.

Bibliography: Meirano 2018, p. 133.

Image from: Meirano 2018, fig. 1.

4.5. Sicily

27. Gela 1, moulded terracotta, pinkish clay, H 14 cm, W 7,2 cm. Monte Bubbonia, necropolis. Caltanissetta, Museo Archeologico Regionale, inv. n. MB 35472. Last quarter of the 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a big infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's right breast with its right hand. The woman is holding it with both hands. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially the infant. She has a hairstyle with strands arranged in a radial shape. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 407, TA/50.

Image from: Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 407, TA/50.

28. Gela 2, hand-modeled terracotta, H 9,5 cm. Gela, necropolis of Monte Bubbonia. Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi, inv. n. 24905. 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a seated woman with an infant in her arms. The infant has its head on the woman's left arm. She is wearing a veil on her head; she is seated on a cylindric base.

Bibliography: Zuntz 1971, p. 151, pl. 21.d; Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 22, fig. 11; Pancucci & Naro 1992, p. 30, cat. 60, pl. VI, n. 9.

Image from: Zuntz 1971, p. 151, pl. 21.d.

29. Gela 3, moulded terracotta. Gela, necropolis of Campo Soprano, Tomb 10. Gela, MARG, inv. n. 21134. 480 BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented in the left profile. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. She has long hair; the infant has long hair, too. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 366.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 366.

30. Randazzo 1, moulded terracotta. Randazzo, necropolis of Sant'Anastasia. Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale A. Salinas, inv. n. 400. Mid-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, an enthroned woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle that covers her head. She has a central parting. The infant is grabbing the woman's left breast with its left hand. Her right hand is on her right knee. Her feet are on a high footrest.

Bibliography: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 29, n. 163, fig. 16.

Image from: Hadzisteliou Price 1978, p. 29, n. 163, fig. 16.

31. Kentoripa 1, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), yellow clay, traces of whiteish englobe, H 10,2 cm. Kentoripa (Centuripe), necropolis of Contrada Cassino, Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi, inv. n. 27768. Hellenistic period.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling an infant at her left breast. She is in the left three-quarter profile; she is looking toward the baby. Both the woman and the baby are naked. The infant is grabbing the woman's left breast with its left hand; she is holding her legs with her right hand. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: the woman's head was reconstructed.

Bibliography: Musumeci 2010, pp. 44, 46, figs. 1, 2.

Image: Pedrucci 2013, p. 330, S67.

32. Kamarina 1, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), chamois clay (traces of cream englobe), H 15,5 cm, W 8,2 cm. Kamarina ? Necropolis ? Catania, Museo Castello Ursino, inv. n. MB 5440, 5441, 5450. End of the 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling a big infant at her left breast. The infant is reaching for the woman's right breast with its right hand. The woman is holding it with both hands. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially the infant. She has a hairstyle with strands arranged in a radial shape. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: 3 items.

Bibliography: Pautasso 1997, p. 40, n. 44, pl. V; Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 402, TA/38.

Image from: Pautasso 1997, p. 40, n. 44, pl. V (inv. n. 5441).

33. Kamarina 2, moulded terracotta, H 23 cm. Kamarina, necropolis of Passo Marinaro. Ragusa, Museo Archeologico Ibleo, inv. n. 23933. Mid-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman with a frontal infant seated on her left shoulder. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and the infant's head. Her right arm is bent across the chest; she is holding her left leg with her left arm. She is holding an object with her right hand. She has a central parting. The infant has its hand on its knees.

Notes: found next to an empty (?) sealed amphora along with an *askos* and a small mug.

Bibliography: Orsi 1990, p. 30, pl. XII.1.

Image from: Orsi 1990, p. 30, pl. XII.1.

34. Kamarina 3, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), red-orange clay, H 12,5 cm, W 7,5 cm. Kamarina, necropolis of Passo Marinaro. Camarina, Museo Archeologico Regionale, inv. n. 1818. End of the 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented almost frontally. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. Her feet are missing.

Bibliography: Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 230, VI/162.

Image from: Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 230, VI/162.

35. Kamarina 4, moulded terracotta, pink clay (with impurities), H 10,5 cm. Kamarina, Necropolis of Passo Marinaro. Ragusa, Museo Archeologico Ibleo, inv. n. 24075. Mid-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, an enthroned woman suckling a big naked child at her left breast. The head is missing. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic; she is holding her breast. The child is lying in an extremely relaxed position; she is supporting its head with her left hand. Throne with ears. Her feet are on a footrest.

Notes: 'Sporadic material'.

Bibliography: Orsi 1990, p. 82f., pl. XLVII, n. 9.

Image from: Orsi 1990, pl. XLVII, n. 9.

36. Kamarina 5, moulded terracotta. Kamarina, necropolis of Passo Marinaro, sporadic finding. Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi, inv. n. 24883. 460 BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman with a frontal naked boy seated on her left shoulder. Its right arm is resting on her head; she is holding its legs with her left arm. She is wearing a tunic with a round neckline. She has a central parting. Her feet are on a round pedestal.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 385.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 385.

37. Syracuse 1, moulded terracotta, orange-pinkish clay (traces of white englobe and red and blue paint), H 12 cm, Syracuse, Villa Landolina (tombs?). Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi, inv. n. 106120. 5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, two fragments of a seated woman suckling an infant from her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. She is wearing a diadem or blindfold. The breast comes out of the tunic. Probably, the infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its left hand. The infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist.

Bibliography: Manenti 2016, pp. 2-4, fig. 1.

Image from: Manenti 2016, fig. 1.

38. Akragas 1, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), pink clay, H 16 cm. Akragas, necropolis of Contrada Pezzino. Agrigento, Museo Archeologico Regionale (MARA), inv. n. 22607. End of the 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented in her left profile. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which probably covers her head. Her head is missing; the infant has long hair. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2013, p. 334, S 81.

Image from: Pedrucci 2013, p. 334, S 81.

39. Akragas 2, moulded terracotta (bivalve mould), pink clay, H 17,5 cm. Akragas, necropolis of Contrada Pezzino. Agrigento, Museo Archeologico Regionale (MARA), inv. n. 22608. End of the 6th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros***,** an enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented in her left profile. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2013, p. 334, S 81.

Image from: Pedrucci 2013, p. 334, S 81.

40. Akragas 3, moulded terracotta, reddish clay, H 20,3 cm, W 9,5 cm. Cave in Vassallaggi (tomb?). Caltanissetta, Museo Archeologico, inv. n. 9213. 530 c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, an enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented frontally. She is

wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. She has long hair with a central parting; the infant has long hair. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Panvini & Sole 2009, II, p. 405, TA/46.

Image from: Pedrucci 2013, p. 335, S 82.

41. Akragas 3, moulded terracotta, H 9,5 cm, W 6,5 cm. Akragas, necropolis of Sottogas. Agrigento, Museo Archeologico Regionale (MARA), inv. n. 3127.

Description: *kourophoros* a headless enthroned woman with a swaddled infant in her arms. She is holding it with both hands; it is represented in her left profile. She is wearing a tunic with a round neckline and a mantle, which likely covers her head and covers the infant. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 371.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 371.

42. Selinous 1, moulded terracotta, H 17,8 cm, W 6,3 cm. Selinous, Manicalunga necropolis, sporadic finding. Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale A. Salinas, inv. n. 7582/5. End of the 6th-beginning of the 5th c. BCE (?).

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman holding a frontal infant with her left arm. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially the child. The infant has its hands folded on its chest. Very detailed feet.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 376.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 376.

43. Selinous 2, moulded terracotta. Selinous, Protoarchaic necropolis. Selinunte, Parco Archeologico (PAS), inv. n. 45163. End of the 6th-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a headless enthroned woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is holding her breast from which the baby is feeding.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 350.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 350.

44. Selinous 3, moulded terracotta (full, without vents), H 7,4 cm, W 2,9 cm. Selinous, Manicalunga necropolis, Tomb 246. Museo Archeologico Regionale A. Salinas, inv. n. 7493/3.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman suckling an infant at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially covers the infant's head. The infant is swaddled. She is holding the breast from which the baby is feeding.

Notes: very well-worn. Possibly, the infant is holding the woman's right hand.

Bibliography: Pedrucci 2022, p. 350.

Image from: Pedrucci 2022, p. 350.

45. Panormo 1, moulded terracotta (well-worn mould), pink-orange clay with small micas, H 11 cm. Panormos, Punic necropolis, monolithic sarcophagus C. Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale A. Salinas, inv. n. 33744/1. Second half of the 5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a seated woman holding a frontal swaddled infant against her left side (only the legs are swaddled). She is wearing a tunic and a mantle, which covers her head. She is holding it with both arms. Her feet are on a footrest.

Bibliography: Allegro 1998, p. 344, T6.

Image from: Allegro 1998, T6.

46. Panormo 2, moulded terracotta, beige-grey clay, H 14,3 cm. Panormos, Punic necropolis, sarcophagus room 7. Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale A. Salinas, inv. n. 33722/3. Second half of the 5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman holding a frontal partially swaddled infant against her left side (only the legs are swaddled). She is wearing a tunic and a *plissé* mantle. She is holding a dove with her right hand; the infant is touching the dove with its left hand. She has curly hair (with a veil?); it has a conic bonnet.

Notes: the dove might be connected with the cult of Astarte.

Bibliography: Allegro 1998, p. 345, T10.

Image from: Allegro 1998, T10.

47. Lipara 1, moulded terracotta (unique mould), pinkish clay, H 14,5 cm. Lipara, tr. XXXIX, Tomb 1988. Lipari, Museo Archeologico Regionale L. Bernabò Brea, inv. n. 14598. Mid-4th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos*, a seated woman breastfeeding an infant. The woman is holding her left breast, which comes out of the tunic; the infant is partially covered by the woman's mantle. She is wearing a tunic and mantle; she is wearing a *stephane*. Feet on a footrest.

Notes: infant's grave. Small lithic sarcophagus; grave goods inside a *pithos.*

Bibliography: Bernabò Brea & Cavalier 1991, p. 46, pl. XXXI, n. 83; *Mater* 2015, p. 407.

Image from: Bernabò Brea & Cavalier 1991, pl. XXXI, n. 83.

48. Lipara 2, moulded terracotta (mould for the head, the body is hand-modeled), traces of colors, H 10 cm. Lipara, tr. XXXI, Tomb 1107. Lipari, Museo Archeologico Regionale L. Bernabò Brea, inv. n. 18429. Mid-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourotrophos,* a seated woman with an infant in her lap. The infant is reaching for the woman's left breast with its right hand. The woman is smiling; she has disproportionate and clownish facial features. Her body is also disproportionate.

Notes: girl's grave. It was found together with a doll and gold dust. It is a *unicum* and it might be a toy.

Bibliography: Bernabò Brea, Cavalier & Villard 2001, p. 467, pl. CCXIV, n. 2 and 5; *Mater* 2015, p. 407.

Image from: Bernabò Brea, Cavalier & Villard 2001, p. 467, pl. CCXIV, n. 2.

49. Lipara 3, terracotta (mould for the head, the body is hand-modeled), traces of colors, H 8,5 and 8 cm. Lipara, tr. XLV, Tomb 2514. Lipari, Museo Archeologico Regionale L. Bernabò Brea, inv. n. 18429/e and 18429/f. Mid-5th c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a woman bathing a baby girl. The woman has long hair and a *stephane.*

Notes: girl's grave. They might be toys. Total: 2 items.

Bibliography: *Mater* 2015, p. 406.

Image from: *Mater* 2015, p. 406.

50. Lipara 4, moulded terracotta (unique mould), pinkish clay with whitish englobe, H 14,5 cm. Lipara, tr. XV, Tomb 247. Lipari, Museo Archeologico Regionale L. Bernabò Brea, inv. n. 357/f. Beginning of the 3rd c. BCE.

Description: *kourophoros*, a standing woman holding an almost frontal infant with her left arm. She is 'protecting' it with her right arm. She is wearing a *plissé* tunic and a mantle, which covers her head and partially the child but leaves her breasts uncovered. She is wearing a *stephane* and round earrings. Her left foot is on a small round *ara*.

Notes: it is known as "Andromache with Astyanax". A similar statuette (without the head) was found in the area Z3 in front of the walls. It was likely used for ritual and not funerary purposes.

Bibliography: *Mater* 2015, p. 408.

Image from: *Mater* 2015, p. 408.

5. Summary and analysis of the data

Latium *vetus*: 1 *kourotrophos* (henceforth KT); **Southern Etruria** (total: 6 items): 1 KT, 3 KT applied on a *kernos*, 1 *kourophoros* (henceforth KP), 1 double KP; **Campania** (total: 9 items): 7 KT from Nola, Cumae, Grigignano (Atella), and Teanum Sidicinum, 2 KP from Pontecagnano; **Magna Graecia** (total: 15 items): 5 KT from Thuriae and Taras, 10 KP from Bauste, Taras, and Lokroi; **Sicily** (total: 27 items): 12 KT from Gela, Randazzo, Kamarina, Kentoripa, Syracuse, Akragas, Selinous, Lipara, 15 KP from Gela, Kamarina, Akragas, Selinous, Panormo, Kamarina.

These quantitative data should be read with a percentage-based approach:
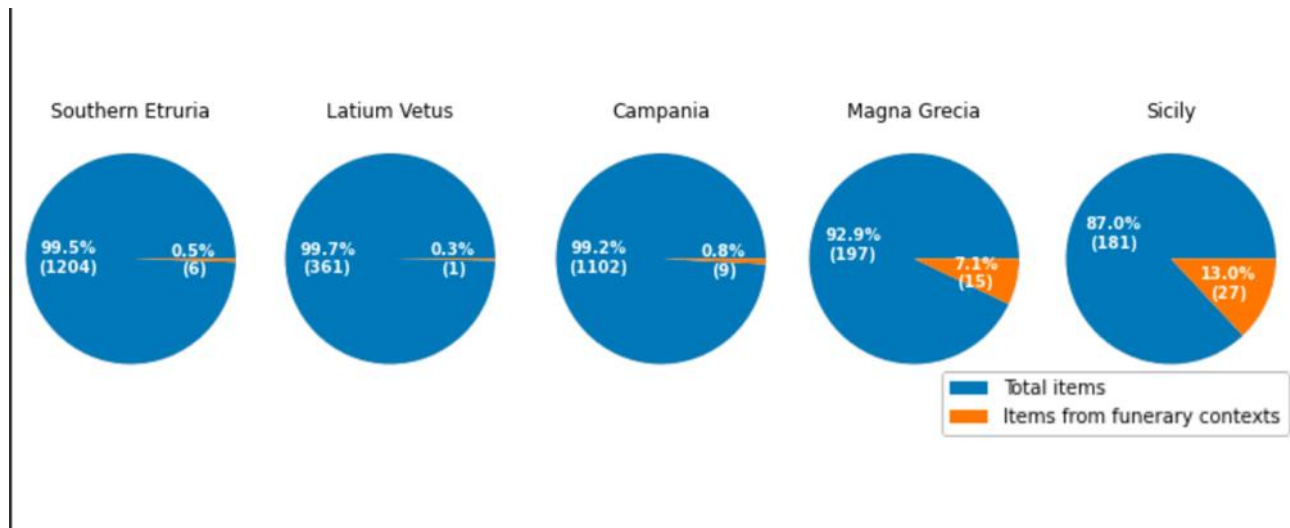
Total items for each region

181; 6%
197; 6%
1204; 40%
1102; 36%
361; 12%

■ S. Etruria ■ A. Latium ■ Campania ■ Magna Graecia ■ Sicily
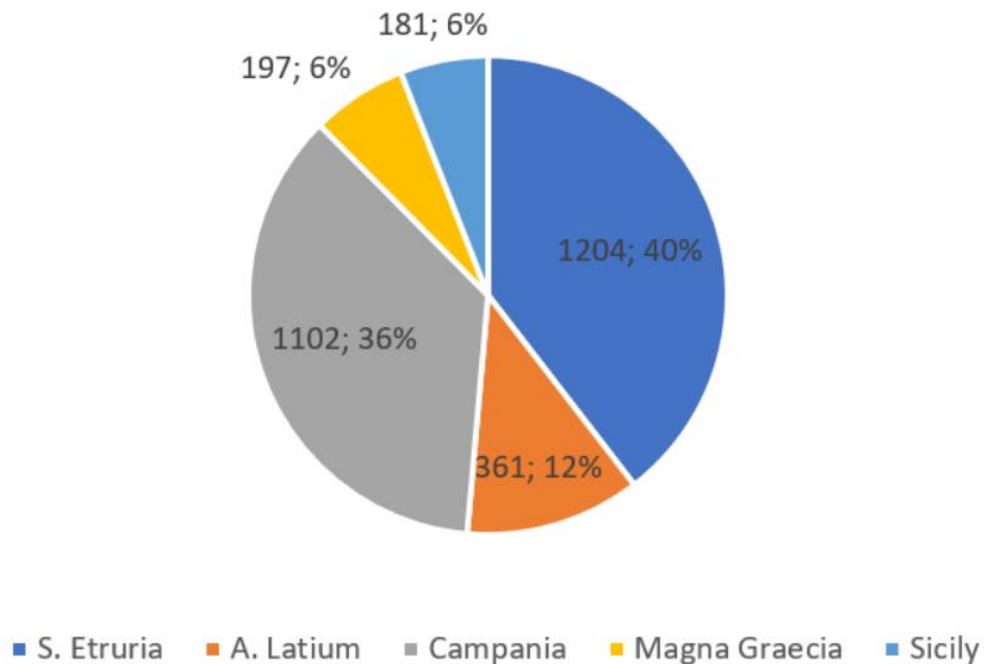
The material is very heterogeneous in typology, distribution, and dating, and the context of finding is often absent. Typologies are mainly influenced by regional taste while dating is roughly between the fourth and third centuries BCE in Southern Etruria, Latium *vetus*, and Campania, from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period in Magna Graecia, and mainly Archaic (sixth to fifth century BCE) in Sicily. There is only one couple in Etruria (pairs, both made of a man and a woman and of two women, indeed, are not attested outside Southern Etruria and Latium *vetus*).

The lack of homogeneity in the distribution is, in my opinion, the most intriguing data. The material from Latium *vetus* and Southern Etruria, in particular, is extremely sporadic and not particularly significant. The absence of these types of terracottas in funerary contexts, however, is relevant especially if we consider the great abundance of them in votive deposits in these areas.

The number of figurines present in funerary contexts starts to increase as we move south to Campania. They are present not only in female graves (Teanum 1 and Teanum 2), as we might expect, but also, possibly, in a male grave (Nola 1) and in an infant grave of a male individual (Cumae 1). Another data of considerable interest is that the majority are *kourotrophoi*: *kourotrophoi* are usually numerically much less than *kourophoroi*, but this is not the case in Campania where they are attested as much as *kourophoroi* and are more

attested than *kourophoroi* in funerary contexts. Nola 1, Cumae 1, Grigignano 1, Teanum 1, and Teanum 2 all belong to the same typology, which is the most widespread in Campania: a seated woman suckling a baby at her left breast. She is wearing a tunic and a big mantle; she is wearing round earrings. She has shoulder length braids. She is holding her (uncovered left) breast from which the baby is feeding. Her feet are on a footrest. The naked baby is reaching for the right arm of the woman with its left hand.[44]

Magna Graecia is an extraordinarily vast and heterogeneous area. From a quantitative point of view, the statuettes representing *kourotrophoi* and *kourophoroi* in funerary contexts are not frequently attested. It's worth noting, however, that are not very attested also in votive contexts (much less in comparison with Southern Etruria, *Latium Vetus*, and Campania).[45] Having said so, from Magna Graecia we can gain some interesting details.

The majority comes from Taras, but it is unfortunately devoid of archaeological context. Based on stylistic elements, it dates from the Archaic to the Hellenist period. Among this material, there are some very refined statuettes of the Hellenistic period belonging to the two following typologies: a standing *kourophoros* with a young girl at her right side; she is holding her hand and looks toward her (Taras 7 and Taras 8); a seated *kourotrophos,* the infant has its back to us; the woman is holding its wrist; the infant can be winged or not winged (Taras 1, Taras 2, Taras 3, and Taras 4).

Winged infants or adolescents are relatively frequent in the funeral context in Southern Italy. They may have been produced as statuettes of Aphrodite and Eros and then used for different purposes. The wings might allude to the soul.[46]

The three figurines from Lokroi are, to my knowledge, *unica* (Lokroi 1, Lokroi 2, and Lokroi 3); Taras 9 is also a *unicum*: and hand-modeled statuette depicting a woman looking after a baby in a cradle with a dog.

Only in three cases, we have information concerning the context of the finding: the two *kourophoroi* from Paestum (Paestum 1) belong to extremely rich female grave goods; the *kourotrophos* from Thuriae (Thuriae 1) was part of the grave goods of a five-year-old girl

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[44] Pedrucci 2022, p. 173.
[45] Pedrucci 2022, throughout.
[46] Guarducci 1985; Hadzisteliou Price 1969. Cf. Pedrucci 2022, p. 110.

along with two other statuettes representing a seated woman with a goose on the lap and 19 miniature-sized artifacts;[47] the *kourophoros* from Bauste (Bauste 1) comes from a votive deposit related to the burial of an old woman (about 70 years old) and an infant (2–4 years old). The latter apparently belongs to a burial of a grandmother with a grandchild (died at the same time? Died separately?) and might speak of their bond. This detail is of extraordinary interest and could shed new light on the family dynamics in the ancient world and on the recipients and religious agents concerning this type of statuette.

Sicily is, on the one hand, the region with the highest number of *kourotrophoi* and *kourophoroi* from funerary contexts and, on the other hand, the region with the lowest number of these types of terracottas.

Apart from two statuettes with Punic influence from Panormo, the others come from Greek colonies or Hellenised indigenous centres. They mainly date back to the sixth to fifth centuries BCE, much earlier compared to the other regions. Two typologies are typical of the island: the standing woman with an infant seated on one of her shoulders (Kamarina 2, Kamarina 5) and the enthroned woman with a big infant enveloped in a big mantle in her lap. The infant has long hair. Because of the infant's and of its long hair, the small figure might be interpreted to be the deceased with a female deity (Gela 3, Akragas 1, Akragas 2, Akragas 3, Kamarina 3).[48]

Generally speaking, the material is sporadic and completely devoid of context. Kamarina 2 (a woman with a child on her left) was found next to an apparently empty sealed amphora along with an *askos* and a small mug. The two statuettes from the Punic necropolis of Panormos are connected with the sarcophagi of adults.

The material of greatest interest to us is from Lipara. It is extremely important because we know the context for four out of five of the findings.

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[47] It is worth noting that it was found in the area of the city on the plain west of the acropolis. The Apulians used to bury not only *extra* but also *intra muros.* See Ciancio 2008.
[48] Similar statuettes have also been found in the Bruttium in sacred contexts linked to Persephone; in these cases, the connection with the afterlife might be confirmed by the presence of the pomegranate. A statuette of a female figure enthroned with an adult figure probably wrapped in a shroud on her knees comes from Kamarina. All these figurines might belong to a mystic context and therefore have little to do with being a mother to an infant. See Pedrucci 2022, p 409.

Three out of the five statuettes have a moulded head but a hand-modelled body, and they have possibly never been used as toys; for this reason, it is thought that they belonged to the tombs of young girls. They date back to the mid-fifth century BCE. Two represent a woman bathing a little girl (Lipara 3). Infant bathing is considered a very important activity and is carried out primarily by the mother or other attachment figures. The other is a polychromatic, disproportionate statuette of a laughing woman with clownish features with an infant in her lap; the infant is reaching for her breast (Lipara 2). To my knowledge, it is a *unicum*. It was found with a doll and gold dust. A more 'classic' *kourotrophos* (mid-4th c. BCE) comes from an infant's tomb (Lipara 1).

There is also a so-called statuette of Andromache and Astyanax from the Hellenistic period (Lipara 4). It is interesting to note that a very similar statuette was found in a ritual context, which suggest the potential reuse of these objects for funerary purposes. A statuette of this type shows a woman (very likely the mother) in angst trying to protect her child from a threat (most likely of death). She is doing so by religious means given the presence of the *ara*.

The discovery of statuettes representing adult/s with infant/s in funerary contexts in ancient Italy is sporadic and uneven, therefore definitive and unquestionable data cannot be obtained, but there are regional variables of significant interest. The discovery context is often absent. In particular, the most important data for us is frequently missing: the sex and age of the deceased. One fact, however, that can be deduced is that these figurines were not placed only in burials for adult female individuals (the supposed dead mothers) but also in the funerary goods for infants of both sexes and perhaps also in those of adult males. In this regard, the discovery in Bauste (Apulia) of a *kourophoros* (a seated woman holding an infant with her left arm in an almost vertical position. It is covered by the woman's mantle) in a tomb in which an elderly woman and a child were buried together is very interesting. The recipients, therefore, are very diversified and not necessarily linked to biological motherhood. The agents might have been any person — regardless of gender — linked to the adult or to the infant.

These statuettes were largely found in votive contexts and therefore probably produced for another purpose, then reused or used *ad hoc* as grave goods. We can assume that they ideally represented the child and a relative or affiliate woman. Statuettes representing a breastfeeding woman (*kourotrophoi*) might allude to any female able to breastfeed and

connected in some way to the baby, primarily the biological mother but also the wet-nurse. They were probably placed in the burial of a biological mother or nurse or breastfed child. Interestingly enough, *kourotrophoi* are the most widespread typology in funerary contexts (and unusually very widespread in votive contexts as well). Statuettes representing a woman holding one or more infants in various ways (*kourophoroi*) might allude to any of the female figures who took care of the infant/s and were attached to it/them being the religious agent: a care-giver within the household, a relative, or even a particularly close neighbour. She might have been a step-mother (if the biological mother had died or been divorced), or (very possibly) a wet-nurse, even a grand-mother, aunt, or elder sister. All of these figurines may have been placed by any of these female figures, but also a man, the father, or a pedagogue, who understood the importance of the offspring having a maternal figure close to it in the ultramundane journey. Another possible function of these figurines in a funerary context might have been that of being placed in a burial X to be brought to the deceased Y: owner of the tomb and recipient of the object could theoretically not be the same person. This obviously multiplies the number of possible agents depositing the object. All these figures may have acted, moreover, on behalf of third parties.

Speaking of the functions of these objects, if put in the graves of infants and adolescents, they very likely speak to us of the desire of the mother or of another close female figure to remain somehow next to the child after death. The most likely function of these objects was to overcome mourning through religious means by trying to keep the maternal presence close to the offspring after death, as support, comfort, and concrete help (in the case of breastfeeding). Alternatively, if the deceased is a young girl, they might have been toys, apparently not used. In any case, maternal training for girls was also transmitted through playing, and these would be toys that, within this context, would allude to a failed motherhood during life and a wish for an otherworldly form of motherhood. In both cases, it would be a form of consolation for those who continue to live without their child.[49]

If put in the burial of a mother, the deposited object probably had the function of prolonging her role as a mother after death but also of celebrating the important role of a mother after death. Ideally, the woman would not stop being a mother in death and her offspring remained present near her in some way. It must be said that these are standardised objects created

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[49] Dasen 2004. For maternal training, see Pasche Guignard & Pedrucci 2018.

mainly for votive usage, so the child is usually one, but we can understand it as a synecdoche. Even if the woman had had many children, a statuette with only one would still have been symbolically used, or maybe more statuettes in the same grave, unless one was rich enough and wanted an object to be commissioned.

6. Conclusions

We hope this paper demonstrated two distinct but to some extent related hypotheses. On one hand, it tries to demonstrate that beyond the traditional gendered division of powerful warriors and beautiful weavers, other identities are expressed in the funerary evidence of protohistoric Italy, which can be linked to maternity and motherhood. This may suggest, albeit without concretely proving, that the death of an infant was experienced with great pain. It can also be seen as a sign that parenthood held a specific central position in protohistoric societies and was recognised as socially important by its members. On the other hand, against the opinion of several scholars of the last century,[50] it highlights the belief that, in later periods and with some regional differences, the death of an infant was experienced with great pain not only by the mother or the father.[51] Some recent research has shown that there is a wealth of evidence in myths, literary sources, and archaeology (especially female and children devotional offerings in sanctuaries) that shows how much ancient Roman and Italic populations hoped and prayed for safe and healthy childbirth and cared lovingly for infants and children, especially in their insecure and dangerous early stages of life.[52]

Looking more specifically at the place where objects addressing motherhood and maternal grief were found in the various regions of ancient Italy, the research and special analysis on suspension rings, as presented in this paper, is only in its early stages, and presently only

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[50] E.g. Golden 1988.

[51] E.g. Aglietti 2020. See also Dasen 2015. The gap between norms and real life is particularly evident in the case of funerary inscriptions from the Roman Imperial period. Roman literary sources unanimously treat child death as an ominous event (Tac., *Ann.*, XIII.17.1-5; Serv., *Aen.*, XI.143; Porph., *Hor. comm.*, II.209; Verg., *Aen.*, VI.426-429). Hence, infants' funerals were required to take place quickly and had to occur at night, under torchlight, and only for children who had already turned the age of three (Plut., *Quaest. Rom.*, XII.2). The high infant mortality rate, common in ancient societies, was certainly one of the main reasons for this social standard, which suggests detachment and a lack of affection. However, infants are commemorated on funerary monuments and in their inscriptions, which suggest very different feelings, as they often express the parents' grief in a way that shows how enormously important it was for them. The grief is shared by both parents, even if mourning is usually considered a female duty in the Greco-Roman world (Sen., *Dial.*, IV.1.1; XII.3.2; XII.16.1), who sometimes count the days of life of their offspring (e.g., *CIL* X.3547; XIII.8375; VI.19227; XIV.1578; XIV.1713; VI.19038; XIII.11363). Plautia Heresia's parents counted even the minutes of her short life (*CIL* VI.18053; VIII.26238).

[52] Graham 2013, 2014, Carroll 2011, 2012, 2018, 2019.

limited to contexts from Latium *vetus*. However, Francesca Fulminante's ongoing research suggests that suspension rings, once believed specifically a dressing attribute of Latin women,[53] are in fact also found in other contexts, such as Incoronata-S. Teodoro in Basilicata and Fossa in Abruzzo, although they are not always associated with fibulae. Further analyses are currently being conducted to reach a complete picture of distribution of these objects and motherhood indicators within Pre-Roman Italy, or at least Central and Southern Italy.

Statuettes representing a woman with infant/s have been found throughout ancient Italy, but they are numerous only in the Latial-Etruscan-Campanian area. In this area, they were offered massively in sanctuaries, especially urban or in any case close to urban areas starting from the fifth century BCE, but especially between the fourth and third centuries BCE. In Southern Etruria and Latium *vetus*, in the same sanctuaries where we found figurines of *kourotrophoi* and *kourophoroi*, statuettes of couples with infant/s were also offered. This type of votive performance, therefore, is typical of early-Romanised areas with an Etruscan background. However, this does not apply to Sicily, where the material is mainly Archaic and linked to local craftsmanship and/or Greek influences.

Further south, in the early-Hellenised areas, these statuettes are few and are sometimes found inside tombs; this is, in fact, consistent with Greek customs. This might be the reason Campania seems to be somehow 'in between'. When found them in the graves of infants and adolescents, they clearly speak of the mother's desire to remain somehow next to the offspring after the death. In the case of a female deceased, we can probably see the allusion to unfulfilled motherhood in life, which will hopefully take place in the afterlife (even in the case they were supposed to be toys).

The highest number of statuettes in Sicily and in some areas of Magna Graecia might be connected, in addition to customs imported by the Greek colonisers, also to the local presence of female deities connected both with motherhood and with the world of the dead, generically indicated with the Greek names Demeter and Kore/Persephone. The so-called Dea of Simeto might be an expression of these divine local beliefs in the case of Sicily and possibly Bruttium, as well as, perhaps, to the custom of burying both outside and inside the city walls in Apulia.

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[53] Iaia 2000, 2007.

Maternity and maternal grief, therefore, seem to be relatively explicit in Archaic and Hellenistic Italy, but with clear regional variations. *Kourothrophoi* and *kourophoroi* and their companions are found in urban sanctuaries in Etruria and Latium and are a public affair. Moving south, they are found more often in burial contexts and seem more a private expression of grief/resilience.

Appendix 1: Latin Burial Database Information and Equivalences about Wealth

Table 1: Fields of the Tomb table in the Latin burials database

Field	Data Type	Description
Sito	Short Text	Site
Tomba	Short Text	Tomb ID: Abbreviation of site and number of tomb
Fase	Short Text	Cultural Dating of the Tomb if different from Bietti Sestieri
Fase Bietti	Short Text	Cultural Dating of the Tomb according to Bietti Sestieri
Datazione	Short Text	Absolute dating of the tomb
Contesto	Short Text	Context of the tomb (intra or extra mural)
Sepolcreto	Short Text	Name of the cemetery/area
Gruppo	Short Text	Name of the group
Posizione	Short Text	Position within the group
Sesso	Short Text	Sex (anthropological and/or by grave goods)
Eta'	Short Text	Age
Classe eta'	Short Text	Age class (INF; CHI; ADO; ADU; ADUM; SEN)
A/B	Short Text	Adults (ADO; ADU; ADUM, SEN) or Children (INF; CHI)
Rito	Short Text	Type of Rite: cremation inhumation, enchytrismos etc.
Tipo Cremazione	Short Text	Type of Cremation
Orientamento	Short Text	Orientation of the tomb
Struttura	Short Text	Type of tomb structure (Trench, Pit etc.)
Dimensioni	Short Text	Dimensions of the Tomb
Copertura	Short Text	Type of coverage of the tomb
Riempimento	Short Text	Type of filling of the tomb
Sema	Short Text	Presence of element signalling the tomb
Circolo	Short Text	Precinct
Tumulo	Short Text	Tumulo
Dim Circolo/Tumulo	Short Text	Dimensions of the precinct/ tumulus
Testa	Short Text	Position/Orientation of the head
Pos corpo	Short Text	Position of the body
Pos braccia	Short Text	Position of the harms
Pos gambe	Short Text	Position of the legs
Dep secondaria	Short Text	Secondary Deposition
Letto/bara	Short Text	Presence of stone bed and/or wooden coffin
Pos corredo	Short Text	Position of the grave goods
Urna	Short Text	Type of urn in the cremations
Coperchio	Short Text	Type of urn lid in the cremations
Tomba multipla	Short Text	Multiple tomb
Vasi rituali	Short Text	Presence of ritual vases
Forma vasi rituali	Short Text	Shape of ritual vases
Pos vasi rituali	Short Text	Position of ritual vases
Vasetto votivo	Short Text	Presence of miniature votive vessel

Forma vasetto votivo	Short Text	Shape of miniature votive vessel
Pos vasetto votivo	Short Text	Position of miniature votive vessel
Offerta/dep votivo	Short Text	Presence of offer/votive deposit
Forma offerta/dep votivo	Short Text	Type of offer/votive deposit
Pos offerta/dep votivo	Short Text	Position of offer/votive deposit
Statuette	Short Text	Presence of human figure statuette
Pos statuette	Short Text	Position of human figure statuette
Ciottoli travertino	Short Text	Presence of travertine pebbles
Pos ciottoli travertino	Short Text	Position of travertine pebbles
Ossa umane	Short Text	Human bones
Pos ossa umane	Short Text	Position of human bones
Offerta animale	Short Text	Presence and type of animal offer
Pos offerta animale	Short Text	Position of animal offer
Offerta vegetale	Short Text	Presence and type of vegetal offer
Pos offerta vegetale	Short Text	Position of vegetal offer
Edizione	Short Text	Published or unpublished
Bibliografia	Long Text	Bibliography
Museum	Short Text	Museum or storage place
Notes	Long Text	Notes
Danni	Short Text	Ancient Damages (tombs intersecting one another)
Dati Parziali	Short Text	Incomplete grave goods

Table 2: Fields of the Grave goods table in the Latin burials database

Field	Data Type	Description
Tomba	Short Text	Tomb ID: Abbreviation of site and number of tomb
Cn	Short Text	Connotation: cc = pottery grave goods; cm = metal grave goods; ogf = female object; ogm = male object; orf = ornament etc.
Cl/m	Short Text	Object class or material
Forma	Short Text	General Shape, mainly based on function (eg. 'Vaso biansato' – 'two handled vase')
Tipo	Short Text	Details about the Shape, based on functional and/or formal attribute (eg. 'Su piede' – 'with foot')
Miniature	Short Text	Miniaturized object
N Es	Number	Number of objects
Import	Short Text	Origin of Imports
Pos oggetto	Short Text	Position of the object
Notes	Long Text	Notes

Table 3: Equivalences between objects in the wealth diagrams

Value	Objects
1=1	Pottery, male fibulae, female belts, female fibulae (gold, silver, bone, amber), weapons, utensils, objects and vases of precious material (gold, silver, bone, ivory, faience glass), imported objects, writing
2=1	Bronze female fibulae, pins, large and flat suspension rings; rare spindle whorl (smooth)
5=1	Pendants, suspension rings, hair, bracelets, rare beads (e.g. amber Allumiere type), common spindle whorl, spools, loom weights
50=1	Beads, small metal decorations (plaques, small rings, bronze buttons, etc.)

Supplementary material

Appendix 2. Absolute and Relative Chronology in Central and Southern Italy

Pontecagnano	Pithekoussai	Veio	Tarquinia	Latium	Fossa	Trad Chronology (Colonna, G. 1976; Ampolo, C., et al., 1980)	Phase	Dendro-chronology (Peroni, R. 1994; Bettelli, M. 1994)	C14 Chronology (Bietti Sestieri, A.M., et al., 1999-2000)	New Absolute Chronology 1 (Pacciarelli, M. 2001, 2005; Nijboer, A. 2005)	New Absolute Chronology 2 (Van der Plicht, J., et al., 2009)	New Absolute Chronology 3 (Nizzo 2013)
						1600		1700		1700	1700	
Proto-Appennine		Grotta Nuova	Grotta Nuova	Grotta Nuova / Proto- Apennine			Middle Bronze Age 1-2					
						1400		1500		1400	1400	
Apennine		Apennine	Apennine	Apennine			Middle Bronze Age 3					
						1300		1365/1350	1350	1325/1300	1325/1300	
Subapennine		Subapennine	Subapennine	Subapennine			Recent Bronze Age					
						1150		1200	1200	1175/1150	1200	
Protovillanovan		Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan			Final Bronze Age 1					
						1100		1150				
							Final Bronze Age 2					
						1000		1085		1050/1025	1050	
Protovillanovan		Protovillanovan	Protovillanovan	I			Final Bronze Age 3					
						900		1020	1020	950/925	950	
IA		IA	IA	IIA			Early Iron Age 1 Early					
						830		950	900 ca.	900 ca.	900 ca.	
IB		IB- IC	IB	IIB			Early Iron Age 1 Late					
						770		880	850/825	850/825	825/800	
IIA	first settlement	IIA- IIB	II	IIIA	1A		Early Iron Age 2 Early/Late					
						750		810				750
IIB	LG1	IIC	II	IIIB	1B		Early Iron Age 2 Final					
						730/720		750	780	750	725	725
EOA	LG2	IIIA	IIIA	IVA1	2A		Early Orientalizing Age					
						670/660						680/675
MOA	MPC1-MPC2	IIIB	IIIB	IVA2	Middle Orientalizing Age		Middle Orientalizing Age					
						640/630				630/620	630/620	650/630
ROA	LPC- CA	IV	IV	IVB	Recent Orientalizing Age		Recent Orientalizing Age					
						580				580	580	580
AP	CM	AP	AP	AP	Archaic Age		Archaic Age					
						509			509			
ERP	ERP	ERP	ERP	ERP			Early Republican Period					
						400			400			
MRA	MRA	MRP	MRP	MRP			Middle Republican Period					
						200			200			
LRA	LRA	LRP	LRP	LRP			Late Republican Period					
						31/27			31/27			

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