

# Cultural Transmission and Semantic Change of Ceramic Forms in Grave Goods of Hellenistic Etruria

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**Abstract:** This contribution addresses semantic change in ceramics as connected to identity construction. With three case studies from Hellenistic Etruria, beaked *situlae*, *lagynoi* and *amphorae*, I aim to answer the following research question: How can a change of vessel functions in funerary contexts express the changing cultural identities of the deceased and their family? The choice of funerary contexts allows an approximation of the change of meaning through the analysis of the distance between daily life and ritual function of the objects. Each case study presents a different relationship between changing meaning and identity construction: the beaked *situlae*, related to the social identity of new social layers; the *amphorae*, related to local cultural identities during the process of Romanisation; and the *lagynoi*, related to the construction of multicultural identities in newly founded agricultural settlements. The distinct patterns of the three forms suggest the possibility of analysing stratified and complex societies by the study of changing meaning.

This article approaches the semantic change of some grave goods in funerary contexts of Hellenistic Etruria as a consequence of a global process of cultural transmission which affected Etruscan and Italic cultures<sup>1</sup> during the Hellenistic period. The process of adopting the Latin language and Roman institutions in Etruria, especially in the inland and northern part of the region, engaged a complexity of layers. Each layer involved the local communities in the selective and distinctive adoption of new lifestyles.<sup>2</sup> The Punic wars and the following unification of the economic system of the western Medi-

terranean represent a breaking point in the social structure of many Etruscan communities. This break effected a change which involved many aspects of the material culture. Three case studies are selected and isolated to analyse specific research questions which are stated at the beginning of each paragraph and relate to the construction of local identities and their transformation during this period. The evolution of the historical situation and the relevant social layers will be briefly indicated in the examination of each example.

By referring to semantic change here I mean changes that involve the meaning of an object. This meaning is shared in a social context and goes beyond the object itself.<sup>3</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> For the definition of pre-Roman Italian culture as Etruscan and Italic see Turfa 2011, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Terrenato 1998, 20–27. 54. 94. Bradley 2007, 298. However, I cannot agree with Bradley about the possibility of connecting the diffusion of black gloss pottery with a cultural spread of Roman lifestyle.

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<sup>3</sup> For the semantic concept in cognitive archaeology see Abramiuk 2012, 49–94, in particular 87.

‘cultural transmission’ I assume a process of transfer of information, in form of know-how, ideas, behaviours and other cultural contents between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> My contribution seeks to show how the semantic change of some ceramic forms relates to local cultural identities.<sup>5</sup> By ‘cultural identity’, I refer to the collective identities of the local communities, referring to the definition of social identity proposed by Hall (2012) as “the internalization within the individual of the knowledge that she or he belongs to a broader social group, along with the value and significance that are attached to such affiliation”.<sup>6</sup> The change of meaning results from an interaction between globally or transregionally transmitted models and local cultural needs, which can be archaeologically detected by the analysis of the reconfigured function of objects within funerary goods.

### Cultural Transmission and Change of Meaning

A precondition for cultural transmission is a contact between at least two individuals or group of individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Through this directed or undirected contact, some cultural contents (ideas, images, forms) may pass from an emittent to

a recipient.<sup>7</sup> The transmission is frequently mediated by people (agents of transmission) or circulating objects (vectors).<sup>8</sup> This process can be traced archaeologically just through its effects (phenomena). One can observe some phenomena of cultural transmission in material culture, in particular in the morphology of objects and in cultural behaviours, e.g. in choices related to consumption, in funerary rituals and in architectural designs.<sup>9</sup> This process involves many components: the knowledge of the models, the availability of people with an appropriate technical know-how to elaborate those, as well as the selection or manipulation of the symbolic value of the transmitted content.

For the study of these processes, I elaborated a model with three different modes of transmission: the simple, the reciprocate and the multivariate transmission (**fig. 1**).<sup>10</sup> A simple transmission follows a linear process, in which the content is transmitted by the emitter to a recipient. This simple transmission (**fig. 1a**) can be directed, if emitter and recipient had a contact, or undirected, if the process of transmission flows through other subjects which have a function of intermediation between emitter and recipient. In the case of mediation, the content of the transmission is very frequently modified. A reciprocal transmission (**fig. 1b**) consists in the transmission by the emitter to the recipient of some cultural contents, which are worked

<sup>4</sup> Eerkens – Lipo 2007, 240–243; Ulf 2011a, 517.

<sup>5</sup> I refer especially to the concept of cultural identity as dynamic construction of collective identity, as in Gruen 2011, 1–9, as well as a cohesive group within a network of individual plural identities, as in Ulf 2011b, 475–477. For the evolution of Italic identities at the end of the Romanisation process see Turfa 2011, 2. With the term Romanisation I mean here the process of adoption of Roman political institutions and Latin as an official language in Etruria, as following Terrenato 1998, 54. 94. For the role played by material culture in the construction of collective identity (an image that a group constructs to allow the identification of its members) see Versluys 2013, 431 with further bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Hall 2012, 351.

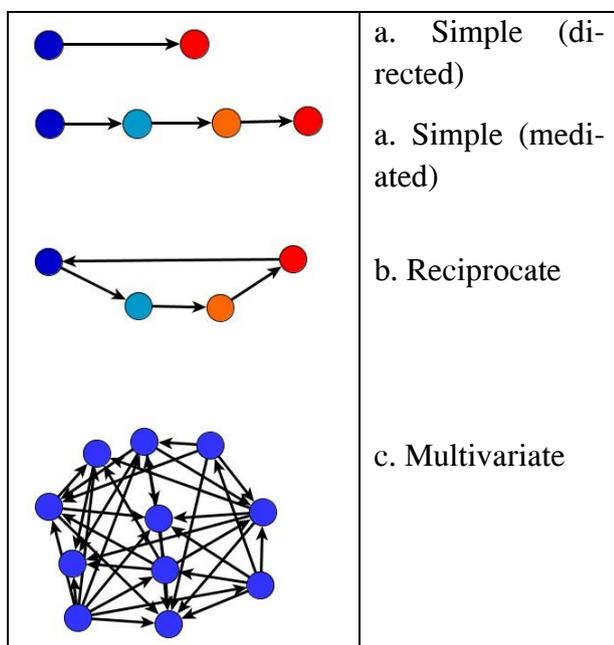
<sup>7</sup> For the possibility of distinguishing different cultures in the ancient world see Ulf 2009, 82. For a synthesis of a model of cultural transmission flowing between emittents (called transmitters) and recipients see Ulf 2011a, 514.

<sup>8</sup> On the mediators of transmission see Ulf 2009, 86. Agency theory is discussed by Ulf in his contribution (2011) 475f. For the role of objects and ideas as vectors see Ulf 2011a, 517.

<sup>9</sup> On the choices related to architectural decoration see Maschek 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Da Vela 2014, 18–20.

on by the recipient and, in a second moment, transmitted back to the emitter in their new form. A multivariate transmission does not have a unique emitter. Its contents have a large diffusion in the global dimension and are frequently defined as *koinè* phenomena. This kind of transmission is the result of repeated and frequent contacts between a large number of actors within a geographic area. Every actor becomes at the same moment emitter and recipient. A multivariate cultural transmission can be related to a homogeneous set of contents (one-mode multivariate transmission), or be transversal to different sets of contents (multi-level multivariate transmission) or cause a chain reaction (chain-reaction multivariate transmission). This form of transmission cannot occur without changing the transmitted object, because it results from an entanglement of different sources within them and with the culture of the recipient (fig. 1c).



**Fig. 1 Scheme of the modes of cultural transmission** (model of the author. Graphic elaboration with the Software Visone 3.9.2. Emitters in blue, recipients in red, mediators in orange).

A change can affect morphological and/or semantic aspects of the transmitted content and is normally a response to a different know-how or cultural background, in the form of adaptation to new needs of the recipient culture, or in the form of innovation or selection.<sup>11</sup> A common form of this change is semantic, which can result from the interaction between the transmitted content and new uses by the recipient. This semantic change is analysed through three examples of transmission, related to the following classes of materials in Etruria: beaked *situlae*, *amphorae* and *lagynoi*. All of them can be referred to as multivariate transmission. Here I analyse the impact of multivariate cultural transmission on the change of meaning in the funerary use of these ceramic classes. The mode of the transmission is therefore important because it enables the condition of the change of meaning: a change of meaning is common in contents, which are transmitted in a multivariate mode, because this mode implicates a local re-elaboration of contents, transmitted by a plurality of emitters, with an high frequency of inputs.<sup>12</sup>

### Change of function and change of meaning

The functions of these three vessel types in their funerary contexts can be detected through their association and position in the tomb, and as such their change of meaning

<sup>11</sup> I intentionally avoid the use of terms such as hybridisation and syncretism, because, as Ulf (2011a, 471) makes clear, there are no pure cultures which can be assumed as a starting point to evaluate such concepts.

<sup>12</sup> For the influence of the mode of transmission on the selection of the transmitted contents and in the speed of the transmission see Bettinger – Garvey – Tushingham 2015, 249–253. In my model, the multivariate transmission presents a higher frequency of contacts and consequently affects the speed and the intensity of the change.

in funerary ritual can be analysed. What is the relationship between change of function and change of meaning? In the case of grave goods, objects no longer have their uses in daily life but assume a symbolic meaning. In becoming a grave good, every object changes meaning. The distance of the function of the object from its function in the daily life of the reference culture describes the nature of the semantic change.

Each case study represents a different relationship between change of meaning and expression of identity. The first case, the beaked *situlae*, concerns the affirmation of a new social identity within the Etruscan culture. The second case, the funerary deposition of commercial *amphorae*, is related to the re-construction of the cultural identity in Apuanic Liguria.<sup>13</sup> The third case, the funerary use of *lagynoi*, regards the expression of a multilayer identity within a new multicultural society with a shared background.

I deal especially with the meaning of beaked *situlae* in funerary depositions because previous studies did not take the contexts of these objects into consideration.<sup>14</sup> The presence of beaked *situlae* in Hellenistic graves assumes a precise social connotation related to the upper social segment. Because the other two case studies are of materials that have been carefully studied in contexts and connotations,<sup>15</sup> I present selected examples only to compare their semantic changes in specific cultural contexts.

<sup>13</sup> By construction of cultural identity I mean the process of intentional differentiation through specific and repeated behaviours, reflected in archaeological material, see Izzet 2007, 210.

<sup>14</sup> See below n. 19.

<sup>15</sup> For *amphorae* see Maggiani 1979; Pieri 1997. For *lagynoi* see Sciarra 2005.

### Change of meaning of beaked *situlae* and social connotations

The first case study suggests chronologically distinct patterns in the change of meaning of beaked *situlae* as grave goods in Hellenistic Etruria. These patterns imply a chronological and geographic oscillation in meaning, relating to the social position of the deceased and, consequently, to the communication system within the local communities. Beaked *situlae* are stamoid or bell *situlae* with two parallel bridge-shaped handles. Both handles end in applique-figures.<sup>16</sup> One of these figures, in shape of a protome or two juxtaposed heads, forms a beak (fig. 2). In correspondence with this beak, the body of the *situla* is carved as a filter.<sup>17</sup> Beaked *situlae* were produced in bronze, ceramic (in the production of silver-glazed and black-glazed pottery and in the overpainted Gnathia style) and, rarely, in lead. The form has a chronological range between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.<sup>18</sup> The question of the origin of this form has generated a long discussion within the scientific community. The first beaked *situlae* were variously attributed to Apulian, Etruscan, Greek or Thracian potters.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The selection of the subjects is strongly limited: heads of lions, satyrs, slaves or Athena, as well as theatre masks.

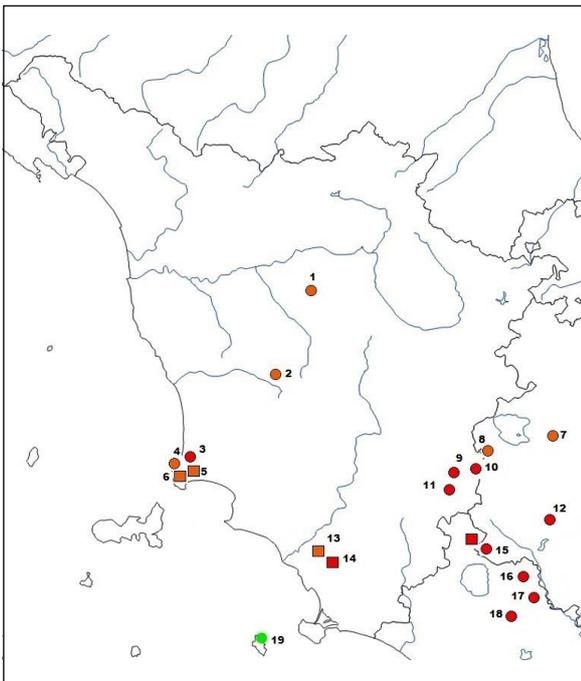
<sup>17</sup> For this reason, Zahlhaas (1971, 97f.) suggests that these vases were used during banquets to pour wine.

<sup>18</sup> The chronological seriation of this form into different production classes was fixed by Gisela Zahlhaas (1971).

<sup>19</sup> Schröder (1914, 20f.) writes: „Die in Italien gefundenen Exemplare können griechische Importe, unteritalisch-griechische Fabrikation oder einheimische Nachahmung griechischer Ware sein. [...] Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, daß die Griechen die Ihnen wohlgefällige Form von den Italikern übernommen, mit ihrem Formengefühl durchdrungen und mit griechischen Ornamenten überzogen haben“. See also Hill 1965, 115–121. A discussion of the transmission of the model in Italy was advanced by Stéphanie Boucher (1973, 79–81; 85–96). In 1985



**Fig. 2a–b** a) Black-glazed beaked *situla* of the Volterranean Workshop Malacena (De Puma 2013, 209 Fig. 6.47). b) Overpainted beaked *situla* with decoration in Gnathia-style from Populonia (after D. Zinelli, *Situla a vernice nera sopra dipinta*, in: Paolucci 2003, 63).



**Fig. 3** Distribution of beaked *situlae* in northern and central Etruria (both funerary and non-funerary contexts).

Milena Candela (1985, 24–71) proposed a revision of the chronology of this objects and gave a synthesis of the history of the studies. Her article sparked a reaction by Lili Byvanck-Quarels van Ufford (1986, 208–211), who proposed a Bithinic origin of the shape, in reference to her own article about the cultural influences between Etruria, Ionia and Bithinia related to the production of the bell *situlae* (Byvanck-Quarels van Ufford 1966). For a focus on the ceramic production in Gnathia style, see Schauenburg 1981, 462–488. A probable multivariate transmission *ante litteram* was suggested by Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni (1992, 15) describing the *situlae* of Populonia.

To examine the principal reasons for the change of meaning of beaked *situlae* in Etruria, I will analyse three geographic and cultural contexts: the coastal area, the territory of Volterra, and the internal zone of the Lake Trasimene (fig. 3).

(1) In the coastal area, beaked *situlae* occur sporadically in the necropoleis of Caere, Populonia and Aleria; at Caere, in the necropolis of Banditaccia, a beaked *situla* with Gnathia decoration associated with local overpainted banquet ceramic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.<sup>20</sup>

A circle indicates clay *situlae*; a square metallic *situlae*. The contexts before the Punic Wars are shown in red, during the Punic Wars in orange, and after the Punic Wars in green. This event caused a break in the social structures of the local communities.

1. San Gimignano, La Ripa; 2. Casole d'Elsa, Colonna; 3. Montepitti; 4. Populonia, S. Cerbone; 5. Populonia, Campo del Debbio; 6. Populonia, Poggio e Piano delle Granate; 7. Perugia, Monte Luce; 8. Gioiella; 9. Sarteano, Pianacce; 10. Chiusi, Colle Lucio; 11. Sarteano, Mulin Canale; 12. Todi; 13. Vetulonia, Costa Murata; 14. Roselle, Collina

The particular significance of these grave goods lies in an inscribed black-glazed cup with a dedication in Greek. Such inscriptions are atypical of Etruscan funerary contexts, and their presence, in few cases, on the local ceramic of Caere has been related to a presence of immigrated people.<sup>21</sup> Com-

<sup>20</sup> Tomb 356 in Ricci 1955, 846f. fig. 191, n. 16.

<sup>21</sup> This inscription was a common dedication for black-glazed pottery and Genucilia plate in the Caeretan temple of Hera (Bellelli 2014, 286f.). The same inscription in Greek is attested in some Genucilia plates from Caere, which were

pared to other Etruscan funerary contexts,<sup>22</sup> the presence of a beaked *situla* in Gnathia style, probably imported from Apulia or Campania, could suggest a strong relationship between the choices of the family owner of the tomb, the family who owned the tomb and the south of Italy.

At Populonia, black-glazed *situlae* with overpainted decoration in Gnathia Style were found in the necropolis of Campo del Debbio,<sup>23</sup> while lead beaked *situlae*, associated with overpainted banquet ceramics in Gnathia style and other metallic goods of the banquet set, were laid in the necropoleis of S. Cerbone, Piano, and Poggio delle Granate, between the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.<sup>24</sup> Two bronze beaked *situlae* were part of the grave goods of a rich isolated tomb in the necropolis of Montepitti,<sup>25</sup> associated with bronze strigils and a lead tiara with golden pendants, which has parallels exclusively in

southern Italy.<sup>26</sup> This tomb is attributed to the local agrarian aristocracy with commercial interests in the western Mediterranean. At Aléria, a single family tomb, Tomb 53, contained beaked *situlae*, replicated in five exemplars.<sup>27</sup> The hypogeal chamber tomb was in use between the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. The numerous associated grave goods were representative of Volterranean production, in particular a *krater* of the Clusium-Volterra Group and *skyphoi* of the northern Group Ferrara T585, of south Etruscan (Torcop and Fantasma Group) and Campanian production. One of these *situlae* was associated with an overpainted *lebes gamikos* and gold jewellery. This tomb has a clear aristocratic connotation and refers to a social position justified by the commercial influence of the family. The presence of the *lebes gamikos* and of many objects, which are specific not just of the production, but also of the funerary culture of Volterra,<sup>28</sup> suggests an endogamic relationship between the owner of the tomb and the correspondent urban aristocracy. Further, we cannot exclude the possibility that the family itself had Volterranean origins.<sup>29</sup>

(2) In the territory of cultural influence of Volterra itself, beaked *situlae* were found inland, in Valdelsa. This area is an interconnected region for Volterranean trade and com-

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attributed to Greeks (Colonna 2004, fig. 13, 94). The author refers the presence of this inscription in two other tombs (id., 77).

<sup>22</sup> For the deposition of vessels of the homeland in Etruscan tombs, where Campanian people were buried, see Benassai 2002, 525–540.

<sup>23</sup> At Campo del Debbio, a beaked *situla* in Gnathia-Style was associated with overpainted ceramics made in south Etruria and a commercial *amphora*, in a tomb of the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (De Agostino 1957, 46–50 figs. 62–72; Fedeli 1983, 353–356 n. 224; Costantini 2004, 167).

<sup>24</sup> S. Cerbone, Podere Casone: Tomb 2/1922 in Minto 1925, 347–366; De Agostino 1955/1956, 255–268; De Agostino 1958, 28–35, figs. 1–5; De Agostino 1961, 63–82; 85 n. 12. Piano delle Granate: Tomb b/1922, featuring a gold tiara in the grave goods, in Minto 1917, 71f. 80f.; De Agostino 1961, 96–102, figs. 33–42; Poggio delle Granate: in Minto 1917, 80f.; Cianferoni 1992, 20.

<sup>25</sup> The date of the necropolis is estimated at the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE or at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

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<sup>26</sup> Falchi 1895, 334–338; Gamurrini 1895, 338; Minto 1943, 351f., n. 12–12b.

<sup>27</sup> Jehasse – Jehasse 1973, 269 n.752, Pl. 110 ; 270 n. 753; 281 n. 817, Pl. 110 ; 282 n. 818; 295 n. 899, Pl. 129.

<sup>28</sup> As the *krater* of the Clusium-Volterra Group and the *skyphoi* of the Ferrara T585 Group.

<sup>29</sup> The presence of immigrated Volterranean families, based on the association of the grave goods and on the choice of cinerary urns, has been suggested in other coastal centres, e.g. Castiglioncello: Massa 2000, 50f.; Vada Volterrana: Ciacci 2000, 71–88. Rocca Pannocchieschi: Ciacci 2000, 71–88.

mercial interests, with links to the south, in the direction of the Trasimenic area, as well as to the east towards the territory of Fiesole. Two necropoleis in this geographical cross-roads present bronze beaked *situlae* as grave goods. Unfortunately, they are both without context: one was found at Cellole (San Gimignano),<sup>30</sup> the other one at Colonna (Casole d'Elsa).<sup>31</sup> Both *situlae* can be related to local aristocratic families from Volterra or with endogamic connections to this city. The power of these families is often related to agrarian possession, which may be deduced from the position of their funerary monuments: huge tumuli, isolated in the countryside, with a strong symbolic tie to the land.<sup>32</sup> The presence of these bronze *situlae*, with a Mediterranean distribution, therefore suggests the possibility that these aristocracies represented themselves with symbols of commercial power and activity. In this case, the change of meaning is realised within the symbol of consumption of wine in the banquet and does not correspond to a shift in the function of the *situlae*.

The traditional semantic system of the upper class assumes a new level of stratification here. The deposition of “exotic” rich objects is not just a means of affirming the social position and the power of the deceased and his family, but it becomes a way to indicate maritime trade as source of this role and power. Through the choice of beaked *situlae*, these families express their sense of belonging to a new aristocracy which appeared in Volterra in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and which based its power on a well-planned economic network in the

western Mediterranean and along the inland routes towards Rome. The new aristocracy regenerated itself through intermarriages with the local middle classes and gained acceptance and support from aristocratic families who fled from the Po Valley because of the pressure of Celtic peoples.<sup>33</sup>

(3) In inland Etruria, the territory around the Lake Trasimene presents the highest frequency of beaked *situlae* in funerary contexts, with some parallels in the near Umbria, e.g. in the Peschiera necropolis of Todi, one of the richest necropoleis of the Hellenistic Umbria, where the grave goods present an high quantity of gold jewellery in association with Etruscan vessels.<sup>34</sup>

At Perugia, Tomb 1 of the necropolis of Monteluca contains a bronze beaked *situla*, in a context dated between the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>35</sup> On the other side of the Lake Trasimene, some contexts with beaked *situlae* are preserved in the surrounds of Chiusi, in two necropoleis which are related to a new form of occupation of the land, the dispersal agricultural settlements, founded in the empty countryside during the Punic Wars.<sup>36</sup> In the necropolis of Gioiella, Le Vigne, with a dating between the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, a burial recess contained a bronze beaked *situla*, which was associated with an alabas-

<sup>30</sup> The totality of the grave goods is here referred to banquet and symposium in Chigi 1880, 243; Ragazzini 2013, 1–79.

<sup>31</sup> Chigi Zondadari 1877, 302; Acconcia 2012, 32 n. 96.

<sup>32</sup> Luhmann 1998, 695–697. Giulierini 2011, 149.

<sup>33</sup> Maggiani 2007, 156–158.

<sup>34</sup> Tomb VI in Candela 1985, 29 n. 22. The tomb is the richest of the city and can be connected to the local nobility. In these grave goods, a materialisation of the beaked *situlae* as symbolic object gives some hints regarding the social and economic role of their consumers, as in DeMarrais – Castillio – Earle 1996, 17f.; Earle 1997, 144.

<sup>35</sup> Paoletti 1923, 25–38.

<sup>36</sup> Bianchi Bandinelli 1925, 177; Giulierini 2011, 151; Salvadori 2014, 64. Both necropoleis have tombs in the form of a long *dromos* with a certain number of independent burial recesses (*loculi*-tomb).

ter urn and a bronze flask.<sup>37</sup> Two other contexts in the territory of Chiusi belong to the necropolis of Sarteano, with chamber tombs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. Here, the burial recesses in the *dromoi* were assigned to depositions of people belonging to the households of noble families.<sup>38</sup> A bronze beaked *situla* was found in the necropolis of Pianacce,<sup>39</sup> and a second one in the necropolis of Mulin Canale.<sup>40</sup>

The most interesting example of change of use and consequently of semantic change for *situlae* concerns an exemplar of the Cambi Collection, unfortunately out of context, but clearly distinct in its function, thanks to the remains of cremation conserved within (fig. 4).<sup>41</sup> The large clay beaked *situla*, which imitated some Volsinian examples in silver-ceramic,<sup>42</sup> served as a cinerary vase. The new function of the object implies a change of meaning, reflected in its morphological aspects. The spout is atrophic and loses its primary function because the inside strainer is missing and the relief header assumes a mere decorative function. In this case, the cultural transmission of the form of the beaked *situla* affected both the change of meaning and correlated morphological change of the object, in the process of its (re)production. A grave good connected to a specific function in the ritual of symposium of the upper class thus became a cinerary urn. The specific Etruscan background for this choice could be a reason of this change

of meaning because the use of *krater* as a cinerary vase is common in Etruria in the first Hellenistic period.<sup>43</sup>

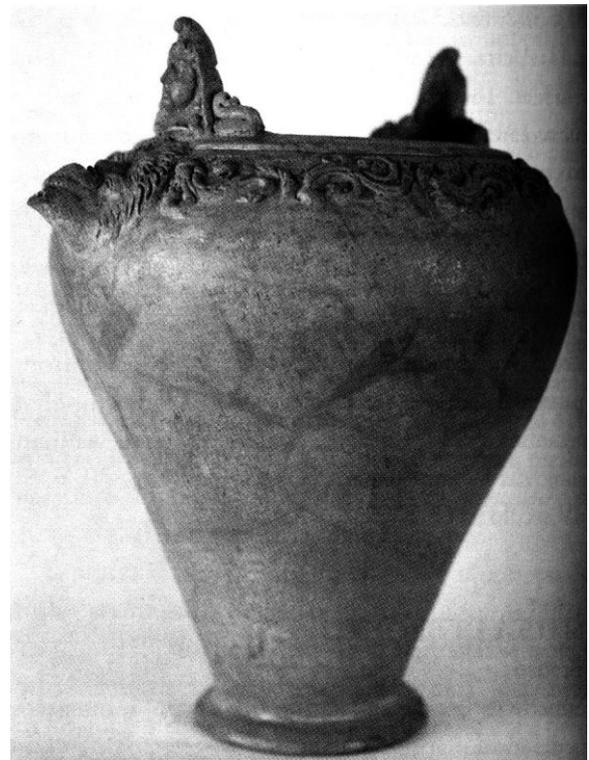


Fig. 4 *Situla* from the collection Cambi (from G. Paolucci, *Situla*, in: Paolucci 2003, 62).

To summarise, in a first phase, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, these *situlae* in bronze or in the clay version in Gnathia style were a prerogative of elite behaviours of the upper social layers, connoted as an agrarian and commercial aristocracy in the territory of Volterra and Perugia and in the coastal cities. The production centres of bronze *situlae* were probably located in Central Etruria, but they had strong formal contacts with the Mediterranean production, Macedonian in particular,<sup>44</sup> while clay *situlae* were imported from Apulia, with Campanian intermediaries, or were

<sup>37</sup> Burial recess nr. 4 of the Tomb 8 in Ponzi Bonomi 1977, 107f.

<sup>38</sup> For this conceptualisation of household and family in pre-modern societies see Luhmann 1998, 697–700. For the social position of the loculi-tombs see Salvadori 2014, 70.

<sup>39</sup> Tomb 7 in Minetti 2008a, 125–136; Minetti 2008b, 557–561; Minetti 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Minetti 1997, 90 fig. 92.

<sup>41</sup> Paolucci 2003, 62.

<sup>42</sup> For the silver-ceramic beaked *situlae* of Volsinii see Candela 1985, 54.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. the *kelebai* (Pasquinucci 1968). About the use of *situlae* as cinerary vase see Giuliani Pomes 1954, 150f.

<sup>44</sup> It may be possible to suggest a migration of artists or artisans from Macedonia or Apulia.

locally imitated.<sup>45</sup> In many cases, bronze beaked *situlae* had a strong social connection to the personal and geographic mobility of aristocratic families. In this first phase, beaked *situlae* functioned both as a grave goods and cinerary vases, with this last association seeming to be a semantic assimilation with the local tradition of cinerary *kraters*.

In a second phase, between the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, the beaked *situla* became a status symbol for new social elements, which expressed themselves as part of the upper social layer. This new social segment is the result of a social mobility of immigrated elements and of rich families of the “middle class”, which were incorporated into the old aristocracies, probably attempting to conserve their existence in the critical period of the Punic Wars.<sup>46</sup> The ceramic beaked *situlae* presented, in this second phase, reduced dimensions and they exclusively functioned as banquet vessels for mixing wine. One can suppose that the importation of Gnathia *situlae* produced in south Italy into coastal centres contributed to a standardisation of their meaning within Etruscan grave goods. In this second phase, some importations of metallic *situlae* from Campania as replacements of the local dismissed productions can be related to the conservative nobility, in the function of self-representation. Their position within the grave goods of the old aristocracy maintains a convivial connotation as reinforcement of the traditional values, linked with the banquet as a cohesive social ritual of the upper layers, as well as being an

important element of the funerary ideology.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, the formal changes of beaked *situlae* relate to changes in function and meaning, and serve mostly to express a particular social identity in the phase of regeneration of the upper social layers.

In this first case study, the change in meaning assumes an intercultural function, namely to connect members of Italic and Etruscan elites, as well as a cohesive function within the Etruscan society, performing the dynamics of emulation and distinction between lower and upper social segments.

#### **Change of meaning of *amphorae* in funerary contexts and the re-construction of cultural identity**

The second case study proposes the semantic change's dependence on the cultural background of the recipients of the cultural transmission, through the analysis of the role of commercial *amphorae* in the funerary assemblages of the northern Etruscan communities, in comparison with their role in the funerary contexts of neighbouring Apuanic Ligurian settlements.

In Etruscan Hellenistic funerary contexts, the deposition of Greco-Italic, Corinthian or Punic *amphorae*<sup>48</sup> as grave goods is common to coastal and inland centres (fig. 5).<sup>49</sup>

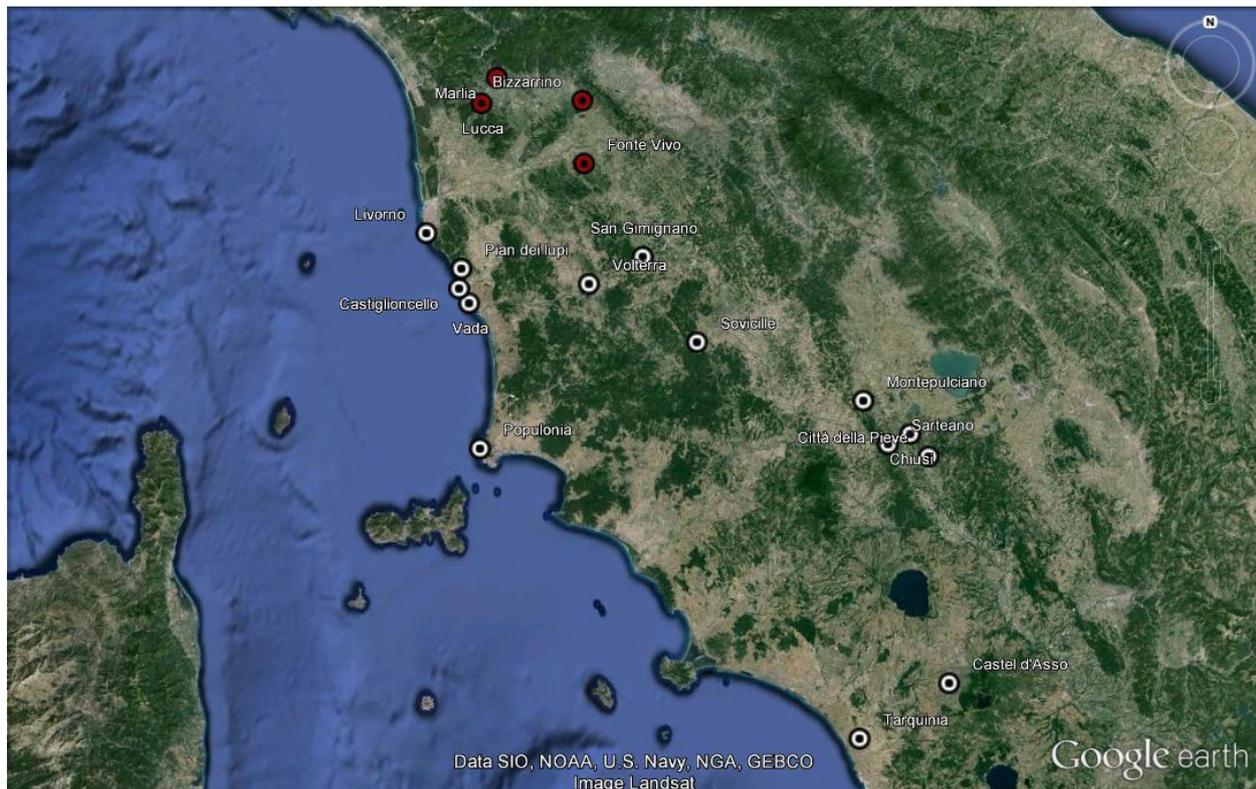
<sup>45</sup> Imported from Tarent or Campania and their local imitations (Bruni 1992, 68).

<sup>46</sup> For the social mobility in the upper social stratum as an autopoietic character if the aristocracy see Luhmann 1998, 697f.

<sup>47</sup> I refer here to the usage of funerary banquets and the numerous representations of banquets in the Otherworld. See Santoro 1985, 36; Camporeale 2000, 177–179.

<sup>48</sup> Tarquinia, Calvario: Tomb 842 in Cavagnaro Vanoni 1996, 49–91; Sarteano, La Palazzina in Minetti – Rastrelli 2001.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. in the Trasimene area (Chiusi, Poggio Renzo in Levi 1932/1933, 14–32; Città della Pieve, Butarone Alto in Bruschetti 1993, 440–450; Montepulciano, Martiena in Paolucci 2001, 51–88; Sarteano, La Palazzina: Minetti – Rastrelli 2001); in coastal centres (Castiglione-cello, Pian dei Lupi; Castiglione-cello, via Tripoli e Asmara in Gambogi – Palladino 1999, 108–



**Fig. 5 Commercial *amphorae* in funerary context in Etruria and Apuanic Liguria** (based on Google Earth. *Amphorae* as wine containers are marked with a white circle, *amphorae* as a cinerary urn containers with a red circle).

158; Livorno in Arbeid 2009, 231f.; Populonia, S. Cerbone: Tombs 1/1908, 1924-25, 26/1908, 27/1908, 32/1908 in Milani 1908, 200–203; Minto 1925, 366–370; Populonia, Campo del Debbio in Costantini 2004, 167; Populonia, Le Grotte: Tombs 1/1965, 2/1965, 8/1965, 9/1965, Tombs  $\mu$ , 13, 14, in Romualdi – Settesoldi 2009, 50–65; Populonia, Piano e Poggio delle Granate: Tombs 1/1915, 2/1915, b/1922 in Minto 1917, 71f. 80f.; Minto 1923, 146f.; Vada, Il Poggetto: Tomb C in Massa 1974, 31–74) at Volterra and in its territory (Badia Montebradoni: Tomb 61/13 in Fiumi 1972, 100–106. Il Portone: Tombs 1970/O in Cristofani 1973, 271; Tomb n/1874 in Cinci 1874, 231–236; San Gimignano, La Ripa: Cellole tb. Alfa 1959 in Caputo et. Al. 1959, 222f.; Sovicille, Poggio Luco: Tombs 16, 17 in Acconcia 2012, 84) and with a larger chronological range (350–100 BCE) at Tarquinia (Necropolis del Calvario: Tombs 842, 1577, 1588, 1686, 1718, 1786, 5430, 5433, 5434, 5612, 6100 in Cavagnaro Cagnoni 1996; at Castel d’Asso in Colonna – Di Paolo Colonna 1970, 224. 245).

They are frequently associated with banquet sets, in a primary relation with their use as a transport and storage wine-vase. A secondary meaning can indicate the wish of the family of the deceased to reference a familiar tradition in Mediterranean commerce or the assumption of the lifestyles of the Italic upper social layers as the consumers of high-quality wine from specific regions. This last meaning is suggested by the depositional associations in the coastal centres.<sup>50</sup>

In Etruria, *amphorae* are used as cinerary vases only in exceptional cases, and this use was probably related to some particular meaning, as in the Tomb 6093/50 of the necropolis of Fondo Scataglini at Tarquinia (fig. 6).

<sup>50</sup> In particular in the necropolis of Populonia, Le Grotte, where the graves belong to the commercial “middle-class” and to some group of Volterranean origin living into the coastal centre (Romualdi 1992, 200; Romualdi 2009, 14f.).

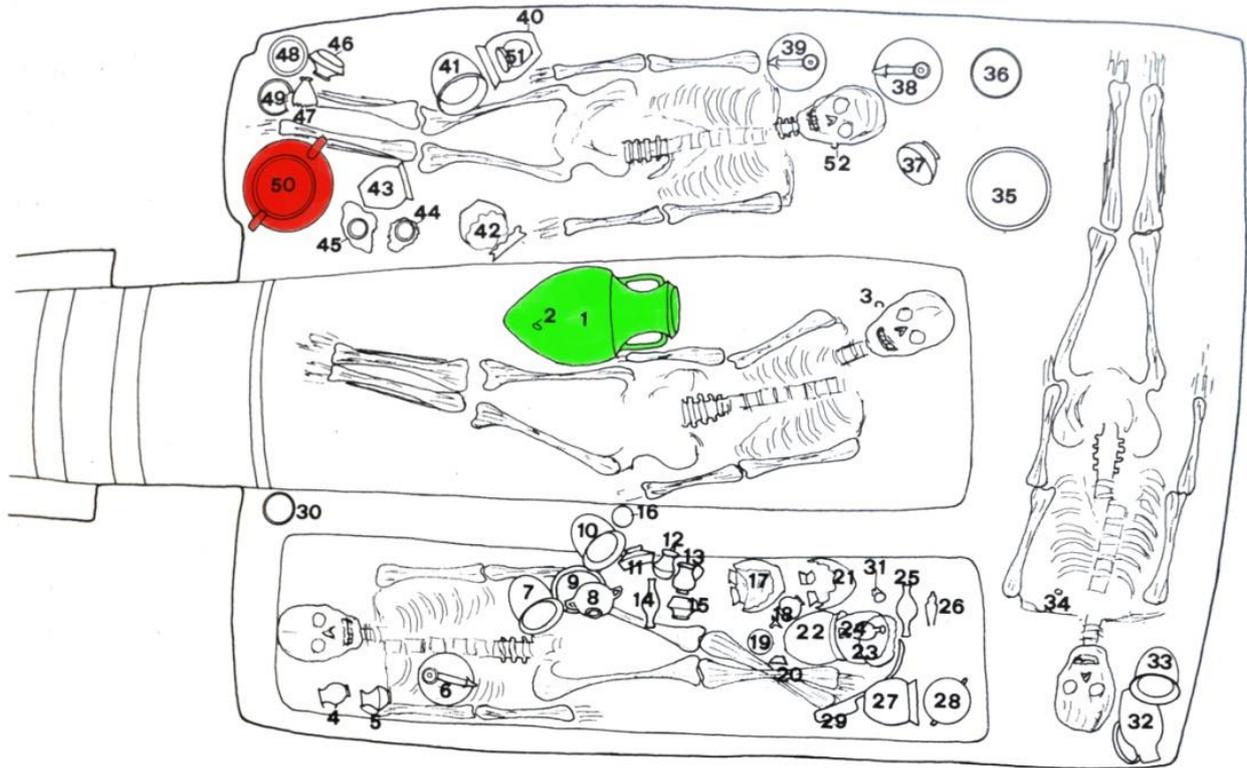


Fig. 6 *Amphorae* as cinerary urn and *coenotaphium* in the Tomb 6093/50 of the Fondo Scataglini in Tarquinia (Cavagnaro Vanoni 1986, fig. 116, 338).

This chamber tomb was topographically isolated and had an exceptional character within the necropolis. Four deceased individuals were buried with an inhumation ritual, and three with a cremation ritual; their ashes were deposited in two *ollae* and an *amphora*. All three cremated were adult males. The cinerary Etruscan *amphora* was placed near the feet of an inhumed female. The peculiarity of this tomb is the presence of a second *amphora* as a grave good of another female inhumation, which was positioned in the central corridor. This *amphora* was of a Greco-Italic type, while the cinerary *amphora* was Etruscan and contained a jasper scarab with an engraving of two fighting knights (*equites*). The grave goods allow this tomb to be dated in the range of 325–190 BCE.<sup>51</sup> The position of the two *amphorae* with respect to the female and the

unique case of deposition of the scarab suggests the use as a cinerary urn of a male who died far away.<sup>52</sup> The second *amphora*, locally produced, would in this case be a *coenotaphium* for a member of the family, with a semantic extension of its funerary meaning.

A different situation, the consequence of a new social assessment, can be seen in the Bruscalupo and Paradiso necropoleis of the agricultural centre of Vaiano, near Chiusi (fig. 5). The settlement, which was founded anew after the Punic Wars, had a multicultural connotation, as indicated by the linguistic and prosopographic aspects of the funerary inscriptions.<sup>53</sup> The complexity in

<sup>51</sup> Tomb 6093/50 in Cavagnaro Vanoni 1996, 336–348.

<sup>52</sup> The two knights depicted on the scarab could suggest this male's role in the upper class as well as the occasion of his death in military action.

<sup>53</sup> See above. The multicultural connotation is confirmed by epigraphic and prosopographic sources, as in Benelli 2009a, 154; Benelli 2009b, 307.

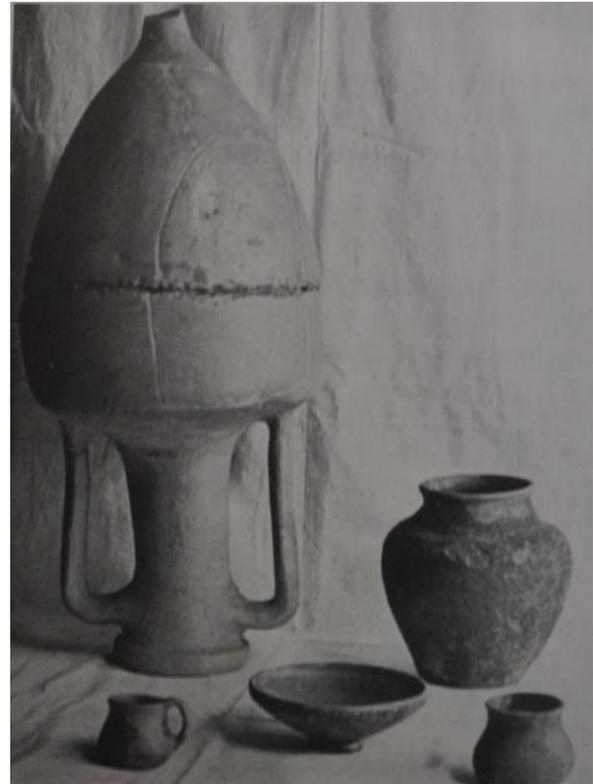
the perception of cultural identities within the local communities is reflected in the use of commercial *amphorae* as cinerary vases, in changeover with local urns in the necropolis of Bruscalupo and their traditional use as a grave goods in the nearby necropolis of Paradiso, where the intentional break of their handle recalls the traditional local use for the defunctionalisation of biconic and canopic urns.<sup>54</sup>

In conclusion, in Etruria, the deposition of *amphorae* in funerary contexts had a variable meaning, with strong emphasis on its function as a wine container in aristocratic banquets. Their use as a cinerary vase appears as a social phenomenon just after the Punic Wars, in new multicultural settlements.

A picture of this shift of meaning in the funerary deposition of commercial *amphorae* and of its relationship with the construction of the cultural identity emerges from the comparison of their function in the Apuanic Ligurian necropoleis,<sup>55</sup> with their role in the northern Etruscan necropoleis at the frontier territories with Ligurian.<sup>56</sup> The presence of a mixed form of burials in these northern Etruscan centres shows, that people with different proveniences and cultural backgrounds were living together in the local communities.<sup>57</sup>

In the late Ligurian culture, between the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, several burials have

Greco-Italic *amphorae* that were cut and re-used to contain cinerary *olla* (fig. 7), while in the neighbouring land of Etruria, Greco-Italic *amphorae* were deposited as grave goods in relation to the consumption of wine in the symposium.



**Fig. 7 Apuanic Ligurian burials with cut *amphora* as a container of the cinerary vase** (fig. 7a from Maggiari 2013, fig. 1, 250. Fig. 7b author's photograph from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Villa Guinigi, Lucca, Tomb from Marlia di Ponticello, 170–130 BCE. Authorisation of the Soprintendenza per le Belle Arti e il Paesaggio per le Province di Lucca e Massa Carrara, depository of image rights).

<sup>54</sup> Vaiano, Bruscalupo in Gamurrini 1891a, 223–231; Bianchi Bandinelli 1925, c.413f.; Pagnotta 1984, 41–46; Vaiano, Paradiso: Fiorelli 1876, 52f.

<sup>55</sup> For general references concerning the Apuanic Ligurian and the relationship between material culture and ancient sources see Maggiari 2004, 369–371.

<sup>56</sup> S. Miniato, Fontevivo in Ciampoltrini 2014; Scandicci, Olmo in Rastrelli 2002, 128f.

<sup>57</sup> Maggiari 1979, 99f.; Maggiari 2013, 233–249.

This burial form appeared in Liguria in several necropoleis in a changeover from the traditional chest of stone-plates, and has been frequently interpreted as a consequence of the cultural contact between Ligurian communities and Roman colonies.<sup>58</sup> The result is a renewal of the traditional burial ritual, in which the principal local choices (incineration, cinerary *olla* protected by a cist, deposition of intentionally broken weapons, Celtic fibulae) are carefully preserved. The cut *amphora* as a clay-cist gradually became a distinct element of some social layers within the Ligurian culture of the period, particularly the frontier zone with Etruria in the communities settled north of river Arno. The introduction of *amphorae* and of their content in the lifestyle of the upper Ligurian classes has been related to their contact with Roman and Etruscan elites.<sup>59</sup> Their secondary use as funerary cist can be instead interpreted as a marker of the construction of a new Apuanic Ligurian cultural identity.<sup>60</sup> We could consider, e.g., the grave goods of two frontier communities, at Bizzarrino and at San Miniato, Fonte Vivo (fig. 5). The choices of the local families in relation to their cultural identities are properly indicated in the function of the *amphorae* in their graves. In the necropolis of Bizzarrino,<sup>61</sup> the *amphora* has the functional connotation of the Ligurian necropolis of the near Valle del Serchio (as Marlia and Bizzarrino: fig. 5); for the necropolis of S. Miniato Fonte Vivo, southern of river Arno, this use can be only supposed.<sup>62</sup> The connota-

tions of the funerary goods are closely similar to these of the proximate Etruscan tombs of the northern *ager Volaterranum*. Both communities occupied an area displaying cultural exchanges, intercultural marriages and intense commercial contacts.<sup>63</sup> The funerary *amphorae* became an element of distinctive identification with respect to the Etruscan families of Volterra, settled on the same territory, who deposited this vase as part of the banquet set (fig. 8).<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Maggiani 2013, 236–243.

<sup>64</sup> A nearby geographical area in the same chronological range (second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> – first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE), the necropoleis of the Greek colony of Ampurias, which was an *emporion* with a multicultural footprint (at least Greek, Iberian and Phoenician), shows a third distinct use of *amphorae* in funerary context: Greco-Punic and locally produced *amphorae* are used exclusively as a grave case in the inhumation ritual of children. In this case, the function, formally close to the Ligurian example, is not specially connected to the construction or the distinction of local identity because their use in the necropoleis continues a local tradition consolidated since the Archaic period (Almagro 1953; Bonjoan: Tombs 49 and 68 in Almagro 1953, 147. 202. Granada: Tomb 14 in Almagro 1953, 224. 245. Archaic children graves in *amphora*: necropolis of Martí, tbs. 1. 2, 47; tbs. 12. 13, 51; tb. 18, 54; tb. 42, 67; tbs. 68. 69. 70, 78; tbs. 88. 89, 89; tb. 93, 91; tb. 106, 98; tbs. 114. 115, 105; tbs. 119. 120, 106; tb.123, 107; tbs. 124. 125, 108; tbs.127. 128, 109).

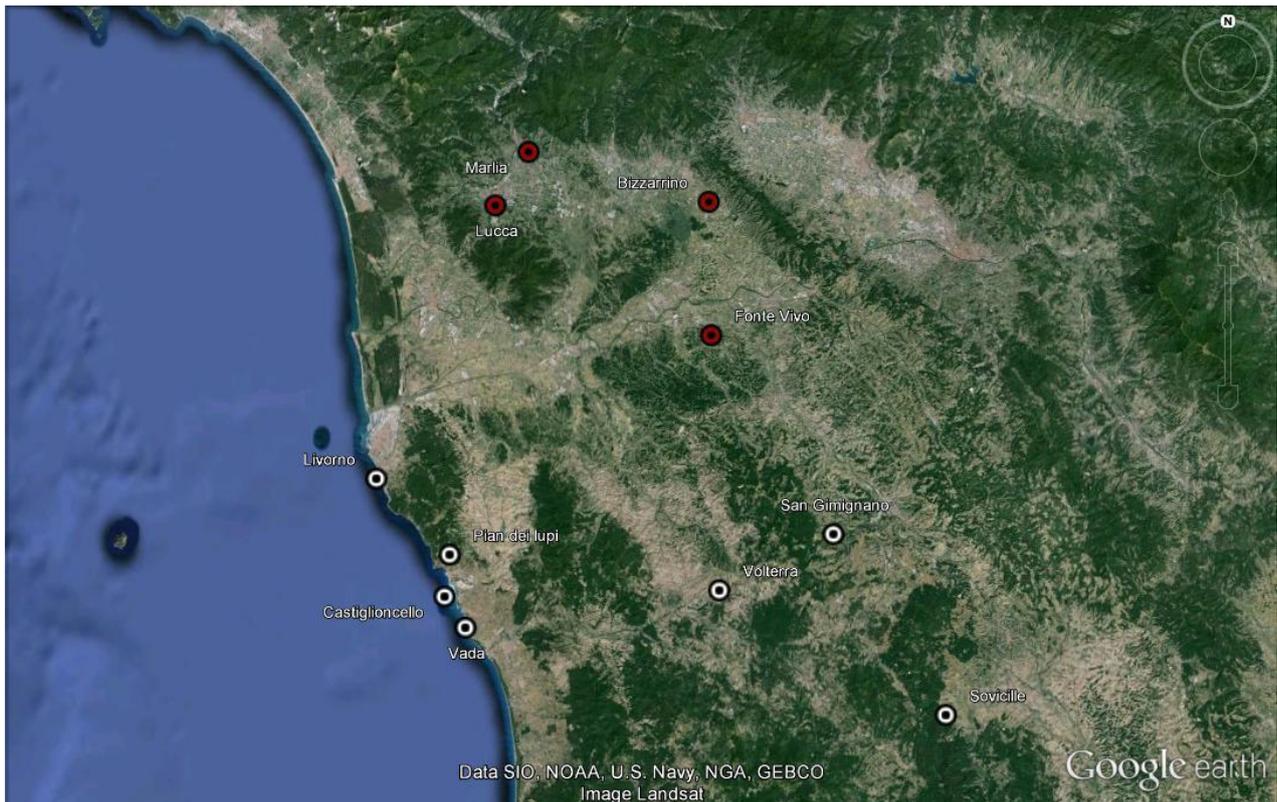
<sup>58</sup> The use of this container was therefore unusual in the local tradition before the foundation of Luni (Maggiani 1979, 99f.; Pieri 1997, 39).

<sup>59</sup> This change has been noted in the food habits of this classes (Menchelli 2007, 189f.).

<sup>60</sup> A construction which relates to only some social layers within the Apuanic Ligurian communities.

<sup>61</sup> Maggiani 1979, 100.

<sup>62</sup> Ciampoltrini 2014, 34 with references.



**Fig. 8 Apuanic Ligurian and northern Etruscan funerary contexts with commercial *amphorae*** (based on Google Earth. *Amphorae* as wine-containers are marked with a white circle; *amphorae* as cinerary-urn cists with a red circle).

To summarise these observations on the change of meaning in the cultural transmission of *amphorae* in funerary context, a semantic shift to cinerary urn or to a constitutional part of the cinerary monument could reflect the desire of local communities to identify themselves through specific and distinct behaviours. During the late Hellenistic period, Ligurian upper social segments attempted to reconstruct their cultural identities by reworking the function of *amphorae* in funerary context.<sup>65</sup>

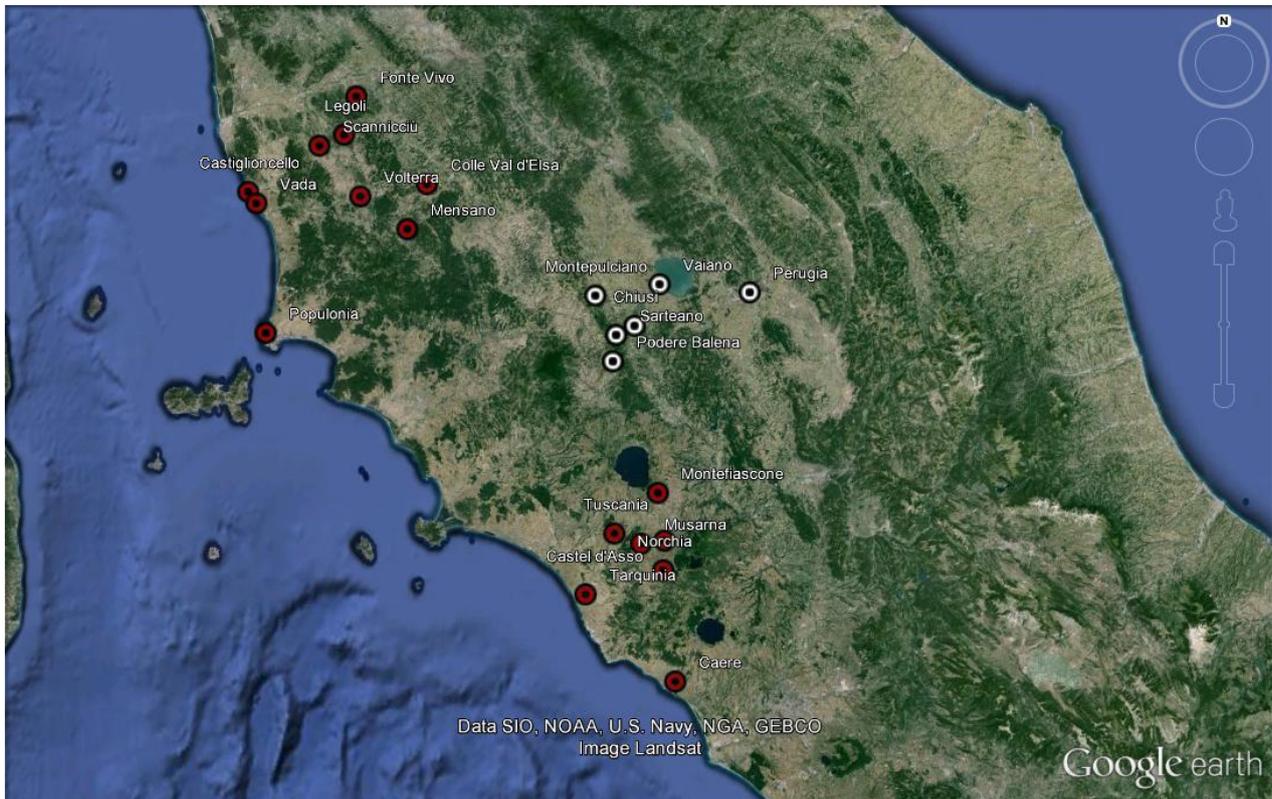
### **Change of meaning of *lagynoi* and the construction of a multicultural identity**

The third case study compares the function and the meaning of *lagynoi* in selected late-Hellenistic funerary contexts in Central Italy, to emphasise the relationship between cultural transmission, the following semantic change and the sense of cultural identity of local communities. My argument rests on the new position of the *lagynoi* in the graves of settlements with a high presence of Italic elements, where these vessels play a significant role for the commemoration rituals at the tomb.

<sup>65</sup> I refer in particular to the wish to create a new cultural tradition within the Ligurian elites as a „normative instrument, to be used as a survival strategy for cultural identity in time of crisis“ (Versluys 2013, 431).

A meaning of the *lagynoi* is connected with wine and the cult of Dionysus,<sup>66</sup> frequently attested in south of Italy,<sup>67</sup> as in the necropo-

belong to south and central Etruria, in particular to Tarquinia,<sup>73</sup> Chiusi and its *ager*, e.g. in the Barcaccia Tomb,<sup>74</sup> in the Mar-



**Fig. 9 Distribution of *lagynoi* in Etruscan funerary contexts** (based on Google Earth. *Lagynoi* featured as part of the banquet set are marked with a red circle; *lagynoi* as a ritual vessel in the commemoration, with a white circle).

leis of Tarent,<sup>68</sup> Arpi,<sup>69</sup> Metapontum,<sup>70</sup> Herakleia,<sup>71</sup> Tursi and in the northern coastal Picene community on the Adriatic, e.g. at Ancona.<sup>72</sup>

*Lagynoi* are present in several Etruscan funerary contexts between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, were they are part of the banquet set, probably functioning as wine vessels, as suggested by the worldly uses of the grave goods (fig. 9). The earliest examples

cianella necropolis,<sup>75</sup> at Montepulciano, Martiena,<sup>76</sup> at Sarteano Mulin Canale,<sup>77</sup> in the grave chamber with *loculi* in the *dromos* of Le Palazze,<sup>78</sup> and in the tomb with *loculi* of La Paccianese.<sup>79</sup> Grave good assemblages with *lagynoi* pertain frequently to local

<sup>66</sup> See Pierobon 1979 with references.

<sup>67</sup> Sciarma 2005, 227–231.

<sup>68</sup> Tarent Tombs in Hempel 2001, 168–216.

<sup>69</sup> Ipogeo delle anfore in Mazzei 1995, 157.

<sup>70</sup> Necropolis of Crucinia, Tomb 324 in De Siena 1993, 126–135.

<sup>71</sup> Tombs 92. 119. 608 and 13 in Giardino 1993, 152–168, and Tomb G of S. Maria d'Anglona in the *chora* in Bianco 1993, 197–207.

<sup>72</sup> Mercado 1976, 160–176.

<sup>73</sup> Tarquinia, necropolis del Calvario: Tombs 752. 842. 1588. 1686. 1718. 1786. 5430. 5433. 5434. 5512. 5521. 5612. 6093 in Cavagnaro Vanoni 1996, 29–348.

<sup>74</sup> The tomb, dated between the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE presents a rich funerary deposition with many imports from Volterra. See Paolucci – Mintetti 2000, 212; Albani 2004/2005, 60–63; Albani 2010, 63–85.

<sup>75</sup> Bianchi Bandinelli 1925, 315–333.

<sup>76</sup> Paolucci 2001, 51–88.

<sup>77</sup> Minetti 1997, 90–102.

<sup>78</sup> Minetti – Paolucci 2010, 40–50.

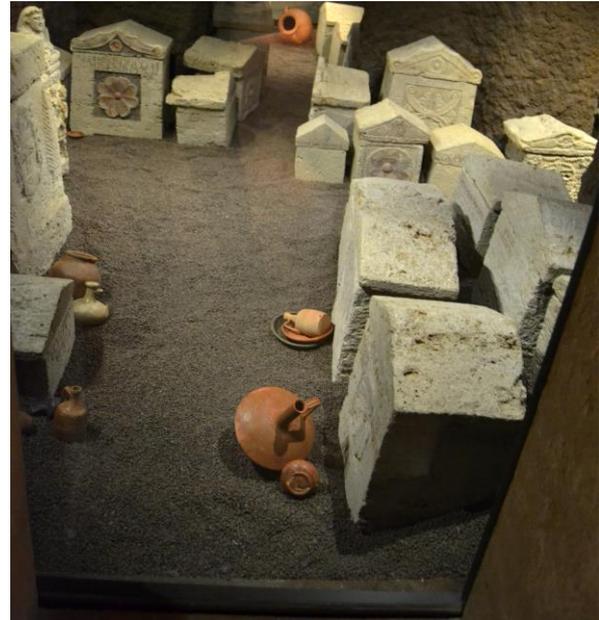
<sup>79</sup> Martelli 2007, 424–430.

families, as indicated by the numerous funerary inscriptions on urns, and on the tiles which locked the *loculi*. Through the prosopographic analysis of these contexts, it is possible to link the presence of *lagynoi* with an Italic character of the local communities, which had become part of the local elite through targeted marriage strategies. In particular, the presence in these tombs of family names as *Umrana*, *Herini* and *Latini* attest to this renewal of the local aristocracy.<sup>80</sup>

In central Italy, particularly in Etruria and Umbria, there was a gradual evolution in the use of the *lagynoi*: in the chamber tomb of *Cai Cutu* in the necropolis of Monte Luce of Perugia, the deposition of *lagynoi* seems to follow a precise ritual, in connection with cinerary urns (fig. 10).<sup>81</sup> In the organisation of the space inside of this articulated chamber tomb, several tuff stone urns of the family member were deposited on the benches, and *lagynoi* were left in front of them as well as *unguentaria* and strigils, sometime directly touching the urn. In comparison with south Italian and earlier Etruscan contexts, a fixed recurrence in their position suggests the possibility of a codified ritual use.

The possibility of a secondary deposition of *lagynoi* in later Etruscan contexts is also suggested by their position in grave corridors, e.g. in the tomb 5433 of the Calvario necropolis in Tarquinia, also, in this case, associated with *unguentaria*.<sup>82</sup> In the inland necropolis of Castel d'Asso, their meaning as a last present for the dead is indicated by

their deposition on the sarcophagus and not inside<sup>83</sup> or at the centre of the grave cellar.<sup>84</sup>



**Fig. 10** *Lagynoi* in front of the cinerary urns in the Tomb of *Cai Cutu* in the Necropolis of Montelucente, Perugia (author's photograph of the reconstructed context in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Perugia. Authorisation of the Polo Museale dell'Umbria, depository of image rights).

The change of meaning can be analysed in the necropoleis of the Trasimenic area with *loculi*-graves. The recent publication concerning Podere Balena (fig. 9), where several inscriptions were incised on the burial-tiles, permits assigning the social level of the owner of the *loculi* and the general structure of the relate society<sup>85</sup> as well as the ritual deposition of the *lagynoi*. In the necropolis the *lagynoi* were always deposited into the *dromos*, outside of the burial recess, in standing position, sometime in contact with the closing tile (fig. 11). This placement, interpreted as the ritual closure of the tomb<sup>86</sup>, could be a commemoration, as sug-

<sup>80</sup> Benelli 2009b, 303–322; Benelli 2012, 303–322; Berrendonner 2001/2002, 67–78.

<sup>81</sup> Feruglio 2002, 475–495.

<sup>82</sup> Cavagnaro Vanoni 1996, 200–207.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. in Grave 27a in Colonna – Di Paolo Colonna 1970, 201f.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. in Grave 34 in Colonna – Di Paolo Colonna 1970, 216.

<sup>85</sup> Maggiani 2014, 51–57; Salvadori 2014, 69f.; Shepherd 2014, 36–41.

<sup>86</sup> Faralli 2014, 43f.

gested by the later chronology of the *lagynoi* in comparison with the grave goods and the urns inside the related *loculi* (fig. 12).<sup>87</sup>

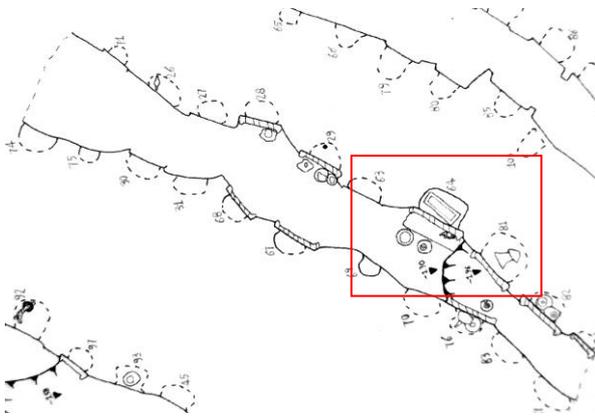


Fig. 11 Position of the *lagynoi* in the *dromos*-Tomb 4 of the necropolis Podere Balena (Siena) (Tuci 2014, attached plate).



Fig. 12 *Lagynoi* in front of the closing-tile of the burial recesses 76 and 29 of the *dromos*-Tomb 4 (Faralli 2014, figs. 20, 43).

This change in the use and meaning of *lagynoi* in the Etruscan communities is not homogeneous throughout the region, but it is a local, circumscribed, subregional phenomenon. Within the same chronological range, in the inland communities the *lagynoi* assume a specific ritual function; in the *ager Volaterranus* and in the coastal area they maintain their primary meaning as a banquet

vessel,<sup>88</sup> e.g. in the tomb of Legoli (Pisa), where they were deposited on the funerary bench with black-glazed *oinochoai*, *kylikes*, cups and *paterae*,<sup>89</sup> as well as in the urban necropolis of Volterra, Il Portone,<sup>90</sup> in the coastal necropolis of Vada,<sup>91</sup> and in the necropoleis of Castiglioncello, villa Patrone,<sup>92</sup> and Populonia, Piano delle Granate.<sup>93</sup>

In this third case study, the change of meaning seems to be linked with a specific new cultural context, located in the agricultural area of Chiusi and in the surrounding of Lake Trasimene. Here, the change of meaning of the *lagynos* in funerary ritual corresponds to a modification in the organisation of the local communities and with the integration or interaction in an Etruscan cultural area of non-local elements of population, as attested by the numerous inscriptions.<sup>94</sup> The change of meaning, in this case, performs the construction of a multicultural collective identity through a new and shared form of the funerary ritual, assumed by Etruscan, non-Etruscan and intercultural families.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>87</sup> E.g. in the tomb *dromos* 4, burial recess 29, where a black-glazed cup inside the recess is dated to the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and the *lagynoi* can be dated in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

<sup>88</sup> For a catalogue of the associations between *lagynoi* and wine sets at Volterra and in its *ager*, see Sciarma 2005, 253–256, fig. 36.

<sup>89</sup> Bruni 1999a; Bruni 2004; Bruni 2008c; Levi 1931, 512; Michelucci 1979, 83.

<sup>90</sup> Portone, Luoghino: Tomb n/1874, in a context with black-glazed ceramic imported from Caes (Cinci 1874, 231–236). Also attested at Tomb R/1971, within a rich good grave composition of banquet vases dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and including a coin of Mamertini (Cristofani 1975, 25–31).

<sup>91</sup> In association with a pitch and *unguentaria*: Massa 1974, 31–74.

<sup>92</sup> Tomb I in Massa 1974, 25–31.

<sup>93</sup> Tomb 3/1915 in Minto 1917, 72f.; Romualdi 1985, 186f.

<sup>94</sup> Maggiani 2014, 51–57.

<sup>95</sup> For a cross-cultural analysis of the formation of shared funerary culture in multicultural settings see Petersen 2011, 172–175.

### Change of meaning and cultural identity

A consequence of the cultural transmission is a selection and/or reconfiguration of the meaning of objects. The analysed case studies have shown a strong relationship between this semantic change and the construction of collective cultural identities. In the first case study, the change of meaning of beaked *situlae* is an expression of the upper social segments of the Etruscan society to underline its role within international cultural and economic contexts. In the case study of commercial *amphorae* in funerary contexts, the comparison between Etruscan and Ligurian behaviours indicates the potentiality of the intentional change of meaning for the definition and (re)construction of ethnic or local identities. During the unification of the economic and political system due to the process of Romanisation, the *amphorae* circulating in the supply chain are deposited in Etruscan tombs as elements of the banquet set, while in Apuanic Ligurian assemblages, the transport vessels are recycled as containers of cinerary urns. In the third case study, concerning the use of *lagynoi* in funerary ritual, the change of the role and of the semantic value of the object resulted from the coexistence of people with different cultural backgrounds. These people are living together and interacting in multicultural communities, the newly founded agricultural settlements around the Lake Trasimene. In their collective necropolis, the *lagynoi*, which were part of the banquet assemblage in the Etruscan tradition, were charged with an additional ritual function for the commemoration of the deceased.

In conclusion, a tendency exists for the semantic change of transmitted forms to preserve, perform or promote some aspects of the local identities. The morphology or the decorative themes of the objects were transferred by the cultural background of the

emittents, while the function and the meaning of the objects themselves were reconfigured by the recipients, who had different needs and communicative intentions. The transformation of collective cultural identities, especially of local identities in relation with global phenomena, e.g. the process of unification of the institutional and economic structures under the hegemony of Rome, effected a change in the social role and value of objects. Under the pressure of the economic and political change, the change of meaning assumed a specific performative function for the (re)construction of the identities of local communities and of emerging social layers. The semantic shift became a part of the process of the negotiation of the local identities with the centralised identity affected by the Romanisation process.<sup>96</sup>

The study of the change of meaning of some contextualised classes of materials, as well as the comparison of their differences and similarities, permits a detection of different patterns of response to global challenges within local communities. The individuation of the reasons and the development of semantic changes become therefore a general and reliable category to analyse interactions within complex systems in their spatial and chronological dynamics.

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<sup>96</sup> For this process of negotiation of identity, in particular in Umbria, see Wallace-Hadrill 2012, 376.

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