



Figure.1 Paestum Sequestro Finanza, tomba 2 (after Pontrandolfo, A., Rouveret, A., 1992. *Le tombe dipinte di Paestum*, p.300)



Figure.2 Red figures campanian krater (campanian pottery) (after Schauenburg, K., 2003. *Studien zur unteritalischen Vasenmalerei*, Band VI, Abb.III-IV, p.137)

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The Mediterranean Sea is not just a sea, but a location that has been pivotal to human history since prehistory. The Romans made it their own¹ (*mare nostrum*), Braudel² placed it at the centre of the attention, Renfrew³ considers it the cradle of civilization, Horden and Purcell⁴ see it as a dynamic force corrupting everything else, and Broodbank⁵ thinks of it as a microcosmos. However it may be perceived or thought, it is a location where people met and clashed producing a dynamism that has no equals for length and breadth of action. I do not intend to define the Mediterranean Sea here, and perhaps it is undefinable given its history. Instead, I wish to centre my attention on the culture that defined the surrounding people. The material culture records the immense vitality of Mediterranean peoples. The many differences, similarities, influences, and contacts have produced several phenomena, including hybridism, skeuomorphism, multiple forms of intercultural exchanges, transcultural phenomena, reciprocity and acculturation. These phenomena can be 'read' in the material culture, which shows a continuous cultural exchange of such a richness that I can only define it as 'Mediterranean'.

It is not possible to understand a single Mediterranean culture without contextualising it, whichever this culture may be, with many other cultures that in time and space have interacted with it eventually producing that culture. The amazing cultural richness of the Mediterranean has also permeated the people of lands increasingly farther from the sea, making of Europe the critical continent for the development of humanity even if the smallest and not necessarily the easiest to colonize.

The topic of this issue 01/2014 was born while reading the paper by Ioannis Fappas entitled 'The case of perfumed oil use and ideology' in *Intercultural Contacts in the Ancient Mediterranean*⁶ in which the author analyses the consumption of perfumed oil in passage rites, and among these, also the ritual of purification of the deceased's bones in the Hittite kingdom⁷ (fourteen-day funerary ritual) and in Ugarit. In spite of the obvious chronological and ritual differences, I think that this practice or at least elements of this ritual (*Šalliš Waštaiš*)⁸ could be significant beyond the Hittite kingdom, both chronologically and spatially. This idea reminded me of ancient Italy, where the warring aristocracies of Tyrrhenian Etruria, Capua, Pontecagnano, and Cumae used to place the burnt bones of the deceased wrapped in linens inside a bronze cauldron during the Iron Age and the Orientalizing period. This ritual was also known in the Euboean world and interpreted by many scholars as a ritual connected to heroes with links to Homer's poems⁹.

The presence of an Oscan inscription in the tufa stele of a burial¹⁰ (from Cuma, National

1 Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, book 6, chapter 47.

2 The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the reign of Philip II. 1971.

3 The emergence of civilisation. 1972.

4 The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history. 2000.

5 The making of the Middle Sea: a history of the Mediterranean from the beginning to the emergence of the classical world. 2013.

6 Fappas, I. 2011. Exchange of Ideas in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 14th and 13th centuries BC: The Case of Perfumed Oil Use and Ideology. In Duistermaat, K., Regulski, I. (eds), *Intercultural Contacts in the Ancient Mediterranean. Proceedings of the International Conference at the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, 25th to 29th October 2008*, 495-510

7 Kassian, A., Korolëv, A., Sidel'tsev, A., 2002. *Hittite Funerary Ritual: Šalliš Waštaiš*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 288, Ugarit-Verlag.

8 Rutherford, I. 2007. Achilles and the sallis wastais ritual: Performing Death in Greece and Anatolia. In Laneri, N. (ed.), *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (The Oriental Institute Seminars 3). Chicago, pp.223-236.

9 Cerchiai, L. 2010. *Gli antichi popoli della Campania*.

10 F. Scotto di Freca, 1999/2000. Una stele funeraria osca da Cuma, *Archeologia Classica* 51(1); note that the author interprets the stele differently.

Archaeological Museum of Naples, Epigraphic section) representing the bottle-shaped idol with sun-disc on top recalls the iconography of *Tanit*, Phoenician-Punic divinity. The Phoenician iconography mixed with Oscan language may be an example of peaceful coexistence, religious freedom and intercultural exchanges between separate cultural identities.

A boxed tomb slab in tufa from Paestum¹¹, in the Lucan region, with a representation of *prothesis* (fig.1), shows the deceased with an *alabastron* in her hand. The iconography is typically Phoenicio-Punic. The perfume flask held in the left hand, contains substances used in passage rituals to purify the body through perfumed oils. The container represents an idol, or at least it is a pass to the netherworld.

Another representation of *prothesis*, on the red-figure crater (Campanian red-figure pottery), shows the deceased with an *alabastron* in her hand¹² (fig. 2).

I want to mention here two classes of materials that are good examples of the concept of 'Mediterranean' culture in my opinion, before the authors each present their own examples. Different Mediterranean artefacts frequently tell us the same story that we often want to make unique emphasising this or that material or aspect that is particularly significant to us.

The perfume flasks containing perfumed oils, remedies, and spices, are manufactured in series in a few locations but they are then exported wherever possible. In a Hellenistic perfume flask (*balsamarium*) from S.Maria Capua Vetere¹³ (Caserta, Italy), the wick has been manufactured using both camel and sheep wool. This is the case of an artefact where different cultural traditions merge in the production centres only to be then diffused to broader areas.

The second class of artefacts that demonstrate to me the mesh of Mediterranean cultures is a particular *colum* (a strainer often found in symposium-related assemblages), with wavy handle (or 'wavy stick' handle), with two or three narrowings of the handle¹⁴, full section, sometimes with ribboned handle, and ring to facilitate hooking, and almost spherical filter (fig. 3). This typology is widespread in the Mediterranean region between the end of the 6th and the whole 5th century BC (especially in tombs and votive deposits¹⁵). The handle can be highly variable in shape, including handles representing birds.

This artefact is usually considered the product of Etruscan metallurgy¹⁶. Some metal and ceramic

11 Pontrandolfo, A., Rouveret, A., 1992. *Le tombe dipinte di Paestum*, pp.300, 402

12 Schauenburg, K., 2003. Studien zur unteritalischen Vasenmalerei, Band VI, Abb.87 a-c III-V, p.33, 137, Verlag Ludwig.

13 Sampaolo, V. et alii, 1996. Analisi sul contenuto di un balsamario proveniente da Capua, *Bollettino di Archeologia del Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali*, pp.161-164.

Sirano, F. 2013. Le rose di Capua. Per l'archeologia del profumo campano dal III secolo a.C.. In *Rosantico natura, bellezza, gusto, profumi. Tra Paestum, Padula e Velia*, pp.69-75

14 Preliminary typological division in: St. Verger, Une passoire en bronze de Puoilly sur-Saone (Cote-d'Or), in *RAE* 43, 1, 1992, pp. 379-385; G. Caramella's classification of Tarquinian strainers (Bini-Caramella-Buccioli 1995, pp. 75-78), note especially type A, with round filter and handle shaped as wavy stick. This type is absent in Kent Hill's study: D.Kent Hill, Wine Ladles and Strainers from Ancient Times, in *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 5, 1942, pp. 41-56.

15 Some examples: Cyprus; Milano (Museo Archeologico INV.443); Como (Ca' Morta Tomba IV/1926, Golasecca culture, 480-440 BC, see: scheda SIRBeC Lombardia Beni Culturali), Bologna (Certosa, tomb 52, Museo Civico); Bologna (Collez. Brunelli); Chiusi (Museo Civico); Vulci (from Tomb 47 del 'Guerriero', dated between 520 and 510, at the Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. 63562), part of an assemblage for symposium, includes objects in metal and bronze: *Civiltà degli etruschi*, Milano 1985, 9.8, 11.21 n.7, pp.248, 300-301); Anagnia; Campovalano (dalla Tomba 1 al Museo Archeologico di Chieti n.inv.5184, with three narrowings of handle: see *Civiltà degli etruschi*, Milano 1985, scheda n.4, p.236 interpreted as Etruscan product exported in Piceno region); Numana (Ancona, Museo Nazionale); Capua; Pompei; Nuceria; Sorrento; Fratte; Ginosa; Rutigliano; Corsica (Aleria, Tombe 102, 142, 155); Fratte (in different variants: excavations 1927, Trincea G, Inv.144a, e dalle tombe: 29/1972, 134/1973); votive deposit of S.Cecilia in the Ernici land, Anagnia (INV.22824), Pompei and Nuceria (National Archaeological Museum of Naples, INVV.:77631, 77632); and Adria (together with bronzes probably from Vulci).

16 Grassi, B., 2000, Capua Preromana. Vasellame e oggetti in bronzo. Artigiani e committenza, *Catalogo del Museo Provinciale Campano*, Volume VIII, pp.71-74, Tav.XVIII, 1-2, Tav.-XIX,1, Roma-Pisa.

I surely agree with Chiara Tarditi, 1996, Vasi di bronzo in area apula. Produzioni greche ed italiche di età arcaica e classica, *Congedo Editore*, pagg.54-56, 140-143.



*Figure.3 Wine Strainer, 5th century BC Hammered, Bronze; 6.3 x 26.3 x 12.1 x 0.1 cm (2 1/2 x 10 3/8 x 4 3/4 x 1/16 in.)
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Transfer from the Alice Corinne McDaniel Collection,
Department of the Classics, Harvard University, 2012.1.58
Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College
Image Number: CARP12520
Accession Number: 2012.1.58*

artefacts from the Levant and ancient Near East, dated earlier, are very similar, especially in the shape of the filter and these may be recognised as prototypes. Another class of artefacts chronologically closer that is comparable is the vase with filter (black gloss pottery) of which survives one example now at the British Museum¹⁷ that has been identified as a Greek product.

This type of *colum* with wavy handle is also found at Ginosa and Rutigliano¹⁸ in Apulia. At Ginosa the vessel is found in contexts with helmets of Corinthian, Apulo-Corinthian and Italic style, with fragments of armour with belt with representations of animals, horse paraphernalia (some elements such as the greaves are certainly imported from Greece), Attic lebetes, basins, olpai, and strainers. The same class of strainer¹⁹ (*colum*) discussed here is clearly identifiable also in its ribboned handle variant, within several depictions on Attic vases (fig. 4-5). All these comparative materials challenge the established Etruscan origin of the shape and suggest a Greek influence, in contexts, as we have seen, of repeated mutual influences for much of the associated artefacts.

I consider it as an integral part of the Greek symposium assemblage together with the crater,

17 See.: AN884542001/Registration Number:1814,0704.631.

Sparkes, B.A., Talcott, L., 1970, L., Black and Plain Pottery of the 6th, 5th, and 4th Centuries B.C., XII, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Morel, J.P., 1981, Céramique campanienne: Les formes, École française de Rome.

18 Ginosa (tomb of Via Vittorio Emanuele 132/1935, with helmets, some Corinthian and some of Italic production, fragments of armour with parts certainly imported from Greece, lebetes probably of Attic production, and several ceramic shapes); Rutigliano (Purgatorio necropolis tomb 24/1977).

19 Beazley Archive, vase number n.205099 from Chiusi, Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco: 3922, attributed to Douris da Hartwig, datata 500-450 a.C.; Lissarrague, F. Vases Grecs. Les Athéniens et leurs images, Hazan 1999, pagg.32-33, figg.20,21,22; Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 432.55; Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Firenze, Regio Museo Archeologico 3, III.I.9, III.I.10, Pls.(1354,1380) 90.1-3, 116.11; Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum: II, Pl.50.GR.187 (A); Lissarrague, F., Greek Vases, The Athenians and their Images (2001): 30-31, Figs.18-22 (colour of I, A, B and part of A); Lissarrague, F., L'Autre Guerrier, Archers, Peltastes, Cavaliers dans l'Imagerie Attique (Paris-Rome, 1990): 142, Fig.81 (drawing of A); Beazley Archive, vase number n.203923 from Vulci al British Museum, attribuito a Brygos P. da Duemmler: Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 1574; Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 371.24, 1649; Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: London, British Museum 9, 55-56, Fig.10D, Pls.(834-835) 58;

Beazley Archive, vase number n.205103 from Chiusi, Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco: V48, Douris by Beazley; Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 432.58; Beazley, J.D., Paralipomena (Oxford, 1971): 374;

Beazley Archive, vase number n.202940 stamnos a New York (NY), Brooklyn Museum: 03.8, Copenhagen P by Beazley; Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 258.22, 1640.



Figure 4 Attic red-figures kylix attributed to Douris (after Lissarrague, F. 1999. *Vases grecs. Les Athéniens et leurs images*, p.32, fig.20)



Figure 5 Attic red-figures kylix attributed to Douris, detail (after Lissarrague, F. 1999. *Vases grecs. Les Athéniens et leurs images*, p.32, fig.20)

oinochoe, amphora, kylix, skyphos, simpulum and sometimes the grater. It is often found in the West and may have been a key component in exporting the ritual outside Greece.

The wavy handle (not the tangled one) seems also to recall the trunk of the vine²⁰ as represented in Attic ceramics²¹ with representations of scenes related to cults of Dionysus or the symposium. This strengthens further my interpretation of a Greek origin of the shape. Many scholars before me have interpreted this class of strainers, but being able to interpret it as evidence of cultural influence within the Mediterranean demonstrates my hypothesis that Mediterranean cultures are so inextricably connected that sometimes we struggle to see similarities and rather attempt to impose forced classifications separating cultures to simplify the task of classification and recognition.

We can think of Mediterranean culture and shared identity as a particular phenomenon that stems from globalisation, or perhaps think that globalisation itself, from antiquity to our time, is only one of the aspects of Mediterranean culture: after all, European states have colonized most of the globe in years gone by and have probably set the stage for globalisation.

As it may be, we cannot ignore the Mediterranean. It is fundamental to understand who we are. It is also a fundamental component of the dynamics of the present-day European and Mediterranean societies, which still provokes influences and clashes that must be addressed by our present multicultural society, as past societies had to deal before us, because there is no fully independent culture. There is no single culture and rather clusters of cultures, in which any culture sits. The vitality and dynamicity of our present-day societies do not allow for static cultures, but the origin of this situation is very old indeed.

20 See: the painted decoration on the handles of a large amphora produced in Chios in the Tomb 992 from San Marzano sul Sarno (Sarno valley, Campania) and similar type in the Tomb 397 from the necropolis of San Montano/Pithecura (D'Anna, R.A., Pacciarelli, M., Rota, L., 2007, *Una tomba di alto rango dell'VIII secolo a.C. da San Marzano sul Sarno, Gli Etruschi e la Campania settentrionale, Atti del XXVI Convegno di Studi Etruschi e Italici*, 591-601).

21 Beazley Archive, vase number n. 7306, dated between 550-500 BC, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1982.1097, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*: 1 (1982), 140-43, FIGS.1-6;
Beazley Archive, vase number n. 14435, dated between 550-500 BC, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*: Rodi, Museo Archeologico Dello Spedale Dei Cavalieri 1, III.H.E.3, PL.(435) 3.1-3, View Whole CVA Plates;
Beazley Archive, vase number n.301323, dated between 550-500 BC, Boston (MA), Museum of Fine Arts: 01.80.52, Beazley, J.D., *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956): 242.35, 259.26.

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