The *mundus muliebris* within Lucanian society: Tales of women and social life from sanctuaries and *necropoleis*

Mundus muliebris dans la société lucanienne : les femmes et la vie sociale d’après les sanctuaires et les nécropoles

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The *mundus muliebris* within Lucanian society: Tales of women and social life from sanctuaries and *necropoleis*  

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1. Introduction*

This chapter considers the social status of women in ancient Lucania as it is mirrored in the votive offerings and ritual instruments from sanctuaries and in the grave goods from *necropoleis*. In contrast with the studies of the Greek world, in which questions concerning women and gender are fully established as mainstream research topics, gender as an analytical category has not received the same attention in the field of indigenous societies and material culture of Magna Graecia, with the exception of a few studies mainly dealing with Prehistoric age.¹

In modern archaeological research sacred objects have been usually approached from a mere religious perspective. Only recently more attention has been paid to symbolic and cultural manifestations of gender, and to the intertwining character of gender and the types of votive dedications.² In this perspective, the votive objects are considered as connoting difference within the ancient societies. They can be read secondly as gender markers, and thirdly, in societies in which gender makes social roles, as social markers. A crucial tool of gender attribution in

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¹ *Archaeology of gender* is a well established field. Introductions on the principle themes concerning this type of approach to the archaeological record can be found in Bacus *et al.*, 1993, Conkey, Gero, 1991; Brown, 1997; Díaz-Andreu *et al.*, 2005; Nelson, 2007; Whitehouse, 2007. On the development of this research topic in Italian archaeology see Whitehouse, 1998; Bietti Sestieri, 2008, p. 133-37.

² This type of approach is more common in Prehistoric archaeology. For Italian contexts see Baldoni, 1993 (Spina and *Forentum*); Luttikhuizen, 2000 (middle-Adriatic Italy); Von Eles, 2007 (with articles dealing with the entire peninsula); Pontrandolfo, 1998 (Lucania); Bietti Sestieri, 2008 (Osteria dell’Osa).
ancient societies is the sure association of some types of objects (and then symbols, namely the idea that these objects symbolize) with sex. Such association is made possible merely through the connection of objects with sexed burials. This premise explains the comparative approach of this research. Archaeological material from sanctuaries is compared with grave goods found in contemporary funerary contexts. In current literature on the indigenous world of Magna Graecia and in those few publications in which some attention has been paid to gender and social organisation, scholars have generally taken for granted that a strict division of roles between male and female components of society existed. In particular, there is a general acceptance on the fact that men conducted their activities outdoors, while women were indoors. Furthermore, scholars agree that some typically male social activities, such as the symposion, were precluded to women, according to a model that is well known in the Greek world. Referring in particular to the Lucanian world, this trend is clearly detectable even in the most recent publications on sanctuaries and ritual practices, as well as in the publications of the contemporary necropoleis. The research question is whether the generally accepted division of roles between women and men in Lucanian society is so clear as it has been described in studies of the sanctuaries. A more careful analysis of burial contexts seems to challenge this view.

After an introduction to the political and social context of the material evidence we are dealing with, we will present a picture of ritual practices, as they are mirrored in material evidence from sanctuaries, and then a selective analysis of contemporary burial contexts. Finally, a cross reading of the analysed data allows critical considerations of Lucanian social structure.

2. Historical framework: the emergence of Lucanian ethnos and the appearance of sanctuaries

The arrival of Oscan-Samnite populations streaming in from the Samnite mountains to the Southern peninsula at the end of the fifth century BCE, gave birth, in the region that acquired its name (figure 1), to the “Lucanian” ethnos. All that we know about the Lucanians is mainly based on archaeological evidence, which provides us with an image of Lucanian society as a hierarchical and socially stratified entity, having its political base in elite families who created a sort of oligarchy. Leading groups are particularly well attested in the funerary record thanks to a number of “princely” tombs uncovered in the territory. These notable examples of elite burials embody the prestige of the families who were at the summit of Lucanian society. The well known tombs of Laos, Armento, and Poseidonia are characterized by the presence of extremely

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3 All dates are BCE, unless otherwise noted.
5 Written sources that deal with the presence of Alexander the Molossian in southern Italy (around the last quarter of the fourth century) refer to some groups of Lucanians who sided with him and some groups who did not, a differentiation that can reflect a division of oligarchic Lucanian families. In addition, sources mention some hostages given to Alexander by three hundred aristocratic families (Livy VIII, 24; Justin XII, 2).
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rare, precious objects (vases, jewellery, and weapons) that reflect the economic and social level of the deceased.6

Along with the oligarchies, during the fourth century, “intermediate”7 groups of landowners settled throughout the rural landscape of the region. The appearance of these groups coincided with the introduction of a new type of land tenure, based on single-family groups. The archaeological record reveals the important role that these groups played within Lucanian society, through a number of residential complexes and farmhouses excavated in the territory. In a passage that is crucial to our understanding of the political organization of the Lucanians, Strabo states that they used to elect a supreme leader (basileus) during times of war.8 On the basis of this information, scholars speculate that Lucanian communities were characterized by a sort of “military democracy” (using a definition by E. Lepore).9 Following Strabo’s account, it can be hypothesized that the Lucanian leading groups used to elect a basileus during times of war, entirely consistent with ancient monarchic patterns.10

The model of a “military democracy” involving the basileis is constructed in the armour discovered in princely tombs, including the aforementioned examples of Laos, Armento, and Poseidonia, and in the tomb paintings at Poseidonia (dating back to the earliest generations of Lucanians in the city), which represent the scene of the “warrior’s return”.11 After death, the male adult personage, who had played a leading role within his social group, was represented as a “warrior,” and this status was symbolically conveyed via his armour and his depiction as a warrior on the grave slabs.12

It is in this social and political scenario that the settlement pattern of Lucania undertook a profound transformation. Despite the unique features of each settlement area, it is still possible to assert that this renovated landscape was quite homogeneous. The necropoleis were located separately from the “world of the living”, nucleated settlements appeared on the hilltops and were often fortified, while the surrounding countryside was densely occupied either by isolated habitations or by small clusters of dwellings. Another element of this renovated landscape is a network of cult places that, set apart from the habitation spaces, were strategically located at the crossroads of the most important communication routes.13 These sanctuaries became centres of political aggregation of the Lucanian communities, the space in which the collectivity reunites itself for all the social manifestations that, in urban entities, usually are performed within the

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6 For Laos cf. Guzzo, Luppino, 1980, p. 821-914. A lavish tomb was found at Armento in 1814. The only item that is still preserved from this tomb is a golden crown. Nevertheless, the excavation report mentions also a statuette, a candelabrum, and some silver vases, which were destroyed during the investigation: cf. De Julius, 1989, p. 443-44. For Poseidonia see Pontrandolfo, Rouveret, 1992.
7 This term translates Torelli’s definition of Lucanian groups as “gruppi intermedi”: Torelli, 1993, p. XIV.
8 Strabo 6.1.3, C 254.
9 Lepore, 1975, p. 53.
10 Torelli, 1993; Bottini, 1999, p. 431.
13 On the Lucanian settlement system, with a special focus on the role of the sanctuaries, see Masseria, 2000; Isayev, 2007 (with references).
city space. For this role, which is not just religious, the sacred places thus represent a precious source of information for our knowledge of the society that gave birth to them.

3. The archaeological data

3.1. Material evidence from sanctuaries

Beyond the differences in the various sacred places in Lucania, it does not seem exaggerated to say that the overall panorama of votive offerings and ritual practices is basically homogenous. The most common votive offerings are terracotta figurines with a prevalence of female images; nonetheless, other types of offerings are attested in different percentages including: weapons, ornamental objects, and miniature pottery. Other types of ritual activities are animal sacrifices and sympotic practices. There is a clear functional specialisation of some types of votive offerings, whose symbolic function is secondary to their original function. These may be considered, according to J.-P. Morel's definition, as votives par transformation: the object, initially produced for other purposes, turned into a sacred object at the moment that it was offered. Given their original practical character, such items provide us with an excellent source of information on the spheres of competence of the female and male components of society. An offering of arms (spear points, knives, swords, etc.) alludes to military skill and war, which were important basic values for males in Lucanian society (figure 2). At times the allusion to war in the votive dedications is merely symbolic, and the arms offered are miniatures. Along with bronze sword belts, these objects make up the panoply of typical Lucanian tombs of the fifth, fourth, and third centuries, belonging to high ranking individuals from communities in the region, in other words, the dominant groups that were identified by the highest role that could be given to a man, that of a warrior. The practice of dedicating arms is well known all over Greece and Magna Graecia, sometimes to thank a deity for a military victory, and at other times as a gift from an individual, who chose it as an object to represent his role in the society, according to the same mechanisms of self-representation that it is possible to find in funeral rites. Whereas, the leading groups of Lucanian society characterized themselves as devoted to warfare, they also tended to identify themselves in terms of land ownership. In this respect, offerings of work tools (mainly agricultural tools) can be considered as a reference to possession of land and the pride that it generates. Alternatively, these objects might be read as a sort of retirement offering of instruments offered by persons at the end of their working lives, thus reflecting the work and activities with which these worshippers identified themselves. Whatever reading is correct, working tools are considered as a reference to male activities, as they allude to working the land.

If the values of the masculine world are linked to concepts of military life and land ownership, the parallel multifaceted women's world or mundus muliebris is epitomized in Lucanian sanctuaries by typically feminine activities: house care, body care, and feminine

16 Rouse, 1902, p. 95-118.
17 Battiloro, Osanna, forthcoming.
18 Rouse, 1902, p. 70-71.
beauty. All these activities took place within domestic boundaries. We can attribute the offering of the loom weight, *instrumentum domesticum* par excellence, to spinning, the most typical feminine domestic activity. Although these were common offerings in both Italiote and indigenous sanctuaries across southern Italy, the meaning of such items in sacred contexts is fairly controversial, so much so that some scholars doubt that they are actually offerings and instead lean towards a more practical interpretation.\(^{19}\) Probably, in some cases, like the agricultural tools just mentioned, it is possible that some of the loom weights unearthed were first used in domestic environments and then offered inside the sanctuaries. Other weights, including some miniatures, have been conceived right from the beginning as votive offerings.\(^{20}\) In any case, their most immediate ideological link is to the female world.\(^{21}\) A gift of such implements might conceal the devotee’s desire to speak of herself by leaving an object that symbolised her activities and abilities in the domestic sphere that were distinct from male activities that took place beyond the home. Publications about Lucanian sanctuaries report a limited number of loom weights among finds, with the only exception being the Armento sanctuary.\(^{22}\) This place is generally interpreted as a sanctuary dedicated to Herakles, and the significant presence of loom weights is explained as a gift that is more than justified to the god of transhumance (through the intrinsic link that these objects have with wool spinning).\(^{23}\)

Other typically feminine objects, often made of precious metals, relate to another aspect of the women’s world, namely beauty and body care.\(^{24}\) The sanctuaries where the largest number of ornamental objects were found are Timmari (bronze and silver fibulae), Colla di Rivello (bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and rings) (figure 4), as well as Rossano (bronze fibulae).\(^{25}\)

The role of women, who were basically confined to domestic boundaries, seems to be reflected also in some types of terracotta figurines. In addition to coroplastic types, which are undoubtedly interpreted as representations of a deity, such as the case of the so called “enthroned goddess” types, manufactured in Poseidonia (seen frequently in sanctuaries such as those at

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19 Loom weights found in sacred places have been interpreted, for example, as having been used to seal objects offered to the deity: Mingazzini, 1974, p. 206-11.
20 See A. Sofroniew’s contribution to the present volume.
22 Fabbri, 1979, p. 406, n. 146 (Ruoti, Fontana Bona); Lo Porto, 1991, p. 169, n. 252 (Timmari); Bottini, 1997, 243, n. 45 (Grumento, San Marco); Barra Bagnasco, Russo Tagliente, 1996, p. 186-90 (Chiaromonte); Lo Monaco, 2005, p. 390 f. (Torre di Satriano); Russo Tagliente, 2000, passim.
23 Di Giuseppe, 2000, p. 141.
24 In considering the presence of metal objects in sanctuary contexts, it should be remembered that they could be melted and the material reused. This could be one of the reasons that these items are much rarer than those made of clay.
Ruoti, Colla di Rivello, and Torre di Satriano), the most frequently attested types of figured terracottas in Lucanian sanctuaries can be read as depictions of dedicants.  

Examples of these figurines are the draped sitting female figures with a so called “step” structure (the figure has no base, and was probably meant to sit on a support made of wood), a derivative of the “Tarantine” type, which was widespread in the Lucanian area between the fourth and the first half of the third century, as attested by the numerous discoveries in sacred sites at Timmari (figure 3), Chiaromonte-San Pasquale, Grumento, Colla di Rivello, and Accettura. In this case, the lack of a throne and *polos* could indicate that the seated figures are meant to represent those making the offerings, there identified themselves with the deity. Some statuettes are completely draped with no special characteristics; more often they hold offerings including: the fan, the mirror, the ball, an animal (swans, doves, hares, etc.), a tympanon, a fruit, the *kalathos* with fruits or wool balls. Most of these attributes are clearly linked to female activities and women’s role within the society. The ball and tympanon, for instance, are symbols of the adolescents’ world which the young girl has to leave forever when she gets married; the flower refers to the virginal status of the girls which changed with the marriage; the *kalathos*, a wool basket, is a reference to the spinning activity; the mirror and fan refer to concepts of feminine beauty. Some attributes, therefore, refer to the celebration of the passage to adulthood, which is, of course, the most important step to enable people to finally perform their social and productive roles in society. Whereas men who pass to the status of adulthood are considered able to participate in war, women can perform their societal role on the occasion of marriage. This role is connected with reproduction and house care. This passage of status is also symbolized in some coroplastic types of seated female figures with veiled head. The veil alludes to the protection exercised by the divinity on the delicate passage from the status of virginal *kore* to that of the *nympha*. The celebration of the role of mother, which is the most fundamental
role played by women in ensuring the continuation of the offspring, is generally embodied in the statuettes of *kourotrophoi*.\(^{34}\)

The generally accepted association of the *symposion* with male components of society is in line with this picture of social organization. The crucial role of the *symposion* in constructing identities in Lucanian society is testified by its importance in all the sacred places. At the archaeological level, this practice is attested by the discovery of pottery that was used both for preparing and consuming food, and for pouring and drinking wine. Kitchen ceramics and common ware were used to prepare and preserve food within the sanctuary area. Whereas these vases were not necessarily votive offerings, nonetheless they document the practice of having common dining within the sacred area. The same can be said about the fine ware (unpainted and black glaze pottery), as well as painted pottery, which were both used for rituals and offered to gods.

All the Lucanian sanctuaries have yielded evidence of dining sets, which were basically composed by forms of red-figure pottery and black-glaze pottery; the black-glaze pottery is found most often in open shapes (bowls, *phialai*, *skyphoi*), and less commonly in closed shapes (such as *oinochoai*). Kraters were always red-figure. The most remarkable example to illustrate this trend is the sanctuary of Timmari, at Lamia San Francesco. Here the black-glaze pottery is characterized by a remarkable prevalence of open forms (*kylikes*, one-handled cups, *skyphoi*, dishes), while the two kraters found are red-figure.\(^{35}\) At Rossano of Vaglio, which is the biggest sanctuary in Lucania, the black glaze pottery has a significant prevalence for open shapes (*skyphoi*), while probably the pitcher was unpainted.\(^{36}\) Such prevalence of open forms in fine ware is also attested at Rivello, loc. San Pasquale, and San Chirico Nuovo, loc. Pila.\(^{37}\) At Chiaromonte, loc. San Pasquale, the importance of the *symposion* is testified by the remarkable amount of black-glaze pottery, with a prevalence of cups and *skyphoi*. Furthermore, the practice of preparing and consuming meals is also attested by the discovery of animal bones near two hearths.\(^{38}\)

### 3. 2. The material evidence from necropoleis

The Lucanian necropoleis all date back to a chronological range that spans from the end of the fifth century to the beginning of the third century, and they present common traits with regard to topographical location, as well as composition of grave good sets. On a topographical level, they are constituted by different nuclei, which pertain to diverse familiar groups and are organized around one or more central tombs. Type, number, and association of objects reveal a complex social organisation at both vertical and horizontal levels, which is reflected in a differentiation that involves not only sex and roles but also rank.

Male burials are characterized in particular by the presence of weapons and vases for *symposion* (krater and recipients for the consumption of wine), which portray the man like

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\(^{34}\) Cf. a statuette of *kourotrophos* from the Rossano di Vaglio sanctuary: Adamesteanu, Dilthey, 1992, p. 51, fig. 49.

\(^{35}\) Vita, 2011; Mandić, 2011.

\(^{36}\) Mutino, 2011, p. 258.


\(^{38}\) Barra Bagnasco, 2001, p. 274.
warrior and protagonist of the political and social life (of the community). Instead, female tombs contain items, which define the deceased as a gentlewoman (ornamental and make-up objects), wife (lebes gamikòs or wedding bowl), mistress and keeper of house (loom weights and others spinning tools). Both in male and female tombs, the lead or iron set formed by spits, fire dogs and sometimes by candelabrum and knife are found.

In publications on the Lucanian necropoleis, scholars consider this evidence as proof of the clear-cut distinction between the male and female worlds, one related to outdoor activities, while the other is connected to indoor activities.\(^\text{39}\) The only exception is the lead or iron set, which is interpreted as a reference to the oikos, the basis of Lucanian social structure.\(^\text{40}\)

The identification of sex and social roles is mainly based on the analysis of grave goods, while laboratory analyses of skeletons have been rarely conducted.\(^\text{41}\) Nonetheless, despite the fact that the examination of the painted images and grave goods is generally not supported by anthropological analysis of bones, Paestum provides an excellent case study on account of the comprehensive publication of its contexts.\(^\text{42}\) At Paestum the Lucanian tombs are located in the areas that were planned as necropolis in the colony of Poseidonia, outside the circuit wall, north and south of the city itself.\(^\text{43}\) They are constituted by different nuclei, which pertain to diverse familiar groups, and are organized around one or more central tombs. They can be dated from the end of the fifth century to the beginning of the third century (concomitantly to the Lucanian domain of the city).\(^\text{44}\) The analysis of the grave goods reveals a strong similarity to other necropoleis in Lucania, excluding some peculiar traits. The presence of paintings and various objects document the complex social structure of the local elite.\(^\text{45}\)

The examination of the data concerning both tomb paintings and grave goods has brought scholars to hypothesize that a definite distinction existed between male and female spheres. According to the most widely accepted view, indeed, the scene of either warrior’s or horseman’s return, who is welcomed by a woman who hands him the object for libation (skyphos or phiale), as well as the representation of chariots races, can be understood as referring to the male sphere. In a similar vein, the depicted objects—weapons frieze, vases for symposion or libation—complete the sets of grave goods which were factually deposited in the tombs. Conversely, the

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41 The analysis of skeletal remains is rarely adopted for the study of Lucanian burials, as for example the tombs excavated in 1970 by A. Russo at San Martino d’Agri, which were published in 2007 (Russo et al., 2007, p. 23-78; Russo, Vicari Sottosanti, 2009, p. 1-25) and Roccalvecchia (necropolis of La Scala) (Gualtieri, 1990a).
43 In particular, the sites of Andriuolo, Arcioni, Laghetto (northward), Santa Venera, Licinella, and Spinazzo (southward). Furthermore there are the necropoleis of Tempa del Prete, Linora, Gaudio, Vannullo, Contrada Vecchia di Agropoli and Albanella, which are connected to farms.
45 On painted tombs see: Pontrandolfo, Rouveret, 1992; Pontrandolfo, Rouveret, 1996, p. 159-65; Pontrandolfo et al., 2004.
scenes of *prothesis*, *gynaeceron*, and—among the funerary games—the struggle scenes, can be only attributed to the female sphere.\(^\text{46}\)

Thus, among the objects found in burials, vases for *symposia* (in particular the krater, which is frequently replaced with the neck amphora and vessels for the consumption of wine), weapons and armour should be exclusively typical of male graves, while *lebes gamikós*, *oinochoai*, *hydrias*, and ornamental objects should be proper of female tombs.\(^\text{47}\)

Whereas this reconstruction is correct in its general lines, some seem to contradict it. The slabs from the Andriuolo Tomb 61 (which is female) show a duel scene (eastern slab), a frieze of weapons and a horseman (southern slab), two men greeting each other (western slab), and a procession (northern slab). On this last slab, in particular, men who probably belonged to the family group of the deceased are depicted and distinguished by age.\(^\text{48}\) Current scholarship interprets these scenes as representations that express the deceased’s rank, which is stressed through the representation of the male component of the familiar group.\(^\text{49}\)

The Andriuolo Tomb 51 (which is male) is also worth discussing. Vases connected to the *symposion* were deposited alongside the deceased (neck amphora, red-figure *kylix*, and black glaze *phiale*), along with a bronze belt and strigil, iron spear and knife, and a clay loom weight, usually connected to weaving and the female world.\(^\text{50}\) The scenes painted on the slabs refer, however, to the female sphere. On the eastern slabs there is a scene of funerary *prothesis*, which pertains to a dead woman (figure 5).\(^\text{51}\) Following the same argument, which has been proposed for Tomb 61, it seems plausible that in this case the male deceased represented himself through the female component of the family. An investigation of the composition of single grave goods sets reveals that neck amphorae are also present in female tombs (Andriuolo Tombs 23, 52, 1/1971, 24/1971).\(^\text{52}\)

The same results come from the Paestan territory. In this respect, the female Tomb 246 in the Gaudio necropolis is emblematic. It is located in the middle of the nucleus of tombs that belong to the family group.\(^\text{53}\) As in male tombs discovered at the same site, it contains a bell krater and a column krater, placed at the feet of the deceased; the latter krater also containing a *skyphos*, a *kylix* and a black-glaze pot.\(^\text{54}\) Finally, in the lavish tomb in the locality of Contrada

\(^{49}\) Pontrandolfo, Rouveret, 1996, p. 160.
\(^{50}\) Guarneri, 2006, p. 137-43.
\(^{53}\) The tombs can be dated between the second half of the fifth century and the first quarter of the fourth century and are organized in distinct nuclei. Cipriani, 1996, p. 119-58; Cipriani, 2000, p. 197-212.
\(^{54}\) On Tomb 246 see Cipriani, 1996, p. 137, 143-44 n. 50; Cipriani, 2000, p. 206-207 (nevertheless, according to Cipriani, within this necropolis the krater does not have any connection to *symposion* ideology: Cipriani, 2000, p. 201).
Vecchia di Agropoli, in addition to the usual lebes gamikós, a neck amphora has been found.\textsuperscript{55} Such exceptions may be found also in other Lucanian necropoleis: Roccagloriosa in western Lucania and Montemurro in Val d’Agri.

Roccagloriosa provides us with very significant suggestions for the research at hand. In the area of La Scala, which is located southwards of theItalic settlement, twenty-two tombs have been discovered, and all of them belong to leading groups. These tombs are distinguished in three nuclei, which are separated by walls (figure 6.1).\textsuperscript{56} Typologies of the grave goods attest to the complex structure of the local aristocracies. Beyond the usual deposition of weapons and vases for symposia in male burials, and of ornamental objects and wedding vases in female burials, sometimes there is a coexistence of male and female symbolic elements in both men’s and women’s burials.\textsuperscript{57} In this respect, Tombs 13 and 14 (in the southern enclosure of the burial area) are particularly important. Tomb 13 belongs to a male adult, and contains a belt and a bronze strainer, many fragments of melted lead (probably part of spits and fire dogs), an iron knife, vases for symposia (skyphos, askós, small cups, amphora), two miniature clay pomegranates and two clay objects in the shape of a snake.\textsuperscript{58} Tomb 14 belongs to a female.\textsuperscript{59} Besides gold and bronze ornamental objects, it contains a kylíx, a skyphos, and an iron knife, as in Tomb 13.\textsuperscript{60}

In the northern enclosure of the same burial area, Tombs 23 and 24 (which are male and female, respectively) document a situation similar to that found in the southern enclosure. They represent the fulcrum around which the remaining tombs were organized.\textsuperscript{61} As in the abovementioned cases, the grave goods from Tomb 23 include a bronze belt and vases for symposia (a skyphos and two wine amphoras).\textsuperscript{62} Conversely, the grave goods from Tomb 24 are a lebes gamikós, a bronze phialé, a miniature coarse ware vessel, two double-handled ollai, and an Apulian red-figure neck amphora. Finally, there is a knife.\textsuperscript{63} This tomb has been reexamined

55 This tomb hosted two different burials, one male and one female, which were almost contemporary (c. 350-340). They had both lavish grave goods. In the first one, a neck amphora, two kylíkes, one strigil and one iron blade were placed; in the second, besides the mentioned items, there was also one hydria, four phialai, and many miniature clay fruits. Cf. Bottini, Greco, 1974-1975, p. 231-74; Pontrandolfo, Rouvieret, 1992, p. 372-76.


57 Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 174-76.


59 Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 166.

60 There was also a red-figure lekane, a glass alabastron, two shells: Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 166-67.

61 Bone analysis demonstrates that the inhabitants of these two tombs were older than forty years of age on death. The other tombs of this burial group (Tombs 19, 20, 21, 25) belong to first and second generations. Maurizio Gualtieri and Helena Fracchia believe that these tombs belong to a single family, whose leaders were buried in Tombs 23 and 24. Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 169-72; Fracchia, 2011.

62 Beyond the mentioned objects, there was also a black glaze guttus and a common pottery lamp. Cf. Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 170-71; Fracchia, Gualtieri, 2004, p. 307-23; Fracchia, 2011.

63 Among the grave goods there were many red-figure vases (one skyphos, one hydria from the Roccanova Painter, and one lekythos), and black glaze vases (six small cups and one askós): Gualtieri, 1990a, p. 171-72; Fracchia, Gualtieri, 2004, p. 307; Fracchia, 2011.
recently by Helena Fracchia, who considers the symbolic connection of these grave goods with
the painted scene on the neck amphora, which depicts Niobe as she is turned to stone in front
of her father, Tantalus, and her brother, Pelops (figure 6.2). The choice of the myth of Niobe
is not accidental, but it is a precise reflection of rank and role of the dead woman, who is depicted
as a “queen”. The small olla, which symbolizes the food that was offered during the funerary
ceremony, the bronze phiale, which is connected to libation, and the knife, which was used for
sacrifices, testify to the role of the deceased as a priestess. In this respect the choice of the neck
amphora, which is generally considered a typical male object for its sympotic function (at least
at Paestum), is very significant, as we will discuss below.

At Montemurro, fifteen tombs have been found in the area of Fosso Concetta and
Vracalicchio, and belong to four sepulchral nuclei. Tombs 5 and 8 are worth mentioning.
Tomb 5 pertains to a male adult, buried with two bronze belts. While the deceased wore one
belt, the other one was deposed at his side and can be interpreted as war trophy. Furthermore,
the burial contained vases used for the symposion: krater, skyphos, phialai, but also a bronze
grater, which is a clear reference to the sympotic practice of aromatizing wine with cheese and
other foods such as honey and barley meal. There was also a lead set, with miniature spits, fire
dogs, candelabrum, and knife. Such a group of objects is generally interpreted as a reference to
the domestic world, as noted above, as are other grave goods deposited in the same tomb—a
clay bun, a cookie, cheese, a grape, a honeycomb, and a fig. This food refers to the productive
activities that were probably part of the economic horizon of the dead: sheep farming and
cheese production, cultivation of fruit trees, and cereal growing.

Tomb 8, a female burial, is characterized by exceptional grave goods, namely thirty objects
placed at the sides and feet of the deceased. Along with the vases that are typical of the female
sphere—lebes gamikos, pxyis, and alabastron—there are also vases that were used in symposion—
krater, amphora, kantharos, small cups, phialai, and a large nestoris. Furthermore, even this tomb
contains a candelabrum and the lead fire dogs. The only ornamental object found in it is a silver
fibula.

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64 According to Fracchia this ceremony was probably performed in the domestic cult place that has
been discovered in the so-called “Complex A” in Roccagloriosa: Fracchia, Gualtieri, 2004, p. 307-23;
Fracchia, 2011. On the Roccagloriosa settlement, see: Gualtieri, 1990b, p. 45-100; Gualtieri 1990c,
p. 203-18; Gualtieri, 2001a, p. 61-78; Gualtieri, 2001b, p. 280-96.
67 This custom is attested since Homeric age: Hom., Il. XI, 638-41; Hom., Od. X, 234-35.
68 Bottini, 1992, p. 29; Bottini, 1997, p. 83. On this subject Perretti, 2006, p. 66. The grave goods found
in this tomb were black-glaze ceramics, among which there was one pelike, one skyphos, two phialai, six
69 Bottini, 1997, p. 95.
70 There are also many red-figure vases (among which two lekythoi, two bottles, one pelike), and black
glaze vases (among which one pitcher, one phiale, and one bottle): Bottini, 1997, p. 93, 97-112.
4. Synthesis

Before proposing observations on the role of women in ancient Lucania, it seems worth reiterating the key points of this research, which have been illustrated in the previous pages. First, the most common votive offerings which were dedicated in sanctuaries refer to either male or female activities, which, generally speaking, took place outdoors (the first) and indoors (the second). While the dedication of arms and working tools refers to the male component of Lucanian society, conversely ornamental objects and working tools used for spinning and other domestic activities are ideologically linked to the world of women. On the basis of this evidence, scholars generally agree that a clear-cut division of roles between men and women existed in Lucanian society. This division is materially and ideologically reflected in votive and ritual activities attested in sacred places, showing women being relegated to domestic boundaries.

Nonetheless, current publications on Lucanian archaeology are often not consistent in the interpretation of women’s social roles. For example, in the publication of the farm of Montemurro the authors highlight a distinction between male and female roles, but they also consider an eventual participation of women to banquet and symposion practices as a possibility. Focusing on a large sized red-figure skyphos found in one of the rooms of the farm, scholars suppose that this pottery shape, which is also commonly found in female tombs, should have had a mere symbolic value as simple expression of rank and social privileges of women. They therefore argue that women’s participation in symptotic activities should have been limited to those rituals (such as libation) that immediately preceded the symposion itself. Given that no krater was discovered in the farm, and skyphoi and cups are the only attested forms for wine, the above mentioned red-figure skyphos seems to have played the same function as the krater, as it was the peculiar vase for symposion. The wide diffusion of this pottery form in different contexts (houses, tombs, sanctuaries) may demonstrate that the assimilation of Greek categories and symbols into indigenous cultures was not merely “passive,” as it involved a large range of connotations and meanings, which are not always understandable for us.

Following on these observations, our research focuses on the problematic issue of symptotic practice within sanctuaries, which played a crucial role in Lucanian sacred places and in constructing social identities. We have noted repeatedly that scholars take for granted that women were excluded from such practice, probably also on the basis of the comparison with the Greek world. Yet evidence from burials challenges the generally accepted theories on symposion in sanctuaries. The presence of symptotic vases in female tombs—for example, the krater in Tomb 8 at Montemurro, and the neck amphoras discovered at Roccagloriosa and Paestum—

71 For the farm see Russo, 2006. For toys see Guarneri, 2006.
72 Russo et al., 2006, p. 151.
73 Russo et al., 2006, p. 150-53.
74 Russo et al., 2006, p. 151. Conversely, M.C. D’Ercole argues that the presence of symposion vases and banquet objects in female tombs has to be referred to private sphere. These objects should be considered as status symbols and signs of the affiliation of the deceased to the oikos: D’Ercole, 1999, p. 467-70.
support the suggestion that women were allowed to attend symposia. Given that these are all high level tombs, it is worth considering whether a wider role of women in sympotic rituals should be considered, at least for high ranking women. This hypothesis seems corroborated by the function that it is possible to attribute to the skyphos in the Lucanian world, namely that the skyphos appears to have a wider role in Lucania than in Greece, where its utilisation is strictly connected to categories of socially marginalized people (especially women and ephebes). It is attested in both male and female burials, and it represents the most widespread pottery shape for wine within both funerary and domestic contexts, in particular in Val d'Agri and in the Mercure-Lao Valley. Representative cases are the Montemurro Necropolis, where it is the most commonly found vase, as well as the Piani Parete farm which is located in the same area. Similarly, the skyphos is widely documented in the Sant'Evaso settlement, in the territory of Castelluccio, as well as among the pottery found in the kiln discovered at Piani di Pignataro, in the Rivello territory. This evidence seems to confirm that a wider use of the skyphos was common in Lucania, without any sex distinction. Similar reasoning can be applied to the lead set—fire dogs, spits, and candelabra—as expressions of the oikos. We conversely argue that they can be considered symbolic of the ritual banquet, which the dead were allowed to attend. The miniature clay terracottas that represent food might also be considered as referring to household activities, and as symbols of votive offerings. Our analysis of this data encourages us to take a nuanced view of the polarity of "male-female" components, which appears stronger from the analysis of votive offerings. Without denying that domestic activities were mainly women's domain, we nevertheless think that gender identities and roles in Lucanian archaeology should be problematised. Given the presence in female burials of objects that refer to activities traditionally understood as male—symposium and ritual meals—and given also that sympotic practices are well attested in sacred places, we question whether women may have played an active role in these practices within the sanctuaries themselves. In other words, we conjecture that women's social function in Lucanian society was wider than the role usually attributed to them by scholars on the basis of partial archaeological record. What has appeared as a marked division of roles between male and female components of Lucanian

75 In general, only some vases to pour (such as oinochoai and skyphoi) are considered as proper to female tombs, as vases connected to libation rites. Cf. Pontrandolfo, Rouweret, 1996, p. 159; Pontrandolfo, 1998, p. 130; Russo et al., 2006, p. 151-52. On libation, see Lissarrague, 1995; Simon, 2004 (with references).
76 On this topic, see Batino, 2002; Schipporeit, 2005a; Schipporeit, 2005b.
77 Bottini, 1992, p. 27. See, in general, Russo, 2006. On the presence of skyphoi on this farm see Russo et al., 2006.
78 On the Sant'Evaso settlement: Bottini, 1988, p. 184-97, esp. 186; Bottini, 1998, p. 171-73. On the Castelluccio Territory: Bottini, 1988, p. 170; Bottini, 1998, p. 85-101. In the same area, Tomb 1 at Masseria Pettinato and Tomb 4 in the southern necropolis are worth mentioning, which are both female burials. An oversized skyphos was used as a sort of marker on the top of Tomb 1, while two normal sized skyphoi were located on the top of Tomb 4: Bottini, 1988, p. 61-64; 68-83.
80 It is worth stressing that in Oenotrian funerary contexts the presence of metal sets in tombs is considered as referring to the ritual banquet for the deceased, in contrast to what is commonly believed for the Lucanian age: Bianco, 1996, p. 110; Bottini, 1998, p. 49, note 3.
society has to be better understood as a modern construction that is a direct consequence of the preconceived scholarly notion of the female role in Lucanian society rather than reflection of social relations attested by the evidence.

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Figure 2. Weapons from Rossano di Vaglio. Drawing after Nardelli, 2011.
Figure 3. Seated figurines from Timmari, after Piccioloni, 2011.
Figure 4. Ornamental objects from Rivello, after Greco (ed.), 1981.

Figure 5. Paestum, Tomb 51 Andriuolo: 1. Eastern slab with præthasis scene (detail); 2. Drawing of eastern and western slabs. Drawing after Portandolfîo, Rouveret, 1992.
Figure 6. Roccagloriosa, La Scala:
1. Map of necropolis;