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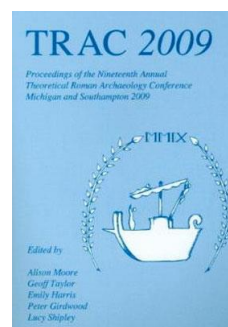
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Beyond the Warlike Samnites: Rethinking Grave Goods, Gender Relations and Social Practice in Ancient Samnium (Italy)

Rafael Scopacasa

Introduction

This paper aims to contribute to the changing image of society and culture in ancient Samnium (central Apennine Italy) by analysing the social practices of men and women expressed through the mortuary evidence. The area of Samnium, which includes present-day Molise, south Abruzzo, north Campania and northwest Puglia (Fig. 1), is described in ancient literary sources as the homeland of the Samnites, who are portrayed in these texts as an enduring warlike people. Ancient authors describe the Samnites as clad in splendid and abundant armour, strongly resisting Roman encroachment during the so-called ‘Samnite Wars’ of the late fourth and early third centuries B.C., in which the Romans were ultimately victorious (e.g. Diodorus: 19.10.1; Livy: 7.29–33, 10.31; Strabo: 5.4.11, Frontinus: *Strat.* 2.1.8, 2.4.1; Pliny the Elder: 3.106–107; Silius Italicus: 10.309–315). The continued legacy of these literary portrayals is still apparent in many current interpretations of the archaeological evidence from Samnium. One assumed characteristic of communities in the region is the centrality of warfare, with an emphasis on the role of men as warriors while women are consigned to household activities (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1980; 1981; Saulnier 1983; Tagliamonte 1996; Bispham 2007). This predominant view is based on generalising interpretations of grave good assemblages, whereby burials containing weapons are assumed to belong to men while those featuring personal ornaments and no weapons are associated with women.

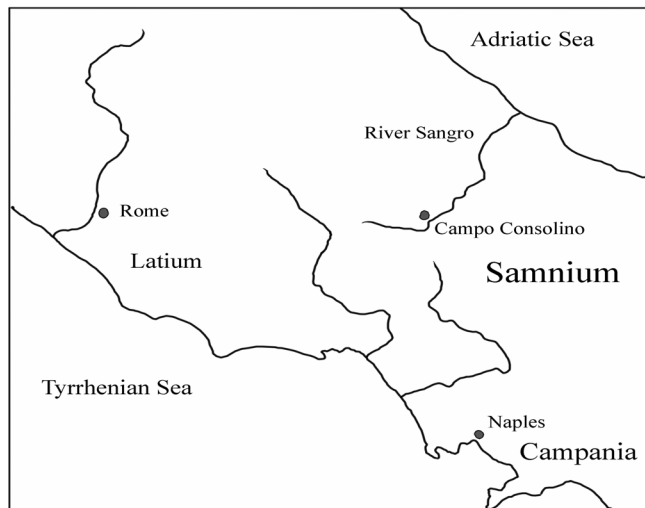


Figure 1: Central Apennine Italy, with Samnium and the funerary site of Campo Consolino.

This traditional view has begun to be challenged by alternative approaches (Suano 1991; 2000), as will be discussed below. Here, I propose to reconsider the traditional assumptions that prevail in the archaeology of Samnium by examining correlations between grave goods and the men and women buried at Campo Consolino, a key funerary site in Samnium. Located in the Apennine hinterland and used between the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C., Campo Consolino provides a strong sample of individuals whose biological sex has been securely determined from skeletal analysis. Chi-square tests are employed to identify correlations between the sex of individuals and their grave goods. This is done in order to assess what the correlations, or their absence, can inform us about social roles and practices associated with men and women in the community – practices which need not be entirely confined to the conventions of mortuary ritual. Before outlining the methodology, a brief overview will be given of the extant scholarly assumptions about grave goods and gendered social practices in Samnium generally, and at Campo Consolino in particular.

The ‘sexing’ of grave goods in Samnium and its shortcomings

Between the sixth and early third centuries B.C., the main funerary sites in Samnium can be seen to include two different classes of grave good assemblages. Whilst some burials contain weaponry (iron spears, axes, daggers) and armour (bronze helmets and breastplates, belts), other burials include items of personal adornment (bronze and iron rings, glass and amber beads, glass pearls, bronze pendants, arm-rings, bracelets, collars and chains). In the past, archaeologists have tended to assign each of these grave good assemblages to either of the biological sexes, often without the support of skeletal analysis. In broad terms, weapons, razors, belts and, to some extent, knives are considered diagnostic of the masculine sex, whilst personal ornaments unaccompanied by the ‘masculine’ artefacts are seen as indicative of the feminine sex (e.g. Capini 1980: 117; 1991; Di Niro 1980; 1991).

Most scholars have regarded these supposedly ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ grave goods as indicative of social activities and identities which characterized the men and women of Samnium before Roman encroachment began in the third century B.C. There has developed a somewhat circular argument whereby the ‘sexing’ of artefacts supports a preconceived view of gendered social relations in ancient Samnium. Thus, because warfare is assumed to be a ‘male’ activity, weapon burials are attributed to men, and are interpreted as evidence that men engaged in warfare and emphasised their role as warriors and community leaders (Salmon 1967; Saulnier 1983; Tagliamonte 1996: 116, 121, 123–4). The traditional viewpoint believes that the emphasis on weaponry indicates the centrality of warfare in the communities in Samnium. On the other hand, burials devoid of weapons but featuring personal ornaments (which are assumed to indicate women) tend to be seen as evidence that household activities were the domain of women, who were supposedly in charge of the holding and guarding of family trinkets and heirlooms. There is a general agreement that this strict division of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ social roles in Samnium originated in the sixth century and was perpetuated into the fourth and third centuries B.C. (e.g. Tagliamonte 1996: 212).

The interpretative framework outlined above has been applied to the key funerary site of Campo Consolino, which was used during the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Although the individuals at the site have been sexed and aged through skeletal analysis, archaeologists have not yet verified whether this data effectively supports the traditional interpretative framework outlined above (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1980). In line with the general consensus, weapon burials at Campo Consolino are seen as indicative of men belonging to a ‘warrior

aristocracy' that headed the community, although warfare is also argued to have been practiced by non-aristocratic men (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1981: xxxvi; Bispham 2007: 189ff.). On the other hand, the burials without weapons but featuring personal ornaments are argued to indicate women showcasing the finery accumulated by their male counterparts. However, as will be seen below, it has not yet been taken into account that most of the men at Campo Consolino were buried with artefacts other than weapons, and that many of the artefacts buried with men are also found with women.

Before examining such trends in more detail, it should be noted that the traditional interpretations of grave goods in Samnium, and at Campo Consolino in particular, are grounded on assumptions which are problematic. The association of weapons with men, and 'warrior men' in particular, is not peculiar to the archaeology of Samnium, having been common since the early developments of archaeology in Italy (Toms 1998: 157). In the case of Samnium, the association is arguably encouraged by the ancient literary emphasis on Samnite male warriorhood. However, such literary sources are not a reliable guide to the study of the communities of Samnium. The basic problem is that the literary accounts were written several centuries after the events to which they refer, from the point of view of Greek and Roman authors whose representations of the Roman and Italian past were tied to pressing ideological agendas (Scopacasa 2007). It has already been demonstrated that ancient authors conceptualised the relationship between Romans and Samnites in light of the ideologically-laden polarization of Greeks versus Barbarians (Dench 1995: 99–103).

Awareness of such problems has begun to encourage alternative approaches to grave goods and mortuary practice in Samnium, based on a more contextual examination of material culture. In particular, Suano (2000) has shown how the 'sexing' of artefacts can be very problematic in light of cases where assumedly 'masculine' and 'feminine' grave goods are found together in the same burial. For example, instances where bronze belts (supposedly 'masculine' items) appear in graves also containing loom weights and spindle whorls (traditionally regarded as 'feminine'). Suano (2000: 188) argues that such overlaps demonstrate the need to move away from the traditional sexing of grave goods, and to search instead for the social meaning of these artefacts in light of the associations between them.

Much work remains to be done along these lines. In particular, the sexing of artefacts remains to be systematically tested with regard to samples of individuals whose biological sex and age can be confidently determined from skeletal evidence. Otherwise, it remains unclear to what extent the grave goods indicate both the biological sex of the individual and patterns in the social practices of men and women in Samnium.

Evidence and methods

This section contains an explanation of how the present investigation will be carried out, using a controlled and well documented sample of funerary evidence. The sample consists of 134 burials at Campo Consolino, one of the largest and best documented funerary sites in Samnium (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1980; 1981). Campo Consolino was part of the much larger necropolis of Alfedena, which lay in the vicinity of roughly contemporaneous funerary sites at Val Fondillo and Barrea. The burials at Campo Consolino are loosely dated to the late sixth and fifth centuries, roughly spanning an interval of 125 years. As the more precise dating of individual graves remains very tentative (Parise Badoni *et al.* 1982), it is preferable to maintain the wider chronological framework in this paper.

The importance of Campo Consolino lies in the fact that it alone encompasses around 25% of the published burials in the entire study area of Samnium, as well as *c.* 50% of the burials in Samnium whose skeletons have been sexed and aged on the basis of anthropological analysis (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1981; Parise Badoni *et al.* 1982). The analysis of the skeletons from Campo Consolino adhered to conventional criteria laid out by the *Istituto Italiano di Antropologia*, the *Journal of Human Evolution* and other specialist literature (Ferembach *et al.* 1977–79; Brothwell 1981: 59–70). Such anthropological analysis relies on diagnostic traits in the pelvis, skull and teeth, as well as bone robusticity, to situate individuals within a spectrum ranging from ‘male’ to ‘female’, with ‘ambiguous’ as the middle term. As the biological sexing of skeletons has been argued to be biased towards men by a factor of 12% (Weiss 1972), disputed or ambiguous cases in the present sample will be noted as often as possible.

Of the 134 burials at Campo Consolino, 109 have been securely sexed, of which 60% were men and 40% were women. Only 86 of the 109 sexed individuals (79%) have been aged. These 79% can be classed into two main age sets, those under 45 years old (43%) and over 45 years old (57%) (Table 1). Children, on the other hand, accounted for only 10% of the burials. As their small number is not enough to reveal patterns, they do not form the main focus of the present paper.

Table 1: Numbers of men and women (under and over 45) at Campo Consolino

	all ages	under 45	over 45
men	65	25	30
women	44	12	19
total	109	37	49

Chi-square and Yule’s Q tests constitute the statistical methodology for determining which artefacts correlate with men or women at Campo Consolino. These tests are conventional in Prehistoric archaeology (e.g. Clarke 1968; Shennan 1997) and are also used in analyses of mortuary sites in Roman Britain (Cool 2004: 439–442) and, to a lesser extent, in Classical archaeology (Morris 1992: 113ff.). Chi-square tests are based on a ‘null-hypothesis’ that a given grave good is randomly distributed between men and women. The test generates a numerical result called the P value, which expresses the probability that the observed distribution is random (Shennan 1997: 106). In cases where samples are small, *Yates’ correction for continuity* is applied to the chi-square tests, to minimize the risk of considering a correlation to be significant when it is not (Weglian 2001).

Whilst chi-square tests reveal the probability that a correlation between an artefact and biological sex exists, they do not indicate how strong the correlation is. The strength is determined by means of the Yule’s Q coefficient, which ranges from -1 to 1 (Shennan 1997: 116–117). In the present case, the closer the coefficient is to 1, the stronger the correlation is between an artefact and biological sex. A parallel set of Yule’s Q coefficients measures the correlation between the artefacts and the two main age groups (under and over 45 years old), to check whether correlation with age is stronger than with biological sex.

When chi-square tests suggest a correlation and Yule’s Q tests confirm its strength, a case can be made that an artefact is related to socio-cultural differentiation of individuals based on their biological sex. This form of differentiation is conceptualised as ‘gender’, which is a key analytical category in this paper (Claassen 1992; Whitehouse 1998; Gilchrist 1999: xv; Sorensen 2000; Arnold 2002). Although many agree that gender is the socio-cultural

interpretation of sexual difference, some argue that sex is also culturally constructed and therefore conflates with gender (Butler 1990: 7). However, the traditional distinction remains valid, as biological sex is less culturally determined than gender (Claassen 1992: 3; Lucy 1997; Carmen Vida 1998: 16–17; Sorensen 2000: 41–59). Given that gender is culturally-specific, it must be investigated in terms of how it is structured or manifested in specific cultural contexts, not in terms of modern preconceptions (Claassen 1992; Hodder 1997; Sorensen 2000; Arnold 2002). The methodology adopted in this paper is most suited to identifying ‘two-gender systems’, that is, the existence of a masculine and a feminine gender rooted in biological sexual difference (Nanda 2000). However, the statistical methodology also has the potential to reveal more complex gender systems that go beyond such a binary opposition. This is particularly so when individuals of one sex are buried with artefacts that strongly correlate with the opposite sex. Such occurrences remind us that gender is related not simply with biological sex but also with age, class, rank or socio-economic status. This complexity has led some to argue that, instead of searching for ‘gender’ as a distinct category of social organization, focus should be placed on social relations that are more or less ‘gendered’; i.e. that are related to or determined by the socio-cultural interpretation of sexual difference (Sofaer Derevenski 2000).

Analysis of correlations between grave goods and biological sex at Campo Consolino

Table 2 shows the results obtained upon applying the Chi-square and Yule’s Q tests to the sample of men and women at Campo Consolino. Artefacts that correlate significantly with men or women (i.e. with a P value of 0.05 or lower) are shown in bold. The first striking point is that the correlation between men and weapons is only valid provided that the total number of weapons is added together, but ceases to be significant if each individual type of weapon is considered separately.

Moreover, the weapon burials are overall quite rare, as they account for a mere 3% of the 134 burials. Some of the weapons are not even exclusive to men. For example, the iron spear – the most common weapon in the cemetery – was buried with a woman in one of five cases (grave 58: Parise Badoni *et al.* 1982). Similar cases of women buried with weapons are known from slightly earlier contexts elsewhere in Italy, particularly Etruria and Picenum in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. In these contexts, the women buried with weapons also featured exceptionally lavish grave goods, so that the presence of weapons is interpreted as indicating a privileged social status shared by both men and women (Riva 2004; Izzet 2007). However, this does not appear to be the case at Campo Consolino, where weapon burials are not particularly lavish. If future excavation reveals further occurrences of weapons with women in Samnium, serious doubt can be cast on the certainty with which weapon burials are seen as signifiers of male identity.

Aside from the weapons, Table 2 shows that the men at Campo Consolino correlate with a series of other items, none of which seem to point consistently to the sphere of warfare or warriorhood. These artefacts are iron knives, rod-arch brooches, wine jugs (both fine ware *bucchero* imported from Campania and locally made coarse ware), and all other drinking vessels taken together as a single category. The association of men with knives and rod-arch brooches at Campo Consolino has already been noted (Parise Badoni and Ruggieri Giove 1980), and is here confirmed by the chi-square tests. Although knives might function as weapons in certain contexts, there is no good reason to discard their range of domestic and ritual uses, especially as only 6% of the knives were accompanied by weapons. On the other

hand, less attention has been given to the correlation between men and drinking vessels in general, and wine jugs in particular. These correlations suggest an association between men and drinking practices, with an emphasis on wine consumption. However, the Yule's Q coefficients show that the drinking vessels correlate more strongly with individuals aged over 45 than with men, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 2: Main correlations between grave goods and biological sex at Campo Consolino

ARTEFACTS	ARTEFACT QUANTITY		CORRELATIONS		
	MEN	WOMEN	CHI SQUARE (P value)	YULE'S Q (SEX)	YULE'S Q (over 45)
cooking pots (ollae)	7	5	0.563	--	--
amphorae	17	18	0.865	--	--
drinking vessels (all)	57	35	0.021 (men)	0.06	0.181
wine jugs	20	9	0.041 (men)	0.266	-0.052
jugs	1	0	1	--	--
cups	17	12	0.353	--	--
skyphoi	3	1	0.617	--	--
kylikes	2	0	0.479	--	--
kantharoi	0	1	1	--	--
bowls	14	12	0.694	--	--
bronze basins	2	2	1	--	--
pans	3	2	1	--	--
brooches (all)	82	97	0.262	--	--
brooches (rod-arch)	39	5	0.0001 (men)	0.802	0.068
brooches (band-arch)	7	36	0.0001 (women)	0.846	0.108
rings	14	39	0.0006 (women)	0.703	-0.361
pendants	51	164	0.0001 (women)	0.843	-0.162
bracelet	2	2	1	--	--
chain mail	9	24	0.009 (women)	0.771	0.032
beads	0	52	0.0001 (women)	1	--
glass pearls	0	41	0.0001 (women)	1	--
chains	0	5	0.073	--	--
collars	0	3	0.248	--	--
weapons (all types)	8	1	0.045 (men)	0.476	-0.706
spears	4	1	0.371	--	--
daggers	3	0	0.248	--	--
axes	1	0	1	--	--
knives	18	0	0.0001 (men)	1	--
bronze belts	4	0	0.133	--	--

The women correlate with band-arch brooches and the majority of the personal ornaments; namely bronze and iron rings, chain mail, pendants, glass and amber beads and glass pearls. The Yule's Q coefficients in Table 2 demonstrate that these ornaments correlate much more strongly with female biological sex than with age. Nor do these ornaments seem to be restricted to the more lavish burials. At first sight, such a scenario seems to suggest a strong cultural association between women and personal ornaments, which would confirm the traditional view that personal ornaments indicate a feminine gender in Samnium, characterised by the wearing

and custody of finery. However, a set of ambiguous occurrences adds complexity to this observation. Table 3 shows that many of the ornaments correlated with women (pendants, rings, chain mail, band-arch brooches), if all taken together, are also found with 20% of the men, 75% of whom are aged under 45 years. A similar overlap occurs with the rod-arch brooches, which correlate with men but also occur with 9% of the women. Among these women, the only two that can be aged are both over 45 years.

Table 3: percentages of men and women buried with each artefact

ARTEFACTS	BURIALS	
	MEN (65)	WOMEN (44)
cooking pots (ollae)	10%	11%
amphorae	26%	41%
wine jugs	30%	20%
jugs	1%	0%
cups	26%	23%
skyphoi	5%	2%
kylikes	3%	0%
kantharoi	0%	2%
bowls	22%	25%
bronze basins	3%	5%
pans	5%	5%
brooches (all)	75%	91%
brooches (rod-arch)	48%	9%
brooches (band-arch)	8%	50%
rings	11%	41%
pendants	3%	27%
bracelet	1%	5%
chain mail	5%	27%
beads	0%	14%
glass pearls	0%	23%
chains	0%	11%
collars	0%	7%
weapons (all types)	6%	2%
spears	6%	2%
daggers	5%	0%
axes	2%	0%
knives	26%	0%
bronze belts	6%	0%

While the pendants which were buried with men differ in shape and style from those of the women, the same does not hold for rings, chain mail and band-arch brooches, which are found in similar shapes and styles among men and women. Similarly, the rod-arch brooches found with 9% of the women do not show any distinguishing features that set them apart from those buried with men. One possible interpretation is that the personal ornaments and rod-arch brooches may not have carried direct connotations of femininity or masculinity in every context. The personal ornaments that correlate with women may not have been perceived as feminine when deposited with men, as they may have been mortuary offerings made by

(possibly female) relations. This seems possible, as some of the men with 'feminine' ornaments also feature items that correlate strongly with men, namely knives, rod-arch brooches and wine jugs. If this was the case, there is also the possibility that the personal ornaments did not bear feminine connotations even when they were worn by or deposited with women. These results confirm Suano's suggestion that artefacts should not be viewed as carrying sex or gender connotations by themselves (Suano 2000: 188). Alternatively, the presence of ornaments in the graves of younger men may suggest that attributes of femininity were viewed as connected with certain younger men by the mourners. This would mean that the community that buried its dead at Campo Consolino regarded femininity as not completely dependent on female sex, but instead as a set of more fluid attributes responding to additional cultural criteria. A similar interpretation can be put forward regarding the rod-arch brooches. Of the women buried with these brooches, the only two whose skeletons could be aged were both found to be over 45 years old. This would suggest that, if the rod-arch brooches were indeed regarded as some type of indicator of masculinity, the very notion of masculinity in the community at Campo Consolino was tied not only to male biological sex but also older age, and possibly other cultural criteria which remain to be determined.

Overall, the ambiguous cases discussed above suggest that, if the correlations between grave goods and biological sex are at all indicative of a gender system at Campo Consolino, there is evidence that this system was complex. This is not surprising, since gender differentiation tends not to be straightforward or to conform to a binary opposition between men and women. The personal ornaments that may have been used to communicate gender at Campo Consolino may also have communicated rank, status or other social identities. It is also necessary to bear in mind that representations of gender roles can differ from the actual social behaviour of men and women. It has been demonstrated that even though working-class women may be aware of feminine gender models which essentially refer to the upper classes, they are obliged to perform social practices at odds with such a model, such as intense farm labour (Stine 1992). However, the ability to perform such activities can be a source of pride for the women in question, even though these are activities primarily associated with men.

Finally, the small proportion of children at Campo Consolino (10%) is not enough to suggest correlations with grave goods. Nevertheless, it is significant that items correlated with men (iron knives) and women (personal ornaments) also occur with children. Although it is impossible to specify the ages of these children, it seems that none of them are infants (i.e. 0–3 years of age) (Scott 1999: 2–4). Therefore it is possible that the children at Campo Consolino received formal burial when reaching an age threshold at which they were perceived as members of the community. Membership status for these children would have been emphasised by burial with artefacts strongly associated with adults.

Communal drinking: crossing gender boundaries?

Alongside the trends discussed above, an interesting case is the distribution of drinking vessels among men and women. At Campo Consolino there is an overall emphasis on drinking vessels, which are mainly represented by cups, beakers, jugs, wine jugs and skyphoi. These vessels are present in almost half (47%) of the burials at the site. Moreover, 36% of the drinking vessels are wine jugs.

Whilst it was noted that wine jugs correlate statistically with men, Table 3 shows that wine jugs also occur with 20% of women, compared to 30% of men. Furthermore, those wine jugs which were made of fine *bucchero* ware, imported from the neighbouring region of Campania,

are distributed equally among men and women. Lastly, the Yule's Q coefficients suggest that drinking vessels taken together correlate more strongly with individuals aged over 45 years old than with men. This suggests that, even though most of the men and women may have been classified into 'masculine' and 'feminine' genders at Campo Consolino, they may have shared important spheres of social practice in life, namely social or communal drinking activities, as indicated by the distribution of drinking vessels at the cemetery. In particular, this shared participation may have been more prominent among older individuals of both sexes.

The analysis of drinking equipment as related to commensality and communal drinking has received little attention in studies of the archaeology of Samnium. This is because drinking vessels have usually been viewed as evidence for libations performed as part of the funerary ritual. However, archaeologists working on Iron Age cemeteries of Europe have approached the emphasis on drinking vessels from an anthropological perspective, with the vessels viewed as vehicles for social interaction centred on drinking, which also occurs in funerary contexts (Dietler 1990; 2003). It is useful to view the emphasis on drinking vessels at Campo Consolino in light of these studies, particularly with regard to the probable gender differentiation discussed above.

Drawing on anthropological case studies, archaeologists suggest that drinking practices may serve to strengthen social bonds among community members in pre-industrial societies, usually as a key element in the establishment of reciprocal obligations between host and guest (Dietler 1990). The dispensing of drink can favour social cohesion by promoting solidarity among people who alternate as hosts and guests. However, this mechanism can also create and reinforce social inequality whenever the guests are incapable of reciprocating by hosting drinking events of their own. Thus communal drinking may empower certain individuals and groups at the expense of others (Mauss 1967; Pitts 2005).

The conclusions reached in these case studies can help to formulate new interpretative possibilities for Campo Consolino. If the wine jugs and other drinking vessels at the funerary site are indicative of communal drinking, it remains unclear what may have been the specific social functions of this practice in the community. It is also unclear what form of drink was consumed (although the predominance of wine jugs does suggest that wine was an important component), whether it was acquired through exchange, locally produced or whether it was consumed exclusively at funerals or also in other contexts. The importance of wine might also be reinforced by the equally widespread presence of amphorae in the graves. Anthropological and archaeological case studies demonstrate that, when wine is available exclusively through trade, it is normally employed to symbolically differentiate elite drinking patterns. For example, in Hallstatt Europe Mediterranean wine would have been a 'luxury' item, given its restricted access and complex acquisition (Dietler 1990). Alternatively, it is also possible that the drinking vessels at Campo Consolino, including the wine jugs, were used for the consumption of other types of beverage which may have been locally produced. In that case, the production of the drink may involve an intense mobilization of resources such as a labour force for land cultivation and the production of agricultural implements.

These interpretative possibilities can help to guide future studies on Campo Consolino and other funerary sites in Samnium. The current evidence does suggest an emphasis on drinking equipment, which may be indicative of drinking practices. Such practices may have had an important function in the social, political and economic life of the community that buried its dead at Campo Consolino, possibly acting as a catalyst in the negotiation of power relations. More specific hypotheses on the role of communal drinking at Campo Consolino depend on further excavation of mortuary and non-mortuary sites in the vicinity, to place the practice into

a wider context. For the present it is significant that, at Campo Consolino, the evidence suggests that participation in power-related and communal events was not restricted to men. This has an impact on the current idea of contrasting social practices of men and women in communities of Samnium. Further, the emphasis on drinking may indicate that power relations were negotiated not through warfare or the monopoly of violence, but rather through a possibly competitive dispensation of commensality in the form of drinking events.

Conclusion

By examining the correlation between biological sex and grave goods, it has been possible to reconsider aspects of gendered social relations in a community of pre-Roman Samnium. The analysis above demonstrates the possibility that communities in ancient Samnium acknowledged different forms of gender relations than those traditionally credited to them. It is clear that the men at Campo Consolino are not associated primarily with weapons or the sphere of warfare, but instead with activities related to commensality, at the least at household level, which also appear to have been associated with women. This result should be taken into account in future analyses, as a deterrent to a reliance on preconceived gender systems not supported by the evidence.

There is currently no neighbouring and contemporaneous settlement evidence that might be compared with Campo Consolino regarding the emphasis on communal drinking. Nevertheless, on a broader level, contemporaneous settlements in the neighbouring region of Lucania seem to confirm the hypothesis suggested here for Campo Consolino. The Lucanian settlements at Pomarico Vecchio and Civita di Tricarico suggest the practice of public dining, in what have been interpreted as ‘public dining rooms’, which involved large amounts of fine ware vessels (Isayev 2007: 136). On the other hand, the overlaps between what appear to be ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ personal ornaments at Campo Consolino support the complexity of gender differentiation as noted by anthropologists.

On the whole, the present suggestions remain to be verified with non-funerary evidence. Although the existing correlations of personal ornaments with women may indicate some form of ‘gendered’ social distinction in burial, there is no conclusive evidence that these distinctions were regularly observed outside of the funerary context. Future excavation of settlement sites will help to verify whether the distinctions observed in mortuary practice also applied to everyday domestic life.

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