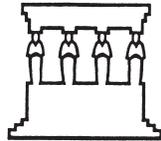


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Weaving Identities - Local and global customs between Early Iron Age Italy and Greece

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This contribution discusses the connectivity of the Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age. In contrast to already well explored tropes like the adoption of banquet equipment and warrior ideology as institutionalised forms of networks based on hospitality, the focus will be laid upon the too looked overlooked role that women might have had in these. In this regard will selected object categories of the funerary assemblage from early Iron Age graves of females in Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean be discussed. Especially the wide distribution of parts of the female attire - in this case study faience bead necklaces - highlight the flow of objects and symbolisms connected to them in the Early Iron Age Mediterranean. This shared sign system is furthermore explored by a study of textile tools in part of these graves. These similarities in the funerary customs hint to a much deeper interaction between the two study areas beyond a mere trade of 'exotic' goods. In both region these objects expressed a part of a female identity. These identities are a connecting factor between the two regions, expressed in a local way.¹

Introduction

The Mediterranean is often seen as a sphere of interaction between its different geographical regions. For the archaeology of the 1st millennium BC it is therefore no surprise that this interaction between different elite groups is a central topic. In particular, the spread of drinking habits and the diffusion of the banquet from the Eastern Mediterranean to Early Iron Age Italy has drawn significant scholarly

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1. First of all I would like to thank the organisers of the workshop 'Global and Local. Perspectives on Mobility in the Eastern Mediterranean' for giving me the possibility to publish this article. It presents a short glimpse of my ongoing PhD project on textile production in Bronze Age Italy. I am very grateful to Constance von Rügen, Stefan Riedel and Sven Neidig for all the inspiring and encouraging discussions over the last years. Moreover I would like to thank them for their patience and critical thoughts during this creative process. Furthermore I would like to thank both anonymous reviewers for their thorough reading and their thoughtful and inspiring critique. For any mistakes I am solely responsible.

attention.² The nature of these exchanges is often thought of as different networks of hospitality, that linked diverse local communities. The deposition of drinking vessels, as well as pottery types related to feasting activity during a banquet, in Italian graves between the 10th and the 8th is seen as the adoption of a certain ‘Eastern way of life’. These interconnections created something like a virtual community between the participating parties.³ Other scholars speak of an ‘elite ideology’ of drinking and banqueting expressed by this specific burial custom and moreover by the supposedly ‘richer’ funerary assemblages during this time.⁴ The common underlying idea of such an approach is the existence of exchange networks, linking various regions of the Mediterranean. Secondly, but more implicitly, the existence of a certain form of a common interregional identity negotiated through material culture can be drawn from this.

A certain weakness in this explanatory models is in my opinion, that they artificially homogenise the spread of certain objects and specific customs on a wider scale. This quite often overshadows the local component in the reception and incorporation of novelties and creates an asymmetry between these regions, reducing the receiving communities to mere absorbers. This cultural asymmetry has recently been challenged by authors either drawing on transcultural studies⁵ or on input from postcolonial theories, including concepts of the third culture.⁶ These theoretical concepts allows us to question the structuralist views of modern thinking, and to strengthen our understanding of the de-centralised local diversity of past social collectives⁷ and to look at how people created their local identities within the discourse of a global context.⁸ For the societies of the 10th to the 8th century BC of Greece, Crete, Cyprus and Italy in particular, it should not be forgotten that though there are a lot of general similarities, there is still a significant regional diversity between them.⁹

Within this broader setting, the aim of this contribution is to reconsider the character of exchange during the early 1st millennium BC between Italy and Greece, more precisely during the 10th to the 8th centuries. This period is of special interest as it establishes the social background for the developments of the Orientalizing Period. This was a time of transition in which the various modes of exchange

2. E.g. Kistler 2010; Dietler 2010; Hodos 2006, 127f; Pieraccini 2000.

3. Crielaard 2001, 194.

4. Naso 2000, 122.

5. E.g. Panagiotopoulos 2011, 36.

6. E.g. Kistler 2010, 745.

7. Hodos 2010, 82.

8. van Dommelen 1997, 309.

9. Whitley 1991, 345; Lemos 2002, 221.

between Bronze Age Italy - starting already during the 3rd millennium BC¹⁰ - and the Eastern Mediterranean¹¹ were (re)established and probably reconfigured in the course of the Early Iron Age. Along these networks different novelties like olive cultivation,¹² purple dye production,¹³ and the adoption of writing - to mention just a few - spread to the Central Mediterranean. Moreover, this period is of special interest for trying to understand the later Orientalizing Period in Italy. Profound changes in the settlement pattern during the latest phase of the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age occur. The plateaus of the later large urban centres of the 9th and 8th century are occupied and increase in size during this period. More and more imported near eastern objects are found in graves¹⁴ as the funerary assemblage is generally getting richer and more complex.¹⁵ To refresh the discussion my arguments will emanate from the up to now less explored female agents, to and shed light on their role in the supposed exchange networks and how they take part in the construction of identities. Due to the limited space of this article, the focus will rest on two selected object groups, namely textile tools and faience bead necklaces. The aim of this paper is not to present an exhaustive survey of female graves with textile tools, but rather to raise some questions and discuss their potential within a limited archaeological framework. The geographical case studies will mostly comprise Early Iron Age Latium and Early Iron Age Attica. This selection is based on the archaeological situation in these two regions, where publication of cemeteries are available and form a viable empirical basis. Another advantage is that the sex of the human remains have been determined anthropologically, so that the often problematic archaeological definition of sex does not undermine the dataset.

Female graves of the Early Iron Age

As with most other parts of archaeological research, female role in the Early Iron Age is to a large extent understudied. Apart from sex determination and specialist studies on different object found in them, they have been significantly less considered in the light of interregional communication. This situation is rooted in a modern concept of gender roles in which women are far too often nearly completely absent

10. Maran 2007, 18.

11. E.g. Cazzella and Recchia 2009; Jung 2009; Jung 2006; Eder and Jung 2005.

12. Evans and Recchia 2001, tab. 3.

13. Cazzella *et al.* 2005, 179.

14. Nijboer 2008, 434.

15. Riva 2006, 116.

in archaeology.¹⁶ Yet a closer look at the funerary offerings from female graves indicates directly that there is a lot of potential in such an approach.

Agneta Strömberg's study on gender in the Iron Age graves of Athens recorded an average number of 2.0 objects in submycenaean male tombs in comparison to an average of 5.3 finds from female graves.¹⁷ This means that statistically there should be more evidence in the archaeological record to trace interaction in female graves than in those of males. Yet, women somehow seem less appealing for studies of interaction. Apart from numbers alone, it is more interesting what might be symbolically expressed by these objects selected for interment. Are possible gender roles expressed by them? Are there similarities in parts of the funerary assemblage which might reflect inter-regional contacts? In my view one of the crucial explanations for why female graves are less attractive to many researchers, is the fact that modern gender roles are projected into these concepts. It still is common in many archaeological studies to presume that the female role is solemnly a part of the domestic sphere of society. Domestic in this regard is somehow understood as something limiting and passive. Following this logic the potential for interaction is a rather small one. Beidelmann's¹⁸ suggestion that the 'heroes' of exchange are seen as the male persons buried with swords and drinking vessels, who are circulating gifts among each other still seems to be common sense. This division of a 'producing' female sphere and an 'exchanging' male sphere has already been critiqued as a construct, which is nearly entirely born out of the modern Western thought, stereotyping their results in the observed society.¹⁹ This is still widely common because scholars (male and female) are trained in an androcentric world, where they still learn to readily accept unquestioned the male power they find in the archaeological record.²⁰ To be clear, it's not my purpose to deny that domestic activity can form a part of the female role, but I would rather argue that the role of women was not limited to this sphere. Instead there are many instances and patterns whereby we can suggest a supra-regional agency of the women. And I think that these aspects deserve a greater emphasis. As the main category of finds we deal with in the search for gender roles is evidence from funerals, we should not forget the specific problems and limits we are facing when we deal with this specific type of archaeological source. Funerary assemblages are perhaps not displaying one's actual role in

16. McCafferty 2009, 22.

17. Strömberg 1993, 44ff.

18. Beidelman, 1989: 231.

19. Strathern, 1990, 72f; Koltsia 2007, 125; Arnold 1995; McCafferty 2009.

20. Hodder 1991, 13.

society, but rather an idealized image of status, age or gender attributed to the deceased. It is not my purpose here to discuss this matter in detail, the concept of ‘role’ in this article is regarded as something which has been ascribed by society, rather than an actual individual formulation of it. Several authors have already challenged this view of the non-active women. Susan Langdon has critiqued the view that the wealth of rich female graves was an expression of richness of the kin group, rather than an expression of the individual wealth of these women.²¹

If we now start to take a look at the archaeological evidence for roles we find different evidence to strengthen this point. A part of the female role indeed can be explained by the domestic. The two chests with the granary models found in the grave of the ‘Rich Athenian Lady’ of the Areopag²² might be a good starting point for such a discussion. These artefacts may symbolise grain storage, and may well be seen as referring to the domestic sphere of production and fertility.²³ They are produced using local clays and as the distribution of the so far known 27 examples show, it seems to be a specific burial custom of Attica.²⁴ A possible predecessor of this rite is found in Euboea, in PG Grave 22 at Palia Perivolia. Among the grave goods was found a small ceramic chest which is commonly regarded as being a prototype of the chest found in the tomb of the Rich Athenian Lady, though its lid was not decorated with a granary model.²⁵ They can be aligned with other similarities observed in the burial customs between these two Regions, in male and female graves alike. The limited distribution of these granary models in the area of Attica is to be seen as a local concept relating to the representation of women - especially of rich women, as the examples from the Rich Athenian Lady and from the Isis Tomb in Eleusis indicate. Langdon’s interesting reading that they could be linked to early cults of Demeter and Kore²⁶ might be a further argument which supports their domestic interpretation. This specific feature might be a representation of domestic activity, related to women, yet its limited distribution connects it rather to a local context, than to an inter-regional. But this is just one side of the coin, as this observation emanates only from a tiny part of the funerary assemblage. As we shall see, other objects from the tomb of the Rich Athenian Lady point to a connection to supra-regional exchange through their wide distribution in the Mediterranean.

21. Langdon 2005, 5.

22. Smithson 1968, 93f.

23. The critique on the interpretation as granaries has recently been rediscussed by Morris and Papadopoulos (2004, 229), who bring good arguments in favour of their interpretation as granaries.

24. Langdon 2005, 10.

25. Coldstream 1995, 401.

26. Langdon 2005, 15f.

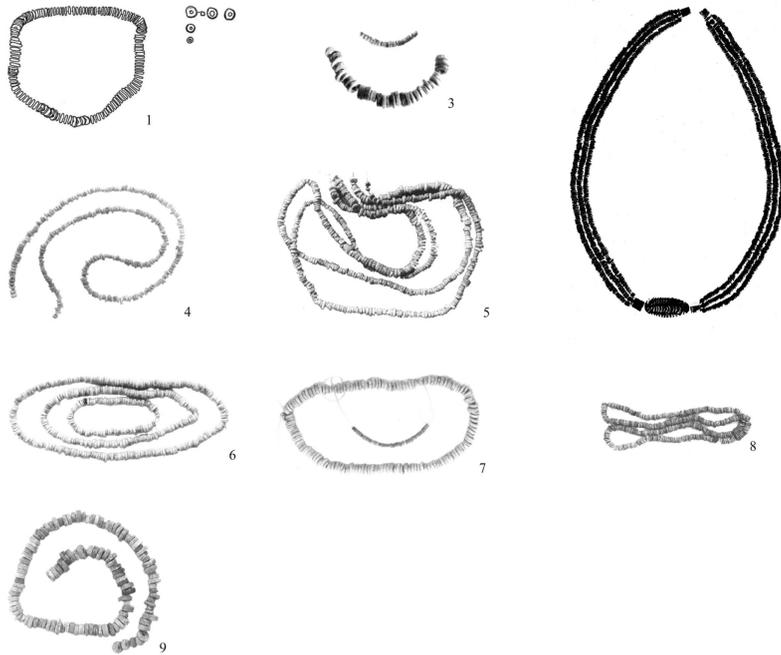


Fig. 1: *Faience disk bead necklaces: 1) Osteria dell'Osa tomb 117 (after Bietti Sestieri 2008: fig 4); 2) Areopag tomb of the Rich Athenian Lady (after Smithson 1968: Pl. 33); 3) Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery tomb 40 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 44); 4) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 39 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 40); 5) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 38 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 40); 6) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 45 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 51); 7) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 46 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 53); 8) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 63 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 70); 9) Lefkandi, Toumba Cemetery tomb 80 (after Popham and Lemos 1996: Pl. 85).*

One of the means by which different identities can be communicated and which are traditionally associated with women are different kinds of jewellery.²⁷ Among the precious jewellery of the grave like the golden ear- and finger-rings, or the ivory objects,²⁸ especially the necklace produced of more than 1100 blue-green faience disk-beads²⁹ is of interest for this present discussion. This kind of jewellery was probably produced in the Near East and has a widespread

27. Iaia 2007, 520.

28. Smithson 1968, 83.

29. Smithson 1968, pl. 33, 78.

distribution in the Mediterranean (Fig. 1)³⁰. It is found in rich female graves, like the tomb 21 in Amathous, dating to CG II (first half of the 9th century BC) which contained a necklace of 924 faience beads of the same type as the one from the grave of the Rich Athenian Lady.³¹ The distribution also includes Cretan graves, where faience disk beads are commonly found in different graves of the Knossos North cemetery³² and on other sites from the Protogeometric Period onwards.³³ A dense concentration of this type of jewellery can be found in the Geometric cemeteries of Lefkandi, Euboea where seventeen female graves yielded necklaces of blue and green faience disk-beads.³⁴ In Athens and Attica they are also common from the 9th century as a marker of rich female graves. They have also been found, for example, in the early 9th century grave of the Odos Hag. Dimitriou or the Isis Tomb in Eleusis of the late 9th century BC³⁵ and tomb 144 of the Kerameikos cemetery.³⁶ Apart from the Eastern Mediterranean, necklaces made out of faience disk beads are also found in Italy. It is necessary to observe that they are not that densely distributed as in the Eastern Mediterranean, but concentrated in certain rich tombs. From the second half of 9th century onward they are found in a few rich female graves, but are absent in male graves. Like the Tomba dei Bronzetti Sardi of the Cavalupo necropolis in Vulci,³⁷ tomb 1 of the Poggio delle Granate in Populonia³⁸ or in Grave 117 of the necropolis of Osteria del'Osa.³⁹ In graves of the 8th and 7th century they are found more frequently. Sometimes the discoid faience beads were combined together with bone beads to form the necklaces. This wide distribution of a similar type of jewellery - although the survey of the evidence is far from being complete - is already a first indicator that apart from their role in local household communities, women seem to take part in the some sort of interregional exchange, as this shared burial custom is indicating. So it seems difficult to retain the idea of a solely domestic role for women in society, at least if we consider the burial evidence more closely. Another interesting aspect

30. Nightingale 2009, 503.

31. Gjerstad 1935, Pl. 25, 49;50.

32. e. g. Knossos Medical Faculty Site tomb 100SW (Coldstream and Catling Vol. I, Pl 298).

33. Coldstream *et al.* 1996, 600.

34. S Tomb 16, P Tomb 21, P Tomb 25 B, P Tomb 42, P Tomb 47, T Tomb 1, T Tomb 12A: Popham, Sackett and Themelis, 1980; Lefkandi Toumba Cemetery tomb 38, 39, 40, 42; 45, 46, 56; 63, 74, 80: (Popham and Lemos 1996).

35. Skias 1898, pl. 6.

36. Ruppenstein 2007, 232.

37. Fugazzola Delpino 1984, 96-106.

38. Fedeli 1983, 82ff.

39. Bietti Sestieri 2008, 145, fig. 4.

is, that we see a shared way of expressing female status in certain graves between large parts of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean.

If we turn now to Italy, we can similarly observe a specific role for women in the society expressed in their local burial customs. The use of hut urns as a container for the cremated bones of the deceased since the 8th is seen as having a growing importance of the household.⁴⁰ It is believed that political control of these communities was practised by men,⁴¹ whereas the distribution of food and drink seems to be associated with female identity, as food containers and drinking vessels in graves might indicate.⁴² But beside this evidence also for the Italian Iron Age it can be argued that women had a role which was far from being exclusively related to the household community. Quite often axes or knives are found in female graves of Italy often interpreted as belonging to sacrificial practices or commensal rituals centred around food preparation. It should not be forgotten, however, that the sharing of meat is an important activity in a lot of commensal rituals. The agency of women can sometimes also expressed by objects that we would normally consider to be belonging to the male sphere. Surprisingly, nearly half of the graves with chariots are those of females, showing that the notion of power is not restricted to men but is also something a women can acquire.⁴³ Moreover, the first writing in Italy for example is exclusively found in female graves of the 7th century in the form of epigraphic graffiti on pottery and textile tools. Only in the following centuries is some sort of representation of writing found also in rich male graves.⁴⁴ Apart from this, textile tools are seen as a status indicator for rich women, though at the same time they are often referred as presenting a domestic role.

Textile production tools in Early Iron Age female graves

Textile production tools are quite common in female graves of the Early Iron Age in the Eastern and Central Mediterranean. Usually they comprise different kinds of tools for spinning, like spindle whorls, or whole spindles and distaffs. Weaving is symbolised in the funerary assemblage by loom-weights, weights for tablet weaving or sometimes by models of looms.

Even though most of the textile tools are found in rich female graves, they are interpreted as symbolising a domestic role of women through textile

40. Riva 2006, 120.

41. Bietti Sestieri 2008, 155.

42. Bietti Sestieri 2008, 156.

43. Riva 2010; Metzner-Nebelsick 2009.

44. Bagnasco Gianni 1999, 85-106.

production for the household community. This interpretation is on the one hand due to the modern conception of gender, but also a misconception of the economic production mode of certain goods. Though textiles can be produced in an domestic environment this does not mean that they were just produced for it. A good comparison can be found in Post-Classical Mexico where textiles produced in a domestic mode did provide to the local market economy.⁴⁵ On the other side is this view an oversimplification of the role textiles have in a lot of societies. Beside their function for the distinction of differences such as gender, class or age,⁴⁶ they have an active role in numerous rituals.⁴⁷ So it is no surprise that examples of weaving equipment produced in precious materials like glass or amber are seen as a non-functional representation of the textile craft, which were associated with rich women.⁴⁸ Though the more lavishly produced examples are readily accepted as being status bearing objects, they still are seen in a functional way representing a craft within the household.⁴⁹ We need to note that the majority of them are made of simple materials like impasto clay and do not receive much attention by researchers unless they appear in great numbers. The origin of this specific burial custom is less well studied in contrast to research on examples coming from the Orientalizing Period. The first textile production tools are found in the graves of the Thapsos culture of south eastern Sicily during the 14th century BC (e. g. Tomb 7 in Thapsos).⁵⁰ They become part of a funerary assemblage in the same period as Eastern Mediterranean imports like Mycenaean pottery were deposited in graves for the first time. Other imports like amber bead necklaces and ivory combs from female graves have close parallels in the burial customs of Late Helladic Greece and in Late Bronze Age Cyprus, indicating a possible eastern influence of this specific burial custom.

In Greece spindle whorls are found already in Late Chalcolithic graves on the Cyclades, but the peak of this rite can be found in the Late Bronze Age. During this time, spindle whorls made out of clay or steatite are very common in female graves. The five golden spindles from circle A, grave 3 at Mycaenae,⁵¹ as well as the ivory spindles from tomb 152 and tomb 65 at Perati, Attica⁵² are rare exceptions and underline vividly their function as prestige items. During the Early Iron Age

45. McCafferty and McCafferty 1991, 23.

46. Gleba 2009, 70.

47. Wagner-Hasel 2007, 330.

48. Gleba 2008, 173.

49. Ammann 2000, 276.

50. Orsi 1895, 103.

51. Karo 1930, pl. 17.

52. Iakovides 1969, pl. 15 and pl. 23.

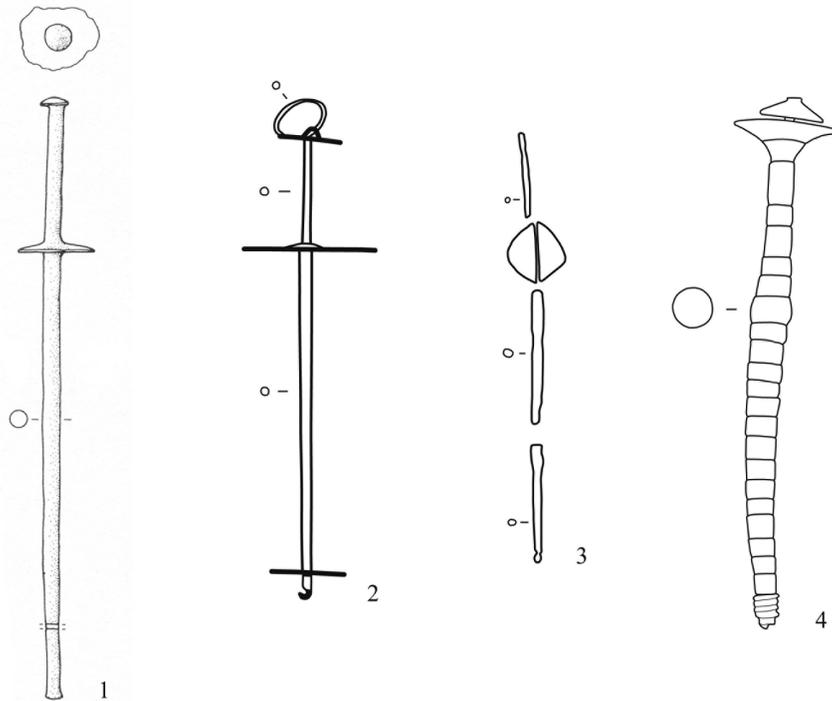


Fig. 2: Bronze Spindles: 1) Torre Galli Tom 92 (after Pacciarelli 1999: Pl 69); 2-3) Le Caprine Tomb 5 (after Damiani & Villa 2005: fig. 2); 4) Rocca Malatestiana, Verucchio Tomb 47 (after Forte 1994: 79).

this custom is still frequently found, although it is now less common and only found in some rich burials. The grave already discussed of the ‘Rich Athenian Lady’, for example, contained two clay spindle whorls⁵³. Other examples of clay spindle whorls have been found in 9th century graves at Athens in Areopag Grave D 16:2,⁵⁴ in tomb G 39 and G12 in the Kerameikos⁵⁵ and Odos Adrianou tomb PH II.⁵⁶ Examples made of faience are known only from Kerameikos tomb 146.⁵⁷ A close parallel was found in tomb 100 of the Medical Faculty site in Knossos.⁵⁸ This represents a surprising find, for spindle whorls made out of other materials than clay are normally not common anymore in Greece during this period. The exception seems to be Crete where one spindle whorl was found in tomb 283 of

53. Smithson 1968, pl. 30, 58-59.

54. Young 1949, pl. 72, 24.

55. Kübler 1974, 216-218, 235.

56. Smithson 1974, 379ff.

57. Ruppenstein 2007, 233.

58. Coldstream *et al.* 1996, 133.

the medical faculty site, which was produced of serpentinite and another one made out of chlorite.⁵⁹ Whole spindles in the grave are considerable rare in the Early Iron Age of the Eastern Mediterranean. The only examples so far known are from Cyprus. One was found in the Cypro-Geometric I tomb 78 at Palaepaphos - Skales and consists of an iron rod with an attached spindle whorl.⁶⁰ Two other ones made of bronze are without a secure context and came to light in the Bulwer Collection in Cambridge, but they can be at least attributed to come from the cemetery of Tamassos.⁶¹

Turning back to Italy we can observe a similar but different situation in the Early Iron Age. The first textile production tools found in graves are produced in a rather simple fashion, made of local impasto clay. The custom of burying textile tools with rich women was not simply adopted from the East, but was modified in a local way. Beside spindle whorls, small clay weights - the so called *rocchetti* - are found frequently in richer graves.⁶² They may have been used for a special weaving technique - tablet weaving - which was used to produce special decorated borders for textiles. Sometimes these were embroidered with different patterns or special dyes, like the purple dyed border of mantle 2 found in Verrucchio tomb 89 is demonstrating.⁶³ In other parts of the Mediterranean this technique is not known from archaeological finds, but can be reconstructed for the Eastern Mediterranean by iconography. By the turn of the 1st millennium BC. this tradition of placing such weights in graves is distributed further north in Italy. Alongside this widening distribution, the first metal spindles are found in graves together with other textile production tools. Like the spindles from Pantano di Cleto⁶⁴ or Torre Galli tomb 92.⁶⁵ One of the first bronze spindles in Central Italy is found among the grave goods belonging to a young girl from Le Caprine, tomb 5 in Latium. The tomb is dated to the latest phase of the Italian Final Bronze Age.⁶⁶ Slightly later examples dating to the Latial II B2 Period (second half of the 9th century BC) are found in Osteria dell'Osa. Grave 44 yielded a wooden spindle covered by a bronze sheet.⁶⁷ One other early example was found

59. Coldstream *et al.* 1996, 623.

60. Karageorghis 1983, 241, pl. CLI.

61. Buchholz 2010, 130, fig. 61 a and b.

62. Gleba 2008, 173.

63. von Eles 2002, 220.

64. Gleba 2011, 28.

65. Pacciarelli 1999, 69.

66. Damiani and Villa 2005, 65, fig. 2.

67. Bietti Sestieri 1992, 747.

in grave 47 and was completely produced of a bronze sheet.⁶⁸ Symbolic textile tools, mostly distaffs and spindles made out of precious materials were a part of female symbolism, especially in graves, from the 8th-7th centuries onward. Most of them were perhaps not practically used in everyday production of textiles, because of their costly materials but were designed to be a symbol.⁶⁹ The great variety in materials used, the kind of textile tools in the graves and their number make it still difficult to interpret the textile tools in the current state of research (Fig. 2). Thus it seems that this special custom was most likely adopted from the Eastern Mediterranean during the late Middle Bronze Age of Italy and is slowly transformed in the course of the 1st millennium to a status symbol itself.

Apart from this textile tools, a recent study on the handmade globular pyxis from Protogeometric Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, highlight another case in which an object connected with textile production was distributed widely in the Mediterranean and especially in the graves of women.

Social Networks - Hospitality in the Iron Age Mediterranean

The wide distribution of certain kinds of objects and burial customs between Cyprus, Greece, Crete and Italy, as well as other parts of the Mediterranean now needs to be explained. We cannot describe exotic items as just being imported from afar and laid in the grave because of their intrinsic value, when they are regularly incorporated in local burial customs. One possible way to describe this is the assumption that certain objects and customs circulated by the means of networks of hospitality.⁷⁰ In many pre-state societies it is a valid way for interaction between different geographical regions to be practised. This has already been used to describe the diffusion of drinking habits and seems to me to be a good way to explain the connection between these regions. As gift-giving has been widely discussed for a long time now, I do not want to delve too deeply into general principles, but rather highlight some aspects which are relevant to describe the role of women and textiles in it. In order to envisage networks of hospitality in the period of study we have to rely on written sources. Long range contacts could also be a source of power in a local context.⁷¹ The Homeric epics illustrate vividly social interaction in a period quite close to the 1st millennium BC. The historicity of the epics and the society described in them are still controversial, but this goes beyond the current

68. Bietti Sestieri 1992, 755.

69. Gleba 2011, 27.

70. Kistler 2010, 744.

71. Schon 2010, 235; Helms 1988.

discussion. However this is not of central concern to my arguments, because I do not intend to find direct matches between the written texts and the archaeological record, but rather I seek to pinpoint broader similarities which can be found between the epics and the archaeological record.⁷²

At first it is important to clarify the ancient Greek terms which are used in the written sources, in order to understand the concepts which are used by the ancient authors. One of the Greek terms used to describe guest-friendship is *xenos*. It denotes ritualised communication over a long distance between two persons, which grants them mutual rights and responsibilities. Sometimes this relationship can be so intense that it is even considered to be kin-like. Important expressions of this relationship are gift-giving and feasting. Gifts are given on special occasions, mostly rituals of status change, like weddings or funerals. They establish a connection over a long distance by creating a reciprocal memory between the *xenoi*. Funerals are of great importance as they link multiple generations by the grave offerings given to the deceased. They are also a good example which highlights that reciprocity is not only constructed over geographical distances, but also through time. Gifts to the deceased represent a connection between different generations and restructure the created bond through time. From the epics, we can observe categories of objects that are commonly bestowed as gifts. The first are metal objects, such as drinking vessels, weapons or armour. The second category comprises many kinds of textiles including veils, robes, or other types of fabrics. It is important to note that it is possible to distinguish which part of the society is donating which object. The textiles are in general given by the *basileus* himself or by him and his wife. Metal objects on the other hand are more likely to be given by the *demos*.⁷³ This division is directly related with the value that textiles and textile production had. Unlike metallic gifts, which could have been already in gift-giving cycles for quite a time, textiles used as gifts have a special value. They are produced by the *basilissa*, which means that they are actually produced within the *oikos* of one *xenos*. By exchanging items crafted in your own household you establish a more personal relation with your guest-friend, than you would do with objects which are not produced locally, but which gained their value by its former bearer.⁷⁴ This observation is strengthened by the fact that textile production is always associated with women of a high status. They are probably not producing everyday textiles, but often textiles for a special occasion or with a specific value. Penelope for example weaves the shroud for Laertes, her father-in-law. Besides she and other women are described as weaving

72. Ulf 2002, 346.

73. Wagner-Hasel 2000, 134.

74. Wagner-Hasel 2003, 169.

precious purple dyed textiles, which were highly in demand.⁷⁵ Their production was time consuming with all the steps necessary to produce them, especially it was expensive to obtain the dye for them. So it is no surprise that in the epics purple dyed textiles are only worn or even owned by individuals of high rank.⁷⁶ Apart from the role actual textiles and their craftpersons played in gift-exchange, there is some - even though sparse - evidence for women actually exchanging goods. Moreover the items exchanged are high prestige textile tools. In one episode of the *Odyssey*,⁷⁷ Helen of Sparta, wife of Menelaos, gives a golden spindle and a silver basket for the raw wool come to the wife of guest-friend of her husband. This demonstrates that besides the role the product of their work played in gift-exchange between *xenoi*, that women may have at times played an active role in gift exchange.

Creating the global and yet local

Now that the archaeological record as well as a possible model for the explanation of this exchange has been, the question remains how this can be related to the construction of identities. An important part of the *xenie* is that it is creating an interregional social collective⁷⁸ on the basis of networks of hospitality between the involved parties. The reciprocal exchange between the *xenoi* is (re)defining and (re)shaping their identity with every interaction, as well as through its very existence.⁷⁹ Identity shall be seen here as a shared construction of a social collective based on common origins, or exclusively shared characteristics. It is to be understood as an on-going discursive delimitation, rather than a fixed status.⁸⁰ It is expressed by the *habitus* of a local social collective. The *habitus* of a social collectives can be defined in the following manner:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them [...]

(Bourdieu 1990, 53)

75. Blum 1998, 68.

76. Blum 1998, 68.

77. Homer, 4, 130.

78. According to Bhabha (2004: 5) social collectives are specific temporal constellations sharing a lot of common elements with others.

79. Beidelmann 1989, 231.

80. Hall 1996, 3.

These dispositions are developed by each member of a social collective by his/her own experiences memorised within their bodies. They define a certain taste and lifestyle of a group, which is used as a medium of exclusion and delimitation.⁸¹ It is suggesting a certain form of typical collective behavior.⁸² The *habitus* is the basic cohesive force which forms a group identity, as well as all the different identities expressed inside this collective. It is visible by material culture, which form the result of behaviour of human beings. Burials are a good example for this concept, as the funerary assemblage does not represent directly the deceased but rather the society burying him or her.⁸³ The problem with the interpretation of the funerary assemblage is hence at first that it is difficult to approach the symbolized meanings expressed by the objects. Often they do not have just one meaning at the same time, but are expressing multiple purposes at the same time.⁸⁴ This is the case with the granaries in female burials of Early Iron Age Attica, or with the weapons and chariots in female graves in Italy. These are examples of how a special local identity, in this case of rich women, is represented each in their local context. The identity must not be exclusively something which is only expressed in a local way. As the glimpse at the written sources has indicated, defined networks of hospitality and their specific group identity may reflect shared global *habitus*. An individual can be part of multiple collectives which have each their own customs. So one can act with different *habitus* at the same time. Gift-giving and various rituals of commensality are forming the ties of these networks and are important foundation points. Single objects may also express a shared identity as they are created to serve a specific requirement of a group. They function also as a medium to memorize and materialize ties within a group.⁸⁵

This is the case, for example, with the wide geographical distribution of necklaces produced of faience disk beads in rich female graves. Its bearer affiliates herself to an interregional social collective by wearing this particular object. In this case of global interaction it should be noted that the local *habitus* is modified by the incorporation of certain elements of the other group behavior.⁸⁶ It is exactly these moments of interaction which postcolonial studies are concerned with and where their analytical strength lies, compared

81. Bourdieu 1982, 44.

82. Bourdieu 1979, 186.

83. Parker Pearson 1999, 84.

84. Sørensen 2005, 289, fig. 3.

85. Feldman 2006, 165.

86. Kraus and Gebauer 2010, 43.

to concepts as diffusion or acculturation.⁸⁷ As the integration of a *habitus* is not something happening in an instant, but rather a process of repeated social memorisation through different fluid interaction.⁸⁸ Possible encounters could take place during feasting, which is one crucial tie of hospitality. It has been already shown how feasting is involving the whole body in the perception of it and to be an important factor in memorising social practices.⁸⁹ Various archaeological features underline the role of feasting in this encounter. The interaction itself has been described as a third space by postcolonial theorists, most notably Homi Bhabha. Something central in Bhabha's notion of third space is, that the different encounters are not creating an amalgam of the two elements of the interacting collectives, but rather something substantially new in which ones known social identities are challenged and newly negotiated.⁹⁰ To this field of theory can be added the concept of 'glocalization' - emanating from social theory - which has been applied to describe the merging of global and the local to a new cultural entity, in which impulses from the outside are transformed by incorporating them in the local social context.⁹¹

Regarding funerary assemblages of female graves, this may best be explained by the textile tools. It is not a concrete object which is used to show membership of a certain social figuration, but rather the craft, or more general the activity which is used to express the affiliation. This means that it is not a type of object which can be compared between different regions, but rather a custom referring to the geographical area within which it was shared.⁹² As we can see by a cross-cultural comparison between, Greece, Crete, Cyprus and Italy we have the same practice expressed by different objects, every time in its respective local interpretation. Textile tools from Italy are therefore of special interest. There are not the only kind of tools being deposited in graves, but they are reflecting different technological traditions. This shared interregional *habitus* of burying a rich woman with textile tools is in the first instance restricted to a certain class of society. In the course of the 8th century BC this custom became more common and is broadly distributed in female graves and distinction of social status is then expressed by tools - mostly spindles - made of metal or other precious materials, and these have become a prestige item in their own right. A possible explanation for this can be that the *habitus* is being desired by other

87. Fahlander 2008, 29.

88. Fahlander 2008, 22.

89. Hamilakis 1998, 117.

90. Bhabha 2004, 54.

91. Maran 2011, 283.

92. Russell 2010, 107.

groups of the society that were previously excluded from this global collective. These groups try to adopt the signs used by the high status collective to express their affiliation.⁹³ This can lead to a situation, in which a former global identity has become a local point of reference instead.

Conclusion

As this brief discussion of some of the grave assemblages of the 1st millennium BC has shown, there is still considerable potential for understanding the various ways that women may have contributed to different types of exchange during the Early Iron Age in the Mediterranean. As it might have been visible, they enable us to discuss aspects of diverse exchange networks on a different level as it has been done for most of the time. And of course in a different manner, as has been discussed for a long time with male burials. The study of their grave offerings open up another sphere of these societies which has been considerably understudied. By comparing the graves of both sexes we might be able to gain a more complete picture than just what the dominant research tradition allows. On the other side we have gained a rather new research subject to study the way in which more global ideas might be adapted and transformed on a local level by the means of networks of shared customs between certain parts of the society.

The wide distribution of jewellery like the faience disk-bead necklaces in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean displays how networks might have communicated some sort of shared taste between different geographical regions as they reflect the affiliations of its bearer within this supra-regional social collective. Furthermore, textile production tools make it possible to trace local variations of another widely distributed aspect of the burial rites. As the archaeological material suggests, the custom of burying women of high status with textile tools is an influence from the Eastern Mediterranean which was adopted in Italy during the Late Bronze Age. In the course of the 1st millennium BC these tools become more common in graves. They are by that time made of metals and probably other precious materials in some of the richest burials. This seems to be a local variation of this widely distributed custom, as metal spindles are unknown in most part of the Eastern Mediterranean apart from Cyprus. All of these customs are part of the materialisation of shared global aspects of the *habitus* of these groups, materialising a collective identity. This does not mean that the identity of the local group is less meaningful and that there is not a strong degree of diversity between these groups. Instead the coincidence and even the entanglement of a

93. Elias 1997, 353.

global and a local identity is what we are observing if we take a detailed look at the funerary assemblage. But as with most of the archaeological evidence we can trace this just for certain groups of the society, supposing that the participation in this rite might have been a source of inequality.

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