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The Etruscan Necropolis of Macchia della Riserva/Pian delle Rusciare at Tuscania: a Preliminary Report

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to give a preliminary report of the CAMNES-LdM Excavation Project of the Hellenistic Etruscan Necropolis of Macchia della Riserva, Tuscania (VT, Italy). The Project, active since 2005, brought to the identification of two autonomous clusters of tombs, respectively situated in the Pian delle Rusciare and Pratino areas. The tombs are all carved into the volcanic tufa banks, and the tomb typology varies from underground chamber tombs to trench and loculus tombs. So far almost 40 tombs have been excavated, 11 of which belong to the first cluster, Pian delle Rusciare, subject of the present paper. Even if all tombs were violated in antiquity, some of them still preserved many artifacts belonging to the grave goods of the deceased. The most important discovery is a bronze mirror with engraved decorations; its main scene represents a hind nursing Telephus as a child, with 5 deities and a temple in the background. Two of the tombs also house three sarcophagi each, carved from nenfro (a grey volcanic stone). These discoveries integrate scholars' knowledge about the importance, extension and location of Tuscania's necropolis during the Hellenistic Age, and also give the opportunity to make new reflections on the population of the area.

Keywords

Tuscania, Etruscan necropolis, Hellenistic Age, Pian delle Rusciare, Macchia della Riserva.

The area currently known as Macchia della Riserva is located NW of Tuscania (VT), and it houses at least two distinct nuclei of Etruscan necropolises. Pian delle Rusciare,¹ the first necropolis that has been investigated, will be described in this preliminary report².

The necropolis comprises eleven tombs (**Figure 1**), which were mostly looted since the 50s of the last century and then filled again with debris. Some reports have led to an excavation of the area that lasted for four campaigns, under the scientific direction of the author, with a team of the Italian International Institute "Lorenzo de' Medici" and CAMNES.³

¹ In this article I present only a description of the most important tombs in the necropolis and a short study of some artifacts we found there. A
² IGM Foglio 136 della Carta d'Italia.

³ The excavation was made under a convention of Ministero dei Beni Culturali e Ambientali, requested by the Comune of Tuscania, which gave the scientific direction to Istituto d'Arte e Cultura "Lorenzo de' Medici" of Florence since 2005. The Center for Ancient Mediterranean

The excavation area is located in the woods of Pian delle Rusciare, in a fenced area owned by the town of Tuscania. During the first field surveys were identified a few small depressions in the ground, corresponding to the violated tombs filled with earth. Plants and greenery were cleaned up and then a NS grid was created on the soil.

The tombs typologies varies from underground chamber tombs, trench tombs, and a sort of *loculus* tomb; all were made through an artificial cut in the natural turf; the tombs are laying inside a sort of depression, following two axes, at the base of two natural slopes that surround it to the north and east. We can observe that the tombs nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, located on the eastern side, are arranged in parallel on the same axis and have the same orientation NW-SE, regardless of their type; there are three chamber tombs (nos. 1, 2, 4), a sort of *loculus* tomb (no. 3), and a structure of uncertain identification (no. 6); their distribution is paratactic.

Tombs nos. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 instead are laying at the base and on the slope of the northern side of the depression; they seem to draw a 'nuclear' outline, with the chamber tomb largest in size and type (no. 5), around which are arranged trench tombs (nos. 7, 8, 11 and probably 10) and one single chamber tomb with one bench (no. 9); the orientation SW / NE is determined by tombs nos. 5, 9, 8 and 10, while tombs nos. 7 and 11 are orthogonal to this orientation, at a short distance from tomb no. 5. From an architectural point of view, the chamber tombs of this necropolis don't have monumental facades, as usual in this period in Tuscania (Colonna Di Paolo 1978, 61; Romanelli 1986, 75); the front is constituted by a flat wall cut into the turf above the entrance door, orthogonal to the *dromos*; the *dromoi*, whose floor can be smooth or stepped, are rectilinear, and they have two parallel sidewalls with vertical profile. The inner chambers differ slightly in plan and internal joints. The trench tombs are rectangular, sometimes with a hollow on the bottom for the deposition.

We will analyze below in more detail some of the tombs of this necropolis, following their topographical arrangement.

Tomb no. 1

Tomb no. 1 is an underground chamber accessible via a long entrance corridor, whose floor has not a regular layout: it leans sharply at about half of the length, reaching a depth of about 3.80 m. The access was originally closed by a door, made by a slab of limestone 'palombino', found in horizontal position, and a number of stones of varying nature and size, found collapsed

and Near Eastern Studies (CAMNES) has supported this institute since 2010.

immediately inside the chamber, which were used to bridge the gap between the big slab and the cut of the entrance. The burial chamber presents an irregular plan and it consists of a central passage, a rear curvilinear wall provided with a narrow bench; and two deep asymmetric niches on the right and left sides; the left one is preceded by a bench of rectangular shape. In the two niches were still preserved three sarcophagi in nenfro with a rectangular case, two in the right niche (**Figure 2**), with a ridged roof lid with gables and columnen (nos. 1 and 2), and the left one with a simple ridged roof lid (no. 3). In this niche a space was left for a second sarcophagus, never deposited. The lids were removed from the boxes and the violators had badly damaged sarcophagus no. 3 in its front part.

In the *dromos*, in an area not affected by violations, we found fragments of black glazed, achromic, purified and plain ware ceramics; a fragmented plate with a painted strip decoration; and a bronze mirror handle with three palm leaves and a capital with oval echinus at the top, and lower end configured as a deer head (**Figure 3**). This handle was lying just outside the door of the burial chamber. Unfortunately the rest of the excavation of the debris of the *dromos* did not return the disc of the mirror, which, given the type of the handle, was probably smooth or decorated with incised concentric circles.⁴ These mirrors belong to a production that date back to the third century BC, and spread in southern Etruria,⁵ Sabina,⁶ the Faliscan area⁷ and Lazio Antico.⁸ These type of handles, because of their features, were often assembled in different ages with not pertinent discs.⁹

⁴ Only a small number of these mirrors was found intact, with the disc and the handle. One of these comes from Palestrina (Battaglia 1933, 184-185, n. 2, fig. 4) and it is not available at the moment. From unknown provenance are two mirrors in Courtrai (CSE Belgique, 21-22, n. 5, figs. 5 a-d, 23-24, n. 7, figs. 7 a-d) and two respectively in Bryn Athyn and in Poughkeepsie (CSE USA 4, 31-32, n. 6, figs. 6 a-d, 58-59, n. 41, figs. 41 a-d). E. Foddai expressed some doubt about the antiquity of the assembly of the disc and the handle of the Bryn Athen's mirror, due to the presence of three rivets (CSE Italia 6, 37); however these are present at the top of a handle in CSE Denmark 1, 82, n. 17, figs. 17 a-d.

⁵ The majority of these mirrors are of unknown provenance. A list of this type of mirrors is in Neri 2002, 133, note 1-2, to which now we can add the following specimens in: Serra Ridgway 1996, 17, 288, n. 133, tav. XIII; CSE USA 4, 31-32, n. 6, figs. 6 a-d, 58-59, n. 41, figs. 41 a-d; CSE Italia 6, II, 36-37, n. 2, figs. 2 a-b.

The following handles come from Etruscan sites: two from Norchia, Fosso Pile B necropolis, respectively from the tomb PB 23, loculus XIII e from Prostila tomb (CSE Italia 5, 46-47, 40, 41, figs. 40 a-d e 41 a-d); one from Tarquinia, tomb no. 3 (=5024) of the Fondo Scatagliani necropolis (Serra Ridgway 1996, 17, 288, n. 133, tav. XIII).

⁶ From tomb no. 46 of the Tumulo of Corvaro di Borgorose: Alvino 1990, 325, fig. 8; Alvino 1997, 102, n. 16, 22. Another possible mirror similar to this type from tomb no. 32 of Poggio Sommavilla is mentioned by E. Foddai in CSE Italia 6, 37.

⁷ From Falerii Veteres: tomb no. 102 of the Valsiarosa necropolis (Cozza and Pasqui 1981, 195-196, n. 10). From Capena: the Civitella San Paolo necropolis (CSE Vaticano 1, 51-52, nn. 26 e 27, figs. 26 a-e, 27 a-d). Another handle, belonging to the type with human heads on the top, maybe from Capena, is in CSE BRD 2, 40-41, n. 15, figs. 15 a-b.

⁸ From Palestrina: one complete mirror, now unavailable, from a tomb found near the tramway station in 1917 (Battaglia 1933, 184-185, n. 2, fig. 4), one from an ancient assembly, with a handle with a ram's head from a tomb of the Colombella necropolis (CSE Italia 6, II, 36-37, n. 2, figs. 2 a-b), three handles, one of which with human heads on the top, in Bruxelles (Lambrechts 1978, 319-327, nn. 56-58).

⁹ CSE Hongrie Tchecoslovaquie, 31; Serra Ridgway 1996, 288; CSE Italia 6, II, 37. Bearing an unoriginal assembly, but of ancient

Both of the sarcophagi in the right niche were full of debris, bone fragments and a few fragments of a bronze wire. Nearby the sarcophagus in the left niche laid a ceramic plate and an iron strigil, while in the front area there was a black-glaze patera with a shiny black colour and very thin walls (without glaze on the bottom), probably due to a local production datable to the first half of the third century BC (**Figure 4**) (Morel 1981, 152, type 2243 b1).

Nearby the second sarcophagus of the right niche, in the area covered by the removed lid, we found a black glaze cup with overhanging lip (Morel 1981, 176, type 2523a1), a fragment of an iron strigil, an alabastron without glaze (Forti 1962, 151, type IV, tavv. VII, XI, 2-4), and a bronze mirror with a cast handle, with a rich engraved figurative decoration (**Figure 5**).

It seems likely that these objects were originally on the lid of their sarcophagus, from which they may have fallen in ancient times and subsequently obliterated by mud infiltration that preserved them by violators. The most significant finding is certainly the bronze mirror (**Figure 6**). It is decorated with an engraved scene of the Greek myth rarely represented in Etruscan art: the feeding of the child Telephus by a doe in the presence of five deities, before the facade of a temple with a male figure lying on the pediment. The figures are not labeled with engraved names, but they are quite well identifiable thanks to the attributes and the features of the clothing. Starting from left, there are: Heracles, youthful and beardless, with club and *leonté*, who apparently is speaking, according to the gesture of the hand; a young naked and bejeweled woman performing the gesture of *anakalypsis*, to be identified with Turan; a young nude man with *chlamys* on the shoulders, leaning on a spear, probably Laran; a woman of mature age, and mantled with a crown, identifiable with Uni; a sitting Minerva armed with a starry aegis, a shield, a spear and a helmet, of which survives only part of the *lophos* (the head is missing). The scene evokes an important moment in the saga of Telephus, son of Heracles and Auge, the priestess of Athena and the daughter of Aleo, king of Tegea and founder of the temple of Athena Alea: the abandonment of the child on the Mount Partenio as the unlawful son of a priestess, his breastfeeding by a doe and his recovery by some herdsmen who gave him the name Telephus and took him to Corito, their king and master.¹⁰ This mirror¹¹ is a direct comparison for a fragment of the lower part of an Etruscan mirror of unknown origin preserved in the Cabinet des Médailles of Paris¹²: the surviving part of the

manufacture, are considered the mirrors respectively in CSE France 1, II, 23-24, n. 48, figs. 48 a-d, and in CSE Italia 6, II, 36-37, n. 2, figs. 2 a-b. Result of modern assembly are the mirrors in CSE Hongrie Tchecoslovaquie, 30-31, n. 6, figs. 6 a-d, in CSE DDR 1, 36-37, n. 20, figs. 20 a-b, in CSE Italia 2, I, 36-37, n. 13, figs. 13 a-d.

¹⁰ In regard to the myth of Telephos see E. Paribeni in EAA, *Telefo*, 669-671 with bibliography; M. Strauss in LIMC VII, 1, *Telephos*, 856-857.

¹¹ The study of the problems concerning this mirror, the discussion about the identification of the figures, the meaning of the scene etc. will soon be published by the author within the final volume concerning this necropolis.

¹² Gehard ES, 94, note 153, pl. XXV, 9; Rebuffat-Emmanuel 1973, 317-320, 600, n. 66, pl 66 (here the drawing is rectified in comparison

scene shows a child with the fragmentary inscription [Tel]ape, nursed by a quadruped of which remains the lower part of the legs, with the left and right feet of two human figures, as well as column bases. Another appropriate comparison for the style, the layout of the characters -some of which are identical-, and the overall composition, is a mirror housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris, with engraved scenes belonging to a different myth (the prophetic head of Orpheus).¹³ The three mirrors can be attributed to the same typological and productive class, dating back to the early third century BC;¹⁴ this chronology is consistent with the surviving grave goods of tomb no.1 and with the sarcophagi,¹⁵ compatible to a chronology in the first half of the century.

Tomb no. 4

Tomb no. 4 is an underground chamber tomb and it lays immediately W of tomb no.1. The presence of a funerary structure was signaled by a wide hole in the ground, going about three meters in depth and produced by clandestine diggers, who identified the facade, but wrongly believed it was an unfinished tomb. The excavation led to the discovery of a long and deep *dromos*, with a steep slope at a constant trend, punctuated by steps. Near the entrance, two collapsed slabs (nenfro and "palombino" limestone) were found, which once functioned as the door of the tomb. The burial chamber is irregularly rectangular in plan, and the inner corridor is aligned with the entrance and bounded on the left, right and rear side by a U-shaped bench. The two side benches continue at the ends toward the door into two deep niches, which likely housed the grave goods: in the right one we found twenty vessels, most of which intact, grouped and sometimes stacked, but dropped, tilted or upside down, probably due to flooding suffered by the burial chamber. The rear bench is smaller in width than the other two and it has two niches less pronounced and profound. In its outer edge (at the end of the inner corridor), there is a vertical nenfro parallelepiped slab, still in its original position, used probably as a boundary or a 'protection' of the bench. A similar slab is also present on the right bench, but inclined towards the sidewall of the chamber: it is quite likely that it had a similar function to the previous one and that its original position was also vertical. The left bench was without

with this in Gehrard ES pl XXV, 9, where is represented in opposite direction); Jucker 1986, 140-141, pl. 24,3; CSE France, 1, I, 32; Emmanuel-Rebuffat 1984a, 199-200, 218.

¹³ Gehrard ES III, 275, 325-8, pl. 257A; Bianchi Bandinelli 1925, 548 ff.; Haynes 1953, 29; Emmanuel-Rebuffat 1984a, 199-200, 218; Emmanuel-Rebuffat 1984b, pl. XVII, fig. 2; Cristofani 1985a 12, „serie G“, n. 3, fig. 10; Cristofani 1985b, 6 ff., fig. 12;; Mangani 1985, 30-31; Maggiani 1986, 9 ff., 16 ff., note 18, fig. 2 ; CSE France 1, I, 28 ff., n. 2 with bibliography; Pairault Massa 1992, 145 ff., fig. 137; Van Der Meer 1995, 86 ff., fig. 35; LIMC VIII, *Umaele*, 158, n. 3 (G. Camporeale); De Grummond 2000, 39 ff., fig. 12.

¹⁴ CSE France, 1, I, 32; Emmanuel-Rebuffat 1984a, 199-200, 218.

¹⁵ M. Moretti in Moretti and Sgubini Moretti 1983, 22, n. 3 with bibliography, 91, n. 4, 96, n. 9; M. D. Gentili in Linington and Serra Ridgway 1997, 159, with bibliography.

similar slabs: it is possible that for some reason it was never put in place, or it was removed for reuse during a violation in ancient-times, which should be assumed for this tomb, as I will show in a minute. The walls of the chamber are curvilinear, tending to taper itself toward the crushed-vaulted ceiling, while the rear wall presents a profile falling more markedly.

During the excavation of the debris of the *dromos*, which was extremely hard, numerous fragments of black glazed vessels (generally open shapes), a fragment of a strips-painted olla, a lid of coarse pottery and some fragments purified and coarse ceramic and tiles were found, in addition to the fragment of a nenfro cippus.¹⁶

The grave goods consisted almost exclusively of ceramic material, from the niche of the right side bench (**Figure 7**), as previously mentioned. This pottery belongs to symposium and banquet. There are: two *oinochoai* (**Figure 8**) (Morel 1981, 383, type 5725b1, 382, type 5722 d1), one pot (Morel 1981, 407, type 7223b1), plates, small plates, a bowl (some decorated with engraved markings and sometimes bearing alphabet initials) in black glaze pottery; an over-painted black-glaze pottery multiple jar (Gnathia Style class), decorated with vegetal branches (**Figure 9**);¹⁷ a stemmed plate and one pot (*olletta*)¹⁸ made from purified ceramic with strip-painted decoration; one pot (*olletta*) and a fragment of the nozzle and neck of a fusiform *unguentarium* of purified clay without glaze; some pots (*ollette*) of raw ceramic.

The left hand bench gave only few fragments of black-glaze pottery and a small over-painted lid, with petals arranged in a radial pattern, belonging to the multiple Gnathia Style jar found on the right bench.¹⁹

This last discovery raises some questions about the dynamics of the arrangement of the grave goods, which may have undergone due to the natural movement of the fill of the burial chamber and / or following ancient violations; they seem likely to have occurred, for the presence of small metallic materials (a nail and a fragmentary ring of bronze), for the lack of the other three jar lids and parts of some vessels and the complete absence of basic equipment found in the niche. The grave goods date back to the third century BC, probably to its first half.

Tomb no. 5

Underground chamber tomb, visible from the ground because of its collapse in ancient times. This collapse has certainly contributed in the past to the discovery of the tomb, subjected to at least two interventions of violation, reconstructed by local witnesses and excavation data. The *dromos* has a long and narrow niche on the left side wall, cut longitudinally. The room is rectangular, with a short inner corridor that continues the *dromos*. In the left wall

¹⁶ About the function of the cippi in the south-Etruscan necropolis of Hellenistic age see e.g. Romanelli 1986, 14; Serra Ridgway 1997, p. 153.

¹⁷ Pianu 1982, decoration type A, 123 ff., n. 244, tav CIII, a-b, n. 245, tav, CIII c.

¹⁸ For a comparison from Tuscania see L. Caretta in Moretti and Sgubini Moretti 1983, 138, n. 309, fig. 20, 3.

¹⁹ A lid almost identical in Pianu 1988, 101, n. 1, tav, XVI, 1.

of the chamber there is the entrance to a tunnel; the rear wall is slightly curved it connects to the right wall without solution of continuity. Inside the recent filling of the chamber, fragments referable to the upper part of the entrance door have emerged, consisting of two slabs of turf, while the lower part of the door (a vertical nenfro slab), was found still in place. Inside the same filling, fragments of three nenfro sarcophagi lids were also found: one double-sloped; one with a convex profile and *columen*; one double-sloped with *columen*.

It was possible to proceed to the allocation of the lids on the three sarcophagi that have emerged during the excavation of the same filling, lying still in their original position: one along the right side of the chamber, one on the rear side, orthogonal to it and one parallel to the first one, placed in the central area of the room and attested with a short side to approximately half of the long side of the second case (**Figure 10**). The sarcophagi were then respectively numbered as 1, 2 and 3. While the position of the sarcophagi nos. 1 and 2 is consistent with the plan of the chamber, no. 3, near the middle, should probably be explained as the last deposition in terms of chronological sequence, or could have been moved in ancient times from the left side of the chamber to create the cuniculus. It also formed a path aligned with the entrance corridor, and it left one space along the left wall where there is the entrance of a narrow tunnel 6.10 meters long. Its trend is orthogonal to the axis of the room, straight into a first section, which then bends slightly to the north, and it tapers toward the end; a breakthrough in this part should be attributed to the action of an animal.

At the base of the filling, but not clearly distinguishable from it, appeared a level of more compacted soil in which have been found, in the corner between the sarcophagi nos. 2 and 3, three almost intact plates made from purified clay without glaze, as well as the fragments of a black glaze patera. Next to the short side of sarcophagus no. 2 one bronze handle was recovered.

One issue worthy of further investigation is the blind cuniculus, for which it's hard to find a purpose. A comparison, albeit rather general, can be established with the tunnels at multiple levels inside the so-called Queen's tomb in the Madonna dell'Ulivo necropolis.²⁰ The shortage of materials and the type of sarcophagi placed here²¹ provide only a generic dating of the tomb, anyway consistent with the one of tomb no. 1.

Tombs nos. 7, 8, 11

These tombs belong to the trench type, with a rectangular plan and a straight profile obtained by cutting the turf; sometimes (nos. 7, 11) they have a recessed bottom for the housing of the deposition (**Figure 11**), probably originally covered with Wikander type II tiles (Wikander 1993, 29-40), of which fragments were there found. The furnishing was completely looted by violators. They are located in the space between the chamber tombs nos. 5 and 9.

²⁰ In regard to the Queen's tomb, see e.g.: Quilici Gigli 1970, 143, n. 435 and note 41 with bibliography, Romanelli 1986, 76-77.

²¹ See note 19.

Tomb no. 9

It is an underground single-chamber tomb, located N of tomb no. 5; the ceiling is collapsed, perhaps in ancient times or in response to the action of violators who came here: the door is in fact still in place, consisting of many stones of different sizes and shapes, in multiple rows. The entrance corridor has a floor sloping gradually down, with some steps slightly outlined. The room, which did not return any artifacts, is rectangular, with a short inner corridor (continuation of the entrance one) and a bench, which runs along the right side. The walls are straight in profile, projecting inward at the top where they join the ceiling, largely collapsed.

Conclusions

The discovery of this necropolis helps to expand our knowledge on the consistency of the necropolis, and consequently the town of Tuscania and the settlements placed around it, during the Hellenistic Age. As it is known, since the second half of the fourth century BC this center enjoys a new phase of development that concerns a much wider framework within Southern Inner Etruria, due to historical, social and economic factors not to be mentioned here.²² The excavation of Pian delle Rusciare also provides additional information regarding the geographical directions in the development of this center, in particular to W and NW, so far not much investigated.²³ The presence of violated funerary structures in Macchia della Riserva and, in particular, in Pian delle Rusciare was already mentioned in the topographic work of S. Quilici Gigli (Quilici Gigli 1970, 131, nn. 339, 340),²⁴ but the identification of them with those described here is far from being certain, due to the approximation of their location in Quilici's archaeological maps, admitted by the author herself and due to the dense bush in the area (Quilici Gigli 1970, 131, note 5, 129, note 3). There are afterwards only few and short mentions about the presence of tombs in Pian delle Rusciare Nardi Brunetti 1981, 182; Ricciardi 2006, 145 and note 88).

The tomb structures, with no external architectural apparatus and a lack of care in the realization of the interior, are among the known models in Tuscania in this period (Colonna Di Paolo 1978, 61; Romanelli 1986, 75 ff). They are generally intended for single families instead of larger aristocrat groups (if not individual graves). Tombs nos. 1 and 5 in fact housed three sarcophagi each, although, given the state of disruption of the original situation by the violators, we cannot strictly rule out the existence of other evidence, but they could not be many, due to the scarcity of additional storage space. Tomb no. 4, with the U-shaped bench (which

²² Regarding this problem see e.g.: Torelli 1970-71, 436 ss.; Colonna 1974, 259 ff.; Colonna Di Paolo 1978, 4-5, 10 ff.; 60-61; Torelli 1984, 218-219, 224 ff.; Sgubini Moretti 1986, 242-243; Romanelli 1986, 59 ff.; Camporeale 2011, 262-263.

²³ About archaeological surveys in this area: Barker and Rasmussen 1988, 38-40, fig. 4; Rasmussen 1991, 111-112.

²⁴ Regarding other archaeological findings in near zones, in area of Macchia della Riserva, 129, nn. 328, 329.

draws the provision of a domestic triclinium), probably contained only three depositions, while the size of tomb no. 2, even if the bench is not well preserved, doesn't allow us to assume a large number of depositions. The distribution of the tombs of this necropolis appears not to be random, although it is clear that the geomorphologic situation of the area has affected position and orientation.

Their location reflects a specific social structure, where some households used to emerge for social status and level of economic wealth (Torelli 1970-71, 436 ff.; Colonna Di Paolo 1978, 10 ff.; Torelli 1984, 237; Torelli 1986, 69 ff.; Serra Ridgway 1997, 177); they qualified themselves as holders of funerary structures with a complex plan and stone sarcophagi (tombs nos. 1 and 5); unfortunately the loss of most of the grave goods prevents us from a more correct assessment of the situation, even if some of the materials recovered and the testimonies of local people about their original consistency, seem to confirm these deductions. The existence of dynamic hierarchical social relationships within the necropolis is evident in particular in the situation on the northern side, where trench tombs are placed around tomb no. 5. On the eastern side the tombs are aligned, but even here, tomb no. 1 emerges over the other funerary structures for size and architectural complexity.

What is the exact nature of the relationship between the individuals deposited in tombs of this necropolis is complex to be defined, but the most prominent tombs seem to belong to the middle class households, who joined the aristocratic elite of Tuscania, of which they assimilated, in a reduced scale, the aristocratic ideological forms of self-representation in funerary contexts. Trench tombs, the *loculus* and perhaps even the single-chamber tomb may belong to the members of subordinate classes, linked to the aristocratic families placed in the bigger chamber tombs by different forms of dependence; but the complete absence of the grave goods prevents us, as in other cases, a more precise determination of the nature of this relationship.

Unfortunately we don't know anything about the settlement of this necropolis, and field surveys (without systemic character) carried out in the surrounding woods have so far yielded no results, even due to the objective difficulties presented by environmental factors of the area.

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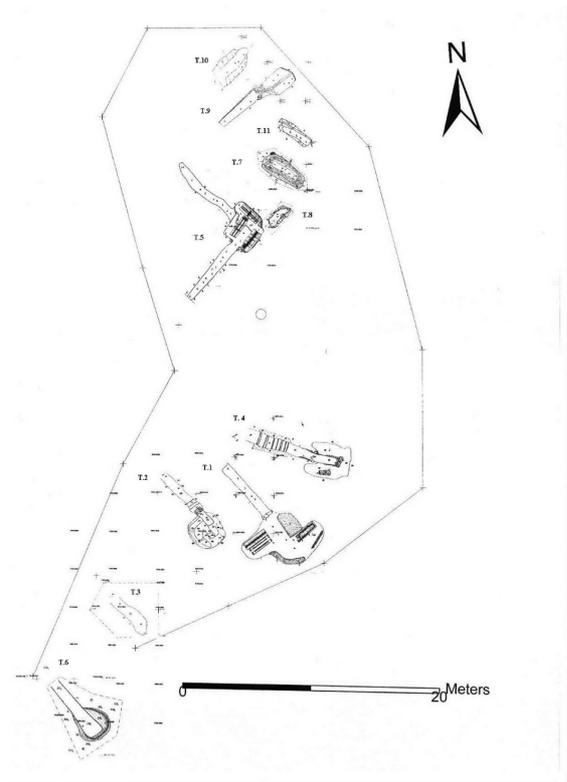


Figure 1: The necropolis of Pian delle Rusciare at Tuscania. General plan (realization by Elisa Orlando).

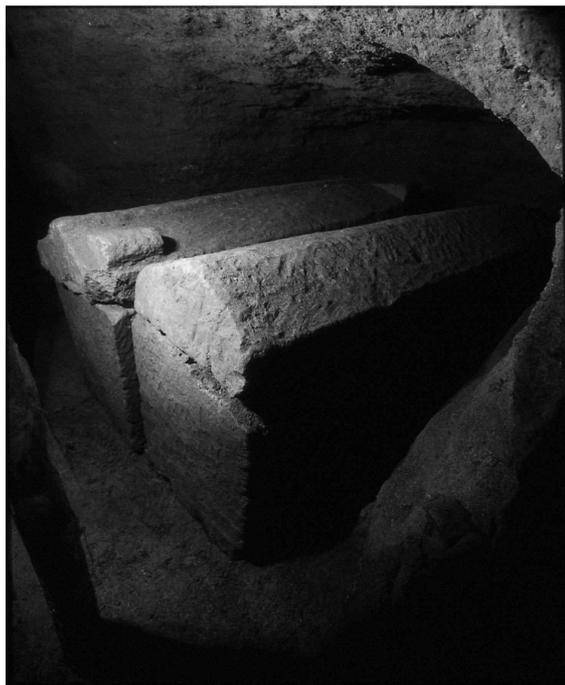


Figure 2: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 1. Sarcophagi nos. 1 and 2 (photograph by Guido Guarducci).



Figure 3: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 1. Bronze mirror handle (photograph by Guido Guarducci).



Figure 4: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 1. Black glaze patera (photograph by the author).



Figure 5: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 1. Bronze mirror and alabastron of without glaze pottery (photograph by the author).



Figure 6: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 1. Bronze mirror with myth of Telephos (photograph by Guido Guarducci).



Figure 7: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 4. The right bench with grave goods (photograph by the author).



Figure 8: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 4. Two oinochoai of black glaze pottery (photograph by Simone Stanislai).



Figure 9: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 4. Multiple jar of over painted black-glaze pottery of Gnathia Style (photograph by Simone Stanislai).

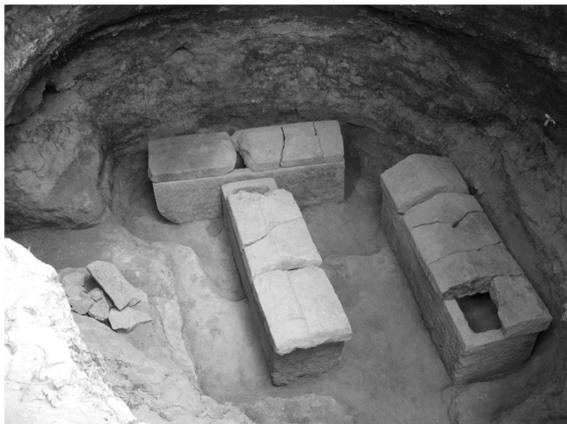


Figure 10: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 5. The chamber and the three sarcophagi (photograph by the author).



Figure 11: Tuscania, Pian delle Rusciare, tomb no. 11 (photograph by the author).