Ralegh Radford Rome Fellowships

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Cultural identity in central Apennine Italy. Patterns in social practice from the Iron Age to the Roman conquest

My research at the British School at Rome forms part of a broader project to develop a new understanding of cultural identity and social organization in central Apennine Italy, from the seventh to second centuries BC. This is aimed at shedding light on how communities reorganized themselves in the context of political transformation brought about by Roman expansion. During my Fellowship I focused on patterns in gender and kinship structures, and their connection with ideological uses of the dead in the landscape, through quantitative and spatial analyses of funerary evidence.

The first three months (October–December) were spent cataloguing a total of *c.* 1,500 burials from major funerary sites in Abruzzo, the most important of which are Campovalano, Fossa and Alfedena. This evidence mostly covers the period between the seventh and fourth centuries BC. I then did a series of quantitative analyses of the funerary material in January and February. Methods ranged from basic statistics to Chi-square and multivariate correspondence analysis.

To investigate gender, I examined correlations between artefacts and the biological sex, age and socio-economic status of individuals. My two main findings were (a) an overall decline in the association between men and weapons from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods; and (b) a long-term pattern of depositing drinking services in high-status burials of both men and women. This suggests that the ritual dispensation of drink may have been a key means of gaining social prestige and power in central Apennine Italy. The commensal politics of drinking may not always have been coexistent with male gender or warriorhood, as has been maintained in mainstream scholarship on Archaic Italy.[1] Comparisons with key cemeteries outside the central Apennines revealed that the association of both genders with ritual drinking paraphernalia was also a major feature at Pontecagnano, but not at Poseidonia. This raises the possibility that 'mixed gender' drinking was a broader Italic cultural practice that connected Adriatic and Tyrrhenian communities, but was absent from settlements where Greek culture was more prominent.[2]

Significant patterns also emerged from my analysis of the placement and above-ground marking of burials, and the importance of factors such as kinship and status in this process. I examined whether the dead were segregated on the basis of kinship, and to what extent familial groups correlate with the furnishings, placement and visibility of burials. I concluded that kinship played very different roles in the construction of ideas about community and social structure in the funerary sites of the central Apennines, at least until the Hellenistic period. While certain communities constructed an undifferentiated and levelled image of their dead (for example, Porticone in coastal Molise), others used burials to stress divisions along family lines and socio-economic hierarchy as clearly as possible. I detected this hierarchical notion of community at

[1] For a recent example of this view, see C. Riva, *The Urbanisation of Etruria* (Cambridge, 2010), 90.

[2] On the concept of 'mixed-gender' drinking events, see B. Arnold, 'Drinking the feast. Alcohol and the legitimation of power in Celtic Europe', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 9 (1), 71–93.

Alfedena, Val Fondillo, Fossa, Campovalano, Borgorose and Scurcola Marsicana. More than simply a shared aristocratic culture or a reflection of social stratification, this pattern suggests that communities in different 'ethnic' territories shared similar ideas about what they were and how they were structured — effectively, about what they should look like.

After investigating the funerary evidence I turned to comparative material from sanctuaries, to trace later developments of the fourth–second centuries BC, when burial evidence is scarce. My examination of patterns in votive deposits and architectural models of temples revealed a substantial socio-cultural realignment of central Apennine communities. Most striking was the finding that connections with Tyrrhenian Italy intensified from the fourth century BC onwards, in a manner that does not simply reflect Roman expansion.

Overall, my research shows that, in the last six centuries BC, central Apennine communities probably had a much more dynamic and fluid view of themselves than simply the ethnic contingents that are mentioned in the historical record (Samnites, Sabines, Picentes, Marsi, for example). It is likely that such ethnic groupings were the product of very specific historical situations, when it became convenient for local élites to foster large territorial identities. In future research, I shall continue to explore the history of Archaic and Republican Italy, in full awareness of the cultural criteria that would have been relevant for people's sense of who they were.

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Forest exploitation and sustainability in central Italy and provincial Britain in the Roman Imperial period

Natural resource economics form the kernel of my interest in the ancient world, in particular the forest economy. Studies on fuel and the forest economy are as yet embryonic, particularly from an archaeological standpoint. Archaeological charcoal analysed as to wood type, and characterized in terms of cropping marks, is our base tool. The results are interpreted in the light of the historical sources, and incorporate ecological and ethnographic data. The goal is to provide a regional economic view of forest management, including transport, supply and consumption patterns of various wood products. During my Fellowship, I focused on the Rome portion of my project, and I sought and analysed charcoal data from a range of sources, both inside Rome and from satellite settlements nearby. Some of this legacy data produced results that demonstrated much information about the timber supply (for construction), rather than the fuel supply; there were so many fires in ancient Rome! This has greatly enhanced my work, as I have had to develop methodological advances in charcoal analysis to be able to differentiate charcoal fuel remains from those of building timbers. While the size of the original wood is a factor, a close reading of all of the archaeological contextual information is essential, and reviewing the historical texts on building (in particular Vitruvius) has been greatly informative also.