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FUNERARY TRANSFORMATIONS IN AN ETRUSCO-ITALIC COMMUNITY: SOCIAL DISPLAY AND AUSTERITY IN HELLENISTIC CHIUSI

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From the end of the third century BC on, the funerary culture of the Etruscan city of Chiusi saw the gradual disappearance of the most expensive containers and tombs. At the same time, there was first a dramatic increase in the number of such monuments, followed by an equally sharp decline in the first century BC. The qualitative development has traditionally been explained using sumptuary laws, which should have constrained funerary expenditure. However, a close examination of the local evidence reveals that this is not only unlikely, but also does not explain the quantitative development and why there was a social and cultural need to constrain these funerary objects in the first place. Using the concepts of distinction and habitus *developed by Bourdieu, this paper analyses the developments in Chiusine funerary practice by focusing on social interactions within and between élites and non-élites. This gives both groups agency in a complex social, cultural and political process that caused the criteria for distinction to change, ultimately making funerary culture less important for status differentiation in the rapidly changing context of Hellenistic Italy.*

A partire dalla fine del III sec. a.C. si può registrare nella cultura funeraria della città etrusca di Chiusi la graduale scomparsa dei cinerari e delle strutture tombali di maggiore impegno economico. Allo stesso tempo si può riconoscere un aumento considerevole nel numero di questi monumenti, seguito poi da un declino, ugualmente netto, nel corso del I sec. a.C. Questo tipo di fenomeno è stato tradizionalmente spiegato con l'introduzione di leggi suntuarie, mirate a contenere il lusso funerario. Tuttavia, un'attenta disamina delle testimonianze locali mostra come questa interpretazione sia non solo improbabile, ma in ultima analisi non contribuisca a chiarire neppure lo sviluppo dal punto di vista quantitativo e i motivi per i quali vi fu una necessità sociale e culturale di limitare l'uso proprio di questi oggetti funerari. Utilizzando i concetti di distinzione *e di* habitus *sviluppati da Bourdieu, il presente articolo analizza gli sviluppi nella pratica funeraria chiusina, mettendo l'accento sulle interazioni sociali all'interno dell'*élite *e tra quest'ultima e le non-*élite. *Questo approccio riconosce a entrambi i gruppi la capacità di* agency *in un processo complesso che ha interessato gli ambiti sociale, culturale e politico e che è stato alla base dei criteri per la* distinzione *che ha portato al cambiamento, rendendo in ultima analisi la cultura funeraria meno importante in rapporto alla manifestazione della differenziazione di* status *nel contesto in rapido cambiamento dell'Italia di età ellenistica.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Material culture associated with funerary practice could be a useful means in ancient times to distinguish oneself or one's family from others, often leading to impressive funerals and monuments. This was certainly the case in Etruria, and the grand tumuli of this region provide evocative images of this prestigious culture. Even though Chiusi[2] also had such impressive tombs, this community developed towards less elaborate funerary monuments during the Hellenistic period. Cheaper materials, such as travertine and terracotta, were introduced, and the representation of the dead as reclining participants in a banquet gradually became obscure. There was not only a diminution of the economic value, but also the artistic value of funerary objects. At the same time, we see a peculiar quantitative development: from *c.* 215 until *c.* 150 BC there was a massive increase in the number of epitaphs, funerary containers and tombs, while the first century BC saw an equally significant drop in this regard, leaving only a small number of people in the surviving funerary record. What caused this seemingly radical abandonment of one of the most familiar elements of Etruscan culture?

This question is not limited to Chiusi, however, as late Etruscan culture seems to have experienced a rather general movement towards less extravagant funerary display. Perugia and Volterra had a somewhat similar quantitative shift, but without the disappearance of the more expensive containers and tombs (Benelli, 2001: 250–1), whereas Tarquinia shows an opposite pattern to these two cities (Roth, 2013); therefore, Chiusi is still a unique case. Traditionally, this late Etruscan situation has been explained by the rise of Rome, overshadowing and overpowering local cultures, invoking an idea of 'decline'.[3] In recent decades, however, ideas about 'Romanization' have changed radically: it is now generally seen as a reciprocal process, in which both Roman and local actors had agency. Moreover, indigenous populations participated in the creation of what was considered to be 'Roman', instead of just absorbing it. At least for Republican Italy, there was seemingly no conscious policy of Rome to obliterate local cultures and impose its own, in contrast to what the traditional focus on Roman texts and law would imply.[4] Consequently, many recent studies have questioned the transformation of the funerary culture of Hellenistic Etruria and its traditional Romano-centric interpretation.[5] This has in many cases led to an

[2] Etruscan Clevsin and Latin Clusium.

[3] Aigner-Foresti (1998) sees the Hellenistic age as a phase of transition for Etruscan culture, rather than a period of decline.

[4] This consensus is expressed in some form or another by Terrenato (1998; defined as 'cultural bricolage'), Woolf (1998; defined as 'becoming Roman') and Roth (2007: 9–39). Harris (1971: 169) and Häussler (1998) discuss the degree to which we could speak of a conscious policy of 'Romanization'.

[5] For example, Nielsen, 1990; Prayon, 1998; Berrendonner, 2004–7; Izzet, 2009.

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increased focus on underlying social and cultural factors that determine funerary forms and has reinvigorated the study of the material culture of Italy.[6]

This new wave of research, based on innovative theoretical insights into the study of material culture,[7] has changed the way funerary evidence is studied. However, the case of reduced funerary expenditure in Chiusi has never been given this elaborate treatment. Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain this trend, but none of these is based on any theoretical discussion or extensive empirical analysis. They also fail to take socio-cultural factors into account. I therefore propose to investigate the Chiusine funerary material in a coherent manner, integrated in its social and cultural context. I will develop an explanatory model drawing on the concepts of *habitus*, distinction and 'materialized ideologies'. My hypothesis is that there was no 'decline' in Chiusi or in its funerary culture, but a thorough transformation due to the changing socio-political context of Hellenistic Italy and the process of distinction. This term has been coined by Bourdieu and refers to the socio-economic process that informs status display and the development of associated objects employed to distinguish oneself from others (see below). This process of distinction caused a shift within its own criteria, away from funerary culture and towards several alternatives, such as landownership, euergetism, local and imperial magistracies, and trade. This was initiated by the transforming context of Roman Italy and the socio-political changes within Chiusine society itself, necessitating new forms of élite self-representation. This perspective allows us to look at the Chiusine evidence without supposing Roman influence a priori, therefore abandoning the Romano-centric point of view. It also enables us to investigate social and cultural developments and interactions and to give agency to all social groups in Chiusi, both élites and non-élites.[8] First, however, it is

[6] Nielsen (1985; 1989; 1999; 2002; 2013) studied the impact of the Roman conquest on genealogies, family representation and identity. Roth analysed élite ideology and family representation for Tarquinia (Roth, 2013) and Volterra (Roth, 2009) and Etruria in general (Roth, 2010) in the changing socio-political context of Roman Italy. Chiusi (Benelli, 2001; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2012), Perugia (Cherici, 2002) and Vulci (Cherici, 2005) have also been analysed in a similar manner. Izzet (2007) developed a socio-cultural model to explain changes in Archaic funerary culture. Such approaches have also been applied to Rome, for example by Morris (1994), Mouritsen (2005) and Wallace-Hadrill (2008).

[7] For example, Hodder, 1979; 1982; Morris, 1987; 1994; Cannon *et al.*, 1989; De Marrais, Castillo and Earle, 1996; Izzet, 2007.

[8] With 'élites', I refer to a small group that has a disproportionate access to political and economic resources and that holds institutional as well as informal power over the community. In Bourdieu's words, this group had the most capital — whatever kind it may be. Conversely, the term 'non-élites' concerns the people who are not 'élites', and therefore the vast majority of society. These groups and their composition are highly dynamic and there was constant competition among them. The reconstruction of these groups in modern scholarship is mainly based on funerary evidence, risking circular reasoning in trying to discern social developments using this very evidence. Benelli (2009) has thoroughly analysed Chiusine society using this evidence and has distilled a changing élite group, also based on practices of intermarriage. This

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necessary to look at the funerary developments in Chiusi in more detail, followed by a short overview of existing explanations for these changes.

2. THE EVOLUTION OF CHIUSINE FUNERARY CULTURE IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

The abandonment of expensive and elaborate funerary accoutrement began at the end of the third century BC, but it seems that this change was rooted in the preceding centuries. In the Archaic and Classical periods, funerary culture was primarily reserved for the élites and was used to exhibit status and privilege. Such monuments were very expensive and entailed multiple costs, both in materials and labour: the tomb, funerary container, epitaph, grave goods, accompanying rituals and perhaps banquets. There was obviously a wide range of options for each of these elements, with different prices, but a monumental burial — resulting in a permanent monument — was never widely available in what was still a subsistence economy. The poorer part of society will have used a simple jar or urn, or deposited the deceased directly into the soil. Élite monuments were much more impressive: life-sized statues could serve as urns, and the ash chests with couples sculpted on the lids are well known, just like the famous canopic urns (Bayet, 1960: 84–8). However, these impressive objects were no longer used by the fourth century BC (Maggiani, 2014: 51–2). A limited number of sarcophagi were interred in the area of Chiusi — mostly based on Tarquinian models, such as the exquisite sarcophagus of Hasti Afunei[9] — but the most popular container by far became the ash chest with a single person on the lid, depicted reclining on a *kline*. This type of container even signified a peak in the artistic production of funerary containers in Chiusi in the third century BC, whereas the sarcophagi and the urns shaped like houses were simplified and less frequently used after this period.

Chiusi also has multiple painted tombs, most notably the Tomba della Scimmia, but all pre-date the Hellenistic period.[10] This was in part due to the more unsuitable limestone of the *ager clusinus*, which often necessitated block-built tombs and did not allow refined decorations as much as in the south (Oleson, 1982: 34). The fifth and fourth centuries BC — the Classical period — were also the age of the last tumuli: enormous mounts with chambers built inside them. The impressive tumulus of Poggio Gaiella of the sixth century BC most vividly illustrates the size and cost of these monuments. However, the tumuli became smaller with fewer chambers and were eventually replaced with chamber tombs, which were built into a hillside or sunk into the ground

reduces the aforementioned risk as much as possible given the nature of the Chiusine evidence, which unfortunately offers no way to identify the élite independently of funerary material.

9 For Chiusine sarcophagi, see Colonna, 1993.

10 See Steingräber (2006) for Etruscan wall painting.

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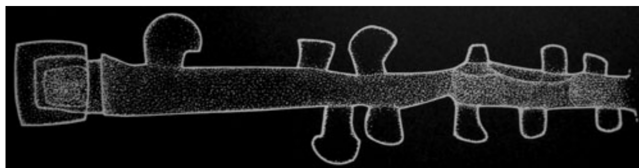

Fig. 1. General example of a *dromos* tomb with one chamber at the end of the *dromos*. Drawing by Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Chiusi, photograph courtesy of Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana — Firenze.

(Steingräber, 1995: 56). In addition, the number of chamber tombs increased drastically in the fifth and especially the fourth centuries BC. Bianchi Bandinelli (1925: 437) estimated that there were about 29 Archaic tombs, whereas he counted 475 tombs datable to the Classical period and about 400 to the Hellenistic period, of which 25 were so-called *dromos* tombs — tombs in which the *dromos*, or corridor, holds depositions (Fig. 1). These estimates are not to be taken as exact numbers and his criteria for them remain unclear. Moreover, research since then has shown that he vastly underestimated the number of *dromos* tombs,[11] but these figures are still an indication of a transition within funerary culture before the Hellenistic period. This increased number also resulted in more variety: some tombs still resembled the layouts of the rich tumuli, but many were much simpler and only had one chamber and a small corridor.

The end of the third century BC saw an acceleration of this ongoing transformation: sarcophagi almost completely disappeared, and at the beginning of the next century the very expensive material of alabaster, which signified a high point of artistic production (Fig. 2) but was relatively rare in the area, was abandoned. However, this material would still be used throughout the second and first centuries BC in Volterra, where it was plentiful. This indicates a conscious decision to abandon this less accessible and more expensive material in Chiusi, though it could still be imported at a certain cost (Briguet, 2002: 20). The beginning of the second century BC saw the replacement of the cheaper ash chests of travertine with *kline* lid, by those with gabled roof-lids. This made these containers far less time-consuming to make. The decoration on the sides of these chests was simplified as well: from elaborate mythological scenes to vegetal ornaments, depictions of Etruscan monsters or even blank planes. This is inextricably connected with the change in material: alabaster allows much more refinement than the more friable travertine. The latter would also be

[11] This is caused by Bianchi Bandinelli's focus on urban *necropoleis*, while *dromos* tombs were mainly situated in rural settings mostly belonging to non-élites. Salvadori's (2014) survey lists 265 *dromos* tombs or archaeological contexts that point towards such tombs, but she stresses that this survey is incomplete and full of uncertain data. The fact that the rise in the number of tombs throughout the Hellenistic period was not as large as that of epitaphs or funerary containers is explained by the fact that tombs generally contained more and more deceased — and thus epitaphs and containers — as time went on.

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Fig. 2. Ash chest of alabaster with lid, 225–200 BC, belonging to Fasti Sentinati Umranasa from the Umrana Tomb. The murder of Troilus is depicted on the box front. NMR.1017.1 and NMR.1017.2 Nicholson Museum, the University of Sydney.

gradually less used, and would in a sense be replaced by the relatively cheap terracotta, which was introduced at the end of the third century BC. The ash chests of terracotta soon became very popular, with *kline*-form lids and adorned with mythological scenes (Berrendonner, 2004–7: 70–2).

This development meant that funerary monuments became less expensive and more accessible to non-élites. Sure enough, the end of the third century BC saw a dramatic increase in the number of funerary containers and epitaphs, mainly due to the popularity of terracotta containers. This upward trend continued into the next century and seems to be unparalleled within the ancient world. Whereas we can only see a relatively small élite group in the funerary record of the Archaic and Classical periods, Berrendonner (2004–7: 72) has estimated that between 18 and 37% of the total population of Chiusi left a traceable funerary marker in the second century BC. Benelli (2009: 305) estimates this at 10%, based only on the number of epitaphs, which he considers to be around 2,700 for the entire Hellenistic period.[12] Nielsen (1989: 56) has counted 412 ash chests with *kline*-styled lid figures, excluding the many aniconic ash chests and *ollae* (see below). These estimates should be treated with utmost care, but it seems that an unusual

[12] This difference in estimates is in part caused by the fact that many depositions were not accompanied by an inscription.

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number of people had a funerary monument that was more than a simple jar or urn. This becomes especially clear when we consider that Chiusi has about five times more extant epitaphs than Rome for the Republican period (Berrendonner, 2008: 181–7). This difference becomes even more significant in the light of possible population sizes and epitaphs per capita. I propose that this radical quantitative change must be significant for the development of Chiusine funerary culture as a whole and that it is the combination of this evolution with the development in materials and elaboration that sets Chiusi apart from other Etruscan cities in this period.

From the Classical period on, tombs became ever smaller and less monumental. The *dromos* started to dominate the structures from the third century BC. At the end of the century, the *dromos* would sometimes lead to a single chamber and had niches, or *loculi*, in its walls for additional depositions. This was a gradual development and therefore produced some structures which had elements of the old model and the new, such as the famous Tomba della Pellegrina of the illustrious Sentinate/Seiante family. Even though this was still a rather elaborate tomb, it was, from the outside at least, very unassuming compared to earlier Chiusine tombs and contemporary tombs elsewhere, especially those of southern Etruria. This is indicative of a more general evolution towards subtle façades which were not aimed at ostentatious display (Fig. 3). Ultimately, the burial chambers disappeared in many tombs, often leaving only the *dromos* and its increasing number of *loculi* by the first century BC. This was accompanied by a major rise in the number of funerary tiles, which were a practical way to close *loculi* and often bore inscriptions. Due to the greater capacity, building a

Fig. 3. Entrance to the Tomba della Pellegrina of the Sentinate/Seiante family, located in the Poggio Renzo necropolis. Photograph by author.

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tomb most likely became a more attractive option for families, since more members could use it and the tombs could be used for longer.

Returning to the funerary containers of the second century BC, there was an intensification of earlier trends. The ash chests of terracotta were now mass-produced by means of moulds, which reduced costs even more. The development of this process clearly indicates that there was a large demand for these products, as is shown by their prevalence in the Chiusine tombs. In the long run, this process caused less variation in the depicted scenes — leaving almost only the scene of Eteokles and Polyneikes and that of the Hero or Demon with the plough — and also the transformation of the *kline* model. The reclining figures were increasingly stylized and most lost their typical banquet posture by the end of this century. Increasingly they resembled sleeping persons, and gradually lost their gender distinctiveness (Sclafani, 2010: 34–56 and 155–64). This was at least in part due to the repeated use of the same moulds, causing the resulting figures to be gradually less well shaped (Fig. 4). *Kline*-form terracotta urns still existed, however, but became smaller and less refined. These later versions sometimes had moulded *kline* legs on the box fronts, making the box more explicitly the *kline*, indicating that this theme of banqueting was still present. *Ollae*, small vessels that were common in central Italy and could be used as urns, were introduced as well (Fig. 5). Being mass-produced but also smaller and painted, as opposed to relief-sculpted, these were even cheaper than the ash chests of terracotta, allowing more people to buy a funerary container. This trend towards less expenditure is illustrated by the grave goods as well. Compared to other Etruscan cities, these were never impressive to begin with, both in number and in worth. This is in part due to

Fig. 4. Ash chest of terracotta with lid, late second century BC, with traces of polychromy. The entrance to Hades is depicted on the box front. Inv. 62778 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Chiusi, photograph courtesy of Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana — Firenze.

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Fig. 5. *Olla* (*campanulata*), second century BC, decorated with garland wreaths. Inv. 62489 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Chiusi, photograph courtesy of Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana — Firenze.

consistent looting throughout the centuries, but also seems to reflect a genuine tendency to give fewer and less expensive objects. Both the number and worth of these objects reduced still further during the Hellenistic period.

We must not forget, however, that despite the increasing availability of funerary monuments, such objects were still limited to a rather select group. At best, we can see an upper *plebs media*, due to the aforementioned expenses that a monumental burial entailed — even if these had dropped significantly. Still, the development of tombs and containers allowed more people than ever before to have one, enabling some families to 'upgrade' from the poorest burial forms. There were even *dromos* tombs with people who seem to be unrelated, giving rise to their hypothetical attribution to funerary *collegia*, similar to those of Rome (Nielsen, 2013: 182–3; Shepherd, 2014: 40). This is also the period when we see *lautni* appear in epitaphs. These were probably Etruscan freedmen and even though they only form about 4% of the entire funerary epigraphic corpus of Hellenistic Chiusi (Benelli, 2013: 450–4), this proportion is far greater than that of other Etruscan cities and seems to be indicative of a more widely accessible funerary culture.

All this does not mean that everyone adopted the same, relatively cheap, forms during the second century BC. More expensive alternatives did still exist, even

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though they had become rare. There were still some ash chests of travertine and, more notably, there were tombs with a barrel-vaulted chamber. There are only six known examples for Chiusi: Tomba del Granduca (Matteini Chiari, 1975: 30–1), Tomba Galeotti (Oleson, 1976b), Tomba Vigna Grande (Matteini Chiari, 1975: 30), Tomba dei Tlesnei (Matteini Chiari, 1975: 32), Tomba di Vaiano (Matteini Chiari, 1975: 31–2; Bruschetti, 2011–12) and Tomba delle Tassinaie (Levi, 1928). Strangely enough, this was an innovation of the second century BC. They were rather small compared to Archaic or Classical chamber tombs, but the required building technique was expensive and these tombs were therefore preserved for a small élite, which is reflected by the relatively rich contents of these burials (Oleson, 1982: 32–5). Just like the mass production of *ollae* and ash chests, this can be seen as part of an innovative funerary culture; changes that did not always lead towards more elaboration and complexity. So there was still some measurable disparity between the most expensive and cheapest forms: the gap between an ash chest of travertine with luscious vegetal decorations and an undecorated *olla* was quite large indeed. The same is true for barrel-vaulted tombs and small *dromos* tombs without a chamber (see below). Nevertheless, these differences were not nearly as striking as the vast chasm separating élites and non-élites in the Archaic and Classical periods, when monumental funerary culture was the prerogative of the city's leading families. At least in the funerary domain, then, the distance between the upper and lower social echelons was decreasing.

This development continued into the first century BC. Ash chests of terracotta and simplified *ollae* became the norm, whilst chamber tombs were reduced to a single room, and *dromos* tombs no longer had a chamber but could have up to 40 *loculi* (Salvadori, 2014: 68–9). More expensive tomb types, such as the barrel-vaulted ones, were no longer constructed and fell out of use as they were filled up. Some people switched to funerary monuments that were put out in the open, instead of in a tomb. Among these were funerary stelae, altars and *cippi*. These latter cubic monuments were already in use from Archaic times on, but these were adorned with reliefs (Nielsen, 2002: 92; Jannot, 2010) whereas the later versions were much simpler. These cheaper solutions did not lead to a further increase in the number of archaeologically traceable people, however. From the second half of the second century BC onwards, a gradual decrease in the number of containers and epitaphs is discernible, and the middle of the first century BC was a radical breaking point in this development. From then on, we only see a small élite in the funerary evidence, with everyone else once again invisible to us.[13] The vast majority stopped using tombs and monumental funerary containers, even though they were cheaper than ever. It seems as if funerary culture was no longer considered as something on which one should spend a lot of resources.

[13] Berrendonner (2004–7: 68) estimates the total number of Hellenistic depositions at about 3,907. The Augustan period has only about 5% of the number of depositions of the middle of the second century BC.

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This all took place in a turbulent period of Chiusine history. The Roman conquest of Italy caused major disturbances. These were more prevalent in the southern part of Etruria, but the Roman intervention in Arezzo in 302 BC and the destruction of nearby Volsinii in 264 BC indicate an uncertain political climate in the region of Chiusi as well. In addition, this conquest further stimulated increasingly dense networks of communities and élites throughout the peninsula, causing intensified social and cultural interaction (Mouritsen, 1998: 39–86).[14] Local élites could increasingly participate in the Roman political and administrative structure, and wider trade networks created more opportunities for those willing to invest. From a socio-political perspective, this meant that élites were now operating within a significantly changed and much broader context than before, needing to assert their status before a wider audience. This new position within the Italic world caused existing strategies of representation and ideology to become outdated and questioned existing paradigms of self-definition. This development is also what Roth (2013: 199–200) stresses in his analysis of Tarquinian tomb painting, which was abandoned at the end of the third century BC. For him, this transforming Italic context is the main reason why Tarquinian élites needed to change their strategies of representation. Tomb painting no longer reached the wide audience that was now required — given its highly local and even private nature — and was therefore no longer worth the investment, causing élites to seek other ways to display their status. I will argue that the impact of this changing context upon strategies of representation is evident at Chiusi as well and that such a shift could very well be a more widespread phenomenon in Hellenistic Italy. This will be explored for Chiusi in detail later on.

This Italic political, economic and social network intensified in the first century BC. After the Social War, there was the mass enfranchisement of the Italic allies. Given the crucial effect that the adoption of a (Roman) name had on personal identity (Adams, 2003: 369), combined with the effect of Roman institutions, this may have contributed to the slowly increasing presence of Latin in Chiusine inscriptions from the beginning of that century onwards. A part of the Chiusine population, especially the élites, must have been able to speak Latin before, but only now did they gradually start to use this language to represent themselves in the funerary sphere. The more unified institutional landscape of Roman Italy and the spread of Latin as a lingua franca also greatly facilitated migration; not only to Rome, but also to Chiusi and other cities. Benelli (2009: 317–18) has shown that the élite of Chiusi underwent serious changes in this period. Several immigrant families arrived at the beginning of the first century BC and became very conspicuous in our epigraphic evidence, some of them becoming part of a new Chiusine élite. At the same time, indigenous families who were not related to the old élite climbed up the social ladder and some old élites disappeared

[14] Guldager Bilde, Nielsen and Nielsen (1993) and Bradley, Isayev and Riva (2007) offer many contributions that discuss interregional interactions in Hellenistic Italy.

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from the evidence. Based on epitaphs, we can see that a new élite was formed, consisting of old indigenous élites, new indigenous élites and new immigrant élites, many of them linked by intermarriage. For a long time, the consensus has been that these immigrants were Roman colonists, following a *deductio* by Sulla. However, Pack and Paolucci (1987: 165–73) have convincingly suggested a Julio-Claudian foundation date of the Chiusine colony instead, mainly based on the lack of mentioned *duoviri* in the first century BC. Later in this century, even more socially prominent immigrants arrived, perhaps due to the wide disturbances caused by the civil wars.

We therefore have to situate the funerary developments in this dynamic social and political context, with changing expectations and possibilities for representation. I argue that Chiusine funerary culture was innovative and adapted very well to a changing market and to new social and cultural needs, without there being a 'decline'. As previously mentioned, Chiusi was not entirely unique in this respect and it is also crucial to keep in mind that funerary culture was almost always changing in some form or another because of its dependency on socio-cultural factors (Roth, 2013: 191). However, I will argue that the much more radical nature of the change in Chiusi, combined with the peculiar quantitative shift, makes Chiusi stand out from the other Etruscan cities and indicates a transformation of the function of funerary culture and a change in its position within Chiusine *habitus*. Before offering an explanation for this unique character, I will first discuss the existing hypotheses and the limitations of these approaches.

3. EXISTING HYPOTHESES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHIUSINE FUNERARY CULTURE

Several hypotheses have been put forward to explain the evolution in the funerary culture of Chiusi. First of all, there is the hypothesis of economic recession, proposed recently by Stevens (2001: 104). Recent research has shown, however, that the Hellenistic period was a rather prosperous one for this region, despite the Second Punic War (Harris, 1977: 57; Cornell, 1996), as evidenced by stable settlement data (Witcher, 2006: 103–5) and the statements of Columella (*De Re Rustica*, 2, 6) and Pliny the Elder (*Historia Naturalis*, 18, 66) regarding the very rich agriculture of Chiusi. The most convincing argument against this economic explanation, however, is the sheer quantity of tombs and funerary containers for this period. This clearly shows that people could spend resources on items that were not necessary for subsistence. This may not indicate a true economic *hausse*, but there definitely does not seem to be any reason to suppose an economic recession.

Thoden van Velzen (1992) suggested a radical wave of cultural pessimism in Etruria, causing people to abandon their cultural heritage because it had lost its meaning due to Roman oppression. This hypothesis is clearly inspired by an

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outdated notion of the Roman conquest of Italy. Moreover, such a development should have led to a massive abandonment of funerary monuments, exactly the opposite of what happened during the second century BC. It also does not work with the chronology: surely this sort of pessimism must have been worst right after the conquest of Etruria, about a century before the expensive funerary forms started to disappear and two centuries before the qualitative and quantitative drops of the first century BC occurred.

For their analysis of Etruscan art in the Hellenistic period, Caccioli (1999: 175–6) and Massa-Pairault (1996: 227) seek an explanation in Rome. They see the transformation of the *kline* model as a direct consequence of the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 186 BC, outlawing the mystery cult of Bacchus in Italy. Banquets were of course associated with this cult and, because of this, these authors argue, banqueting imagery was banned from ash chests as well. However, there is much debate about the areas that were affected by this Roman decision (Mouritsen, 1998: 54–5; de Cazanove, 2000). Even if we assume it did apply to Chiusi, it could only explain one aspect of the funerary developments. It also assumes one of two things: either Rome was so powerful and determined that it managed to effectively ban this imagery as far as the north of Etruria; or people in Chiusi were so keen on emulating Rome and its moral values that they willingly excluded this imagery. Both notions belong to the aforementioned outdated idea of Romanization, which reduces local agency to a servile attitude without local input. They also require a rather sudden abandonment of the *kline* model, but instead we see a gradual transformation over more than a century and no complete disappearance. There are also no obvious signs of emulation of Roman culture in Chiusi in the second century BC, and the same goes for the vast majority of Italy (Mouritsen, 1998: 81). This was almost a century before Latin appeared in Chiusine inscriptions and there is no evidence for the adoption of such illusive Roman values as discipline and an aversion to *luxuria*.

I say 'illusive' because, in reality, these values were hardly present in Rome. An overview of Roman funerary culture during the middle and late Republic reveals a development towards increasing luxury and monumentality. This only started in the third century BC, but rapidly expanded in scale, even spreading beyond the élite. The extravagant tombs of the first century BC, such as the pyramid of Gaius Cestius and the oven-like tomb of Marceius Virgileus Eurysaces, reflect a grandeur in the funerary domain that was absolutely inconceivable in contemporary Chiusi. Roman funerals became important ritual spectacles (Engels, 1998: 155–62), for men and women alike, used to assert family identities and shape genealogic traditions, for instance by carrying the *imagines maiorum*, portraits of illustrious ancestors, along in the *pompae funebres* (Morris, 1987: 33; Flower, 2002: 159–60). Livy (*Periochae*, 48) described this event as the most important element of élite funerals, even more crucial than the funerary monument itself. Due to the lack of Etruscan texts about funerary practice, we cannot know for sure how much of a spectacle it was in Hellenistic

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Etruria, but nothing points towards something comparable to late Republican Rome.

It is clear then that funerary culture was used in Rome to put oneself and one's family in the spotlight and affirm (aspired) social positions. In Bourdieu's terms, it was a means of distinction, an instrument used to create social differentiation. Élites constantly tried to outdo other families, leading to more luxury and monumentality (Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 351–5). However, it is clear that Chiusi did not emulate Rome's funerary culture or even its social function. Chiusi and Rome had in fact opposite developments and there does not seem to have been any 'self-Romanization' in Chiusi, then, with supposedly 'less developed' peoples acquiring Roman forms and values because these were considered more enlightened or practical. Supposing direct Roman influence on the development of funerary culture in Chiusi therefore has no empirical or theoretical ground.

This leads us to the popular hypothesis of sumptuary laws as the motivator for change (Minetti and Paolucci, 2000: 213–15; Benelli, 2001: 254; Berrendonner, 2004–7: 72; Sclafani, 2010: 152; Salvadori, 2014: 64). Such laws were imposed to limit expenditure aimed at status display and are known at Rome and Athens (Morris, 1994: 128–55; Engels, 1998: 77–96; Zanda, 2011). As far as we know, only the Twelve Tables regulated funerary expenditure directly in Rome, while other laws could affect it indirectly, for example through banqueting practice (Engels, 1998: 171–2). However, the 'Roman cultural revolution' of the second and first centuries BC, and the development of funerary culture in particular, makes clear that these laws did not work and actually caused certain objects to be more desirable and therefore subject to élite competition (Wallace-Hadrill, 2008). The goal of these laws was therefore to condone luxury in a controlled manner so élite competition could be regulated with a system of fines: banning ostentatious display was never an option (Engels, 1998: 169–70; Zanda, 2011: 110).

It seems, then, that sumptuary laws barely concerned the funerary domain in Rome, and if they did, they had very little effect. This is perhaps not entirely surprising, given that funerary culture is a rather peculiar form of conspicuous consumption because of its inherent ritual and traditional character. We should therefore not expect this cultural domain to be regulated in the same manner as, for instance, jewellery or clothing. This finding also presents serious problems for the hypothetical effects of these laws in Chiusi: why should we automatically assume that they were much more effective there? And why would they have been used to regulate the funerary domain in the first place? Suggesting sumptuary laws as the cause for change therefore becomes highly problematic, especially given the lack of empirical evidence other than the reduced expenditure in Chiusine funerary culture itself. These laws generally did not impose a certain selection of options for specific acts or goods, but usually set a maximum value that could be spent and imposed fines if these limits were not respected. It therefore seems unlikely that these laws were responsible for the loss of variety in the tombs, representations of the dead and decoration of Chiusine funerary containers. The assumption that standard forms were in fact

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imposed leads to another problem. Chiusine funerary culture was still somewhat heterogeneous, with experimentation and variety. The gap between élites and non-élites, although smaller, was definitely still there, which begs the question why the cheapest forms decreased in value as well. Moreover, the introduction of tombs with a barrel-vaulted ceiling becomes very difficult to explain in a period of sumptuary restriction. Some of the more impressive tombs may not have been identifiable as such from the outside, but, as far as sumptuary laws are concerned, only their cost mattered, and this was still high compared to other tombs.

Furthermore, most Etruscan *necropoleis*, such as those of Cerveteri, Populonia and Tarquinia, show signs of conscious planning and multiple systems for the representation of and relationships between tombs, which usually conveyed a message of a social, ritual or religious nature that was seemingly very important. Orvieto even has regularly spaced, remarkably similar tombs, despite being built at different moments; this is the main reason why scholars have supposed sumptuary laws to be in effect here as well (Oleson, 1976a: 211–18; Izzet, 2007: 117–19). All these elements are completely absent in the Chiusine *necropoleis*,[15] however, which seems to indicate that there was no imposed system or other form of regulation. Moreover, *necropoleis* are so widely spread out over the vast *ager clusinus* and fragmented over the many rural settlements that it seems unlikely that such laws would even be respected or could be enforced. It also seems difficult to explain the quantitative evolution of the funerary culture of Chiusi using sumptuary laws. Why would so many people suddenly start buying funerary monuments? And why did people not develop cheaper forms earlier? Was this regulated beforehand as well and did these regulations then change? We have also seen that the transformation of Chiusine funerary culture was very gradual and not the sudden change we would expect with laws being imposed at a particular moment. Holding on to this hypothesis would require supposing a series of laws, enacted successively and each being stricter than the last. We know of no other community where this was the case and I think it is very unlikely indeed.

This sumptuary hypothesis may not be completely Romano-centric in and of itself, but its uncritical application, without consideration for its causes or long-term effects, betrays the implicit attitude that Roman influence is the logical explanation here and that Roman parallels need no further justification. As I have pointed out, this idea is still very much present; Roman influences and models are not questioned enough. Moreover, simply stating that these laws were the cause of everything ignores the circumstances of their enactment and also their consequences. Instead of evoking this explanatory *deus ex machina*, I will try to explain the funerary developments from a socio-cultural point of view.

[15] See Minetti and Paolucci (2000) for an introduction to the Chiusine *necropoleis*.

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4. THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATION AND COMPETITION ON FUNERARY CULTURE

I argue that the explanation for the funerary evolution of Chiusi needs to be sought in socio-cultural developments that caused the social function of funerary culture to change. There are some empirical observations that support this assumption. Firstly, the élites could spend a lot more on funerary objects because of the aforementioned economic situation, but it appears that they increasingly decided not to do so. The élite also had no problem using relatively cheap objects, which were mainly used by non-élites, in combination with the more expensive ones belonging to their ancestors, in the same tomb. The Tomba Matausni serves as an interesting example of this phenomenon, as it has exquisite alabaster urns and also one poorly made terracotta one. As mentioned before, this changing economic behaviour of élites can also be seen in Tarquinia during the third century BC, which Roth (2013) saw as crucial evidence for a different social function for funerary culture. For Chiusi as well, this role had seemingly changed, from the impressive prerogative of élites to display wealth in the Archaic and Classical periods, to a culture that was relatively widespread and seemed more egalitarian in nature. Apparently it was no longer desirable or profitable, in a social sense, to invest in these monuments. This is most clearly illustrated by the immigrant élites of the first century BC, who only used relatively simple and inexpensive *dromos* tombs and terracotta containers and apparently did not feel the need to assert their new and uncertain status using impressive funerary monuments (Benelli, 2012: 104). This seems to indicate an altered social value for funerary culture and a changed use for representation.

Secondly, the development of the Chiusine tombs had consequences for the way family members were buried. Before the Hellenistic period, there were not as many spaces in every tomb, making burial in it a more exclusive position to have within a family and thus probably a sign of achievement. This demanded that most élite households construct their own tombs, not relying on ancestors to reserve a spot for them. Tumuli could contain multiple chamber tombs, but these still had relatively few deceased and often belonged to different families. The Hellenistic period saw a development towards smaller tombs, but with many more interments. The earlier Hellenistic tombs still had multiple chambers, usually with the head of the family and founder of the tomb in the main chamber, accompanied by his wife and children (Roth, 2010: 179–80). Gradually, these chambers became more crowded, making the hierarchy within the family less clear in a spatial sense. Eventually, these chambers disappeared in many cases and the growing use of *loculi* in *dromoi* at least visually indicated a greater sense of equality and collectiveness. Nielsen (2013: 182–3) attributes this Chiusine evolution to the advanced stage of Romanization — in the classic sense of the term — and increasing social mobility, resulting in a weakening of family ties and the rise of many egalitarian funerary *collegia*. As previously mentioned, such *collegia* are debatable for Chiusi, however, and

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tombs were seemingly still centred around the idea of family. I do share Nielsen's opinion that the increasingly wider Italic context had consequences for funerary culture and representation within it. It seems that the value of the funerary domain for socio-economic differentiation and representation within the family had changed. Given the importance of the funerary context for genealogic purposes, this development should indicate a significant change in its social use.

Thirdly, there was a change in the way the deceased was represented and the container was decorated. The representation of the deceased had already undergone important changes before the Hellenistic period. In the Archaic period, and probably before as well (Tuck, 1994), most representations of the dead served a revitalizing purpose, reintegrating the deceased amongst the living, as live participants in their own banquet. The predominant symbolism of the banquets transformed during the fourth century BC and started to depict the dead still as participants in a banquet, but this was now aimed at the survival of the almost material soul of the deceased, instead of reintegration amongst the living (Jannot, 1987: 285–6). Starting from the second century BC, the iconography of the banquet transformed once more and became far less explicit, resulting in persons who seemed to be sleeping or resting. Moreover, even though the sculpted figures were never true portraits, most attempts at individualization vanished as well, except for some cases that seem to be specific commissions (Nielsen, 2002: 116). This evolution towards a more subdued iconography and a focus on death itself is mirrored in the accompanying reliefs on the ash chests. Elaborate decorations became fewer and the depicted myths were first centred around victims who were about to die and were then almost reduced to only two scenes, the battle of Eteokles and Polyneikes, and the Hero or Demon with the plough (Jannot, 1987: 290; Sclafani, 2010: 155–67). In a sense, then, the world of the living became more separated from that of the dead. In short, despite the constant evolution in the funerary iconography of Chiusi, the Hellenistic period seemed to be a period of more drastic changes. The loss of most individualizing features in the *kline* lids could also indicate a reduced stress on the high status of specific élite members, replacing them with more generic depictions; again having consequences for strategies of representation (Roth, 2009: 48).

Finally, there was the change in the quantity of funerary objects. First, there was the great increase in the number of people able and willing to have a monumental burial. This presence of many non-élites, suddenly making the élites a minority in the tombs, must have affected the way people looked at funerary culture. Mouritsen (2005) has shown that such a strong presence in funerary culture of a social group which is considered to be 'inferior' can lead to significant changes in the way socially dominant groups represent themselves within this domain, causing social groups to have different epigraphic habits. Similarly, we could expect important transformations in Chiusi as well, given this unusual and rather sudden rise in the number of funerary monuments. Likewise, the enormous decline in this number in the first century BC must be just as significant, even if we keep in mind that monuments such as *cippi* and

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stelai have probably been lost to some degree, due to their exposure to the elements. Any explanation should answer the question as to why the more monumental forms, which had become so popular, suddenly were abandoned again on a massive scale. Given that the combination of this quantitative aspect with the qualitative development sets Chiusi apart from other Etruscan cities, I believe the former is crucial.

In addition, there are theoretical reasons to assume socio-cultural transformations. Funerary culture is not something that operates in a vacuum, separated from other aspects of culture or society, but is rather inherently bound up in these elements. Still, this domain is often approached as an isolated art-historical phenomenon, without consideration for its crucial social and ritual character (Morris, 1994: 22). Morris (1987: 39–43) created an elaborate theoretical framework to deal with funerary evidence, concluding that aspects of social structure are captured in ritual action, and through funerary material in the archaeological record. Social structure is 'an ideal model, a mental template, of the relative placings of individuals within the world', while social organization is 'the empirical distribution of relationships in everyday experience' (Morris, 1987: 39), which is much harder to grasp for the modern researcher than the former concept. Thus, funerary rituals are an instrument for making social structure explicit. Moreover, these rituals also structure an ideal image of how people should act and think, and how society should be organized. This creates a reciprocal relation between social structures and rituals, and the material culture these rituals necessitate. This does not mean that funerary culture is a reflection of society; but it does inform us about certain aspects of it, if it is carefully considered in its context. From a theoretical point of view, then, the empirical observations I just made justify the assumption that there were important socio-cultural transformations in Chiusi.

Morris discusses some more concrete theoretical models to take this step from funerary evidence to the analysis of social structure, most of which are in essence closely related to the process of 'distinction'.[16] When considered more carefully, 'distinction' allows us to link élites to non-élites in their behaviour. Put simply, élites wanted to maintain their advantageous position in society and distinguish themselves from socially inferior people. Conversely, non-élites aspired to climb the social ladder and wanted to imitate élite culture, which had an aura of élitism, hoping to reach the same social status. This copying was more often than not done in an imperfect way and always 'stained' these élite-forms with non-élite culture. The appropriation of these forms happened slowly and subsequently throughout all layers of society, but non-élites could always reject certain strategies or objects. If the élites wanted to maintain their social dominance, they had to either transform these 'tainted' forms into further elaboration or develop new forms/categories and abandon the old ones. This

[16] For example, Hodder (1982: 186–90) with 'stress hypothesis' and Cannon *et al.* (1989) with 'expressive redundancy'.

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means that élites adjusted their behaviour according to the actions of non-élites and vice versa, giving both parties agency (Bourdieu, 1984: 498). Thucydides (1, 6.4) already wrote that luxurious forms could sometimes be abandoned because the people objected to them, demanding that élites represent themselves differently. The process of distinction therefore involves more than just small élite groups, and is a wide social phenomenon.

This process is closely linked to the concept of *habitus*. A social battle for distinction becomes part of the *habitus* and is therefore not always consciously expressed, as *habitus* forms both conscious and unconscious behaviour. The process of distinction becomes part of one's disposition and shapes it, or to quote Foster (1986: 105): '*Habitus* is the background of and resource for playing the social game.' This means that this process of distinction, and the changes within it, may cause changes in *habitus* and, consequently, in culture and behaviour; and this also works the other way around. Crucially, *habitus* is inextricably linked to social structure and each works to determine the other. This means that changes in *habitus* will result in changes within social structure and thus within ritual and the funerary domain. Likewise, the structuring of social relations that takes place in funerary rituals, in part through material culture, will also influence *habitus* (Gartman, 1991: 421). Furthermore, funerary objects were often employed in the struggle for distinction, as the situation in Rome and Archaic and Classical Etruria demonstrates. Therefore, an intense bond exists between funerary culture and social structure on the one hand, and distinction and *habitus* on the other. This is not surprising, given that material culture, ritual in nature or not, is always created by social knowledge, and the other way around (Knappett, 2005; Izzet, 2007: 23–5). Izzet (2007: 91) has shown that this also specifically applies to funerary forms, such as tombs; changes in these monuments can reflect changes in social conceptions and behaviour.

Therefore, this creates a dynamic situation in which people have agency in social change through strategies of representation, and social structure also influences these strategies. People can explicitly act against social structure causing change, in an attempt to improve their chances of social success. The involvement of *habitus* also stresses the option of more unconscious changes in funerary rituals resulting in more gradual and interiorized transformations, instead of seeing everything as a result of deliberate action and strategy (Morris, 1987: 41). An important consequence is that the process of distinction need not lead to more elaborate forms, but can see a shift in what is considered to provide social and symbolic capital, causing the abandonment of certain categories as such. This shift can be caused by a variety of social, cultural, economic and political processes, but also by changes in material culture. I argue that the funerary development in Chiusi is the result of such a shift within the criteria for distinction, due to a new socio-political context in Chiusi — and Italy as a whole — and the rise of alternative ways to acquire distinction.

This coherent framework allows us to link funerary culture to meaningful socio-cultural developments, if this evidence is carefully considered in its

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broader context. Social structure is influenced by a multitude of factors and *habitus* is also, in part, determined by economic and political structures. It is therefore perhaps not a coincidence that the early stages of funerary transformation in Chiusi occurred during a period of intensified interaction and interconnectedness, stimulated by the Roman conquest. As previously discussed, this undermined the way élites represented themselves and necessitated a transition towards more appropriate strategies (Roth, 2013: 199–200; Warden, 2013: 363). This shift in élite representation combined with the uncertain political climate created opportunities for non-élites who adopted a more timely form of status communication. This was perhaps actively encouraged by non-élites who were unhappy with the inability of the established élite to defend the city, and a new élite was formed in Chiusi by the end of the fourth century BC (Benelli, 2008: 157). It is from then on that we see the accelerated change in the funerary culture of Chiusi, which was increasingly used in a different way by these new élites, more adapted to the evolving Italic context. These new élites were still conservative to some degree by building tombs as well — accounting for the drastic rise in their number during this period — but they were smaller and simpler. What we see here is the creation of a new ideological language: rooted in tradition, but also innovative. This way, they could both compete with the old élite using the same basis for distinction, while also altering this process by using more efficient methods. It is possible that this changing ideology was formalized through a sumptuary law, but this would be a mere statement to enforce the new ideology and must be situated in its socio-political context to be meaningful. Conservative elements would always remain, given that the élite continued to erect funerary monuments. They did, however, become less elaborate and prominent, signalling a changing social value.

This transition could be explained through the theory of 'materialized ideologies', in which social ideologies are not only mental constructions, but are also transformed into material culture, and this culture is then used to convince people of this ideology (De Marrais, Castillo and Earle, 1996). However, this treats ideology, and by extension social structure, as an entirely practical and deliberate top-down process that can be directly controlled. This problem is also noticeable in Roth's (2013) aforementioned analysis of Tarquinian tomb painting, which revolves around this concept. Even though he acknowledges that changes in the material forms through which these ideologies are expressed 'play a rather more active part in the social dynamics they represent, to the point of having a transformative role' (Roth, 2013: 196), these 'social dynamics' seem to be limited to deliberate actions by a select group of élites, with almost no mention of non-élites. As I have shown above, the relationship between social structure and action is much more subtle and could entail unwanted effects and undeliberate actions (Morris, 1987: 41). Material culture indeed does not involve mere objects and forms an intricate interdependency with the materialized ideology, and could therefore also influence the actions of the élites. This had consequences for wider social interaction and *habitus*, which in turn influenced the materialized ideology. Furthermore, we should

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keep in mind that the context of a tomb is a highly private one in the case of Chiusi, meaning that funerary display first and foremost played an important role in representation and identity within families themselves (Nielsen, 2002: 91). It is possible that the funerary container was carried to its final resting place in a funerary procession, but there is no evidence for this in this period (Steingräber, 1981: 236), and we must assume that the inscriptions were almost always read only by relatives and close friends. This form of representation is therefore heavily involved in *habitus* and concerns more than just pragmatic and conscious behaviour. I propose that the aforementioned initial change in élite representation, which may be explained by a gradual shift within the materialization of ideologies towards alternatives that generated more social and symbolic capital, started and interacted with a complex transformation of *habitus* and the process of distinction, which took three centuries to unfold.

Thus, this change in materialized ideology initiated a slow process that altered the way élites represented themselves towards the changing outside world, perhaps in part due to internal pressure. This led to a gradually shifting social function of funerary culture within the *habitus* and to the further transformation of funerary forms, creating a reciprocal relation. From the fourth century BC onwards, then, ostentatious display within funerary culture was progressively seen as less necessary, useful and, in the long term, even appropriate, which may also explain the sudden lack of evidence for extravagant funerary rituals from then on (Steingräber, 1981: 236). This gradual shift within the criteria for distinction, to which I will return at the end of this paper, most likely caused funerary culture to be seen as less élitist, now that funerary forms slowly became simpler and a less prominent part of élite ideology. Wealthier non-élites started to adopt these formerly élitist objects, perhaps encouraged by the discontent of the people with the old way of élite representation. The desire to do so was facilitated by favourable economic conditions, all of which led to the rise in monuments in the late third century BC and to the production of the ash chests of terracotta and the *dromos* tombs. Beforehand, such display by non-élites may have been inconceivable, with these forms being the prerogative of the élite. Now though, it gradually acquired a new position within *habitus* and ideals of social structure, making it part of a much broader competition for distinction. This also explains why there was no production aimed at cheaper monuments before: there was no social context for it.

Some people did succeed in copying élite forms, as evidenced by some non-élite use of travertine (Benelli, 2001: 236), but most non-élites did not have the necessary funds and started to use the cheaper alternatives on an ever increasing scale. This 'introduction' of non-élites into the monumental domain happened at a moment when élite forms had become simpler and were aimed less at ostentatious display but were still very elaborate, as evidenced by the beautiful ash chests of alabaster. Around 200 BC, the place of funerary culture had already changed within Chiusine society and modes of representation, and two interacting developments were at work. On the one hand, there was the continued attitude of the élite towards funerary culture as a less suitable

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instrument for distinction, enforced by the growing Italic network that necessitated representation geared more towards the world beyond one's own community. On the other hand, the introduction of non-élites into monumental funerary culture made it even less exclusive and suitable for distinguishing élites. Instead of answering this latter development with more elaborate forms, the changed socio-political context demanded that élite ideology be enforced differently, strengthening the first development even more and leading to the further simplification of élite funerary forms.

When mass production of ash chests of terracotta and *ollae* was employed and *dromos* tombs became more inclusive in the early second century BC, the percentage of people with funerary monuments rose to unusual heights by ancient standards. This accelerated the changing funerary behaviour of élites, leading to the disappearance of the ash chests of alabaster and the simplification of those of travertine. The changed value of funerary monuments within the representation of élites meant that it was no problem for them to adopt cheaper forms, such as the ash chests of terracotta, the *ollae* and the *dromos* tombs. These did not clash with the more elaborate forms of their ancestors in the same tomb, because they served a different purpose, yet still represented cultural continuity as distinctively social forms. Because of this, we have several élite tombs that show a gradual evolution towards cheaper funerary containers, which were apparently not seen as socially inferior.[17]

Élite representation was still in transition, however, and we can see an effort to mix new strategies with conservative elements. This was typical for periods of transforming ideologies, and has parallels in the funerary culture of Volterra and Tarquinia (Roth, 2009: 46; 2013: 196–7). In Chiusi, this was expressed by the use of ash chests of travertine by several élite families throughout the second century BC[18] and by the construction of barrel-vaulted tombs. Not surprisingly, some of these tombs contain numerous ash chests of travertine. The use of these monuments was an attempt to reconcile tradition and heritage with a changing socio-political environment. The fact that such elaborate forms were in use for only a short time, however, indicates that they were part of an ideological language that was increasingly becoming part of the past, as funerary culture slowly stopped being a place to assert élite status. It is important to stress that this did not seem to signal a decline in the general importance of funerary culture, just of its specific function as an instrument for distinction.

[17] For example, the Tomba dei Cumni (Thimme, 1957: 154–60; Paolucci, 2005), the Tombe di Cerretelli (Paolucci, 1988: 41) and the Tomba dei Remzna al Colle (Benelli, 2008: 150–1).

[18] For example, the Tomba di Poggio alla Salla (Thimme, 1957: 96–106; Barni and Paolucci, 1985: 118; Paolucci, 2005: 9), the second tomb of the Lucioli (Hammarström, 1929), the Tomba di Vigna Grande (Minetti and Paolucci, 2000: 213–15; Paolucci, 2005: 79) and the Tomba del Granduca (Thimme, 1954: 60–73; Sclafani, 2002). The last two tombs have a barrel-vaulted construction.

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This transforming attitude of the élite had further effects on the behaviour of non-élites. Because the élites were no longer willing to spend a lot of resources on funerary monuments, and it became clear that they increasingly chose to assert themselves through other means, these monuments became socially less important for non-élites as well. They had appropriated a funerary culture that left room for establishing social status and was a shared basis for distinction on which they could compete with the élites, but social structure gradually changed. Investing in these monuments no longer generated enough social and symbolic capital for non-élites to justify the cost, causing a reduced interest in these material forms. In addition, alternative strategies were becoming available for non-élites (see below). All this led to a further decrease in the value, and slowly, from *c.* 150 BC, in the number, of funerary objects.

Some non-élites started to use smaller and less costly ash chests and *ollae* in tombs, while others abandoned this model and used *cippi*, stelae and other less monumental burial methods. The *dromos* tombs with dozens of *loculi* belong to the first half of the first century BC and seem to indicate that most people by then were only willing to invest in monumental forms if they could use them as efficiently as possible. This change accelerated in the middle of the century, when the élite had almost completely left this domain as a means for distinction, and eventually all non-élites abandoned monumental forms. Many élites still had ash chests of travertine or terracotta, but these were no longer an effective means to acquire distinction. It sufficed to have simple tombs and containers and thus basic physical markers of their presence in Chiusine upper society, even for newcomers to the élite during this century (Benelli, 2012: 109). For non-élites, this behaviour probably signalled the final demise of funerary culture as a means for distinction, explaining the rapid decline after *c.* 50 BC.

These social processes played an important part in the aforementioned transformation of the symbolic and aesthetic nature of funerary rituals, mainly concerning the representation of the deceased, and a more subdued focus on death itself. This was in part caused by less expenditure and therefore quality, but the transformation of *habitus* and the reduced relevance of funerary culture for representation caused funerary symbolism to point to a greater divide between the world of the living and that of the dead. This changed context also affected representation within the family: private tombs were becoming increasingly less effective as a means to assert status as a family member or generation. This created a focus on the collective nature of the family, instead of focusing on generational continuity and hierarchy, further encouraging the desire to find alternative ways of differentiation, which again led to less hierarchical and more inclusive tombs. These developments were caused by the slow transformation of funerary culture — which explains why the *kline* model transformed so gradually during the second century BC — but also influenced this process at the same time, through the reciprocity between ritual symbolism and social structure.

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These processes ultimately led to the exclusive presence of the élites in the monumental funerary domain by the Augustan age. The old and some of the new members of the indigenous élite proved to be most conservative and still had relatively valuable objects. We see an interesting parallel to this in the process of Latinization.[19] Not surprisingly, the immigrant élites were the first to use Latin at the beginning of the first century BC, later followed by some new indigenous élites and the old élite family of the Trebonii, who may have had officers in the Roman army (Benelli, 2012: 106). By then, many people were already using the Latin alphabet, but still wrote their epitaphs in the Etruscan language. After *c.* 50 BC, this changed rapidly and only the old and some of the new members of the indigenous élite held on to Etruscan, some even until the age of Tiberius. This conservatism is best expressed by their use of bilingual epitaphs (Benelli, 2012: 106–8).[20] These form only a small percentage of the inscriptions that show signs of language mixing and are anything but representative for the process of language shifts. Therefore, they are conscious statements used to communicate ideas about identity and representation, even if they did not actually speak Etruscan anymore, in this case (Langslow, 2012: 292).

Given the private nature of tombs, the choice of language in epitaphs was primarily a matter of representation and identity of the deceased within the family, with barely any consequences for representation towards the outside world (Adams, 2003: 40). Combined with their more elaborate funerary monuments, this indicates that specifically Etruscan traditions were still an important part of the *habitus* of this small élite group. This may not be surprising, given that this heritage distinguished them from immigrants and new indigenous élites alike. This different use of language within funerary culture points to its varying value for different social groups. The changed socio-cultural function of funerary culture in Chiusi was partly expressed by different physical characteristics, but also by changing linguistic communication and expression of identity. In this last respect, material culture and language are closely connected in funerary culture (Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 68).

It seems as if the latter never reclaimed its formerly important function in the battle for distinction, with tombs and containers never again developing towards more elaboration and prominence. The fact that most élites kept building tombs, whether they were very simple or not, indicates that there were still some shared conservative strategies in élite ideology. It is clear, however, that this aspect of élite ideology played an increasingly smaller part as time went on because of the ever reduced effectiveness of displaying status in such a private and local context. More suitable methods had emerged.

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[19] See Kaimio (1975) and Hadas-Lebel (2004).

[20] For example: two Arrii (*ET* Cl 1.858 = *CIE* 1468; *ET* Cl 1.859 = *CIE* 1469) and one maternal descendant of the Arrii (*ET* Cl 1.957 = *CIE* 1048), one Alfius (*ET* Cl 1.1181 = *CIE* 1671), one Vensius (*ET* Cl 1.356 = *CIE* 1437), one maternal descendant of the Gellii (*ET* Cl 1.354 = *CIL* I[2] 2767) and one maternal descendant of the Cupsna (*ET* Cl 1.1221 = *CIE* 1729). See Benelli (1994) and Hadas-Lebel (2004) for the Etruscan bilingual inscriptions.

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Now, we can ask ourselves: what other ways? This question cannot be answered with any certainty given the small amount of non-funerary evidence that Chiusi has to offer, but likely options can be suggested. Some strategies were already present and probably increased in importance, while others were innovations. Firstly, owning land may have become even more important than it already was, given the fertile lands of Chiusi and the ever growing metropolis of Rome nearby, which provided an enormous market that was relatively easy to reach from Chiusi. Benelli (2008: 157) has argued that the spread of élite tombs over the entire productive area of the *ager clusinus* means that élites slowly acquired their properties over time, resulting in branches of the same family being buried miles apart. This could be the result of the emergence of the new élite at the end of the fourth century BC, trying to legitimize its position by gradually acquiring land. Italy also saw a development towards larger estates after the Second Punic War due to the deaths of many soldiers and the availability of slave labour, possibly stimulating the accumulation of land by Chiusine élites — although such developments were not as prevalent in Etruria, especially in the north (Cornell, 1996: 113). In the end, it is to be expected in pre-modern societies that ownership of land is an important status marker.

Secondly, euergetism probably emerged during the second century BC and could have played an increasingly important role. Elsewhere in Etruria, for example Perugia and Volterra, monumental constructions would be directly linked to élites and their status within the community, offering an efficient way to communicate one's élite status to outsiders (Harris, 1977: 58; Warden, 2013: 358). This behaviour, coupled with other types of euergetism, could have catered to the non-élite's potentially changed ideas about élite behaviour. However, we do not have concrete evidence for this at Chiusi as it was seemingly not the custom to record these acts in inscriptions. The only structure still visible to us that might indicate euergetism is the temple for Heracles in Chianciano Terme, built between 175 and 150 BC. This sanctuary was probably part of a larger wave of new temples in central Italy during the second century BC, which were financed by wealthy persons (Massa-Pairault, 1996: 228). Given the acceleration of the changed funerary behaviour of élites during this century, it is very likely that euergetism started to play an important part in the status of élites (Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 103).

Thirdly, local magistracies may have increased in importance as well, but evidence for this at Chiusi is rather scarce compared to Tarquinia or Volterra, for example (Lambrechts, 1959), which seems to indicate a lesser significance, or at the very least that it was less suitable to advertise this in a funerary context, our main evidence. In the first century BC, local magistracies are slightly better documented in Latin inscriptions, although this is probably more a consequence of changing epigraphic conventions that were brought about by municipalization. Still, over time, recording one's acts as magistrate offered an increasingly interesting way to promote oneself and one's family, and participation in Roman politics became a new and attractive possibility for

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self-distinction.[21] This is also the period when we see magistrates advertising their building activities, entailing the possibility of euergetism or *summae honorariae*.[22] The changed epigraphic conventions also allow us to detect numerous *collegia* in Chiusi from the Imperial period onwards, indicating a thriving economy and community, and the desire to display membership to such associations (Pack, 1988: 25–9). This could have become an interesting alternative for distinction as well, mostly for non-élites.

Finally, trade also intensified as the Italic networks expanded and Rome became an ever larger market. This seems to have been particularly the case in Tyrrhenian central Italy from the early third century BC on. Exchange was formalized and expanded at a rapid rate, creating many opportunities for people willing to invest. Recent research has also shown that, in a similar vein to cultural influence, it was not so much Rome itself that directed these networks, but primarily the local élites (Roth, 2013: 199). Chiusi seems to have benefited from this economic situation, judging from the possible export of some types of funerary containers — to nearby and befriended Perugia (Sclafani, 2010: 143–54) — and of ceramics (Pucci and Mascione, 2003). The agriculturally rich Chiusi was also conveniently located along the Via Cassia, one of the major roads leading from Rome to the north, and the Clanis, which flowed into the Tiber, facilitating trade even more.

Several of these alternatives for distinction became more prominent during the second century BC — coinciding with the acceleration in the funerary transformation — and it is perhaps the culmination of all these options in the first century BC that can explain the very rapid abandonment of funerary monuments by most people in this period. It could also explain the fast dissemination of Latin after *c.* 50 BC, given that several alternatives were more closely linked to Rome and above all to the wider Italic context, which needed a lingua franca. The arrival of many immigrants during this century will surely have made Chiusinians more aware of this rapidly changing stage for representation, further contributing to this funerary transformation.

I have discussed the interdependency of social structure and funerary (material) culture, but does this also inform us about broader changes in social organization — that is, daily social relations? The funerary evidence alone does not suffice to answer this question. There definitely is a tradition in Etruscology of interpreting changes in this evidence as signs of vast social transformations, largely due to the lack of sufficient evidence of another kind. A general rise of a sort of 'middle class' has been suggested for Cerveteri for the sixth century BC, based on the increased uniformity of tombs (Cristofani, 1978; Spivey and

[21] The number of Chiusinians of whom we know that did this is still very small. Nicolet (1974: 848–9) has detected only one *eques* for Chiusi for the period 312–43 BC. Wiseman (1971: 189) has found two possible Republican senators for Chiusi. In addition, we also know of two officers of the Roman army originating from Chiusi for this period (Suolahti, 1955: 354 and 392), one of whom is the aforementioned member of the Trebonii.

[22] *CIL* XI, 2122; *CIL* I², 1999; *CIL* I², 3359; *CIL* XI, 7122.

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Stoddart, 1990: 143–7), and Tarquinia for the third century BC, based on the evolution of tomb painting (Colonna, 1985).[23] Nielsen (2013: 183) has seen the drastic rise in the number of tombs and containers in Chiusi during the second century BC as a sign of the social advancement of marginal people, such as freedmen, after a class struggle. Rix (1963) and in his wake Berrendonner (2002: 840) advance similar ideas, mainly based on the so-called *Vornamengentilizia*.[24] However, both Morris (1994: 27) and Izzet (2007: 87) warn about such far-reaching conclusions in general and point to the possibility that such funerary developments only signal a different representation of social hierarchy, rather than actual changes in social organization. Similar caution should apply to the analysis of Chiusine society. It is all too easy to see the reduced distance between social groups within the funerary corpus as a sign of a more egalitarian society, or at least of a broad ideology of egalitarianism.

I therefore remain sceptical about drastic changes in social organization. It is more likely that change was limited to a thorough shift in the way élites represented themselves and their social position, and how this was expressed in both conscious and unconscious behaviour. However, this does mean that there were some ideological consequences for the perception of social structure, even if this did not involve altered social organization. We could therefore say that at least the funerary domain of Chiusi became more 'egalitarian' in terms of discourse. Perhaps the many new élites that emerged in the first century BC, combined with the relatively large proportion of epitaphs of freedmen — remember these are still only about 4% of all Hellenistic epitaphs of Chiusi (Benelli, 2013: 450–4) — point towards a slightly more open society, with more chances of social mobility. Capdeville (2002–3) has analysed the trajectory of slaves to full citizens over multiple generations for Hellenistic Chiusi, Perugia and Volterra, so such processes were seemingly going on to some degree. However, given the limited nature of these phenomena and, most of all, the limited non-funerary evidence we have, it would be wise not to draw too many conclusions about Chiusine society in general.

5. CONCLUSION

This proposed explanation is based on a coherent theoretical framework, the first time such an approach has been used for this Chiusine case study. It also takes into account symbolic and quantitative developments, which have hitherto been overlooked. The emergence of a new élite at the end of the fourth century BC,

[23] This is discussed at more length by Roth (2013: 193–4), who offers a very different interpretation.

[24] There is still much debate about this type of *gentilicium*, but this is not the place to discuss this. I personally agree with Benelli's (2001: 248–50; 2011) conclusion that these names probably did not correspond with a specific social status and therefore did not signal massive social advancement.

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due to a new socio-political context, was caused by and in turn led to a change in élite representation and ideology. This started a gradual process of distinction that transformed social structure, *habitus* and funerary culture, changing the social and ideological function of the latter. Both élites and non-élites had agency in this development, and ultimately abandoned all elaborate forms of funerary display. Other means to gain distinction had either emerged or had become more important due to the changes in Chiusi, Etruria and Italy as a whole. Even though funerary culture was still very important in Chiusi, its social value had changed so it was no longer suitable for ostentatious display and processes of imitation and emulation. The battle for distinction had moved elsewhere, seemingly for good, and this fundamentally altered the way élites represented themselves and their position. There is no 'decline' or 'stagnation' of culture, but rather a dynamic community adapting to a changing internal and external context. The rapid cultural integration of immigrants also illustrates that indigenous cultural traditions in Roman Italy could be very strong, even after the Social War, and that it was not a matter of simple unilateral absorption of 'Roman' culture.

Besides its explanatory force, this hypothesis has the merit of looking at Chiusi itself for an explanation and linking cultural developments to meaningful social interactions. Scholars are easily tempted to look towards Rome for a solution to their problem, simply because it is often easier to find one there, due to the available evidence, than it is to find one in the studied community itself. Especially for Etruria, this 'external perspective' is still a crucial problem (Izzet, 2007: 20). Looking primarily at the local context does not preclude possible external influences; it simply demands a careful consideration of the way these influences were received in communities and why they could have had an impact, instead of just assuming their effect. It is exactly this thoughtful analysis that gives meaning and explanatory power to external influences. I therefore have attempted to let go not only of the implicit notion that only élites determine social and cultural development, but also of Romano-centrism and the paradigm of 'decline'.

It has become clear that we need to treat funerary evidence with care and constantly take the local context into account. The relationship between funerary culture and society is flexible and often indirect, and should therefore be considered separately for every community, or at least for every culture. This way, funerary culture can tell us a lot about ancient societies and interactions between people. It can illuminate social processes and show us how dynamic communities were, even after being conquered by Rome.

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