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**The Social Significance of Communal Dining in Etruscan
Italy from the seventh to the fourth century BC:
an Iconographical Approach**

by

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VOLUME I

TEXT

**The Social Significance of Communal Dining in Etruscan Italy from the seventh
to the fourth century BC: an Iconographical Approach**

Abstract

Imagery relating to communal dining or banqueting in ancient Etruria is relatively abundant and provides a useful source of potential information about the workings of Etruscan society, not least because of the semantic value of banquet scenes. The conduct of eating and drinking in company generally reflects patterns of social behavior, governed by local traditions, rules, ritual, beliefs and ideology embedded in society. In addition, banqueting or feasting may be closely interwoven with other social events, while rules of inclusion or exclusion may well come into play, thereby helping to reinforce or create social hierarchies. The depiction of a convivial scene alluding to experiences of communal dining is automatically a reference to these concepts, irrespective of whether an image represents a specific event or not.

This thesis examines the iconography of banqueting in Etruscan Italy from the seventh to the fourth centuries BC. The analysis takes into account all types of Etruscan artefacts with banquet iconography. These include tomb paintings, scenes on vessels, mirrors or plaques once attached to buildings, grave stelae, sarcophagi and urns as well as sculptural representations made of ivory or bronze. The scenes are examined by considering a variety of visual elements that help to constitute a banquet. Theoretical perspectives and the defining elements of banquets are discussed in Part I. The latter are essential to the study because they were chosen to be included in representations and were evidently deemed important by the Etruscans themselves. By approaching the social practice of sharing food and drink through a systematic formal analysis of local iconography, many interesting questions, such as specific seating arrangements according to age and gender, can be explored. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to help us understand what constituted an Etruscan banquet from a study of its component parts, and what can be learned from banquet representations about the make-up and workings of Etruscan society.

Declaration:

I confirm that this thesis is entirely of my own composition and represents my own original research.

Signed:

Sabine Geißler

January 2012

Acknowledgements

This research was initiated by Mr. D. Ridgway's lectures on Villanovan and Etruscan Italy which I attended as a first year student at Edinburgh University in 2002-03. My subsequent studies on the Ancient Mediterranean civilizations always made the Etruscans stand out as a society most interesting and different from their neighbours in time and space, and my passion for this particular society was always alert and active.

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CONTENTS**Volume I (Text)**

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| ABSTRACT | i |
| DECLARATION | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iii |
| CONTENTS PAGE | v |
| ABBREVIATIONS | vii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | viii |

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. Aim of the present study | 1 |
| 1.2. Previous research on the iconography of Etruscan banqueting | 3 |
| 1.3. Defining banqueting - sources of contemporary and archaeological evidence. What constitutes a feast, a banquet, a commensal event, conviviality and all other food sharing occasions? | 6 |
| 1.3.1. Artistic-iconographical representations | 15 |
| 1.3.2. Architectural evidence | 15 |
| 1.3.3. Banqueting equipment | 16 |
| 1.4. Structure of thesis | 21 |
| 2. Methodology | 23 |
| 2.1. Theoretical approaches to communal dining, research traditions, and theoretical schools of thought | 23 |
| 2.2. The significance of research into conviviality to archaeology, anthropology, history and social science | 25 |
| 2.3. Sampling strategy and chosen criteria for the assemblage of the database | 26 |
| 2.3.1. Sampling strategy | 26 |
| 2.3.2. Context and categorisation of banquet scenes | 28 |
| 2.3.3. Chosen criteria for the analysis of the banquet scenes | 29 |
| 2.3.4. Grouping of the criteria | 31 |
| 2.4. General issues when describing and examining the banquet scenes | 33 |
| 2.4.1. The use of paint to colour the banquet scenes | 33 |
| 2.4.2. The size of the representations | 33 |
| 2.4.3. Food and drink | 34 |
| 2.4.4. Arrangement of furniture | 37 |
| 2.4.5. Domestic-residential and funerary contexts combined | 37 |

**PART TWO: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE
SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNAL DINING:**

| | | |
|-------------|--|----|
| 3. | From Structuralism to sacrificial use of food | 40 |
| 3.1. | Theoretical perspectives | 40 |
| 3.1.1. | Symbolism of food and food sharing as discussed in Structuralist and Post-structuralist research | 40 |
| 3.1.2. | The systems of socio-cultural rules for communal meals and feasts | 45 |
| 3.1.3. | The ritual of dinner and the sacrificial use of food | 47 |
| 3.2. | Historical Overview - Food in the Greek and Roman world from the eighth century BC to the first century AD, from necessity to symbolism | 49 |
| 3.2.1. | Material evidence for the upper stratum of society | 50 |
| 3.2.2. | Literary evidence for the upper stratum of society | 51 |
| 3.2.3. | Socio-cultural aspects of communal dining in Greek and Roman society | 54 |
| 3.2.4. | Material evidence for the diet of the lower stratum of society | 56 |
| 3.2.5. | The staple food of cereals in the Greek and Roman world | 57 |
| 3.2.6. | Sacrificial use of food in the Greek and Roman world and its social implications | 58 |

PART THREE: ETRUSCAN BANQUET ICONOGRAPHY

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| 4. | The value of banquet representations for the purpose of gaining knowledge of Etruscan Society | 61 |
| 4.1. | The importance of research into conviviality in Etruscan-specific context | 61 |
| 4.2. | The reasons for choosing exclusivity for Etruscan-indigenous iconography | 63 |
| 4.2.1. | Banquet scenes from funerary context | 64 |
| 4.2.1.1. | Burial evidence | 69 |
| 4.2.1.2. | Intoxicated banquet participants | 70 |
| 4.2.2. | Banquet scenes from domestic-residential contexts | 71 |
| 4.3. | Textual records from Greek and Roman times | 72 |
| 4.3.1. | Etruscan communal eating habits as perceived by ancient writers | 74 |
| 5. | The analysis of the Etruscan banquet scenes | 77 |
| 5.1. | Reclining versus seated arrangements, and the significance of furnishings | 77 |
| 5.1.1. | Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings | 77 |
| 5.1.2. | Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory | 87 |
| 5.1.3. | Tarquian tomb paintings | 96 |
| 5.1.4. | Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano | 110 |
| 5.1.5. | Funerary monuments | 115 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 5.2. | Servants and their significance | 121 |
| 5.2.1. | Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings | 121 |
| 5.2.2. | Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory | 124 |
| 5.2.3. | Tarquinian tomb paintings | 127 |
| 5.2.4. | Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano | 137 |
| 5.2.5. | Funerary monuments | 139 |
| 5.3. | The significance of food and drink | 145 |
| 5.3.1. | Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings | 145 |
| 5.3.2. | Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory | 154 |
| 5.3.3. | Tarquinian tomb paintings | 161 |
| 5.3.4. | Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano | 173 |
| 5.3.5. | Funerary monuments | 178 |
| 5.4. | Social details | 183 |
| 5.4.1. | Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings | 183 |
| 5.4.2. | Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory | 195 |
| 5.4.3. | Tarquinian tomb paintings | 199 |
| 5.4.4. | Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano | 213 |
| 5.4.5. | Funerary monuments | 218 |
| 5.5. | Tangible extras | 223 |
| 5.5.1. | Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings | 223 |
| 5.5.2. | Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory | 225 |
| 5.5.3. | Tarquinian tomb paintings | 227 |
| 5.5.4. | Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano | 231 |
| 5.5.5. | Funerary monuments | 232 |
| 6. | Conclusions | 234 |
| 7. | Postscript | 263 |

Volume II Appendices

| | | |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| Appendix I: | Catalogue and illustrations of the Etruscan banquet representations and the analysis according to the chosen criteria | 271 |
| Appendix II: | Diagrams and Greek and Roman textual quotes | 450 |
| Appendix III: | Bibliography | 455 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|------------------|
| Cat. No. | Catalogue Number |
| c. | circa |
| fig. | Figure |
| illu. | Illustration |

LIST OF FIGURES IN VOLUME I

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1: from Tomb 2 at Vergina: Exterior Frieze Painting and drawing of a hunting Scene
(Source: <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/ancientfilmCC304/lecture18/detail.php?linenum=19>) 53
- Figure 3.2: Suovetaurilia. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suovetaurilia>) 59

Chapter 4

- Figure 4.1: Prothesis scene from the Tomb of the Dead Man/Tarquinia, sixth century BC (Source: Steingräber, 2006: 101) 67

Chapter 5

- Figure 5.1: Banquet scene of King Assurbanipal and his wife from the palace a Nineveh, now in the British Museum, London, exhibit ME124920.
(Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.corbisimages.com>) 82
- Figure 5.2: Corinthian column crater, now in the Louvre, Paris, exhibit E653.
(Source: <http://www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres>) 82

| | | |
|--------------|--|-----|
| Figure 5.3: | Bronze bed stand from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb/Cerverteri (Source: Haynes, 2000: 78) | 109 |
| Figure 5.4: | Bronze statue of the <i>Spinario</i> (Source for image: http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/italy/rome/capitolinemuseumone/spinario.html) | 136 |
| Figure 5.5: | Marble statue of a Boy with a Goose, c. 200 BC (Source for image: http://www.superstock.com/stock-photos-images/1848-265759) | 136 |
| Figure 5.6: | Marble statue of a Girl, second century BC (Source for image: http://www.search.com/reference/Brauron) | 136 |
| Figure 5.7: | Dance scene on an urn from Chiusi, c. 500 BC (Source: http://www.piney.com/MuHarpRev.html) | 142 |
| Figure 5.8: | Dance scene on an urn from Chiusi, c. 500 BC (Source: authors own photography) | 143 |
| Figure 5.9: | Drawing of a dance scene from the Tomb of the Triclinium/ Tarquinia, c. 470 BC (Source: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Triclinio/index.htm) | 143 |
| Figure 5.10: | Dance scene from the Tomb of the Lionesses/Tarquinia, c. 520-510 BC (Source: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Lionesse/index.htm) | 144 |
| Figure 5.11: | Dance scene from the Tomb of the Cock/Tarquinia, c. 400 BC (Source: Spivey, 1997: 113, illu. 97) | 144 |
| Figure 5.12: | Bronze sieves (Source: Barbieri, 1987: 175) | 169 |
| Figure 5.13: | Bronze combination tool of a sieve and filter (Source: Richter, 1937: 63) | 169 |
| Figure 5.14: | Drawing of the Seated Figure scene on relief plaques from Murlo (Source: Torelli 1985: 43) | 191 |

Chapter 7

- Figure 7.1: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene on main panel, c. 520 BC, Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection. (Source: author's own photography) 263
- Figure 7.2: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene on main panel, c. 500 BC, Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection (Source: author's own photography) 264
- Figure 7.3: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene on main panel, alleged 520 - 500 BC, Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection (Source: author's own photography) 266
- Figure 7.4: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene right panel, alleged 520 - 500 BC, Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection (Source: author's own photography) 267
- Figure 7.5: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene left panel, alleged 520 - 500 BC, Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection (Source: author's own photography) 267

LIST OF FIGURES IN VOLUME II

Catalogue of revetment frieze plaques from domestic-residential contexts

- Figure cat. No. 1.1: Small (1971: tav XIII) 272
- Figure cat. No. 1.2: Small (1971, fig. 1) 272
- Figure cat. No. 2: Strandberg Olofsson (1986: 85) 275
- Figure cat. No. 3: Small (1971: tav XXIIa) 277
- Figure cat. No. 4: Small (1971: tav XXIIIa) 279
- Figure cat. No. 6: Small (1971: tav XXIIId) 281
- Figure cat. No. 7: Small (1971: tav XXIIIb) 282
- Figure cat. No. 8: Andren (1940: plate 128 No. 447 & 448) 283
- Figure cat. No. 9: Small (1971; tav XXIIc) 286

Catalogue of Small Finds

- Figure cat. No. 10: Rathje (1983: 25, fig. 25) 288
- Figure cat. No. 11: Rathje (1983: 24, fig. 24) 290
- Figure cat. No. 12: Pieraccini (1996: 108, fig. 19) 291

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 13: Micali (1844, tav XXXII.3, drawing by N. Stanghi, copied by author of thesis) | 293 |
| Figure cat. No. 14: De Marinis (1961: tav IIIa) | 295 |
| Figure cat. No. 15: Dohrn (1938: tav LIV.4) | 296 |
| Figure cat. No. 16: Dohrn (1938: tav LIV.2) | 298 |
| Figure cat. No. 17: Bovini (1941: tav VIII2. & 3.) | 300 |
| Figure cat. No. 18: Haynes (2000, on the inside front and back jacket flaps) | 302 |
| Figure cat. No. 19: Del Chiaro (1967: fig. 44) | 303 |
| Figure cat. No. 20: Richter (1940: fig 76 & 77) | 304 |
| Figure cat. No. 21: Boethius et. al. (1962: fig 422) | 306 |
| Figure cat. No. 22: Barbierie ed. (1978: illu. No. 64) | 307 |
| Figure cat. No. 23: Pieraccini (2000: fig 1) | 309 |
| Figure cat. No. 24: Nogara (1934: tav XXXI) | 310 |
| Figure cat. No. 25: Treasures from Tuscany Catalogue (2004: 106, illu. No. 171) | 312 |

Catalogue of Tarquinian tomb paintings

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 26.1: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 27) | 313 |
| Figure cat. No. 26.2: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Bartoccini/index. htm | 314 |
| Figure cat. No. 27.1: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 17) | 316 |
| Figure cat. No. 27.2: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Topolino/index.h tm | 316 |
| Figure cat. No. 28.1: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 24) | 317 |
| Figure cat. No. 28.2: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Leonesse/index.h tm | 318 |
| Figure cat. No. 28.3: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Leonesse/index.h tm | 318 |
| Figure cat. No. 30: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 8) | 321 |
| Figure cat. No. 31.1: Bloch (1959: plate 6) | 323 |
| Figure cat. No. 31.2: De Marinis (1961: tav III) | 323 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 32: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Caccia%20e%20Pesca/index.htm | 325 |
| Figure cat. No. 33.1: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 16 & 15) | 327 |
| Figure cat. No. 33.2: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Olimpiadi/index.htm | 328 |
| Figure cat. No. 34: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 14) | 329 |
| Figure cat. No. 35.1: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 5) | 331 |
| Figure cat. No. 35.2: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 6) | 331 |
| Figure cat. No. 35.3: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Frontoncino/index.htm | 331 |
| Figure cat. No. 36.1: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 22) | 333 |
| Figure cat. No. 36.2: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/1999/index.htm | 333 |
| Figure cat. No. 37: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 60) | 335 |
| Figure cat. No. 38.1: Spivey (1991: 64) | 337 |
| Figure cat. No. 38.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 58) | 337 |
| Figure cat. No. 39: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 9) | 339 |
| Figure cat. No. 40.1: Poulsen (1922: fig. 23) | 341 |
| Figure cat. No. 40.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 67) | 341 |
| Figure cat. No. 42: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 32) | 344 |
| Figure cat. No. 43: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Fiorellini/index.htm | 346 |
| Figure cat. No. 44.1: Lawrence (2007: illu. 12) | 347 |
| Figure cat. No. 44.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann 1992: 5) | 348 |
| Figure cat. No. 45.1: Romanelli (1940: illu. 14) | 351 |
| Figure cat. No. 45.2: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 28; male banqueters) | 351 |
| Figure cat. No. 45.3: detail with male banqueters: | |
| http://forum.stirpes.net/antiquity/2112-etruscan-paintings.html | 352 |
| Figure cat. No. 45.4: Weber-Lehmann (1985: tav 29; female banqueters) | 352 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 45.5: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 34) | 353 |
| Figure cat. No. 46: Torelli (1985: 139) | 355 |
| Figure cat. No. 47: Steingräber (2006: 134) | 358 |
| Figure cat. No. 48.1: De Marinis (1961: tav V couch a and b) | 360 |
| Figure cat. No. 48.2: De Marinis (1961: tav V couch c and d) | 361 |
| Figure cat. No. 49.1: Barbierie ed. (1978: 52) | 363 |
| Figure cat. No. 49.2: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Caccia%20al%20Cervo/index.htm | 363 |
| Figure cat. No. 50: Steingräber (2006: 143 photo & 170-171) | 365 |
| Figure cat. No. 51.1: Steingräber (2006: 172 & 173) | 367 |
| Figure cat. No. 51.2: http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com/tarship | 368 |
| Figure cat. No. 52: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/994/index.htm | 370 |
| Figure cat. No. 53: Steingräber (2006: 183) | 372 |
| Figure cat. No. 54.1: Bartoccini (1956: XVII) | 373 |
| Figure cat. No. 54.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 28) | 374 |
| Figure cat. No. 54.3: Steingräber (2006: 17) | 374 |
| Figure cat. No. 55.1: De Marinis (1961: tav VIb) | 377 |
| Figure cat. No. 55.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 13) | 377 |
| Figure cat. No. 55.3: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 30) | 378 |
| Figure cat. No. 56: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Gallo/index.htm | 380 |
| Figure cat. No. 57: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/1200/index.htm | 381 |
| Figure cat. No. 58: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/808/index.htm | 382 |
| Figure cat. No. 59: Steingräber (2006: 161) | 384 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 60: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/2327/index.htm | 385 |
| Figure cat. No. 61: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/3697/index.htm | 386 |
| Figure cat. No. 63.1: | |
| http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Guerriero/index.htm | 387 |
| Figure cat. No. 63.2: Steingräber (2006: 194) | 388 |
| Figure cat. No. 64: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 54) | 390 |
| Figure cat. No. 65: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 49) | 392 |

Catalogue of tomb paintings from Ceere, Chuisi, Orvieto and Sarteano

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 66: Steingräber (2006: 263) | 395 |
| Figure cat. No. 68: De Marinis (1961: tav VII) | 398 |
| Figure cat. No. 70.1: Santangelo (1960: 33) | 401 |
| Figure cat. No. 70.2: Moltesen & Weber-Lehmann (1992: 79) | 401 |
| Figure cat. No. 72.1: Barbierie (ed.) (1978: 168) | 405 |
| Figure cat. No. 72.2: Poulsen (1922: fig. 32) | 405 |
| Figure cat. No. 75.1: http://www.archart.it/archart/italia/Toscana/provincia-Siena/Sarteano-tomba-etrusca-della-quadruga-infernale/index.html | 409 |
| Figure cat. No. 75.2: http://www.archart.it/archart/italia/Toscana/provincia-Siena/Sarteano-tomba-etrusca-della-quadruga-infernale/index.html | 409 |

Catalogue of funerary monuments

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 76: Vesco (2003: 11) | 411 |
| Figure cat. No. 77.1: http://www.ou.edu/class/ahi4163/slides4/pg19-03.jpg | 413 |
| Figure cat. No. 77.2: http://www.ou.edu/class/ahi4163/files/terra01.html | 413 |
| Figure cat. No. 78: Magi (1932 tav. X) | 415 |
| Figure cat. No. 79: Magi (1933: 61) | 416 |
| Figure cat. No. 80: Magi (1932, tav. XI) | 418 |
| Figure cat. No. 81: Magi (1932: tav XII) | 420 |
| Figure cat. No. 82: Heurgon (1961: illu. 38) | 421 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure cat. No. 83: Gatti (1928: fig. 1) | 423 |
| Figure cat. No. 84: Santangelo (1960: 48) | 424 |
| Figure cat. No. 85: Paribeni (1938: tav XXVI.3) | 426 |
| Figure cat. No. 86: Spivey (1997: illu. 123) | 428 |
| Figure cat. No. 87: De Marinis (1961: tav VIII.b) | 429 |
| Figure cat. No. 88: Paribeni (1938: tav XXVI.1) | 431 |
| Figure cat. No. 89: Messerschmidt (1929: tav LVII) | 432 |
| Figure cat. No. 90: De Marinis (1961: tav VIII) | 434 |
| Figure cat. No. 91: Paribeni (1938: tav. XXXIII No. 3) | 435 |
| Figure cat. No. 92: De Marinis (1961: tav IX) | 437 |
| Figure cat. No. 93: De Marinis (1961: tav. X.b) | 439 |
| Figure cat. No. 94.1: Santangelo (1960) | 441 |
| Figure cat. No. 94.2: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3c/Etruscan_symposium_sarcophagus.jpg | 441 |
| Figure cat. No. 95: Paribeni (1938: 63, No. 204.c) | 443 |
| Figure cat. No. 96: De Marinis (1961: tav IX) | 444 |
| Figure cat. No. 97: Spivey (1997: illu. 125) | 446 |
| Figure cat. No. 98: Avramidou (AJA Vol 110 No. 4, October 2006) | 448 |

“Greater history has been made in the kitchen than on the field of war”

Robin McNaughton

private conversation at the Scottish Whisky Society, Leith, 2008

PART ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the present study

The aim of the thesis is to find out how communal eating was used by the Etruscans to create and structure political and private relations, how the society's cultural dynamics were navigated, and how they utilized food sharing events to create and maintain their social order and identity in which certain groups are distinguished by their relative access to prestige and privilege. It is an attempt to reconstruct the Etruscans peoples' behaviour, away from a purely descriptive research towards a more interpretative approach. By looking at the use of, for example, different types of drinking vessels used by banqueters, related socio-semiotic inferences might be pursued.

The period under consideration for this thesis is the seventh to the fourth centuries BC that corresponds with the emergence, flourishing and decline of Etruscan civilisation. There is a focus on the seventh to the fifth centuries BC for iconographical sources from domestic-residential and funerary contexts because it is within these centuries that the majority of preserved banquet scenes were manufactured.

In this thesis it will be examined as to *who* eats *what* with *whom* on *which* occasion. It will be shown how the iconography of communal dining can help us to learn about the social structure of the Etruscan people. Public and private relationships can be distinguished, and we can decipher the banquet participants' place in Etruscan society. The other aspect of the '*who* with *whom*' is to find out who was included, or excluded from the communal dinners, in view of gender, age and social status. The *what* refers to the nature of the food and drink served.

Questions asked include, for example, whether certain foods for certain occasions can be distinguished? Also, was wine served to men and women alike? The objective is not to present the agricultural background of the foodstuffs produced, harvested and traded, but the consumption of food and drink in the social context of conviviality. Specific kinds of food and drink will only be presented if it furthers the discussion of the communication of social practices. The question as to *which* occasion is to try to find out whether the nature of the celebration depicted can be discerned? Are we looking at a public - political festivity? On the other hand, is the onlooker the witnesses of a private occasion where family and perhaps closest friends are invited? Is a religious objective in the festivity depicted to be distinguished?

Banquets, feasts and food sharing events express political, social and cultural identity. The use of food and drink events to this purpose appears to have been applied by the Etruscan civilization. Conviviality was certainly of central significance among the social ceremonial practices of the Etruscans. The importance of this social activity is implied by architectural evidence, the manifold artistic representations, by banqueting and feasting related equipment, and by Greek and Roman textual references to the Etruscan's convivial peculiarities. It is indeed a fact that banqueting is the theme with the most numerous iconographic representations in domestic-residential and in funerary contexts (Small, 1971; D'Agostino, 1989). Many scholars agree that the banquet is the most conspicuous expression of status, power, opulence and lifestyle for the aristocracy, and that it functions as a core point of convergence for communication (De Marinis, 1961; Rathje, 1990, 1994, 2004: 217; Steingräber, 2006: 66). However, the iconography of banqueting needs decoding so that we can learn about the social constructs of Etruscan civilisation.

How can it be shown that banqueting had such significance for the political and socio-cultural organization of Etruscan society? Banquets, for example, may have been utilized to seal formal agreements by a shared meal since dinner symbolized accord, and the sharing of food and drink was the material counterpart of the written contract (Joannes, 1999: 32-33). Do we have historical texts referring to the social use of banquets in Etruscan times? Can we confirm that Etruscan women did indeed have the 'emancipation' that has been ascribed to them (Bonfante 1973a,

1973b, Small, 1994: 88)? Did children participate at *convivia* in the same way as adults, or can we distinguish objects and behaviour typically associated with children and teenagers? Is it possible to distinguish an outdoor family picnic from an all-male 'night-in'? May we infer political status, age, gender or family relation through the use of different types of drinks vessels or other objects associated with particular people in any one representation? Why did material remains take the form they did, from grand architectural structures to small drinking cups?

It is hoped to answer, sometimes fully - sometimes partially, the above questions and to present further research results regarding the make-up and workings of Etruscan society that became apparent while examining and analysing this people's images of conviviality.

1.2 Previous research on the iconography of banqueting

Dennis (1878) is amongst the first explorers of the modern era to describe Etruscan tomb paintings within a framework of historical knowledge. He commented on the social and material peculiarities depicted in the *convivia*. When appropriate, he supported the iconographical evidence with references to the ancient sources. His descriptions of the banquet scenes are indispensable for the current research. Some of the scenes he described either are now lost due to the tombs having collapsed or the originals having more or less completely faded, without any drawings, facsimiles or photographs being produced at the time of their existence. However, Dennis did not specialize on the banquets scenes. His accounts were more of a descriptive journal in which he recorded all the Etruscan art works he encountered on his travels.

An early article that discusses a particular banquet scene is by Messerschmidt (1929). He presents an analysis of the *convivia* from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45) in regards to its religious significance by describing and comparing the scene with other funerary banquets.

The first Etruscologist who focused on the banquet scenes as a specific genre in Etruscan art, concentrating on the Archaic period, was De Marinis (1961). She listed the known banquet scenes and catalogued these within different media. She attempted to trace the origin of the Etruscan banquet while looking at the elements

that constitute a banquet. References were made to the social implications regarding the inclusion of women. The main objectives of her study were to categorise the scenes into a chronology with the help of artistic paradigms, and to group the banquets according to their setting, as either a funerary rite, a scene from daily life, or the continuation of earthly pleasures into the afterlife.

Small (1971) published a detailed study of the Banquet Frieze from Poggio Civitate/Murlo. She listed all the frieze plaques and fragments, and presents a stylistic, typological and chronological discourse for the banquet scene which once decorated the monumental building at Murlo.

Weber-Lehmann (1986) offered a comprehensive monograph of the late Archaic banquet scenes from Tarquinia. The treatise is primarily descriptive. Details such as drunken banqueters, or the conspicuous display of vessels and *kylikeia* are not examined within a socio-cultural context, but rather in view of placement within the tomb, and vessel typology respectively.

A synthesis of the material and iconographic evidence that supports the notion of the importance of banqueting for Etruscan aristocratic society was presented by Cristofani (1987). Food and drink as represented through banqueting and wine drinking equipment, paintings and sculptural art are described in their variety of settings.

Rathje (1989, 1990, 1994, 2004) regarded the origin of banqueting in Central Italy in the Orientalising period as an adaptation from Homeric society. She states that the Etruscan aristocracy accustomed themselves to banqueting by taking over this social event with strong influences from both Greece and the Near East. She does not allow for the possibility that the Etruscans may have picked and chosen certain elements they saw fit for their social needs while others were not adapted. In consequence, she does not allow for indigenous developments in the application and execution of *convivia*.

Murray (1985) took a similar viewpoint by stating that the introduction of social customs such as wine drinking and the symposia originated from the Greeks and the later Phoenicians. However, he allows for Etruscan-specific distinctions and developments.

Small (1994), in her article 'Eat, drink and Be Merry', presented a short study

into the social dimensions of banqueting in Etruria. She discussed the inclusion of females at banquet. She was also the first Etruscologist who suggested an alternative significance for the 'egg', suggesting a practical use instead of the religious-mythological symbolism prevailing in academic circles.¹

Tuck (1994) elaborates on the Eastern Mediterranean influence on Villanovan funerary iconography. He stresses that the funerary meal was adapted from abroad to pre-existing Villanovan themes, and the consequent pervasive use of the banquet iconography from the Orientalising period onwards.

Research that acknowledged the socio-cultural significance of banqueting in Etruscan Italy was carried out by Berkin (2003). In the conclusion of his extensive analysis into the Orientalising *bucchero* from the Lower Building at Poggio Civitate (Murlo), he suggested a field of research that so far had only been marginally touched upon. Material evidence and iconography may be assembled to gain an understanding of the political and socio-cultural aspects of Etruscan society. For example what the people celebrated with the banqueting equipment found in archaeological excavations, why certain vessels were used / depicted, and how many people were able to partake at any one dinner.

In the last decades, more research has been conducted and papers published dealing with the significance of communal dining in ancient civilizations, and what we can learn about these civilizations by analyzing their banqueting particularities. The research conducted for the Etruscans, as enumerated above, was mainly descriptive regarding iconography; typology and chronological considerations were of primary importance. It is thus of essential importance to add a new perspective to the examination of banquet scenes from Etruria. The work described in this thesis focuses on the indigenous iconography of conviviality, and what can be learned about Etruscan society when analyzing all imagery whether from domestic-residential or from funerary contexts. It is a comprehensive study looking at available Etruscan banquet scenes, encompassing the Etruscan era, covering the geographical expanse of Etruscan settlements, and a wide range of contexts as to where banquet scenes were displayed, may it be engraved on a handheld bronze mirror or painted in a family tomb.

¹ See discussions in subsection 5.3.3.

1.3 Definitions of banqueting - sources of contemporary and archaeological evidence. What constitutes a feast, a banquet, a commensal event, conviviality and all other food sharing occasions?

When researching the social aspect of sharing food and drink in company with other human beings, the application of terminology is rather fluid and examples will be given to show the wide variety and interchangeable use of nomenclature. However, two expressions are narrowly defined in their use as these are bound to their Latin etymology.

The first one is commensality. Commensality is the act of eating together. *Com mensalis* is sharing a table, or eating together, with the table to be seen as a western metaphor as many societies eat together without the table as a necessary tool. Commensality is reflected in conscious preferences for certain foodstuffs. What is edible and what is not differs from culture to culture and from one era to another, and may additionally depend on religious and traditional taboos. Commensality includes consciously enacted table manners and a conscious choice of guests. Therefore has commensality its own limits in view of the chosen participants and its own internal hierarchies. Commensality is defined as a gathering aimed to accomplish a collective goal, usually a material task and the associated symbolic obligations. The study of commensality is the study of social morphology, of group relationships in view of drink and food exchange and of everything that is exchanged through this exchange. There is every-day (the habitual meal) and exceptional commensality (the exceptional meal). The everyday commensality is for close family, friends and colleagues. With the exceptional meal we celebrate annual calendar or life cycle events with the extended family, friends and colleagues. The meal enables us to memorize the meal and the associated event more easily (Grignon, 2001: 23-28). In this definition, commensality is used as a universal term for all events where people share food and drink.

The second expression is conviviality. *Con vivialis/ cum vivere* is to live together. In context with a feast or festive activity, it is understood as being fond of eating and drinking in good company, to be sociable and jovial. Conviviality may be compared to friends and family enjoying a barbecue together, where there is no

seating plan by which the participants are bound, no formal attire to be worn, some people sit and eat, while others stand and eat, and some others sit or stand and chat, without a drink. In contrast, at a commensal event, a strict seating order must be adhered to, clothing appropriate to the occasion is to be worn, a set menu with set drinks is served, and people speak one after the other, and do not chat over and above each other as happens at informal events.

The banquet has a similar antecedent as commensality. The word banquet is believed to have its origins in the Late Latin *bancus*, which became the Germanic word *bank*, which means bench. How the adaptation from a type of seat shared by more than one person was to become a derivate that means to take a meal in company is not certain. It has been suggested that early Christians sat on benches as they celebrated their agape feasts (Montagne, 1971: 85). It is also proposed that the word was transformed, once it was adapted into the Old French *banc*, from 'little bench' to 'a meal taken on the family workbench' to 'feast'. Since the word banquet was added to the English language in the late fifteenth century, it signifies a rather solemn and sumptuous meal given to a large number of guests. It is given on festal or ceremonious occasions, often accompanied by music and entertainment, to bring together people with the same religious or political agendas, the same subjective or 'just' gastronomic tastes, people of the same social status or profession, people of the same geographical or ethnic origin, and any other tangible or intangible unifiers. A banquet is therefore an event where people gather round the same table either because of the necessity of family life, to mark important occasions, or to affirm mutual ideas that may be intellectual or sentimental.

However, in academic circles, commensality and conviviality are often synonymous with the definition of banqueting, and of feasting.² Commensality and Conviviality take on a kind of 'umbrella terminology' and defines the social practice of sharing the consumption of food and drink. Commensality and Conviviality are attested as among the most profound ways of establishing social connections in the form of solidarity or competition in stratified social systems based on status, gender, age, etc. in multiple formal versus informal contexts. There may be multiple formal versus informal commensal contexts as defined by Dietler and Hayden (1996) that

² See the following paragraphs for definitions and discussions for the expression of banqueting and of feasting.

are interlinked in complex ways. Here, commensality fuses with definitions of feasting, as formal and informal communal eating events are included (Pollock, 2003:19).

The expressions 'banquets', 'feasts', 'ceremonial dinner parties', and 'symposia' are often used interchangeably in addition to commensality and conviviality. This is where it can get confusing or even may lead to misunderstandings. An example may be the use of the word 'feast'. When browsing printed media or the internet for definitions, a feast is described as an elaborate meal (often accompanied by entertainment); as a very large, splendid meal with many good things to eat and drink; as a banquet; as a ceremonial dinner party for many people; or as a banquet which is a meal that is well prepared and greatly enjoyed (Hornby, 1983). In comparison, when looking for a definition for a banquet, the following descriptions can be found: a banquet is a large public meal or feast, complete with main courses and desserts. It usually serves a purpose, such as a charitable gathering, a ceremony, or a celebration, often followed by speeches in honour of someone; an elaborate and often ceremonious meal for numerous people, often including speakers or presentations and music; a lavish feast or dinner, usually held as a celebration (Montagne, 1971: 85-102). Strong (2003: 7) fuses both expressions of convivium and feast into one, namely the act of eating together which transforms a necessary bodily function into something more significant, a social act. Borgna (2004 (a)) uses feasting and banqueting interchangeably in the context either of exclusive elite celebrations or also for unrestricted occasions in which social identity rather than power was most important. Effros (2002: 45-47) is indiscriminate when analysing the life of sixth century nuns and monks in view of convivia as feasts as banquets. Wright (2004 (b): 13) defines feasting as the formal ceremony of communal eating and drinking to celebrate significant occasions. Activities without any perceived reciprocity are excluded from his definition. Sherratt (2004) examined feasting in Homeric epic and uses feasting for any occasion where food and/or drink was shared, even if done just by a few men at the end of their day for reasons of nourishment. She exemplifies the ideals of equal sharing, mutual obligation and individual esteem within the collective, and the potential for universal inclusion. These are all indicators for a collective identity and ideology symbolized by sharing food and

drink. As can be seen above, the definitions for a feast or a banquet describe very similar events that have translucent boundaries of use from scholar to scholar. Often, the terminology is used indiscriminately.

When it comes to scholars defining the social aspect of eating in the community of others at public events, at feasts, the non-discriminative use of the terminology is apparent, too. Here are some examples: A good meal is transformed into a feast by adding some extra dimensions. Ambience is created by visual and sensory impact of fine tapestries, tablecloths, flowers, perfumes, music, and entertainers (Fletcher, 2004: 115). Bradley (2001: 36-55) postulated that in Roman times, a meal becomes a convivium when various types of entertainment accompany the food. Gero (2003: 285-287) defines the practice of feasting as a splendid meal where it is important to what you eat, who with, what you eat it on and from, and with which etiquette. Once these points are established for any convivial event, it can be deduced that the participants share cultural assumptions and ideologies. However, they can be divided by emergent class and status differences, sometimes across significant divides of wealth and obligation.

Feasts differ from daily food consumption practices. They can help to create and reinforce social connections, while distinctions can be emphasized and elaborated. The use of particular kinds of food and drink, serving equipment and etiquette of seating, serving and eating represents the adherence to (usually unwritten) rules and rituals to which the participants assent and they therewith accept social relations embodied in that ritual. Feasting denotes exclusive contexts and styles of consumption in order to maintain social privilege and power. The primary goal of feasting is symbolic and ideological, and is not concerned with the redistribution of nutrition (Pollock, 2003: 21 and 25). Feasting can be defined as a public ritual communal food consumption event that differs in some way from everyday practice. Ritual is not to be seen as sacred, but as somewhat symbolically differentiated from everyday activities in terms of forms of action or purpose. Therefore, feasts do provide an arena for both the highly condensed symbolic manifestations and the active manipulation of social relations. Different political roles enacted by the ritual feasts and their nature of symbolic action can be categorized into entrepreneurial, patron-client and diacritical feasts (Bray, 2003: 1;

Dietler, 1996; Hayden, 1996; Dietler and Hayden, 2001).³ Feasts are not only about power, but they are important and universally understood arenas for the display and manipulation of political relations. Hayden (2001, 4 and 27-28) defines feasting in a more open way by not including the political aspect. He defines a feast as an unusual occasion that is accompanied by an unusual shared meal. He also points out that the ritual aspect may, or may not be identifiable in the archaeological record.

Dietler and Hayden (2001) use the terminology of public consumption events and feasting. When a communal eating event receives a major political dimension, it is a means by which status and power are negotiated, and the social order is transformed. Feasts are occasions where large scale hospitality creates debt and obligations, where reputations are formed and lost, the social hierarchy displayed, challenged and restructured, and the work and manufacture effort of many is exhibited as the benevolent gesture of a few.

Dietler (1996: 92-99) distinguishes three variants of feasting. The first is what he terms the entrepreneurial feast, which is held for the reciprocal conversion of economic and symbolic capital. The second is the patron-client feast where the patron's hospitality is used to legitimize institutionalized relations of social power. The third feast is the diacritical feast. These events are characterized by the use of differentiated cuisine and styles of consumption as a diacritical symbolic device to naturalize and rectify concepts of ranked differences in social status.

Hayden (2001: 35-40) elaborates the distinct signatures of feasts in the archaeological record. The food might consist of rare or labour intensive plant or animal species, the foodstuffs are of high quality and there is evidence of waste of food items. The preparation vessels are of unusual type, unusual large sizes and numbers. Serving vessels are of unusual quality or material, of unusual size and numbers. Food preparation facilities are of unusually large size, numbers and location, or construction. There will also be special food disposal features, special feasting facilities, associated prestige items, ritualized forms of etiquette, and pictorial and written records of these events. A feast is therefore an act of eating together which transforms a necessary bodily function into something far more significant, a social event. It is one of the most universally used and socially

³ Examples are given in section 3.1.

productive human interactions, with personal involvement of every single individual, open to infinite cultural variations in the selection of what food and drink is to be consumed, how the food is to be prepared and served, and in what manner the dishes are to be eaten and drunk. Feasting is a social activity that binds a group through sharing. A formal ceremonial practice differentiates host from guest, gender, youth from elder, and affirms and manipulates social ranking. As a social practice feasting is dynamic in restructuring society and therewith power and economic relations. It assumes the acceptance of guidelines as to how such gatherings should be conducted. The table is the vehicle for social aggregation and unity; it also can facilitate social distinction or even exclusion. A shared meal and all its context has been and is a vehicle to determine status, hierarchy and aspiration (Strong, 2003: 7).

Feasting is an important ceremony that is instrumental in the forging of cultural identity (Wright, 2004 (b): 14). Feasting is also to be seen in its wider context as to encompass the production, the transport, the trade in and preparation of the foodstuffs, the architectural setting and furnishings for a feast and the overall organisation. All this is labour and leadership intensive which depends on human relationships, good communication, on trust and sharing. Feasts are an activity where social relations are continuously re-shaped, manipulated and restructured and consequently serve to promote personal, kin, group economic, ideological and political aims. These issues are all not found as hard material evidence in the archaeological record, but they can be learned, deduced, assumed and interpreted from the evidence of feasting related goods, artistic representation, architecture and textual evidence.

Hamilakis (2000: 57-59) presents a definition to the consumption of foodstuffs within a socio-archaeological context. He explains that a product, during its consumption, embodies the meaning of the whole production and distribution process. It follows that the production and distribution meaning of a product is written on it, constructs its social life and cultural biography that can be read and recollected during consumption. The consumption of different products communicated different meanings and the consumption of the same product has different meanings in different social contexts. Some people's basic foodstuffs are other people's luxuries. Therefore has the consumption of all foods a social meaning

and that it is the specific social context in which this meaning operates that is important. Feasts are of considerable importance and are organized by an authority, be it an individual household, an elite group or the chief of the community. The key feature is the exhibition of generosity by the organizers. Feasts are mechanisms not only for the accumulation of material wealth but, most importantly, of transforming material wealth into power. They may offer, therefore, a key to the explanation of the development of power in a number of societies. Hamilakis then goes on to present research done in classical Greece and uses feasting and banqueting interchangeably, simply distinguishing whether they were held in a political, religious or social context.

Tolles (1943: 6-37) examined banqueting libations of the Greeks in archaic and classical times. She distinguishes secular/social feast versus ceremonial/religious feast, both held in private setting. Both have very similar formal conventions, which were carefully respected by the aristocratic participants in archaic times. Therefore is it difficult to distinguish one from the other in the archaeological record. Only in later classical Greece was a divide observable as to the why and how. Some banquets were held by the aristocracy to have learned discourses while enjoying a banquet, while others held banquets that are more frivolous where drink and entertainment was the foremost motive.

The terminology adhered to in this thesis is the following. The expression 'feasting' will be used explicitly for public communal feasting and drinking events in the sense as defined by Dietler and Hayden, and by Hamilakis (see above and in section 3.1). Feasting will be applied to classify events by their symbolic content, what kind of social, economic, and political goals were to be achieved, what horizontal versus vertical social relationships between guests and host can be distinguished, the kind of reciprocity involved and the degree of obligation attached to participating at a feasts. Any particular feast can be a combination of any of above defined kinds of feast. The diversity of definitions of 'feasts' can be used as a practical tool. Classifications are tools of analysis and different tools are needed for different purposes. Since every communally taken meal differs from another in terms of the people involved, dishes prepared and served, and the social and political goals to be achieved, so do the tools have to be used in diverse and malleable ways. Every

single feast is conducted in its individual setting, so definitions of typologies have to be adjusted accordingly. In archaeology, a feast is classified on the material evidence. Therefore, feasting can be discussed in the archaeological context without actually being able to specify the socio-political reason for the feast in the first place. However, with the help of social science, with anthropology and history, a contextual and culturally specific argument founded on the theoretical understanding of the complexities of feasting can be constructed.

The word 'banquet', in our modern times, is used to denote a festivity, a ceremonial dinner party for many people, often accompanied by music and speeches (see paragraphs above). Such a definition implies that we have more than one person, and that food and drink is enjoyed in bigger than usual quantities. Such a definition is associated with our currently existing knowledge of such an event, thus pre-imposing a specific image onto the Etruscan representations. In addition, the word 'banquet' itself is an imposition of what we are to expect. However, it is a fact that most Etruscan 'banquet' representations do not refer to the consumption of food, but to drinks consumption only. Sometimes, neither is shown in a scene, for example in the scenes from the *dolio* cat. No. 12, the sculptural formation from the Tomb of the Five Chairs (cat. No. 77), the grave stele cat. No. 81, and from the urn cat. No. 98.

Using the contemporary Greek 'symposium', as used by some scholars (Cristofani, 1987: 126; Sassatelli, 1999: 110; Small, 1994; Camporeale, 2003: 103; Barker and Rasmussen, 2005: 181) is not advantageous because this terminology may be associated with a number of different social concepts as to how to conduct a banquet. The Greek symposium may include different combinations of participants or settings, for example in regards as to who is shown participating in comparison to the Etruscan banquet, or for example regarding the dress code for banqueters and servants alike. Often, when Etruscan banqueters are depicted, they are shown drinking wine and having a variety of food dishes set in front of them. This is a distinct way of showing convivial events. It is distinct from the Greek and the Roman way of banqueting as the Greeks and Romans depicted these events in connection with wine drinking and entertainers, but without the food. Some Etruscan images show that food and wine is enjoyed at the same time.

It is important to note that the Etruscans combined both eating and drinking at their banquets, while in contemporary Greece, broadly speaking, drinks followed food (Davidson, 1998: 45; Hill, 2006: 77-78, Small, 1994: 85). This was also described by Plato in his *Symposium* 172a-176a. The combination of both food and drink can be seen in many Etruscan representations of dining, for example, on the frieze plaques from Murlo. To show the Etruscans with food and drink may have been an iconographical language to represent the convivial act of banqueting as such, or it could have been to show the wealth of the Etruscans in an idealized way. Both suggestions embody a symbolic idea. It could have been that the artist mirrored the event as it happened in reality, namely with food and drink being enjoyed at the same time. Further suggestions regarding the significance of showing food and/or drink in any one representation are discussed in subsection 5.3.1 to 5.3.5. This is not to deny that some Etruscan scenes look much alike Greek symposia. Dennis (1878: 373 and 396, Vol. I and 325, Vol. II) distinguished such Greek-reminiscent scenes and called an Etruscan banquet a ‘symposium’ when it is an all male banquet, in addition to the absence of edibles on/or tables.

The later Roman ‘convivium’, as described by Cicero (*Letters to his Friends* IX.24.3) and Pliny the Younger (*The Letters* IX.36) inform us that daily dining among friends was an established and valued social and cultural institution at Rome. The *convivium*, so Cicero (*Letters to his Friends* IX.24.3), is an ideal setting in which Romans can sit down to dinner with friends because they share one’s life.

The terms banqueting, convivium and commensal eating and drinking events will be used interchangeably to describe how the Etruscans conducted their sharing of food and/or drink in an environment evidently used to socialize with friends and family. They all represent the act of sharing food and drink with two or more people at any one time, at any given occasion, which is not a feast as defined above. The terms are primarily used when discussing smaller scale events where the formation and negotiation of social, economic and political power are not enacted in an event organized by a central and public authority. Here, more private and intimate dinner parties will be the primary objects of research when analysing the archaeological, the iconographical and textual record of Etruscan convivial events, since there is a numerical majority of banquet scenes from private spheres of Etruscan life. These

include Patron-client based banquets, staying with the terminology of Dietler (see above), as these were also staged in the private dwellings of the patrons, not only in feast-related official settings.

1.3.1 Artistic-iconographical representations

This social activity of banqueting is featured prominently in artistic-iconographic media and it is the aim of this thesis to find out as much as possible about the Etruscan society from these representations of *convivia*. It will be analysed as to how chosen iconographical elements were utilized by the Etruscans when they represented themselves at a banquet, and what we can learn from these images about their society.

When comparing Etruscan banquet iconography to the archaeological record of banqueting accoutrements it is revealed that both reflect customs of the wealthy elite and consequently are connected to social status. When examining iconographic evidence the following would be kept in mind: The banquet was a ceremonial event with many ideological and social meanings attached to it. The scenes describe social activities of the very society that produced them (Pieraccini, 2000: 35). They are also the subject matter of choice of the individual clients who commissioned the art works. To share a meal with somebody is a way of honouring the personage, as can be read as early as in the epos of Gilgamesh and in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The inclusion of the banquet as one of the most prominent motives in Etruscan art is in direct relation to its social importance within the upper Etruscan classes. Images, as will be shown in Part II and III, are chosen for the propaganda of social and political leadership of the very people who commission the images.

1.3.2. Architectural evidence

There are indications of specific dining facilities in some buildings' architectural layouts. Such architectural information can tell us where such communal events were held, how many people could have participated, and perhaps even class divisional seating arrangement may be discerned. Specific dining rooms have been suggested by Bergquist (1973), Strandberg Olofsson (1984, 1996), Scheffer (1986) and Torelli (1989) for Acquarossa; by Rystedt (1984) and Berkin (2003) for Murlo; and by

Karlsson (1996) for San Giovenale.

1.3.3. Banqueting equipment

The Etruscans also left us a great variety and number of dining related vessels. Feasting, banqueting and general dining and drinking equipment are essential in finding out about the social implications of dining. The equipment helps us to understand fundamental issues such as how food and drink was prepared, served and eating, how many people may have participated in any one event and whether we can distinguish social classes or markers symbolizing age, gender, political or wealth related standing in the community. Sometimes we have to assume and perhaps even guess the importance of evidence, so for example how a particular banqueting accoutrement could have been used to display or to symbolize social stratification at table. Analogies from historical and modern research may be suggested to compare and contrast how certain dining accoutrements are used in such specific circumstances.⁴ However, it is very important to stress that, when looking at food related pottery in particular, Gero (2003: 285) has fittingly postulated that ceramics have to be put back into the hands of the people to connect them to their intended contextual functions. The materials, the forms and scales chosen for material objects are to be analysed as deeply inherent in the creation and understanding of the objects' cultural meaning.

Ancient iconography can greatly help in the identification of the function and use of an object. However, there is the danger in establishing the function of an ancient object through iconography, written sources or modern sociological and anthropological analogies. The archaeological evidence may be reduced to merely a descriptive illustration, devoid of its own context of assemblages and provenances (Allison, 2004: 43). It is not to be forgotten that objects were and are used regularly outwith their intended function, too. A table may be used as a stepladder, and a serving plate may be used as a lid to cover a simmering dish on the cooker.

Fine tableware was being produced in Central Italy from the late eighth century BC. This is recorded by ceramics that are local imitations of imported vessels and the emergence of the Etruscan specific *bucchero* production, with the

⁴ See also sections 3.1 and 3.2 for contemporary and historical examples.

bucchero production probably originating at Caere at around 700 BC. Both the fine impasto and the *bucchero* vessels also imitate metal ware, so for example *oinochoai*, jugs, *kyathoi* and goblets (Nijboer, 1998: 55-58). Most *bucchero* vessels are designs for the service and consumption of wine and water and the same shapes are found in domestic as in funerary contexts (Rasmussen, 1979: 158). It can therefore be assumed that the banqueting items found in funerary contexts are not produced for the purpose of accompanying the deceased in the underworld, but that they were items used at convivial events amongst the living.

The influence of fine tableware spread from Etruscan Italy to Greece, too, and not just always vice versa as is usually stressed in the majority of academic literature. It is believed that a specific *kyathos* type from Vulci was most likely to be the prototype for the Attic *kyathos* which was first manufactured in the Nikosthenes workshop at around 530 – 520 BC (Rasmussen, 1979: 13).

The change of a certain ceramics from a prestige goods to becoming more mundane tableware can be followed by looking at the *bucchero* production. At the beginning, *bucchero* vessels were carefully made as individual artefacts with limited output. From southern Etruria, the manufacture began to spread to new production sites to the north and further to the south. With the spread of production came a standardization of serial manufacture. By the late sixth and the fifth centuries, *bucchero* is manufactured in a limited range of vessel forms and the distribution was confined to local markets. We can see how *bucchero* evolved from a prestige individual ceramic for banqueting use, produced by a very limited number of workshops, through to semi-luxury vessels as a greater number and geographical spread of workshops with limited and standardizes vessel types developed to common tableware (Nijboer, 1998: 58).

In Etruria, the types of vessel shapes for specific functions such as fine ceramic drinking sets with *kotylai*, *skyphoi* and *oinochoai*, rapidly increased in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. This is a reflection of higher demand, of a growing market for such vessels required for banqueting events. There is also a certain degree of standardisation as the vessel shapes became more uniform than the types from the previous period. It was facilitated by the introduction of wheel throwing manufacture of ceramics into Central Italy in the eighth century BC (Nijboer, 1998: 67-68).

Coarse clay household vessels include lids, plates, jars and vessels for cooking food. Vessels for cooking are manufactured with their specific use in mind as the clay need to have thermal shock resistant properties because the vessel will repeatedly be heated and cooled in the duration of its life-span. The intended use of the artefact determines the raw material and method of its manufacture. Large quantities of coarse ware household vessels for preparing, storing and serving food, when found near buildings, indicate secular purposes. The vessels include a wide variety of pottery types such as kitchen and tableware, storage jars and cooking pots and stoves. Common coarse ware is quantitatively the main ceramic group in comparison to fine tableware, so for example in Caere (Nijboer, 1998: 110).

Until the sixth century BC, fine ware made with levigated clay, on a fast wheel by skilled craftsmen, was mainly used for eating and drinking while hand-made pottery may have been produced within a household tradition and used for preparing and cooking food.

The demand for fine ware increases in the Orientalising period and this rise in demand is related to the new consumption patterns and to cultural changes (Rathje, 1990: 208). Luxury ceramics become the functional and symbolic items used at convivial events such as banquets. There are now specialized drinking-, pouring-, and mixing vessels. The ceramic vessels utilized during these convivial events can be described as highly valued artefacts and luxury ware due to their very specific use and often-expensive modes of production regarding time and material and decoration applied to each vessel. The demand from the seventh century BC for the luxury tableware of *bucchero* and elaborate decorated fine ceramic vessels was instigated by the wealthy and their changed patterns of consumption. The elite confirmed their status with prestige goods that were imported or made by the local specialized workshops. This can be seen in the very elegant drinking vessels from the banqueting sets from Ficana (Rathje, 1983) and Poggio Civitate (Tuck, 1994; Nijboer, 1998: 130-132, Berkin, 2003). Fragments of pottery were excavated from the Lower Building at Murlo that equal some of the vessels shown on the banquet relief plaques of the same structure (Tuck, 1994; Haynes, 2000: 117-124).

Counter-evidence from the farm at Podere Tartuchino:

The following example is a kind of ‘negative’ proof that banqueting was of no concern at places such as farms, where the production of food and the non-ceremonial taking of food but only as nourishment was the main concern of the inhabitants.

A large number of pottery vessels were unearthed at the excavation at Podere Tartuchino. The continuous occupation of this farm lasted from the second half of sixth to the third century BC (Perkins and Attolini, 1992: 104-108). The pottery finds belong to fine tableware, coarse ware, large *pithoi* and *amphorae*. More than half of the pottery sherds are coarse ware, which were vessels likely to be used for storage, fermentation of wine, and for cooking. This is congruent with the building complex being used as a farm, where the production and the storage of agricultural produce and the feeding of the labourers was the main aim within the daily activities.

Of the diagnostic coarse ware sherds, 82% were jar forms, and of these, 56% were blackened on the exterior. If we assumed that this is the result from using these jars for cooking purposes, this then represents that the jars were evenly divided between cooking and storing. Perkins and Attolini also point out that the jars have a certain regularity regarding the rim diameter, with most jars at a diameter of 130, 180 or 240 millimetres. These might have been the ideal sizes of jars for handling the required volumes of food to be cooked.

The *bucchero* and fine cream ware vessels are limited to the shapes of cups, small bowls, calices and some jugs. These are all associated with drinking. The exception are a few larger fine cream ware bowls and a (possibly stemmed) plate, which could have been used for serving food, perhaps when using them in combination with the fine cream ware drinking vessels for more formal eating occasions. Overall is the pottery assemblage from Podere Tartuchino similar to the collections from other survey sites in the upper Albegna valley.

The more ceremonial tableware is small in number and limited in shapes in comparison to the majority of pottery vessels found. It therefore follows, by examining the vessel assemblage, that at Podere Tartuchino the production of farm produce was the main purpose of the site, and the necessary feeding of the farm workers. No banquets show the (not existent) high social standing of the farm

workers, or their (non-existent) political importance to be presented and celebrated with elaborate dining events. The few bucchero and fine cream ware vessels may have been used to celebrate special occasions only. Another suggestion is that the vessels may have been used when high-ranking visitors, such as the proprietors, stayed at the farm.

Research into the social practices of ancient societies is fundamental in that it provides an understanding of how and for what purposes objects were created and put to use within communities. It is a fact that material culture is structured by social needs. The society that created objects deliberately selected the shape and materials most suited to their needs and ideas at the time. In this way society is structured by material culture. The material culture can therewith open up insights into the Etruscan culture that produced the objects. Etruscan behaviour, attitudes and ideas shaped and were shaped by the material world that surrounded them, just as we are shaped and shape our material environments today. Therefore archaeologists can deduce social behaviour from the material record and from the archaeological context in which the object has been found and then make deductions as to the (common sense perceived/most likely) function of the object (Izzet, 2007: 23-24 and 46).

The combination of the banqueting services from Ficana and Murlo; the banqueting friezes from Murlo, Acquarossa and Velletri; the architectural evidence from Murlo, Acquarossa and San Giovenale, and the negative evidence from Podere Tartuchino can be viewed as evidence that banqueting took place at these locations. Conviviality can be understood as an essential part of the Etruscan elites' social and political propaganda as the banquets were held and celebrated in larger, more monumental complexes in comparison to the more modest buildings in their surroundings.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The structure of the thesis is based on a theme-related framework, starting with early research into food habits conducted in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, followed by a presentation of post-war Structuralist and Developmental approaches concerning *who* ate *what* kind of food at *which* occasion.

The theoretical aspect of part II, section 3.1. is supplemented with anthropological and modern examples of how convivial events forge social community. Section 3.2. is an investigation into the eating habits, into the social importance and perception of food in the ancient world. The period discussed will cover a range of locations from around the Mediterranean, from the beginning of the first millennium BC to the early Imperial times of Rome. This geographical and chronological range was chosen because research into food and drink habits has concentrated on these societies and, from the eighth century BC onwards, it corresponds with the emergence and flourishing of the Etruscan civilization and its continuation into the Roman period.

Part III, sections 4. and 5., the main body of this thesis, will deal with the Etruscan society itself. The banquet representations will be analysed in view of tangible objects such as furniture, crockery and animals, servants and their duties, food and drink shown in the scenes, and the social make-up of the people depicted ranging from duties, gender, age, and social status. It appears that communal dining played a fundamental role in Etruscan society. There is architectural, artistic, and material evidence from Etruscan urban centres. Necropoleis such as those from Tarquinia and Cerveteri display events of conviviality in the media of tomb painting. At Tarquinia, the banquet was the topic with the most representations numerically in comparison to other events chosen to decorate tomb chambers.⁵ Therefore, it will be argued that feasting has played an important role in the

⁵ There are around 180 Etruscan chamber tombs decorated with wall paintings and around a further 100 chamber tombs decorated with simple geometric patterns and/or inscriptions. 80% of these painted tombs are found in the Tarquinian necropoleis. The other painted tombs are distributed as follows: fourteen in Chiusi, eleven in Cerveteri, three each in Vulci and in the environs of Orvieto, two each in Veii, Blera, Sarentano, Magliano Toscano, and Populonia, and one each in Bomarzo, Cosa, Grotte San Stefano, Orte, San Giuliano, and Tuscania (Steingraber, 2006: 15).

emergence of social hierarchies and the establishment and negotiation of socio-cultural and political power in Etruscan Italy. The functional significance of artistic representations of conviviality will be examined. Questions asked include whether it can be verified that Etruscan women were as socially emancipated as is often inferred (Small, 1994: 88), whether kinship or hierarchies can be discerned by looking at the arrangement of couches and other banqueting furniture and the placement of banqueters on the furniture, or whether Etruscan debauchery, a topic discussed by Greek and Roman writers, can be confirmed by Etruscan iconographic evidence.

The thesis will conclude with a synthesis of the socio-cultural and political aspects of Etruscan culture from which insight can be gained by examining their iconographical representations of banquets.

The appendix contains a catalogue and the illustrations of the 98 banquet scenes that were available for analysis.⁶ The appendix also includes diagrams that demonstrate the importance and significance of conviviality for the Etruscan society. Quotes from classical writers, which related directly to Etruscan customs of conviviality will be presented in the main body of the thesis. Quotes indirectly related to food and drinks in the Etruscan world are given in the appendix.

⁶ These are the scenes that could be procured in sufficient pictorial or written detail to be included in this research. There may be further banquet representations already excavated but stored in museums or private collections without having been publicised. And there will be scenes waiting to be discovered by archaeologists and publicised in the future.

“...After your belly’s full, your counsel’s best...”

Plutarch *Symposiacs* VII.9

2. Methodology

2.1 Theoretical approaches to communal dining, research traditions, and theoretical schools of thought

Archaeological, historical, sociological, anthropological and ethnographical research indicates that communal dining activities are one of the primary arenas of social interaction. Solidarity, competition, and support of social groupings are established. It is also used to form, to manipulate and to maintain power relations, social identities and hierarchies. This thesis refers to a variety of academic disciplines and theoretical schools of thought in discussing the research of banqueting. Such an inclusive approach is required to discuss and analyse the socio-cultural and political application of conviviality in Etruria. This is necessitated because archaeology alone cannot provide sufficient answers. Where archaeological evidence is lacking, history, anthropology, sociology and comparative studies play a vital role to help to answer research questions.

The interpretation of convivial events in past societies relies on circumstantial associations and analogies from a variety of academic disciplines in addition to analysing the material evidence in the archaeological record. An attempt will be made to decode the iconographic record of banqueting in Etruria and to make plausible inferences about the social life and culture of the Etruscan people who were producing and participating in these dinners and feasts. The difficulty faced by archaeologists wanting to find out about why people acted in certain ways lies in the fact that there is a gap in the material remains left to us and the intentions and actions of humans who created them which have been long lost, forgotten or are now misunderstood and misinterpreted. However, architecture, artistic iconography and culinary equipment increased archaeological visibility of such events.

Nevertheless, when it comes to conviviality, we do not know the practical reasons, for example, for the manufacture of a shallow drinking vessel or a deep

drinking vessel, as both have their advantages and disadvantages when being used. What makes the archaeology of social practices rather unique is that learned assumptions have to be made. These are often rooted in modern analogies, regarding the socio-cultural reasons behind creating and using different vessels when one vessel shape would be sufficient to drink beverages at any one convivial gathering. When examining the archaeological material record of architecture, art and equipment with respect to social practises, one has to move beyond the traditional concerns with typology, chronology, and distribution. Questions asked include why banquet representations utilize certain seating arrangements in view of social hierarchy, gender and age, or why vessels were shown in differing size and shape.

Analogy becomes an important tool in the attempt to make sense of material and iconographical evidence. Archaeologists have to employ social science studies, anthropology and ethnography, experimental archaeology and history with associated literary evidence in order to gain assumptions, interpretations, theories, and conclusions.

Archaeologist, as well and Sociologists and Anthropologists all approach the social implications of conviviality from different angles of research. Different questions are asked at the onset of the various approaches, different analytical frameworks and schools of thought are applied.⁷ Nevertheless certain basic rules and practices in communal eating and drinking can be discerned, independent of time and place. Disadvantageous to archaeology is that these rules and practices are mostly un-documented by the ancient civilizations in question. Social rules and conventions were common knowledge to the Mesopotamian people, to the Greeks, the Gauls and the Etruscans, and understood and applied by everybody concerned. People did not need to read or write down what it meant to be invited (or not) to a banquet or to a

⁷ This topic has been researched and discussed from an archaeological and historical perspective, for example, by Bolchazy (1977), Detienne and Vernant (1989), Brothwell and Brothwell (1998), Davidson (1998), Flandrin and Montanari (1999), Joannes (1999), Dietler and Hayden (2001), Dalby (2003), Parker Pearson (ed.) (2003), Wilkins, Harvey and Dobson (eds.) (2003), Sherratt (2004), Wilkins and Hill (2006). Anthropologists and sociologists studied the social significance of conviviality. Researchers include Cohen (1968), Douglas (1971, 1975, 1984, 2003), Bourdieu (1977, 1986), Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo (1992), Falk (1994), Bell and Valentine (eds.) (1997), Canetti (2000).

feast, nor was there a need to explain why, for example, a freedman got a lesser quality wine served at a Roman banquet than his ex-master.⁸

Nevertheless communal eating and drinking was and is a universally understood and applied tool to forge social identities, fairly independent of time and location. Analogies from other academic disciplines help to make sense of the archaeological record of material and iconographic remains. When studying the practice of communal eating and drinking, archaeologists devise and utilize methods of analysis that lead to a direct assessment of specific human activities (Wright, 2004). That this inclusive approach of using a wide variety of academic fields to research the practice of conviviality, covering wide-ranging civilisations and societies (geographically and chronologically) can be successful will be shown in Part Two section 3.1 and section 3.2 of this thesis.

2.2 The significance of research into conviviality to archaeology, anthropology, history and social science

It is only recently that archaeologists have chosen to analyse themes representing specific social practices. The reason might be that archaeologists are not comfortable with the exploration of social practices. Conviviality and feasting are difficult to document through the material record. Nevertheless, focus on eating and drinking can lead to new explanations of the past (Kirkby, 2007: 7).

Sociological, anthropological and historical research indicates that the sharing of food and drink is one of the primary arenas of social interaction. Feasts and banquets have been implicated in significant ways in processes of social change and socio-political transformations. Social identities and status are constructed and communicated via food-related practices. Conversely, social and political identities and aspirations do generate particular strategies of commensality and consumption of food and drink. Alliances, solidarity and class distinctions, political superiority, obligations and reciprocity are achieved through food events. The social significance

⁸ See Petronius' *The Satyricon* for a vivid description of a freedman's dinner party in early Roman Imperial times.

of banqueting and feasting incorporates the gendered construction of power (Bray, 2003: 6 and 9). Food is both means of physical survival and cultural symbol. It functions as a symbol and as a tool for the formation, the negotiation and communication of social and political hierarchies.

The taking of food marks human relationships at all levels and in many situations. It expresses social, political and religious rules and it binds together people tied by kin, religion or citizenship. Cultures propagate their identity, beliefs and status systems through the discourse of conviviality. The ways in which food is distributed and consumed reflects a society's dominant mode of social relationships and groupings (Cohen, 1968: 513). It can also divide a society in respect of how it is being distributed and consumed in accordance with social, economic and political hierarchies.

Why are practices involving food and drink such a universally used and understood form of social and political interaction? Food and drink is an essential, a daily and physical need. Therefore, it can be a powerful means of social control over people. It is also almost infinitely variable and can be elaborated in (m)any imaginable ways in view of what is given, how it is prepared, served and consumed. The study of taking food and drink is a pathway into understanding the cultural traits, the social institutions, and individuals' and communities' attitudes in a particular society or in whole civilizations. The answers as to *who* eats *what* with *whom* on *which* occasion all contribute to the meaning of commensality and opens up perspectives of social and political make-ups of the society under study.

2.3 Sampling strategy and chosen criteria for the assemblage of the database

2.3.1. Sampling strategy

The search for iconographical representations of Etruscan banquet scenes primarily involved the consultation of books, articles, journals and the internet. The search for iconographical representations of Etruscan banquet scenes was also conducted by visiting archaeological sites and museums in Italy. Banquet scenes displayed on a variety of media such as pottery or bronze and now exhibited in museums in

Germany, Great Britain, and the United States of America were also visited and a first-hand description produced. This resulted in a collection of a total of 98 iconographical representations of Etruscan banquet scenes. All 98 scenes are analysed with the same set of questions to understand which elements compose an Etruscan banquet, from crockery to gendered seating arrangements. As a result, informed assumptions and interpretations based on these observations can be made regarding the socio-cultural composition and peculiarities of the people depicted.

Some of the scenes are complete, while some scenes are only fragmentarily preserved. A few scenes are now lost and only written references or drawings, sometimes with a certain artistic freedom, are available. However, all scenes are listed in the catalogue in the appendix to present a complete overview of the Etruscan *convivia* of which pictorial representations existed or still, at least partly, exist and are accessible and publicised.

There may be further Etruscan banquet scenes, perhaps in private collections hidden from the public eye, un-catalogued representations boxed and stored in museum vaults, or others still waiting to be excavated by archaeologists. However, the ninety-eight scenes analysed are a representative selection on which the statistics and discussions of section 5. are based.

The total number of 103 scenes discussed is three less (including the scenes listed in the postscript) than De Marinis' from 1961, despite the discovery of many new banquet scenes in the meantime. The discrepancy of numbers is threefold. In this thesis, only scenes are discussed to which the author had access, either by literature (text and/or photos, drawings or facsimiles), or by personal observations. Scenes listed by De Marinis, but not discussed here are De Marinis No 4. to 8., No. 16 to 19, No. 20 to 34, No. 57, No. 62 to 63, No. 65, No. 67, No. 69, No. 73, No. 75 to 76, No. 80 to 81, No. 83, No. 86 to 87, No. 95 to 97, No. 99 to 101, and No. 105 to 106. Other scenes are not included in the thesis because they have been identified as forgeries in the decades since De Marinis listed them. These include De Marinis No. 56, 59, 60, 61, 68, 70, 79. The fragment De Marinis No. 89 was not included in this study because it does not show a banquet scene. The scene may show a procession because the male depicted holds a staff but no banquet related objects.

2.3.2. Context and categorisation of banquet scenes

The vast majority of representations are from funerary contexts. Tomb paintings are the most numerous with fifty scenes. Sculptural scenes from funerary monuments add up to twenty-two representations. Revetment plaques that were originally attached to buildings from domestic-residential contexts were found in nine locations. The remaining fourteen scenes are listed under the umbrella heading of 'Small Finds' and include a variety of banquet scenes ranging from cylinder stamps on pottery vessels to bronze mirrors and ivory plaques.

The Etruscan banquet scenes are listed in the catalogue in the appendix by context and by medium. They are also always catalogued according to chronology, starting with the oldest representation and finishing with the youngest image of a banquet, each in their own sub-category, for example all the pottery objects are presented in their own sub-group. When discussing more than one banquet scene in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.5.5., they are also always discussed in chronological order.

The banquet scenes in the catalogue are contextually grouped as follows:

cat. No 1 to 9: revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts,

cat. No 11 to 25: small finds divided into pottery (seven scenes), bronze (eight scenes) or ivory (one scene) objects,

cat. No 26 to 65: wall paintings from funerary context of the necropoleis at Tarquinia,

cat. No 66 to 75: wall paintings from funerary context of the necropoleis at Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano,

cat. No 76 to 98: sculptural banquet scenes from funerary monuments

The tomb paintings from Tarquinia and from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano are listed in two separate groups in the catalogue because of the sheer number of banquet representations from Tarquinia. This sub-division is to provide a more detailed discussion of the tomb paintings, with the additional benefit of having a site-specific analysis instead of combining all wall painted banquet scenes from tombs under one catalogue heading.

The numerical majority of scenes from funerary contexts may be attributed to

the fact that burials have generated more interest in the times of early archaeology, and they have been more intensely studied, due to research schools and traditions. In addition, many Etruscan cities have been built over by Medieval or by modern settlements. It is likely that Etruscan houses were decorated with wall paintings, since they decorated their tombs with such works of art (Rystedt, 1984). Some of their contemporary neighbours like the Greeks beautified their dwellings with such decorations. The later Romans were certainly masters of wall decoration as can be seen in Pompeii, Herculaneum or at Hadrian's Villa. However, there are no surviving Etruscan domestic wall paintings since these would have decayed and the dwellings have been destroyed over time. We can assume that wall paintings (some on wood or clay plaques) adorned domestic and public buildings, because such art works were described by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, XXXV. 17-18 for buildings in Caere, Ardea, and Lanuvium in Latium. It may very well be possible that the repertoire of these domestic wall paintings included the genre of banquets, since this is the most popular topic in funerary wall art.

2.3.3. Chosen criteria for the analysis of the banquet scenes

The criteria chosen are rooted in the visual observation of the Etruscan banquet representations. All the iconographical elements visible in the representations that are shown to constitute an Etruscan banquet are noted and described in the catalogue for each of the ninety-eight *convivia*. Every single scene is described by posing a set of seventeen identical questions for each of the ninety-eight representations. This enables a comparative analysis where similarities, the identical use of elements, divergences, and unusual or unique use of elements become clear.

The chosen criteria of analysis may appear rather basic, for example whether the banqueters recline or whether they are seated, or the number of people reclining per banqueting couch. However, such a basic approach to the social practice of banqueting is necessary to discern the customs and the peculiarities of the peoples depicted. As a result, we can learn about some of the social practices of the Etruscans. By doing this, it is possible to disseminate which elements were crucial for the Etruscans to include at their *convivia*, and how these elements were used. These elements range from tangible objects such as furniture to intangible socio-

cultural issues such as the customs of showing female banqueters recline to the left of their male couch partners. Each individual representation of a banquet scene has to be looked at and then compared with all the other scenes of this genre. In this way it can be seen that, for example, only women and children were shown seated, never male banqueters. In addition, when it comes to the number of people per couch, the fact that women never occupied a couch on their own may be of social significance. Women always share a couch with a male partner. Men, however, are seen banqueting on couches individually or in pairs.⁹

The banqueters of the *convivia* are, for ease of comparison and cross-referencing, numbered and described from left to right. The first reclining or seated banqueter will always be the first reclining or seated banqueter being shown starting from the left of the representation. The same is applied to servants, and animals listed in the descriptions.

The criteria are all based on visual information. They are all composite elements of the banquet representations. The combination of use and depiction of each element varies from scene to scene. However, the seventeen questions chosen cover all the visible composites the Etruscans used to represent a banquet. All ninety-eight *convivia* were described and examined using the same seventeen questions. The questions are as follows:

1. is it a seated or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?
2. who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/sitting person?
3. what is the direction of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image)?
4. are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?
5. what furniture is shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters?
6. how many couches are shown?
7. what is the number of people per couch or blanket?
8. what is the number of servants in image?
9. what are the duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing)?

⁹ See sections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5. for a detailed discussion.

10. what is the gender of servants and what are their assigned duties?
11. is food and drink taken or is the depiction showing only food or only drink or neither food or drink?
12. which vessels and food dishes can be distinguished (can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes)?
13. which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished (can we attribute status or gender by certain vessels)?
14. who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant)?
15. what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments)?
16. what is the gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, hairdo, gesturing, and items held in hands)?
17. are there extras such as cats, geese, dogs or objects not discussed previously?

2.3.4. Grouping of the criteria

To have a comprehensive and compact discussion of the seventeen criteria, they are summarized into five contextually related groups. These are as follows:

Layout and seating arrangements at banquet, which includes the following criteria:

- is the scene a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?
- who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/sitting person?
- in which direction do the banqueters recline (left to right or right to left when looking at the image)?
- are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?
- what furniture is shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters?
- how many couches are shown?
- how many people per couch or blanket?

Servants and their place at an Etruscan banquet:

- what is the number of servants in image?

- what are the duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing)?
- what is the gender of servants and what are their assigned duties?

Food and drink at banquet:

- is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?
- food: which vessels and food dishes can be distinguished (can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes)?
- drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished (can we attribute status or gender by certain vessels)?

Social composition in regard to who is depicted at banquet, including age, rank, gender (including numerical ratio male to female participants), family relationships:

- who addresses whom on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant)?
- banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments)?
- what is the gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, hairdo, gesturing, and items held in hands)?

Tangible extras:

- extras, such as cats, geese, dogs or objects not previously discussed

Each of the five contextually related supra-groups is utilized to discuss the revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts (cat. No. 1 to 9), the small finds (cat. No 11 to 25), the Tarquinian tomb paintings (cat. No 26 to 65), the wall paintings from the necropoleis at Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano (cat. No 66 to 75), and the sculptural banquet scenes from funerary monuments (cat. No 76 to 98). This approach allows a detailed examination, comparison and discussion of all the banquet scenes that is presented in the main body of this thesis, in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.5.5.

2.4 General issues when describing and examining the banquet scenes

2.4.1. The use of paint to colour the banquet scenes

The colouration/paint is only considered in tomb paintings. With the tomb paintings, the colours are sufficiently recognizable to make deductions from them, for example the use of different colour to distinguish the gender of the banqueters and servants. However, since many of the ninety-eight *convivia* have little or no traces of paint, the colouration is only mentioned when describing skin-tones, hair colours, clothing and furniture, where applicable. In other media, for example on the terracotta revetment plaques, the paint is too fragmentary to gain any useful information as to its use concerning the social importance of banqueting. With other media, such as bronze mirrors, no paint was applied in the first place. Colouration was of no significance with these images. Therefore, the colouration with paint is only referred to when describing images which allow for such additional examination.

Colouration is not listed as a separate point of analysis in addition to the seventeen criteria chosen because not all scenes have sufficient, or any, paint applied to support the usefulness of such an analysis.

2.4.2. The size of the representations

The actual size of each of the images is not considered. The size is dependent on the physical context of the where the scene was to be displayed. Revetment plaques decorating buildings and tomb paintings prominently displaying the historiographical concerns of the commissioning people are relatively large in comparison to handheld mirrors or a cylinder stamp on a *dolio* or vase. Small-scale revetment plaques, most likely attached to the upper parts of the buildings, would have been unsuitable because it would have been impossible for the onlooker to view the plaques properly and in sufficient detail. However, whether comparatively large or small, the images do not excel or lack in detail. For example the painting of the banquet scene from the Tomb of the Lionesses/Tarquinius (cat. No. 28) has relatively little detail in furnishings, clothing or variation in posture of the banqueters, while the scene from the Bronze Mirror cat. No. 24 shows two banqueters, a servant and a dog, in a variety of poses, clothing, and interactions with each other. The four banqueters from the

Tomb of the Lionesses/Tarquinius stretch over c. 8 metres of wall, while the scene on the mirror takes the best part of 15 centimetres in diameter.

2.4.3. Food and drink

Both food and drink will be looked at, sometimes together to further a particular argument, sometimes separately according to context and archaeological evidence available.

Food and drink both have symbolic meanings. They have the quality of structuring our everyday lives, they symbolize certain one-off and life cycle events, and they are used to create mnemonic traditions. Food and drink and the differentiated access to either is used privately as well as publicly to build, to manipulate and to deconstruct social structures and relationships. Food and drink are usually present when status and power are negotiated and when the social order is transformed. Conversely but not contradictory is the fact that food and drink shared is a most fundamental form of gift exchange and binds the people who share together. With the help of food and drink, identities are forged. Identities within families and the community are symbolized by what kinds of foods and drink are taken, regarding age, gender and status. These identities can be dynamic according to what group the person is currently sharing the food and drink.

It is also significant whether groups are bound by the sharing of drink only, or whether food is offered, too, as this signals different levels of intimacy and vertical versus horizontal socio-political relationship.¹⁰ Drinking habits can also be a very useful marker of a culturally based gender identity, as will be discussed in subsections 5.4.1 to 5.4.5. We will see that some ancient writers refer to the Etruscan's social habit of allowing women to drink wine as they saw fit for themselves. Apparently, Etruscan women were not bound to supervision by their male companions regarding the quality and quantity of alcoholic beverages. A number of Etruscologists adapted this statement, without taking into consideration the prevailing picture the Etruscans present of themselves. The iconographical analysis of Etruscan banquet scenes tells a very different story. This will be presented in detail in subsections 5.4.1 to 5.4.5. The apparent ostentatious drinking habits, and resulting 'emancipated' behaviour, of

¹⁰ See discussion in subsections 5.3.1 to 5.3.5.

Etruscan females have often been used as maker for Etruscan social and cultural identity. The current study will show that this social peculiarity may not have existed in as dominant a form as has previously been suggested.

However, in regards to the consumption of alcoholic beverages the psychosomatic effects of intoxication was known to the Etruscans and the experience has been iconographically eternalized in a most life-like way.¹¹

Communal drinking is often more present in the archaeological record because vessels for drinking are often of better quality than most food vessels, including preparation and service vessels. Drinking vessels are usually made for and used by the elite who could afford the luxury of drinking alcoholic beverages, and wine in particular in Etruscan context. Therefore, drinking parties can often be more easily discerned in an archaeological context. Fine ware (and often decorated) *hydriai*, *kraters* and *oinochoai* were preparation and serving vessels, and *kylixes*, *kantharoi* and *kyathoi* were drinking vessels with specific functions related to the serving and drinking of wine, and therefore they can be classified fairly easily as to their use context.

The acquisition of the knowledge of wine and the associated etiquette is an important element in the development of socio-political complexity. To acquire wine and to be accustomed to its proper consumption sets the possessor of this commodity and knowledge apart from his neighbours and underlings (Dietler, 1990). A further reason that communal drinking is often more visible in the archaeological record may also be due to a traditional focus of Etruscan archaeology on funerary contexts rather than on dwellings of the non-elite inhabitants of Etruscan settlements.

Food vessels are often of a more coarse material than drinking vessels used at banquets, and they are more multifunctional. They may have been used for storing, also for serving food, and perhaps for keeping food warm. They will have been in more constant use due to their multi-functionality. When these vessels broke, they might have been discarded in no particular pit. Drinking vessels might have been used on certain occasions only and when they broke, they might have been discarded in the pit closest to the convivial event's location, like the political meeting hall of

¹¹ See cat. No. 27 for the analysis and illustrations of drunken banqueters from The Tomb of the Mouse/Tarquinius.

the community in question. Therefore, such vessels accumulated in one particular place and are more easily discernable in the archaeological contexts as compared to the daily chores of cooking and eating for the majority of the population which discarded their vessels in various locations and more regularly because these were in constant use.

Placing the two concepts of convivial food and drink occasions next to each other and in combination with each other allows interpretation of the archaeological, the iconographical and the textual record, with the help of social studies and anthropology to interpret how feasts and dinners were used by the Etruscans to forge political and private relations and alliances, how these relations were symbolized through eating and drinking together at convivial events, and how food sharing events were utilized to create and maintain social order.

Despite the criteria No. 11 to 13 dealing with food and drink, the more practical aspects how food and drink raw materials were grown and harvested, prepared, manufactured and distributed in Etruria in rural and urban communities are not dealt with in this thesis. Nutritional and health-related aspects of the ancient diet are also of not of primary interest in this research. Zooarchaeological, archaeobotanical, dental and skeletal research is not presented and discussed. These questions and analyses have been addressed by other researchers and authors.¹² The intention here is to explore the symbolic importance of sharing a meal in socio-hierarchical, in cultural, and in gender related context in Etruria. Particular food and drink will be presented when these further the arguments, so for example the gendered use of wine. It is of no concern as to when vineyards appeared in Etruria or how wine was produced.

¹² See for example Capasso (1985), Bartoli, Mallegni and Vitiello (1989-90), Corruccini and Pacciani (1991), Becker (1993), Capasso, Caramiello and Di Tota (1993), Tafuri, Robb, Mastroberto, Salvadei and Manzi (2001-2003), Onisto (2002), Swaddling and Prag (eds.) (2002) for dental and skeletal research. Zooarchaeological research was done by Barker (1976), Gejvall (1982), Corridi (1987-88), Gillian (1987-88), Ciampoltrini, Rendini and Wilkins (1989-90), Bedini (1997). Archaeobotanical research was done by Jarman (1976), Cristofani (1979), Hjelmqvist (1989), Attolini and Perkins (1992), Hostetter, Beck and Stewart (1994), Rottoli (1997, 2001), Marchesini and Marvelli (2002), Wilkins, Harvey and Dobson (eds.) (2003).

2.4.4. Arrangement of furniture

The table associated with the diners is usually described as being 'lower' than the banqueting couch. This might not necessarily be the truth. The table might have been the same height as the couch. It may be an artistic solution to create depth and to display the banqueting couch and the associated table in the same artistic plane. In the catalogue and in sections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5., tables in front of couches are described as 'lower' to adhere to the actual representation in the images. It may be a compositional solution by the artist to create the illusion of one object being in front of the other. Some tables were set in front of the banqueters as can clearly be seen in the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65), where the legs of the lady banqueters are partly obliterated by the tables in front of her.

2.4.5. Domestic-residential and funerary contexts combined

When reconstructing the past, we have literary and archaeological material remains. We largely depend on the material remains in case of the Etruscans in order to demonstrate local concerns. However, since a social practice is looked at which due to its nature does not leave any material evidence as such, these questions cannot be answered by purely looking at the evidence we find at Etruscan sites. We do not know for certain how to read and interpret the material evidence left by communal dining itself, as this social practice does not leave hard and undisputable material facts. The aim of eating in company is communication and discussion. The hierarchical structuring and re-structuring which results from these events needs to be deduced and interpreted from the mute hard evidence.

The study includes many comparisons of scenes from domestic-residential contexts with scenes from funerary contexts indiscriminately. With this cross-context comparison, it is possible to draw connections, correlations, similarities and differences spanning the whole range of environments where banquet scenes were used to honour an event, public or private, by and of Etruscan society.¹³ The cross-context and cross-site comparison and analysis is an attempt to find unifying and diversifying aspects of Etruscan society regarding the socio-cultural make-up. It is an

¹³ See section 3.1 for a discussion within modern context, especially Bourdieu's 'socially informed body'

attempt not to look at the Etruscan civilisation as a cultural and political conglomerate of separate cities and regions within the geographical entity of Etruria which are supposed to have existed in relative independence, as done in many studies before (Pallottino, 1975; Barker and Rasmussen, 2005; Haynes, 2000; Stoddart 2009). It is much rather an outlook on the Etruscan civilization as a whole, analysed through their banqueting habits.

However, it has to be stressed that in most banquet iconography, the most informative source evidence of how the Etruscans conducted a banquet, comes from funerary contexts (Berkin, 2003: 120-121). Tomb paintings are not meant to be public advertisements of social hierarchies, but private ideas and ideologies viewed by a select few belonging to the core of the family whose tomb is decorated. Then again, there is an overwhelming consistency in general elements and also in detailed elements in the representations of funerary banquets in comparison to scenes from public buildings, such as the revetment plaques from Murlo or Velletri. There is a uniformity of orientation, of assigned seating arrangements, of dress and general demeanour. Admittedly, there are differences in certain components as for example females holding drinking vessels in public representations but not in representations from funerary context.

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that funerary iconography was thought up, designed, and executed as paintings inside tombs by people who were alive. The master of the tomb chose what and how to decorated his/her/their final resting place while still alive. Therefore, the ideas and ideals of the living were projected by these banquet scenes, not realities in the afterlife, even if these scenes are located in tombs. Even with scenes from the later Etruscan period that have visitors from the underworld participating at the banquet, for example in the Golini I Tomb/Orvieto (cat. No. 72) it can be assured that none of the people actively involved in the design and execution of the painted banquet scene had actually participated at a banquet in the netherworld. Basic ideas, like the direction of reclining, females to the left of their couch partners, etc. originate in Etruscan society, as was customary when dining in the world of the living.

The scenes may contain a 'mythical-ritual' element when in funerary context, and may project a visionary status of those depicted rather than describing an

everyday subsistence strategy (D'Agostino, 1989: 2; Perkins, 1999: 101). However, tombs are social constructs built by the living and represent both a material space and a symbolic space at the same time and therefore reflect social reality, and the self-representation of the wealthy who commissioned the scenes, as well as their ideology (Scheffer, 1986: 110; Rathje, 2004: 216-17).

Funerary imagery contains descriptions of the society that produced it. Social occasions designed for the funerary context are images showing emblematic situations in the life of the man and/or woman commissioned the tomb and is therefore characteristic of his/her status, position and influence in society (D'Agostino, 1989: 1-2). For example, conviviality was the theme most often chosen to decorate the tomb walls in Tarquinia. On the Archaic Building at Murlo, this theme was included in the four most propagated and emblematic themes chosen by the elite to represent themselves and their ideology. It may also be deduced that since the tombs of the wealthy were decorated in vivid and colourful images, that this might have been a fashion that decorated their homes, too. The expression of an ideology in the medium of the funerary sphere does not exclude its expression in the world of the living.

Archaeology also confirms a congruency of funerary and domestic-residential evidence when looking at finds related to banqueting. Berkin (2003) and Rathje (1983, 1988: 83) both examined banqueting services found in domestic-residential contexts. Both scholars concluded that the majority of banqueting crockery is also found in funerary contexts as pottery assemblages. Such banquet equipment is also shown in banquet iconography.

The analysis of the banquet scenes will therefore compare, most of the time, indiscriminately between the representations from funerary and domestic-residential contexts. This approach is a way of looking objectively at what is shown in the image, not what political or religious intentions may have been expressed. We will never know these for certain. What we can know for certain is who was chosen to be depicted (gender, age, social status), what kind of event the patron wanted to eternalize (intimate family gathering, or drunken revel), which items were seen as essential to be included in the representations (drinks and food vessels, couches, cushions), and what location was wished for (indoors or picnic-style setting).

Therefore, the criteria chosen to analyse each scene individually, and then to compare them with each other, are all criteria based on what is visible, of what is physically included in the picture. In this way, there is little room for guesswork and interpretations not based on fact. The elements included in the scenes are visualized and are therefore readable facts. Such readable facts are especially useful when attempting to learn about a people like the Etruscans. By reading their images as closely as possible in what was actually depicted, we may be able to fill out gaps in knowledge due to the fragmentary literary sources left to us by the Etruscans.

PART TWO:

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNAL DINING

3. From Structuralism to sacrificial use of food

3.1. Theoretical perspectives

3.1.1. Symbolism of food and food sharing as discussed in Structuralist and Post-structuralist research

Food and the sharing of it, as will be discussed in this section, is “good to taste” and “good to think”. Why is it the case? Is it because it stimulates all our senses? We can certainly taste and smell food, especially in its cooked state. We can see what we eat, and we can touch it. We can hear it when it sizzles on the cooker or barbecue grill, and we can hear and feel it in our mouths when chewing. Food awakens an awareness in all our senses. However, it is also part of basic human need, as much as the air we breathe, sex and shelter (Wöhe and Döring, 2002: 345-348). Indeed, the physical intake of nutrition to convert it into energy is its biological component. Nevertheless, in today’s societies, food and drink, and the sharing of such, is much more than just one of life’s biological necessities. It symbolizes society itself.

Institutional powers such as political regimes or religions, and institutions such as hospitals, schools and work places encode each of their hierarchical structure within an environment of who eats which kind of food with whom, and where.

“Working breakfasts” between Heads of States stand for a relationship where congruency of opinions is aimed for, since a shared breakfast can be read as a metaphor for a higher than average degree of intimacy of the participants. Hospitals provide different sets of meals according to the category of illness a patient belongs to, and hospitals distinguish employees’ food provided in the canteen from the food provided for patients. Food as a code conveys a moral message (Bell and Valentine, 1997: 6). Different levels of social class, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and boundary transgressions (Douglas, 1975: 249) are expressed in each society’s code of practice regarding the admittance or refusal of admittance to one’s table. It is also a fact of food that the ethnic origin of a family can be deduced by looking into its kitchen (Farb and Armelagos, 1980: 6).

Structuralist approaches to the commensality of food:

The commensality of food sharing is an important signifier of community, and anthropologists have emphasized this role in family- and political kinship and its reciprocal ties in a variety of cultural settings (Bell and Valentine, 1997: 6).

The structuralist Claude Levi-Strauss (1970) is one of the first post-war anthropologists who conducted research into the importance of food as a metaphor, as a language to represent patterns of social relations in indigenous populations, focusing on the Bororo Indians of Brazil. He coined the dictum that some foods are “good to think” while others are “bad to think”.

He looked at the structure of thinking about food to deduce the structure of human thought itself. Levi-Strauss investigated the vertical, the deep axis of structure rather than the horizontal structure to find a congruency between the human mind and a society’s hierarchy. The culinary triangle that resulted from his research is based on the readings of local mythologies, where food is divided into the Raw that is set opposite the Cooked, and both are opposed by the Rotten (see appendix 3.1.a for diagram). The Raw is transformed either into the Cooked, which is a conscious and therefore culture-driven act, or it can turn into the Rotten, which is a natural occurrence. These binary oppositions of raw-cooked, raw/fresh-decayed, and moist/raw-cooked/burnt can be used as conceptual tools with which to express abstract ideas and combine them into a culturally understood language. It

symbolizes the contrast between raw and cooked as nature versus civilization.

Examples include the customs of the some Indonesian tribes and Pueblo Indians, where females gave birth over a small heap of hot sand, which is intended to turn the baby into a “cooked” person, a socialized and civilized human being (Levi-Strauss, 1970: 1, 335-6). When cooking actual food stuffs from raw to edible the texture, flavour and/or digestibility are changed. People construct and engage in a moral process transferring raw matter from nature to culture and therewith making it part of society. Food is civilized by cooking (Lupton, 1996: 2).

Harris (1985: 15) emulated the above ideas and extends Levi-Strauss’ “good/bad to think” foods to the fact that whether foods are good or bad to eat depends on whether it must nourish the collective stomach before it can feed the collective mind. A collective stomach is based on a preference for particular foods or a collective taste.

This notion is discussed by the Marxist influenced anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1986). His social class based analysis of taste related to food states that each social class has its own ideas about the body and of the effects of food on the body with respect to strength, health and beauty. Food acts as a marker of social position, and social change is largely blocked by the forces of capitalism that assign economic and symbolic capital to each individual. Some ideal might be important for one class while others are ignored or rated differently by another. Eating habits also depend on a person’s or society unit’s life cycle, and on the division between the sexes. Bourdieu sees the true basis of differences in food consumption in the opposition between the tastes of luxury or freedom and the tastes of necessity. The tastes of necessity are expressed by the need of which they are the product, the taste of the most economical and filling foods. The tastes of luxury are the product of material conditions of existence that are defined by the distance from necessity (Bourdieu, 1986: 177-192). This class-based categorisation of food, therefore, is encoded into differing social events. Bourdieu’s necessity is our basic human need to fill our stomachs to survive physically. Luxury and freedom are expressed in various modes of conspicuous consumption.

Douglas (1975) adapts this structuralist approach from social class to micro scale social system. She puts forward boundaries between those with whom we

share drinks and food, and distinguishes between those with whom we share different kinds of meals. Drinks, according to Douglas, are for strangers, workers, acquaintances and family. Drinks are fluid and symbolise a lack of structuring the people involved in such a social event. Hot meals, in contrast, are for family, close friends and privileged guests. Here, solid foods are shared, giving a solid structure to the group. Drinks versus hot meals mirrors distance versus intimacy. The people we share food with we also know at drinks occasions. A meal expresses close friendship (Douglas, 1975: 256, 258). It expresses companionship, the literal sharing of bread (Farb and Armelagos, 1980: 4) according to the Latin etymological roots for together<->*com* and bread<->*panis* (Falk, 1994: 15).

An example of how important this stage of having a meal with someone is can be seen in the fact that a date for a “new” couple is rated as a big step towards intimacy when going out for the first meal together. It is an even more serious step when we are being invited by the new “in-laws” for a family dinner for the first time. Social occasions that represent a point where decisions are made whether to progress certain people into the category of companions are for example cocktail and buffet parties, and barbecues. Intimacy and distance can both be kept in a state of limbo and no open affront against anybody needs to be displayed. People we like will be at our hot meals in the future, people we do not want to share this intimacy with will simply not be invited to such events. Family bonds are strengthened by eating together. To be allowed to sit and eat with a family at table amounts almost to being accepted into the family itself (Canetti, 2000: 221).

Douglas (2003: 44) also analyses meals in an ordered scale of importance and grandeur regarding festivities in the calendar year and life cycle of nature and humans. Food is a symbol for differentiating values, and the more numerous the differentiating ranks, the more varieties and courses of food will be.

We also invest repetitive analogies into the different meals. These analogies give meals additional meaning and at the same time intensify such meanings. A meal only stays within a certain category of meals (for example the turkey “meaning” Christmas) only as far as it continues to carry the structure that allows the part (the turkey) to recall the whole (Christmas). This system of continuous repetition of analogies enables us to recognise and evaluate the social event of a meal

as a symbol for social reproduction (Douglas, 1975: 257-260). This is also a way of enculturation for the younger generation of a community as a whole or within a family unit to learn and accept the traditions of their cultural environment (Farb and Armelagos, 1980: 14).

Food, therefore, becomes a code and the message it encodes is to be found in the pattern of social relations between the individuals and groups concerned. Food is symbolic of social relationships. There is a connection between a given social structure and the structure of symbols by which it is expressed (Douglas, 1971: 61, 66).

Post-Structuralist approaches to the commensality of food:

Critique was voiced regarding the Structuralist theory by Post-structuralists who aim to enhance the binary conception of the Structuralists' approach. Structuralism showed a preoccupation with codes and deep structures that were shown as static and unchanging. Also taste was shown as static because of being culturally shaped and socially controlled. Structuralism was allowing little or no concern for how food preferences, taste and personal circumstances and social relations change and develop in society over time (Minnelli, 1985: 6-7, 13). Levi-Strauss's nature – culture theory, Bourdieu's necessity – luxury oppositions, and Douglas's in-/exclusion to a group based on the sharing of a meal were developed further.

Mennell (1985: 15-17, 302) offered a developmental approach to understand the origins, the formation and processes of change over time. He looks at the history of cooking and eating in a figural and 'sociogenic' way. Cultural tastes and needs are the outcome of individuals and groups' social experience within their tribe, community and social class over time. This interaction creates co-operation and conflict. Therefore, social patterns are not static but develop continuously. With these, behaviour, tastes, ideas and ideals, social stratification, political alliances and economies change over time. Mennell attempts to offer a 'sociogenic' explanation of how these configurations change from one type to another, why some change more rapidly and are more pronounced than others. He also aims to work out the resulting consequences for individuals' lives.

Tastes in food are also socially shaped. A negative aspect of how taste is

socially shaped is the fear of social derogation or exclusion that may result from a person being known to eat certain foods or not eat others.

Food is an integral part of the social and cultural context in which it is produced and consumed. Food needs to be grown, harvested/slaughtered, transported, stored, prepared, (often) cooked, and eaten with your social peers. At the conclusion of a meal, there is the clearing up of the equipment used in these various processes. Food, therefore, is material and economic culture as it creates socio-cultural networks and the negotiations of power enacted therein (Milner and Miracle, 2002: 1; Miracle, 2002: 65).

Overall, in any society, deviations from the known and deviations in repeated analogies of a meal can be the result of gradual or rapid change of elements in the social behaviour of an individual or a group. It could also be the result of the introduction of ingredients and culinary techniques from outside the community (Goody, 1982: 35-36). However, when looking at the broader picture over time, it can be pointed out that each society has evolved its own system relating to the produce and techniques available, altering its ways sometimes to suit circumstances, but carefully maintaining its customised order to support its ideals and style, and to hold fast to its identity (Visser, 1986, 1993: Introduction X).

3.1.2. The systems of socio-cultural rules for communal meals and feasts

All these structures, tastes, and in- and exclusion to a communal table are 'loaded', like the table itself, with a system of rules. The place and time for a communal meal is prescribed, sometimes "appropriate" clothing is asked for to support the occasion, food related equipment is carefully chosen and, finally yet importantly, the (predictable) kind of food and its sequence of service are being offered. Predictable in the sense that, for example, in the Western World, soup or some produce of the sea usually constitutes the starter sequence, followed by meat, and concluded by a sweet and/or savoury dessert. Therefore, it was, for example, at the Culinary Olympics where a team of national chefs prepare and present a three-course Olympic to judges and interested visitors.¹⁴ The chefs do not have to base their food on what is

¹⁴ The information regarding the Culinary Olympics has been gathered by the author of this thesis. The event is held every four years and is the most important competition for chefs worldwide. The

naturally available in each country, nor is the choice of food to be based on what is presumed to be eaten in each particular nation. The choice of ingredients is up to the different teams. Nevertheless, it is a fact that ingredients are usually chosen which “reflect” each nation’s point of recognition viewed from within and from the outside world. The consumption of food that is a biological necessity is turned into a cultured expression of the society in which it is enacted. Eating is used as a medium for social relationships and their presentation to the people within and outside the group. The satisfaction of the most basic of human needs becomes a means of creating community (Visser, 1993: Introduction IX).

To take the analysis of the system of rules that make a meal a symbol of a certain event for a particular group of people one step further, we can categorise such a social practice as a “feast”. A feast can be defined as a “splendid meal with many good things to eat and drink” which may be connected with a “religious anniversary or festival” (Hornby, 1983: 313).

Feasts can provide an insight into the understanding of culture and social life in both present and past communities. Feasts have a peculiar power in articulating social relations and actions (Dietler and Hayden, 2001: 1, 3) and have them fused with the structure of the community. They are built into the existing body of family- and political solidarity, cooperation and hierarchy.

Hayden (2001: 35-36) elaborates the definition of feasts and distinguishes these by symbolical context, inferred function regarding the types of practical benefits, the size and type of social unit participating (core or peripheral individuals), the goals of creating social bonds versus the achievement of more immediate, limited objectives and the use of prestige materials. Also important are the horizontal versus the vertical social relationships between host and guest, the kind of reciprocity involved and the resulting degree of obligation. Feasts can be a combination of any of the above features.¹⁵ All these features are based on social agreements. The people involved will not accept a refusal to conform (Visser, 1993: Introduction XII). Individuals attending a meal must ensure they act in the ways expected of them.

author has been an active member of the Federation of Chefs Scotland since 1994, taking part in international culinary conferences, chefing World Cups and three Culinary Olympics.

¹⁵ See section 2. Methodology for a detailed discussion for what defines and constitutes a feast.

Each participant is judged, and in turn judges everybody else involved, as to the adherence to unwritten laws and conventions, to Levi-Strauss's social relations' language of food.

Partaking in a shared meal or a feast is therefore not about nutritional survival or even as little as pleasing the individual's taste. The perceived good taste and suitability of companions is the fusion of the community into one "mouth" of acknowledged congruent taste and kinship. Only when an individual's taste and kinship bonds grow weaker will his or her perceived and actual recognition of taste and systems of food-sharing enable the individual to recognize other communities' symbolic values. Conditioning by original cultural values will prevail, at least for some time and actions. A Westerner might learn to understand the nutritional value of eating insects and even try such a food which is a delicacy for some tribal communities, as for example the Aborigines of Australia. Nevertheless, a culturally conditioned aversion to such food might always stay within the food system of the Westerner.

On the other hand, we have modern conditions of dynamic social hierarchies, where social mobility is possible and might replace conditioned boundaries of social norm. An employee's promotion within a company might allow access to such "elite" events as directors' dinner parties. A marriage of one individual into a higher social class opens up previously uncharted food tastes and kinship alliances. Then, these individuals can or will have to "learn" to enjoy the "good" taste of a food representing this different community if the person wants to be a full member of it (Falk, 1994: 83-84). When people (of lower social class) attempt to adopt such foods without being an acknowledged member of the particular group, Tarde (1903) labelled such behaviour the "law of imitation", while Bourdieu (1986: 190-196) analysed it as the lower classes attempting to seek to emulate the mores of the elite, who constantly adopt new ways of distinguishing themselves from the rest.

3.1.3. The ritual of dinner and the sacrificial use of food

We now take the concept of feasting one step further, from Hornby's (1983: 313) definition that a feast can be a "splendid meal with many good things to eat and drink" to the "religious anniversary or festival". Rituals mark feasts, and especially

religious celebrations.

Visser (1993: Introduction IX, 20-29) defines ritual, in relation to food, as an expression of solidarity. Taking part in a ritual establishes identity. You know what is done and how it is done. Group conventions have decided the sequence, the spatial layout, and the manners of how we eat and why we eat as we do. Ritual is about lasting in time and this is why ritual occasions are continuously repeated. They express order and predict endurance. They link the presence with the past and the future. Traditional food is served, inherited from the past and intended to be experienced as an ancient custom. Value is being ascribed to certain food. It becomes meaningful and therefore a symbol of cultural history which we, the social body, are able to internally absorb by eating it, (the individual's nutrition). Rituals survive because people want them to do so, because they work for the communities.

The sacrificial use of food within ritual is an additional component of how the alimentary encoding of food in the socio-cultural context can be expressed. For Valeri (1985: 83), food in its ritualistic-sacrificial form connects the preparation and consumption of a meal with the exchange and communion with the supernatural. The rite of sacrifice is an act of symbolic exchange that de-sacralises the foodstuff into our human food. It is also a communion – a shared meal with the deities –that sacralises the partakers in the ritual. An example is the symbolic sharing of the body of Christ in the Catholic communion ritual, where the communion wafer and wine is given to the members of the congregation. Christ's body is shared and eaten to ensure the future physical/nutritional and symbolic survival of the rite.

The sacrifice of an animal symbolizes the conscious participation with the cosmic movement, from life through death to life. A dead animal is eaten in the context of sharing it with the gods and fellow diners. The group of initiates who partake in the ritual process mirrors its own life cycle by incorporating the change from life to death to (human nutritional) life into the future of the group. Sacrifices for initiation ceremonies mark the death inherent in every new start. The dead animal separates and unites one side with the other (Visser, 1993: 32).

In modern research, food has been analysed within a variety of contexts. It is a part of basic human needs. In Structuralist research, it is also a social signifier of community by converting food into a language. It was shown that within a given

community, food is a marker of social position due to socially ascribed tastes. Food served in a variety of forms, from liquid to several courses of solid hot food is also used to include/exclude individuals and groups to/from different social events and occasions, and different social levels. Nevertheless, Post-structuralist analysis has made evident the possibility of socio-cultural development into previously unavailable social strata by acquiring produce and taste which was not part of the individual's environment before. The importance of feasting for the social life of a community was presented, and how the inclusion of the supernatural into the foodways of humans influences their cultural-ritualistic outlook on society.

With regard to the necessity and symbolism of food in the ancient world, all these aspects have left traces in the archaeological record. The next section will show how similar (or different) the consumption of food was viewed in antiquity.

3.2. Historical Overview - Food in the Greek and Roman world from the 8th century BC to the first century AD, from necessity to symbolism

Section 3.1. detailed the different approaches to food consumption as discussed by Levi-Strauss, Bourdieu, Douglas, Mennel and others. Several schools of theoretical thought such as Structuralist and Post-structuralist research were presented. It was shown that the sharing of food is a social practice and a significant code that maintains nutritional survival and social relationships. Food is “where biology meets culture” (Gosden, 1999: 1) and its communal consumption produces, reproduces and signifies (in-) equalities, and it constructs and deconstructs power and hierarchy (Canetti, 2000: 219-220 and Hamilakis, 2000: 55). Food is at the heart of cultural exchanges and intersections (Wilkins and Hill, 2006, 37). At the interpretative level of archaeology, the emphasis has been largely on the subsistence rather than on the social meaning of food. Looking at pre-, and proto- historic cultures and societies is a difficult task since a whole sets of rules and behaviours need to be deciphered through their material remains (Valamoti, 2003: 97). However, the food practices which can be deduced from material remains are important to interpret the past, since food is vital to constructing culture (Gosden, 1999: 1).

This section will refer to and discuss some of the neighbours of the Etruscans in time (the Greeks and Gauls) and in space (the Romans). The period chosen for this section covers about 900 years. It corresponds with the emergence, the cultural-political blooming and the military and political defeats and consequent submergence of the Etruscan civilisation from the eighth to the third century BC. The period was expanded to the first century AD, since we have many literary references for and from the Greek and Roman world dealing with agriculture produce overall, and the importance of the social act of dining in company in their respective societies.

3.2.1. Material evidence for the upper stratum of society

Until recently, archaeology has focused on the material remains of the elite, such as the varieties (in shape and use) of pottery and cooking facilities, and animal and plant remains. They were the people who could afford large quantities and unusual types of food, including meat. These physical remains, when discarded, are more likely to leave traces in the archaeological record simply due to the large quantity and variety of types of material left behind. The elite's conspicuous consumption is also recognisable in their having had equipment made of fine pottery or metal and of high craftsmanship with which to prepare and serve food. Scenes of daily household activities, feasting and special commemorative occasions were recorded with great detail on painted dinner and wine serving equipment (Dalby and Grainer, 2003: 8). Some items were regarded as so valuable that these were either given as gifts of exchange or as parts of dowries. When the owner died, these were sometimes given as grave goods. The Vix Fürstengrab near Chatillon-sur-Seine/Burgundy, dated to 500-480 BC, is a good example of food and feasting related grave goods from an exceedingly wealthy burial (Collis, 1998: 95-98).

Up to around the last ten years, archaeological analysis focused mainly on the political- and trade network implications these prestige material items might have represented (for example Sherratt, 1999: 13-17). That these goods could have been primarily used for *convivia* and for feasting has been disregarded by archaeology and anthropology, according to Hayden (2001), as they represent the self-indulgence and the self-gratification of pleasure-loving individuals. He points out, within an archaeological context (as done by Levi-Strauss, Bourdieu and Douglas and others

regarding today's western and tribal societies), that to understand feasting is to understand an entire range of cultural processes and dynamics. Surplus had to be generated and transformed, social and political inequalities had to emerge, and prestige technologies had to be created, including specialized domesticated foods. Feasting is a social institution that brings continuous dynamics to these features. Hayden (2001: 23-24, 40) categorizes material evidence into four archaeological signatures of feasts. First, there is the food itself. In addition to the above-mentioned large quantity and evidence of waste, a feast bears items that belong to rare or labour-intensive plant or animal species. Second, the food-preparation vessels are of unusual types, of large sizes and numbers. Third, the serving vessels are of an unusual quality or material, and of unusual size and number. Fourth, the food preparation facilities show an unusual size, number and location (for example mortuary context) or construction.

3.2.2. Literary evidence for the upper stratum of society

In addition to the archaeological remains listed above, there are written records from ancient societies. The elite's food and feasting habits were recorded by philosophers, political leaders, agronomists, play-writers and poets, and medical scientists. They had a variety of objectives for why and what they recorded. In ancient literature, food projects an individual's and a group's moral and cultural values (Gowers, 1993: 4).

The literary sources used food as a marker of ethnic and cultural difference. They depict the inhabited world as culturally heterogeneous and contrast food choices and eating customs of the urban elite to which they themselves belong, with those of societies they present in their works (Garnsey, 1988, 1998, 1999: 6, 62). The Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-c. 425 BC) contrasts the Scythians with the Greeks in *Histories IV*, using diverging food practices. It is "us" versus "the others". The Greek epic poet Homer (eight century BC) presents the heroes of the *Iliad* as meat-eaters, not fish-eaters or vegetarians (for example *Iliad* 7.470-480, 8.500-5609.200-230). He stressed this nutritional fact since it is a special diet of people who can afford it for wealth and moral reasons. The heroes do not eat the diet of ordinary people.

To support this idea of only heroes eating large quantities of meat,

archaeology has shown that the Mediterranean countries from the era of the *Iliad* to the early Roman Imperial times sustained fewer domesticated animals than for example contemporary northern Europe (Jameson, 1988: 87-119). It also appears that more domesticated animals for meat production were raised in ancient Italy than in contemporary Greece, where domesticated animals were slaughtered primarily for religious occasions, not for food consumption per se (Garnsey, 1999: 86, Wilkins, 2003: 104). Detienne's (1989: 3) research has also shown that in Greece most, if not all, consumable meat came from ritually slaughtered domesticated animals. He termed this the "absolute coincidence of meat-eating and sacrifice". The Roman scholar Varro (116-27 BC; *On Agriculture* II.4.3; see also Hazel, 2002: 316-317) informs us that pig breeding is a particular Roman/Italian fashion in comparison to other Mediterranean countries of this time.

That pigs were popular farm animals and bred in higher quantities compared to other meat-producing animals can also be deduced from Etruscan evidence. In domestic-residential contexts, large quantities of pig bone were found, and the analysis of these bones shows that the animals were slaughtered at the age where the maximum meat yield was achieved. The zooarchaeological evidence can be found, for example, at Narce (Barker, 1979: 295-301), at Tarquinia (Bedini, 1997: 103-108), at Cerveteri (Clark, 1987-88: 253-258), and at Acquarossa (Lundgren and Wendt, 1987-88: 262).

Wild animals like fish and fowl were not used as sacrificial animals. These were additions to the diet for the elite and rural poor alike (Wilkins, 2003: 104). Concerning supplementing the diet with fish, the Roman orator Cicero (106-43 BC) informs us in an anecdote in *On Duties* III.58-62 that one reason why a rich property owner bought a villa overlooking the seacoast was because of the view of fishermen at sea. This may be understood as an example of how the rich perceive the life of fishermen as picturesque and romantic while not explicitly taking into account that fishing as subsistence is up to chance. However, on the other hand, a good catch or highly valued fish could be sold to the wealthy as luxury food at a high price.

Supplementing the diet with large game animals was reserved for the rich who left us literary and artistic evidence. It was the elite who wrote treatises on the

skills of hunting. The Greek writer Xenophon (c.428-354 BC) gives advice in his Treatise *On Hunting*. Pliny the Younger (Roman lawyer and statesman, AD 61-c.112) makes passing remarks about the pleasures of hunting (*The Letters* I.6 and IX.16). Hunting, as the elite's sport and for additional meat provision, is shown artistically, for example, in the tomb that is attributed to Philip II, where an ionic frieze is adorned with a painting of a hunting scene.



Figure 3.1: from Tomb 2 at Vergina: Exterior Frieze Painting of a Hunting Scene

(Source:

<http://www.utexas.edu/courses/ancientfilmCC304/lecture18/detail.php?linenum=19>)

Three horsemen and seven men on foot pursue a lion, a deer, and a boar. The discussion as to whether this is a real or hypothetical landscape with an actual or hypothetical combination of animals is of no concern here (Collins Reilly, 1993: 160). What is of importance is that all the evidence of hunting relates to big game such as boar and deer. Hare or fowl, for example, are not worth mentioning as they are also caught by the common folk.

Meat eating has been the privilege of the rich. It is the food with the highest status since raising animals for meat is comparatively uneconomical in comparison with growing crops. Domestic animals raised for meat production were an indicator of wealth (Wilkins and Hill, 2006: IX). In late Republican and Imperial Roman times, meat eating was expected as standard among the elite, who as landowners of large estates could afford to turn arable land into pastures for livestock raising (Garnsey, 1999: 123).

3.2.3. Socio-cultural aspects of communal dining in Greek and Roman society

This conspicuous consumption brings us to the sociological aspect of dining. In Greek and Roman society, as well as in today's societies, *haute cuisine* is represented by a variety of home-produced and imported foods, prepared with elaboration and professionalism and expressing novelty and luxury. Unusually sized or shaped vessels with fine decoration made of fine pottery or metal also belong to the expression of conspicuous consumption. Manufacture was costly as it involved longer times of (slave-) labour and materials more expensive than, for example, coarse-ware. Such foods and equipment, therefore, signal wealth and social status. The presentation of it to one's peers meant winning or maintaining prestige.

Petronius' (*The Satyricon* V) (Roman writer and senator, first century AD) Trimalchio, the Roman freedman who gives a luxurious dinner party is an example where conspicuous display of luxury goods and novelty food mirrors the social hierarchy in Imperial Rome. Although a satire where wealth does not equal status, it is a vivid example that fits in with the description of food in pre-industrial societies as an effective marker of economic and social distinction (Dommers Vehling, 1977: 7-8; Garnsey, 1999: 113).

As discussed in section 3.1., it is of fundamental importance as to who eats what with whom. A Pompeian graffito reads: "The man with whom I do not dine is a barbarian to me" (Diehl, 1910: 641). Cicero and Pliny the Younger (*The Letters* IX.36) inform us that daily dining among friends was an established and valued social and cultural institution in Rome. This *convivium* is described by Cicero (*Letters to his Friends* IX.24.3) as an ideal setting in which Romans can "live together". Pliny the Younger (*The Letters* I.15) writes, with mock offence, how he felt when a friend of his did not attend one of his dinner parties: "Who are you, to accept my invitation to dinner and never come? Here's your sentence and you shall pay my costs in full, no small sum either. It was all laid out, one lettuce each, three snails, two eggs, barley-cake, and wine with honey chilled with snow (you will reckon this too please, and as an expensive item, seeing that it disappears in the dish), besides olives, beetroots, gherkins, onions, and any number of similar delicacies...oysters, sow's innards, sea-urchins...It was a cruel trick done to spite one of us – yourself or most likely me, and possibly both of us, if you think what a

feast of fun, laughter and learning we were going to have...”.

With reference to the sociological codes discussed in section 3.1. and in the quotes above, food is used as a language to express inclusion and exclusion to any particular social group. Gowers (1993: 32) projects these notions onto the Roman elite. She states that dinner parties, festivals and the literature that records them depicts these communal eating occasions as supplementary. Nevertheless, they more accurately complete the overall picture of Roman culture. They are experimental forms of Roman writing, showing that the people involved are at ease, sharing confidences in an intimate setting, newly organizing politics, society or language that all challenge the accepted view of what is normally considered worthy of recording. In other words, hospitality can be seen as a barometer of civilization in modern and ancient societies, and it played an important role in ancient Roman culture. The unwritten law of hospitality regulates the relationship between strangers and friends alike (Bolchazy, 1977: 1).

That our civilization is encoded in shaping, regulating, constraining and dramatizing ourselves, that we echo the preferences and the principles of our culture in the way we treat our food (Visser, 1986:12) can also be seen in the Greco-Roman world. The Roman statesman, moralist and writer Cato, (234-149 BC; Hazel, 2002: 58-59) insisted on a rather frugal life in his later years. To present this to the society he lived in he insisted that he, his family and slaves, restricted their diet largely to cabbage (Cato, *On Agriculture*). The meaning of “cabbage” as part of the poor man’s diet is immediately obvious. The message it encodes, namely to live a life of frugality and “back to basics” is therewith passed on to Cato’s fellow Roman statesmen. Nevertheless, they opposed Cato’s moral and political statement as to how to live the life of a good Roman citizen. They saw conspicuous consumption as *their* way to create the social and economic distance between them and the mass of the population that was needed to display the vertical distinction between rich and poor (Garnsey, 1999: 6).

When looking at the Greek world, the Pythagoreans saw vegetarianism as protocol to their moral and cultural wellbeing. They believed in the immortality of the soul and its reincarnation within a different body, whether human or animal. To kill an animal equalled murder and eating the animal equalled cannibalism. They

therefore ate a strictly vegetarian diet (Speake, 1994: 537-8).

3.2.4. Material evidence for the diet of the lower stratum of society

Taking the literary evidence relating to the consumption of food and combining it with the artistic and material evidence of cooking and service equipment, we get a good insight into the socio-cultural relationships of the elite of the Greek and Roman world. The majority of people did not leave such a variety of written evidence. The role of food in moral discourse in the Greek and Roman world was of little relevance to ordinary people, and was not intended to be, since philosophical discussions were perceived as a luxury past-time of the educated (Garnsey, 1999: 10). Illiteracy and the necessity of food for subsistence (not as pleasurable luxury) created a practical and moral distance to see food as a theme for philosophical discussions, but not for the people of lower social standing. Cato's and the Pythagorean's creation and elaboration of the myth of the advantages of frugality were intended for upper class "consumption" of moral behaviour and political discussion. It is, therefore, more difficult to rediscover the daily routine and also the special occasions of communal food sharing of the urban and rural masses and the peasantry.

Nevertheless, in recent years, technologies like flotation of soil to retrieve botanical evidence from settlement floors, the analysis of residues found in food containers, and DNA and dental analysis of human skeletons all help to assemble the dietary picture of all levels of ancient society. These analyses suggest that the diet of the majority of people, especially for the urban masses, is basic and repetitive and built round the staples of cereals and dry legumes. People living in rural areas could supplement their diet with simple and cheap additions such as fruit and nuts, and fish and small wild animals found and caught in the fields and forests, and rivers and shores of lakes and the sea.

Lombardo (2003: 260) details the social qualifications regarding food as follows. The food supplying capacity of a given territory (rural and urban) in relation to the technology for land exploitation available and used by its inhabitants has to be calculated. It is also important to look at the ways in which a society living on that territory and interacting with its environment, is organizing and reproducing itself. In detail, we have to examine the social structures regulating access to the

means of production and the social modes in which these are exploited. Also to be analysed are the ways of distribution, disposal and consumption of these products. The access to and consumption of fish, for example, can help to explain the last point raised by Lombardo. Fish is a source of protein that was at least sometimes available to the poorer population in some quantity. It, nevertheless, could also divide the social levels. For a number of rich men, it was a hobby to raise the fish they were going to eat. Fishponds were part of the gardens of high society households of the Roman Republic and of Imperial Roman times. The favourite fish were fed on good food, as these were going to be consumed by the proprietor and his family. Varro (*On Agriculture* III.17.7) informs us that one particular proprietor fed his 'pet' on smaller fish while the local population of the coastline had difficulties to procure enough food for sustenance. At times, the weather was too bad for the fishermen to go to sea at all. The consequences were that the common folk had no protein intake at all, while the rich man, to avoid this prized fish dying, fed it on bought jars of expensive dried and preserved fish.

3.2.5. The staple food of cereals in the Greek and Roman world

The staple food in the Greek and Roman world was cereals. However, even for cereals there are different consumption patterns reflecting the social and economic hierarchy. Binary oppositions, as discussed in section 3.1., are again of importance. There is wheat versus barley, naked versus hulled wheat, bread versus other cereal products, and the "social" grading of different classes of bread. From the literature, we know that in Greece barley was the staple cereal, and that in Rome wheat was the staple cereal (Butterworth and Laurence, 2006: 84). Barley was more common in Greece than in Rome since it is a more drought resistant crop than wheat. It could therefore be grown in semi-arid parts such as Attica. Wheat was a prestige cereal in Greece (Garnsey, 1998: 119). In Greece, barley was also used in religious festivals to be shared out for the masses of people attending. This is described, for example, by the Greek prose writer Plutarch (c. AD 50-120) in his *Morals* 292b-c. In Rome and Italy, barley was seen as a minor crop and used as animal fodder and punishment food for Roman legions in disgrace. This is described for example in Polybius' (Greek historian of Rome, c. 200-118 BC) *The Rise of the Roman Empire* VI.38.3

and in Frontinus' (Roman politician and engineer, c. AD 34-104) *Strategies* IV.1.25, 37. Also Pliny the Elder (Latin scholar and writer, AD 23/4–79) commented on the changing use of barley in his *Natural History*: “Barley bread, which was extensively used by the ancients, has now fallen into universal disrepute, and is mostly used as a food for cattle only.”.

As the above examples show differences between two nations regarding the use of staple cereals, so can different breads reflect social divisions. In classical literature, poor man's bread was described as black, for example in Athenaeus' (Greek writer, second to third century AD) *Deipnosophists* 60 b-c. The whiter a bread was the more of a luxury food it represented. Extra labour time and money on milling and sieving had to be spent to produce white bread (Garnsey, 1999, 121-122).

3.2.6. Sacrificial use of food in the Greek and Roman world and its social implications

Subsection 3.1.3. discussed how the sacrificial use of food within ritual is an additional component of how the alimentary encoding of food in the socio-cultural context can be expressed. Goody (1982: 11) describes sacrifice as the offering that feeds the living, the dead and the divine. Depending on who of the living feeds whom of the deceased mirrors the domestic relationship that existed among the still living and the ones that had died. Heirs especially had the obligation to make offerings to those from whom they had received their inheritance. Within the wider community, when looking at the consumption of food in a ritual setting, this is often combined with exchanges taking place. When thanking a god or goddess for a favour, a gift of wine or food might have been offered. Friends met and ate together, honoured citizens or important visiting strangers were feasted at the cities' expense. When such a meal was taken, shared amongst friends and strangers alike, the communities' gods were invited to partake in the meal, thereby confirming and strengthening the bonds within the group and also with its divine protector. Non-adherence to the (unwritten) rules of such a shared meal could result, in antiquity as much as today, in exclusion from the ritual of sharing this meal (Wilkins, 2003: 174-175).

The early anthropologist Robertson Smith (1889: 247-248) summarised the social importance of the sacrificial meal in the following words: “*The ethical significance which thus appertains to the sacrificial meal, viewed as a social act, received particular emphasis from certain ancient customs and ideas connected with eating and drinking. According to antique ideas, those who eat and drink together are by this very act tied to one another by a bond of friendship and mutual obligation. Hence when we find that in ancient religions all the ordinary functions of worship are summed up in the sacrificial meal, and that the ordinary intercourse between gods and men has no other form, we are to remember that the act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all those who share the meal are brethren, and that all the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act. By admitting man to his table the god admits his friendship; but this favour is extended to no man in his mere private capacity; he is received as one of a community, to eat and drink along with his fellows, and in the same measure as the act of worship cements the bond between him and his god, it cements also the bond between him and his brethren in the common faith.*”.

However, not all food was seen as suitable for sacred consumption, if not in sacrificial, than at least in ritual context. The most prominent exception is that fish was never included in the sacrificial use of animals, unlike cattle, sheep and pig. The Suovetaurilian sacrificial scene is an example that depicts a state sacrifice at the census, which was the basis for military mustering of Roman male citizens. The *suovetaurilia* or *suovitaurilia* was one of the most sacred and traditional rites of Roman religion. The sacrifice of a pig (*sus*), a ram (*ovis*) and a bull (*taurus*) to the deity Mars was performed at certain state ceremonies, including agricultural festivals, the conclusion of a census, and to atone for any accidental ritual errors. Mars was to bless and purify the land.



Figure 3.2: Suovetaurilia. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suovetaurilia>)

It dates to the reign of Emperor Claudius (AD 41-54). The ritual required cattle, pig and sheep being taken to an altar to be sacrificed. No fish are present. The reason behind this exception of fish might be that the animal to be sacrificed had to bleed. Another reason could be that domestic animals were favoured over wild animals in which the fish was included. Fish could be caught any time by chance, and big game was hunted as a sport exclusively for the upper classes of society. Domestic animals had to be reared over long periods of time. Outstanding specimens received special attention in breeding and keeping them fit for sacrifice. Fish appeared to be an animal that could be consumed within the private, secular sphere (Davidson, 1997: 12-13). It is an interesting fact that Homer's heroes in the *Iliad* (*Iliad* 7.470-480, 8.500-5609.200-230) do not consume fish at their banquets. Fish is not a food for gods and heroes alike.

An interesting observation made by Detienne (Detienne and Vernant, 1989: 2) brings us back “full circle” to Levi-Strauss culinary triangle, and this time the example is securely based in the mythology of the first millennium BC. In the *Homeric Hymns 1-7* (Evelyn-White, 1914) the child Dionysus is slaughtered by the Titans, who were sent by his jealous stepmother Hera. They rip him apart and before eating him, they boil him. The myth emphasizes that meat has to be boiled before it can be ritually eaten. Raw meat is not to be consumed. Again, as stressed by Levi-Strauss, any meat we consume has to be acculturated by transforming it from its natural state of being raw. The action of cooking meat turns it into the altered and cultured state of being boiled and fit for human consumption. It has been made suitable to be received by society. Plutarch, in his *Morals* 290a asks the following question regarding a certain Roman custom, and also gives the answer:” Why is this priest also forbidden to touch raw flesh? Is this custom intended to deter people completely from eating raw meat, or do they scrupulously repudiate flesh for the same reason as flour? For neither is it a living creature nor has it yet become a cooked food. Now boiling or roasting, being a sort of alteration and mutilation eliminates the previous form; but fresh raw meat does not have a clean and unsullied appearance, but one that is repulsive, like a fresh wound.”¹⁶ Here we have Levi-

¹⁶ For the full quotation of above text in reference for the repudiation of raw meat and flour see

Strauss' analysis in ancient context, and Plutarch's analysis in the theorem of Levi-Strauss' and Bourdieu's Structuralist context. The general aversion and taboos in Western society regarding the adoption of raw meat into our diet appears not to have changed over millennia.

*We do not invite each other simply to eat and drink,
but to eat and drink together*
Plutarch *Symposiacs Question X Plutarch Hagias*

PART THREE:

ETRUSCAN BANQUET ICONOGRAPHY

4. The value of banquet representations for the purpose of gaining knowledge of Etruscan Society

4.1. The importance of research into conviviality in Etruscan-specific contexts

All cultures eat and drink in community in order to build and support socio-cultural and political structures. The various forms of conviviality therefore reflect and reinforce the social and political system in many complex ways (Murray, 1990: 5). The banquet was the most conspicuous expression of aristocratic lifestyle that can be distinguished from the archaeological record overall. Banquets create acquisitions of honour and at the same time a network of obligations (Rathje, 1990: 279-280). The banqueting ideology as presented in Etruscan art and material evidence reflects a system of guest-friendship and an exhibition of social status by making use of objects that are clearly status symbols.¹⁷ This interpretation of Etruscan iconography can be

appendix 3.2.a

¹⁷ Guest-friendship is a concept of hospitality that goes beyond the sharing of food and drink. It embraces respect, courtesy and generosity from the host to the guest and vice versa. It can also be described as ritualized friendship because of the rituals of hospitality that express a reciprocal relationship between guest and host (see section 3.1. Theoretical Perspectives). This concept was also discussed by, for example, Feeley-Harnik 1994, Dietler and Hayden 1996 and 2001, Henisch 1999, Bray 2003, Gero 2003, and Pollock 2003.

supported when looking at the similarities of architectural plaque depiction of banquets found for example in Murlo (cat. No. 1), Acquarossa (cat. No. 2) and Velletri (cat. No. 8), in funerary art, and when looking at the material remains of food preparation and service equipment found in domestic-residential sites and the textual references from Classical times to the Etruscans at banquet. The custom of banqueting as shown in banquet iconography is not just a snapshot of a necessity in life, to eat to sustain physical survival. It is rather an iconographic language informing us of specific traditions and structures of the individual members of Etruscan society immortalized in the paintings, sculptures and reliefs.

This section will look at Etruscan society through dining habits as visualized in their banquet iconography. Textual and material evidence will be included when this furthers or refutes findings from the iconographical record. It is an attempt to recreate Etruscan society through their pictorial language, since we have not many Etruscan written sources informing us to how their society was made up and how it worked on a day-to-day basis. The banquet iconography was chosen because this is the topic most represented in the media of iconography overall. No comprehensive study has been conducted so far which attempts to analyse the Etruscan society through this most often chosen topic of self-representation. The aim is to attempt to understand how Etruscan society was made up, how it interacted, how it presented itself through its banquet iconography. There are certain material elements depicted over and over again when showing a convivial event. These chosen elements, their juxtapositioning and utilization by the people represented in these images allows us to get an insight into the workings of Etruscan society, a society of which little is known but through archaeological evidence. Undoubtedly there is a focus on the upper strata of society. There is more information for the elite in comparison to the lower strata of society such as farmers and tradesmen. The elite left more iconographic evidence to work with and therefore they will be discussed in much more detail. The 'elite' as understood in this thesis comprises the wealthy inhabitants of Etruria that encompasses the people of (political) influence by genealogy, but also by material wealth that may have been accumulated by trade. The Tomb of the Ship (cat. No. 51) may be an example where the apparent wealth of the tomb owners may have been acquired by trade with seafaring ships.

4.2. The reasons for choosing exclusivity for Etruscan-indigenous iconography

Because of the lack of Etruscan written sources, the alphabet adopted by the Etruscans from the Greeks, and linguistic terms taken over by the Romans, Etruria is sometimes presented as merely a bridge between two superior cultures. This results in the Etruscan material culture often being viewed and analysed from the perspective of Greek, Phoenician or Roman cultures, but not from within its own developments, processes and structures. It is often remarked that the Etruscans adapted the Greek and Phoenician high societies' peculiarities of banqueting, of specialized dining accoutrements and lying down on couches for convivial events, which was subsequently refined by the Romans (Dunbabin, 2003; Rathje, 1990, 1994, 2004, Karlsson, 1996). Such an approach to the Etruscan culture presents the Etruscans purely as an 'in between' society which was adopting foreign ideas from a more dominant people, and for these ideas to merely be taken away by another dominant people. This thesis will show that such an approach to the Etruscan society is too narrow.

This is not to deny that the Etruscans were open to foreign ideas and goods, some of which related to the acts of conviviality. When analysing models of foreign influence, the reasons for adopting certain practices, techniques and objects while denying others are not obvious. With the Etruscans, it is a rather non-disputed fact that the upper classes desired luxury goods from the Eastern Mediterranean and that they adopted the social banqueting practices from the Greeks and Near Eastern peoples. It has to be found out why especially these and not other exotic elements were important and beneficial for the wealthy and politically important strata of Etruscan society. It cannot be assumed that the foreignness or novelty was sufficient. Import of goods, practices and techniques have to have benefits beyond the ones attributed to the goods, practices and techniques the society has developed from within and to which it is accustomed. The amount of goods and practices that were adopted through foreign trades and influences had to serve the indigenous cultural and social environment of the Etruscans.

Individual and group identity is created by the manipulation of material

culture. It will be shown that the Etruscans had their very own material culture and ways of life. It can be assumed that material objects and habits were taken on from neighbours by contact through trade, marriages from outside a family regional borders, peaceful political exchanges, and hostile military actions. Neither we today, nor peoples of the past, can exist in an autarchy in space and time. However, to present a socio-cultural picture as closely focused on the Etruscan as possible, only representations produced and manufactured in Etruria are taken into account. For example, in regards to pottery, only scenes (in view of the origin of a vessel and the execution of the banquet scene) made in Etruria are included in this study. Scenes that can be found on imported vessels, especially from Greece and the Near East, are not considered. Such vessels, despite having been found in Etruria, were manufactured in countries which may have had a different socio-cultural attitude towards banqueting.¹⁸ Due to different applications of the social practice of banqueting in contemporary societies, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include banquet scenes of foreign origin. The social significance of banqueting in other ancient civilizations has been discussed elsewhere¹⁹, and some examples were presented in section 3.2.

4.2.1. Banquet scenes from funerary contexts

Most of the banquet scenes that survive today are tomb paintings. This art form begun to occur in the late Orientalising period, with a flourish in the Archaic period, especially in the decades of around 540 to 490 BC, and continued into the Hellenistic

¹⁸ See for discussions for example Romanelli (1940), Rhyta (1976), Lewis (1997), Osborne (2001).

¹⁹ For the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Europe see for example Dietler (1996), Hayden (1996), Gosden and Hather (1999), Joannes (1999), Renfrew (2005), Janik (2003), Parker Pearson (2003), Valamoti (2003), Renfrew (2005). For the Levant Hamilakis (1996, 1999, 2000), McGovern (2003), Bendall (2004), Borgna (2004, 2004), Dabney, Halstead and Thomas (2004), Day and Wilson (2004), Hamilakis and Konsolaki (2004), Steel (2004). For Greece see Garnsey (and Rome 1988, 1998, 1999), Detienne and Vernant (1989), Wright (1996, 2004), Davidson (1998), Halstead and Barrett (2004), Stocker and Davis (2004), Vardaki (2004). For Imperial Rome see Dommers Vehling (1977), D'Arms (1991), Gowers (1993), Dunbabin (2003), Faas (2003), Renfrew (2004). For the Middle Ages onwards see such as Smith (1889), Tannahill (1973), Mennell (1985), Flandrin and Montanari (1999), Fletcher (2004), Kirkby and Luckins (2007).

era. It has to be stressed that only chamber tombs were decorated, and that decorated chamber tombs are represented by a comparative small percentage of the overall chamber tombs in Etruria. In Tarquinia for example, only 2.5 percent of chamber tombs are distinguished by wall paintings, which itself is an indication of the social status of their owners. There are approximately 180 decorated tombs, with a further approximately 100 tombs with architectural and simple ornamental designs and /or inscriptions. Of these approximate 180 tombs with decorative and figurative scenes, around fifty-one tombs are decorated with a banquet scene. This amounts up to 29 percent, which equals nearly one-third of all the painted tombs. Also the motive of banqueting had a special place in Etruscan funerary art, literally, as most (if not all) banquet scenes were depicted prominently on the end walls of the tomb chambers, on the main part or in the gable, sometimes also stretching onto the side walls, for example in the Tomb of the Black Sow/Tarquinia (cat. No. 46), or in the Tomb of the Ship/Tarquinia (cat. No. 51). Regarding the positioning of the convivial scenes, D'Agostino states that as long as the banquet occupied the central end wall within the funerary chamber, it retained its function as an emblematic representation. It is the fundamental symbol of the life-style of the Etruscan aristocratic elite (D'Agostino, 1989: 6).

What makes these images interesting and open to research and discussion is the question we pose today as to the intended meaning of the banquets. Do the representations show a pleasurable real life occasion with food and drink, or an idealized picture of a sumptuous lifestyle which was used for purely decorative purposes, or are we looking at an ideal imagery of blissful afterlife? (De Marinis: 1961, Bonfante, 1994: 247; Leighton, 2004: 100 and 114-116). Within this aspect, especially tomb paintings have to be examined with care when attempting to find out social aspects of the world of the living. Funerary art has been placed in graves with the specific occasion of death, the deceased and the difference between the world of the living and the netherworld in mind. However, we can gain some insight into the structure of society when looking at funerary iconography, even with the added dimension of death in such scenes. It may be an idealized picture of a happy life full of enjoyment in the society of others. This is what the deceased enjoyed in life, and what he or she valued beyond other important aspects in their social, political and

private lives. These banquets are real activities, not just ideologies (Spivey, 1997: 108).²⁰

What is for certain is that the iconographic contents of the paintings were chosen by the family of the deceased or by the deceased themselves. The topics chosen were only to be seen by a small number of people, usually family and perhaps friends and officials associated with burials, during the funeral or at commemorations of the dead.

Some of the late Classical and Hellenistic scenes are certainly set in the afterlife, since Hades and Persephone or underworld demons join the banqueters, as, for example, in the Tomb Golini I/Orvieto (cat. No. 72) (Small, 1994: 88).

Most scenes from the Orientalising and Archaic period are full of *joie-de-vivre* and could be set in the real world with open-air banquets and entertainment, for example, as shown in the Tomb of the Olympic Games/Tarquinia (cat. No. 33) and in the Tomb of the Leopards/Tarquinia (cat. No. 42) (Spivey, 1997: 109). The choice of banquets as a dominant theme in the Orientalising and Archaic periods can be seen as a reflection of the importance of ostentatious display that banquets represented in the real life of the Etruscan aristocracy (Cristofani, 1979: 117). Nevertheless can the scenes also evoke memories of intimate family gatherings, as executed in the Tomb of the Painted Vases/Tarquinia (cat. No. 38) and in the Tomb of the Old Man/Tarquinia (cat. No. 37). Here, the children of the deceased are shown in a familial setting, or an intimate scene between a loving couple is shown respectively. The scenes of convivial events in the tombs of the seventh to the fifth century BC do recreate the appearance of actual events, even if idealized with, for example, each and every male person drinking from a cup at that very moment of artistic capture. The banquets have a certain emotional power in being like snapshots in time, catching the lively atmosphere of a party of friends and family. This is sometimes done with certain humorous aspects such as a banqueter being too drunk to be able to fight off mice from his chalice in the Tomb of the Olympic Games/Tarquinia (cat. No. 33), or the coquettish behaviour and typical teenager looks given by the elder daughter to her parents who display their conjugal affection

²⁰ See also discussions in section 5.

to each other in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing/Tarquinius.²¹ The banquet scenes go beyond the rivalries of conspicuous consumption since family members were to see the decoration themes, and not political or social competitors (Spivey, 1997: 105). These scenes depict scenes of the living (Briguet, 1986: 158-160; Bonfante, 1986: 268). Not one person is singled out sitting on a special throne-like chair, or reclining on a couch on his or her own, or showing the deceased person as for example in the Tomb of the Dead Man/Tarquinius (sixth century BC).

Figure 4.1: Prothesis scene from the Tomb of the Dead Man / Tarquinia, sixth century BC (Source: Steingraber, 2006: 101).

In these banquet scenes, people enjoy a gay, sensuous and luxurious quality of life, conversing animatedly and being entertained by musicians and dancers. People depicted are shown enjoying themselves and no individual can be specified as to be the one who is the deceased or who will be the deceased in the near future. The scenes always show the aristocratic class and their way of having a good time. This

²¹ See cat. No. 32 for an explanation regarding the family relations of the people depicted on the banquet scene in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing.

“living life to the full” message sets them apart from people who cannot afford such luxurious convivial events. Otherwise, the aristocracy might have chosen other topics for their enjoyment for eternal bliss and happiness.

Weber-Lehmann (1985: 33-36) compared tomb paintings from Tarquinia, especially those showing banquet scenes. She also concluded that the equipment depicted, for example the vases in the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38 for illustrations) very closely resemble actual finds in funerary and domestic-residential contexts. Pure fantasy shapes are not shown. Therefore, it is to be assumed that real events with real equipment are represented. This point will be further supported by examples in the following section.

The subject matter of the banquet scene is accompanied by entertainers such as musicians and dancers. The aristocratic pastimes of the hunt, athletic games, or chariot racing are also dominant topics in the iconography of Etruscan tomb painting. The juxtaposition of the banquet with the subject of the hunt, athletic games or chariot-racing are often to be found in one and the same tomb, for example in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32; banquet, hunt), in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45; banquet, athletic games, chariot racing), in the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46; banquet, hunt), and in the Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49; banquet, hunt). A banquet with the related scenes of music and dance with all participants richly dressed and the opulence of the furnishings shown juxtaposed with athletic games and hunts displays the tomb owner’s aristocratic values and political and economic power.

An example where the actual source of the economic, and perhaps political, power might have been iconographically related may be the dominant scene in the Tomb of the Ship/Tarquinia (cat. No. 51). The subject of banqueting is combined with the depiction of a ship. The scene with the ship has been interpreted with the journey of the deceased to the underworld (Colonna, 1985: 139ff). However, the type of ship, with its wide and deep hull, indicates its use as a merchant ship. Such ships have been documented on Greek vases since the Late Archaic period (Steingraber, 2006: 143-155). Therefore, the scene can be interpreted as showing the source of wealth and influence of the tomb owner coming from sea-faring trade and that the banquet is the most universally understood and over centuries conventionalized

expression of display of acquired wealth.

4.2.1.1. Burial evidence

Looking at material evidence of banqueting, Perkins made some very interesting observations when analysing the grave goods at Marsiliana d'Albegna near Grosseto from the seventh to the first half of the sixth centuries cemetery (Perkins, 1999: 80-98). The graves included both cremation and inhumation burials. Some had identical grave goods in both types of graves. However, cremation burials contained less goods overall.

There can be a possible ranking of two categories discerned when looking at the grave goods. There are items relating to the body of the deceased at the time of death, namely arms, ornaments and jewellery. There are also items relating to activities associated with the individual or the burial rite itself, namely vessels, chariots, banqueting equipment and precious metal objects. When looking at the banqueting equipment, it was laid out round the bodies with a certain ritualistic consistency. The bronze vessels were at the feet of the inhumed bodies, to the north of the vessels was laid any banqueting equipment, tripods, skewers, etc., and fire dogs which were always put to the right side of the body. All these goods enable us to create a social persona and even a social stratification when comparing the finds to the goods left in other graves. Perkins stresses that the second category is difficult to interpret. It cannot be said with certainty if the "social" goods are reflecting the activities of the person in life, or if the items are there to be used within the funerary context as representing a funeral banquet and ceremonial procession.

Perkins attempted a social reconstruction in dividing the grave goods into four categories: banqueting equipment, chariots, gold objects and silver objects. His findings confirm a strong link of goods symbolizing wealth (chariots, gold, and silver) and the inclusion of banqueting equipment in this matrix of the elite's conspicuous consumption. The findings can be summarized as follows (see also appendix 4.a for Venn diagram):

- the richest graves contained all four categories.
- of the eight burials with chariots, all but one also contained banqueting equipment.
- the sub-group of ten arm bearers (ca. 1/3 of tombs with grave goods) were all

buried with banqueting equipment, and all but three were also buried with a chariot.

- four burials with banqueting equipment also contained gold objects and all but two also contained silver objects.

That banqueting played an important role in the elites' life-style could be interpreted in an indirect way when looking at grave goods of burials without arms. Perkins again grouped the grave goods into the above four categories. Banqueting equipment was found in the graves of people who did not bear arms. Nevertheless chariots and banqueting equipment are much less common in graves without arms. Only four graves without arms contained banqueting equipment, whereas ten with arms also had banqueting equipment buried with them (see appendix 4.b for table). Therefore the rich graves can be interpreted as those of people of high social standing, symbolized by their chariots, arms, objects of precious metal and banqueting equipment.

Gender could not be differentiated due to poor bone preservation. It was also not possible to assign certain graves to the sex of the person laid to rest with the help of grave goods. It was not conclusive that arms indicate a male burial and weaving tools a female burial, as some graves contained both groups of items. That both male and females were buried with banqueting equipment seems likely since the inclusion of females in festivities becomes a distinctive feature of Etruscan society, and is clearly visible in later tomb paintings and descriptions from literary sources .

Perkins findings are consistent with the observations of the author of this thesis regarding the combination of certain themes in funerary frescoes in one tomb. The dominant motives found in combination with each other in chamber tombs are the banquet, the hunt, and chariot races.

4.2.1.2. Intoxicated banquet participants

An interesting observation regarding the setting of the banquet scenes in tombs was made by Weber-Lehmann (1985: 32-33). The observation was made in relation to drunken participants. People who fall asleep, those who stumble or swing their legs, are always shown in banquets that happen on the ground picnic-style, but never at ceremonial banquets on couches. Men and women are depicted in these scenes,

stressing the equal status of both sexes at these occasions (Richter, 1966: 93).

When the patron of a tomb did not want to miss the humorous atmosphere of drunkenness, the scenes were included in the iconography of tombs, but separated from the formal banquets by always being painted in the tympanum of the tomb's end walls. Examples include the Tomb of the Tarantola/Tarquinoa (cat. No. 31 for illustrations), and the Tomb of the Olympic Games/Tarquinoa (cat. No. 33 for illustrations). Drunken people are not shown on the terracotta frieze plaques from the buildings at Murlo, Acquarossa and Velletri. Inebriation is not a topic to be displayed on a public building. Such a physical state is only to be shown in the private realms of a family enclave. For public display, the socio-political unity at dinner was of primary concern, including the accoutrements that come with displaying the rich opulence of such an occasion

4.2.2. Banquet scenes from domestic-residential context

The painted scenes from funerary context and the scenes on the terracotta plaques from official buildings like centres of administration or seats of the ruling families at Murlo, Acquarossa or Velletri are very similar to each other. Gestures of participants and general demeanour, musical instruments used for entertainment, clothing and furnishings, food and drinks accoutrements do not differ from funerary to domestic-residential iconography. Nevertheless small, but most likely fundamental nuances can be distinguished. For example the use of certain utensils, especially drinking accoutrements in a gendered context; or the inclusion of children and the display of intimate affection between couples in funerary iconography. These socio-cultural particularities will be discussed in detail in section 5.

However, it has to be stressed that images from funerary contexts will be compared to images from domestic-residential contexts indiscriminately because for once, the terracotta frieze plaques from domestic-residential contexts show an idealized image, too. This is how the people who had the economic wealth and political power to commission the buildings and the decorations wanted to be shown within their chosen subject matters, in chosen surroundings, gestures and company. It has to be stressed that we do not have any artistic evidence showing the social event of eating and drinking in company from the world of the living apart from on the

terracotta frieze plaques (cat. No. 1 to cat. no. 9) and on the Small Finds (cat. No. 10 to cat. No. 25). We have no surviving wall paintings from the insides of houses such as, for example, from Imperial Roman Pompeii.

A short introduction as to why non-Etruscan textual evidence is included to support the analysis of Etruscan society through their iconography is given in the next subsection. Some examples, based on material evidence, will be given to strengthen the argument that banqueting was an integral part of Etruscan civilization used to build, manipulate and maintain the political and socio-cultural order.

4.3. Textual records from Greek and Roman times

Textual records from Homeric times to early Roman Imperial times will be utilized in this thesis as they can help to give a clearer picture of remains uncovered archaeologically. Textual sources can guide interpretation of material and artistic evidence by supplementing the archaeological records. The prominent role that food plays in ancient literature has not always been recognized, despite the fact that the food that people eat and the social context within which they eat it can be very expressive and provides insight into the social make-up of the society we read about. This is despite the inherent bias with which most literary sources were written to support the (primarily) aristocratic, republican, imperial or democratic leaders and to put forth these leaders' ideas of social and political behaviour.²²

When reading classical texts, food and how it is consumed becomes an ethnographical marker of social identity. Food culture in the Classical world reflects a desire to belong to the civilized world, which is to be separated from the barbarian world, as many passages in Homer and Herodotus, and other classical authors stress.²³ The privileges of living a civilized life is based on three aspects of a food

²² See E. Dench for self-definition through imagery and ideological language in Greek and Roman context. With specific relation to the Etruscans: 1995: 88, 110, 131, 141-145.

²³ Several Classical authors will be utilized in this thesis to support or refute the iconographic-archaeological evidence discussed. Authors include Athenaeus, Cato, Catullus, Columella, Livy, Plato, Pliny the Elder, Pliny the Younger, and Strabo.

model of conviviality. These comprise of the kind of food eaten, the art of how to prepare the foodstuffs, and in what social setting the dishes were consumed. The act of consuming food and drink in company is much more than satisfying a bodily urge. Through the classical writers, we learn that it is a highly charged social and communicative event. Rules as to how the food and drink is to be taken, from which vessels, whether vessels are shared or individually used, and the table talk are all to be adhered to by the guests invited. Any group partaking in a meal around a common table (in the broadest sense) is considered a unified group. The table is therefore an instrument of inclusion but also, in consequence, an instrument of exclusion and separation. However, it is not to be forgotten that a convivial event can also be used by the host as an event approached with generous condescension and social dominance; from the underlings with humility and subservience; and between peers as communality. Sub-divisions in all of them are achieved with, for example, a seating plan and the kind and quality of food that are offered to each individual guest (when different social categories partake at the meal). This serves, even if only in micro structural ways, to stress hierarchy and power relationships.

The writings of Greek and Roman chroniclers, historians, and politicians all inform us of such social use of *convivia*. These peoples were the neighbours of the Etruscans in place and time respectively. We currently have no surviving Etruscan texts relating to the social practice of dining. The Greek and Roman writers referred to Etruscan customs regarding their way of life, which included culinary points of reference. The texts hold important information for historians and archaeologists alike, despite the biases with which every ancient author consciously or unconsciously sets out when writing down his or her 'true' story of their political, socio-cultural and culinary environment. These accounts of the Etruscans' way of life will be considered critically as they are agendas of the Greek and Roman writers' own time, cultural and social associations, and political background. For example Athens and other cities in Greece had embraced democracy as their political constitution, while Rome chose to be a Republic, and the Etruscans opted for a theocratic kingship for their city-states (Camporeale, 2003; Barker and Rasmussen, 2005). This may therefore be the reason why Greek and Roman men of letters described the Etruscans unfavourably as tyrants, as luxury and lust-loving, and as

obese and inert.²⁴ Nevertheless, their writings are not to be dismissed completely as they are the only written sources providing an insight into Etruscan social habits. We can gain an insight into their public and private lives through these literary sources.

4.3.1. Etruscan communal eating habits as perceived by ancient writers

So far, no Etruscan literature or historical writing has been discovered. This is why we do not have written information about features of the social role of communal dining in Etruria. We do not know whether banquets were an essential component of political decision making events where alliances were forged, trade routes decided on, or armies brought together to fight a common enemy. We have to look at contemporary Greek historians and later Roman writers to get a glimpse of Etruscan

²⁴ In Diodorus of Sicily's *Library* V.21-27, 32, 65 and in Livy's *The Early History of Rome* II.9 we read that the Roman Senate was concerned about the political and military powers of the Etruscan city Clusium and of the fame of King Lars Porsena (508 BC). In an attempt to "buy peace and support" the Senate sent missions to Cumae and the Volscians to purchase grain and feed the hungry population of Rome. The Romans otherwise might have welcomed the Etruscan king who was known to have had the means to feed the poorer masses of Rome and, therefore, gain their support.

Further quotes by Greek and Roman authors are discussed in subsection 4.3.1.

A social issue that scandalized the ancient Greek world of its time was the fact that Etruscan women ate together with their men and male relatives, or even had dinner parties of their own. In the contemporary Greek world, only *hetairai* (prostitutes) and female entertainers were allowed to join men at dinner parties. Respectable women stayed in the domestic quarters of their house, which was even architecturally partitioned off from the *andron*, the dining room for the men. The social custom of the Etruscan women of the family sharing food with their men at social events was such scandalous behaviour of the time that the Greek historian Theopompus (fourth century BC) had to write the following: "...these women take great care of their bodies and exercise bare, exposing their bodies even to men and among themselves: for it is not shameful for them to appear almost naked. He also says "...they dine not with their husbands, but with any man who happens to be present; and they toast anyone they want to..." (Theopompus in Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* XII, 517d-518l).

Livy (*The Early History of Rome* I.57-59), as well as Theopompus, stresses the immorality of the Etruscans, in the story of the Rape of Lucretia. This Roman lady, after being molested by an Etruscan nobleman, killed herself to preserve her and her family's honour. She was working wool, running the household as expected from a respectable Roman lady, while Etruscan aristocratic ladies enjoyed themselves outside their homes at a luxurious dinner.

See also subsections 5.4.1. and 5.4.3. for discussion of female participation as shown in Etruscan banquet representations.

social and political customs. We can gain a more coherent picture that would have been lost to us otherwise. Despite the inherent interpretative dangers when working with ancient historiographies, “ethnographies” and philosophies, which will not be discussed here in detail, they are a very valuable source of information for certain habits otherwise not recorded and therefore not known to us, even if permeated with political and social bias and misunderstandings. We also have to keep in mind that some reports were written hundreds of years after the events described occurred. These authors wrote in their specific time for a specific audience, to (perhaps) please a certain sponsor of their work and therefore to secure their own private and political survival.

It appears that the Etruscans were an interesting and popular topic for contemporary and later writers from the Greek and the Roman world. When looking at the social aspect of Etruscan eating habits, the ancient writers are not very complementary. They remark on the fertility of the Etruscan soil and beauty of Etruscan cattle, on the exceptional quality and quantity of flour and meat production and the breeding of sacrificial animals, the rich cereal harvests and high quality wine production, the high quality of secondary animal produce and agrarian technology, and rich sweet and salt water fish resources.²⁵

Nevertheless the Etruscans did use this bountiful agrarian produce in the wrong nutritional and social ways, according to ancient writers and chroniclers such as Athenaeus, Columella and Diodorus of Sicily. Diodorus of Sicily writes with disbelief about the lavishly laid up Etruscan tables – twice a day!-which made the Etruscan men complacent and effeminate (see appendix 4.d for quote). Both Poseidonius and Timaeus in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophists* IV.153d give a very similar description of the Etruscans (see appendix 4.d for quote). The philosopher Poseidonius of Apamea in Athenaeus IV.153c also remarks on the decadent custom of the Etruscans of having two main meals in the day. This is seen as decadent by the (contemporary) Greeks and (later) Romans since they took one main meal only, in the afternoon or evening respectively. This remark by Poseidonius is echoed in Diodorus of Sicily V.40. They give Etruria’s fertility of land as a contributing factor

²⁵ See appendix 4.c for references and quotes of Greek and Roman writers regarding agrarian produce.

to the decadence of the Etruscans. Ancient non-Etruscan writers described the Etruscans as being fond of parties, of self-indulgence and excess, and of unbridled luxury and pleasure that in turn lead to a diminished vigour of their race. In defence of the Etruscans, it can be noted that such accusations and comparisons to the Roman civilization under which most of these writers worked was an already historical cliché to distinguish your favoured civilization from other barbarian peoples. Catullus (*The Poems* XXXIX.11) and Virgil (*Georgics* II.193) even go one step further and calling the Etruscans fat and plump/well-fed.²⁶ This critique is a little surprising, especially in the writings of Virgil. Virgil mentions the plumpness of the Etruscans in connection with their military shortcomings when in conflict with the Romans. The Etruscans are depicted as an obese nation, hardly able to get up from its banqueting couch. It is biased to put the ‘proud, strong and ever conquering’ Roman army in a favourable picture, especially since Virgil was patronized by Roman political leaders to write about the grandiose history of the Roman Empire.

Conclusion:

Section 4 identified why the research into dining habits as shown in indigenous iconography is important to gain knowledge of the Etruscan society. It was also shown why textual and material evidence can be useful to support or refute these findings, and why it is advantageous to compare and contrast representations from domestic-residential and funerary contexts indiscriminately.

Section 5 will be the analysis of the ninety-eight Etruscan banquet scenes with the help of the seventeen criteria outlined in section ‘2. Methodology’. The findings which resulted from the analysis in section 5 enabled the author of this thesis to draw conclusions about the Etruscan society which were not apparent through previous research conducted by other Etruscologists.

²⁶ Catullus: “*aut obesus Etruscus*”; Virgil “*inflavit cum pinguis ebur Tyrrhenus ad aras*”.

5. The analysis of the Etruscan banquet scenes

Section 5 is an extensive presentation and analysis of all ninety-eight banquet scenes. The scenes are compared and contrasted in their categories, ranging from revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts, to small finds, to Tarquinian Tomb paintings, to tomb paintings from other locations, and scenes found on funerary monuments. All scenes are individually described, with seventeen chosen criteria, in the catalogue in the appendix of the thesis.

Section 5.1. divided into subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5. deals with seating arrangements and furnishings.

Section 5.2. divided into subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.5. discusses the servant's appearance, gender and duties.

Section 5.3. divided into subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. analyses food, drink and associated accoutrements shown.

Section 5.4. divided into subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.4. identifies social details, such as the relationship in between the sexes, possible status and age differentiations, and a variety of occasions depicted.

Section 5.5. divided into subsections 5.5.1. to 5.5.5. looks at tangible extras that so far were not mentioned. The discussions mostly refer to animals.

5.1. Reclining versus seated arrangements, and the significance of furnishings

5.1.1. Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/sitting person?;

The revetment plaques show all banqueters recline. By having all banqueters recline, there are no obvious differences as to the social status of the participants when analysing their posture at banquet.

Age differentiation for adults, in reference to seating arrangements, is also not practiced in the plaques. In Etruscan art, females are always shown with rather

youthful facial features, even when their association with an older man is strongly suggested. Older men are shown with a beard, and sometimes with white hair to stress their mature age, as in the Tomb of the Old Man/Tarquinia (cat. No. 37). However, bearded men versus non-bearded men are not tied in to a rigid seating arrangement. Banqueters one and three on the Murlo plaques, and banqueter three on the Acquarossa plaques are bearded. Other multi-male occupied couches within the same chronological range are shown in the Tomb 5039/Tarquinia (banqueter one, three and five, cat. No. 30), Tomb of the Tarantola/Tarquinia (banqueter two, cat. No. 31), Tomb 5898/Tarquinia (banqueter two and four, cat. No. 34). It appears that the seating arrangement for men of different age is flexible and not tied to any socio-cultural convention.

Different seating arrangement can be distinguished for younger people in comparison to adults. Younger people are seated either to the left or to the right of banqueting couches. Such a spatial arrangement is reminiscent to today's seating arrangements at larger dinner parties where a children's' table is usually set at the periphery of the dining room. Also different body posture can be distinguished for younger people in comparison to adults. Young sub-males are shown seated either on cushions or on chairs, but they do not recline on couches. We have young males seated on pillows in the Tomb 5039/Tarquinia (cat. No. 30). Two children, one boy and one girl, are shown seated on one chair in the Tomb of the Painted Vases/Tarquinia (cat. No. 38).²⁷ The two tombs are chronologically within the same range as the revetment plaques from Roselle (cat. No. 6), Veii (cat. No. 7), Velletri (cat. No. 8) and Rome (cat. No. 9). Since we have these examples of age differentiation at banquet from a contemporary funerary context, we may have been able to distinguish similar discrimination on the revetment plaques if children were shown. Portraiture was in its infancies in the sixth century BC. Nevertheless the artists did convey the presence of children by having them depicted seated, with toys or toy pets. Girls were dressed like their older female companions or their mothers. According to their age, very young boys were shown naked, but older boys wore a tunic. None of these combinations of iconographic clues is shown in the revetment plaques. It can therefore be assumed that no children are included in the scenes

²⁷ See subsection 5.1.3. for a detailed discussion of younger banquet participants.

shown on the revetment plaques.

There is no affirmative differentiation regarding gender indicated through the pose at banquet. Women are depicted on the plaques from Acquarossa, Velletri and Rome. In some examples of banquet representations females are portrayed seated on couches or on separate chairs and pillows. Seated females are shown in the Bartoccini Tomb/Tarquinia (cat. No. 26), on the stele from Sancepolcro (cat. No. 79) and on the stele from Travignoli (cat. No. 80). These examples are contemporary to the later revetment plaques. However, to show women seated is not a prerogative in artistic terms to express female gender. In Etruscan art, showing the females as seated banqueting participants is rather the exception. Most banqueting scenes from funerary and domestic-residential context show females reclining at banquet.

None of the plaques allow us to detect us any differentiation of social status or age when looking at the posture at banquet. It can therefore be concluded that the people depicted are of equal importance to the scenes. In addition, no differentiation is made according to gender since all people are shown reclining at banquet. Even in detail the poses of the reclining banqueters are the same for males as for females.

There are, however, strong indicators that gender was differentiated as to the exact placement of male versus female participants at banquet. Gender differences with respect to who reclines on which side of their fellow banqueters are adhered to in Etruscan banquet scenes. Women are shown in the middle of arrangements where three people share one reclining space (couch or mattress). The only two existing examples are the Acquarossa frieze plaques and a cinerary urn from Chiusi (cat. No. 86). When the scenes show two people per banqueting couch or more than three people reclining on a common ground, the female is always placed to the left of her banqueting companion. This is at least an artistic and perhaps even a socio-cultural convention in the Etruscan world. It is adhered to on the Acquarossa, the Velletri and the Rome plaques, in addition to all other Etruscan mixed sex scenes of a reclining banquet arrangement, which will be discussed in detail in subsections 5.1.2. to 5.1.5.

There may be two exceptions to this otherwise unbroken rule. One is a cylinder stamp scene of a banquet on a *dolio* from Cerveteri (cat. No. 12). The second is the three bronze sheets (cat. No. 17).²⁸ It will be shown that these two

²⁸ Both representations are discussed in detail in subsection 5.1.2.

examples are not proof enough to doubt the Etruscan seating arrangement of females to the left of male companions at reclining banquets.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

All frieze plaque scenes, apart from the Murlo plaques, have an orientation of reclining from right to left. All banqueters are shown with their head to the right and their feet to the left when looking at the plaques. This is universal to all Etruscan reclining banquet scenes and was briefly discussed by De Marinis (1961: 40). The exceptions are, as above mentioned when discussing the placement of females next to males, the stamp of a banquet scene on the impasto *dolio* from Cerveteri (cat. No. 12) and the banquet scene on three bronze sheets (cat. No. 17). The non-validity of these two representations as negation of the universal orientation at a reclining banquet is shown in the subsection 5.1.2.

The unique orientation of the banqueters from left to right is not as easily explained for the Murlo frieze plaques. It has been suggested elsewhere that the orientation from left to right on the Murlo frieze was an error in planning and that the artisan who manufactured the mould forgot the nature of a mirror image when working with such a mould based technique (Small, 1971:50). Small makes allowances that the artisan was unfamiliar with the nature of moulds and impressions. According to this rather humane and forgiving explanation, the artisan got away with an image the wrong way round, which would in due course decorate the possibly most impressive Etruscan building of its time. The idea of a mirror image is of course a valid suggestion and this argument is utilized for the two banquet scenes cat No. 12 and cat. No. 17, mentioned in above paragraph. Torelli (1985: 27) displayed a photo of the Murlo banquet frieze plaque the wrong, mirrored way round. However, in Etruria of the sixth century BC when manufacturing terracotta frieze plaques for the most elaborate building of the time, at least as far as current archaeology knows, it is not very likely that one mould would be produced and, realizing its wrong orientation, then simply be continued in use to produce these wrong-sided images. The mould was produced by skilled labourers, but “labourers only” who had to do as they were told by the people who commissioned the images.

No lord would have accepted such a mistake especially when decorating one of the most impressive buildings of contemporary Etruria. It follows that the mirror image idea of the plaques is not very likely.

This argument of orientation of the plaques and the seating arrangement that follows from this orientation will also be important in the subsections 5.4.1 to 5.4.5. to refute the thesis that a female participant is shown on the Murlo plaques as suggested by Rathje and others (Rathje, 1989: 78-79; 1994: 96-97; 2004: 219; Small, 1994: 87; Baglione, 1989: 110; Haynes, 2000: 124).

We have to allow for the fact that the orientation of the Murlo frieze plaques is unique for Etruscan banquet iconography. The Murlo banquet scene is the first representation of a reclining banquet in Etruscan art. This is an observation that allows for a chronological classification, but it does not give an answer to the questions as to why the orientation is unique for an Etruscan reclining banquet, and that it changed to the opposite direction for all of the following banquet scenes.

Some scholars have discussed the possibility that the fashion of reclining at banquet may be an adaptation from Greece and the Near East (Rathje, 1994; Small, 1994; Weber-Lehmann, 1985; Denzer, 1982). This may be correct. However, the origin of the reclining banquet as such is of no concern here. Nevertheless, since Murlo is the earliest representation of such a banquet, it would suggest an iconography very similar to the slightly earlier and the contemporary reclining banquet scenes from the East. Nevertheless, when examining these banquet scenes it quickly becomes apparent that the banquet scenes from Greece and the Near East also have an orientation of reclining from right to left. Examples include the earliest reclining banquet scene of King Assurbanipal/Nineveh (c. 645 BC),



Figure 5.1: Banquet scene of King Assurbanipal and his wife from the palace at Nineveh, now in the British Museum, London, exhibit ME124920. (Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.corbisimages.com>)

and early Greek vase paintings such as on a Corinthian column crater (c. 600 BC).



Figure 5.2: Corinthian column crater, now in the Louvre, Paris, exhibit E653. (Source: <http://www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres>).

The orientation at a reclining banquet was right to left in Greek and Near Eastern art. Therefore, to explain the Murlo banquet orientation with the adaptation of Greek and Near Eastern artistic convention is not a valid approach.

The reasons as to why the banquet scenes from Murlo are orientated left to right may not be known. We can only be assertive with the observation that the Murlo plaques are an exception regarding the orientation of the banqueters. All other Etruscan banquet scenes are orientated from right to left. It may be that this

orientation from right to left is an artistic convention, as it is a convention to represent the “typical cavemen couple” by him dragging her by the hair (sic.), or to represent a Caribbean landscape by including palm trees and a Hawaiian scene with hula-dancing girls. Perhaps another meaning of this particular orientation is that it is a way of telling the viewer about the social organisation and ranking in Etruscan society. Whoever sits to the left, or to the right of the following person is of higher or lower ranking to his or her couch neighbour. It may be that the orientation of the banqueters was of no concern, perhaps because it was not known yet that there actually was an ‘official’ orientation from right to left. Such orientation may have become conventionalised with the passage of time. What is important is that the people who commissioned the terracotta frieze plaques included the banquet as one of four topics of major concern to present and to represent their society to whoever came from near and far to see the building and the consciously chosen decorations.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?:

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

The frieze plaques from all nine sites show the banqueters recline on couches.

The significance of reclining on couches versus reclining on the ground (on mattresses or blankets) can be explained by the setting of location of each banquet. A banquet enjoyed while reclining on couches is generally, but not exclusively, located indoors. Banquets on the ground, on mattresses or thick blankets, are usually set outdoors, in a picnic style setting.²⁹ The interpretation that couches are more likely to be set in the indoors, and that banqueting on the ground is usually located outdoors was the most obvious and therefore logical solution when comparing the juxtapositioning of elements used in the entire ninety-eight banquet scenes. While examining the images, reclining on the ground (on mattresses and/or blankets) in combination with outdoor indicators which are trees, branches held by banqueters, leaves on the ground to insulate the banqueters or to keep vessels cool, ribbons, wreaths and birdcages decoratively placed in the background are all elements which

²⁹ See also subsections 5.1.2 to 5.1.5. for the arguments presented that banqueting on couches versus on the ground is most likely an indicator as to the setting of the banquet.

are used together (even if not all of them at once) in the majority of images. On the other hand, it was found that when the banqueting took place on couches, that most of the scenes show a profound and undeniable lack of any of the elements that are believed to be outdoor indicators.

This observation is not exclusive, as sometimes the location of a banquet cannot be made out with certainty, since the objects which indicate a certain location for a scene are either ambivalent, or not relevant to determine an indoors versus outdoors location, or the representation does not include any clues as to the setting. In addition, there are a number of banquets where the participants recline on couches and the setting is clearly outdoors, as indicated by trees and branches, wreaths and ribbons, and birdcages. Examples include the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42, and the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54), all from Tarquinia. However, as stated above, it appears to be most plausible to analyse reclining on couches versus on the ground (on mattresses or blankets) in combination with certain indoor (lack of outdoor indicators) versus outdoor indicators, as the most logical and fitting way to explain the choice and use of these elements, especially since these combinations with each other recur in the majority of banquets.

Most banquet scenes where the participants recline on couches do not include objects which would inform the viewer of an outdoor setting such as bushes and trees, beds of leaves under the banqueters to have them recline on soft grounds, or beds of leaves under beverage containers to keep the beverages cool, and ribbons or wreaths, and birdcages hanging in the background of the scenes. Outdoor banquet scenes, contemporary with the frieze plaques, are shown for example in the Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), the Tomb of the Olympic Games (cat. No. 33), and the Tomb 5898 (cat. No. 34), all from Tarquinia. The revetment frieze plaques do not include any such outdoor indicators. The main indication that the location of the banquets on the plaques is an indoor setting is the fact that people recline on couches. In addition, there is a marked absence of plants, either as trees, as insulation or as decorative items such as wreaths.

Several different interpretations as to the meaning behind banqueting on the ground have been presented by different scholars, for example Fehr (1971)

and Weber-Lehmann (1985). Fehr argues that this kind of banquet without couches is during wartime, or due to a nomadic lifestyle. In both instances the people did not have the resources to transport dining furniture such as couches and tables. However, the Etruscans were neither nomadic, nor are any references made to Etruscan banquets set in wartimes. Weber-Lehmann explains the banquets on the ground in relation to paintings set in the gable of tomb chambers. Her arguments will be discussed in detail in subsection 5.1.3.

The suggested correlation of outdoor indicators in combination with the scenes being set on the ground as presented in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5., appears to be a more reliable (because observable, even if not absolute) explanation for the different settings of banqueting. Therefore, the combination of having couches to recline on and an absence of outdoors indicators suggest an indoor location for all revetment plaque representations.

6. The number of couches shown:

It can be assumed that the revetment plaques from all locations show two couches per terracotta plaque. Complete scenes survived from Murlo and Acquarossa. The fragmentary plaques from Cerveteri and Tarquinia did not preserve complete banquet scenes. However, since the existing fragments are very similar to the Acquarossa banquet scenes, a two-couch arrangement can be assumed. The same deduction from style and space available on the plaques can be applied to the fragmentary plaques from Roselle, Rome and Veii in comparison to the ones from Velletri. The plaques from Roselle are very similar to the ones from Velletri, while the ones from Rome and Veii are identical to the ones from Velletri. The Velletri plaques show a two-couch arrangement per frieze plaque. Therefore, two-couch scenes are to be assumed for Roselle, Rome and Veii, too.

Whether there is a socio-symbolic significance in the banquet scenes from all locations showing two-couch arrangements cannot be deduced from the iconographic evidence alone. In Etruscan iconography, some scenes show a one-couch banquet as, for example, on the stele from Antella (cat. No. 78); others show up to five couches as, for example, in the Casuccini Hill Tomb/Chiusi (cat. No. 70). Perhaps it was a practical solution to the problem representing a banquet with two couches per

terracotta relief plaque. The plaques were manufactured according to a prescribed size. They had to fit architecturally and visually into the overall decoration in combination with other terracotta plaque scenes and building ornamentation. To have only one couch per plaque may not have conveyed an atmosphere of socio-political conviviality. To have three or more couches modelled per plaque may have reduced the size of each banqueter and couch too much, so that the details of the convivial scenes may not have been clearly visible to the onlooker, once the plaques were attached to the buildings for which they were manufactured.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

The banquet scenes from Murlo, Velletri and Rome show two people per couch. The banquet scenes from Acquarossa show three people per couch. Due to the similarity in style, three people per couch may be assumed for Cerveteri and Tarquinia. For Roselle and Veii, the number of people per couch is not known since the plaques are very fragmentary. The Roselle fragments are very similar in style to the Velletri plaques. In addition, the plaques from Velletri, Veii and Rome originate from the same matrix. Therefore, two people per couch can be assumed for the Roselle and Veii scenes.

When comparing the number of people per couch with the other media in this study, it becomes obvious that a two people per couch arrangement is by far the most common. Therefore, it is very unusual in Etruscan banquet representations that the scenes from Acquarossa, and most likely the ones from Cerveteria and Tarquinia, accommodate three people per one couch. Three people per one banqueting couch is not seen anywhere else in Etruscan banquet iconography. The significance of either two or three people per banqueting couch is not known. Perhaps to try to analyse the numerical difference with the help of the strictly adhered to seating arrangement according to gender is not sufficient to explain the two versus three people per couch seating arrangement. The females on the Acquarossa plaques are seated in the middle of the three people per couch arrangement. On the Velletri and Rome plaques, the females are seated to the left of their male couch partners. Both seating arrangements are in strict accordance with the gendered socio-cultural symbolism in Etruscan art; both are regularly used and valid, and both are practiced in Etruscan art over the

centuries (see subsections 5.1.2. to 5.1.5. for further discussion).

A more practical solution to the questions as to why the majority of couches is occupied by two people is presented in subsection 5.1.3

5.1.2. Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory

Pottery

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/seated person?:

There is a clear chronological divide when looking at seated versus reclining banqueting. The two oldest vessels (cat. No. 10 and Cat. No. 11), both from the seventh century BC, show a seated banquet. The vessels from the sixth century are all decorated with scenes of reclining banqueters.

The seventh century BC cylinder decorated vase (cat. No. 10) shows two banqueters seated to either side of a table. Unfortunately the gender of the banqueters is not to be assigned with certainty. Perhaps gender was not important in this scene in the first place. A female may be shown since a bosom and a chignon-type coiffure can be made out. However, both banqueters have rather pointed chin lines suggesting a beard. That the person is female is supported by fact that she is seated to the left of the other banqueter. To locate females to the left of male couch companions seem to be a strictly adhered rule when banqueters recline. However, here, banqueters are seated on separate chairs. When the female is seated, and the male reclines, the female is always seated to the right of the reclining male companion. What the rule or convention is when two banqueters of different sex are seated on separate chairs is not known since there is no known surviving example. If the person is female, then she is one of the few females shown with a drinking vessel. Examples only exist in domestic-residential contexts (see subsection 5.3.1.), not in funerary contexts. That 'she' is shown with a different vessel form her male companion may be a gender related use of drinks vessels. Other theories as to the non-gender related use of (different types of) vessels were discussed in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. If the person

to the left were female, this would be the only representation of a mixed-sex seated banquet in Etruscan Italy.

The chalice cat. No. 11 depicts one banqueter, seated to the right of a table, facing to the left. This orientation is in accord with the orientation with reclining banqueters from right to left.

The sixth century BC cylinder decorated scene on the *dolio* cat. No. 12 shows all banqueters reclining. It is not certain whether females are shown reclining with males. If females are indeed shown, it is unusual that they are reclining to the right of their male couch companions. However, it has to be stressed that gender cannot be assigned with certainty as the cylinder stamp is not detailed enough to distinguish male versus female body features and clothing.

The sixth century BC *oinochoe* cat. No. 13, and two fragments from two Pontic vases cat. No. 15 and 16 all show reclining banqueters.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

The seventh century BC vase cat. No. 10 shows a cylinder decorated seated banquet with two banqueters. It is arranged with one banqueter to the left, the other banqueter to the right of a table that is placed equal distance to each of the banqueters. The banqueters face each other.

The seventh century BC cylinder decorated chalice cat. No. 11 with just one banqueter has the person sitting on the right side of the table, facing to the left. This orientation of the banqueter facing to the left is in accordance with the convention of later reclining banqueters being orientated towards the left.

The Pontic vase fragments cat. No. 15 and 16 show all the banqueters recline from right to left.

The *dolio* cat. No. 12 is unusual in Etruscan art since it shows the banqueters recline left to right. Such an orientation when reclining is also only shown on the Murlo frieze plaques, and on three bronze sheets (cat. No. 17). The validity of the bronze sheets as examples of a left to right orientation is questionable and will be discussed later. The *dolio* has an additional rare socio-artistic iconography by having (possible) females seated to the right of males. Such an orientation and seating

arrangement is only also found on the bronze sheets. If females are indeed shown in the *dolio* and bronze sheet scenes, the left to right orientation and females to the right of the male partners may not be an enigma. For those two media, a more practical explanation may suffice to eliminate these two representations as unique in the overall adhered to artistic and socio-cultural conventions. The cylinder stamp with the banquet scene was manufactured with the “correct” right to left reclining orientation, and females reclining to the left of the males' arrangement. Only when pressing the cylinder stamp into the soft clay of the *dolio* did the scene display its “wrong” orientation and seating arrangement. The *dolio* decorated with the wrong-sided mirror image was not destroyed since a *dolio* is just a vessel, not a socio-politically important building like the one at Murlo or aristocratic tomb painting where such mistakes would not have been acceptable.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

All banqueters are seated on stools or recline on couches respectively. The significance of reclining on couches versus reclining on the ground (on mattresses or blankets) was discussed in detail in subsections 5.1.1. and 5.1.3. to 5.1.5. The combination of being seated on an elevated level, contrary to being seated on the ground, suggests an indoor setting. The indoor setting is also implied by not having any outdoor indicators present in the images. The same explanation can be applied to the two scenes where the banqueters are seated on stools. However, since there is a clear chronological divide when looking at seated versus reclining banqueting, it may be more plausible to explain the seated banquet with the vessels being the two oldest vessels, both from the seventh century BC. Reclining at banquet was first shown on the Murlo terracotta frieze plaques. These date to c. 600-575 BC. Scenes from the seventh century BC do show banqueters seated as this was the customary way to show people at banquet up to c. 600 BC, for example on the Montescudaio Urn/near Volterra (c. 630-600 BC, cat. No. 76) or the banqueters from the Tomb of the Five Chairs/Cerveteri (c. 630-600 BC, cat. No. 77)

6. The number of couches shown:

The scenes with the banqueters seated show two chairs and one chair each, to accommodate two and one banqueter(s) respectively. The other pottery banquet scenes, where the participants recline, vary from one couch to three couch arrangements. Again, as detailed in subsection 5.1.1., we do not know whether a socio-symbolic significance was expressed by having banquets showing a certain number of couches. The suggested practical aspect of showing two couches each on the terracotta frieze plaques scenes are not valid for the medium of pottery vessels. A continuously painted or moulded decoration can show any number of couches the artist may have chosen to show on the available space on the vessel. A vessel is to be seen from close-to by the viewer. Small and detailed moulds and paintings can be applied. Therefore, any number of couches, or one very long-stretched couch, is feasible from a practical point of view. The number of couches may have been entirely up to the artist's freedom, or dependent as to how a story was to be told in pictures (for example on the Pontic amphora). It could also mean that these were in fact small-scale domestic scenes instead of large-scale feasts. Another possibility is that the banquet scenes had to be displayed and executed by the artist, as it was the wish of the commissioning client.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

The seated scenes have one person seated on each chair. The reclining scenes have a variety of combinations regarding the number of occupants per couch. The *dolio* from Cerveteri shows one couch with one person, then one couch with two people reclining. The Pontic amphora and the Pontic vase show one person per couch. The *bucchero oinochoe* shows two people per couch. The Pontic vase fragment (Cat. No. 16) is too damaged to make out the number of people per couch with certainty. There may be one and/or two people per couch.

Whether there is a socio-cultural significance in the number of people per couch is difficult to determine. When comparing the convivial images from the terracotta frieze plaques, from small finds, and the variety of images from funerary contexts, no strictly adhered structure can be distinguished, as for example with the gendered seating arrangement of females to the left, or in the centre, of male

companions. Any combination of number of people per couch regarding gender, age, possible social ranking (determined by objects directly associated with certain persons, facial and body features, seating arrangement) can be found in Etruscan banquet iconography. There is no obvious and distinguishable rule as to how many people share one couch, or who occupies a couch by him- or herself. It appears that the combinations of people and their placement on couches, mattresses and seats is always according to who participated in what kind of occasion for each individual party shown.

Bronze objects

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/seated person?;

All bronze objects show reclining banquets.

The figurine (cat. No. 19), and the figurine (cat. No. 20) were most likely originally manufactured and attached to the same object because they are very similar in size, style, execution, and they wear the same mantles decorated in a stellar motive. They are, however, individual banqueters, who did not recline on the same couch or blanket. A similar figurine (cat. No. 21) only survived as a single piece of bronze figurative art. We do not know if there were additional and similar figurines in existence. The banqueting couple (cat. No. 18), which is part of a vessel rim, follows the Etruscan convention of placing the female to the left of the male partner. The figures of banqueters intricately woven into the design of a tripod (cat. No. 22) have the females recline on the upper tier, while the males recline on the lower tier of the tripod. Both mirrors (cat. No. 23 and 24) show one couple each reclining at banquet. According to Etruscan convention are the females placed to the left of the male couch partner.

The exception to the rule of females reclining to the left of male banqueters may be found in the banquet scenes of the three bronze sheets (cat. No. 17), now in the Villa Giulia, Rome. On the sheets, altogether twelve figures alternate from male to female and so on. The male is shown to the right of the female. This, in addition to the *dolio* from Cerveteri (cat. No. 12), is the only known exception to the usual

convention of Etruscan gendered seating arrangement. The possible circumstances as to the arrangement being the “wrong” way round for the *dolio* have been explained above. The arrangement on the bronze sheets may be due to similar circumstances. It is not only remarkable that the females are to the right of the males; it is also a fact that the direction of reclining is left to right, as it is the case on the *dolio* (cat. No. 12). Again, as with the *dolio* cylinder stamp above, a very practical explanation may be the cause for this arrangement. It may be that the stamp that has the negative image of the scene would have shown the correct seating arrangement for males and female. When embossing the scene onto the bronze sheets, a mirrored image was the result. Since the bronze sheets were for decoration only, perhaps to be laid round a vessel, and not meant to represent a community and their socio-political agenda, the bronze sheets were kept, and not melted down and re-worked. Again, as with the *dolio*, due to the media and the possibility of a practical mistake in the original design in the male to female seating arrangement, the bronze sheets are not a viable example to refute the otherwise strictly adhered Etruscan rule of females to the left of male couch companions.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

All banqueters as presented in the media of bronze recline from right to left, as is the custom in Etruscan banquet iconography. The only exceptions are the three bronze sheets. Possible explanations as to the effect that the direction was actually the correct right to left orientation originally were given in above paragraph.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

On the bronze sheets, the people recline with just one pillow each under their elbows. The couple and the three individual figurines recline with one pillow under their elbow each. The figurines on the tripod vary in their reclining equipment. The upper tier females recline on a couch, while the lower tier males recline each with a pillow under their elbow. The couples on the two mirrors recline on one couch each.

For the couple and the three individual banqueters, nothing of the environment of their original setting is preserved to determine the location and purpose of their banquet. We do not know if they recline indoors or picnic-style outdoors, we do not know if a family event is depicted, and we do not know if vessels for food and/or drink were set nearby. Perhaps the setting and the accompanying banqueting equipment was not important. It was of importance to convey the idea of the banquet itself, using the most basic iconography, which is represented by a banqueter by him, or herself. The same may be true for the bronze sheets where the banqueters are shown resting on pillows. The males and females reclining on the tripod do not reveal any details as to the setting of their banquet either. There are no clues as to why the females recline on couches while the males rest on a pillow. The two mirrors show the couples recline on one couch each. In subsections 5.1.1. and 5.1.3. to 5.1.5. the relevance of reclining on couches versus reclining on the ground has been explained. In accordance with the findings presented in subsections 5.1.1. and 5.1.3. to 5.1.5., outdoor settings are strongly implied by a certain combination of items in each scene. The mirror cat. No. 23 has vine tendrils frame the scene, while the lady holds a ribbon and the man perhaps a blossom. The mirror cat. No. 24 has ivy frame the scene, while ribbons and a possible birdcage is hanging in the background. That the couples recline on couches is usually an indicator of an indoor setting. The combination of plants, ribbons and birdcage are indicators of outdoor settings. As explained in subsection 5.1.1., reclining on couches is not exclusive to indoor banqueting. Both the two scenes include a number of outdoor elements, and even if the banquets are held on couches, an outdoor location may be assumed.

The idea that flowers held by banqueters, and small trees included in banquet scenes, may be indicators that the festivities are set outdoors has been suggested by Bovini with regards to the bronze sheets (1941: 89). The findings from subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.5. do support this notion and are discussed in detail in the according paragraphs.

6. The number of couches shown:

The people on the bronze sheets, the couple and the three individual banqueters, and

the males on the tripod all recline on pillows only. No couches are shown. The upper tier females on the tripod recline on one couch each. The couples on the two mirrors recline on one couch each. Again, as detailed in subsection 5.1.1., we do not know whether a socio-symbolic significance was expressed by having banquets including a certain number of couches.

The suggested practical aspect of showing two couches each on the terracotta frieze plaques scenes are not valid for the medium of bronze objects. Bronze can be poured into moulds hollowed with any number of couches or continuous ground spaces. A bronze object can be seen from close quarters by the viewer. Small and detailed moulds can be fashioned by the artist. Therefore, any number of couches, or one very long-stretched couch or ground space, is feasible from a practical point of view. As discussed in the above paragraphs dedicated to “Pottery” (criteria 6 “number of couches shown“) the number of couches may have been entirely up to the artist’s freedom, or dependent on how a story was to be told in pictures, or the scenes that had to be fashioned by the artist as in accordance with the wish of the commissioning client.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

On the bronze sheets (cat. No. 17), twelve people recline on one ground space, each with a pillow under their elbow. The couple (cat. No. 18) recline on one ground space, each with a pillow under their elbow. The three individual banqueters (cat. No. 19, 20, 21), and the males on the tripod (cat. No. 22) all recline on pillows only. No couches are shown. The upper tier females on the tripod (cat. No. 22) each recline on an individual couch. The couches on the mirrors (cat. No. 23 and 24) are occupied by one couple each.

Whether there is a socio-cultural significance in the number of people per couch is difficult to determine. When comparing the convivial images from the terracotta frieze plaques, from small finds, and the variety of images from funerary contexts, no strictly adhered to structure can be distinguished, as for example with the gendered seating arrangement of females to the left, or in the centre, of male companions. Any combination of number of people per couch regarding gender, age, possible social ranking (determined by objects directly associated with certain

persons) can be found in Etruscan banquet iconography. There is no rule as to how many people share one couch, or who occupies a couch by him- or herself.

Ivory

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/seated person?;

An all-male reclining banquet is shown.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

The direction of reclining is the customary right to left orientation in Etruscan iconography.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

The two men recline on a mattress. The meaning of reclining on a mattress versus on a couch was explained in detail in subsection 5.1.1. However, the ivory scene does not include any of the aforementioned outdoor indicators. However, it may be suggested that the scene is to be read in combination with the second ivory plaque from the same casket that shows a hunting scene. It looks like the men had a successful hunt for the stag shown on the second plaque. Since the hunt is conducted outdoors, and the men recline on a mattress, which by itself is an outdoor indicator, it can be assumed that the convivial event takes place outdoors.

6. The number of couches shown:

One mattress is shown. The significance of one mattress may be found in combination with the hunting scene, where the two men hunt a stag. The same men may be depicted as intimate friends first hunting together and then reclining on one mattress to symbolise their friendship, the successful hunt, and the outdoor setting of both the hunt and the banquet.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

Two people are shown on one mattress. As above, the meaning behind having two people recline on one couch may be that the same two people are seen hunting a stag on a further ivory plaque from the same wooden casket. Two men are shown, and their friendship is symbolized by hunting one stag, and sharing one mattress at banquet.

5.1.3. Tarquinian tomb paintings

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/seated person?:

By far the most numerous are those scenes showing all banqueters reclining. These add up to thirty-four (85%) scenes out of a total of forty banquet events. They range over the complete chronological spectrum of from c. 520 BC to c. 375-350 BC. There are six (15%) mixed representations of banqueters seated and reclining in the same scene. The mixed arrangements are shown in the Bartoccini Tomb (c. 520 BC, cat. No. 26), Tomb 5039 (c. 520-510 BC, cat. No. 30), Tomb of the Painted Vases (c. 500 BC, cat. No. 38), Tomb of the Black Sow (c. 450 BC, cat. No. 46), Tomb 808 (c. 400-355 BC, cat. No. 58) and Tomb of the Shields (c. 375-350 BC, cat. No. 65). Banquets with purely seated participants are not shown in Tarquinian tomb painting.

Seated females and their place at banquet in Tarquinian tomb paintings:

Four of the six mixed representations have women seated while men recline. The Etruscans follow an at least artistic, more likely a socio-cultural, rule as to the location of a seated female. The location of a seated female in the banquet scene depends on whether she is seated on her own chair, or whether she is seated on a couch that she shares with a male companion. Females do not recline on individual couches at banquet. They are seated on their individual chair, if a scene required showing a female at banquet occupying her own space (De Marinis, 1961: 74).

The Bartoccini Tomb shows two seated females, both seated on their individual chairs, located to the right of the reclining male banqueters. Tomb 808 shows a female seated on her individual chair to the right of a reclining male banqueter. Showing females seated on their own individual chairs, to the right of male reclining banquet participants, is also strictly adhered to in the other media showing banquet scenes. This apparent rule is followed on the stelae from Sancepolcro (cat. No. 79) and from Travignoli (cat. No. 80). These will be discussed in detail in a subsection 5.1.5. This observation enables us to determine the gendered seating arrangement that if a woman is seated on her own, on a chair or cushion, she is always and without exception shown to the right of a reclining male.

The Tomb of the Black Sow shows one seated female. She is placed on a couch, to the left of her reclining male couch partner. The Tomb of the Shields shows two couches, both occupied by one couple each. In both, the females are seated on the left side of the couch, while the male companions recline to the right of their seated couch companion. This is in accordance with the banquet scenes from other media to have females to the left of their couch partners. The examples from the Tomb of the Black Sow and the Tomb of the Shields confirm this Etruscan artistic and most likely social rule, even when the female is shown seated on a couch and not reclining.

Banquet scenes where a male reclines with a female on one couch or space always depicts, without exception, the female reclining on the left side of the male. Examples include the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36), the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), and the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42).

Children, adolescent youths, and their place at banquet in Tarquinian tomb paintings: Tomb 5039 shows two male banqueters seated on a cushion. They are located in the left corner of the gable painting. This seating location is contrary to the one of seated female banqueters who are always placed to the right of the male companions when they have a chair to themselves, or seated to the left of their male partner when sharing a couch.

That the two males are seated in the first place may be explained by their

youth. The way they are painted suggests that they are young boys, not even adolescent yet. They are painted smaller in size than the adult banqueters, the boy to the left is shown giving all his attention to binding a wreath, and they are kept separate from the banqueters by a tree painted in the space between the seated boys and the reclining men. Because of their youth, they do not recline with the other, older men. The spatial seating arrangement of banqueters is therefore not just gender-dependent, but also age-related.

Weber-Lehmann (1985: 22) described the seated males as adult banqueters. Unfortunately she did not offer any suggestions as to why some male banqueters are shown seated while others recline at banquet. However, when looking at the painting, the general demeanour and the relative small size of the two boys, compared to the reclining banqueters, strongly suggests a young age.

An age-discriminating seating arrangement is also found in the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38). The scene depicts two young, pre-adolescent banquet participants located to the left of the reclining banqueters. A young girl is seated on a chair. An even younger boy is sitting on the lap of the older girl. His youth is stressed by his nakedness and his holding a pet duck. Nakedness is usually reserved for male servants in Etruscan art. However, it can be assumed that he is the son of the couple reclining on the adjacent couch and not a boy servant. It is fit for a young son to be shown seated idly on the lap of an older girl, presumably his older sister, playing with a pet. Such iconography is suited in the intimate setting of a family tomb. It is not to be expected to have servants eternalized in such a situation in a family tomb scene.

One further Tarquinian tomb painting can be presented where family members are shown (in) their correct place because of their young age. The two girls from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32) are also seated to the left of the reclining banqueters. These girls are very similar in general demeanour to the two youths from Tomb 5039. Both the girl and the boy to the very left of both scenes bind a wreath, fully concentrating on this duty. The girl and the boy next to the wreath binders both turn to the right to watch the banquet proceedings of the adults.

In the above three tombs pre-adult banqueters are depicted. It can be safely assumed that indeed young banqueters are shown because of the combination of

certain elements. These elements are the fact that the persons are seated, they have duties such as ribbon binding which is not shown with reclining banqueters, or they even hold a pet. The over-the-shoulder-look of the second girl in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing that she is giving to the reclining couple may confirm the notion that a typical coquettish teenager is depicted. These three tomb paintings are the only examples where people with youthful features, demeanour and even holding toys are shown seated, to the left of reclining banqueters. It may be suggested that these are pre-adult children. It can therefore be noted that in Etruscan iconography, this group of society is customarily seated to the left of reclining adult banqueters, irrespective of sex.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

Most Tarquinian tomb paintings show the reclining banqueters recline right to left, but there are three exceptions. The exceptions are the gable scenes in the Tomb of the Mouse (c. 520 BC, cat. No. 27), in the Tomb of the Olympic Games (c. 510 BC, cat. No. 33), and in Tomb 5898 (c. 510 BC, cat. No. 34).

Compositional limitations regarding the orientation of some banqueters:

The scene in the Tomb of the Olympic Games is centrally divided by a painted column. The two banqueters to the left of the column recline right to left, and so does the first banqueter to the right of the column. The second banqueter reclines left to right. This is contrary to the much more conventional pattern, and only seen elsewhere on the terracotta frieze plaques from Murlo (cat. No. 1), a *dolio* (cat. No. 12), and three bronze sheets (cat. No. 17). All but the Murlo frieze plaques have been discussed and dismissed as not sufficiently valid to count as relevant examples for rejecting the right to left direction as a rule in the Etruscan art world, when depicting the social event of banqueting. The left to right reclining banqueter in the Tomb of the Olympic Games may be an artistic solution to fill the narrowing space of the gable toward the right, and to balance the overall composition of the scene. The artistic consideration to create balance in the narrowing space and symmetry for the overall scene may also have been the reason to have the banqueters recline from left

to right on the right side gable of Tomb 5898. The banqueters in the left corner recline right to left.

One banqueter is seen reclining left to right in the right corner in the gable of the Tomb of the Mouse. Again, as above, the artist may have taken some spatial limitations into consideration when filling in the narrowing space with a reclining banqueter whose orientation is left to right.

It must be noted that the deviation from the otherwise adhered to right to left orientation is only seen in gable paintings, and on the right side of the gable. Therefore, it is suggested that left to right reclining banqueters are only painted in the right half of gables, when the available space for the scene demands such a solution. The majority of artists who decorated tomb gables strictly adhered to the right to left orientation when painting reclining banqueters. This can be seen, for example, in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), in the Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), in the Tomb of the Tarantola (cat. No. 31), in the Tomb of the Frontoncino (cat. No. 35), and in the Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39), and in all the other thirty-two Tarquinian tomb paintings.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

Out of the forty banquet scenes, thirty-nine (97.5%) were preserved with a complete enough image to determine whether people recline (or sit) on couches or whether they recline on the ground. Out of the thirty-nine images, twenty (52%) show all the banqueters reclining on couches. Eleven (28%) show all the banqueters reclining on the ground, some with mattresses. Two scenes (5%) show a mix of people reclining and sitting on couches. These are the scenes from the Tomb of the Black Sow and the Tomb of the Shields. They have the females sitting while the males recline. Two scenes (5%) show a mix of banqueters reclining on couches and people seated on chairs separate from the couches. These are from the Tomb of the Painted Vases, and Tomb 808. The Bartoccini Tomb scene is unique (2.5%) showing people reclining on couches (all the males), while a lady is seated on a separate chair, and a young female is seated on a thick cushion. Tomb 5039 has an all male banquet, with the older men reclining on couches, and two boys seated on cushions (2.5%). The scene

from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing shows the adult couple reclining on a mattress on the ground, while their two young daughters are seated on cushions (2.5%). The banquet scene in the Tomb of the Mouse is the only (2.5%) tomb painting which shows a mix of one person reclining on a couch and two people reclining on the ground.

Outdoor versus indoor location for the banquet:

The correlation of reclining on couches and sitting on chairs with an indoor setting, and reclining on the ground on mattresses with an outdoor location has been presented in subsection 5.1.1. “*Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?*”. The Tarquinian tomb paintings may be read in a similar way, by looking at the furniture the banqueters recline or sit on in combination with other items by which they are surrounded.

Dennis (1878: 394-396) is the only writer/historian who has remarked on the recurring inclusion of wreaths and ribbons in the (Tarquinian tomb paintings of) banquet scenes and attempted an explanation. He noted the frequent occurrence of what he called ‘chaplets’, referring to ribbons and garlands, sometimes bound with flowers, gems or made of material such as wool. He correlated the wreaths and ribbons with the symbolism of a festive occasion. He elaborated on the custom of the ancient people wearing crowns and garlands at banquets by quoting Greek and Roman authors. He also suggested that the significance of wreaths and ribbons may be related to sacred, or funerary rites, and suggested an analogy to the Roman ‘*infulae*’, again substantiating his argument from Greek and Roman literary sources. He concluded that wreaths and ribbons were primarily festive, and at the same time had a sacred importance. De Marinis (1961: 56-7) remarked on the frequent inclusion of garlands in the banquet scenes, but did not give an explanation as to their significance. Fehr (1971: 39) researched the custom of wearing wreaths at banquets and the decoration of the surroundings with garlands, placing this custom within eastern origins.

Banquet scenes on couches and chairs located in the indoors:

The majority of the scenes where banqueters recline on couches or sit on chairs do

not have any single outdoor indicator. Therefore, most banquet scenes where the participants reclining on couches, are set indoors. These fifteen examples are from the Tomb of the Bigas, the Tomb of the Kithara Player, the Tomb of the Little Flower, the Tomb of the Black Sow, Tomb 5513, the Tomb of the Biclinium, the Tomb of the Deer Hunt, the Maggi Tomb, the Tomb of the Cock, Tomb 1200, the Tomb of the Pygmies, Tomb 2327, Tomb 3697, Orcus I Tomb, and the Tomb of the Shields.

Banquet scenes on couches and chairs located in the outdoors:

Of the banquet scenes on couches and chairs, eleven have items that are also seen in scenes undoubtedly set outdoors. The objects are wreaths, ribbons, trees and plants. These tomb scenes are found in the Bartoccini Tomb (wreaths), in the Tomb of the Old Man (ribbons), the Tomb of the Triclinium (ribbons), in Tomb 808 (wreaths), and in the Tomb of the Painted Vases (wreaths and ribbons, trees and small plants), in the Tomb of the Leopards (trees and small plants), in the Tomb of the Ship (trees and small plants), in the Tomb of the Blue Demons (trees and small plants), in the Tomb of the Maiden (trees and small plants), in the Querciola I Tomb (trees and small plants), and in the Tomb of the Warrior (trees and small plants).

It may be noted that wreaths and ribbons cannot always be distinguished due to the poor preservation of the original painting. Wreaths may be more suited as outdoor indicators as they are made of fresh leaves and blossoms; whereas ribbons are made from cloth (admittedly plants, too, in a more materialistic context). However, colourful ribbons are used even today to decorate picnics and al-fresco-dining locations. In addition, as Dennis (1878: 394-396) has stated, ribbons may have been decorated and interwoven with fresh blossoms. Therefore, it may not be necessary to divide ribbons from wreaths in too strict a manner, which is in accordance to Dennis descriptions of different materials used for ribbons and garlands.

The Tomb of the Mouse, where two banqueters recline on the ground, and one banqueter on a couch, is set outdoors. The ground on which the two banqueters lie is made from a bed of leaves; there are flowers in the scene, and ribbons in the background.

Banquet scenes on the ground, on mattresses, located outdoors:

Of the scenes where banqueters recline on the ground, on mattresses, all but three have outdoor indicators. All other paintings where the banqueters recline on the ground, with or without mattresses, are set outdoors. These tombs and their indicators are the Tomb of the Lionesses (branches held by the banqueters, wreaths in background), Tomb 5039 (different types of trees, bowl set on a bed of leaves), Tomb of the Tarantola (ribbons), Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (wreaths, birdcage, vases on beds of leaves), Tomb of Olympic Games (variety of plants), Tomb 5898 (a *hydria* on a bed of leaves), Tomb of the Frontoncinio (wreaths), Tomb 1999 (trees, ribbons), and Tomb 4780 (ribbons, perhaps bed of leaves on which vases are placed, original is too faded to determine this detail with certainty). To sum up numerically, nine out of nine scenes that could be analysed in sufficient detail, with banqueters reclining on the ground, are set outdoors. The three tomb paintings where banqueters recline on the ground, but their location is in question are the Tomb of the Lionesses II (cat. No. 29), Tomb 994 (cat. No. 52), and the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45). However, the paintings from the Tomb of the Lionesses II and Tomb 994 are preserved in fragments only. Outdoor indicators may have been included in the scenes and may now be lost.

Tomb 994 is without outdoor indicators. The painting of the banquet scene is very fragmentary and faded. Outdoor indicators may have been present in the original, but are now lost. The banquet scene is set above a scene with animals. It is not possible to determine, due to the ruined state of the painting, whether the banqueters recline on a decorative frieze that separates them from the animal scene underneath, or whether an actual mattress is shown which would place the banqueters in the same location as the animals, which would be an outdoor setting. A similar scene is shown in the Tomb of the Lionesses (cat. No. 28). Two banqueters hold a branch each in one of their hands. A scene with dolphins, flying fish and sea birds is painted underneath them. The composition evokes an atmosphere of a picnic on the seashore. The second tomb without outdoor indicators is the Tomb of the Lionesses II. The tomb painting is now too fragmentary and ruined to determine its original details.

The third scene in question is from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed. This painting is said to be unique not just in subject matter, but also because of iconographic items included in the image. Scholars have analysed the subject matter and artistic details from a variety of viewpoints (Dennis, 1878: 317; Messerschmidt, 1929: 521-2; De Marinis, 1961: 49, Jannot, 1984: 363f; Weber-Lehmann, 1985: 40-4). The different religious and ritualistic interpretations of the scene are of no major concern here, but the visual elements and their significance. There is a baldachin prominently shown in the image. This depiction of a baldachin is not unique in Etruscan funerary art as stated by Steingräber (2006: 139). Such furnishing is also shown on an urn from Chiusi (cat No. 89; see subsection 5.1.5.). There, the banqueters recline on the ground, just as in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed, and a baldachin is shown above the banqueters, falling in regular folds. The baldachin in the scene of the tomb painting is entwined with foliage. Therefore, it is possible that the baldachin, especially since it is entwined with foliage, is an outdoor indicator. This is very plausible due to the nature of the usage of a baldachin. It shades the people who recline underneath it from the sun that shines...outdoors. Dennis (1878: 317) and Messerschmidt (1929: 521-2) draw the same conclusion.

To associate outdoor banqueting with the representation of certain indicators, such as textile awnings, shrubs and trees, garlands and scarves was also suggested by Spivey (1997: 109-110). Considering the above issues, it may be that the three tomb paintings in question regarding their location may actually be set outdoors. This would firmly place all Tarquinian banquet scenes that are held on the ground outdoors. An outdoor banquet held on mattresses also makes sense from a purely practical perspective. It is a lot easier to transport blankets, cushions and mattresses than wooden and/or metallic couches. Mattresses are also more sturdy on the ground than couches with four or six legs for which an even ground would have to be found.

Alternative interpretations as to why some banquets are depicted on the ground in comparison to reclining on couches: Weber-Lehmann (1985) presented two interpretations as to why some banquets are depicted being held on the ground. One is bound to the location of the banquet. Mattresses or ground level indicate outdoor settings, while couches indicate indoor settings. The second, alternative interpretation is that the mattress symbolizes a kind of shorthand imagery

abbreviating the event of banqueting to a few symbols such as reclining banqueters, with this shorthand image being located on the gable end of the tomb wall. She also postulates a limit for the banquets on the ground to within the Archaic period.

However there are scenes such as, for example, from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), or from the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37) overflowing with details of furnishings, clothing, accessories, and facial expressions and body language that suggest such a “shorthand” symbolism cannot be applied. Also, are there scenes such, as from the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42) where the banqueters recline on the ground, and the scene is painted along the main walls of the Tomb chamber, and not pushed into the limiting space of the gable. Small (1971: 53) reasons that reclining on couches versus on the ground may have developed out of the spatial requirements of a triangular pediment in which many banquet scenes in tombs are set, or of the long and narrow sarcophagus bands. However, this argument cannot be validated when looking at a numerical comparison of scenes being set on the ground or on mattresses. When comparing urn and sarcophagus scenes for example, there are twelve scenes on couches (three of them are on sarcophagi), while only five are set on the ground/on mattresses (one of them is on a sarcophagus). The artists chiselled out the banquet scenes onto comparatively small surfaces in comparison to tomb walls and used the space available to include couches.³⁰

Is banqueting on the ground gender exclusive?

That banquets on the ground tend to be exclusively male, as postulated by Steingraber (2006: 66) can certainly not be verified. Scenes from the Tomb of the Old Man, Tomb 4780, and Tomb 1999 all include female banqueters, with females even in the majority in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing.

Does banqueting on the ground support the depiction of inebriation?

The observation made by Weber-Lehmann (1985: 32-3) that banqueters shown (slightly) drunk, or/and asleep only occur when the banqueter is located on mattresses or directly on the ground, is certainly true. Examples include the scene from the Tomb of the Mouse, the Tomb of the Tarantola, and the Tomb of the

³⁰ See subsection 5.1.5. for a detailed discussion of funerary monuments.

Olympic Games. Steingräber (2006: 68) speaks about carousing and notes that such scenes appear to be set in groves, indicated by small trees, again making a connection to a more laissez-fair way of banqueting with an outdoor setting.

Sub-adult banqueters and their pose regarding the seating arrangements:

When analysing the paintings it became apparent that pre-adult banqueters are always shown seated on pillows. Children and teenagers do not recline either on couches or on the ground (on mattresses). They are an integral part of the scenes, for example in Tomb 5039 or in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing. However, they are shown with their specific way of banquet participation, by having their place on cushions.

In the Tomb of the Painted Vases, both children are seated on one chair, with the younger boy on his sister's lap. It is the only representation where children are seated on a chair, and not on cushions. The girl may be very close to becoming a woman (age and/or marital status related), and therefore has the privilege of being seated on a chair. Her elaborate dress and rich jewellery are very similar to the reclining mature woman's dress and jewellery. Nevertheless the seated female has the filial duty of looking after her baby brother. The boy's young age is stressed by his nakedness, and that he is clutching a duck chick.

6. The number of couches shown:

Twenty-five out of twenty-seven banquet scenes with couches were preserved in enough detail to allow a count of banquet couches. The number of couches in tomb 2327 (cat. No. 60) and Orcus I (cat. No. 64) cannot be made out any more due to the ruinous state of the paintings. There were five (20%) out of the twenty-five one-couch banquet scenes. These are to be seen in the Tomb of the Mouse, in the Tomb of the Old Man, in the Tomb of the Painted Vases, in the Tomb of the Little Flowers and in Tomb 808. Two-couch banquet scenes are shown in five tombs (20%) , which are the following: Bartoccini Tomb, Tomb 5513, Tomb 3697, Tomb of the Warrior and Tomb of the Shields. Three-couch scenes were chosen for the following tombs: Tomb of the Bigas, Tomb of the Kithara Player, Tomb of the Leopards, Tomb of the Triclinium, Tomb of the Black Sow, Tomb of the Deer Hunt, Maggi Tomb, Tomb of

the Cock and Tomb 1200. They add up to nine tombs (36%). Four-couch banquets were painted in five (20%) (or perhaps six, 24%) tombs with the Ouerciola Tomb I not being clear enough whether five or six couches are shown (see also discussion in De Marinis, 1961: 103-4). The tombs are as follows: Tomb of the Biclinium, Tomb of the Ship, Tomb of the Blue Demons, Tomb of the Maiden, Tomb of the Pygmies and perhaps Ouerciola Tomb I. The only five-couch tomb is perhaps Ouerciola Tomb I (4%).

As in subsections 5.1.1. and 5.1.2., it is not possible to deduce any socio-symbolic significance from the number of couches per banquet representation. A practical solution to representing the banquet with two couches, as was the case with the terracotta relief plaques is not to be applied to the medium of tomb paintings. The walls of the tombs are a sufficiently large space, and being easily viewed from ground level to have as many couches as needed painted, as wanted or suited the occasion. Taking the location of the paintings in family tombs, the number of couches may have depended on the wish of the person(s) who commissioned the frescoes. It seems that for the client commissioning the intimate scene of an elderly couple in the Tomb of the Old Man wanted to commemorate the love of husband and wife, who were sharing their affection until a mature age. Nobody else mattered to them.³¹

In the Bartoccini Tomb, two couches were shown occupied by men, and two chairs occupied by females. The interpretation of the scene as a family banquet with the older woman being the person of honour was given in the catalogue “Bartoccini Tomb”, cat. No. 26. Here, a formal family scene is presented, and we get an insight into how the Etruscan aristocracy dined with all family members present. Two adolescent males, most likely the sons of the honoured lady, recline on one couch to the left, and the husband reclines on his own couch in the centre of the scene. The lady sits to the right of the male family members, with a younger female, most likely her adolescent daughter sitting behind her. Since all eyes concentrate on the lady, she is the main person in the scene. She had to be seated separately since ladies do not occupy couches on their own in Etruscan society, even though she is the person of

³¹ For further discussion of the subject matter of the banquet scene from the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), see subsection 5.4.3. ‘Scenes with a numerical equality of males and females’.

honour. This results in having two couches for the males for this formal family banquet to adhere to aristocratic etiquette.

The four couches in the Tomb of the Ship and in the Tomb of the Maiden are filled with merry banqueters and it looks like all guests are enjoying themselves and each other's company. All faces and bodies are those of youthful people bursting with health and life. No differences regarding age or status can be distinguished. Whoever commissioned this tomb painting did not want to commemorate mature love or formal aristocratic etiquette, but the enjoyment of life with friends and/or family. This is best represented by having many people on many couches celebrating with you...the more, the merrier! Such an image of enjoyment may also be interpreted as to reflect the high status of the host who is wealthy enough to entertain such a relatively large number of distinguished guests (they certainly are distinguished because of their rich attires, jewellery and coiffeuses) with all the food, drink and entertainment necessary for a party.

To conclude, the number of couches does not represent any official socio-political or socio-cultural agenda, but is adjusted to each individual's ideas and ideals of what was to be presented as a memorable picture of life. This picture of life is not to be understood as an image of the underworld even though these banquets are located in tombs; they are far too varied and personal, indicating images of life.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

Out of forty paintings with banquet scenes where couches or reclining spaces are visible, thirty-seven were preserved in sufficient detail to analyse the number of people per couch or reclining space. Tombs 994 (cat. No. 52), Tomb 2327 (cat. No. 60) and Orcus I (cat. No. 64) are not preserved well enough to allow an analysis as to how many people recline on a couch or on an individual space. One person per couch/space is to be seen in the Tomb of the Mouse, in the Tomb of the Lionesses II, in both banquet scenes in the Tomb of the Olympic Games, in Tomb 5898, in Tomb 808, and perhaps in the Querciola Tomb I. Querciola Tomb I however, may show a three person per couch scene. These add up to five (13.5%), or perhaps six scenes (16%). Two people per couch or reclining space are by far the most numerous with twenty-six representations (70%). These are the Tomb of the Lionesses, the Tomb of

Hunting and Fishing, Tomb 1999, the Tomb of the Old Man, the Tomb of the Painted Vases, the Tomb of the Bigas, the Tomb of the Kithara Player, the Tomb of the Leopards, the Tomb of the Little Flower, the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Tomb of the Funerary Bed, the Tomb of the Black Sow, Tomb 5513, the Tomb of the Biclinium, the Tomb of the Deer Hunt, the Maggi Tomb, the Tomb of the Ship, the Tomb of the Blue Demons , the Tomb of the Maiden, Querciola Tomb I, the Tomb of the Cock, Tomb 1200, the Tomb of the Pygmies, Tomb 3697, the Tomb of the Warrior, and the Tomb of the Shields. Three people per couch are shown in the Tomb of the Frontoncino, the Tomb of the Funerary Bed and perhaps in the Querciola Tomb I. Querciola Tomb I, however, may show two couches with one and two people respectively, not one couch with three people. The three people per couch scenes add up to two (5%), or perhaps three (8%) examples. There is only one scene with four people reclining on the same space, namely in the Tomb of the Tarantola (3%). The Tomb 4780 shows five banqueters recline on one mattress (3%), while Tomb 5039 shows six people recline on one mattress (3%). The Bartoccini Tomb is a mix of one and two people per one couch (3%).

The vast majority of images show two people reclining on one couch or on one space. The next most numerous is the arrangement of one person reclining on individual couches. This may reflect the arrangements at banquet as it was customarily practiced in aristocratic life. Unfortunately we do not have any surviving banqueting couches or mattresses. We only have what is most likely a bedstead, made of bronze, from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb/Cerverteri (c. 650 BC).



Figure 5.3: Bronze bed stand from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb/Cerverteri (Source: Haynes, 2000: 78).

This bedstead/couch/daybed would only have accommodated one person. We can only look at the iconographical information presented in banquet scenes where in most of the representations one or two people recline per couch. It appears that this numerical arrangement was the customary way to dine in Etruscan Italy. The three (possible exception Querciola Tomb I), four, five, and six people scenes all have the banqueters reclining on the ground, on mattresses or blankets, or just on pillows. No couches are shown large enough to accommodate more than two people reclining at banquet. Three or more people reclining on one couch were, it appears, not “en vogue” for the Etruscan upper classes, either for practical and/or for socio-cultural reasons.

5.1.4. Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano

Nine out of ten known banquet scenes from these necropoleis could be analysed in sufficient detail and are included in study below. These are the Montollo Tomb, the Tomb of the Well, the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice, the Casuccini Hill Tomb, the Hill of Moro Tomb (all Chiusi), the Golini Tomb I/Orvieto, the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto, the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga/Sarteano and the Tomb of the Triclinium/Cerveteri. The Hescanas Tomb/Orvieto is not included in the study since the original is very faded overall and completely lost in places. It was therefore not possible to extract enough detail to include the scene in this analysis.

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/seated person?;

All paintings show all the banqueters reclining. The scenes where females are included show the women recline to the left of their male couch partners. These mixed sex scenes are shown in the Tomb of the Triclinium/Cerveteri (cat. No. 66), the Golini Tomb I/Orvieto (cat. No. 72), and in the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto (cat. No. 73). This arrangement is in strict congruency in comparison to the finds of the gendered seating arrangements from domestic-residential and other funerary

contexts. Therefore, it appears that a female reclining to the left of male couch partners is a socio-cultural convention or rule that was customarily applied and adhered to in Etruscan aristocratic society. Children are not shown in any of the convivial scenes.

Bloch (1959: illustration 89) describes an illustration of a reclining female from the Golini Tomb I. However, the female shown in the painting is the female supervisor of the banquet preparation scene. She is standing and she is busy organising the kitchen operation.

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

Seven banquet scenes could be analyzed as to the orientation of reclining. All banqueters in these convivial scenes recline right to left. This direction of reclining is strictly adhered to in all Etruscan scenes with reclining banqueters apart from the Murlo frieze plaque (cat. No. 1). The tomb painting from Chiusi, Sarteano, Orvieto and Cerveteri support that the direction of reclining from right to left is at least an artistic convention. It is plausible that the direction of reclining also has a socio-cultural significance since all but the Murlo scenes display this direction of reclining. Artists, certainly today, and perhaps in the past, enjoyed a certain level of artistic freedom. In Etruscan times, however, it is likely that the artist had to put into pictorial language the wishes of the person who employed him or her. The people who commissioned the tomb paintings were, or wanted to be tied into the language of aristocracy, of formality and social symbolism prevalent at their time among their peers. In addition, one of the universally understood, accepted and applied parts of the language was the direction of reclining from right to left.

The scene from the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice (cat. No. 69) and from the Tomb of the Moro (cat. No. 71), both Chiusi, could not be analysed because only textual reference material was available which did not give any information as to the orientation of reclining. No images or drawings were produced before the tomb collapsed (Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice) or the original was destroyed (Tomb of the Moro).

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground?;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

Out of the nine banquet scenes, eight were preserved with a complete enough image to determine whether people recline (or sit) on couches or whether they recline on the ground.

Banquet scenes on the ground/mattresses located in the outdoors:

Banqueters who recline on the ground are shown in the Tomb of the Well (cat. No. 68) where they recline on a mattress, in the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice, and in the Hill of the Moro Tomb, all Chiusi, where the diners recline on the ground. The Tomb of the Well banquet scene is preserved in fragments only. The two people who can be seen today recline on the ground, on a mattress. Of the surroundings, only the mattress, a pillow under the second banqueter's elbow, and a small table is visible today. Whether the location of the convivial event was indoors or outdoors cannot be made out any more. The Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice is described by De Marinis (1961: 21 and 108-9). She mentions that the banqueters holding ribbons and wreaths, and flowers. She does not specify which banqueter held what object(s). She also remarks on the many wreaths and ribbons hanging high in the scene. The combination of wreaths and ribbons, and the banqueters reclining on the ground can be taken as indication that an outdoor setting for the scene is intended. Of the Hill of the Moro Tomb scene, it can also be assumed that it is taking place outdoors. Three people can be seen who recline on one ground. The second banqueter holds a blossom in his hand, while the third banqueter holds a small leafed branch. The combination of the men reclining on the ground, with two out of three banqueters holding an outdoor indicator, strongly suggests an outdoor setting for the banquet. The scene from the Montollo Tomb/Chiusi (cat. No. 67) could not be analysed as only textual reference material was available which did not give any information as to whether the banqueters recline on couches or on the ground.

Banquet scenes on couches located indoors:

Out of the eight images, five show the banqueters recline on couches. These are the

Casuccini Tomb/Chiusi (cat. No. 70), the Golini Tomb I/Orvieto, the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto, the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga/Sarteano (cat. No. 75), and the Tomb of the Triclinium/Cerveteri.

The Casuccini Tomb has just one outdoor indicator included in the scene. The ninth banqueter holds a long leafy branch in his hand. However, when comparing the pictorial information from all the other banquet scenes, it appears that one branch held by one out of ten banqueters is not a strong enough indicator for an outdoor setting. Would there have also been wreaths or ribbons decorating the background, then the branch may have been viewed as an additional outdoor indicator. However, taking into account the evidence, an indoor setting can be assumed, since the banquet is held on couches, and no wreaths, ribbons, blossoms, small plants or trees are shown.

In accordance with the finds from subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.3. and 5.1.5., the absence of outdoor indicators, in combination with the banqueters reclining on couches, places the banqueting events from the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Casuccini Tomb, the Golini Tomb I, the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto, and from the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga indoors.

It may be noted that the scene from the Tomb of the Triclinium is the only *convivium* where round tables are depicted, not rectangular tables as in all other banquet scenes where such furniture is included. However, since we only have a nineteenth century drawing of the now lost original, the truthful reproduction of the tables may be questioned. Other banquet details are also not in accordance with the finds from the other Etruscan banquet scenes, and these are discussed in subsections 5.3.4. and 5.4.4.

6. The number of couches shown:

The five tombs that have banqueting couches as part of their banquet illustrations all showing a different number of couches. The scenes in the Casuccini Hill Tomb and in the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto comprise five banqueting couches. Golini Tomb I shows four couches on which banqueters recline. The scene in the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga has just one couch in the convivial scene, whereas the banqueters dine on two couches in the Tomb of the Triclinium. The variation of number of

couches in these banquet scenes is in accordance with the variation observed in the Tarquinian Tomb paintings. The fact that no rule as to the number of couches in banquet scenes seems to have existed in Etruscan banquet iconography gives support to the suggestion that the number of couches depended on the occasion that was being depicted. The more private and intimate the occasion, the fewer couches (consequently with fewer people) were chosen to be shown, and vice versa. The Tomb of the Triclinium perhaps shows a family banquet, with two couches. Both couples appear to be of the same age. Therefore, one generation of family members such as brothers/sisters and their wives/husbands may be represented on the tomb fresco. Quiet intimacy and decorum is the atmosphere presented by the image. In comparison, the Casuccini Hill Tomb scene which is a big party with five couches, all occupied with young men in their prime. It appears as if the enjoyment of each other's company is written in each single face and everybody's body language. They gesticulate animatedly with head and bodies turned backward and forward to ensure inter-couch conversation.

As with the Tarquinian tomb paintings, it is to be assumed that the number of couches do not represent any official socio-political agenda. It is much more likely that individual people's most memorable events of their very personal lives were to be showcased in these images. As said before, "the more the merrier" for some, while others preferred to take the most intimate of partners with them on the pictorial decorations of their last resting place.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

Two people reclining per couch are shown in the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Casuccini Tomb, the Golini Tomb I, the Golini Tomb II/Orvieto, and in the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga. The fragment preserved from the Tomb of the Well show two people recline on one mattress, while three people are shown reclining on the ground in the image from the Hill of the Moro Tomb. In the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice, five people recline on one ground space. The number of people in the Montollo Tomb not to be determined as no illustration of the complete original, which is now lost, is available. However, one reclining banqueter is shown in the drawing from the early eighteenth century.

All five tomb paintings that have couches on which the banqueters recline, show two people per couch. This fact is in accordance with the findings from Tarquinia. We do not know whether two people per couch were an Etruscan rule or convention. Considering the iconographic and archaeological evidence, it may be that having two people per couch was a practical and comfort issue, since more than two people on one couch would limit comfort and movement while banqueting and entertaining. That more than two people per reclining unit was practiced in aristocratic circles is shown, but then only when the banqueters reclined on mattresses, blankets or on the ground. This can be seen in the Hill of the Moro tomb where three people recline on the ground, and in the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice, where five people recline on one ground space. Therefore, sociability, practicability and comfort may have been the deciding reasons when showing two banqueters reclining per couch.

5.1.5. Funerary monuments

1. Is it a sitting or a reclining banquet, or a mix of both?;

2. Who is reclining, and who is sitting upright, and on which side of the reclining/sitting person?;

There is a clear chronological divide when looking at seated versus reclining banqueting. The two oldest representations (9%), both from c. 630 to 600 BC, show a seated banquet each. These two are the sculptures on the lid of the urn from Montescudaio (cat. No. 76), and the terracotta figures from the Tomb of the Five Chairs from Cerveteri (cat. No. 77). The urn has one banqueter only (preserved), therefore no formal seating arrangement is observable. He is seated in front of a table that has many (presumable) food dishes stacked on it. The dishes are shallow oval and round dishes, stacked three times two and one time four dished on top of each other. It is difficult to make out if these are actual vessels or if they are food dishes such as flatbread, or a combination of the two suggested possibilities. Two relief scenes (9%), the stelae cat. no. 79 and 80, dated to c. 520 to 500 BC show a mix of seated and reclining banqueters. The division as to who is reclining versus who is

seated is a gendered arrangement (see discussion underneath). All other images, from 550 to 460 BC, are all decorated with scenes of reclining banqueters. These add up to nineteen representations (82%).

Seated females and their place at banquet:

The Tomb of the Five Chairs has five chairs aligned along one of the walls inside the chamber tomb, with two tables set in front of the five chairs. When the tomb was opened by archaeologists, the five terracotta statues were broken and not in situ any more. To three of the five statues gender can be assigned. Two are female and one is male. The other two statues, of which only fragments survive, are most likely male due to the facial features found on the fragments. Since the statues were out of situ, it is not possible to reconstruct the original order of seating. This is very unfortunate since the Tomb of the Five Chairs the only known mixed-sex scene where all participants are seated. It is not certain that the figures represent banqueters. They may be ancestor figures, perhaps seated on thrones. However, since the figures had small tables set in front of them, and pottery was found near the tables, it is possible that the five figures are shown at banquet. Because of this possibility, the scene is included in this study. We cannot know whether the figures in the tomb were arranged in accordance with the Etruscan gendered seating arrangements that became obvious when analysing all the other banquet scenes in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5. The rules of seating are that females either recline or are seated to the left of reclining males when both share one couch. The other rule is that the females are seated on an individual chair to the right of the couch-reclining male partners. However, no couches are utilized in this banquet. To suggest a seating arrangement would be pure guesswork. What is certain is that there will have been a seating plan according to gendered rules as all other Etruscan banquets are arranged with regard to such formal social decorum. It is possible that the scene on the vase cat. No. 10 may show a mixed-sex seated banquet. If indeed a male and female at banquet are shown, then the female is seated to the left of the male.

The gendered seating arrangement that has been observed in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.4. when there is a mix of seated and reclining banqueters is also adhered to on the funerary monuments. On the stele cat. No. 79, a male reclines on a couch,

while a female sits on a chair to the right of the reclining male. On the stele cat. No. 80, two men recline on one couch while a female sits on a chair to the right of the reclining men. These two examples are in accordance with the gendered seating arrangements as found in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26) and Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58), both from Tarquinia (see subsection 5.1.3. for detailed discussion). In those two paintings, the seated females are placed to the right of the reclining males. These are the only four examples known in Etruscan banquet iconography where females are seated on individual chairs while their male companions recline on couches. In addition, all four times are the females seated to the right of the reclining males. This seating arrangement may therefore be a formal socio-cultural expression of gendered life in the aristocratic Etruscan world. The possibility of its adaptation from the Eastern Greek world of the sixth century BC was discussed by Steingraber (2006: 90).

All other banquet scenes on urns, sarcophagi and stelae, show all banqueters recline. Out of these nineteen scenes of conviviality, four include females. Of these four scenes, three have two people per couch arrangements, with the female to the left of the male. The fourth mixed-sex scene has a three people arrangement with the female in the middle of her male companions (cat. No. 86). This is one of only two existing examples for such seating arrangement, with the second example being the Acquarossa frieze plaques (cat. No. 2). The positioning of reclining females either to the left when pairs recline, or in the centre of three people units is congruent with the finds from all other mixed-sex reclining banquet representations discussed in the previous subsection. The remaining fifteen banquet representations are male only scenes. Young children are not included in any of the scenes, as these would be shown seated on individual chairs or pillows (see subsection 5.1.3. for examples).

3. The orientation of reclining (left to right or right to left when looking at the image):

The seated banqueter on the Montescudaio urn is sitting in front of a table. He sits on the periphery of the urn lid while the table is placed in the centre. The five sculptured banqueters in the Tomb of the Five Chairs were seated on five individual chairs with two tables in front of them. All nineteen representations where all banqueters recline

show them reclining from right to left. The two stelae where females are seated to the right of the reclining males show these males recline right to left. This means that without exception are all banqueters reclining in the same direction. This, and the overwhelming number of reclining from right to left when looking at the other example in Etruscan banquet iconography supports the notion that this direction of reclining was not just an artistic convention. It appears that it may have been a socio-cultural rule that was strictly adhered to by the Etruscan elite when being depicted at convivial events.

4. Are the people reclining on a raised couch or on the ground;

5. Furniture shown, inclusive soft furnishings, curtains and wall hangings, and other items surrounding the banqueters:

Of the twenty-three examples in this subsection, two have the banqueters sitting on chairs (cat. No 76 and 77), two show banquets with some participants sitting on chairs while others recline on couches (cat. No. 79 and 80), five scenes have all banqueters recline on the ground (one of the scenes, cat No. 86, clearly shows a mattress while the others show a ground space, cat. No. 87, 89, 90, 91), and fourteen images have all banqueters recline on couches.

Banquet scenes on couches and chairs located in the indoors:

In view of the correlation of reclining on couches indicating an indoor setting versus reclining on the ground/on mattresses indicating an outdoor setting, the following observations were made. Of the fourteen images that include couches as furnishings, ten had no outdoor indicators included in the scenes. This is a clear numerical majority of scenes with couches and indoor location due to the absence of outdoor indicators.

Banquet scenes on couches and chairs located in the outdoors:

The four images with couches and outdoor indicators are the Urn catalogue No. 84, the Urn catalogue No. 85, the sarcophagus catalogue No. 94 and 95. Images 94 and 95 are from the two head ends of the same sarcophagus from Chiusi. The scene on the urn catalogue No. 84 includes four ribbons and one tree as outdoor indicators.

The urn catalogue No. 85 has one wreath decorating the scene. The two scenes from the sarcophagus catalogue No. 94 and 95 have three wreaths each suspended from above.

Banquet scenes on the ground, on mattresses:

Of the nineteen scenes where all banqueters recline, five are set on the ground (cat. No. 86, 87, 89, 90, 91). The urn cat No. 86 clearly shows a mattress, while the other four representations do not distinguish a possible mattress from a ground space on which the banqueters recline.

The banquet scenes in subsection 5.1.1. to 5.1.4. all have a numerical majority of ground reclining banquets with outdoor indicators. Here, it is not the case. The scenes cat. No. 86, cat. No. 87 and cat. No. 90 all have the banqueters recline without couches, but no outdoor indicators are included in the scenes. However, the scene on the urn cat. No. 87 is preserved in a small fragment only, not showing the upper part of the scene, and only a very small part of the (lower) banquet scene overall. There is a lot of lost space that could have included outdoor indicators. The scene on the sarcophagus cat. No. 91 has two wreaths and a basket suspended from above, both being outdoor indicators. The banquet representation on the urn cat. No. 89 has an unusual furnishing included in its scene. A baldachin is shown which is suspended in regular folds over the banqueters. Such a furnishing is only also shown in the banquet scene from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed/Tarquinius (cat. No. 45). The interpretation on a baldachin as an outdoor indicator is supported by the fact that both the urn cat. No. 89 and the painting from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed/Tarquinius show the banqueters recline on the ground and on mattresses respectively. And, as noted in subsection 5.1.3., the fact that baldachins are used to shade people from the sun which shines outdoors is a very strong pointer as to the banquets being located outdoors. These combinations alone may be enough to locate both scenes into the outdoors, even if no further outdoor indicators are included in the scenes.

6. The number of couches shown:

There are twenty-one banquet scenes on which people recline. Five of these show

people recline on the ground. Of the sixteen images with banqueting couches, six (37.5%) have one-couch images (of which two also have one single chair). Eight representations (50%) have two couches in their scenes, with two of the scenes being carved into the two head-ends of the same sarcophagus. Two scenes (12.5%) show four-couch banquets each. The overwhelming number of images shows one or two couch banquet scenes. This may be related to the nature of the objects on which these scenes were carved, namely on urns, grave stelae, and sarcophagi. The space available on these media is limited. It is not comparable with for example with the (up to) four walls which were available to the artist who painted tomb walls with such scenes of conviviality. Indeed, urns and sarcophagi have four walls, too, but the absolute space is much smaller than chamber tomb walls, and to add more furniture etc, would have meant a loss of precision and detail for the scenes. This is one practical reason as to limiting the number of couches to two in all but two of these banquet scenes.

Another possibility may be, again tied to the nature of the media, that urns, stelae and sarcophagi are more related to one person only, while a chamber tomb may be the resting place of more than one person. An urn and a sarcophagus are to take the remains of one person, and a grave stele is to commemorate one person. Therefore, a more intimate scene may have been requested to represent this very one person. Just the spouse, or dearest family member or friend was to be depicted on such personal grave monuments that were the resting places for the person's remains. To depict big parties was not wished for by the majority of the commissioning Etruscans. Only two people wanted to show a big banquet on their urn, these being cat. No. 83 and cat. No. 96.

7. Number of people per couch or ground space/mattress/blanket:

Out of twenty-one scenes with banquets where couches or reclining spaces were visible, eighteen were preserved in sufficient detail to analyse the number of people per couch or reclining space. The urns cat. No. 87, 88 and 90 are preserved in small fragments only. An analysis as to how many people recline on a couch or on an individual space is therefore not possible. One person per couch/space is to be seen on the stele from Sancepolcro, and on the urn cat. No. 85 (11%). Scenes with one

person on one couch and two people on a further couch are shown on one sarcophagus. It has two banquet scenes, one on each of the head-ends. These are the cat. No. 94 and 95 (11%). Two people per couch scenes are on the following stelae, urns and sarcophagi: cat. No. 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98 (61%). Three people scenes are depicted on the urns cat. No. 86 and 89. These two scenes show the banqueters recline on the ground (11%). One seven-people scene is shown on the sarcophagus cat. No. 91 (6%). The people recline on one ground space.

The vast majority of images show two people recline on one couch (61%). As suggested in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.4., this may reflect the arrangements at banquet as it was customarily practiced in aristocratic life. More than two people may find the space on a banqueting couch rather limiting. This is supported by the fact that all images with more than two people reclining have these people recline on the ground, as is shown in the relief from urn cat. No. 86 and 98, and on the sarcophagus catalogue No. 91.

The iconographic evidence of above analysis supports the finds made in subsection 5.1.1. to 5.1.4. Three or more people reclining on one couch were not “the done thing” for the Etruscan upper classes, either for practical and/or for socio-cultural reasons.

5.2. Servants and their significance

5.2.1 Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings

While comparing and contrasting the banquet scenes, it has transpired that in Etruscan iconography servants are distinguished from banqueters by showing all which as attendants standing upright or standing and bending forward to fetch beverages or attend to the comfort of the seated or reclining banqueters. They are shown occupied in service duties such as serving beverages, playing musical instruments, or attending to the banqueters by adjusting cushions or providing entertainment. Being seated or being shown reclining is the privilege of the upper class banquet participants.

Revetment plaques from eight different locations are known. Of these, four are now too fragmentary to make any observations regarding servants who may have been included in the images. These are the frieze plaques from Cerveteri (cat. No. 3), from Roselle (cat. No. 6), from Veii (cat. No. 7) and from Rome (cat. No. 9). The Cerveteri plaques are similar to the Acquarossa and Tarquinia plaques, and the Veii and Rome plaques are from the same matrix as the Velletri banquet scene. Therefore, similar and identical compositions respectively can be assumed.

8. The number of servants in the image:

Some of the frieze plaques from Murlo (cat. No. 1), from Acquarossa (cat. No. 2) and from Velletri (cat. No. 8) are preserved well enough to conduct a detailed analysis. Only a limited analysis can be made from the fragments found in Tarquinia (cat. No. 5). The Murlo and Velletri plaques include the most servants in their scenes by showing four attendants each. The second most numerous attendants are depicted in the Acquarossa plaques that show three servants. One of three frieze plaque fragments from Tarquinia is preserved well enough to show one servant. Since the Tarquinian plaques are very similar to the ones from Acquarossa and Cerveteri, perhaps three servants were part of the overall composition of the banquet scenes. However, this is deduction by comparison and cannot be proven.

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

The duties of the attendants fall into three categories: beverage servants, musicians, and general assistants.

The Murlo plaques show two beverage servants, and two general assistants. One of the general assistants is adjusting one of the banqueter's soft furnishings, or mantle for more comfort, while the other general assistant seems to be conversing with a further banqueter. However, the conversing servant may have held a double flute as is suggested by the positioning of his arms and hands. The flute could have been painted only, not shown in relief, as was the case with the strings of the fourth banqueter's lyre (Small, 1971: 35). The duties of the four servants in the Velletri plaques are divided into one beverage servant, one double-flute player, one servant assisting the flute player, and one general assistant who is attending to the comfort of

a banqueter by adjusting the banqueter's blanket and perhaps giving him what looks like a shoulder massage. The Acquarossa assistants comprise one double-flute player, one lyre player and one beverage servant. The Tarquinian assistant visible in the one fragment is a beverage servant.

When looking at the numerical ratio of the twelve servant's duties from all the frieze plaques added together, the following observation has been made: there are five beverage servants (42%), four general assistants (33%), two double-flute players (17%), and one lyre player (8%). This numerical observation suggests that it was most important to have beverages served by assistants when servants were included in banquet scenes in the first place. General comfort was nearly of equal importance, with music being the least prominent duty of servants in Etruscan banquet ideology, as found in domestic-residential contexts.

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

All servants in all the existent frieze plaques scenes are male. Gender can be assigned with the help of facial and body features, and with clothing, where applicable. All servants in the Murlo frieze plaques are fully clothed. The servants in the Acquarossa plaques wear tight fitting bodices and skirts reaching just below hip-line. The first servant on the Velletri plaques wears a loincloth baring his upper body, and the second servant wears a short tunic. Of the third servant, only his naked upper body is visible, while the fourth servant is nude. The (at least) partial and the complete nudity of the servants three and four on the Velletri plaques may be in relation to the youth of the servants. Both assistants are shown smaller in body size than the other two, clothed, servants. Smaller body size denotes young people in Etruscan art. This can be seen, for example, in the frescoes from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32) and the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), both Tarquinia, where children are depicted as miniature adults. Therefore, the small body size may reflect young servants. It is certain that they are servants since they are standing upright, in addition to being naked. No respectable Etruscan is shown participating naked at banquet. The custom of having naked servants may be the result of eastern influence. The Near Eastern and Greek customs of having naked servants at banquet was discussed in detail by Fehr (1971: 101) and the possible adaptation by the Etruscans

by Weber-Lehmann (1985: 31-2).

Female attendants and their duties:

The duties of servants in Etruscan banquet scenes encompass beverage servant, double-flute player, lyre player, and general assistant. When looking at the duties from a gendered perspective, it can be observed that beverage servants and musicians are always male. This is the case in all Etruscan banquet representations, not just on the revetment plaques. Female servants rarely hold any items, or are directly associated with any objects. They may occupy the role of general assistant looking after the comfort of the banqueters. They are never shown in the roles of beverage servant or musician. Rathje (2004: 219) tentatively assigned female gender to the flute player in the Murlo relief. However, she does not substantiate her suggestion whether she bases this observation on clothing, body and facial features, or on the person playing this particular instrument. When comparing the flautist to the other male servants and banqueters, no differences are observable in clothing, hairstyle, or body and facial features to define this person as different, as female. This person, if female, would be the only female flute player depicted in any Etruscan banquet scene. Flautists are exclusively male. Due to the pictorial information we can gather, and the comparative information from all other banquet scenes, male gender should be assigned to the flautist.

5.2.2. Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory

As stated in subsection 5.2.1., in Etruscan banquet iconography servants are distinguished from banqueters by showing them as attendants standing upright or standing, bending forward to fetch beverages or attend to the comfort of the seated or reclining banqueters. They are shown occupied in service duties such as serving beverages, playing musical instruments, or attending to the general comfort of the banqueters. Being seated or being shown reclining is the privilege of the upper class banquet participants. This imagery is consistent across the different kinds of objects.

Pottery

8. The number of servants in the image:

Three out of six banquet scenes on pottery objects include two servants (cat. No. 10, 11 and 12). One of the pottery objects shows one servant (cat. No. 13). Of two further pottery objects, there are only fragments. One of the fragments shows one servant (cat. No. 16). More servants may have been included in the scene. The other fragment, belonging to another vase, shows an outstretched arm which holds a bowl in its hand, and it looks like the bowl is being offered to a banqueter (cat. No. 15). Since a further bowl and an *oinochoe* are visible in another fragment of the same vase, it is likely that the arm belongs to a beverage servant.

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

The duties of the attendants fall into four categories: beverage servants, musicians, dancers, and general assistants. Nine servants are visible overall, including the single outstretched arm on the fragment mentioned above. Four servants are general assistants who are not associated with any one object (44.5%), three are double-flute players (33.5%), one is a beverage servant (11%), and one is a dancer (11%). The dancer is an addition to the duties of the assistants in comparison to the banquet scenes from the terracotta frieze plaques (see subsection 5.2.1.). The dancer is shown in connection with a flute player. No other assistants are included. Visual and acoustic entertainment must have been important to the artist painting or the person commissioning the scene. It is unusual, in comparison to the findings from subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.5., that beverage servants are not in the majority.

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

Eight (89%) of the nine servants in all the pottery scenes are male, and one is female (11%). Gender can be assigned with the help of facial and body features, and with clothing or also the absence of clothing. The single arm assigned to a beverage servant belongs to a male (see explanation below). The men are shown either wearing tight fitting tunics allowing male physique to be seen (cat. No. 11, cat. No. 13, cat. No. 16), they are naked (cat. No. 10, cat. No. 12) or they display facial and body features (cat. No. 15).

The males cover all duties listed above as beverage servants, musicians, dancers, and general assistants. The arm that is visible in the fragment cat. No. 15 most likely belongs to a male servant, since beverage serving duties are almost exclusively covered by males, and only in two cases by female servants (see cat. No. 45 and 54).

The female on the vase cat. No. 10 wears an ankle length gown with a pronounced waistline and bosom. She is a general assistant. She does not hold any object in either of her hands. It appears that she is giving a massage to the seated female (?) banqueter in front of her. It is a recurrent iconographical theme that the vast majority of female servants are shown with their hands empty of objects, and that they are almost exclusively attending to female banqueters. the only exception to female servants attending on female banqueters can be seen in the Tomb 5513/Tarquinia (cat. No. 47).

Bronze objects

Of the eight bronze objects with banquet scenes, only three include servants in the scenes. These are the bronze sheets (cat. No 17), and the two mirrors (cat. No 23 and 24). The other bronze objects show banqueters only, and will therefore not be included in this analysis.

8. The number of servants in the image:

The three scenes where servants are included show one assistant each.

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

All three servants are beverage servants (100%). The assistant in the scene on the mirror cat. No. 24 is also playing with the family pet, a dog. As with the terracotta frieze plaques, the main duty of assistants was to serve beverages to the banqueters.

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

All assistants are male (100%). The servant on the bronze sheets either wears a tight fitting tunic or is naked. He has a male physique. The servant on the mirror cat. No. 23 has male facial features and is wears a long, loose tunic. The servant on the mirror

cat. No. 24 is naked, showing male physique. That the assistants who serve beverages are of male gender is in accordance with the pictorial evidence from most other banquet scenes. There are only two exceptions (Tomb of the Funerary Bed, cat. No 45 and Tomb of the Maiden, cat. No. 54) which will be discussed in detail in subsection 5.2.3. The serving of beverages is, in the vast majority of cases, reserved for male assistants.

Ivory

The ivory relief plaque does not include any servants. Therefore, an analysis as to the number, duties and gender of assistants is not applicable for this category of small finds.

5.2.3. Tarquinian tomb paintings

The findings as to who is a servant and who is a participant in the banquet from the revetment plaques (see subsection 5.2.1.) and small finds (see subsection 5.2.2.) are corroborated in the Tarquinian tomb paintings. In the Tarquinian tomb paintings, servants are distinguished from banqueters by showing all attendants standing upright or standing and bending forward to fetch beverages or attend to the comfort of the seated or reclining banqueters. In addition to being shown occupied in service duties such as serving beverages, playing musical instruments (double flute), and attending to the general comfort of the banqueters, they are also shown playing the lyre and as dancers.

Of the forty Tarquinian banquet scenes, thirty-nine are preserved with the banquet scene complete enough to either show servants or allow for the possibility of assistants being included in the scenes. The banquet from the Orcus I Tomb (cat. No. 64) is now lost without any detailed textual, drawn or photographed references. Of the 39 representations, the banquet scenes from The Kithara Player Tomb (cat. No. 41), the Tomb of the Cock (cat. No. 56), Tomb 1200 (cat. No. 57), the Tomb of the Pygmies (cat. No. 59), Tomb 2327 (cat. No. 60) and Tomb 3697 (cat. No. 61) are now too damaged, faded or partly lost to show these details. Therefore, thirty-three

scenes in total could be analysed in detail and are included in the study below.

In the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45) three attendants are focusing their attention on the funerary bed (Messerschmidt, 1929: 519). Therefore, they may be associated with a religious aspect of Etruscan life, and may not be servants at all but professionals dealing with funeral activities and rites. They may also be friends or family members of the deceased. Because of their unique representation, the two men and one woman directly dealing with the funerary bed are excluded from the analysis below since they may not be servants at all.

Again, as was stated in subsections 5.2.1. and 5.2.2., being seated or being shown reclining is the privilege of the upper class banquet participants.

8. The number of servants in the image:

There are thirty-three scenes included in the following analysis. The number of servants that can be made out with certainty ranges from no servants at all to six servants in one single banquet scene. Scenes with no assistants attending to the banqueters are to be seen in the Tomb of the Lionesses II (cat. No. 29), the Tomb of the Tarantola (cat. No. 31), the Tomb of the Olympic Games (cat. No. 33), and in Tomb 5898 (cat. No. 34). These add up to four tombs (12%) without any servants present. One servant is seen in the Tomb of the Lionesses (cat. No. 28), the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39), the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45), Tomb 994 (cat. No. 52), the Tomb of the Blue Demons (cat. No. 53), Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58) and in Tomb 3697 (cat. No. 61). These are nine tombs (27%) with one servant each. Two attendants are serving the banqueters in the Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36), the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42), the Tomb of the Little Flower (cat. No. 43), and in the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46). These add up to four tombs (12%) with two attendants each. Three servants are seen in the Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No. 27), Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), the Tomb of the Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), Tomb of the Frontoncino (cat. No. 35), the Tomb of the Bigas (cat. No. 40), the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 44), the Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49), the Maggi Tomb (cat. No. 50), the Tomb of the Ship (cat. No. 51), the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54), the Querciola Tomb I (cat. No. 55), the Tomb of the Warrior (cat. No. 63),

and in the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65). These are the most numerous with 13 banquets (40%) scenes with three servants each. Four servants are to be seen in just two tomb banquet scenes, namely in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), and in Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47). This adds up to 6%.

Six banqueters being waited on by six servants are shown in the Tomb of the Biclinium (cat. No. 48), which adds up to 3%.

The most obvious correlation would be the number of servants in relation to the number of banqueters who would like to be looked after. This is not the case. There are, for example, three servants looking after one couple and two children in the Tomb of the Hunting and Fishing, and three servants looking after three banqueters in the Tomb of the Frontoncino. Eight banqueters in Tomb 5039 are being served by three servants only. A similar situation can be seen in Tomb 4780 where five banqueters are served by one servant only. The opposite situation is presented in Tomb 1999 with two banqueters who are waited on by four servants. It is therefore unlikely that there is an artistic or a socio-political rule as to the number of servants a banquet should have. The impression one gets when comparing the images regarding the number of servants is that these were entirely up to the person who commissioned the scenes of conviviality. Perhaps, when the actual party was more of an issue, more banqueters than servants were “in the picture” as can be seen in Tomb 5039 and Tomb 4780. Where private wealth, luxury and the entertainment of all senses was the prominent atmosphere to be displayed, more attendants were included in the scene. This was done for example in Tomb 1999; and in the Tomb of the Biclinium, where each banqueteer has his or her own assistant respectively. To have a high number of servants relative to the number of guests may imply a higher status of the host than in images with a lower servant to guest ratio.

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

In the Tarquinian banquet scenes, seventy servants are visible in total. There are twenty-four beverage servants (34%). Twenty are general assistants (including one servant who also plays the flute in the Tomb of the Lionesses). This equals 29%. Ten assistants play the flute, of which nine play the double flute, while one plays a single flute and is also a general assistant (Tomb of the Lionesses). This equals 14%. Three

musicians play the lyre, one in the Tomb of the Black Sow, one Tomb of the Ship and in the Tomb of the Shields each. This amounts to 4%. In the Tomb of the Mouse, two dancers entertain the banqueters. This equals 3%. For eleven servants, of what is now preserved of the paintings is not sufficient to determine their duties at banquet. This adds up to 16%. As noted with the revetment plaques and the bronze objects, the beverage servants are the most numerical group of assistants, followed by general assistants, then musicians.

This numerical observation correlates with the findings in subsections 5.2.1. and 5.2.2. (bronze objects). It can be confirmed that the serving of beverages was perceived as the most important duty when including servants in banquet scenes. General comfort was nearly equally important, with musical and visual entertainment being the least prominent duty of servants in Etruscan banquet ideology.

It is not correct, as stated by Bonfante (1986: 233), that servants are shown bringing food and drink to the banqueters in the Tarquinian banquet scenes. Food is never actively served by any servant shown in the tomb paintings. Only drink is actively served by the assistants. There is only one possible exception where a servant may be offering a food morsel to a banqueter, which is discussed in subsection 5.2.5. (see cat. No. 82).

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

Fifty-seven out of seventy servants are male (81%). Twelve assistants are female (17%). The one assistant in the banquet scene from Tomb 808 is now too fragmentary to assign gender (2%). The numerical ratio of male to female servants is nearly 6 to 1. Female assistants are shown in only seven (21%) out of thirty-three tomb banquet scenes. Gender can be assigned with the help of facial and body features, and with clothing and jewellery where applicable. Only male servants are shown completely nude.

Female servants, their duties and their appearance:

We have two unique representations of female beverage servants. One is found in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45), and the other in the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54). This contradicts the observation made in subsections 5.2.1. and 5.2.2.,

and in subsection 5.2.4. and 5.2.5. where the serving of beverages is an entirely male domain. They are unique representations, unique for Etruscan banquet scenes from domestic-residential and funerary contexts. The female servant who holds an *oinochoe*, may be explained by the unique subject matter for the banquet scene for the Tomb of the Funerary Bed. The scene and its religious or otherwise symbolic meanings are discussed elsewhere.³² What needs to be stressed here, regarding the social importance is that the female cupbearer attends to female banqueters. This gendered servant - banqueter relation is adhered to here as in all other tomb paintings.

The other exception is the female servant from the Tomb of the Maiden. Her face and her hands and the object held are now lost. We have to rely on nineteenth century drawings and textual descriptions to learn about the vessel she held. The reliability of the Copenhagen facsimile (Moltesen and Weber-Lehmann, 1992: 27-9) is supported by the textual description of Dennis (1878: 314-315, Vol. I). The female attendant is shown holding a *kantharos*. She either offers the vessel to the lady banqueter to the right of her, or has just received it from her mistress. It is difficult to read from the image why a young female servant is shown holding a drinking vessel. However, again as with the image from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed, it is important to stress that the female servant is addressing a female banqueter. Social correctness may have been loosened to transcend, and to be more true to the banquet scenes decorating buildings in the domestic-residential context, where women are shown enjoying beverages. Women drinking at banquet can be seen on the revetment plaques from Velletri and Rome (see subsection 5.3.1.). It must be stressed that female attendants, not female banqueters are directly associated with drinking vessels in these two exceptions where drinking vessels are handled by females. The female banqueters who are attended by the female cupbearers all have hands that are empty of objects

The two dancers in the banquet scene from the Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No. 27) are male, while entertaining the banqueters with music is done by two male and one female servants in the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46).

³² See Dennis, 1878: 317; Messerschmidt, 1929: 521-2; De Marinis, 1961: 49, Jannot, 1984: 363f; Weber-Lehmann, 1985: 40-4.

Exceptions regarding the duties of female servants are the cupbearers from the Tomb of the Funerary Bed and from the Tomb of the Maiden, and the musician from the Tomb of the Black Sow. Otherwise female servants, consistent with the findings reported in subsections 5.2.1. and 5.2.2., are attending to the general comfort of the banqueters. Female assistants are found in the Bartoccini Tomb (attending to a female banqueter), in the Tomb of the Triclinium (attending to a female banqueter), in the Tomb 5513 (three attendants talking to the male banqueters), in the Tomb of the Biclinium (three attendants looking after one female banqueter each), in the Tomb of the Maiden (attending to female banqueters), and in the Tomb of the Shields (the attendant is holding a fan close to a lady banqueter). It is interesting to observe that very few of the female servants is actually holding any objects in their hands, with the exception of the female holding an *alabastron* in the Tomb of the Triclinium, a lyrist in the Tomb of the Black Sow, a *oinochoe*-holding beverage servant in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed, a servant holding a *kantharos* in the Tomb of the Maiden, and the fan-holding female attendant in the Tomb of the Shield banquet scene. All other female servants are gesticulating animatedly with their hands, or they are adjusting lady banqueters' mantles, blankets, and shawls. The female servant in the Tomb of the Triclinium was holding a *lekythos/alabastron* type vase. This vase is now lost due to the painting being damaged in this part. The information that the servant was holding such a vessel is from Ruspi's watercolour drawings, and from the written description of the banquet scene by Dennis (1878: 318; also described by D. H. Lawrence, 2007: 77).

In this context, it is important to stress the gendered servant-banqueter relationships. Female attendants are exclusively associated with lady banqueters. This observation is contrary to Weber-Lehmann's (1985: 41) who postulated that there are no gender distinctions regarding females/males serving female/male banqueters. However, the current research shows that it is an iconographic fact that females attendants serve female banqueters exclusively. There is only one exception, Tomb 5513, where three female general assistants look after an all male banquet party.³³ Izzet (2007: 85) and Steingraber (2006: 134) recognize female diners and

³³ There may be a further exception. The Montescudaio urn (cat. No. 76) may show a female servants attending to a male banqueter. However, the female is preserved in fragment only, and her purpose

wives in the ladies standing behind the males reclining on the couches. Izzet explains this with the beginning of marginalization of Etruscan women in Etruscan society, with this process of marginalization taken further in later tomb paintings such as in the Tomb of the Shields where *'the female perches on the couch, selecting food for him from the table in front of them. She has been demoted from a position on the couch as equal participant to that of a subordinate servant'* .

In both the Tomb 5513, and the Tomb of the Shields, Izzet (2007: 85) uses banquet iconography support her hypothesis that Etruscan women were not as influential as postulated by other scholars such as Bonfante (1986), Small (1994), Spivey (1997), Baglione (1989), Haynes (2000), or Rathje (1989, 1994, 2004). She picked two scenes, without looking and comparing these with other information that can be gained from analysing all Etruscan banquet scenes. Etruscan ladies of society are never shown standing. Only female servants are shown in such a pose. Therefore, the females in the scenes from Tomb 5513 are much more likely to be servants. In the Tomb of the Shields, the lady is not perched on the couch but seated, with the artist attempting to show perspective foreshortening. It is not her offering him food in a demure gesture, but him offering her food in a caring pose, since his arm is outstretched towards her. Also, it is a fact that female attendants are never shown in close physical contact with male banqueters, only with female banqueters when fixing the ladies blankets or shawls.

When looking at the female servants dresses, jewels and hair-arrangements, what Poseidonius remarked, noted by Athenaeus' in his *Deipnosophistae* IV.153d is certainly true "...Poseidonius ...'and among the Etruscans sumptuous tables are prepared twice a day, and richly coloured rugs are spread, and there are silver cups of every kind, and a host of handsome slaves stands by, dressed in rich garments.' It cannot be confirmed that the Etruscans were waited on by naked hand-maidens, as remarked by Timaeus in Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* XII.c14 and IV.c38. Timaeus, moreover, in his first book of 'Histories' adds that the slave girls among them serve naked until they grow to be adults...".. In confirmation of Dennis' (1878: 321) and Rallo's (1989: 149) findings, no naked hand-maiden can be found on any Etruscan painting or relief work showing scenes of conviviality. The only exception is the

may be interpreted in many different ways (see subsection 5.2.5.).

lyrist in the Tomb of the Black Sow. She is semi-nude with bare bosom and shoulders, wearing a richly decorated blue robe wrapped round her waist and lower limbs. She is the only (semi-) nude female servant shown in any of the Etruscan banquet scenes from domestic-residential and funerary contexts. Otherwise, all female attendants wear lavish dresses, shawls, mantles, jewellery, make-up and coiffure that do not distinguish them from the lady banqueters, who are members of the Etruscan high society.

The only differences between female banqueters and female assistants are that all the assistants are standing, and that some of the servants attend to the blankets, mantles and shawls of the sitting or reclining females. Female attendants fixing the blanket or mantle of her mistress are shown, for example, in the Bartoccini Tomb, in the Tomb of the Biclinium (one out of three female servants), and in the Tomb of the Maiden. It appears that the banquet representations in the Tomb of the Triclinium and in the Tomb 5513 show the female attendants chatting and gesticulating with the banqueters. This is a 'duty' not associated with male servants. Perhaps in Etruscan times men were not as gifted as women at chatting!

Male servants, their duties and their appearance:

While male assistants cover all duties shown in banquet scenes, female assistants are hand-maidens and entertainers only, but with the two above discussed exceptions. The term hand-maiden is to be understood as a duty which encompasses the general comfort of the guests such as adjusting the banqueters cushions, mantles and shawls (for example in the Bartoccini Tomb, in the Tomb of the Biclinium, and in the Tomb of the Maiden) or what looks like chatting to the guests (for example in the Tomb of the Triclinium and in Tomb 5513). Hand-maidens are female attendants who are shown without any particular object in their hands.

Males are shown from all ages, and dressed in a great variety of clothing, from elaborate costumes to being naked. Nakedness, as mentioned in previous subsections, may refer to the young age of a servant. It is, however, not correct that male servants are more often shown in the nude than clothed as stated by Small (1994: 88 and 93 No. 51). Most servants are shown with the torso naked while wearing a skirt or loincloth. Musicians are always fully clothed in a tunic. Therefore,

Diodorus of Sicily (5.40.3) is describing the attendants at Etruscan banquets more truthfully when saying that the servants are numerous, handsome and dressed in clothes more costly than can be expected for a slave. Poseidonius, quoted by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophists* 4.153d) confirms this observation by saying that many handsome slaves stand by at banquet, dressed in rich garments. That the slaves were indeed handsome and well looked after can be seen in representations such as in the Tomb of the Leopards, the Tomb of the Triclinium or in the Maggi Tomb where the bodies of the male attendants are very well sculptured by muscles and a matching 'six-pack', the hair well looked after and the facial features are indeed handsome, at least on a subjective level.

However, it may be correct to distinguish naked servants versus dressed servants according to their assigned duty as suggested by Small (1994: 88). She remarked on the nudity of cupbearers. This is true in banquet scenes from funerary context. Nevertheless, the cupbearers are fully clothed in the revetment plaques from Murlo; they wear a skirt on the Acquarossa and Velletri plaques. Being shown without clothing may, however, reflect on the youth of the naked male servant. It is an iconographical fact that none of the naked servants is shown with mature facial features such as a beard or grey hair, or with well shaped chest muscles with which to assign a more mature age. They are also shown smaller in size in comparison to other, dressed servants and banqueters. To show younger people looking like miniature adults was an artistic convention in the antique world before the use of realistic portraiture was developed in the Hellenistic era. Examples from the Hellenistic era include the *Spinario* and the Boy strangling a Goose, both in the Capitoline Museum, Rome; or the statue of a young girl exhibited in the Brauron Museum in Markopoulo Mesogeias, Greece.



Figure 5.4: *Spinario*, 1st century BC (Source for image: <http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/italy/rome/capitolinemuseumone/spinario.html>)

Figure 5.5: *Boy with a Goose*, c. 200 BC (Source for image: <http://www.superstock.com/stock-photos-images/1848-265759>)

Figure 5.6: *Girl from Brauron*, 2nd century BC
(Source for image: <http://www.search.com/reference/Brauron>)

5.2.4. Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano

It has been shown in subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.3. and 5.2.5. that servants are distinguished from banqueters by representing them standing upright or bending forward to fetch beverages or attend to the comfort of the seated or reclining banqueters. The tomb paintings discussed in this subsection show the servants in all duties described in the previous subsections, but not as dancers as shown in one Tarquinian banquet scene (cat. No. 27). The attendants are serving beverages, playing the double flute or the lyre, and are attending to the general comfort of the banqueters. Being seated or being shown reclining is the privilege of the upper class banquet participants.

Of the ten painted banquets, eight are preserved with the scene complete enough to determine whether servants were included in the scenes. The banquet scenes from the Montollo Tomb (cat. No. 67) and from the Hescanas Tomb (cat. No. 74) are not included here since only textual reference material is available which does not mention any servants. Unfortunately, no drawings or photographs were made before the originals were lost. The Hescanas tomb was destroyed and the Montollo Tomb scene is now too faded in some parts and lost in other parts. The banquet scene from the Hill of the Moro Tomb (cat. No. 71) is included in following analysis. However, the description of the scene is based on a textual reference by Dennis (1878: 342-343, Vol. II). The original is now lost.

8. The number of servants in the image:

The number of servants in the eight banquets ranges from one to four servants.

One servant each are depicted in the Tomb of the Well (cat. No. 68), in the Tomb of the Moro, and in the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga (cat. No. 75). The three tombs equal 37.5%. Two servants are depicted in the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice (cat. No. 69), Casuccini Tomb (cat. No. 70), the Golini Tomb I (cat. No. 72), the Golini Tomb II (cat. No. 73). These four tombs equal 50%. Four servants are shown in the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 66), which represents 12.5%.

As with the paintings in the Tarquinian chamber tombs, the rather obvious

and logical correlation of more banqueters with more servants is not followed in these *convivia* either. For example, one servant is looking after two banqueters in the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga, while two servants are looking after ten banqueters in the Casuccini Tomb. Two servants are looking after eight banqueters in the Golini Tomb I, while four servants are looking after four banqueters in the Tomb of the Triclinium.

It appears, consistent with the finds from the Tarquinian banquet scenes, that sometimes the party itself was the image the person commissioning his or her ideal *convivium* wanted to present as the main feature of the banquet scene. Boisterous young men making merry at a 'bachelor's or men's only' party may be depicted in the Casuccini Tomb. Other times, aristocratic formality, decorum and ostentatious display of wealth and luxury were the message and atmosphere to be conveyed. This could have been the case in the Tomb of the Triclinium.

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

The banquet scenes presented here show a total of fifteen servants. Eight (53%) of the fifteen attendants are beverage servants, three (20%) are lyre players, two (13.5%) are general assistants, and two (13.5%) are double flute players. The numerical majority of beverage servants, followed by musicians and general assistants is in exact accordance with the distribution of duties found on the revetment plaques (subsection 5.2.1.), on small finds (bronze objects, subsection 5.2.2.), and in the Tarquinian tomb paintings (subsection 5.2.3.).

The service of beverages is the duty most often assigned to Etruscan banquet attendants. However, one might expect to find a relatively high number of beverage servants to serve, presumably alcoholic beverages, at parties where apparently boisterous young men enjoy each other's company. The Casuccini Tomb shows a group of ten young male merrymakers being waited on by just two beverage servants. The serene and decorous atmosphere of the Tomb of the Triclinium shows two beverage servants for four banqueters. Therefore, more beverage servants may not necessarily equate to more consumption and more merrymaking. When looking at the distribution of duties according to percentages, general comfort and musical entertainment was a little less represented in the images compared to the service of

beverages.

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

All attendants are male. This is little surprising when looking at the duties of beverage servant, general assistant and musician. Of the twelve attendants, eight are beverage servants, and five are musicians. It was shown in the subsection 5.2.1. to 5.2.3. and 5.2.5. that in Etruscan banquet iconography, these two duties are almost always covered by males only, very rarely by females. The eight banquet scenes presented here confirm this division of gendered servant duties. That the two general assistants are male, too, may have been the choice of the commissioning person, not a socio-cultural rule that was adhered to, since being a general assistant was covered by males and females. That no females are shown may also be connected to the statistical probability of showing females in the first place. For example was the ratio of male to female attendants in the Tarquinian scenes 6 to 1, and female servants were shown in only six out of thirty-nine tomb banquet scenes. It follows that to have a female attendant in one of the five tomb paintings has a low probability by statistical reasoning.

Another explanation for the absence of female attendants may be the fact that of the eight scenes included in this analysis, five show all-male banquets. As discussed in subsection 5.2.1. to 5.2.5., it is a fact that when all-male banquets are displayed, the attendants are also male, but with the exception of Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47) and perhaps the female person on the Montescudaio urn (cat. No. 79). The combination of the majority of scenes being all-male banquets, and the statistical distribution of male to female banqueters may explain the absence of female attendants in these banquet scenes.

5.2.5. Funerary monuments

It was shown in subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.4. that servants are distinguished from banqueters by showing all attendants standing upright or standing, bending forward to fetch beverages or attend to the comfort of the seated or reclining banqueters. The

scenes of conviviality discussed in this subsection show the servants in all duties listed in the previous subsections. They are serving beverages, playing the double flute or the lyre, they are dancers, and they are attending to the general comfort of the banqueters.

Of the twenty-three banquet scenes, two are not included in this analysis. The urns cat. No. 88 and cat. No. 90 are very fragmentary and in the fragments preserved, no servants are visible.

8. The number of servants in the image:

Of the twenty-one banquet scenes, three *convivia* have no servants present (14%). Ten banquets are attended by one assistant each (48%). Three scenes have two attendants each (14%). Three (9.5%) and four (9.5%) servants are in two scenes each respectively. One scene shows ten assistants (5%).

9. Duties of servants (serving, musicians, conversing):

In the banquet scenes, forty servants are visible in total. There are fourteen beverage servants (35%). Ten are general assistants (25%). Musicians are divided into six double flute players (15%) and two the lyre players (5%), while one servant appears to handle objects reminiscent of *castagnettes* (2.5%; urn cat. No. 97). There are two dancers (5%), one food servant (2.5%), one male attending to a dove (2.5%), and one attendant holding a twisted funnel shaped object (2.5%; urn cat. No. 97). Two assistants' duties are not to be determined any more since they are too fragmentary (5%).

On the urn cat. No. 82 one servant is serving food. That he is serving food indeed is clearly shown by the pose with which he presents a bowl to the banqueter, and by the position of the banqueters' hand and fingers picking some small finger food from the bowl. This is a unique representation of food being served by a servant to a banqueter. No other Etruscan banquet scene shows an attendant with this specific duty, apart from one possible exception. This is the female attendant on the Montescudaio urn. She may be serving food to the seated, single male banqueter. Rathje (2004: 217) assigned the duty of a fan-bearer to the female attendant. Another female attendant in exactly this duty can be seen in the painting from the Tomb of

the Shields/Tarquinia (cat. No. 65). However, since both her arms are broken off from the elbows downwards, her specific responsibilities can only be guessed, but not determined with certainty.

Both assistants depicted on the urn cat. No. 97 are unusual regarding the gesturing and objects held. The first servant is male. He holds two items in each of his raised hands. The objects are slightly fluted from one end to the other. De Marinis (1961: 27, No. 82) interprets the man as being a flute player. However, no other representations of a flute show such a variant of the instrument. In addition, the man does not hold any of the two objects to his mouth. He rather waves them high up in the air. They may be a type of castagnette or a similar percussion instrument. The second servant is female. She holds an object in her left hand which looks like a 360 degree twisted funnel. What the object actually was not determined by Etruscologists so far. De Marinis (1961: 27, No. 82) describes the female as a dancer. However, it is not likely that she is a dancer because the woman does not have her body contorted in dance movements as for example the maenads in the relief on the sarcophagus cat. No. 92, or on the scene on the urn cat. No 85, or the dancers from the Tomb of the Triclinium/Tarquinia (cat. No. 44). Perhaps is the object she is holding a musical instrument, since the male servant is a musician, too. However, the duty of the female cannot be determined with certainty.

10. The gender of servants and their assigned duties:

Thirty-six (90%) of the forty servants are male. Four (10%) assistants are female. This makes it a 4:1 ratio of male to female servants that is consistent with the finds from subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.4. The one assistant in the banquet scene from urn cat. No. 87 is now too fragmentary to assign gender to with certainty. However, the assistant was included in the males since the foot and lower leg visible are naked. Female assistants wear ankle length tunics. Gender can be assigned with the help of facial and body features, and with clothing and jewellery where applicable. While examining the Etruscan banquet scenes it became evident that only male servants are shown semi or completely nude.

Fourteen male assistants serve beverages. Ten are general assistants of which one is female. Six play the double flute, of which one is female. Two assistants are

dancers, one male and one female. Two males play the lyre, one male plays perhaps the castagnttes. One male is attending to a dove, and one serves food to a banqueter. One female assistant holds a 360 degree turned funnel-shaped object, and one female and one male is too fragmentary to determine their duties. Consistent with the finds from subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.4., serving beverages is an entirely male duty. Most lyre players and most flute players are also male. The urn cat. No. 85 is unique in banquet iconography by showing a female double flute player. This specific scene also incorporated two dancers, one male and one female, and a beverage servant who is also a wreath bearer. The scene overall emphasises an atmosphere of entertainment by dance and music, not stressing the *convivia* itself. Female entertainers are numerous in Etruscan art and can be seen for example on urns from Chiusi (both c. 500 BC),



Figure 5.7: Dance scene on an urn from Chiusi
(Source: <http://www.piney.com/MuHarpRev.html>)



Figure 5.8: Dance scene on an urn from Chiusi
(Source: authors own photography)

or in the Tomb of the Triclinium/Tarquinia (cat. No. 44),

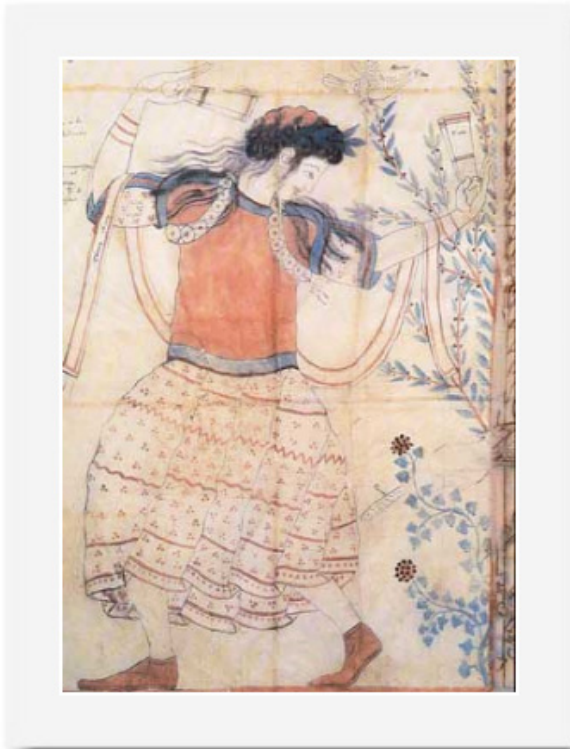


Figure 5.9: Drawing of a dance scene from the Tomb of the Triclinium/Tarquinia,
c. 470 BC

(Source:

[http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Triclinio/index.
htm](http://www.canino.info/inseriti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Triclinio/index.htm))

or in the Tomb of the Lionesses/Tarquinia (cat. No. 28)



Figure 5.10: Dance scene from the Tomb of the Lionesses/Tarquinia, c. 520-510 BC
(Source: http://www.canino.info/inserti/monografie/etruschi/tombe_tarquinia/Leonesse/index.htm)

and in the Tomb of the Cock/Tarquinia (cat. No. 56)

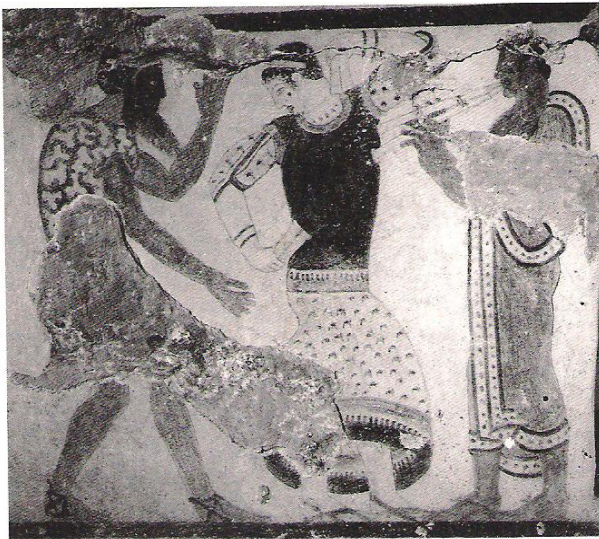


Figure 5.11: Dance scene from the Tomb of the Cock/Tarquinia, c. 400 BC
(Source: Spivey, 1997: 113, illu. 97)

Perhaps the scene on the urn cat. No. 85 shows entertainment as the primary objective while the lords recline; not the lords at banquet with entertainment as

secondary background.

The only other female whose duty can be determined is the general assistant from the urn cat. No. 96. Her duty of general assistant is in congruency with the duties undertaken by the other female servants in the banquet scenes from domestic-residential contexts and from the other media in the sphere of the funerary world.

Small (1971: 60-61) argues that on Chiusine banquets, most servants carrying *oinochoi* and bowls are female, based on the research conducted by De Marinis (1961: 61). However, De Marinis does not mention such findings. The findings presented in subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.5. clearly show that female servants are never associated with drinks vessels or any other types of vessels, apart from two exceptions (cat. No. 45 and cat. No. 54; see subsection 5.2.3. for detailed discussion).

5.3. The significance of food and drink

5.3.1. Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings

The vessels shown on the various frieze plaques are representative of actual banquet vessels for eating and drinking. Such vessels have been found during excavations at Murlo, especially in the sealed deposit of the so-called ‘Lower Building’. This banquet service from a domestic-residential context has been studied and the results published by Berkin (2003). Other excavation, for example at Acquarossa, San Giovenale, Chiusi, Vulci, Vetulonia, Roselle and Cerveteri, also brought to light pottery vessels which show great resemblances with those on the various revetment plaques (Karlsson, 2006; Lundgren and Wendt, 1982; Berggren and Berggren, 1981; Pohl, 1977). The banquet service found at the Latin city of Ficana also confirms that iconographic representations of banquet vessels correspond to real vessels (Rathje, 1983). Regional distribution of certain vessel shapes can also be attested (Nicosia, 1972 and 1974; Mangani, 1990; Nijboer, 1998; Berkin, 2003; Rasmussen, 1979).³⁴

³⁴ See also subsection 5.3.3. for references regarding excavations which support the notion that the material evidence is in large parts congruent with iconographical evidence.

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Revetment plaques with banquet scenes showing food and drink can be found at Murlo, Acquarossa, Cerveteri and at Tarquinia. Drinks, but no food, were enjoyed on the frieze plaques from Velletri and Rome. Andren (1940: 412) claims that food is included in the Velletri banquet scene. This, however, cannot be confirmed by the present study because only drink related vessels are shown. There are two lower tables, one each in front of the couches, but none of the tables has any food dishes placed on them. The plaques from Veii are too fragmentary to analyse whether food and/or drink was taken by the banqueters. However, since it appears that the Veii scenes were made from the same matrix as the Velletri and Rome plaques, it can be assumed that drink was included at banquet, but not food. The fragment from the Roselle banquet frieze shows a banqueter enjoying a drink. Whether food was also taken can now not be determined any more, since the frieze plaque is too fragmentary to show possible lower tables where food dishes might be set, as for example, on the plaques from Murlo and Acquarossa. There are no banquet representations where only food was presented to the banqueters.

12. Food: which vessels and food items can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Murlo:

Four vessels, two each placed on the two lower tables, contain round and oval items. From left to right, the containers on the first lower table are as follows: a shallow bowl with four slanting oval objects, a high-footed shallow plate, a high-footed bowl with four round items inside it, and a further high-footed plate. The vessels on the second lower table are, from left to right: a slim and high-footed plate, a high-footed bowl with four round objects inside, a high-footed and slightly broader plate than the first one, a broad bowl with four slanted objects inside it, and a cup (Rasmussen type 3, Rasmussen, 1979). The cup may be the drinks vessel belonging to the lyre player, who had to place it on the table to play the instrument (Rathje, 1994: 97). The shape and relative size of the items, and the fact that they are placed inside stemmed vessels, suggests that they are most likely food morsels such as fruit, dough/baked cakes or other finger foods. The third banqueter may hold one of the oval food items

in addition to the bowl. Rathje (1994: 97) suggests that it is some kind of fruit taken from one of the bowls in front of the banqueter.

Acquarossa:

The presence of food is suggested by having a variety of shallow bowls and plates set on the lower tables in front of the banqueting couches. However, no actual food dishes are shown in these vessels. None of the banqueters is associated with any particular one of the vessels shown on the tables. Therefore, it is not possible to obtain social status or gender symbolism in connection with individual banqueters from these food containers. Perhaps it was sufficient to show a selection of vessels, even without contents, to convey a message of opulence, generosity and wealth. Actual food may be shown in the following items held by some of the banqueters: the first banqueter on left couch may hold a thin “leg of lamb“, or a knife/*machaira* as suggested by Small (1994: 43); the middle banqueter holds an oblong object in her hand which could be a piece of bread-type food. The fourth banqueter, again, may hold a thin “leg of lamb” (or a knife/*machaira*), or some other food item. Whether the objects are indeed food items is highly debatable as the items held by these three banqueters are not easily identifiable and therefore open to interpretation. They could be food dishes because of the context of banqueting. It may be stressed that the “legs of lamb” are held by male participants, and the possible flat dough cake is held by a female banqueter.

Cerveteri:

Food is depicted indirectly by showing shallow bowls and plates on the low table in front of the single diner. These containers are presented on the low tables without specific food, and without being associated with any particular person. Therefore, no social status or gender symbolism can be obtained from these food containers. The single male banqueter preserved on the fragment is holding the “leg of lamb” (or a knife/ *machaira*) very similar to the ones held by the male banqueters on the Acquarossa frieze plaques.

Tarquinius:

There are shallow, empty bowls and plates on the lower table. Food is indirectly indicated by having these empty vessels on this banqueting table. These containers are presented without specific food, and without being associated with any particular person. Therefore, no social status and gender symbolism can be obtained from these food containers. On one fragment, a male banqueter is shown holding the “leg of lamb” (or a knife/ *machaira*). As with the Acquarossa and Cerveteri relief plaques, the “leg of lamb” object is associated with a male banqueter.

Findings regarding the inclusion of food and food vessels:

No banqueter is shown picking food from any of the vessels set on the lower tables. Only five (26%) of the total of nineteen the banqueters hold items which may be food dishes. These are the three banqueters in the Acquarossa frieze plaques, and one banqueter each in the Cerveteri and Tarquinia frieze plaques. It is four males who hold the blade shaped object. The interpretation of it being a food dish is just one of many. The description of the object being a knife/ *machaira* is equally valid. Whatever the item is, it is a fact that it is always held by male banqueters. The other possible food dish is held by the female banqueter in the Acquarossa frieze plaque. It is an oblong object that could be a piece of bread-type food or a very shallow bowl. The interpretation of the object being food related is contextual since a banquet scene is shown. The object may be unrelated to food. A secure identification is not possible, as the object is not detailed enough for such an analysis.

Why some revetment plaques include food, and others show drink only is not certain.

Small (1994: 87) suggested that perhaps the scenes show different stages of banqueting. The personages depicted may be at the stage of eating and drinking on the Murlo and Cerveteri plaques versus pre or after dinner drinks on the Velletri and Rome plaques.

When Etruscan banquets are shown without food but only wine drinking, Sassatelli (1999: 110) remarks that showing drink and entertainment could be the depiction of the final part of the event in which the banqueters drank to the accompaniment of musical and theatrical merriment, while the real banquet where

food was eaten had preceded the entertainment part of the event. Perhaps a different kind of festivity was shown; a meal with food and drink versus a drinking party only. Different customs of different regions may have been reflected in the plaques. Another possibility is that the people who commissioned the relief plaques at Velletri and Rome wanted to convey the ideological message encoded within banquet plaques but took a kind of shorthand imagery of people reclining on couches, with a few chosen banquet accoutrements which were sufficient to enable the viewer to understand the unifying concept of the banquet.³⁵

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Drink is enjoyed in the frieze plaques from all eight locations. The Veii banquet scene probably included drink since it is most likely that these plaques were made from the same mould as the Velletri and Rome plaques. Both plaques show drink being taken by the banqueters. However, the Veii frieze plaques are not included in following analysis, as no drinks related vessels are preserved on the fragments available to us.

It appears that all vessels held by banqueters are used for the consumption of beverages. That the vessels are used for the consumption of beverages can be deduced from the way the cups and bowls are held by the banqueters. The position of arms and hands will enable the banqueters to bring the vessels to their mouths and tip them towards themselves to drink from them.

Murlo:

Two banqueters hold simple, non-stemmed bowls (first and third banqueter), while the second banqueter holds a *skyphos*. Berkin (2003: 121) reports three different drinking vessels being held by the banqueters: hemispherical bowls, *skyphoi*, and *kylixes*. The depiction of bowls and *skyphoi* can be confirmed by the present study, but not the *kylixes*. The servant to the left of the image holds a bowl and an *oinochoe*, while the servant on the right of the image holds a two-handled deep *kantharos* and an *oinochoe*. The *oinochoe* held by the fourth servant is smaller than the one held by

³⁵ See subsection 3.1. Theoretical Perspectives.

the first servant. This may be an indication as to the kind of beverage served with the vessel, a reference to the status of the banqueter served with this smaller *oinochoe*, or a practical restriction since this servant's body is shown in a more elongated and in a narrower fashion than the other servants of reclining banqueters. The artistic composition has this servant occupying less space than the other persons shown. Therefore, the *oinochoe* may have been reduced in size, too. A *skyphos* is placed on the second table, but not associated with any one particular banqueter. What beverage was enjoyed cannot be determined with certainty. The use of *oinochoai*, however, indicates that wine was served at this banquet. In addition, there is a cauldron in the centre of the scene, in between the two banqueting couches. Cauldrons were customarily used at banquet in relation to the service of wine. In large open containers like these, wine may have been mixed with water (Rathje, 1994: 97; Berkin, 2003: 120).

Acquarossa:

Beverages are suggested by first banqueter on the left couch and the first banqueter on the right couch holding a two-handled cup each. The servant to the right of the scene fills an *oinochoe* with a beverage from the cauldron which rests on a stand. Cauldrons as this one are known to have been used to hold wine or wine mixed with water. The inclusion of the cauldron on the stand, in addition to the *oinochoe*, suggests that wine was enjoyed at this banquet.

Cerveteri:

On the very fragmentary frieze plaques, beverages are shown by the (one) man (preserved) holding a two-handled cup in his raised right hand. No other drinking vessels are preserved on the fragments.

Tarquinia:

On one of the plaques, the (one) banqueter (preserved) holds a two-handled cup in his left hand. One servant to the very left of the plaque is holding an *oinochoe* with his right hand. Since a servant is shown with an *oinochoe*, it may be assumed that wine was served at this banquet.

Roselle:

There is only vessel preserved on one of the plaque fragments (cat. No. 6 for illustration). It shows the banqueter holding a two handled cup in his left hand. No other vessels related to the service or to the drinking of beverages are preserved.

Velletri:

The plaques from Velletri show the greatest variety. The first banqueter holds a two-handled cup in her left. Her couch partner holds a long drinking horn, a *rhyton* in his left hand. On the second couch, the female banqueter holds a rather small, deep-bowled chalice with horizontal handles on both sides and a flaring stand. Andren (1940: 412) speaks of a *kylix*, while Berkin (2003: 123) refers to the vessel as a *skyphos*. However, the vessel held by the lady banqueter is neither type because the cup is too deep bowled and fluted to be a *kylix* and too fluted to be a *skyphoi*. To describe the vessel as a chalice is therefore the most closely suited to this shape and size. A servant, standing, at the left edge of the plaques faces the first banqueter and holds an *oinochoe* in his right hand. Therefore, wine may have been enjoyed.

Rome:

The lady who is the left person on the right couch is holding the rather small, deep-bowled chalice with a horizontal handles on both sides and a flaring stand, just like the lady banqueter in the Velletri plaques. The drinks vessel implies that beverages are enjoyed in this scene. No other beverage related vessels (and people) are preserved on the frieze plaque.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

Gender:

Male banqueters are seen holding drinking bowls (2x Murlo), *skyphoi* (1x each Murlo, Acquarossa, Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Roselle, Velletri), or a *rhyton* (1x Velletri).

Female banqueters are shown holding a *skyphos* (1x Velletri), and the small, deep bowled chalice with a horizontal handles (1x Velletri, 1x Rome). All the lady banqueter's drinking vessels are small, even dainty, when compared to the male

banqueter's vessels. Different drinking vessels held by the two female banqueters on the Velletri plaques may refer to different status. Such an interpretation was suggested by Rathje (1983; 1994: 97) in connection with the Ficana banquet set, and with the depictions of drinks vessels on the Murlo revetment plaques. Other suggestions as to the reasons for having two different drinking vessels in one banquet scene are presented in the next subsection. What is remarkable is that three females overall are shown holding drinking vessels. In funerary art, not a single lady banqueter is shown holding a drinks vessel. The reason behind this differential treatment of female banqueters from domestic-residential versus funerary contexts needs further research.

Status:

Banqueters

It has been suggested that hierarchical status is expressed by the banqueters holding differing drinking vessels (Rathje, 1983 and 1994: 97). This may be the case. However, the argument by Rathje cannot be substantiated by the iconographic evidence. Only in the Murlo and the Velletri banquet frieze do we have two different vessel types in one frieze plaque associated with specific persons. This can certainly refer to status differences. However, we cannot deduce exactly what kind of status is expressed by, for example the female holding the two-handled cup versus the female holding the elegant vessel in the Velletri plaques. Is one a magistrate, the other a priestess? Alternatively, they may be mother and daughter, representing a ruling dynastic lineage with the older being assigned a different vessel than the younger woman to represent the standing within an inheritable dynastic rank. The same questions may be asked with reference to the men in the Murlo plaques holding different types of vessels. It may be, however, that different beverages are served in different vessels, like wine versus mead, beer, or perhaps a spirit or a non-alcoholic beverage. It may also be the case that different vessels shown are meant to represent wealth as such which is the basis for owning a variety of drinking vessels. Perhaps people from different areas (of Etruria) are depicted and they each brought their own, location-specific drinks vessel. On the relief plaques, their region is therewith represented. This can be compared with south-west Germany where up to this day

the different vineyards serve their wines in region specific wine bottles and glasses. This would also be in accordance with the notion that Murlo functioned as a supra-regional meeting place (Rathje, 1994; Rystedt, 1984; Hague Sinos 1994; Torelli, 1989; Tuck, 2003; Edlund-Berry, 1994; De Grummond, 1997).

It has to be stressed that in all but the Murlo and Velletri plaques, only one type of drinking vessel is shown per scene. The Acquarossa plaque has two banqueters drink from one *skyphos* each. The Cerverteri, Tarquinia and Roselle plaques all have one banqueter each hold one *skyphos*. In the scene from Rome, a female is holding the deep-bowled chalice. Since most scenes show one person with one vessel, or two people with the same vessel type, status differences cannot be distinguished with such evidence. The evidence from only two out of eight frieze plaque banquet scenes where different drinks vessels are shown does not allow for a decisive conclusion as to the (possible) significance of these vessels. This evidence is even less prominent when looking at all ninety-eight scenes of conviviality. Only three further representations shows us two different kinds of drinking vessels in any one scene. There are the decorative friezes on the pottery chalice (cat. No. 10), the ivory carving cat. No. 25, and from the Tarquinian tomb painting from the Querciola Tomb I (cat. No. 55).

Servants

Only servants, never banqueters, hold *oinochoai*. The servants who are handling drinks related equipment are always male. One servant on the Murlo plaques is holding a *kantharos*. This makes the Murlo plaques showing the largest variety of drinking vessels with two bowls and one *skyphos* held by banqueters, two *oinochoai*, one bowl and one *kantharos* being handled by servants and one *skyphos* placed on a table, and a cauldron on a stand in the centre of the scene.

It is very useful to compare the findings from this analysis of the revetment plaques to the results from subsections 5.3.2. to 5.3.5. It is evident that when more than one banqueter is shown holding a drinks vessel, these vessels are (almost) always of the same type. With this knowledge, it is now possible to determine the distribution of drinks vessels and therewith the maximum number of participants at

banquet with the material evidence found at Murlo and Ficana.³⁶

5.3.2. Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory

Pottery

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Of the seven banquet scenes on pottery vessels, three display food and drink. These are the vase cat, No. 10, the chalice cat, No. 11 and the *oinochoe* cat, No. 13. Drinks only are to be seen in the fragments from the two Pontic vases cat. No. 15 and 16. Neither food nor drink is shown in the scenes on the *dolio* cat. No. 12.

12. Food: which vessels and food items can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Of the three scenes that include references to food, none shows actual food items. The consumption of food is indicated indirectly by having vessels on tables that are placed in front of the banqueters so that they may pick out some finger foods. The banquet scene on the vase (cat. No. 10) includes one small low-footed chalice set on the table. It is not associated with any of the two banqueters directly, but it is placed closer to the person in the left side of the image who holds a *kantharos*. The chalice (cat. No. 11) displays three chalices on the table in the banquet scene, while the scene on the *oinochoe* (cat No. 13) shows two shallow bowls or plates and one bowl on the banquet table.

It may be argued that these are vessels for drinking beverages, especially since the chalices are very much alike some of the chalices used for drinking. However, some of the banqueters already are holding vessels for drinking beverages, for example the banqueters on the vase (cat. No. 10). It is therefore possible that food containers are presented. However, it may also be possible that wealth and generosity are to be symbolized by variety of drinks vessels filled with (different)

³⁶ Berkin (2003: 121) posed the question whether the concept of a banquet service existed and if so, what the constituting elements of such a service may have been and the number of banqueters which could have been served with any such banquet set.

beverages.

It is not possible to assign status or gender to the banqueters by purely looking at the food vessels, since none of the containers is associated with any particular person. The exception may be the person on the vase (cat. No. 10) who is seated to the left of the scene. The person has the table leaning towards her/him, with the food vessel being placed on her/his side of the table. The gender of the figure cannot be determined with certainty. The figure displayed a more pronounced bosom than her / his banquet partner did, and she/he sits to the left of the other banqueteer who is male due to his flat chest and pointed beard. The bosom and being seated to the left of a male banquet partner (see subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5.) indicate a female banqueteer. However, the figure also has the same, very pointed, chin or beard, which indicated male gender to the banqueteer to the right of the table. The person to the left of the banquet table is too schematic to come to a reliable conclusion as to its gender.

Findings regarding the inclusion of food and food vessels:

Food itself may not have been of primary importance in the depictions. Only the indication of food dishes by including food containers may have been sufficient to convey the atmosphere of a banquet, and therewith of opulence, wealth and generosity. No person in particular is associated with any of the food containers with one possible exception that was noted above. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions on status or gender related access and consumption of food or the use of certain food containers by any particular person.

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

The vase cat. No. 10 shows one banqueteer with a *kantharos*, and the other with a *skyphos*. The single banqueteer on the chalice cat. No. 11 is holding a *kyathos*. One banqueteer on the *oinochoe* cat. No. 13 holds a two-handled Ionian cup, while his banquet companion does not hold anything. On the Pontic vase fragment cat. No. 15, a bowl is passed to a banqueteer by a servant, and on the Pontic vase fragment cat. No. 16, an *oinochoe* is held by a servant.

The type of beverages enjoyed cannot be determined with certainty. The use

of *oinochoai*, however, indicates that wine was served at some of above banquets.

However, if a sieve and a ladle were included, then the most likely beverage would be wine, since impurities were filtered out with these implements during service (Rathje, 1983: 18). The images of just the containers from which the banqueters drink do not allow us to draw sufficient information as to the contents of the bowls and cups.

Status and Gender:

To build a case that status or gender is assigned by vessels and objects (not) held is difficult. The evidence is simply too sparse to come to assertive conclusions. One example is the two banqueters on the vase cat. No. 10. One holds a *kantharos*, while the other holds a *skyphos*. This could signify a difference in status and/or gender. However, we do not have indisputable evidence that either is the case. When comparing this image with banquet scenes from all other media, we do not get a coherent picture. For example is there no particular drinking vessel only used by men with beard (the beard indicating age, rank or something else); or that banqueters who hold a two-handed cup would always be seated in one particular place within the banquet seating arrangement. Rather the opposite is true. In the media where more banqueters are shown per scene overall, especially in the tomb paintings, the homogeneity of vessels held by banqueters, when more than one vessel is depicted being held by a number of banqueters in any one scene, is remarkable. These findings are discussed in subsections 5.3.3. and 5.3.4.

Different drinks vessels held by banqueters may also signify that the banqueters enjoy two different beverages, such as wine and mead in suitable vessels. It may signify that the wealth of the patron was to be displayed by showing that the host can entertain the guests with different kinds of drinking vessels. Different vessel types may also represent different geographical origins of the two banqueters (see also subsection 5.3.1.). The banqueter on the chalice cat. No. 11 holds a *kyathos*. He is male, but he is also the only banqueter in this scene, so no comparison can be made with any banqueting companions. On the *oinochoe* cat. No. 13, one banqueter is holding a *skyphos*, while the other banqueter's hands are empty. Both banqueters

are male. It would therefore not be necessary to distinguish gender by this method of having two males holding or not holding any items. It may rather be a symbolic language to differentiate status, with the banqueter with the vessel being of certain (elevated) status than the one without. The vessel may also be a symbol of the banquet itself; to show that a banquet is being shown, not just two people reclining, in this way ensuring that the viewer knew the kind of event that was being depicted. The Pontic vase fragments (cat. No. 15 and 16) show too little details to come to conclusions. In the vase fragment cat. No. 15 only one single male banqueter is visible to whom a bowl is passed. In the fragments cat. No. 16 a (most likely) male banqueter is holding a *kylix*, while a servant holds an *oinochoe*. No other banqueters are preserved to compare vessels held.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

It is difficult to determine what kinds of beverages are enjoyed in the different banquet scenes. Wine may be the most likely beverage because one servant holds an *oinochoe* from which wine is usually served.

To infer information such as status, gender or perhaps origin of the banqueters through the association of the people with certain vessels is arduous with the little data available from these images. What is certain is that many different types of vessels are depicted for the consumption of beverages. Of six banqueters who hold a drinking vessel, five different vessels are shown. These are two *skyphoi*, one *kantharos*, one *kyathos*, one bowl (being passed to a banqueter), and one *kylix*. This means that a wide variety of drinking vessels is depicted. The reason for this variety is not clear. It could be, as noted above, a sign of status, of age, of wealth, of origin of the banqueter, or of the enjoyment of different beverages, as we do today. We savour champagne from thin and dainty champagne flutes, and beer from big pint glasses in Britain or massive “Steins” in Germany. In addition, literary sources make frequent reference to the Etruscan’s use of a variety of drinking vessels at banquet, without stating what kind of beverages were enjoyed. (see subsection 5.3.3., and 4.d for Greek and Roman quotes).

One observation is in accordance with the finds from subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5.: it is always a servant who carries the *oinochoe* (or other drinks service

equipment), never a banqueter.

Bronze Objects

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Of the eight banquet scenes in bronze, three may show food and drink. These are the tripod banquet figurines cat. No. 22, and the two mirrors cat. No. 23 and 24. Drink only is referred to on the bronze sheets cat No. 17, the vessel figurines cat. No. 18, the statuettes of reclining banqueters' cat. No. 19 and cat. No. 21 in addition to the tripod, and the two mirrors. Neither food nor drink is depicted with the statuette of the reclining banqueter cat. No. 20.

12. Food: which vessels and food dishes can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Actual food may be shown in the three bronze works cat. no. 22, cat. No. 23 and cat. No. 24. The female banqueter on the tripod holds an oval object in her left hand. It could be some fruit, an egg or pastry, but also an item non-food related. The banquet scene on the mirror cat. No. 23 is rich in food dishes. There are eggs, fruit, or similar small foodstuffs in two stemmed bowls, and perhaps flat breads in two shallow bowls on the table in front of the banqueting couple. The female banqueter in the scene on the mirror cat. No. 24 holds an object that may be an egg. Since no other food dishes or vessels are present in this scene, a symbolic interpretation of the "egg" is possible in addition to the item being a small finger food or some fruit.³⁷ It may also be non-food related.

Findings regarding the inclusion of food and food vessels:

It is not certain that the females on the tripod cat. No. 22 and the mirror cat. No. 24 respectively holds an item of food. It may be the case that food items are shown since the women recline at banquet, where food and drink are customarily enjoyed. The item on the mirror cat. No. 24 may be interpreted as an egg more easily than the item on the tripod. Since no other food dishes or containers are included in the scene on the mirror, a symbolic message may be conveyed by the female banqueter holding an

³⁷ See subsection 5.3.3. for discussion regarding the "egg".

egg. The food shown on the mirror catalogue No. 23 is not associated with any particular person. Therefore, no status or gender related conclusions can be drawn.

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

The banquet scene on the bronze sheets cat. No. 17 show the most numerous and diverse assembly of beverage related vessels. There is a crater and an amphora, a *kylikeion* with a *lebetes*, and an amphora and shallow dishes and deep plates under the *kylikeion* table. Wine may be enjoyed in this scene due to the craters and amphorae and all the diverse other vessels being included in the scene. Craters were customarily used for mixing wine with water. The figurine cat. No. 18 shows the male holding a bowl in his hand. The one existent hand of the female is empty of objects. The statuette cat. No. 19 holds a stemmed drinking bowl, while the male banqueter cat. No. 21 holds a very shallow bowl. The man in the scene cat. No. 23 holds a *kylix*. The male banqueter in the scene cat. No. 24 holds a wide bowl, while the servant holds an *oinochoe*. Since wine is usually served from *oinochoai*, it may be assumed that this beverage was enjoyed in the scene. The male figure in the lower part of the tripod cat. No. 22 holds an object in his hand that may be a *rhyton*. However, the object is very schematic. It may also be a *machaira* or a different object altogether. On the bronze sheets cat. No. 17, the beverage paraphernalia is not associated with any one particular banqueter with the exception of one bowl that the servant is in the process of taking or passing to a female (?) banqueter. The gender cannot be made out with certainty since the banqueter is not very clearly preserved. However, consideration for the conventional male-female arrangement suggests a female banqueter.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

Status:

Status relevance in connection with certain drinks vessel types may be determined when just one person is associated with any particular vessel. However, many of the scenes are isolated from any background setting for the banquet, for example on the tripod, or the single figures cat. 19 to 21. It is therefore difficult to infer social issues

such as status, age, or wealth from just one figure being present, whether he/she holds a drinks vessel or not.

Gender:

When looking at gender, it may be relevant that the man is holding a drinking vessel while the woman does not hold anything in the scene cat. No. 18. Female banqueters have never been depicted holding drinks vessels in any of the banquet scenes from funerary contexts. Just two *convivia*, the scenes cat. No. 8 and 9, both from revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts, show female banqueters actively holding drinks vessels.. On the bronze sheets cat. No. 17, the bowl may be passed to a female banqueter. However, gender is not to be assigned with certainty due to the fragmentary condition of the bronze sheets. All other drinking vessels are held by male banqueters.

Ivory Objects:

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

The ivory plaque (cat. No. 25) shows a convivial scene where only drink is taken. No food or food containers are depicted.

12. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

The two banqueters who are depicted on the ivory plaque are both male. The banqueter to the left holds a shallow bowl, while the banqueter to the right holds a stemmed bowl. Since we do not have any other beverage related vessels, we cannot say what beverages were enjoyed.

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Both banqueters are male. They hold a shallow bowl and a stemmed bowl respectively. Since both are male, it is unlikely that gender is being symbolized by these vessels. Age may not be in issue either since both males have the same facial features. An older man is usually shown with a beard, for example in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26) or in the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), both Tarquinia. Status may indeed be assigned by giving one man a bowl while the other male holds

a stemmed bowl. However, in demeanor, gestures and facial expressions, there is no difference in social attitude to be detected from one male to the other. They both appear to be equal partners in this scene.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

The two banqueters each have a different drinks vessel. This may have several meanings. Different social status may be encoded in the different vessels; different drinks may be enjoyed and therefore served in their according vessels; or material wealth might be expressed by showing as many types of vessels as there are banquet participants. The two men may come from different regions and their place of origin may be represented by the variety of vessels (see discussion subsection 5.3.1.).

5.3.3. Tarquinian tomb paintings

The shapes and sizes of vessels shown are very reminiscent of the ones shown on scenes of conviviality from domestic-residential contexts (see subsection 5.3.1. and 5.3.2.). Some Etruscologists also remarked on the many similarities, and only some differences, of actual vessels found in domestic-residential versus funerary contexts (Berkin, 2003: 1-2; Rathje, 1988: 83). This suggests the conclusion that the iconographical representation of banquet equipment in funerary contexts depicts real vessels that have been used at banquets. This will also be discussed in subsections 5.3.4. and 5.3.5.

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Of the forty banquet scenes, ten could not be analyzed in this subsection, because the originals are too faded or they are fragmentary, or they are now lost without facsimiles, photographs or textual references having been produced in the past from which to find out about the consumption of food and drink.³⁸

The scenes with both food and drink, or drink-only images range over the

³⁸ These are the banquets from the Tomb of the Lionesses II, Kithara Player, Little Flowers, Cock, Tomb 1200, Tomb 808, Pygmies, Tomb 2327, Orcus II and Orcus I.

complete chronological spectrum of Tarquinian tomb paintings. Therefore, a chronological classification is not suited when looking at the inclusion of these elements of banqueting.

Ten convivial scenes show the banqueters enjoying food and drink. These are from the Tomb of the Lionesses (cat. No. 28), the Tomb of the Frontoncino (cat. No. 35), the Tomb of the Bigas (cat. No. 40), the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42), the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 44), the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46), the Tomb of the Biclinium (cat. No. 48), the Tomb of the Blue Demons (cat. No. 53), the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54), and from the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65). Nineteen banquets include drinks vessels only. No references are being made to the consumption of food. These drinks-only banquets are from the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), the Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No. 27), Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), the Tomb of the Tarantola (cat. No. 31), the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), the Tomb of the Olympic Games (cat. No. 33), Tomb 5898 (cat. No. 34), Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36), the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39), the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45), Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47), the Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49), the Tomb of the Maggi (cat. No. 50), the Tomb of the Ship (cat. No. 51), Tomb 994 (cat. No. 52), Querciola I Tomb (cat. No. 55), and the Tomb of the Warrior (cat. No. 63). The only scene where neither food nor drink is shown is the banquet in Tomb 3697 (cat. No. 61). The drinks only banquets are the most numerous with nineteen (63%) out of thirty analyzed representations, followed by the food and drink scenes with ten (33.5%) images, and one (3.5%) scene with neither food or drink.

12. Food: which vessels and food items can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Food containers:

Actual containers that hold or represent food are shown in only three out of ten paintings. The Tomb of the Triclinium has two lower tables with three shallow plates and two high-stemmed small shallow bowls filled with finger foods and/or fruit each. The Tomb of the Shields' banquet scene has two lower tables with two wide deep empty bowls and three bowls filled with food items each. The food items, from left

to right, may be described as grapes, a dish looking like jelly, and dough buns. Neither of the containers described above is associated with any particular diner. The third banquet scene with food containers is from the Tomb of the Biclinium. The scene is doubtful as to the correctness to the eighteenth century drawing by Smuglewicz. The original is now lost. Smuglewicz has one lady banqueter and one male banqueter hold a small shallow bowl or plates each. They hold the plates as if to pick food morsels from them. This representation of what or how the banqueters hold the objects is doubtful since no other Etruscan banquet scene has the banqueters hold food containers. A further reason to doubt the correctness of this representation is that Smuglewicz drew two of the four females exposing one and both breasts respectively. The plates held and the exposed bosoms must be assigned to artistic freedom since no food containers are ever held by Etruscans and no other Etruscan female at banquet is known shown exposing her bosom.

Food dishes:

What is extraordinary is that all ten paintings show at least one banqueter holding a white (or off-white) rounded pastry, fruit or egg food morsel to their own mouths, or they are offering it to their couch partners. It is certain that it is some kind of food morsel since the gesture of bringing the hand with the object to the mouth leaves no doubt about it being an edible item. Three banqueters in the Tomb of the Bigas, two banqueters in the Tomb of the Lionesses (see detailed image of one of the banqueters in cat. No. 28), and one banqueter each in the Tomb of the Frontoncino (painting very fragmentary in this part), the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Tomb of the Black Sow, the Tomb of the Biclinium, and in the Tomb of the Blue Demons hold one of the round food morsels each. They are all male banqueters. In the Tomb of the Leopards, a male banqueter holds the food dish in his raised right hand. It is not clear whether he has received it from his female couch partner, whether he is about to pass it to her, or whether he is keeping it for himself. In the Tomb of the Maiden, the painting may be read that the female banqueter passed the white food morsel to her male couch partner (see detailed image of the banqueters in cat. No. 54). The scene in the Tomb of the Shields looks like the male banqueter offers the white food to his female couch partner (see detailed image of the banqueters in cat. No. 65). Out of

thirteen banqueters holding the white food morsel overall, only one is female.

Findings regarding the inclusion of food and food vessels:

A variety of food dishes placed in food containers are shown in two out of ten tombs. These are Tomb of the Triclinium and the Tomb of the Shields. The dishes are not associated with any particular diner.

When diners are depicted holding a food dish, it is without exception a white (or off-white) rounded pastry, fruit or egg food morsel. Out of the ten paintings, four are exclusively male banquets (Lionesses, Frontoncino, Bigas, and Black Sow). No offering of the morsel to a couch partner is seen in any of these four banquet scenes. The male banqueters eat the morsel themselves. In three paintings of mixed-sex scenes (Triclinium, Biclinium, Blue Demons) male banqueters hold the morsel and they do not make any gesture as to pass it on or that they have received it from their male (Triclinium), female (Biclinium), and male (Blue Demons) couch partners. The three mixed-sex scenes from the Tomb of the Leopards, the Tomb of the Maiden and the Tomb of the Shields all tell a different story as to who may pass the food morsel to whom on the male-female couch arrangements. The scene from the Tomb of the Leopards is not clear whether the banqueteer has received food from his female couch partner, whether he is to pass it to her (as described by Bartoccini, 1956: text to plate X), or whether he is keeping it for himself. In the scene from the Tomb of the Maiden, it looks more likely that the female has passed the food dish to the male couch partner. In the Tomb of the Shields, it looks like the male banqueteer offers the white food to his female couch partner since Larth has his arm and hand outstretched to offer it to his wife Velia. Haynes (2000: 309) interprets the scene as Velia offering an egg to her husband, while Dennis (1878: 337) sees the husband offering the egg to his wife. Heurgon (2002: 190) sees Velia offering a piece of fruit, not an egg, to her husband. However, both persons' body language more strongly supports the interpretation of him offering the egg/fruit/food morsel to her.

The enigma of the "egg" in Tarquinian banquet tomb paintings:

The white rounded food has widely been interpreted as having a certain symbolic and mythological value, perhaps in reference to fertility, life or rebirth (for example De Marinis 1961: 41-2; De Grummond, 2006: 125; Steingraber, 2006: 94; Carpino, 1996: 70). Unfortunately there are no surviving Etruscan texts that could provide an insight into the use and meaning of the egg in Etruria. A symbolic meaning is possible since this is the only food item ever shown being held by banqueters in Etruscan banquet scenes. Food itself does not appear to play an important part in Etruscan banquets since food dishes are only shown in two out of the 40 Tarquinian banquet scenes. That the white dish is a symbol for fertility is not likely. The majority of paintings showing the food morsel are in male-only banquet scenes. Scenes where the morsel is passed to a fellow female or male banqueteer by the opposite sex are just as numerous as scenes where the egg is being passed to same-sex banqueters.³⁹ There are also numerous scenes where a person does not pass the object at all but keeps it to himself.

To designate the white rounded food as an egg and assign the symbolism of rebirth to it is perhaps more plausible, since a gendered use as such, in view of fertility symbolism, cannot be found. However, the use of the food item as a symbol of rebirth cannot be wholly supported either because it is also included in the banquet scenes from domestic-residential contexts. A food dish, oval in shape, the size of an egg, is enjoyed by the third banqueteer on the Murlo frieze plaques. Only Rathje (1994: 97) has commented on this item of food. She categorically eliminated the possibility of it being an egg since such objects are seen in funerary contexts only. She therefore prefers to refer to it as a fruit. This interpretation seems rather arbitrary and is not persuasive since the logical conclusion is that only dead people eat eggs. We have, at least from Roman times, a multitude of recipes for a great variety of birds' eggs served to the discerning and certainly alive banqueteer.⁴⁰ Therefore, they may simply be a very tasty food dish of perhaps pickled or seasoned eggs, if they are eggs in the first place, and not fruit or dough parcels or something else. The tomb

³⁹ It is assumed that in Etruscan society fertility and procreation was recognised as the combination and the result of a male and female partner.

⁴⁰ For recipes with eggs as a main ingredient, or as a supplementary see for example Renfrew (2004); Apicius Book VII section XIX; Pliny the Younger *The Letters* I.15, Petronius' *The Satyricon* V.33.

paintings are glimpses into the private world of the people who commissioned them.

The interpretation of these objects being eggs, and as eggs being simply a food dish is postulated by Small (1994: 86-87). With the help of the egg as a food dish, she attempts to distinguish the stage at which a banquet is, meaning at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the eating event, by assigning the egg as being a starter, a main course or a dessert. This interpretation of the egg being a signaller as to the stage of the banquet is certainly a valid and plausible one. This notion is supported by ancient writers such as Horace (*Sat.* 1.3.6-7), Athenaeus (*Deipnosophists* 14.640-41) and Plutarch (*Morals* 8.9 (733f)) who distinguish the different stages of a meal by different dishes and also by the serving of eggs.

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Vessel types:

Twenty-nine of the forty banquet scenes include clear references to drinks being enjoyed. This is either in the form of drinking vessels being held by the banqueters, or by servants handling beverage related vessels or equipment such as sieves, ladles and craters. The drinking, serving and storage vessels and associated equipment such as ladles and sieves are all real types. Archaeological excavations have unearthed a wide variety of vessels depicted on iconographical banquet representations from domestic-residential and funerary contexts.⁴¹ Since we are dealing with real vessels which were used by real people, it is self-explanatory that shape, size and function are interrelated (Wenn, 2006: 9-10, 25-28, 100; Osborne, 2001; Lundgren and Wendt, 1982), and also decorative techniques and shapes (Berkin, 2003).

However, the relative size of one vessel to another in one any painting may not be proportionate. In the Frontoncino Tomb and the Tomb of the Leopards, for example, the drinking bowls held by the banqueters are rather large in comparison to

⁴¹ See for example De Grummond (2006.b.); Wenn (2006); Barker and Rasmussen (2005); Sassatelli and Govi (2005); Zifferero (2004); Berkin (2003 and 1994); Nielsen and Tuck (2001); Hemphill (2000); C. Chiaramonte Trere (1999); Tuck (1999); Nijboer (1998), Bonghi Jovino and Chiaramonte Trere (1997); Perkins and Attolini (1992); Roberts (1991); Weber-Lehmann (1985); Rathje (1983); Hitzl (1982: 149 ff); Rasmussen (1979); Bouloumie (1978); Bouloumie (1978); Del Chiaro (1960); Dohrn (1938); Richter (1921 and 1937).

the small *oinochoe* held by the servants. The servants would have to do many runs to keep bowls of that size filled from their small serving *oinochoai*. It has to be stressed that both the drinks bowls and the *oinochoai* are real banqueting vessels, vessels that have been found in excavations, even if they are not in proportion to each other in some of the paintings. Oversized vessels, even as tall as a man shown as in the Tomb of the Lionesses, have been confirmed by archaeological evidence such as the Vix crater. Although Lawrence (2007: 79) denied the possibility of *kylixes* shown in the Tomb of the Painted Vases due to their enormous size and explained them as symbolizing the importance of the feast such *kylixes* were unearthed in Etruria.⁴²

Perhaps it was not important to show that a lot was drunk; it was sufficient to show that some beverage was enjoyed. Another possibility is that only very small amounts of beverages were drunk, so that the small *oinochoai* were sufficient to serve the banqueters. The vessels the banqueters drink from are not easy to handle. Therefore, it may have been rather unpractical and perhaps even messy to have large quantities of liquid in such wide and shallow drinks containers.

It is important to point out that most of the scenes shows the men drink from vessels which are not easy to handle. The different shapes and sizes of drinking vessels require different manners of drinking. It is easier to drink deep sips from deep vessels, while drinking from shallow vessels requires a more restrained drinking by tilting the vessel a little and taking small sips of the beverage more slowly (Davidson, 1998: 64). The men in the paintings drink from *kylixes*, shallow bowls and stemmed shallow cups. These vessel shapes do not allow the *conviviant* to drink fast and deep. The opposite is the case. Slow and restrained nipping on the vessel is required so that the contents are not spilled. This is contrary to the social particularities ascribed to the Etruscans by ancient writers. For example, Diodorus of Sicily (5.40.3), or Theopompus (*in Athenaeus Deipnosophists* 12.517f) claim that debauchery is the aim of Etruscan banquets. However, the vast majority of scenes show a different picture. In addition, the *oinochoai* held by the beverage servants in several banquet are very small. These are to be seen for example in the Tomb 1999

⁴² One such *kylix* was found either at Chiusi (Tuscany) or at Civita Castellana (Lazio), and is now exhibited in the British Museum, GR 1892.5-18.1 (Vases F 478). A further *kylix* of that size is illustrated in Boardmann, 1996: 274.

and in the Tomb of the Triclinium. According to the pictorial evidence, the consumption of beverages was restrained, not wild and not in vast quantities.

Beverage types:

What beverage(s) were enjoyed is difficult to determine. Scholars most often refer to the Etruscans drinking wine at banquet (Berkin, 2003: 1; De Grummond, 1996: 342; Gran-Aymerich, 1995; Rathje, 1994: 97; D'Agostino, 1989: 6; Weber-Lehmann, 1985: 33; Rasmussen, 1979; Small, 1971: 42). This, however, is often based on assumptions built on the frequent mention of wine at banquet in the contemporary Greek and South Italian world (Forti and Stazio, 1983; Seltman, 1957); and in the later primary sources, for example Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* XIV.35-36 and 38-39 and 67-68; XV.25, 36), Pliny the Younger (*The letters* V.6.), Martial (*Epigrams* XIII.18.2; XIII, 124), Columella (III.9.6) and Livy (V.33), while Dionysius of Harlicarnassus (I.37.2), referring to the quality of Etruscan grapes and vintages. That specifically the Etruscans indeed liked to drink was referred to by, for example, Diodorus of Sicily (V.40.3-5) and by Poseidonius in Athenaeus (*Deipnosophists* IV.153d). However, both chroniclers refer to the generous consumption of beverages and do not explicitly mention wine.

There are only three clear references to the consumption of wine in all of the twenty-nine banquet scenes that clearly show that drinks are being enjoyed. They are to be seen in the Tomb of the Painted Vases, in the Tomb of the Triclinium and in the Querciola Tomb I. In each scene, a servant holds a sieve in one of his hands. In the Tomb of the Triclinium, the servant also holds a small *oinochoe*. Sieves were customarily used to filter out impurities from wine when it was poured into a drinking vessel for immediate consumption (Richter, 1937; Rathje, 1983: 18). Actual examples of bronze sieves are shown here:



Figure 5.12: Bronze sieves (Source: Barbieri, 1987: 175).



Figure 5.13: Combination tool of bronze sieve and filter (Source: Richter, 1937: 63).

When broadening the vessel types associated with the consumption of wine to include *oinochoai* as typical serving vessels for this particular beverage, the number of tomb paintings showing the consumption of wine adds up to eight representations. That such serving vessels may have contained wine is supported by the research conducted by Wenn (2006: 54, 59, 62, 92) at the Latin city of Ficana. She has examined certain levels of corrosion inside *ollas* that were used for storing and serving liquids. The corrosion is explained by storing acidic liquids such as oil and wine in these containers. It is generally agreed that containers such as *ollas*, *dolia* or *pithoi* were used to store and serve liquids, in addition to *oinochai* (Berkin, 2003:

125-127, Lundgren and Wendt, 1982: 40-41; Seltman, 1957: 70-1). The research conducted with *ollas* is important regarding the question as to what constitutes a banquet service. Only two banquet services have been found so far. One is the set from Ficana.⁴³ The other being the service found in the sealed deposit of the Lower Building at Murlo.⁴⁴

A similar study as to which items may be listed to compose a wine service in Etruria, not a banquet set which includes food vessels, was conducted by Bouloumie (1986: 72-73). His research concentrated on bronze vessels from funerary context, not from iconographic evidence, or vessels made from other materials. He concluded that an Etruscan wine service is made up of six elements: a vessel for wine and water, a mixing bowl, a dipper or ladle, a filter, and a serving vessel. Bouloumie does not include any particular beverage-drinking vessel in the wine related banquet set. In concordance with his analysis, it is important to stress that the banqueters holding a drinking vessel is not enough evidence to assume that wine is drunk. More banquet items related to the preparation, service and consumption of wine is required to determine that this beverage is being enjoyed. This results in the observation that twenty-one out of twenty-nine banquet scenes that show beverage related equipment do not make clear references as to which beverage is being consumed. They show banqueters and servants handling vessels such as drinking bowls, *kylixes*, and cups. What was consumed is not clear from the clues given in the paintings. It could be wine; it could also be an alcoholic beverage similar to our modern beer, or an alcoholic beverage such as mead made from honey. That mead may have been enjoyed at the Tomb of the Shields banquet was suggested by Copeland (1981). It may even not be alcoholic beverages at all at the *convivia*, since we do not know whether alcoholic beverages were a pre-requisite for Etruscan banquets in the first place.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

Gender differentiation of banqueters

It is important to note that all vessels for the service and for the consumption of

⁴³ See Rathje (1983) for a detailed discussion.

⁴⁴ See Berkin (2003) for a detailed discussion.

beverages are handled by male servants and male banqueters respectively, apart from three exceptions. The first exception is the eighteenth century drawing from the Tomb of the Biclinium by Smuglewicz. He drew the now lost original of the banquet scene with two female banqueters holding a *rhyton* and a deep cup respectively. The correctness of the representation of the original has been questioned above in this subsection. Since Smuglewicz' drawing is the only banquet scene where females are shown with exposed bosoms, banqueters holding food plates, and females handling drinking vessels, the drawing has to be dismissed as not being a reliable copy of the original. The second and third exceptions to the otherwise strictly adhered rule of drinking vessels being associated with males exclusively can be found in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed and in the Tomb of the Maiden. These cases are discussed in detail in subsection 5.2.3. since the drinking vessels are associated with female servants, not with a lady banqueter.

All other banquet scenes from funerary contexts where beverages are included show the vessels being handled by male banqueters only. Therefore, it can be concluded that the consumption of beverages at banquet was an exclusive male privilege in the more private iconography of a tomb chamber in comparison to the iconography from domestic-residential contexts such as the revetment plaques, where females are shown holding drinking vessels. That drinking was a male 'privilege' and an integral part of Etruscan banquet ideology can be concluded since the consumption of beverages features in twenty-nine out of forty banquet scenes. This is not to say that females did not drink at private banquets. They may have enjoyed beverages that did not feature in the scenes.

Another possibility is that it was not proper Etruscan etiquette to show a lady with an (alcoholic) beverage, even if they actually enjoyed that drink in the private sphere. We do know that Etruscan ladies indeed held luxurious parties, as was described by Livy in his story of the "Rape of Lucretia" (Livy, *The Early History of Rome* I.57-59). However, based on the iconographic evidence, it appears farfetched to compare Etruscan women with modern females enjoying the freedom of Ladies Clubs (Small, 1994: 88), or to proclaim that the Etruscan women might feel as comfortable in the twentieth-century as they did in sixth-century BC Tarquinia due to their extraordinary freedom (Bonfante, 1973a and b, 1986: 235). Theopompus may

also not be taken at face value when he comments that the Etruscan women are experienced drinkers of wine (Theopompus in Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 12.517d).

Status differentiation of banqueters

Status cannot be assigned with the kind of drinking vessel held by the individual banqueters as was suggested by Rathje for the Murlo frieze plaques (Rathje, 1994: 97). When more than one banqueter holds a drinking vessel, these are, with just one exception, all of the same kind. This can be seen in the Tomb 5039 (four banqueters hold one stemmed bowl each), in the Tomb of the Olympic Games (three banqueters hold one stemmed cup each), in the Tomb of the Frontocino (two banqueters hold one *kylix* each), in the Tomb of the Bigas (three banqueters hold one shallow drinking bowl each, one of the banqueters also holds a very shallow two-handled cup). The exception is from the Querciola Tomb I, where two banqueters hold a small *kylix* each, and one banqueters a small shallow bowl. In all these tombs, there are other drinking vessels and serving equipment, but the banqueters do not hold them in their hands. These either are handled by servants or are stored on the ground. In the scenes not mentioned in the above paragraph there is only one single banqueter holding a drinks vessels, or just a servant handling an *oinochoe* or other drinks related equipment, as for example in the Tomb of the Triclinium.

As pointed out above, reference to drinking at banquet is made in twenty-nine out of forty banquet scenes. However, the amount of reference varies from a drunken revel for example in the Tomb of the Mouse, to just one object indicating the consumption of drink as for example in the Tomb of the Maiden, where only one out of eight banqueters holds a drinking bowl.

Status differences cannot be ascribed by just looking at types of drinks vessels held by the banqueters alone. The vessels held are either homogenous for all banqueters in any one scene, or just one out of several banqueters is holding a drinks vessel. Even with the other items held by some of the banqueters, which will be considered in subsection 5.4.3., a strong case for status differentiation by objects held cannot be made. However, status may be indicated by the fact that one, or several banqueters, holds one type of drinks vessel, while the other banqueters do not hold such a vessel, or hold another object. This will be discussed in further detail in

subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5.

Status and gender differentiation of servants:

Status and gender are clearly adhered to when it comes to servants versus banqueters. No banqueteer is depicted holding service vessels or handling drinks related tools such as sieves and ladles. Only servants actively deal with serving vessels such as craters, *oinochoai*, ladles, and sieves.

5.3.4. Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Of the ten banquet scenes, two could not be analyzed. The Hescanas Tomb scene (cat. No. 74) is badly faded and lost in many places. The scene from the Montollo Tomb (cat. No. 67) is now lost with only a drawing from 1743 available which is highly questionable as to its closeness to the original. These two scenes could not be included into following analysis, as there are not any reliable facsimile, photographs or textual descriptions available.

The convivial scene from the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 66) is the only one showing the banqueters enjoying food and drink. However, the reliability of the drawing regarding these details will be questioned below. Drink only is taken in the scenes from the Orpheus and Eurydice Tomb (textual evidence only, see cat. No. 69), the Casuccini Tomb (cat. No. 70), Hill of the Moro Tomb (textual evidence only, see catalogue No. 71), the Golini I Tomb, the Golini II Tomb (cat. No. 71), and in the scene from the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga (cat. No. 75). Neither food nor drink is taken by the banqueters in the fragmentary scene from the Tomb of the Well (cat. No. 68).

12. Food: which vessels and food items can be distinguished? Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

Several small plates and bowls with a variety of finger-foods are shown in the nineteenth century drawing based on the banquet scene from the Tomb of the

Triclinium. The original banquet scene is now lost. Canina, in his nineteenth century drawing, shows the second male banqueters actively reaching for some finger food placed in a bowl on a small round table which is located in front of his banqueting couch. A similar gesture is shown with the first lady banqueter. However, her hand does not quite reach the table placed in front of her where all the food dishes are presented. This imagery of banqueters actively reaching, actively being associated with food other than the “egg”, is very rare in Etruscan iconography of conviviality. Such action is only shown in one *convivium*, on the urn cat. No. 82 (see discussion subsection 5.3.5.). Whether the scene from the Tomb of the Triclinium is a further example of banqueters reaching for food, or whether Canina applied some artistic interpretation when copying (a perhaps already very faded or partly lost) original may be debated. If the drawing were a reliable copy of the original, it would make it the only tomb painting showing banqueters in such activity.

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

References made to the consumption of drink are as follows:

Orpheus and Eurydice Tomb: a beverage may be enjoyed at the banquet because a crater, which is commonly used for mixing wine with water, is shown in the scene.

Casuccini Tomb: two banqueters hold a wide, stemmed, shallow drinking bowl each.

Two male servants hold a small *oinochoe* and a sieve each.

Hill of the Moro Tomb: one of the banqueters holds a cup (De Marinis 1961: 21), and another banqueter a goblet (Dennis, 1878: 343, Vol. II). A *lebetes* is placed next to the servant. Dennis describes the servant as being busy at a mixing vessel (Dennis, 1878: 343, Vol. II) (textual description only. The original is now lost).

Golini Tomb I: two male banqueters hold a *kylix* each.

Golini II Tomb: cupbearer

Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga: One male servant holds a sieve.

Tomb of the Triclinium: two male banqueters hold one shallow drinking bowl each.

One female banqueter holds a shallow drinking bowl. Two male servants

hold one small oinochoe each, and one of those servants holds a sieve, too. A *kylikeion* is in the centre of the scene displaying a variety of vases and bowls.

When looking at the equipment used in the different scenes, wine can be assumed to be consumed as the main beverage in the Casuccini Tomb, in the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga, and in the Tomb of the Triclinium. In all three tombs, at least one servant holds a sieve each. Such sieves were used to filter out impurities from wine just before service (Richter, 1937; Rathje, 1983: 18). When assigning the *oinochoe* as a wine specific service tool, the scenes from the Tomb of the Triclinium, and from the Casuccini Tomb have this additional vessel to symbolize that wine was enjoyed at the *convivia*. The paintings in the Orpheus and Eurydice Tomb, the Hill of the Moro Tomb, and in the Golini Tomb I do not give beverage-specific clues. The banqueters are shown with different drinks vessels in each of the tombs. *Oinochoai*, sieves or ladles are not included as wine specific utensils. A variety of beverages could have been drunk from these vessels.

The shape of any of the drinking vessels has to be remarked on, whether it is *kylixes* or bowls. Both these vessels are rather shallow. It is quite an art to drink from such vessels and not to spill any of the liquid when tipping them to your lips. From a practical viewpoint, this means that fast and deep gulping of the beverage was not possible. The vessels types necessitate a slow, elegant sipping of the beverage. It can be compared to our champagne coupe. This is another indicator that the debauchery described by some ancient authors such as Diodorus of Sicily (5.40.3) was not really happening at Etruscan banquets. People did get drunk, as shown in some of the Tarquinian banquet scenes, for example in the Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No 27) or in the Tarantola Tomb (cat. No. 31). Nevertheless, in the majority of scenes, and in all of the tomb paintings outside Tarquinia, drink was handled with elegance, not with drunken greed and gluttony. This pictorial evidence regarding the elegant consumption of beverages is consistent with the finds from the vast majority of Tarquinian tomb paintings.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

Status

The banquet scenes from Caere, Chuisi, Orvieto and Sarteano confirm the iconographical finds as discussed in subsection 5.3.3. When more than one banqueter holds a drinks vessel, these are of the same type. In the Golini Tomb I, both banqueters hold a *kylix*. In the Tomb of the Triclinium, the two male banqueters hold a shallow drinking bowl each. In the Casuccini Tomb, only two out of ten banqueters hold a drinking bowl. It is a wide, stemmed, shallow drinking bowl. The textual descriptions of the Hill of the Moro Tomb are partly based on an unreliable 18th century drawing. Therefore is this scene excluded as evidence for different drinks vessels used by the banqueters.

It is unlikely that status was expressed through the use of drinking vessels. When more than one banqueter is shown in any one convivial scene, they always handle the same type of vessel. If status had been expressed through drinks vessels as suggested by Rathje (1994: 97), it would mean that all men are always of same social standing, age, or family relation, etc. However, status may be expressed by some people handling a vessel, or another object, while other have their hands empty of any items. This notion will be discussed further in subsection 5.4.1. to 5.4.5.

Gender

The drawing of the Tomb of the Triclinium banquet scenes shows the second female holding out her drinks bowl to a servant who is just about to refill her vessel with liquid from a small *oinochoe*. The reliability of the drawing by Canina is very doubtful not just in the above noted details regarding food, but also by him showing a female banqueter holding a drinks vessel. If it is a truthful copy of the original, it would make her the only female banqueter directly associated with a drinking vessel ever depicted in a funerary context. Due to the pictorial evidence, gathered from all other funerary related banquet scenes, it is postulated that artistic freedom was applied by Canina when producing the drawing, and that a female holding a drinks vessel was not shown in the original. Therefore, as with the banquet scenes from the Tarquinian tombs and other funerary monuments, all drinks related vessels are handled by male banqueters and by male servants. Not one single female banqueter

is depicted holding a drinking vessel. The service and the consumption of beverages are exclusive to males. As with the Tarquinian banquet scenes, this does not mean that females never took any liquids at all. As stated in subsection 5.3.3., the reasons behind females not being shown with beverages may be many. It may indeed be a gender issue and therefore not proper Etruscan etiquette to show a lady with an (alcoholic) beverage. It may also be that they enjoyed beverages that did not feature in the scenes. The importance from an Etruscan female's perspective may have been to be included at these private banquets in the first place, but that the issue of females drinking beverages was not of (primary) importance. That women were shown drinking at banquet can be seen on the revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts from Velletri and Rome (see subsection 5.3.1.).

Food preparation scene in Golini I Tomb/Orvieto:

When looking at the banqueting accoutrements depicted in Etruscan art, it is noteworthy that only a limited repertoire is shown. There are cauldrons and craters, plates and bowls for serving the food, and a variety of drinking and drink-pouring vessels. Food preparation and cooking equipment such as firedogs, spits and cooking stands are not shown but in one exception. The images otherwise always show the elite who commissioned the works. They were not concerned with the people who prepared the food. They wanted to be seen at banquet, surrounded by the paraphernalia needed to show their own and the guests' social status when eating, drinking and having a good time in company of equally privileged banqueters.

The one exception is the detailed painting that shows the preparation of foods for a convivial event in the Golini I Tomb/Orvieto (cat No. 72). In this tomb, one part of the wall space is dedicated to the preparations for a banquet, with a focus on meat dishes from showing carcasses to cutting up the animals to serving the cooked and roasted dishes to the banqueter who are shown on a further wall painting to the right of the larder and kitchen scene. To the right of this tomb painting the banqueters are shown, including the tomb's owner, some of his already deceased ancestors and/or guests from the world of the living, and underworld divinities. This is funerary art, which was executed and placed in a very specific context at its time. Nevertheless is it included in the current discussion as the minutely detailed and organized

preparation of this banquet might not have differed so much from one held by the family in the world of the living. It is interesting to note that it appears that the kitchen is supervised by a female as she is the figure with the most elegant clothing and jewellery. Such costume would not have been practical or hygienic to participate actively in the food preparation. The reason for the inclusion of the kitchen scene within the tomb paintings may be to show the wealth of the person who commissioned it. There is a richly stocked larder, and a well-equipped preparation area with appropriate and even elaborately dressed servants. Since the scene is relatively late in the art history of the Etruscans (c. 350-325 BC), it may also indicate a move away from the aristocratic way of life to the more Roman influenced political agendas of a republic. However, this argument is rather unlikely to explain such an unusual scene because the Roman Republican did not immortalize their slave servants.

5.3.5. Funerary monuments

11. Is food and drink taken, or only food/only drink/neither food or drink depicted?:

Of the twenty-three banquet scenes, only three (13%) show food and drink being consumed. These are the Montescudaio urn cat. No. 76, and the urns cat. No. 84 and cat.No. 86.

Food only is referred to in the scenes on the urn catalogue No. 82, and on the urn cat. No. 90, which adds up to 9%. Drinks, but not food, are enjoyed in fifteen (65%) *convivia*. The scenes are from the following funerary monuments: stele from Antella (cat. No. 78), stele from Sancepolcro (cat. No. 79) and the stele from Travignoli (cat. No. 80), column base cat. No. 83, urns cat. No. 85, 87, 88, 89, 93, 96, 97, and the sarcophagi cat. No. 91, 92, 94, and 95. Three (13%) representations do not refer to food or drink. These are from the Tomb of the Five Chairs (cat. No. 77), the stele cat. No. 81, and on the urn cat. No. 98. It is most likely that the Tomb of the Five Chairs had food and drink placed in front of the statues. The five statues had two tables set in front of them and food and drinks vessels of different types may have been placed on these two tables to provide a banquet. Unfortunately only some pottery sherds of

vessels were left when the tomb was excavated.

12. Food: which vessels and food items can be distinguished? Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?:

The Montescudaio urn (cat. No. 76) includes the figurative representation of a table laden with two shallow containers that have flat shaped inside each of them. Perhaps flatbreads were shown, or some other food dishes. The table is placed in the centre of the urn lid, in front of the single seated banqueter occupying the lid. On the urn cat. No. 82, a servant offers a shallow bowl to a banqueter. Due to the way the servant holds the bowl and the banqueter's positioning of hand and fingers above the bowl, it is most likely that food is offered from the vessel, not a beverage. The banqueter is about to pick out a finger-food from the bowl being offered to him by the servant. The urn cat. No. 84 shows one male banqueter holding a small round object that may be food. He probably picked it out from one of the vessels placed on the table in front of him. There are two lower tables in the scene, both with five vessels each. Three are shallow bowls, and two are small stemmed and slightly fluted vessels. No actual food dishes are shown. On the urn cat. No. 86, a female banqueter holds a round object with her fingers. De Marinis (1961: 24) describes the item as an egg. It may also be a soft dough pastry since the banqueter's fingers indent the object. The urn cat. No. 90 has a male banqueter hold a small round object. As above, De Marinis (1961: 25) describes the item as an egg.

Findings regarding the inclusion of food and food vessels:

Gender and Status

There is no obvious correlation of food and gender or status. When banqueters are holding an actual item which could be food, it is without exception the small round item usually described as an egg. Colour is not applicable in these banquet scenes because either no paint was applied, or the paint is now lost. In the tomb paintings, the colour white or off-white was always an additional indicator of the object being an egg, besides its shape and size. Consistent with the findings from the tomb paintings (see subsection 5.3.3.) it is indeed likely that an egg is shown. Since two of the banqueters are male, and one banqueter is female, the egg is not to be associated

with any particular gender, and therefore not to be denoted as a fertility symbol. It may rather be a symbol of rebirth, if any symbolism is to be read into the object at all. As presented in subsection 5.3.3. it is very plausible that, if an egg is shown in the first place, it may simply be a food morsel. Other food dishes are indicated by them being placed in bowls and (footed) plates arranged on tables. They are not associated with any particular diner. The one scene from the urn cat. No. 82 shows a servant offering food to a banqueter. However, it is not possible to distinguish what kind of food dish it is.

There is not enough evidence to build a case that certain food dishes or food containers indicate, or represent any gender, or status differentiations in Etruscan art and as an effect of this, in Etruscan society.

13. Drink: which vessels and types of beverages can be distinguished?

Can we attribute status or gender by certain dishes?

That drink is taken at banquet can be seen because of the inclusion of the following objects in the scenes: The Montescudaio urn cat. No. 76 includes a clay-sculptured crater. The Antella stele cat. No. 78 shows one male banqueter with what may be a shallow drinking bowl. There is also a table with two *situle*. On the Sancepolcro stele cat. No. 79, a male banqueter holds a *kylix*, a servant holds a sieve and a ladle in his hands. A table is also included in the scene on which two *situle* are placed. The Travignoli stele cat. No. 80 shows a male banqueter holding what may be a shallow drinking bowl. A servant handles a sieve and a ladle. On a table, two *situle* are placed. The urn cat. No. 83 has one servant carry a small *oinochoe*, and another servant a shallow cup that he refills from a crater. On the urn cat. No. 84, one male banqueter holds a shallow bowl, while a further male banqueter holds a deep bowl. A servant busies himself with a sieve and a ladle. A crater and a *hydria* are placed in front of the servant. The urn cat. No. 85 shows a servant holding a small *oinochoe*. A wide crater is also included in the scene. The urn cat. No. 86 has one male banqueter hold a wide shallow bowl. On the urn cat. No. 87, a servant holds a ladle and an object that may be a small *oinochoe*. He is leaning over a large shallow crater. A *lebetes* and a *stamnos* are included in the scene of the urn cat. No. 88. One male banqueter holds a wide shallow bowl and a servant handles a sieve and a ladle in the

scene on the urn cat. No. 89. There is also a crater and a *stamnos* shown. The sarcophagus cat. No. 91 shows two male banqueters holding one *kylix* each, and a servant holding a sieve and a ladle. A crater and a *stamnos* are placed on a table. A table with three small *oinochoai*, and a large crater placed on a further table is shown on the sarcophagus cat. No. 92. The urn cat. No. 93 shows two male banqueters holding one shallow bowl each. There is also a crater depicted. In the sarcophagus scene cat. No. 94, a male banqueters hold a shallow bowl, and a servant holds a small *oinochoe*. A *lebetes* is also included in the scene. On the same sarcophagus, scene cat. No. 95, a servant holds a small *oinochoe*, while a crater and a *lebetes* also indicate the consumption of beverages. On the urn catalogue No. 96, a servant holds a object that may be a sieve. A crater is placed under one of the couches. The urn cat. No. 97 shows one crater as one object relevant to the consumption of beverages.

The funerary monuments discussed in this subsection are the most numerous in comparison to the scenes from subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.4. in giving us an indication as to which beverage was enjoyed at banquet. Of the 18 scenes with references to the consumption of beverages, seven show servants holding a sieve and/or a ladle. Both are a pre-requisites for the service of wine. If we add *oinochoai* as the typical serving vessel for wine, the images add up to an overall of eleven banquets where wine was served. Of the other seven banquets, we do not know what was served as the beverage of choice at banquet. For example are there two banqueters with a shallow bowl each on the urn cat. No. 93. There is also a crater in the scene. It may have been wine, but also some kind of beer, mead, or non-alcoholic drink that was taken at this particular banquet. The two bowls and the crater are not enough to determine the kind of beverage drunk. De Marinis (1961) correctly pointed out that all Chiusi banquet scenes include a *lebetes*, or a crater respectively. However, the vessel itself does not inform us of its contents, despite the understanding that craters were customarily used at banquet in relation to the service of wine (Rathje, 1994: 97; Berkin, 2003: 120). Only when in addition sieves, ladles or *oinochoai* are also depicted can we assume that wine was served.

As noticed in previous subsections, the vessels depicted are all elegant vessels with their very own styles. Drinking from these accoutrements is a rather careful and slow procedure. Fast and deep gulping of the liquid is not possible from

the wide shallow bowls or *kylixes*. The only exception is the deep bowl depicted on the urn cat. No. 84. When drinking from such a vessel, it is easier to control the liquid being taken into the mouth. Most of the *oinochoai* held by the servants are small in size compared to the bodies of the people in the images. This may be the actual sizes of the serving vessels. It may also be a symbolic indicator that wine was enjoyed at banquet, but that the quantity was of secondary importance. Both possibilities strengthen the argument that the drinking of wine was an elegant and sophisticated matter, not an issue of fast and plentiful consumption. Therefore, as concluded previously, wild debauchery and drunkenness was not a primary aim at Etruscan banquets, even if claims of some ancient writers such as Diodorus of Sicily (V.40.3-5) and by Poseidonius in Athenaeus (*Deipnosophists* IV.153d) would make us believe otherwise. Elegance, wealth and sophistication in a suitable social setting with friends and family must have been the image the people who commissioned the funerary monuments wanted to convey.

Findings regarding the inclusion of drink and drinking vessels:

Gender

Consistent with the findings from the subsections 5.3.3. and 5.3.4., there are no female banqueters or female servants shown in any of the funerary monuments holding drinking vessels, or beverage service vessels or associated tools. The relevance of this observance was discussed in subsections 5.2.1, to 5.2.5. and 5.3.1. to 5.3.4., and these findings apply to subsection 5.3.5.

Status

It is difficult to base status differences on the use of drinking vessels as suggested by Rathje (1994: 97). As was shown in the Tomb paintings from Tarquinia and elsewhere, if more than one drinking vessel is held by more than one banqueter, these are always of the same type, but with the one exception from the Querciola Tomb I/ Tarquinia (cat. No. 55). Of the twenty-three scenes analysed in this subsection, eighteen feature the consumption of beverages. Only one of these eighteen scene shows two banqueters with different drinking vessel types, namely on the urn ca. No. 84, where one banqueter holds a shallow bowl, and the other a deep

bowl. In the two scenes, where more than one banqueter holds a drinking vessel, these are always of the same type. The scenes are on the sarcophagus cat. No. 91, and on the urn cat. No. 93. In the other banquets, sometimes just one banqueter is shown holding a drinks vessel. Often, none of the banqueters is being personally associated with drinks. Then, perhaps a servant is seen holding an *oinochoe*, or just a crater is added to the banquet to indicate the consumption of beverages.

As stated in the previous subsections, the different vessels may indicate status, but this is not very likely due to the non-conclusive evidence we can gather from the actual banquet scenes. Different vessels may represent different types of beverages consumed. The vessels may be an indicator of wealth and/or personal taste of the person who commissioned the reliefs. It may also be possible that different vessels represent people from different locations, or they may be “holiday souvenirs” from the local person remembered on the urn who has travelled far and wide.

5.4. Social details

5.4.1. Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings

14. Who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant?):

It must be stressed that banqueters and servants, and banqueters from both sexes talk, look in any direction, turn around, and gesticulate in an open manner as if not tied to status, gender or other conversational conventions. Servants speak with male banqueters (Murlo); servants speak with female banqueters (Velletri). Male banqueters address other male banqueters (Murlo), or female banqueters (Velletri). Females and/or males turn their back to each other despite reclining on the same couch (Murlo, Acquarossa, Velletri). Any combination of the above groupings may be present in any one banquet scene. This uninhibited way of conversing and addressing in between servants and masters, and in between the sexes, represents an atmosphere of relaxed and jovial *convivia*, where the party is ‘happening’, quite like a photographic snapshot of a dinner party in our times. No differentiating

conventions or rules regarding status (political, religious, wealth, age) or gender can be read from the banqueting images when looking at the way the people converse with each other.

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

A detailed representation of each of the eight revetment frieze banquet scenes is given in the catalogue No. 1 to 9.

Discussion:

Of the nineteen banqueters, sixteen banqueters (84%) hold an object in their hands, while three banqueters do not hold anything (16%). Twelve banqueters (63%) hold drinking vessels, five banqueters (26%; one also holds a drinks vessel) hold other items, and three banqueters (16%) do not hold any objects.

Status:

The fact that sixteen banqueters (84%) hold an object in their hands, while only three banqueters do not hold anything (16%) is unusual in comparison to the finds from subsections 5.4.2. to 5.4.5. In the Tarquinian tomb paintings, only 40%, of banqueters are directly associated with an object, while 54% is the percentage for the tomb paintings from Cerverteri, Chusi, Orvieto and Sarteano. 39% of banqueters hold an object in other funerary related banquet scenes. Therefore, 84% represents a comparative high percentage. Since banqueters from funerary contexts are less often shown holding objects, and the scenes being of a more private nature being located in tombs, on urns and sarcophagi, status display may not have been a major issue, if indeed status is symbolized through objects held. On the revetment plaques, which decorated conspicuously large and eminent buildings, status display may have been much more of a prominent issue for the commissioning personages. Such status may

have been represented symbolically by the association of many people with many objects. Status displayed on the revetment plaques is to be understood in relation to political, religious, and socio-cultural influence over members of their society. Such status was also to be iconographical read and understood by visiting delegations and dignitaries. However, in addition to status as enumerated above, the items held may symbolize other values such as different places of origin of the people depicted (see discussion subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. in relation to drinks vessels). The objects may also denote different professions, such as *togate* are recognized by their specific staff that can be seen for example in the painting from the Tomb of the Well/Chiusi (cat. No. 68).

Drinking Vessels:⁴⁵

Drinking vessels are held by twelve banqueters, which equals 63%. When more than one person is holding a vessel in any of the plaques, it is always held in the same hand. On the Murlo plaques, all banqueters hold the vessels in their right hands, and in the Velletri plaques, all hold the vessels in their left hands, irrespective of gender. Perhaps were only right-handed people allowed to be depicted on the Murlo plaques, and left handed people in Velletri. Another theory is that the orientation of the banqueters may play a role in the right- versus left-handedness. Because of the orientation from left to right on the Murlo plaques and the orientation of right to left on the Velletri plaques, the hand that holds the beverage containers is always the passive one, meaning that the banqueter cannot drink from the vessel in this hand. He/she has to pass it to the other hand to be able to lift it to his/her mouth. This results in the observation that no active drinking is displayed. Not the drinking of beverages was important, but to show the actual vessels. Why were the vessels important? Was it to symbolize a certain status? Was it to symbolize the wealth and knowledge of how to conduct a banquet? To show that one owned the correct accoutrements for different beverages? To to symbolize that a banquet was shown, and not some other event which required reclining on couches? To symbolize different origins for the people depicted, for example does the honourable guest from Cerveteri drink from his two-handled cup 'made in' Cerveteri, while his two Murlo

⁴⁵ The significance of the types of drinking vessels held was discussed in detail in subsection 5.3.1.

hosts drink from their local 'made in' Murlo bowl? All these theories are valid suggestions as to a possible symbolism encoded in the different vessels, or just one vessel held by one single banquet in a multi-banqueter scene.

Other Objects:

Five (26%) of nineteen banqueters hold objects other than drinking vessels. On the Murlo plaques, the fourth banqueter holds a lyre. At Acquarossa, the first and the fourth banqueters hold an oblong object/knife in their left hands in addition to a drinking vessel and the first female banqueter holds an oblong object in her left hand, somewhat resembling a cacao bean. In the Cerveteri scene, the one male preserved holds what is most likely a knife in his left hand, in addition to a two-handled cup in his right hand. One male in the Tarquinian scene also holds such a knife in one of his (not preserved) hands. In the scene from Velletri, we have the only instance of a banqueter, a male, holding an object that resembles a book or a scroll, in his left hand.

The significance of the oblong object/knife held by banqueters:

The oblong objects/knives held by the banqueters on the Acquarossa, Cerveteri and Tarquinia plaques are unusual as they are only shown at banquets from domestic-residential contexts. No banqueter depicted on funerary-related art is shown holding this object. Perhaps it is an indicator that a certain symbolic value from a socio-political context was embedded within the item, and the value was transferred to the owner of the object. It is possible that the status symbolized by the item was not relevant in the more private realms in the funerary world, since no banqueters are shown with such an object.

The significance of the lyre held by banqueters:

The lyre is one of the rarer objects held by banqueters. We have one lyre-playing banqueter from domestic-residential context, and he is depicted on the Murlo plaques. The other examples are from Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39), the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54), and from the Querciola Tomb I (cat. No. 55), all Tarquinia, from the Hill of the Moro Tomb/Chiusi (cat. No. 71), on two urns (cat. No. 89 and

cat. No. 95) and on the Bronze Sheets cat. No. 17. It appears that lyre players are bound to a specific allocation of reclining space at banquet, which is always the first (male) reclining space or the last (male) reclining space in any one banquet scene. The possibility of a symbolic meaning of banqueters playing the lyre is discussed in subsection 5.4.3.

The significance of the scroll held by banqueters:

The male banqueter holding an object resembling a scroll or book is unique in Etruscan banquet iconography. There are fifty-nine banqueters analysed from revetment plaques and from small finds. We have over 270 banqueters from funerary contexts. No other banqueter is depicted with such an object. Since we have a larger number of banqueters depicted in funerary related art in comparison to just fifty-nine from domestic-residential contexts, the symbolism or the practicality behind the object was only useful in a domestic-residential context. Here, in the world of the living, there was a need to encode a message of prestige, wealth, status, origin and/or political and religious power. However, the man is not attracting any special attention from the other banqueters. His female couch companion is turned towards him, and a servant is attending to him. However, such attention is observable in any other banquet scene, with banqueters holding other objects, or no objects at all. Nothing singles him out when looking at his clothing, facial and body features, gestures and general demeanour. Only the scroll/book may be the key to his specific status in politics, religion, economics, age, or other recognized distinction.

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Two (25%) out of eight banquets are mixed-sex scenes. The one (12.5%) plaque from Rome has a female banqueter as the only person preserved. (Preserved) male only scenes amount to plaques from three (37.5%) locations, while the gender of the banqueters cannot be determined due to the fragmentary state of the plaques from two locations (25%). Of the nineteen banqueters, thirteen (68.5%) are male, five (26.5%) female, while one (5%) banqueter's gender could not be determined due to the fragmentary state of the plaque from Roselle.

It is a comparative high percentage of female participants when compared with the other banquet scenes discussed in subsections 5.4.2. to 5.4.5. It is an Etruscan convention that the ratio of men to women did not have to be equal as is often the formal etiquette of mixed-sex dinners of our times. It is remarkable that four (8%) out of five females hold an object. Usually, as is shown in subsections 5.4.2. to 5.4.5., the percentage is considerably smaller. It is even a more remarkable fact that three out of the five female hold a drinking vessel. In funerary context, not a single lady banqueter is depicted holding a drinks vessel. On the relief plaques, the situation is obviously very different. When comparing the relative number of females to the number of males, we get a near even distribution, namely 61.5% males to 60% females being shown holding a drinking vessel on the relief plaques. The comparative numbers for funerary contexts is 100% males to 0% females shown with drinks vessels. At Velletri, there are two lady banqueters, and they hold a different type of vessel each, with a male banqueter holding a third type of vessel. In funerary contexts, in the vast majority of depictions (99%) where two or more (male!) banqueters hold vessels, the vessels are always of the same type. To have three banqueters with vessels, and all three vessels are of a different type, is only seen in the Velletri plaques. Theories are manifold. Gender may be expressed with the two-handled cup and the small, deep-bowled chalice with horizontal handles being reserved for females, with the *rhyton* being a 'male' drinking vessel. However, at Murlo and at Tarquinia, male banqueters are shown holding a two-handled cup each, and at Acquarossa two men hold such a two-handled cup. Therefore, a gender-based assignment of drinking vessels cannot be supported, since two-handled cups are held by males and by females. The small, deep-bowled chalice with horizontal handles may be a gendered vessel since only females are represented with them. However, such a vessel is only ever depicted on the Velletri and on the Rome plaques out of ninety-eight banquet scenes that could be analysed in this study. An assignment based on just 2% is not sufficient to conclude an undisputable gender-based vessels usage.

Another suggested theory is that different vessels hold different beverages, like wine, mead or a non-alcoholic drink. A further idea is that perhaps different vessels represent a different origin of the people associated with the vessels. This

theory was discussed in more detail in subsection 5.3.1. However, there are no obvious facial features on the people shown which may indicate a different origin of the banquet participants. The clothing and hairstyles are uniform, too.

Discussion of the gender of the persons on the Murlo-Poggio Civitate banqueting frieze plaques:

Regarding the question as to the sex of the participants at banquet in the Murlo terracotta frieze plaques, scholars are not in agreement as to whether all figures are male (Bonfante, 1986: 234), or whether the second figure on the left couch is female (Rathje, 2004: 219; 1994: 96-97; 1989: 78-79; Haynes, 2000: 124; Small, 1994: 87; Baglione, 1989: 110). Small (1994: 87) and Haynes (2000: 124) interpret the figure as holding a flower. The person also has a profile that might indicate breasts, and 'she' holds the same two-handled cup as the person on the Velletri plaques who is clearly identifiable as a female.

The Murlo representation, taken that a female is shown, places her on the right of her banqueting partner. This spatial arrangement is unique in Etruscan mixed-sex iconography. What is also unique is the banqueter's orientation of their bodies with the bodies being propped up on the left with feet pointing to the right. Because of the positioning of the female to the right of her banqueting partner, it can be questioned whether she is a female at all. This spatial positioning of the female is contrary to any other images of this kind in Etruria. Because of the unique orientation of the banqueters, it has been suggested elsewhere that the mould of the frieze is a mirror image and was intended the other way round (Small, 1971: 50). If this were true, then the person who is proposed to be female would then sit on the conventionally used left side of the male couch neighbour. Such seating arrangement would support the interpretation that she is female. Incidentally is a photo of the Murlo banquet plaque shown the wrong way round in Torelli (1985: 27). The idea of a mirror image used is of course a valid objective, as we can see daily. We also have for example ambulances and police cars with the descriptive writing the wrong, the mirrored way, round. The reason for the mirrored writing on ambulance and police vehicles is that when seen in the rear mirror of a car in front, the writing is the correct way round. However, it is highly questionable that the plaques were supposed to be

viewed in a mirror in Etruria of the sixth century BC. On the other hand, to produce one mould, realizing its wrong orientation, and then simply continue to produce these wrong-sided images is not very likely either. The mould was produced by skilled labourers, but labourers 'only' who had to do as they were told by the people who commissioned these images. No lord would have accepted such a mistake and then decorated the most impressive building of contemporary Etruria. It follows that the mirror image idea and the implicit conventional and correct positioning of the female is not very likely.

Female gender cannot be assigned to the person by attributing them 'typically' female clothes or accessories. The *tutulus* is commonly described as an accessory for females. The ladies in the Velletri frieze wear a *tutulus*. However, the *tutulus* itself is not an accessory with which to determine the gender of a participant, since the majority of women in the banqueting scenes from domestic-residential and funerary contexts do not wear this particular piece of clothing. Only the lady in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32) wears the *tutulus*. It might simply be the fashion of the day that changed over time to wear the *tutulus* or the headscarf respectively (see Tomb of the Triclinium, cat. No. 44), or a wreath as in the other tomb frescoes. The *tutulus* was also worn by men, for example in the Frontoncino Tomb (cat. No. 35), or by the male banqueter on the sarcophagus cat. No. 85. The long, unbelted dress worn by the banqueters does not lend itself to any gender-specific assignment either since all of the banqueters wore this type of clothing. Because of these observations, we can also note that, when looking at the clothing, no traits regarding differing social standings can be distinguished. The banqueters appear to be from the same social strata.

It has been argued that the person has female features (Haynes, 2000: 124; Rathje, 1994: 96 and 1989: 78-79; Small, 1994: 87; Bonfante, 1986: 233). Haynes (2000: 124) makes special reference to the coiffeuse. Etruscan ladies, when it comes to long hair being done up in a coiffure, without the addition of a scarf or a wreath, often wear thick braids. This coiffeuse for example, is shown by the lady on the right couch on the Acquarossa frieze plaque (cat. No. 2). However all persons depicted on the Murlo plaques do have the same single thick-tied strand of hair at the back of the head and down the neck. The profile is not detailed enough to distinguish female

features for certain. That the person does not have a beard is not enough indication as to the sex. No other banqueter has ever been declared to be female simply because the person does not have a beard. The only individual with a beard on the Murlo frieze plaques is the person to the left on the right couch. This argument would conclude that all the other three banqueters were female.

The notion to ascribe the person to be female because she holds a flower appears to be slightly romanticised. It is not certain that the object is a flower. It could as well be a (metal) implement of symbolic significance or a banqueting-related accoutrement. To determine the item to be a flower, and to deduce that it is therefore held by a female, does not suit the overall placement of the frieze plaques on the largest and most decorated, and imposing building in Murlo. Scenes in bliss with pretty nature settings are to be found in the private realms of tombs, for example in the Tomb of the Lotus Flower, or in the Tomb of the Hunter, both from Tarquinia. In the banquet scene from the Tomb 5513/Tarquinia (cat. No. 47), a man is depicted holding a flower. The terracotta frieze at Murlo has an official duty by narrating a socio-political agenda as envisioned by the people who commissioned the frieze and building to the official visitors and to the common onlookers, and not to depict pretty flowers in pretty maiden's hands. However, two figures on the Seated Figure Frieze plaques hold similar objects, with three and two "buds" respectively.

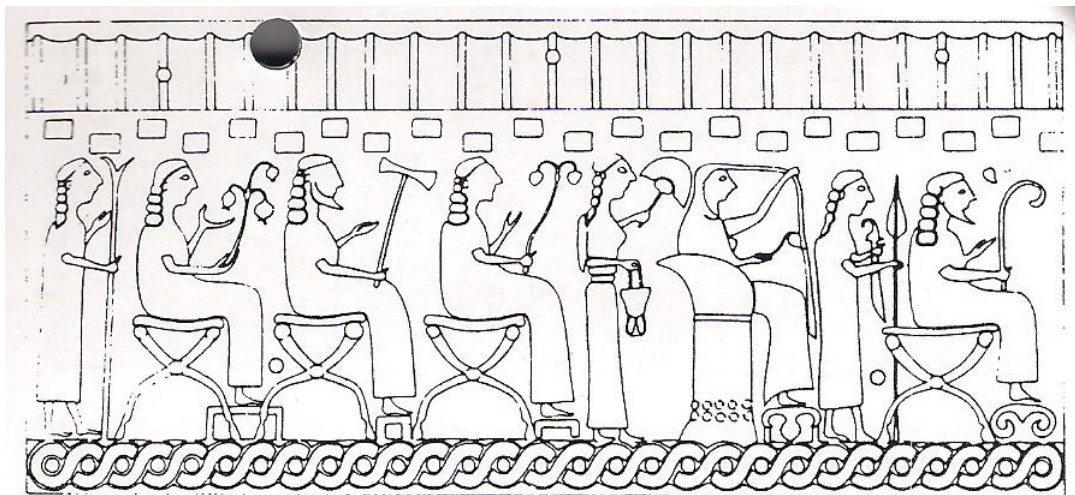


Figure 5.14: Drawing of the Seated Figure scene on relief plaques from Murlo
(Source: Torelli 1985: 43)

The figures are interpreted as being female (goddesses), due to their facial features, the possibility of earrings, and them holding a vegetal object. The vegetal objects from the Seated Figure Frieze plaques are indeed very similar to the one held by the second person from the left in the Banquet Frieze plaques. However, the Seated Figure Frieze plaques are interpreted as being of religious significance, while the Banquet Scene is understood as propagating a socio-political agenda. Therefore, symbolism cannot be transferred from one image to the other.

The most prominent feature mentioned in academic circles to assign female gender to the person is the indication of breasts. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the relief is not detailed enough to determine this feature for certain. The larger chest may individualize a larger person, just as the beard individualizes a bearded man.

Small (1971: 60) further suggests the possibility that the fourth banqueter who plays the lyre is also female. The same arguments as presented in the paragraphs above can be applied to negate the suggestion that the lyre-player is female. An additional argument against female gender of the fourth banqueter is that 'she' would be the only female lyre-player ever depicted at an Etruscan banquet. Male lyre-playing banqueters are rare, but exist in banquet iconography. Only a further six lyre-playing banqueters can be found, and these are in the Tomb 4780/Tarquinia (cat. No. 39), in the Tomb of the Maiden/Tarquinia (cat. No. 54), Querciola Tomb I/Tarquinia (cat. No. 55), Tomb of the Moro/Chiusi (cat. No. 71), on the urn cat. No.89, and on the urn cat. No. 95.

From the arguments presented in the above paragraphs, it is proposed that the Murlo banquet frieze plaques show an all-male banquet.

Discussion of the gender of the persons on the Acquarossa banqueting frieze plaques: Regarding the gender of the banquet participants on the Acquarossa plaques, some scholars are in agreement that all banqueters are male (Small, 1994: 87; Rathje, 1989: 79). However, it is argued here that the middle person one on the left couch, and perhaps the middle person on the second couch are female. Both these persons can be interpreted as having larger chests than the other participants have. The chests look distinctly like female bosoms and not like the chest of perhaps a larger person as in the Murlo plaques. They do not hold drinking vessels (a typically 'female feature' which was discussed in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. and also in subsections 5.4.1. to

5.4.5.), and they do not have beards, either. In addition the middle person on the right couch does have soft, rounded facial features and a thick single braid, which is a fashionable coiffeuse for Etruscan women of the times (Haynes, 2000: 124). Both the middle persons, as well as their couch neighbours, wear rather similar clothing. These consist of tunics and mantles wrapped over their right shoulders. It can, however, be distinguished that the tunics of the middle persons have more details by being moulded with deeper plaits than their male couch neighbours' tunics. The outer banqueter's tunics either have very low folds or lie flat on their chests.

The spatial seating arrangement on the couches may help to determine the gender of the middle persons. In domestic-residential contexts, the Acquarossa plaques are unique in showing three people per couch. There is, fortunately, one example from a funerary context. The image shows exactly such a male-female spatial arrangements when three people are depicted per couch. This is the urn cat. No. 86 which shows a female reclining in between two males. The Acquarossa and the urn catalogue No. 86 are rare but nevertheless existent examples of one woman sharing a banqueting couch/mattress with more than two men, contrary to the statement of Small (1994: 89) that such examples do not exist.

It is proposed here that the Acquarossa banquet frieze plaques include at least one female, the middle person on the right couch, due to the physique of a comparatively large and pronounced bosom, the soft rounded facial features, the at the time fashionable female braid, the tunic in deep folds, and the fact that she is not holding any drinks vessel. The gender of the middle person on the left couch cannot be determined with so many features which point either to male or female identification. He/She has a larger chest than the couch neighbours do, and the facial features are softer and rounded than the couch neighbours' features. A male attribute may be the hair which is done in a straight long chignon. This is usually a male hair fashion as can be seen in many of the banquet scenes. Then again, as with the lady banqueter on the left couch is the tunic moulded in deep folds, the couch neighbour's tunics are flat and without any decorative details. He/she is not holding any object in any of the hands, especially not a drinks vessel. Holding or not holding an object, especially a drinks vessel in one's hand, is not an exclusive male determinant. Examples of females holding a vessel do exist but they are few, for example on the

Velletri frieze plaques, and on the Rome frieze plaques (see discussion subsections 5.2.1. to 5.2.5. and 5.3.1. to 5.3.5.). Since most visual elements distinguish the middle person on the right couch from the immediate couch neighbours, and the spatial seating arrangement supports the notion, it is proposed that this person is female.

Discussion of the gender of the persons on the Velletri and Rome banqueting frieze plaques:

Female participation at banquet, in the terracotta plaques, can be ascertained for the Velletri and Rome plaques. They have clearly rendered bosoms, display female facial features (Velletri) and wear the *tutulus* (Velletri). However, Small (1994: 92 no. 36) and Andren (1940: 411) states that on the Velletri frieze plaques, the first couch is occupied by two men while the second couch is occupied by a male-female couple. They base their observations on the ‘male’ clothing (Small) and *tutulus* (Andren) worn by both the persons placed on the left side of each couch in comparison to the clothing of the person identified as a female who is located on the second couch. However, when looking at the frieze plaques, it is difficult to follow their argument since both figures are dressed in identical clothing and headgear, with identical facial and body features. They also wear upper arm bracelets for jeweller, only found with female banqueters (see catalogue “Tarquinian tomb paintings“). They differ from each other in the types of drinks vessels held. The first banqueter on the left couch hold an object which may be a vegetal item, while the banqueter on the left couch has the second hand empty of items. The significance of objects held was discussed in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. and also in subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5. Items held are not a conclusive and absolute factor to negate the possibility that these two people are female.

It has been argued that, if reclining females are included in a banquet scene, they are always placed to the left of the male couch partner (see subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.4.). This socio-iconographic rule would support the notion that the first banqueter is female. Due to above inferences, it is reasonable to propose that both figures are female. On this basis Andren’s and Small’s interpretations are not valid.

5.4.2. Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory

14. Who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant?):

As with the banquet scenes from other media, all kinds of direction of interaction is depicted, ranging from over-the-table conversation in the scene cat. No. 10, to everybody ignoring each other in the scene cat. No. 12. Detailed descriptions of each scene can be found in catalogue No. 10 to 25.

Pottery

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

Discussion:

Of the eleven banqueters, there are five banqueters (45.5%) holding an object in their hands, while six banqueters do not hold anything (54.5%). All objects held are drinking vessels. Two (18%) of the eleven banqueters are female, with one further banqueter's gender not being clearly assignable.

Status:

Of the eleven banqueters, five banqueters (45.5%) hold an object in their hands, while six banqueters do not hold anything (54.5%). All objects held are drinking vessels. No other objects are held. The possibility of distinguishing status using drinks vessels was discussed in detail in subsection 5.3.2. Since only drinks vessels are held by the banqueters, the ideas presented in subsection 5.3.2. are valid for the current question, too.

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Two (18%) of the eleven banqueters are female, and nine banqueters are male (82%). There is a possibility that a further banqueteer, the one from the vase cat. No.10, is female, too. The two female banqueters, from the dolio cat. No.12, do not hold any items in their hands. This is consistent with the depictions from the other media, where the majority of female banqueters are shown with their hands empty of objects.

The gender of the person holding the *kantharos* on the vase cat. No.10 is difficult to make out; perhaps gender was not important in this scene in the first place. That the person is female is supported by some physical features, and by that fact that he/she is seated to the left of the other banqueteer.⁴⁶ That 'she' is shown with a different kind of vessel from her male companion may be a gender related use of drinks' vessels. Other theories as to a non-gender related use of (different types of) vessels were discussed in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5.

Bronze Objects

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueteer from left to right when looking at the images).

Discussion:

Of the twenty-seven banqueters, twenty banqueters (74%) hold an object in their hands, while seven banqueters do not hold anything (26%). Drinks bowls are held by eight banqueters (30%), while flowers/small leafed branches are held by five banqueters (18%), and other objects by seven banqueters (egg x 1 (?) (4%), lyre x 1 (4%), plate x 1 (4%), dove x 1 (4%), oblong object x 3 (11%).

⁴⁶ See subsection 5.1.2. and 5.3.2. for a detailed discussion of the person on the vase cat. No. 10.

Status:

It is difficult to pick out instances of the use of objects to represent status, since all bronze objects show either one or two banqueters only. Where there are more than two banqueters, they are simply a repeat of the same banqueter, as can be seen on the bronze sheets and on the tripod.

Drinking vessels and other objects:

Most objects held are drinking vessels. The only example where we have more than one drinking vessel in any one scene is from the tripod. However, it is a three-time repeat of the same banqueter. Therefore, a useful comparative study cannot be carried out. That one banqueter is shown with a vessel, and the other holds another object, or nothing, can certainly be an indication of status. But it is difficult to determine what is encoded in the pictorial message, if there is a message at all, where one person holding a wreath, the other a *kylix*, and a third nothing in his/her hands. For example the male in mirror cat. No. 24 is holding a bowl, while the female holds an oval object (egg?). Since we have a male and a female, a gendered symbolism may be the issue here. Perhaps the bowl represents a certain social rank while the egg (?) represents another such rank? A further interpretation is that the man is thirsty, hence the drinks vessel, and the lady is eating a finger food because she is hungry. It may be a combination of above-mentioned interpretations. For example, the bowl held by the male may represent a socio-political rank and the wealth that comes with it, while the lady is simply hungry. Unfortunately, we do not have any example of two males or two females with different objects in any one scene on bronze objects.

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Women are shown with a variety of objects. Five are holding a blossom or a small leafed branch (one repeated five times; it is not clear what of the two is actually shown), three with an oblong object (one repeated 3 times), one is holding a bowl, one an egg (?), one a dove and one with nothing in her hands. Since the banquet scenes are from objects of a very varied origin and intended use, and each lady is shown with a different item, it is difficult to make valid deductions of gendered use

of objects. There may be a symbolic meaning encoded in some of them. For example the dove may represent beauty, freedom or domestication, peace, a messenger, or any other symbolism the Etruscans associated with the dove. The same may be true for the female with the drinking bowl. The bowl may be read as the lady having a certain status in Etruscan society, or it may be that she is the thirstiest person in the group since she is the only one shown with a bowl. Perhaps only one drinking bowl is shown that is passed round, one by one to every banqueter, and the lady was the first one to receive it, perhaps as a sign of status. It may also be coincidence that she was closest to the servant handing forth the vessel. A lot of conjecture is involved in attempting to analyse the possible gendered symbolism of objects held by female banqueters. The examples are not numerous enough to be able to discern a possible recurrent pattern for the gendered application of objects.

Ivory Objects

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

Observation:

Both banqueters (100%) hold an object in their hands.

16. Gender and Status:

Both banqueters are male. Each holds a different kind of drinks vessel. Interpretations are manifold. Different vessels may indicate different status, but if so, it is not known what status is represented. Different beverages enjoyed may be shown. Wealth may be displayed in having the economic and social power to afford and have the knowledge of the existence and correct use of different types of drinking vessels. Any interpretations can be provided for the people and objects, or

absent items. It is difficult to discern an obvious pattern since there is a lack of repetition of certain combinations in comparison to others. With the size of the sample of banquet scenes available, conjecture is all that can be worked with.

5.4.3. Tarquinian tomb paintings

Of the forty *convivia* examined from Tarquinia, thirty-two banquet scenes are preserved well enough, or illustrations obtained are detailed enough, to be included in the following analysis. The paintings from the Tomb of the Kithara Player (cat. No. 41) and from the Orcus II Tomb (cat. No. 62) are now lost. There are no detailed facsimiles, drawings or photographs available for reference. Only textual descriptions are available with varying degrees of details given. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the scenes is not possible. The original painting from the Tomb of the Little Flowers (cat. No. 43) is now very fragmentary. No facsimiles were produced when the tomb was discovered. Therefore, this tomb is not included in this analysis. The original painting from the Tomb of the Biclinium (cat. No. 48) is now lost. We only have a drawing made by Smuglewicz in the eighteenth century that shows eight banqueters, four male and four female. The drawing appears to incorporate a high degree of artistic freedom with respect to social customs, clothing and utensils. Smuglewicz drew reclining, banqueting females with nude torsos, which is in complete contradiction of what the Etruscans ever showed in their banquet iconography. This must be assigned to Smuglewicz's artistic imagination. Artistic freedom may also be the explanation for the male banqueter on the fourth couch holding an instrument resembling a lute. It would make it the only representation of such an instrument at Etruscan banquet if the copy made by Smuglewicz could be relied on. Therefore, in accord with De Marinis (1961: 99), the correctness of the reproduction by Smuglewicz is viewed as being highly questionable and the banquet scene is not included in the following analysis. It is therefore rather an unfortunate choice of Vesco (2003: 27) to illustrate a 'typical' Etruscan banquet with reproductions of two of Smuglewicz's illustrations from the Tomb of the Biclinium. These give a wrong image of how an Etruscan banquet was conducted.

The originals from the Tomb of the Cock (cat. No. 56), Tomb 1200 (cat. No. 57), Tomb of the Pygmies (cat. No. 59), and from Tomb 2327 (cat. No. 60) are now too faded or lost in parts to determine what objects were held by the banqueters. No facsimiles or photographs were utilized in time to capture the kind of details required for this study. The paintings are not included in following analysis.

14. Who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant?):

When looking at the Tarquinian banquet scenes, it is remarkable to observe that the gendered seating arrangement with females to the left of their male couch companions is a rule that the banqueters adhered to without exception. In all other aspects the partygoers are rather lively with everybody speaking, cheering, and gesticulating with everybody else, whether male, or female, old, or young, banqueter, or servant. Male banqueters speak with their couch/ground space companions in the Tomb of the Lionesses II (cat. No. 29), and in the Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42). Men were also shown speaking with the male occupants of the neighbouring couch, and/or turning away from their actual couch companion in Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), the Tomb of the Olympic Games (cat. No. 33), the Frontoncino Tomb (cat. No. 35), the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45), and in the Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54). Females speak with their male couch companions in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), the Tomb of the Maiden), in the Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36), and the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37). Females are also seen speaking with the males from their neighbouring couch or chair in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26). Female banqueters by themselves and with female servants are in contact with each other in the Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45). Young banqueters and older banqueters are actively participating at banquet in the Bartoccini Tomb, the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), and Tomb 5039.

Male banqueters speak to servants in the Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No. 27), Tomb of the Lionesses (cat. No. 28), Tomb 5039, Tomb of the Leopards, Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47); while female banqueters speak to servants in the Tomb of the Leopards, and in the Tomb of the Ship (cat. No. 51).

In the banquet scenes, there is no “red tape” being followed in the sense that perhaps females may not be shown addressing servants, or where communication is restricted solemnly to your couch partner. At these Tarquinian banquets there are no obvious gender, status or age constraints. Anything goes, even sleeping (off a glass of wine too many) as in the Tarantola Tomb (cat. No. 31).

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

A detailed representation of each of the Tarquinian Tomb banquet scenes is given in the catalogue No. 26 to 65.

Discussion:

Out of one hundred and seventy one banqueters preserved, thirty-two hold drinking vessels (19%), while twelve banqueters hold wreaths or ribbons (7%), nine hold the round-ish white “egg“ (5%; perhaps also once held in the Tomb of the Sow, but the object is now too faded to say so with certainty), three hold a leafed branch (2%), three hold a lyre (2%), two a “rope”(1%), one holds a duck (0.6%), one a small plate (or small bowl; 0.6%), one holds a spear-like object (0.6%), one holds a blossom (0.6%), and one perhaps a small red object (0.6%). This adds up to sixty-six (39%) banqueters out of one hundred and seventy one being directly associated with an object, while sixty-five (38%) banqueter’s hands are empty and forty (23%) banqueter’s hands are now lost due to deterioration of the original paintings. De Marinis (1961: 63-4) stressed the fact that so many of the banqueters gesticulate with animated arm movements and empty hands, referring to images from Chiusi and Tarquinia in particular.

Status (status regarding political and/or religious superiority, age, wealth, family relation or main person at private or public):

It is very difficult to find clues that would allow us to assign status to the banqueters when looking at the objects they are associated with, or clothing, or facial features such as beards, or gesturing and general demeanour. It is certain that the objects held are very varied and no specific funerary relation or significance can be assigned to the objects, with the possible exception of the round, white, egg-like object (De Marinis, 1961: 41-2). The discussion as to the origin and purpose of the white, round object can be found in this subsection, and in subsections 5.4.2. and 5.4.5.

Drinking vessels:

Drinking vessels are by far the most numerous objects held by the Tarquinian banqueters. Out of one hundred and seventy one banqueters preserved, thirty-two hold such vessels. The only way, so far, to differentiate status as suggested by Etruscologists was by looking at the use of different drinking vessels as shown in the revetment plaques from Murlo and others representations as well as looking at actual banqueting sets made from pottery or metal (Rathje, 1990: 283).⁴⁷ It is certainly a valid proposition that different vessels would indicate different status in any one particular banquet scene. However, this theory cannot be applied to the Tarquinian tomb paintings. Of the thirty-six scenes analysed, only five scenes show two or more banqueters holding a drinks vessel. They are exclusively male banqueters. In all five banquets, the vessels held are always of the same type in each of the paintings. In Tomb 5039, four out of eight banqueters hold one stemmed bowl each (banqueter two and five in their right hand, banqueter three and six in their left hand). In the Tomb of the Olympic Games, three out of five banqueters hold a stemmed cup each (first and fourth banqueter in left hand, extra banqueter in right hand). In the Frontoncino Tomb, two out of three banqueters hold a *kylix* each in their right hand. In the Tomb of the Bigas, two out of six banqueters hold one shallow bowl each (first banqueter in his left hand, sixth banqueter in his right hand, in addition to a two-handled cup in his left hand. The sixth banqueter may be a very thirsty man). In the Querciola Tomb I, two out of nine banqueters hold a *kylix* each, both in their right hand (banqueter six and seven). It is remarkable that whenever two or more drinks vessels are shown, they are always of exactly the same type in each individual scene.

⁴⁷ See discussion subsection 5.3.1.

Therefore the theory of status differentiation through the use of different vessels is not applicable to Tarquinian Tomb paintings.

This is not to say that status is not expressed by some banqueters actually holding drinks vessels, while others do not. The vessels, even if of the same type, may encode some social significance. However, when looking at the men with and without vessels for example the scene from the Querciola Tomb I with nine banqueters overall, there is no discernable difference in the men, and the lady, regarding clothes, gestures, age (perhaps a beard as indication of age), to assign a place of social distinction, or one particular person being the focus of the party. The vessels may represent a distinguished status for the persons holding them. But in dress, hair fashion, and general demeanour they do not differ from any banqueteer without the vessels. The same can be postulated for Tomb 5039. Here, we have eight male banqueters. Karlsson (1996: 268) mentioned male and female banqueters reclining, without elaborating on this statement. However, there are only men shown in this scene. Four of them hold a stemmed bowl each, two of them in their right hand, and two of them in their left hand. This may be an indication of different status, or of some being right- or left handed respectively. One of the men, the fifth banqueteer, also has a beard. He may therefore be a man of status, right-handed, and perhaps older than all the other males since he is the only one with a beard (taken that a beard is an indication of age). Another interpretation is that perhaps the beard is an expression of fashion, for which the Italian men are still famous. Or else he may be a foreigner and his foreignness is expressed by him being the only one with a beard.

With this one example it is shown that speculation can go beyond the useful. Any combination of possible theories can be assigned to the analysis of objects and people's personal traits. What is important here is to stress that there are no obvious signs that can be used to decipher status markers. Suggestions can be made, but there is no distinct rule that can be discerned like, for example, the strict gendered seating arrangement at banquet. The same result can be observed when looking at the banquet scenes where only one male is depicted holding a drinks vessel. This is the case in the following tombs: Bartoccini, Tarantola, Hunting and Fishing (one adult couple only), 5898, Old Man (one adult couple only), Painted Vases (one adult

couple only), 4780, Leopards, Funerary Bed, Black Sow, 5513, Deer Hunt, Maggi, Ship, Blue Demons, Maiden, Shields. As mentioned above, it is possible that the assignment of a drinking vessel to one particular banqueter is a sign of status. It may also mean that this particular man is thirsty; while the man holding the ribbon (for example in the Tomb of the Tarantola) is the one with the distinguished status, whatever the precise status that is to be conferred. However, in the case of the Tomb of the Tarantola, the man holding the only drinking vessel, in his left hand, also has a beard. He may therefore be the man with the most distinguished status. His status may relate to socio-political or religious standing, age, fashion or his place of origin because he has a beard. However, the theory that a vessel being held in combination with the man having a beard confers different status than the other, non-vessel-holding and non-bearded banqueters does not hold.

A further example is Tomb 5898 where four male banqueters are depicted. One banqueter holds a wide stemmed bowl in his right hand. He is without beard. Two further banqueters have beards but they do not hold any objects at all. One banqueter has neither beard nor any object in his hands. Possible interpretations are many: The man with the drinks vessel may have higher status than his three companions. He may be right handed. However, he is younger than the two men with beards, or less fashionable or more fashionable in not having a beard, and/or he may be a local/non-local. This kind of interpretation can be followed though with all four banqueters. A lot can be said this way, but there is no interpretation that stands out as the one with most (numerically prominent) combination of circumstances on which a theory could be built. If there was a numerical majority of scenes where it is, for example, always the bearded men that hold drinking vessels, we could build a theory on this correlation. However, there is no observable statistical majority of drinks vessel held in combination with certain clothing worn or general demeanour.

Nonetheless, there may be a hint as to the connection of status to drinks vessels after all. We may be able to discern status through the conspicuous display of drinks vessels based on the following observation. Of the thirty-two drinks vessels held, twelve are held in right hands, and twenty in left hands. What needs to be pointed out is that, because of the direction of reclining, the banqueters rest on their left elbows. It would therefore not be possible to drink from a vessel held in the left

hand. With most banqueters resting their drink in their left hand, no active drinking is illustrated. This may indicate that the drinks vessel indeed represent a status symbol of some kind; perhaps of wealth and sophistication of the people being associated with these vessels. These people have the economic wealth to enjoy (alcoholic) beverages such as wine, and the sophistication to drink these from appropriate vessels.

Other objects:

Twelve banqueters hold wreaths (or ribbons), nine hold the rounded white “egg“ (perhaps also once held in the Tomb of the Sow, but object is now too faded to say so with certainty), three hold a leafed branch, three hold a lyre, two a “rope”, one holds a duck, one a small plate (or small bowl), one holds a spear-like object, one holds a blossom, and what looks like a small red object (original is now too faded to make out the object with certainty). It is difficult to find a correlation of status and object held by banqueters, even when including the drinking vessels, in combination with the physical traits and general demeanour of the banqueters.

Wreaths and ribbons:

The most numerous other items held, not counting the drinks vessels discussed above, are wreaths and ribbons. Banqueters directly associated with wreath/ribbons and leafed branches are seen in the Bartoccini Tomb, the Tomb of the Lionesses, Tomb 5039, the Tomb of the Tarantola, the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, the Tomb of the Olympic Games, Frontoncino Tomb, the Tomb of the Old Man, The Tomb of the Painted Vases, and the Tomb of the Leopards. The significance of wreaths and ribbons, and the significance of leafed branches were presented in subsection 5.1.3. With the evidence there, the holding of wreaths and leafed branches is most likely to be an indicator for an outdoor setting for the banquet, and not a symbol of status of any kind. This theory is supported by the fact that both male and females are shown holding wreaths and ribbons as for example in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing and in the Tomb of the Leopards.

The “egg”:

The round, white item usually described as an egg, is represented ten times. What is almost certain is that it is a morsel of food, since two out of the nine banqueters lift the item to their mouths. In addition to it being an egg, it may also be a dough parcel or a fruit. We simply do not have enough clear representations to know for certain whether it was always the same kind of object that was represented in all nine instances. The gendered fertility symbolism was negated with the help of the evidence presented in subsection 5.3.3. There is the “egg” in the male only banquets from the Tombs of the Lionesses and Bigas (one banqueter eats the “egg”), we have men offering the “egg” to females in the Tomb of the Leopards, and in the Tomb of the Shields. The female is offering it to her male companion in the Tomb of the Maiden. In the Tomb of the Blue Demons, the male banqueter eats the food morsel all by himself. We have no numerical-statistical majority for the “egg” being used, represented, or associated with one particular and exclusive (combination of) way(s).

The lyre:

The lyre as a musical instrument being held by banqueters may indeed have a social symbolism (Jannot, 1974, 1988). The instrument is viewed in association with the banqueters being learned in Homeric verse. The Homeric style of life is supposed to have been introduced into Central Italy in the eighth century BC (Ridgway, 1981: 23). Lyres are shown being held by banqueters in the Tomb 4780, the Tomb of the Maiden, and the Querciola Tomb I. Lyre players at banquet are always male. In most instances, the servant-musicians play this instrument. Servants also play the double-flute. We never see a banqueter play the double flute, apart from one exception, on a sarcophagus from Chiusi, cat. No. 91 (see subsection 5.4.5. for discussion). The lyre is different. An explanation may be that in the world of the Homeric epos, which was known to the Etruscan society, the hero Achilles is associated with playing the lyre. We read in Iliad (IX.192) that Achilles plays the lyre while Patroclus provides fire, wine and meat for the guests. We have two heroes, one playing the lyre, while the other one provides food and comfort. A banquet with food, warmth and entertainment is provided by heroes. Perhaps this was what the commissioner of the three banquet scenes wanted to express; the knowledge and learning acquired regarding heroic epos, popular at the time in the central Mediterranean, and the

acting out of a heroic banquet. However, the banqueters in these three scenes do not put forth any heroic demeanour otherwise.

In Tomb 4780 one couple each is shown in loving embrace, and the other two banqueters do not give any attention to the lyre player either. In the Tomb of the Maiden, the lyre player shares a couch with a female, but they do not look at each other to give attention to each other. In the banquet scene from the Querciola Tomb I, the lyre player is also not given any special attention from his fellow banqueters or servants.

It has been noted during the current research that the lyre player is always the first (male) banqueter to the left of the banquet scene, or always the last banqueter to the right of the scene. He is never in the middle of the banqueting crowd. He is always situated on the edge of the reclining arrangement. This fact of where to place a lyre playing banqueter must have a social significance. We have females always reclining to the left of their male couch companions that is a gendered issue. Now, we have a cast of lyre players always reclining as the first or last banqueter of any banquet scene that includes lyre-playing banqueters.

The duck:

The naked boy holding a duck, sitting on the lap of a female in the Tomb of the Painted Vases has been the topic of academic controversy. D'Agostino (1987: 216) stressed the nudity and the dove as a symbol of eroticism for the overall scene and for the boy and girl in particular. However, an erotic interpretation of the scene cannot be sustained when analysing all elements that complete the scene. We have an older, mature couple in loving embrace on the banquet couch. We have a girl and a boy on a chair to the left of the couch. The spatial arrangement of younger and older banqueters (see subsection 5.1.3.), the nakedness of the boy symbolising his young age (see subsection 5.2.3.) and the overall composition of the scene supports the interpretation of this scene as an intimate family occasion eternalized as a tomb painting as being much more likely. The duck is the young boy's pet. Holding a pet stresses his boyish playfulness, not his erotic qualities. Dennis (1878: 360) also concludes that not sensual love but fraternal affection is thematic in this scene.

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Of all the scenes, there are one hundred and seventy one banqueters preserved well enough to assign gender. One hundred and twenty nine male banqueters and forty-two female banqueters are shown. This is a 75% male to 25% female ratio. When comparing the number of male only scenes to mixed sex scenes, the result is that out of thirty-six banquet scenes, fifteen are male only, and twenty-one are mixed sex scenes; a 41% exclusive male to 58% mixed sex ratio. There are no female only scenes. This means that the vast majority of banqueters are males, but that the majority of banquet scenes have at least one female included.

Scenes with a numerical majority of males in comparison to females:

The ratio may be explained in assigning the few females who are included in the scenes a special status; meaning that the females had 'reason' to be included in an otherwise male dominated banquet. Considerably more males than females are shown in the Bartoccini Tomb (three males, one adult female, one sub-adult female), Tomb 4780 (four male, one female), the Tomb of the Leopards (four male, two female), the Tomb of the Black Sow (five males, one female), the Tomb of the Blue Demons (seven males, one female), Querciola Tomb I (eight males, one female), and Tomb 3697 (three males, one female).

Of all these scenes, a special status for the female can be assigned exclusively for the first seated female in the Bartoccini Tomb. The status is not to be assigned because she is seated while the males recline. Being seated is a convention of showing banqueting females in Etruscan art.⁴⁸ She is not singled out because of holding or being associated with any particular or unusual objects. In fact she is not holding anything at all in her hands. She is the main person in the scene because all other persons, banqueters are servants alike focus their attention on her. All eyes and all bodies are turned to focus on her, with the man on the couch closest to her reaching out and resting his hand on her shoulder. She is the main attraction, the focal point, not the male banqueter occupying a couch on his own, in the centre of the scene, as stated by Weber-Lehmann (1985: 42). She may be the mother of the

⁴⁸ See discussions in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5.

two young men reclining together on the couch and the maiden seated behind her, and the wife of the older man reclining on a couch by himself, resting a hand tenderly on the seated lady's shoulder. The lady and the maiden are not 'perched in adjacent chairs, like spectators (Leighton, 2004: 107), while the men recline comfortably on couches. The females are much more than an unwanted but necessary addition to the scene. The first lady banqueter seated on a throne-like chair is the guest of honour in the Bartoccini banquet.

In all the other scenes where men have a numerical majority, there is no special focus on the females. The women mingle with the men and do not distinguish themselves by body language or by objects being associated with them, or by being the focal point of the scene. In Tomb 4780 and Querciola Tomb I, the one female in each scene is seen in loving embrace with her couch partner, but the couple is not the focal point of the scene. They are part of it, without drawing special attention to themselves because of a female being included in the scene. Dennis (1878: 309) assigned the female in the Querciola Tomb I the status of hetairai, by arguing that her amorous attitude only allows such an interpretation. On the other hand, in today's world of interpretative freedom and emancipation, we may regard the lady as a member of society, and give the male the status of a rent-boy. However, the aim of this thesis is to examine the elements that constitute a banquet, and what we can learn about Etruscan society from these elements. What is clearly discernible is that the female is dressed, bejewelled and coiffured in a most careful manner, with her stola made of what looks like leopard fur, and the small details in her headband suggesting gems. The men and the female are shown in their prime of youth and beauty. We know they are wealthy because of the opulent and beautiful (soft-) furnishings surrounding them, and being entertained and served by richly clad musicians and cupbearers, in a lush picnic style outdoor setting. Why introduce a high-class call girl into this private tomb scene? It may be much more reasonable to identify the centre couple as perhaps newlyweds and this scene commemorating their happy time together with their close friends.

In the Tomb of the Leopards the females are not distinguished from the male participants by body language, items held, or who they converse. No distinctions are made between the sexes. Only clothing, lighter skin colour (which was an artistic

convention in ancient times), facial features, hairstyles and jewellery distinguish them from their male companions. This is very reminiscent as when taking a snapshot of a dinner party in our times.

Scenes with a numerical equality of males and females:

In banquet scenes, where the ratio of male to (adult) female is equal, the relationship between couples appears to be the focal point. Such scenes can be found in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tomb 1999, Tomb of the Old Man, the Tomb of the Painted Vases, the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49), the Tomb of the Maiden, Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58), the Tomb of the Warrior (cat. No. 63), and the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65). All these paintings have one man and one woman paired up per one couch or reclining space, or in a mixed reclining and seated scene (Tomb 808). Some of the scenes stress the (marital) affection and intimacy between the couple (Spivey, 199: 58), so for example in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tomb 1999, the Tomb of the Painted Vases (Dennis, 1883: 360 and illu p. 359: Small, 1994 No. 17), or in the Tomb of the Old Man. The lady banqueter in the Tomb of the Old Man is clearly of a mature age due to her round and full matronly facial features, caring demeanor, and very richly woven and embroidered tunic, mantle and *tutulus* covering her body. Dennis (1878: 357), however, describes her as being ‘*as youthful as he is venerable*’, and her being most likely the ‘*May to his December*’. It is difficult to read such an age difference into the faces of the couple. The lady may be shown as aged with grace, just like the funerary terracotta sculpture of Seitanti Hanunia Tlesnasa (Swaddling and Prag, 2002). However, it should not come as a surprise that a certain amount of female vanity is to be allowed when portraying a lady of mature age. Not to paint all the wrinkles and sagging cheeks was as kindly an act and appreciated by the females in Etruscan days as it is today. A snapshot of a sugar daddy with his younger playmate is clearly not substantiated by the painting.

The other paintings of equal numbered male to female couples depict the pairs reclining together, but they do not ‘make a show’ of sharing one couch. They may focus their attention on their couch partners (Tomb of the Maiden, Tomb of the Shields), or the couch partners turn their attention to other banqueters, musicians or

servants (Tomb of the Triclinium).

What has become noticeable while researching the social details is that when there is only one couple shown in the paintings, then the couple focuses their attention on each other. This is the case in all the single couple banquet scenes from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tomb 1999, Tomb of the Painted Vases and from the Tomb of the Old Man. These are scenes of domestic Etruscan life (De Marinis 1961: 48). The (matrimonial) unity of a man and a woman are to be conveyed in the paintings. When there is more than one couple, there is no rule discernable as to who focuses on which other person present in the scene. Then, there is more of a party atmosphere, where everybody converses and attends to whomever they like.

Scenes with a numerical majority of females:

The only scene where female banqueters outnumber male banqueters is from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing. We have one adult couple reclining on a couch. They both focus their attention on each other. To their left are two young females, seated on separate pillows. The whole scene emanates an atmosphere of family bliss, union, and relaxed outdoor happening. We do not deal with a gendered issue here by having the male outnumbered by females. It is much more a family scene showing a couple and their two pre-adolescent daughters in an intimate and blissful moment of family life. The notion that the scene is one of an intimate and domestic family setting of a married couple with their daughters was also postulated by De Marinis (1961: 46) and by Brendel (1995: 189).

In the context of Tarquinian and other tomb paintings and funerary art, and in domestic-residential contexts such as the revetment plaques and (banquet) scenes from other objects, such as vessels and mirrors, it has to be stressed that Etruscan females are always fully clothed, showing a minimum of bare skin, with just the face, hands and lower arms showing. Tunics are often high-collared, over knee-length (De Marinis, 1961: 48) and even the feet are either dressed in *calcei repandi* (Bartoccini Tomb, Tomb of the Shields) or covered by a blanket or tunic (Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tomb of the Leopards, Tomb of the Maiden, Tomb of the Ship, Tomb 4780). Considering this evidence, the well-known 'description' of Etruscan life and of Etruscan women in particular as given by Theopompus, is not supported

by Etruscan iconography. The opposite is true, it is not the case that:”...these women take great care of their bodies and exercise bare, exposing their bodies even with men and among themselves: for it is not shameful for them to appear almost naked. He also says they dine not with their husbands, but with any man who happens to be present; and they toast anyone they want to...” (Theopompus in Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* XII, 517d-518l). Aristotle’s statement, in Athenaeus 1.23d (Dennis states the reference as I.42), is also not to be confirmed with actual Etruscan evidence, namely that the Etruscan females and males recline under the same mantle. Mantles or blankets are always separate. The female banqueters have their own individual coverings, and so do the men. Dennis (1878: 320) remarks on this decorous Etruscan custom in reference to the banquet scene in the Tomb of the Triclinium. However, Theopompus can be confirmed when he states that Etruscan females “...toast anyone they want to...” at dinner (Theopompus in Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* XII, 517d-518l).

Items held by female banqueters:

Of the forty-two female banqueters, twenty-three have their hands empty of objects, seven women and girls hold wreaths, three hold an 'egg', and nine female banqueters' hands are not preserved anymore, so it cannot be determined whether they held any items. The wreaths held by women, of whom sub-adolescence girls are just three, consistent with the finds in subsection 5.1.3. since the majority of these scenes appear to be set outdoors. The various, non-gendered interpretations for the 'egg' was presented in subsection 5.3.3.

The 'gendered' observance is that 55% of females do not hold any objects. This rather high percentage in comparison to domestic-residential contexts can also be confirmed with the findings from subsections 5.4.4. and 5.4.5. It can be noted that there are fewer items held overall by either sex in funerary contexts by comparison with scenes from domestic-residential contexts. However, it is only 31% of men in Tarquinina banquet scenes whose hands are empty of objects. Perhaps the high percentage of women without objects is related to the fact that the most numerous item held are drinks vessels. But there is not a single woman in funerary contexts holding a *kylix* or a bowl from which she enjoys a beverage. This may account for

the low number of women being directly associated with an item. The reason why women are not shown with drinks vessels in funerary contexts but in domestic-residential contexts is not known. However, women appear to be equal banqueting partners to their male companions even if they are less frequently associated with any objects. They address servants and other banqueters just as animatedly as do the male banqueters, they gesticulate as lively as their male partners do, and dress, jewellery and coiffeur are as elaborate as can be expected from an Etruscan aristocratic lady.

5.4.4. Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano

Of the ten *convivia* examined from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano, nine banquet scenes are preserved well enough to be included in following analysis. The painting of the banquet scene from the Hescanas Tomb/Orvieto (cat. No. 74) is too faded and destroyed in many places. Many details are now lost and no facsimiles or photographs were taken when the scene was still in a better condition.

14. Who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant?):

As with the Tarquinian banquet scenes, there are all kinds of set-ups regarding who converses with whom. There are banqueters giving attention to a fellow banqueter, or a servant (Golini Tomb I, Golini II Tomb), couch-intimate conversations (Tomb of the Wells, Cassuccini Tomb, Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga), cross-couch conversations (Cassuccini Tomb), or couch partners looking in different directions (Golini Tomb I, Tomb of the Triclinium). Detailed descriptions of the interaction of banqueters and servants are given in the "Catalogue - Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto, Sarteano Tomb Paintings". As was noted with the Tarquinian banquet scenes, there are no obvious rules as to how a conversation at banquet should be conducted. We have gendered seating arrangements, and we have male lyre-playing banqueters with their assigned place at banquet. Nevertheless, when it comes to who speaks with whom, or who gives their attention to which fellow banqueters or servant, various combinations are shown in these *convivia*.

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

A detailed representation of each of the painted tomb banquet scenes from Cerverteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano is given in the catalogue No. 66 to 75.

Discussion:

Of the thirty-nine banqueters (preserved), sixteen hold objects in their hands (41%), nine have hands empty of objects (23%), and eight banqueters' hands are not preserved (20.5%). The lady banqueter holding the drinking bowl in the Tomb of the Triclinium is excluded from this discussion for reasons presented in subsection 5.3.4. (2.5%). The five banqueters from the Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice are also excluded since it is only known from textual sources that some of them held wreaths, ribbons, and flowers, but it is not known exactly who of the banqueters held which objects (13%). It may be noted that, as with the representations from Tarquinia and on funerary monuments, we have a rather large percentage of banqueters whose hands are empty of items. Of the sixteen banqueters who hold an object, seven (39%) hold a drinking vessel, three hold a leafed branch (17%), two hold a long "togati" staff (11%), two a blossom (11%), two a small plate (11%), one a wreath (5.5%), and one a lyre (5.5%). This adds up to eighteen people and results from two banqueters being counted twice because they hold a drinks vessel and a branch at the same time. The percentages are calculated on the headcount of eighteen people to allow for both objects held by the two banqueters from the Casuccini Hill Tomb and the Tomb of the Moro.

Status (status regarding political and/or religious superiority, age, wealth, family relation or main person at banquet for private or public reasons):

Sixteen banqueters hold an object. Of these sixteen people, seven (39%) hold a

drinking vessel, three a leafed branch (17%), two hold a long “togati” staff (11%), two a blossom (11%), two a small plate (11%), one a wreath (5.5%), and one a lyre (5.5%).

Drinking vessels:

The drinking vessels are the largest group of objects being directly associated with banqueters. They amount to 39%. Of the seven tombs, four show banqueters enjoying beverages from their own vessels. These are the Casuccini Hill, the Hill of the Moro Tomb, the Golini I, and the Triclinium tombs. In the Golini I Tomb, both the banqueters hold *kylixes*. In the Tomb of the Triclinium, both the banqueters hold shallow drinking bowls. As was shown when two or more banqueters hold a drinks vessel in any one tomb from Tarquinia, the vessels are always of the same type. No status distinction can be made, on status referring to political, religious, wealth, or age differentiations by looking at drinks vessels. The men holding the drinks vessels do not show any markers to distinguish each other by the way of different clothing, dress, facial features (including beards) or general demeanour. In the Casuccini Hill Tomb, two banqueters hold a shallow drinking bowl each, while in the Tomb of the Moro, one banqueter holds a cup. Neither of their fellow banqueters holds any objects, or an item such a wreath or a blossom.

The drinks vessels could be a symbol of status. Moreover, the status each vessel encoded may have been common knowledge in these Etruscan circles of society. However, when we look at the images of conviviality nowadays, this decoding of symbolic status-reflecting language is not at all obvious, if indeed it did existed at all. Since the vessels are of the same type, when more than one banqueter is depicted, a sense of uniformity and sharing is emanated, not an atmosphere of distinction. However, as noted in subsection 5.4.3., to be personally associated with a vessel may be a symbol that assigns a certain status to that particular person, in comparison to a person not holding a vessel.

Other objects:

Togati staffs:

The two men in the Tomb of the Well holding the “togati” staffs are the only two

banqueters shown with these objects in Etruscan banquet scenes. These may very well be indicators of the status of magistrate and/or augur.

Outdoor indicators:

Blossoms and small leafed branches are being held by the banqueters in the Hill of the Moro Tomb and in the Casuccini Hill Tomb. The banquet scenes were discussed in subsection 5.1.4. and the branches identified as outdoor indicators.

The lyre:

With regard to the lyre-playing banqueter in the Hill of the Moro Tomb, it can be observed that, in accordance with all other lyre-holding banqueters (subsection 5.4.2. and 5.4.3.), he is placed as the first reclining banqueter in this scene, too. This observation confirms that this specific seating arrangement may be an Etruscan rule of socio-cultural significance. A reason why the lyre-players are always at the head end of the couches may be that the volume of the instrument was not to overpower the conversations of the banqueters. The lyre was an integral part, but it was not to overpower the overall conviviality.

Empty hands versus items held:

In the Casuccini Hill Tomb, five out of ten banqueters hold items; five banqueters have hands empty of objects, of which one banqueter rests his hand on his couch companion's shoulder. This banquet scene may have been a very useful image to distinguish certain status. The men are distinguished from each other by holding different items, and by body language of gesticulating differently with arms and hands. In addition, they wear mantles of different shades and a variety of coloured borders. Therewith, status differences could be expressed by one banqueter wearing the white mantle with the turquoise border and holding a bowl and a large leafed branch, while his couch partner wears a red mantle with a green border, but nothing in his hands, and so on for all ten banqueters. Every detail of clothing and items held can be made into an issue of symbolic status value. However, there is no obvious differentiation of one banqueter from the other when looking at the scene as a whole. The different coloured mantles rather add much to the atmosphere of a group of men

in their prime (none of them is shown with a beard, which may be a status symbol of age) enjoying each other's company and sharing a moment of fun and camaraderie amongst equals.

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Of the thirty-nine banqueters (preserved), only four are female. This is a ratio of 35 (90%) male to 4 (10%) female participants. The four females are seen in three (33%) out of nine tombs. These are the Tombs Golini I, Golini II, and Triclinium. There are no female only scenes. Six tombs show male only scenes (67%). The female in the Golini I Tomb and the first female in the Tomb of the Triclinium do not hold any objects. Only the head of the female in the Golini II Tomb is preserved. Unfortunately, her body, hands and possible objects held by her are not preserved. The finds that most female's hands are empty of object are consistent with the results from subsections 5.4.3. and 5.4.5. However, there is no further differential demeanour observable in the behaviour of females at dinner when comparing them with the male banqueters. They chat and gesticulate just like their male companions, have elaborate coiffeuses, clothing and jewellery, and are represented in the same physical size as the male banqueters.

Conclusion:

Sixteen banqueters out of thirty-nine hold objects in their hands (41%). The items held may be the symbolic codification of gender and status as it was known and understood in the strata of Etruscan society as depicted in the banquet scenes. However, the symbolic language that may be encoded is not easy to decipher. When comparing the above banquet scenes to the other scenes analysed in this study, the recurrent observable patterns are that females are not shown with drinking vessels, and that lyre-playing participants are always the first or last reclining male banqueters. When more than one banqueter in a scene is directly associated with a drinks vessel, these are without exception, always of the same type. Therefore, status differentiation by exclusively looking at vessel type is not viable for banquet scenes from funerary contexts.

As was stressed in the subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5., this is not to say that gender and status differentiation through the association of specific objects with certain people was not practiced. It is not easy to decode such differentiation by looking at the banquet scenes, by analysing them numerically (percentages), by comparing and contrasting them with scenes from different locations (Tarquinia, Cerveteri, Orvieto, Sarteano), or from different media such as tomb paintings, funerary monuments, or pottery, bronze, and ivory artefacts. No obvious correlation of certain objects with certain types of people becomes apparent. Too many variations are shown to be able to make a conclusive statement as to the use of objects to represent status in Etruscan society.

5.4.5. Funerary monuments

All twenty-three *convivia* are included in the analysis. Some individuals' hands are not preserved (well enough) to see if they held any objects. Nevertheless, these scenes are still included since their banquetting companions' hands are often in a good enough condition for analysis.

14. Who addresses who on each couch/blanket/inter couch conversation (fellow male or female diner, or servant?):

Consistent with the observations detailed in subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.4., there are no obvious rules as to how a conversation at banquet is to be conducted. There are all kinds of arrangements regarding who converses with whom, who gives attention to a fellow banqueter or servant (cat. No. 84), couch-intimate conversations (cat. No. 84, cat. No. 83, cat. No. 93) or cross-couch conversations (cat. No. 79), or banqueters not looking at each other (cat. No. 89, cat. No. 95).

What we do have is the gendered seating arrangements with females to the left of the male when reclining on a two-peopled couch (cat. No. 85, cat. No. 90), or to the right of the reclining male when seated on a chair (cat. No. 79, cat. No. 80). However, when we look at who speaks with whom, or who gives their attention to which fellow banqueters or servant, any combination is shown at these *convivia*, irrespective of gender.

15. Banqueters: what other items are held/can be attributed to any particular person to help identify the status and /or gender of such person (small branches, flowers, instruments in addition to food and beverage related objects); also in relation to coiffeuse, clothing, body and facial features and gesturing (detailed analysis of body and facial features, clothing and gesturing: (banqueters are enumerated as first, second, etc banqueter from left to right when looking at the images).

A detailed description of the interaction of banqueters and servants is given in the catalogue No. 76 to 98.

Discussion:

Of the seventy-six banqueters, twenty-four banqueters (31.5%) hold an object in their hands (of which two banqueter hold two objects in either of their hands), while forty-nine banqueters (64.5%) do not hold anything, and three banqueters (4%) hands are now lost so we cannot determine any more whether they held anything. In accordance with the finds from the subsections 5.4.3. and 5.4.4., it can be confirmed that most banqueters are not actively associated with any particular object.

Status:

Of seventy-six banqueters, twelve (16%) hold a drinking vessel, twelve (16%) another object, forty-nine (64%) do not hold any items, while three (4%) banqueters' hands are now lost and we cannot determine if they held any items. De Marinis (1961: 63-4) pointed out that it is remarkable that so many of the banqueters gesticulate with animated arm movements and empty hands, referring to images from Chiusi and Tarquinia in particular.

Drinks vessels:

As was observed with the tomb paintings, when two or more banqueters hold a drinks vessel, these are in the vast majority of cases of the same type. On the sarcophagus cat. No. 91, two banqueters each hold a vessel, and both are *kylixes*. On the urn cat. No. 93, two banqueters hold shallow drinking bowls in their left hands. However, there is one exception to this otherwise strictly adhered to trend in funerary

banquet scenes, and this can be seen on urn cat. No. 84. The second banqueter holds a shallow drinking bowl, while the third banqueter holds a much deeper bowl. The third banqueter also has a beard, while the other three banqueters are depicted with smooth cheeks. The combination of the deeper bowl and the beard may be an indicator of greater age of the third banqueter in comparison to his companions. He may indeed be the main person since the second banqueter, the fourth banqueter and the flutist focus on him. In the other images of banquets where there are one or several men with drinks vessels, nobody is singled out by everybody else focusing their attention on him. This is not to negate that the drinks vessels may be indicators for a certain status, as has been discussed in subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.4. It has to be pointed out that no recurrent pattern of use of vessel by any particular kind of person can be determined. The iconographic language is subtle and was certainly understood by the Etruscans. Nevertheless, is it only with great difficulty and gaps in knowledge that we can attempt to translate this pictorial language to understand the correct symbolism the *kylix*, the egg, or the lyre.

Other objects:

The same is the case with other objects being held by the *convivants*.

Leafed branches are held by four banqueters (5%) , and wreaths/ribbons by three (one of them also holds a branch, and another also holds a lyre) (4%), three hold the round food morsel (4%), two a lyre (2.5%), one a double flute (1.25%), and one a staff/spear (1.25%).

Wreath and ribbons:

The branches and wreaths/ribbons held are all associated with banquet scenes being located outdoors, since there are also trees shown in these scenes. Therefore, instead of being symbols of status, they may rather be indicators of the setting, the location of the banquet depicted. This theory is strengthened when looking at the people who are associated with leafed branches and wreaths. On the urn cat. No. 82 only one of four banqueters holds a leafed branch and a wreath. He holds a leafed branch in his right hand, and a wreath in his left hand. Still, he is not the centre of attraction. The other three banqueters are not focusing their attention on him. He is just one of four

banqueters who are all looking and gesticulating with each other, and not singling out any one in particular. The same is observable on the urn cat. No. 83. Two banqueters hold leafed branches in each their left hands. The other six banqueter's hands are empty of items. Still, the two *convivants* with branches are not singled out by having the others focus their attention on them. All gesticulate animatedly, arms and hands up in the air, with each other. It is more likely that the branches are outdoor indicators, than symbols to represent status.

The “egg”:

The rounded food dish, held by two male and one female banqueter, is most likely a food morsel, since on the urn cat. No. 84 the banqueter holding the food in his raised right hand gives the impression that he is just about to eat it. In addition, there are several bowls and plates of food placed on the table in front of him. He might have just picked up the finger food from one of the plates. The round item held by the female banqueter on the urn cat No. 86 is indentured by her fingers. If it is a food dish, then it is more likely to be a dough-based dish than an egg. The same can be said about the rounded object held by the second banqueter on the urn cat. No. 90.

The lyre:

The two banqueters holding a lyre each (urn cat. No. 89 and 95) are a little unusual because in both instances, the last male reclining banqueter, to the right of the scene, is holding the lyre. In all other examples from funerary contexts, the first reclining male holds the lyre. Perhaps it was coincidence that in tomb paintings, the lyre player is always the first reclining male, whereas on funerary relief works, it is the last of the reclining males. Perhaps there is some social significance in the different placement of the musician-banqueter. However, it can be stated with certainty that the lyre-playing musician is always either the first or last male reclining banqueter. He never gets any special attention from his fellow banqueters, neither in the tomb painting, nor in the funerary relief works. As with the banqueters holding other objects, he is one of many in each of the scenes.

The double flute:

A unique occupation of a reclining male is shown on sarcophagus cat. No. 91, where a banqueter is playing the double flute. The centre male is shown with puffed up cheeks and a double flute in both his hands, looking straight ahead out of the relief scene. He is the only reclining banqueter shown playing the double flute in all of the Etruscan banquet scenes. De Marinis (1961: 61) and Small (1971: 60) assigned female gender to the flute player. No further explanation is given as to why female gender is assigned to the flutist. However, when comparing all of banqueters on the sarcophagus regarding facial peculiarities, body features, and clothing, the person can securely be identified as male.

The spear:

Another unusual item on the sarcophagus cat. No. 91 is the spear or a straight staff that is held by a further banqueter. This is relatively rare. Banqueters holding a similar spear or staff are only known from the Bartoccini Tomb/Tarquinia (cat. No. 26).

16. Gender of people on the couches/blankets (determined by body shape, clothing, coiffeuse, gesturing, and items held in hands):

Nine (12%) of the seventy-six banqueters are female. Sixty-seven (88%) are male. Of the twenty-three scenes, seven include female banqueters. This is a ratio of 30% mixed sex scenes to 70% male only *convivia*. This confirms the general pattern from all other media that women were indeed participating at banquet. The ratio of 30% mixed sex scenes to 70% male only scenes is similar and comparable to the findings in subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.4.

Consistent with the findings from the subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.4., most females are not directly associated with an object. Eight (89%) of the nine female's hands are empty of objects. One female (11%) is holding a round food morsel, perhaps an egg. Again, this is consistent with the findings from banquet scenes, such as the ones in tomb paintings, where females are depicted with just such kind of food morsel. However the object itself is not an indicator for a gendered use, because when looking at the banquet scenes from all media, more men than women are

shown holding the item. It may be, as suggested before, a finger food morsel, representing a tasty dish at the banquet in which the *convivants* participate (see subsection 5.3.3. for detailed discussion).

De Marinis (1961: 61) and Paribeni (1938: 135) identify the centre figure on sarcophagus cat. No. 91 as female. However, facial features, clothing, and coiffeuse do not distinguish this figure in any way from the others who are all male. The figure clearly has his upper body devoid of clothing, with only a mantle wrapped round his waist and lower body. A male flute player is shown without doubt. Females are always shown with their upper bodies covered by clothing. In addition females are never shown in direct association with a musical instrument in Etruscan banquet iconography.

5.5. Tangible extras

5.5.1. Revetment plaques from domestic-residential buildings

17. Tangible extras:

A detailed description of animals and other objects so far not discussed can be found in catalogue No. 1 to No. 9.

Of the revetment plaques from the eight different locations, six have animals positioned under the couches. This equals 86% of all revetment plaques. They are the plaques from Murlo, Acquarossa, Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Velletri, and Rome. The Roselle and Veii plaques are too fragmentary in the lower parts of the scenes. If animals or other objects were included in the scenes, these are not preserved.

All six scenes (100%) which have animals preserved show dogs. In addition, two (33%) of these scenes also show a duck/goose each.

Discussion:

There is no active interaction of servants or banqueters with any of the animals. The animals, however, will be an integral part of the scenes; otherwise, they would not have been included in the first place. They give the scenes a sense of spontaneity, of

momentary action, since the animals are shown in different poses. Some of the dogs crouch and perhaps pick up some food morsel from the ground; others lay in relaxed languid, but nevertheless with their heads up so they do not miss any of the action happening around them.

Birds and dogs:

The ducks, rather undisturbed by the dogs nearby them, appear to waddle about their own business. Some scholars interpret waterfowl such as ducks with specific symbolism.⁴⁹ Since dogs are also shown when there are birds, a symbolic meaning should then be formed for the dogs, too. However, the dogs are, if mentioned at all, just given the status of a domesticated animal, the status of a pet, or perhaps a guard dog or a hunting dog. Symbolism is very much marginalized in view of the presence of dogs. The only reference made to dogs in banquet scenes concerning a symbolic meaning was made by Dennis (1878: 307) who compares the dogs (in this particular instance he refers to the dog from the Querciola Tomb I scene, cat. No. 55) to the ones described in Homer's *Iliad* XXII.137, and *Odyssey* XVII. 309. However, since we have dogs and ducks in some of the scenes, often under the same couch, the necessity for symbolic interpretation is not given. The dog is a pet. The duck may also be a pet. The duck as pet can be seen in the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38). A different suggestion is that the ducks may have been exotic breeds, and therefore a symbol after all. However, this time not in relation to the netherworld, but as a conspicuous display of wealth and status, of style and (international) relations with people who bred such animals. Japanese carp in Koi ponds may be suggested as a comparable status-displaying symbol of wealth and 'knowledge of how to be fashionably international' in the western world of today.

The bird and its animal counterparts in domestic-residential and funerary contexts:

Regarding the juxta-positioning of the bird with other animals, one fact became

⁴⁹ In Iranian mythology, it was identified with Supreme Wisdom, with Fire and Sun. In Indo-Iranian mythology the bird, particularly the waterfowl, personified and accompanied the Mother-Goddess and was associated with the Water. In rituals, the image of pair of birds was symbol of fertility, wealth and well-being. In the folklore of many peoples, pair of ducks was a symbol of marital love (Neva: 2007). Egyptian and Greek mythology assigned birds as symbols of death and rebirth, especially in form of the Phoenix. In Etruria, the flight of birds was examined to allow prediction being made of the future.

evident while analysing the banquet scenes. It is interesting to observe that on two revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts, we have dogs and birds in the same scene. In the scenes from the Tarquinian tomb paintings, birds are shown in combination with cats, but not with dogs. On funerary monuments, birds are shown in combination with dogs, but not with cats.

5.5.2. Small finds on pottery, bronze and ivory

17. Tangible extras:

A detailed description of animals and other objects so far not discussed can be found in catalogues No. 10 to No. 25.

Pottery

Of the six banquet scenes known from pottery vessels, two (33%) show animals under the couches, while four pottery vessels with banquet scenes (67%) have no extras included. Two of these banquet scenes are very fragmentary (cat. No. 15 and 16) and may have included extras. The scenes including extras are the *dolio* cat. No. 12 and the *oinochoe* cat. No. 13.

Discussion:

As with the revetment plaques, there is not active interaction of humans with the animals.

Birds:

The two ducks shown under the second banqueter of the second couch on the *dolio* cat. No. 12 are turned towards each other. Interaction of the two birds with each other may be shown. Another possibility is that the artist who designed the stamp with which the *dolio* is impressed wanted to add some visual variation of position and profile to the decorative frieze of the pottery vessel. The conventional symbolic interpretation of the birds being representatives of the netherworld is another possible option. If this interpretation is accepted, does it mean that the

second banqueter on the second couch is closer to death or has been dead longer than her couch partner since there are two birds under this second banqueter and only one bird under the first banqueter? However, why should a scene of the netherworld decorate a storage vessel that was used in daily household activities? A setting in the world of the living is more appropriate, showing a *convivium* where ducks are pets, or the equivalent of today's vacuum cleaners picking up the crumbs of food falling to the ground from the banqueting couches. That the ducks may pick crumbs from the banquet is also suggested by Pieraccini (1996: 107).

Dogs:

The dog on the *oinochoe* cat. No. 13 does not interact with the banqueters who are reclining on the couch. He is, however, an integral part of the composition, since otherwise the animal would not have been included in the scene. The dog may be a pet, or perhaps a hunting dog, therefore referring to and symbolizing the society's elite pastime sports of hunting.

Bronze

Of the eight objects made of bronze, three (37.5%) include animals in the banquet scenes, while five (62.5%) do not include any extras such as animals or items. The scenes with animals are from the tripod cat. No. 22 (a bird), and from the mirrors cat. No. 23 and cat. No. 24 (a dog each).

Discussion:

The observations made above regarding the inclusion of animals are applicable for the bronze objects, too.

Human and animal interaction:

The scene on the mirror cat. No. 24 deserves special mentioning because it shows true and lively interaction between a person and an animal. A male servant is teasing a dog with a flower he is holding. The dog is sitting on its hind legs sniffing at the flower, and reaching out with its front legs towards the blossom. A true life-like pose of a tame dog being curious and wanting to sniff out the object presented to him. The

'well-mannered' pose of the dog, the playful interaction of servant and animal, and the intimate gestures of the couple reclining on the couch all add up to a warm and homely domestic atmosphere of the scene. The only other active involvement of an animal with humans can be seen on an urn from Chiusi, cat. No. 97, where a dog has his tail, head and left paw raised as in a playful gesture to interact with the people in the scene.

Ivory

The ivory plaque does not include any extras such as animals.

5.5.3. Tarquinian tomb paintings

17. Tangible extras:

A detailed description of animals and other objects so far not discussed can be found in catalogue No. 26 to No. 65.

Out of the forty Tarquinian banquet scenes, fifteen (37.5%) tomb paintings are without extras such as animals or otherwise not included objects so far. These are from the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), Tomb of the Mouse (cat. No. 27), Tomb of the Lionesses (cat. No. 28), Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), Tomb of the Olympic Games (main banquet scenes, cat. No. 33), Tomb 5898 (cat. No. 34), Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36), Tomb of the Leopards (cat. No. 42), Tomb of the Funerary Bed (cat. No. 45), Tomb of the Ship (cat. No. 51), Tomb 994 (cat. No. 52), Tomb of the Blue Demons (cat. No. 53), Tomb of the Maiden (cat. No. 54), Tomb of the Warrior (cat. No. 63), and from the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65). Due to the fragmentary or very faded state of the paintings, or because the painting is now partly or completely lost, especially the part of scenes shown below the banqueting couches, the following paintings have no extras preserved. The Tomb of the Lionesses II (cat. No. 29), Tomb of the Kithara Player (cat. No. 41), Tomb of the Little Flowers (cat. No. 43), Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49), Maggi Tomb (cat. No. 50), Tomb of the Cock (cat. No. 56), Tomb 1200 (cat. No. 57), Tomb of the Pygmies (cat. No. 59), Tomb

2327 (cat. No. 60), Tomb 3697 (cat. No. 61), Tomb Orcus II (cat. No. 62), and the Orcus I Tomb (cat. No. 64). These are twelve tombs, or (25%). Scenes with animals, or other objects not previously mentioned are depicted in fourteen tombs, or 35%.⁵⁰ These are from the Tomb of the Tarantola (cat. No. 31), Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (cat. No. 32), Tomb of the Olympic Games (gable banquet scene, cat. No. 33), Tomb of the Frontoncino (cat. No. 35), Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37), Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39), Tomb of the Bigas (cat. No. 40), Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 44), Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46), Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47), Tomb of the Biclinium (cat. No. 48), Querciola Tomb I (cat. No. 55), and from Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58).

Discussion:

Birds and cats:

In banquet scenes from domestic-residential contexts, only birds and dogs were shown. Now, when analysing the Tarquinian tomb paintings, there are, in addition to birds and dogs, also cats, mice and leopards. Of thirty-one animals included in the banquet scenes overall, nineteen are birds (61%; ducks, geese, doves, pigeons, chickens, pheasant or peacock), four are dogs (13%), three are cats (10%), three are mice (10%), and two are leopards (6%).

By far in the majority are birds. They are shown in ten out of the fourteen tomb paintings. Scholars have made frequent reference regarding the symbolic significance of birds. The connection to death and rebirth may indeed be of special significance since we are here dealing with painting in tombs. However, when looking at the birds in these tomb paintings without 'knowing' these interpretations of the birds being connected to the death, a variety of very different interpretations can be noted. First, seven of the nineteen birds are shown in combination with a cat. Each time, the cat is always shown ready to pounce on the birds, while at least the bird(s) closest to the cat keep a watchful eye over the predator. Not much symbolism may be interpreted into these scenes, just common behaviour of cats and birds. Then again, a cat pouncing and the resulting killing and eating of a bird may be understood

⁵⁰ The scenes add up to forty-one in total. The banquet scenes from the Tomb of the Olympic Games have been divided into the scene from the main wall, and the scene from the gable.

as a symbol of death. However, only ready-to-pounce cats are shown, while the bird(s) are watchful and alert. No bloody killing is happening under the couches of the merry banqueters. Just a bit of hide and seek of domestic animals. On a bronze candelabra, now in the Museo Gregoriano/Roma, a cat is shown chasing up the vertical shaft of the candelabra to catch a cockerel while two birds sit on top of the small candelabra bowl as if in the process of drinking water from it (illustration in Dennis, 1878: 479, Vol. II). No scholar has ever interpreted any netherworldly associations into this scene. It is simply a domestic happening, perhaps even with a little humour added. Therefore, why not allow the reading of such scenes as domestic ones even if they originate from funerary context?

That the animals shown are always domestic ones is also noted by De Marinis (1961: 54). The popularity of birds, placing them under the banquet couches, may also be a reflection of common elite banqueting in a rather practical way. These birds will have looked pretty with their colourful and perhaps exotic plumage, but they will also have been practical household helpers by picking food crumbs and morsels from the floor that were dropped by the banqueters.

The three mice shown with the banqueter in the gable of the Tomb of the Olympic Games may be a rather cheeky way to play on the drunkenness of the banqueter. His movements may be so slow that even timid mice walk all over him and his vessel; and a bird drinks from his stemmed cup. He cannot defend himself from easily scared off animals such as mice and birds. Again, as before, the bird may be a symbol of the netherworld because of alcohol-inflicted death. Nevertheless, it is not known if the Etruscans had cases of alcohol-inflicted death; if yes, we do not know if they made the medical connection.

It is interesting to observe that on revetment plaques from domestic-residential contexts, birds are shown in combination with dogs. In the tomb paintings from Tarquinia, birds are shown in combination with cats, and once with mice, but never with dogs. The combination of birds and dogs can be seen again on the urns from Chiusi, discussed in subsection 5.5.5.

Mice:

Three mice are shown in the Tomb of the Olympic Games. They are shown scurrying

on and around a rather drunk banqueter. These animals have been observed and discussed in a variety of interpretations. Panofsky (1964: 250f) understood the persistence of the animals as a reference to the continuously diminishing time we all have in this life. Weber-Lehmann (1985: 31) suggested, at least for Ionia of the archaic time, a connection to the god Apollo. In some places of the Ionian coast, Apollo was venerated as the “Micepollo”, as Apollo Smintheus. Fehr (1971: 45) described the presence of mice to more practical circumstances. The mice were rummaging about being drawn by the presence of food. However, in the Tomb of the Olympic Games, there is no food present. A more humorous interpretation may be that the banqueter is simply too drunk to shoo the mice away.

Leopards:

The two leopards in the scene from the Tomb of the Frontoncinio are interesting in their own right. Leopards are not indigenous to Italy, and they are not domestic animals as such. They may have a heraldic, or a symbolic function (De Marinis 1961: 55). Heraldic animals as part of banquet scenes are to be found in the Tomb of the Mouse (seahorse and leopard), and in the Tomb 5898 (a *hippocamp*). The heraldic and/or symbolic nature of the animals can be assumed because of them being mythological creatures (the *hippocamp*), or them framing the banquet scene with the animals being proportionally too large in comparison to the overall composition of the *convivia* (seahorse and leopard). In addition, the seahorse’s and the leopard’s gesturing and positioning is framing the banquet scene without being an active and integral part of the actual banquet. Yet, the animals from the Tomb of the Frontoncinio are different from heraldic or mythological animals. The two leopards from the Tomb of the Frontoncinio are placed to the left and right hand sides of the scene respectively, just like the heraldic-symbolic seahorse and leopard from the Tomb of the Mouse. However, the leopards from the Tomb of the Frontoncinio are depicted in a way that shows a much more active involvement with the banquet in between the two of them. The leopard to the left is stretching his body in a typically cat like fashion while watching the banqueters’ proceedings just like any curious cat does. The cat in the right corner is just about to walk into the banquet. The two animals move and behave in typical big cat fashion. Therefore, it is not

likely that they are meant to symbolize any heraldic or mythological idea. It is quite plausible that they are included in the scene, even if only as corner-fillers, to represent exotic luxury and wealth. These African big cats had to be purchased, transported and domesticated. Such unnecessary luxuries, expenses and dangers can only be afforded by rich and influential people of the upper echelons of society. Therefore the leopards are symbols after all, but not within the mythological sphere such as the *hippocamp* from the Tomb 5898. These leopards are much rather symbols of wealth, exotic luxury and perhaps international connections.

Dogs:

The dogs are shown in several poses, always under the banqueting couches. They may be included in the scenes to show them as pets, as guard dogs, or referring to the elite's pastime sports of hunting by the animals being hunting dogs. They certainly are of large size, and strong and lean breeds, which fulfil the criteria. However, there is no active interaction of humans with the animals, as shown for example on the bronze mirror cat. No. 24. However, Dennis (1878: 360) noted that the dog under the couch from the banquet scene of the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38) looks jealous because the gentleman bestows all attention to the female banqueter. Therefore, this may indicate passive interaction of animals with humans.

5.5.4. Tomb paintings from Cerveteri, Chiusi, Orvieto and Sarteano

17. Tangible extras:

A detailed description of animals and other objects so far not discussed can be found in catalogue No. 66 to No. 75.

Out of the ten banquet scenes, only two (20%) have extras included. Three (30%) tomb paintings are without extras such as animals, or otherwise not discussed objects. These are from the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 66), Tomb of the Well (cat. No. 68), and from the Casuccini Hill Tomb (cat. No. 70). Tombs with no extras preserved, due to the fragmentary or very faded state of the paintings, or the painting being now lost, are the Montollo Tomb (cat. No. 67), Tomb of Orpheus and Eurydice

(cat. No. 69), Hill of the Moro Tomb (cat. No. 71), Hescanas Tomb (cat. No. 740, and the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga (cat. No. 75). This amounts to five tombs, or (50%).

The two scenes with animals or other objects not previously mentioned can be found in the Golini Tomb I (cat. No. 72) and in the Golini Tomb II (cat. No. 73). The Golini Tomb I depicts, under the first couch, a small stag that is standing on a large, shallow bowl, facing to the right. There is also a small, naked man, facing to the left. Both have an identifying inscription above them. Therefore, a story or event may be narrated in this iconographical event. We are not to understand the scene as showing an actual animal and man under the table. There appear to be two animals under the second couch, facing each other. The second animal is perhaps a cat, or dog according to the paws and lower legs that are visible. Two doves can be seen under the third couch. The first dove faces to the left. The second dove, of which only the tail feathers are preserved, faces to the right. The space under the fourth couch is too fragmentary and therefore no animals are preserved that may have been painted in this part of the scene.

The paintings in the Golini Tomb II show a pair of pigeons that are placed on the low footstools under the couches.

Birds:

The majority of animals are birds. The manifold reasons as to why birds were included in banquet scenes were given in subsections 5.5.1. to 5.5.3., and these ideas and interpretations are valid for the two banquet scenes described here.

5.5.5. Funerary Monuments

17. Tangible extras:

A detailed description of animals and other objects so far not discussed can be found in catalogue No. 76 to No. 98.

We have twenty-three banquet scenes in this category. Of these twenty-three, the scenes without any extras are the most numerous with thirteen (57%). These are

the cat. No. 76, 77, 78, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 94, 95, 96, and 98. There is one banquet scene (4%), the stele cat. No. 81, which is now too fragmentary to determine whether it had animals or other objects included. Scenes with extras such as animals/pets and objects so far not discussed in the other analyses add up to nine examples, or 39%. They are from the stele cat. No. 79, stele cat. No. 80, urn cat. No. 82, urn cat. No. 83, urn cat. No. 84, urn cat. No. 85, sarcophagus cat. No. 92, urn cat. No. 93, and from the urn cat. No. 97.

Discussion:

There are twelve animals included overall. Seven of them are birds (58%), and five are dogs (42%). Of the nine scenes with extras under the couches, seven show animals only, one has a crater under a couch (urn cat. No. 85), while a further scene shows two dogs and a rectangular object under the couches (urn cat. No. 83).

Birds:

Of the eight scenes that include animals, four show birds only. This may be explained with the birds being messengers of the netherworld. The other possibilities are, that the birds may be pets, or symbols of luxury and wealth as they may be exotic and colourful breeds of ducks, doves or cockerels, or practical household helpers by picking up crumbs from the floor, or any combination of above suggestions.⁵¹

Birds and dogs:

Of the eight scenes where animals are shown, two have dogs and birds included. However, the dogs and birds do not interact, at least not as obviously as do the cats and birds in the Tarquinian tomb paintings. This may be explained by the dogs being perhaps less interested in chasing the birds than are cats.

Dogs:

The dog in the scene from the urn cat. No. 97 deserves special mention. It raises its tail, head and left paw as in a playful gesture. The dog is an active part of the

⁵¹ See discussions subsections 5.5.1. to 5.5.4.

composition of the banquet scene. It interacts with the humans, and this gives the scene a homely, intimate quality of play and comfort; a domestic snapshot in time. It is the only representation of an animal being actively involved with the humans in addition to the scene on the bronze mirror cat. No. 24. Otherwise, dogs are in more passive poses such as sleeping or resting their heads on their front paws.

6. Conclusions

At the outset of this thesis, it was hoped to gain an insight into Etruscan society through representations of convivial and feasting habits. The aim of the research was to investigate what could be found out about communal eating and how it was used by the Etruscans to create and structure social relations, in a public or private sphere where cultural dynamics were navigated. It was an attempt to reconstruct the Etruscans peoples' behaviour by having looked at *who* banquets with *whom*, by analysing *what* food and drink was enjoyed, and by trying to define the occasion for which the banquet was laid on. It was hoped to answer these questions, maybe at times just in part, by looking at the people depicted, the vessels, the furniture and other tangible objects, which were shown in Etruscan banquet scenes. Seventeen criteria to analyse the representations were formulated, all based on visual information. These criteria were applied to the total of ninety-eight banquet scenes, which were grouped into five contextually related categories. To conclude the research, the findings of all the banquet scenes will now be compared and contrasted. The aim is to highlight congruencies and divergences which emerge when analysing all scenes, independent of medium and original context.

Layout and seating arrangements at banquet

Of ninety-eight banquet representations, eighty-five (87%) show all banqueters reclining. Eight (8%) scenes have some banqueters reclining while others are seated. Four (4%) scenes depict all banqueters seated. The banquet from the Hescanas Tomb/Orvieto (cat No. 74) could not be included in this particular study since the original is very faded overall and also lost in places (1%).

Chronological conclusions

The four images that have all banqueters seated are the two *bucchero* chalices (cat. No. 10 and 11), the Montescudaio urn (cat. No. 76) and the statues from the Tomb of the Five Chairs/Cerveteri (cat. No. 77). Chronologically, these are the four oldest images. They were manufactured in the seventh century BC. To show all banqueters seated on the oldest representations, but not any more on representations from the sixth century BC onwards may indeed be a fact explained by chronology. It has been noted by several scholars that Etruscan (funerary) art shows the banqueters seated initially, while later images show them reclining or at least in scenes where some banqueters recline while others are seated (De Marinis, 1961: 114, Tuck, 1994). The current study supports the notion that the early Etruscan banquet scenes depict the banqueters seated, while representations from the sixth century BC onwards show most of the banqueters reclining.

Gender-related conclusions

The eight scenes that show the banqueters in mixed arrangements of being seated and reclining are to be seen in the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30), the Tomb of the Painted Vases (cat. No. 38), the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46), Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58) the Tomb of the Shields (cat. No. 65), all tomb paintings from Tarquinia, and the relief scenes on the stelae cat. no. 79 and 80. The mixed seated and reclining arrangements range from c. 520 BC (Bartoccini Tomb) to c. 375-350 BC (Tomb of the Shields) with the stelae dated to c. 520 to 500 BC. A chronological division is therefore not applicable. However, when analysing the mixed arrangement images, a gender and age based division is discernable. When banqueters are seated on their own individual chair, it is without exception that these persons are female, and it is without exception that these females are seated on their individual chairs to the right of the banqueting couches. The examples are the Bartoccini Tomb (cat. No. 26), Tomb 808 (cat. No. 58), the stele from Sancepolcro (cat. No. 79) and the stele from Travignoli (cat. No. 80).

When a female banqueter shares a couch with one male banqueter, she is always placed to the left of her partner. This arrangement is independent of whether

the female is seated (Tomb of the Black Sow, cat. No. 46 ; Tomb of the Shields, cat. No. 65) or whether the female reclines (examples include Tomb 1999, cat. No. 36; the Tomb of the Old Man, cat. No. 37; the Tomb of the Leopards, cat. No. 42, all Tarquinia; and the Tomb of the Triclinium/Cerveteri, cat. No. 66). If one female shares a couch or mattress with two male banqueters, she is always placed in the middle of her two banquet partners. The two examples of such an arrangement are the Acquarossa revetment plaques (cat. No. 2) and the urn from Chiusi (cat. No. 86).

Age-related conclusions

Age-related seating is practiced in Etruscan art, too. Sub-adult banqueters are always placed, seated either on cushions (Tomb 5039, cat. No. 30; Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, cat. No. 32) or on an individual chair (Tomb of the Painted Vases, cat. No. 38) to the left of banqueting couches. This is reminiscent of today's practice of having a children's table set at the periphery of large dinner parties.

The orientation of reclining

Ninety-one (93%) of ninety-eight images could be analysed regarding the orientation of the banqueters when reclining. Of the ninety-one scenes where banqueters recline, eight-five show banqueters recline right to left (94%), three show a mix of reclining from right to left and left to right (3%; see subsection 5.1.3. for discussion) one shows the banqueters from left to right (1%; see subsection 5.1.1. for discussion) and two further images show a left to right orientations (2%, see discussion subsection 5.1.2.). The formal observation that 94% of all Etruscan banquet scenes have the banqueters reclining right to left, may indicate that this orientation was indeed the preferred practice at Etruscan banquets. The reason for this may be that it was adopted from their neighbours the Greeks, who also reclined left to right. There may have been social rules, conventions, cultural traditions, or even superstitions dealing with the orientation at banquet that are not known to us. It could have been etiquette or en vogue to recline this way. Perhaps most people were (as they are today) right handed, and reclining on the left elbow frees the right hand to interact with gestures or to hold objects. There may have been architectural reasons for the orientation relating to the positioning of walls in dining rooms, and the placement of dining couches within these rooms. One, or a combination of these and other reasons may

have been the decisive factor in showing 94% of scenes with all banqueters reclining right to left, and an additional 3% with a mix of both reclining directions.

Use of couch and furnishings

Of ninety-eight scenes in total four show banqueters seated on chairs. Of the remaining ninety-four images where at least some of the banqueters recline, sixty-four (68%) banquets have people recline on couches, twenty-six (28%) have banqueters reclining on the ground (on mattresses or blankets or without any obvious underlay), one scene (1%; cat. No. 27) shows one banqueteer reclining on a couch while two further banqueters recline on the ground. For three scenes (3%; cat. No. 62, cat. No. 67, cat. No. 74), it was not possible to determine whether banqueters reclined on couches or on the ground.

It was shown that more than two-thirds of all Etruscan banquets are held on couches. The reasons may be one or a combination of the following suggestions. Banqueting on couches may be more comfortable than having to lie down and get up from a mattress placed on the ground. It is also plausible, since it is the upper stratum of society which is depicted in these images, that wealth, opulence, luxury and status are depicted. The couches are made with wrought metal or carved wood, covered by richly embroidered or dyed cloths, plumped up with equally richly decorated mattresses and cushions. It is easier to display one's wealth and/or one's status by including prestige objects in such imagery. Another suggestion may be that when there was a large 'canvas space' available to the artist who created the scenes it was possible to show many banqueters in different states of inebriation on a variety of different reclining furniture (see discussion in subsection 5.1.3.). However, while examining the different items included in the banquet scenes, one particular correlation of couch versus ground reclining became obvious. Of the twenty-six scenes which have banqueters reclining on the ground, fifteen (58%) include what is termed outdoor indicators (see discussion in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5.). Of the remaining scenes on the ground, five (19%) are banqueting figurines or scenes where the original settings are now lost. These original settings may have been outdoors. There are six scenes (23%) set on the ground, without outdoor indicators. The scene where banqueters recline on a couch and on the ground has outdoor indicators.

Of the sixty-four banquets where couches were utilized, fifty-two (81%) do not have any outdoor indicators included in the scenes. Twelve scenes (19%) where people recline on couches have outdoor indicators. The percentages suggest a correlation of reclining on couches with the banquet being located indoors. At the same time the correlation of reclining on the ground and the inclusion of outdoor indicators does suggest an *al-fresco* style of dining. This is supported by the inclusion of objects such as trees, beds of leaves under banqueters and also under vessels, shawls blowing in the breeze, wreaths and ribbons suspended into the scenes, and baldachins opened up to protect the banqueters from the sun. This suggested correlation is not absolute or exclusive, since there are twelve scenes set on couches, which have outdoor indicators. It should be observed that all these scenes are from the private realm of funerary art. It may be that the persons who commissioned the scenes wanted to convey an atmosphere of opulence, luxury and bliss by showing that he/she could arrange for the costly dining couches to be set up outdoors. In addition, this 'no-expenses-spared' image may have been the idea that the person wanted to eternalize in his/her last resting place.

However, a further correlation of dining on couches versus dining on the ground (on mattresses and blankets) became apparent when analysing the number of people placed on the couches versus the number of people placed on the ground. This correlation is discussed below under the heading 'Number of people per couch or blanket'.

A gender-related arrangement of men reclining on the ground while females recline on couches or are seated on chairs, or vice versa, could not be observed. In images where both men and women participate reclining at banquet, both either recline on couches or both recline on the ground.

Number of couches shown

The ninety-eight scenes differ in the number of couches and ground spaces shown. There are twenty-nine scenes where all banqueters recline on the ground. Four scenes have all banqueters seated. Two scenes (cat. No. 60 and cat. No. 64) did show the banqueters reclining on couches, but the paintings are now too ruined to determine the number of couches. Of the remaining sixty-three scenes where couches are

included, the following numerical distribution can be observed. Sixteen images (25%) comprise one couch banquets, twenty-six (41%) are two couch banquets, ten (16%) show three couches, eight or nine (13 or 14%; cat. No. 55 cannot be determined with certainty) have four couches, and two or three scenes (3 or 5%; again cat. No. 55 may be included here) show five couches.

The most numerous are banquets conducted on two couches with a share of 41%. In this context, it may be remarked upon that all revetment plaques from domestic contexts show two couch banquets. This may be due to practical reasons as suggested in subsection 5.1.1. Another suggestion is that two couch banquets were the most recognizable image of what an Etruscan banquet was meant to look like for the people of the time, and this may have been the reason why domestic buildings were decorated with that particular imagery. Another possibility is that this was the preferred fashion for Etruscan banquets. It may have been the most suitable arrangement, due to available space in an Etruscan dining room. It may have been the most social way to have four people dine together. To have two couch banquets will not have been an absolute rule, since there are too many other numerical arrangements regarding banqueting couches. However, the two couch banquets appear to be the most popular way in which to present banquets, since nearly half of all Etruscan banquet representations show two couch banquets. The next most numerous are one couch banquets with 25%. Most one couch banquets are found on funerary monuments where the available space was limited, due to the size of the urns, stelae and sarcophagi on which the scenes were carved. It was also pointed out in subsection 5.1.5. that urns, stelae and sarcophagi are related to one person only.

Perhaps, it was the wish of the future deceased to show a rather intimate banquet with the closest of family, or friends only. It may not have been the foremost wish to commemorate a large party with the many family members and friends. Such multi couch parties can be found in large family tombs, where many people may have been laid to rest, or where funerary rites allowed family, friends and religious officials to witness the decorative iconography of large banqueting parties, when visiting the tombs. It is to be remarked upon that in the more private realm of tombs and their banquet paintings there is a wide variety of number of couches depicted in comparison to the two couch arrangements on revetment plaques. The funerary

paintings show a range from one to five couch parties. Reasons may include the fact that the artist had a relatively large 'canvas' on which to work allowing a certain artistic freedom as how to depict the banquet. The available space also allowed the commissioning client to eternalize a party in the way they wanted. The iconographic messages we see today range from intimate single-couple scenes to boisterous parties of ten people. Therefore, it can be deduced that in the more private realm of funerary art, especially in tomb painting, there was a certain freedom as to the nature of the party that was to be depicted. In the more public realm of decorative art for building in domestic-residential context, a two couch arrangement was the suitable status quo for depicting the socio-political/public agenda decoded in the iconography of a banquet scene.

Number of people per couch or blanket

Of ninety-eight scenes, fourteen scenes are now lost or too faded to determine the number of people per couch or ground reclining space. Four scenes show banqueters seated on individual chairs. This leaves eighty scenes where at least some of the banqueters recline while others are seated on couches or on individual chairs and cushions. One person per couch, or ground reclining space is shown in fourteen (17.5%) of the eighty representations. Two people per couch, or space, can be seen in fifty-one images (64%). Four banquets (5%) show one person on one couch and two people on a further couch. Three people per couch are shown only in one image, namely on the Acquarossa frieze plaques (1.25%; cat. No. 2). Three people per ground space are reclining in five (6%; or perhaps in six, see cat. No. 55) scenes. Four people per ground space are shown in one scene (1.25%), five people per space in two scenes (2.5%), seven people per space in one scene (1.25%), and twelve people per space on one scene (1.25%).

The majority of banquet scenes are arranged with two people per couch, or ground reclining space. The only exception are the frieze plaques from Acquarossa. That 64% of scenes where people recline have two people per couch may be an indication that this arrangement was the customary Etruscan banqueting style when couches were part of the banquet furniture. The reasons for this may be that it was not practical to have more than two people reclining on any one couch. It may have

been uncomfortable, or too crowded. To manufacture large dining couches and to bring them into rooms, perhaps as permanently fitted furniture, may have taken too much space. Such space may have been utilized differently unless large dining parties were a regular happening in any one household. Perhaps it may have been dining-room etiquette or 'en-vogue' for socio-cultural reasons to share a couch with a maximum of one more person.

All banquet scenes, with the exception of the Acquarossa representations, where more than two people recline at banquet, are shown to do so lying on the ground, on mattresses, or blankets. Again, as above, this may have been a practical solution. To recline on a/several mattresses and blankets allows each individual more space, and if anyone comes off the mattress, they only slip a few inches, not a few feet, as when falling off a couch.

Whether Etruscan banqueters swapped places at banquet is not known. Perhaps, in combination with the findings from criterion 4. and criterion 5., a banquet on the ground can be described as a more informal gathering. It was shown that in the majority of cases these parties were set outdoors. Many people shared one unit (mattress, blanket). Perhaps people reclined wherever there was a space. Such arrangements could be comparable to today's picnics and barbecues where people recline on blankets, or on makeshift seating furniture.⁵² There is a constant fluidity of people sitting, lying, getting up, and changing conversation partners. At more formal dinner parties indoors, each guest has an allocated seat with permanent conversation partners; this may have been the case in Etruscan times, when a banquet on couches was the formal arrangement.

The number of servants in the image

Of the ninety-eight scenes, sixteen could not be included in this analysis because the originals are now lost without record of any servants which may have been shown in the images, or the images are now too faded or destroyed to note any servants with certainty. Of the remaining eighty-two representations, fourteen (17%) do not include attendants. Twenty-nine images (35%) show one attendant, fourteen images

⁵² See chapter 3.1. Theoretical Perspectives, for the different categories of communal dining and the social implications of being part of different dining occasions.

(17%) have two attendants, 16 (19.5%) images show three servants, seven images (8.5%) include four attendants each, one image (1.5%) has six servants, and one image (1.5%) a total of ten attendants. The most numerous representations are images with one servant only. It may have been an issue of available space on grave stelae, urns and sarcophagi that could have been a decisive factor for including one servant only on these media. On all other media, the distribution of servants per image is comparatively equal.

When analysing the number of servants, one idea was assumed to be 'logical'. It was thought that there is a correlation between the number of servants and the number of guests that they had to attend on. It may be expected that the more guests attending a banquet, the more servants would be employed to look after these guests. However, this is not the case. There is no discernable rule as to the number of attendants in relation to the number of guests. For example eight banqueters are being served by three servants in Tomb 5039 (cat. No. 30). A similar situation can be seen in Tomb 4780 (cat. No. 39) where five banqueters are served by one servant only, and in the Casuccini Tomb (cat. No. 70) where two servants are looking after ten banqueters. The contrary situation is presented in Tomb 1999 (cat. No. 36) with two banqueters who are waited on by four servants, and in the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No.66) where four servants are looking after four banqueters. Perhaps it was up to the commissioning person to decide on the number of servants in relation to the number of guests. If the objective was to portray a boisterous party atmosphere, more banqueters were shown in relation to servants. When status was to be expressed by iconography, then an ostentatious display of luxury, wealth, etiquette and formality may have been represented by a relatively large number of attendants in relation to the number of guests. The lower the servant to guest ratio, the more wealth and luxury was shown by having servants continuously attend to the needs of the guests.

Duties of servants

From the ninety-eight banquet scenes, a total of one hundred and forty nine attendants could be identified. There are fifty-five (37%) beverage servants of which one is also attending to a dog, forty (27%) general assistants, twenty-three (15.5%)

flute players, nine (6%) lyre players, five (3%) dancers, two (1%) attend to animals of which one is also a beverage servant, and one (0.5%) food servant, one (0.5%) *castagnettes* musician, and one (0.5%) female attendant who handles an unidentified funnel shaped object. The responsibilities of thirteen servants could not be identified because only parts of their bodies were preserved which did not provide any clues as to their duties. It appears that for an Etruscan host, it was of foremost importance to ensure that the guests had a constant supply of beverages, because beverage servants are by far the most numerous servants.

Under the term 'general assistants' all servants are grouped, who are not directly, or otherwise associated with any one object.⁵³ Such an object may have been an *oinochoe* for example, which would have identified the attendant as a beverage servant. However, general assistants will have been indispensable at an Etruscan banquet either to show guests into the dining room, to store away mantles, shawls, or other objects the guests may have bought with them, or to fetch any items the banqueters wished for, to refresh the cushions and to tidy blankets, or to pass on and to receive information to/from the banqueters; overall to be on constant call to see to the wishes of the banqueters. These general assistants probably attended to all assignments that were not specific duties such as beverage servant or musicians or dancers. The importance of having general assistants attending at banquets is supported by their representation forty times in the total of ninety-eight banquet scenes. Musical entertainment was also an integral part of Etruscan banquets.

There are thirty-three musicians overall, with double flute players being the most popular musician to be depicted. Dancers were less frequently a part of banquet entertainment, with only five people being shown in such a role. Whether musicians and dancers can be classified as servants is not certain, especially since there are several representations of male banqueters playing the lyre. The possibility of a symbolic significance of the lyre has been discussed in detail in subsection 5.4.3. However, flute players were always shown standing upright apart from one exception (cat. No. 91). As discussed before, servants are depicted standing, while it is the banqueters' prerogative to recline or sit.

⁵³ The duty of attendants may be determined by them holding objects in their hands which identifies them, in the majority, as beverage servants or musicians.

However, it is not possible to determine whether, for example, a beverage servant may be compared to a sommelier of today. It cannot be assumed that servants were specialists in their field of duty. It is possible that a servant covered several duties at any one banquet, or that duties changed from one banquet to the next.

The gender of servants and their assigned duties

From the ninety-eight banquet scenes, a total of one hundred and forty nine attendants could be counted. The responsibilities of fourteen servants could not be identified because only parts of their bodies were preserved which did not provide enough clues as to their gender in combination with assigned duties. The remaining one hundred and thirty five assistants were well preserved and complete enough to assign gender and duty. They comprised one hundred and eighteen (87%) male and seventeen (13%) female attendants. This equals a 5:1 ratio of male to female servants. There are fifty-three (39%) male and two female (1.5%) beverage servants of which one is also attending to a dog, twenty-nine (21.5%) male and eleven female (8%) general assistants of which one male is also a double flute player, twenty-two (16%) male and one female (0.8%) flute players of which one male is also a general assistant, eight male (6%) and one female (0.8%) lyre players, four male (3%) and one female (0.8%) dancers, two male (0.8%) assistants who attend to an animal of which one is also a beverage servant, and one male (0.8%) food servant, one male (0.8%) *castagnettes* musician, and one (0.8%) female attendant who handles an unidentified funnel shaped object.

It can be concluded that serving beverages was a duty that was almost exclusively assigned to male assistants. The same can be said about entertainers such as musicians and dancers. However, general assistant is the one specific duty that involves females in great numbers. From a mathematical perspective, the ratio for general assistants is 3:1 male to female, or twenty-nine (21.5%) male to eleven female (8%). General assistants therefore represent a more even distribution in the amount of people shown in this duty when looking at gender. All other assignments of servants at Etruscan banquets have the higher ratio of 5:1 male to female distribution, as stated above. It appears that females were perceived as attendants looking after a wide spectrum of assignments, and not being limited to one particular

duty. Often, their hands are empty of objects. Therefore, they can pick up anything that the masters ask them to take up. Alternatively, they can perform services that require them to have their hands empty of items. They appear to fluff up pillows, pass on verbal messages, give massages, and they smooth their female masters' mantles and shawls. They may be perceived as 'being on call' to attend to any kind of assignment which is not covered by the specific duties such as the male beverage servants, or male entertainers.

A strong gendered correlation can be observed from the fact that all Etruscan banquet scenes show female servants attending almost exclusively to female banqueters. The one exception is the scene from Tomb 5513 (cat. No. 47) where three female general assistants attend to an all male banquet. The remaining fourteen female servants, depicted in twelve scenes, all attend to female banqueters. In the few instances when they are shown with objects in their hands, for example with a fan, they exclusively attend to the comfort of female banqueters. Male attendants are sometimes shown interacting with female banqueters, for example in the Tomb of the Triclinium (cat. No. 44), or in the Tomb of the Deer Hunt (cat. No. 49). In the majority of cases however, female banqueters do not interact with male servants, but bestow their attention on their male couch partners.

Depictions with food and drink

Eighty-four scenes of the total of ninety-eight are preserved well enough to determine whether food and drink is shown in the banquet representations. Of these eighty-four scenes, fifty-one (61%) show drink only, twenty-four (28%) food and drink, seven (8%) neither food or drink, and two (3%) food only. The majority of banquets show the inclusion of drink only. Evidently it was sufficient to represent a banquet with drink only. Food was perhaps not as important a signifier when such an event was to be depicted. Due to 51% of images including references to drinks only, a hypothesis can be created that the Etruscans were inclined to have drinks only, and that food was not as important an 'ingredient' to a banquet. More speculative is the idea that different stages of the event were shown, where drinks are being served like an aperitif or digestive. The food was to follow, or had been served already. This idea is less well supported since there is only one 'snapshot' of any one banquet, not

a series of three to four images showing the event in its development from beginning to end.

It can be observed that scenes from domestic contexts are more even in numbers with regard to the scenes showing drinks only in comparison to drinks and food scenes. Ten scenes from domestic-residential contexts show food and drink, while eleven scenes show drink only. Scenes from funerary contexts have many more scenes with drink only in relation to scenes with food and drink. There are forty images where drink only is shown, while only fourteen representations make reference to food and drink. Evidently, in a domestic context, the representation of food was more important than in funerary contexts. Status and wealth may have been expressed by showing different bowls and food dishes, in addition to the beverages, to the many people who would have seen the banquet imagery on buildings such as at Murlo or Acquarossa, or on vessels decorated with such scenes and these vessels being displayed on a *kylikeion* in households which held banquets. Admittedly, this concept of symbolizing status and wealth applies to both domestic and funerary contexts. However, in the more private realm of funerary art, to show a banquet conducted with drink only was sufficient to signify prestige and status. A tomb, because of its purpose to hold the remains of people deceased, would have been visited by fewer people, presumably family and friends, and religious personages who conducted the funerary rites. The people who looked at the banquet scenes painted in these tombs will have been familiar with the status and wealth of the family laid to rest there. Public status and wealth, symbolized by the conspicuous display of food and food vessels may not have been at the forefront of what the people who commissioned the scenes wanted to be conveyed. To show private conviviality may have been more important than to show public status-related etiquette and formality. More speculative is the suggestion that it may have been more acceptable in private funerary art to show private parties where, presumably alcoholic, beverages were enjoyed without also having food. Such parties would lend to inebriation which is a physical and mental state which (assumedly) was not suited to display on public buildings, which would have been seen by the local population and visitors alike.

Types of food and food vessels displayed

The foods shown on Etruscan banquet scenes are all of the type of what we term 'finger foods', where no cutlery is needed to pick up the items from plates or bowls. The food is either served in bowls placed on the tables in front of the banqueters, or is held as dainty morsels by the banqueters in their fingers. The food can be picked and immediately eaten just by hand. No knives are needed to reduce the size, and no napkins or bowls are shown to catch any spillage from sauces or food which may be very juicy. When food is placed in vessels on the tables in front of the banqueters, it appears that every banqueteer has equal access to any one vessel. The way the vessels are set in front of the banqueters suggests that each banqueteer can pick and choose from the 'communal' bowls. It is not obvious that individual banqueters take ownership of any particular vessel filled with food. The food is prominently shown, but the banqueters pay attention to their couch neighbours or servants. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions regarding the status of a banqueteer by looking at what food he/she may consume. That an atmosphere of wealth, luxury and generosity was to be conveyed by the host (the person who commissioned the scene) by including tables laden with food may certainly be the case. This effectively reflects status onto the host without the host being singled out in the scene.

Of all the items discussed in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5., which are actually held by banqueters, only one kind of dish can be identified with certainty as food. It is the rounded, white to off-white, apricot-sized item that is conventionally identified as an egg. It is held by three female and fourteen male banqueters. That the small round item is food of the type of a pastry, a fruit, or an egg can be confirmed by the way it is held and how some banqueteer's arms and hands are led towards their mouths. The majority of scholars interpret the finger food as an egg and therewith as a symbol of fertility, life or rebirth, especially since sixteen of the eighteen representations of this food morsel are from funerary contexts. However, this notion cannot be fully supported by the current findings, as discussed in subsection 5.3.3. (see *The enigma of the "egg" in Tarquinian banquet tomb paintings*). Alternative interpretations of why the egg, if indeed it is an egg, was the only food directly associated with any particular banqueteer in Etruscan iconography are possible. Such ideas range from the item being a different kind of food altogether, to it being an egg

that can certainly be prepared and enjoyed in a wide variety of ways and with a wide variety of seasonings, to the egg signifying a certain stage of the festivity depicted.⁵⁴

It is difficult to detect any particular status for the people holding the round food item. They are fully integrated in group scenes, and not singled out when only two or three people are depicted. The food item is either eaten by a banqueter, or passed to a couch neighbor, regardless of gender. The imagery of either keeping the item to oneself or passing the item to a couch neighbor can be found in Etruscan banquet iconography. A highly symbolic use of this food morsel, as is often suggested, is therefore not obvious. A more practical solution such as it being a tasty morsel or a signifier of a certain stage of the party may be at least equally valid.

Types of drink and drinking vessels displayed

Of the total of ninety-eight scenes, eighty-four are preserved well enough to determine that food or beverages were taken. Of these eighty-four scenes, seventy-four (88%) make reference to drinks which is a considerably higher percentage than 31% in regard of the scenes making reference to food. Perhaps drinking was more of an essential part of an Etruscan banquet. This may be supported by the notion that if food is shown, it is small morsels of food. Roasts, big cauldrons over fire, or spits with meats are never shown in the banquet scenes. What we can see is rather elegant nibbling on small finger foods.

The question as to the kind of beverages consumed is not as easily answered. For many scholars the general consensus is that wine is enjoyed, without substantiating their hypothesis with supporting facts. However, of the seventy-four scenes with reference to drink, only twenty-eight (38%) may show the consumption of wine with the support of pictorial evidence. The utensils commonly associated with the consumption of wine are the sieve, the ladle, and the *oinochoe*. At least one of these implements generally associated with the consumption of wine is shown in each of these twenty-eight images where the consumption of wine may be suggested.

The remaining forty-six (62%) scenes do not show any one of these three utensils. In these images, the banqueters hold drinks vessels, and in some images a crater is placed within the scenes, too. The fact that the banqueters hold a drinking

⁵⁴ See detailed discussion in subsection 5.3.3.

vessel, whatever type of vessel it may be, does not necessarily support the hypothesis that wine is enjoyed. Wine may certainly be the drink of choice. Alternatively, it may be mead, a type of beer, or non-alcoholic drinks. Fact is that drinking vessels alone do not support drawing conclusions as to what beverage was drunk. Therefore the (inconclusive) iconographic evidence may support the idea that not only wine is taken at an Etruscan banquet. However, it must also be remarked that it is not very likely that some of the images depict the consumption of mead or a beer-type beverage since there is no archaeological evidence that such drinks were produced or consumed by the Etruscans.

The vessels used for drinking are of a wide variety.⁵⁵ What was a little surprising was the fact that the majority of drinking vessels are shallow and wide-rimmed. This makes drinking from these *kylixes* and bowls a rather slow, careful, and even elegant and sophisticated way of drinking. Deep gulps can be taken from deep and relatively narrow-rimmed cups and chalices. That the image of excessive consumption (of wine) at banquet, which was presented by ancient writers, may not be true is also supported by the following observation.⁵⁶ In many banquet scenes the relative size of an *oinochoe* is very small in comparison to the drinking vessels held by the banqueters. This may be an additional indication that to drink large quantities (of alcoholic) beverages were not something the Etruscans were concerned about when representing themselves at banquet. The primary objective, when including reference to drink, may have been to represent the quality of the beverage by showing it to be offered from comparatively small serving vessels. These beverages were drunk from *kylixes* and shallow bowls which had to be handled carefully due to the shape of these vessels, as mentioned above. This interpretation can be compared to luxurious dinner parties today where small quantities of rare and exotic foods and beverages are served from plates and vessels which are made of equally rare and exotic materials such as mahogany or crystal. The drinking vessels had large inner and outer surfaces which lend themselves to decorations. Vessels decorated by skilled artisans were luxury items in themselves. This indicates that the status and wealth of the host and the special occasion which was celebrated are represented by

⁵⁵ See subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. for complete listing and discussion of drinks vessels.

⁵⁶ See subsection 5.3.3. for quotes.

the choice of food, beverages and serving accoutrements. However, it cannot be denied that quantity, even if the drinking vessels shown do not lend themselves to fast and deep drinking, can be made up by the amount of time each guest spends at banquet, and the frequency of refills.

The idea that because servants held the *oinochoai*, and that therefore the representation of the serving vessel was reduced in size and the servant, too, is not the case. Servants are shown the same size as the banqueters. In respect to serving vessels, it is always and without exception a servant who holds these utensils, never a banqueter. Banqueters always only hold vessels from which they can drink. They are never shown holding an *oinochoe* or ladle, even when no servant is in attendance in a scene.

The iconographical evidence is inconclusive regarding the question of whether status can be assigned to the persons holding drinking vessels, as has been suggested by scholars. That a particular status, be it a political rank, a profession, age, wealth, family relations, or different places of origin could be encoded in a specific type of drinking vessel may be the case.⁵⁷ However, when analysing the representations, no obvious correlation of any type of drinking vessel with a specific type of banqueter, regarding physical appearance, clothing, gesturing, gender or assigned location at banquet can be detected.

When looking at the percentages of vessel type distribution in scenes with more than one banqueter holding a drinking vessel, the following observations can be made. Six scenes (37.5%) show two banqueters each holding a different type of vessel. Ten scenes (62.5%) show the banqueters holding vessels of the same type. The banqueters in the ten scenes who hold the same vessel type may be of the same status, (political) profession, age, family, place of origin, or they are enjoying the same kind of beverage.

Since the drinking vessels held by the banqueters are of the same type in the majority of banquet scenes, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the status of the people depicted. Also, holding a vessel may be as much a status indicator as holding another object such as a ribbon or the 'egg' or showing hands empty of items. The difficulty in determining status lies in the fact that there is no congruency of vessel

⁵⁷ See subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5., with detailed discussion regarding the significance of the types of drinking vessels held by banqueters in subsection 5.3.1.

(or object) type held in combination with certain type of banqueter. If such an observable combination of vessel type with a certain type of banqueter would have been detectable, a hypothesis regarding status division could have been supported. However, this is not the case.

There are strong indications of gender division in relation to access to beverages. Only two (3%; cat. No. 8 and Cat. No. 9) of the seventy-four scenes that refer to drink show female banqueters holding drinking vessels. Both scenes are from domestic-residential contexts. There are seventy-one female banqueters in total, and in the two scenes, there are three females (4%) directly associated with drinking vessels. It is interesting that females associated with drinks bowls are represented on revetment plaques that decorated comparatively prominent buildings. Similar plaques were found at Murlo (cat. No. 1) and at Acquarossa (cat. No. 2) where women are depicted participating at banquet without holding drinking vessels. These decorations may have conveyed a socio-political agenda where the people who commissioned these images wanted to include women showing them in the act of drinking, as equals to the men depicted.

It may be remarked upon that the vessels held by the female banqueters on the Velletri plaques are comparatively small, even dainty in comparison to the vessel held by their male companion. Unfortunately this is the only Etruscan representation of male and female banqueters holding drinks vessels. More evidence is needed for comparison to draw conclusion as to the use of such vessels in relation to gender in scenes where both sexes hold drinks vessels.

In banquet scenes from funerary contexts, not one of the fifty-four female banqueters is shown holding a drinking vessel. It is difficult to explain this fact, especially since ancient ethnographers liked to comment on the drinking habits of Etruscan women.⁵⁸ The iconographic evidence does not support this. The setting of the images, in tombs, on grave markers, urns and sarcophagi, may be an indicator of a more restrained atmosphere of what was represented on these media. However, most scenes are full of merrymaking, family gatherings, or intimate scenes of couples. A religious or pious restraint, represented by only females not drinking beverages, seems unsuited. It may simply be a coincidence that only male banqueters

⁵⁸ See subsection 5.4.3. for quotes and detailed discussion.

hold drinks bowls. However, the iconography may reflect the fact that females drunk less than men at banquet.

Curiously enough, when it comes to female servants, there are two attendants serving beverages to female banqueters (cat. No. 45 and cat. No. 54) while the ladies do not hold any vessels into which the beverage could be poured. That female servants attend to female banqueters is consistent with the findings of the research reported in this thesis, but that female attendants hold beverage-serving vessels is exceptional. All other serving vessels are held by male servants, be it representations from funerary, or domestic-residential contexts.

Interaction of the people at banquet

A detailed description of every banquet scene is given in the catalogue in the appendix of this thesis. It became apparent when analysing the iconography of banqueting that a variety of interactions is shown. Male banqueters speak with male or female banqueters. Female banqueters speak with female or male banqueters. Male banqueters address male or female servants, and the same is true for female banqueters concerning attendants. Couch partners pay attention to each other, or turn their backs on each other to be in conversation with the person on the neighbouring couch, irrespective of sex. These are all-directional interactions, where multiple combinations can be observed in any one scene irrespective of sex or standing (banqueters or servant). This may remind the onlooker of personal snapshots in time where either an atmosphere of relaxed conversation or a party with animatedly gesticulating merry makers is 'happening' without much formality of conversational rules. However, the rules of gendered seating arrangement,⁵⁹ and the rule as to where a lyre player is shown reclining, are adhered to in all scenes.⁶⁰

Objects held by or associated with the banqueters to help identify the status and / or gender

There are 345 banqueters preserved in all of the ninety-eight representations. Of these, 149 (43%) hold objects, 135 (39%) have their hands empty of objects, sixty-

⁵⁹ See discussions subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5., and Conclusions.

⁶⁰ See discussions subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5., and Conclusions.

one (18%) banqueter's hands are not preserved to determine whether they held any objects. This is a rather balanced distribution of banqueters being directly associated with objects, and banqueters who rest their empty hands or who gesticulate animatedly with empty hands. However, when comparing and contrasting the number of banqueters with object versus the number of banqueters with empty hands from domestic-residential contexts versus funerary contexts, a rather different picture emerges. In domestic-residential contexts, of the total of fifty-nine banqueters, forty-three (73%) hold objects while sixteen (27%) have their hands empty of items. The two hundred and eighty six banqueters depicted in funerary contexts divide into one hundred and six (37%) who hold items, one hundred and nineteen (42%) who do not, and sixty-one (18%) banqueters whose hands are not preserved. It must be remarked that in domestic-residential contexts, it appears that it was of more importance to have banqueters directly associated with objects than in funerary contexts.

The reasons may be one, or a combination of several. The scenes from the revetment plaques are especially telling. These were attached to buildings that are more prominent than the other surrounding houses in their respective neighbourhood. A socio-political message will have been encoded in the choice and execution of the scenes that decorated these buildings. Therefore, it would have been of importance to include as many objects of which the 'symbolic short hand' message to be conveyed was seen and understood by the onlookers. We have women holding drinks vessels, we have banqueters holding oblong objects, and we have one male banqueter hold a scroll.⁶¹ These are images not known in funerary contexts. These items, and women shown actively drinking at banquet may therefore only be relevant in public art. There was no place or no need for these images and objects in the more private sphere of tomb paintings, urns and sarcophagi.

The fact that 73% of banqueters hold items in scenes from domestic-residential contexts versus only 37% in funerary art may also perhaps point to the need to project status, wealth, diversity of professions or origins of the personages depicted, a political agenda, a recent story of success of a/some aristocratic family/-ies who commissioned the plaques, or any combination of these suggestions, or others not mentioned. Moreover, to represent this story, objects that symbolise it

⁶¹ See subsection 5.3.1. and 5.4.1. for detailed discussion.

were necessary to tell it. Whereas in the realm of funerary art, statements of power and public success may not have been a primary factor in deciding on how the banquet was to be executed. Fewer items had to be associated with the people you shared your banquet couch with to symbolise public responsibilities. We have 37% of banqueters hold items versus 42% who have their hands empty of objects in funerary banquet art. It appears that the people themselves were of more importance than their association them with certain objects. In demeanour and gesturing, the people without objects are just as prominent as the ones with a drinks bowl or a wreath in their hands. They are as active a part as anybody else is. It may have been less of an objective in the more private art from funerary contexts to associate a person with an object (of status relevance).

However, an alternative hypothesis may be that the objects which were incorporated in banquet scenes from domestic-residential contexts, but not in funerary imagery, were actually placed in the tombs. Grave goods do contain many items which formed (at least part of) banqueting sets. The accoutrements required to represent a banquet were not necessarily shown in tomb paintings, but were deposited in the tombs as the 'real' objects. Therefore there was no need to include some of the banqueting equipment in the tomb paintings, or engravings.

The variety of items held are, in the majority, drinking vessels, followed by vegetal objects (branches, flowers, wreathes and ribbons), the 'egg', the oblong object (perhaps a food dish) from domestic-residential contexts, and the lyre. Other objects, including two possible *togati* staffs, a scroll, and a plate held by one, or two banqueters. The significance of drinking vessels, vegetal objects, the food dishes and the lyre has been discussed above⁶². Some of the other objects, which are comparatively rare in banquet iconography, may be explained by circumstantial evidence. The two men who hold what look like *togati* staffs in the scene from the Tomb of the Well (cat. No. 68) may very well have held this post in their lifetime.

Objects are more often held in the left hand than in the right hand, irrespective of gender. This may have several different reasons, or a combination of the interpretations given below. The majority of Etruscan banqueters may be left handed. However, since ninety-seven out ninety-eight scenes show the banqueters

⁶² See discussions subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5.

reclining right to left, the left hand automatically becomes the hand and arm on which the people recline. The left hand is now less movable, more passive, because the body is resting on it. The right hand is freed to gesticulate or to move items about. Of the one hundred and forty nine banqueters who hold items, seventy-eight (52%) hold drinking vessels. However, it is remarkable that most drinking vessels are held in the left, the passive hand. No active drinking is shown, since the banqueteer would not be able to drink from such a physical arrangement of body and hand. This supports the findings that beverages were an integral part of Etruscan banquets, but that perhaps the active act of consuming beverages was of less importance than the (symbolic) representation of beverages as part of the banquet iconography.

Regarding the question of whether status, wealth, political power, age, host versus guest relation, family hierarchy, or social superiority can be distinguished with the help of objects associated with certain banqueters is speculative at best. People who hold drinks vessels may be of a different status in comparison to people who do not hold anything, or who hold other items. However, they may simply be thirsty. The *togati* staffs most likely do represent the men's political status. The 'egg' may transfer a religious-mystic quality to the person who holds it, or it may signify appetite for finger food.

While analysing the banquet scenes with regard to objects held/or not held, it became obvious that no distinguishable correlation of one item with a specific kind of banqueteer, be it physical traits, gender, demeanour or place at banquet could be detected. If, for example, it was always the bearded man, second from the left, who holds a *kylix* in his left hand and who holds the attention of the other banqueters, then he could be interpreted as a personage of a different status. However, rather the opposite is the case in Etruscan banquet scenes. It is difficult to ascertain correlations of any kind. In addition, it was rare that any particular person was singled out and was given all the attention by his/her fellow banqueters. One exception is the lady in the Bartoccini Tomb scene (cat. No. 26). However, it is not an object held that singles her out. It is the fact that heads and bodies of her fellow banqueters are all turned towards her. In this respect, it is remarkable that whatever item is being held, it appears to make no difference to the actual attention received by the other

banqueters. However, the place of the lyre player is always either at the very left or right side of a banquet scene. This may be a practical solution, or it may reflect a socio-cultural convention. Nonetheless, attention is not focused on him. Nor are the fellow banqueters paying any attention to the only Etruscan banqueter ever shown holding a scroll on the revetment plaque from Velletri (cat. No. 8). This is not to say that these items do not have socio-political relevance. They will symbolise certain political ranks and mark issues such as wealth, social and family relations, origins, age and gender. Unfortunately, banquet iconography does not allow us to make deductions based on the information available regarding the status of the banqueters depicted. We can be certain that they are the aristocratic elite of Etruscan society, but the fine nuances of each person's specific standings will stay locked behind the representations.

Discussion of gender of the banqueters

There are two hundred and seventy six male and sixty-eight female banqueters, while the gender of one further banqueter could not be determined. Detailed presentations of all the banqueters with regard to their physical appearance, clothing, and general demeanour, and discussions where some of the banqueters' gender was questioned are given in subsections 5.4.1. to 5.4.5. Of the two hundred and seventy six male banqueters, sixty-three (23%) are empty handed. When looking at images from domestic-residential contexts only, eleven (24%) of forty-five male banqueters do not hold any items. In funerary contexts, two hundred and thirty one men could be counted, of which eighty-eight (38%) are not directly associated with any objects. Of the sixty-eight female banqueters overall, thirty-eight (56%) do not hold any objects. Four (31%) of the thirteen women banqueting in domestic-residential context imagery are not directly associated with any items. In funerary imagery, we have fifty-five female banqueters in total, of which thirty-four (62%) do not hold an object. Only in domestic-residential contexts is the number of women (31%) relatively close to the number of men (24%) being shown without items. In sum, it can be said that the number of women associated with an object is relatively high in domestic-residential imagery.

It has been noted above that it is only in domestic-residential contexts that

women are shown holding drinking vessels. These vessels account for a large percentage of items held overall. Drinking vessels may certainly be an indicator of a specific status for these women and men, which could be political or socio-cultural.⁶³

However, this status or ideological idea symbolised by drinks vessels held by women cannot be ascertained in funerary contexts. Here, 38% of the men have their hands empty of items, in comparison to 62% of women. Moreover, the foremost item missing from the repertoire of objects held by lady banqueters is the drinking vessel. Reasons for this absolute absence of drinking vessels in respect of female banquet participants have been suggested above.⁶⁴ However, it must be stressed that each and every single female banqueter is shown as an active participant at banquet. They gesticulate with their hands and arms, turn their bodies to be in active conversation with whomever they chose, even if this means turning away from their couch partner. In some of the better-preserved tomb paintings it can be easily seen how rich and varied in texture and choice of material the women's clothes were, and how intricate the designs of their jewellery was. Make-up and coiffeuse were always elegantly executed. The reason that women in domestic-residential contexts were shown with drinking vessels but not in funerary contexts may be based on a religious, a political, or a socio-cultural agenda. The funerary banquets appear to be different kinds of occasions in comparison to domestic-residential banquets, at least concerning the specific act of females drinking at such *convivia*. Coincidence does not seem to be a suitable argument because the absence of female drinkers in funerary contexts is too absolute.

When looking at the other objects held by female banqueters, these are limited to wreaths and ribbons, and the 'egg'. They are held by females both in domestic-residential and funerary contexts. The number of women holding the ribbons and the 'egg' is comparably balanced with the number of men holding these items in both contexts. A numerical divergence in view of gendered use and access as with the drinking vessels can therefore not be observed. These are non-gender specific items. That wreaths and ribbons may most likely be indicators for the

⁶³ See discussion subsection 5.3.1.

⁶⁴ See discussions and suggestions in subsections 5.3.1. to 5.3.5. and Conclusions.

setting, for the location of some of the banquets was suggested elsewhere.⁶⁵ Wreaths and ribbons are handled by men and women indiscriminately. A gendered symbolism in regard for the ‘egg’ has also been negated.⁶⁶ Since men and women hold the ‘egg’, pass it on in between each other or keep it for themselves, it cannot be regarded as gender specific. The finding that men and women deal with the ‘egg’ in equal ways therefore supports the suggestion that the item may be finger food, as was suggested above.⁶⁷

Only men are shown playing the lyre. The lyre is played by five banqueters overall. This may certainly be an indicator of gendered privilege to play the lyre at banquet. The opportunity to learn to play the instrument may have been open to both sexes because a female servant is holding a lyre in the banquet scene from the Tomb of the Black Sow (cat. No. 46). However, she may be offering the instrument to one of the male banqueters, or she may just have received the instrument to store it. That she is the person playing the instrument is debatable.

To sum up, female banqueters are shown much less frequently holding an item than male banqueters. This is an iconographical fact that may indicate differential access to drink, possible status symbols such as scrolls, or entertainment-providing items such as lyres. However, the female banqueters are equal to their male companions in demeanour and gesturing, in the richness of clothing and luxurious jewellery, and in their choice of to whom they pay attention.

Tangible extras

Grouped as tangible extras are items which are part of the visual imagery of an Etruscan banquet, but which so far have not been discussed under any of the previous sixteen categories. All but one of these tangible extras are animals. The item visible on the urn cat. No. 83 may be a storage chest because it looks very much like an inanimate rectangular object. Of the ninety-eight banquet scenes in total, there are thirty-six (37%) scenes with tangible object set under the banquet couches. There are a total of sixty-five animals: thirty-five (54%) are birds (ducks, geese, doves,

⁶⁵ See discussions and suggestions in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.1.5. and Conclusions.

⁶⁶ See discussions in subsection 5.3.3.

⁶⁷ See discussion subsection 5.3.3. and Conclusions.

pigeons, chickens and pheasants or peacocks), twenty-two (34%) are dogs, three (5%) are cats; there are three mice (5%) and two leopards (3%).

It is remarkable that despite the fact that 37% of banquet scenes do include animals, only two of these scenes show active interaction of humans with animals. The scene on the mirror cat. No. 24 shows a male attendant play with a dog, while on the urn cat. No. 97 a dog is shown in a playful gesture. All other animals conduct their 'own business'.

However, even if the majority of animals do not interact with the humans, they must be an integral part of the iconography. Otherwise, why were they included? It has been suggested that animals, especially birds have a symbolic significance in view of death and rebirth.⁶⁸ Birds indeed are the most numerous of the animals depicted. However, whether they are shown by themselves, or in juxtaposition with other animals a picture emerges that is less symbolic, but more practical. Pigeons and doves keep a watchful eye on the cats underneath the neighbouring couches, geese pick crumbs off the floor underneath the banqueting couches, birds ignore sleepy dogs, and one duck pays attention to its neighbour duck. These are less mythical-symbolic images, than snapshots in time full of action and spontaneity. The animals are in typical animal poses. Dogs stretch out long after, or ready for a snooze, cats contract their bodies ready to pounce on nearby birds.

If symbolism is to be assigned to the animals, it may be less of a religious-mythical, but more of a practical origin. The dogs shown may be hunting dogs, with the hunt being a pastime reserved for the aristocratic elite of Etruscan society. It must be remarked upon that it is exclusively dogs that are shown in combination with birds on the revetment plaques from domestic-residential context. The combinations of cats with birds are only known from Tarquinian tomb paintings. The possibility of a religious interpretation was discussed and negated in subsections 5.5.1. and 5.5.3.

Perhaps, as is suggested in this thesis, the tomb paintings are of a more private nature, where status symbols such as (hunting) dogs were less of an issue than in a domestic scene where *KRANKRU* the family cat chases a bird (see Golini I Tomb, cat. No. 72). In regards to the birds being symbols, they may be prestige goods because of being exotic breeds of chickens, doves or ducks with colourful

⁶⁸ See discussion subsection 5.5.1.

plumages.⁶⁹ They can be compared with the luxury of having Japanese carp in a Koi pond in our society today. The two leopards depicted in the Tomb of the Frontoncino (cat. No. 35) are unusual pets. However, to have exotic pets has been a privilege of the elite through the centuries.

The mice ‘dancing’ on the banqueters in the Tomb of the Olympic Games (cat. No. 33) may be a humorous symbolic language to represent the very inebriated state of the banqueter. Therefore the animals may be symbols for wealth, exotic luxury, and the privilege to drink too much alcohol. At the same time the presence of the animals does support the atmosphere of spontaneity at banquet that is already epitomised by the lively banqueters and ever-busy servants.

Final Comments

This thesis ascertained new findings with regard to Etruscan society by analysing banquet iconography. It became apparent that much had been said about Etruscan banquets but little had been based on actual research. Scholars chose a particular scene to support, or contradict their arguments. The research conducted for this thesis comprises a systematically conducted examination of all the banquet scenes which were available, indiscriminately of pursuit any particular hypothesis

Chronological conclusions could be drawn by being able to determine that the oldest banquets show the banqueters seated, while from the middle of the sixth century BC onwards the majority of banqueters reclined. It was also found that seating and reclining arrangements were determined by gender and age in images where both seated and reclining banqueters were shown. The females and sub-adult banqueters were seated on individual chairs or cushions respectively, while men reclined on couches. When females were sharing a couch with a male, the female was shown reclining to the left of her male couch partner. No gender or age related constraint could be observed when examining the interaction of the banqueters in any one banquet scene. Male, female, and sub-adult banqueters appear to communicate with each other freely.

It was also observed that there is a gender bias regarding the attendants, in so far as female servants predominantly attend to female banqueters, and that male

⁶⁹ See discussion subsection 5.5.1., 5.5.3 and 5.5.5.

servants exclusively attend to male banqueters. It can also be ascertained that some duties are reserved for male servants, while others were almost exclusively executed by female attendants. However, it was interesting to observe that there is no obvious correlation of the number of guests with the number of servants attending to the banqueters. The more guests depicted did not necessitate more servants to be included in any one scene, and vice versa.

It can be postulated that two people per couch, and two-couch banquets were the most numerous in Etruscan imagery of conviviality. Suggestions as to the reasons for this were given above. The setting of a banquet can now also be determined, by looking at reclining arrangements on couches versus (on mattresses) on the ground with the help of outdoor indicators.

Food and drink were integral constituents of Etruscan banquets. Food was always shown as small morsel, easily picked up for immediate consumption. No cutlery was needed. The preparation, roasting or boiling of any meats or other agrarian produce was never an immediate part of any one banquet scene. What kinds of foods and drinks were enjoyed at banquet is difficult to determine. In regards to food, most of the images were inconclusive or not detailed enough to establish what was served. In regards to beverages, objects such as, for example, wine related equipment were shown in only 38% of all scenes which made reference to beverages. It is therefore not possible to ascertain the beverage(s) of choice in 62% of images which made reference to the consumption of drink.

The evidence from the banquet iconography shows that the status of the people depicted, be it political, wealth, gender, age or family-related, could only be speculated on. No distinct pattern could be detected to build a hypothesis as to the individual or specific status of the persons shown. Too many variables, be they physical features, clothing, objects held, or general demeanour were observable to decide and conclude on a distinct pattern with which to distinguish a social or political status.

One question often asked by scholars is whether funerary banquets differ from banquets depicted in domestic-residential contexts. It is difficult to hypothesise on this as the only observable difference is that females are shown holding drinking vessels in domestic-residential contexts, whereas in funerary contexts not a single

female banqueter is shown with such vessels. Future research may help with this question. Funerary assemblages where the gender of the deceased is known, need to be analysed in view of whether drinking vessels were part of the grave goods for females as well as for males. If grave assemblages for females contain drinking vessels, it could then be concluded that women as well as men participated at social events drinking beverages. The funerary iconography of showing women not actively drinking could then be reviewed with the additional knowledge gained from archaeological evidence. Funerary iconography may then indeed be different from domestic-residential imagery by denying women access to beverages.

With regard to future research, the findings as presented in this thesis could be compared and contrasted to similar research conducted with banquet iconography found in societies which neighboured the Etruscans in space or time. Similarities or differences may be inferred from the societies under examination which have not been discovered before.

In conclusion, the iconographic evidence presents a picture of wealth and prosperity of the elite, guided by social rules to which the Etruscans adhered. Nevertheless, the Etruscan banquet scenes allow us to glimpse a snapshot of a festive and relaxed ‘natural humour of life’ (Lawrence, 2007: 58), an iconographical introduction to how the Etruscan people saw themselves and how they wanted to be remembered.

7. Postscript

The following is a documentation of three ash urns with a total of five banquet scenes. The three urns had been in storage in East Berlin Museums since 1937 and were only exhibited again since June 2010.

Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection, c. 520 BC, Sk 1222.

Chiusi Urn with banquet scene on main panel.



Figure 7.1: Chiusi Urn with banquet scene (Source: author's own photography)

The first person is male. He is a drinks servant. He wears a tunic that covers his upper body, while his lower body is bare of clothing. A cap covers his hair. He is facing right, is holding a sieve in his raised left hand and a small amphora in his right hand. There is a small tree to the right of him. Next to him is a double flute player, male, facing to the right. He wears an elaborate, knee-length tunic and a cap on his hair. A wreath can be seen hanging from the ceiling to the right of the double flute player. Next is a banqueter, male, reclining and facing to the left. He has his right hand raised towards the two attendants. His left hand does not hold anything. He wears a tunic and a mantle wrapped round his waist. The second banqueter, female, wears a tunic. It is difficult to make out what she is wearing on the lower part of her body. It may be a mantle or belt wrapped round her waist. She wears a *tutulus*. Her

bosom can be made out under her tunic. She is reclining to the left, with her head turned over her shoulder to the right to converse with the third banqueter. Her hands are empty. The third banqueter, male, wears a tunic and a mantle wrapped round his waist. His raised right hand and his left hand are both empty. He is reclining and facing to the left, and is in conversation with his female couch neighbour. Both male banqueters wear tight fitting caps with bands, just like the two male attendants.

The banqueters recline on one mattress, with cushions under their left elbows.

Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection, c. 500 BC, Sk 1224.

Chiusi Urn with banquet scene on main panel.



Figure 7.2: Chiusi Urn with banquet scenes (Source: author's own photography)

A male attendant, dressed in an elaborate mantle, is standing, facing to the right. He is passing or receiving an object in his raised left hand from the first banqueter. It is difficult to determine what the object is. In his right hand, he is holding an object resembling a *pyxis*. Immediately to the right of the attendant stands a further male figure, who is much smaller in body size, and who is facing to the right. The size of the figure may be due to his relatively young age, or to an inferior duty he may be performing. He is wearing an ankle length tunic. Unfortunately, most of his torso, face, and arms are now lost so it is difficult to determine any further details, such as his exact duty. The first banqueter, male, is reclining and facing to the left. His upper body, showing a well-shaped chest, is bare. A mantle is wrapped round his waist and lower body. With his raised right hand he receives, or passes something to the first attendant, while his left hand holds a large *kylix*. The second banqueter, male, is reclining to the left, but his head is turned to the right, over his shoulder. He is

holding a ribbon in his raised right hand, and an item in his left hand that resembles an apple or a similar round (food?) item. His bare chest is well shaped, and a mantle is wrapped round his waist and lower body. Both banqueters wear head-caps fitted with bands.

A figure is standing at the right side of the single couch on which the two banqueters are reclining. The upper part of the figure, down to the waist, is now lost. A mantle, rich in drapes, is reaching to the ankles of the figure. *Calcei repandi* are worn by the person, and one hand, empty of object, is reaching towards the banqueteer closest to him/her. Cushions and thick blankets are draped on the banqueting couch. One amphora on the left hand side and one crater on a stand, with a further vessel placed inside it, on the right hand side, are placed under the banqueting couch.

These two banquet scenes, now in the Altes Museum, Berlin, are consistent in their iconography with all other representations discussed in this thesis. For example it can be noted that the female is seated in the middle of the two men with whom she shares one mattress with. Such spatial arrangement is also found on the Acquarossa revetment plaques (cat. No. 2) and on a cinerary urn from Chiusi (cat. No. 86).

The combination of trees, ribbons and wreaths and banqueters reclining on the ground with mattresses suggest an outdoor setting for the Ash Urn Sk1222, which is in accordance with the findings from subsections 5.1.1 to 5.1.5. The orientation of reclining from right to left is adhered to in both the banquet scenes Sk 1222 and Sk 1224. People handling wine service equipment are shown standing, which is the appropriate pose for an attendant at banquet.

It can be concluded that the two ash urns Sk 1222 and Sk 1224 confirm and therefore give additional support to the findings presented and discussed in subsections 5.1.1. to 5.5.5.

It is proposed that the following ash urn is a later date forgery.

Altes Museum, Berlin, Mazzetti Collection, alleged 520 - 500 BC, Sk 1238.

Chiusi Urn with banquet scenes on one main panel and on both side panels.

Banquet scene main panel:

De Marinis No. 59.



Figure 7.3: banquet scene main panel (Source: author's own photography)

Three banqueters are shown, of which the two outer banqueters are male, and the centre banqueter is female. They all recline right to left, on one mattress. The first banqueter is holding a drinks bowl in his left hand. The middle banqueter is holding an indented food (?) item, perhaps a fruit or dough ball in her left hand. The third banqueter is holding a branch in his right hand. It looks like he is using the branch to fan air to refresh him. The first and second banqueters both have their heads turned backwards over their shoulders to face the third banqueter. They wear identical short-sleeved tunics with mantles wrapped round their waists. The female wears a headscarf under her *tutulus* and large disk earrings with elaborate decorations. Each of the men also wears a *tutulus*.

They way the topic of banqueting is depicted on the main panel is in accordance with Etruscan banquet iconography. However, the urn is to be declared a forgery because of how the subject-matter is depicted on the side panels. On the side panels, described below, the way the Etruscan banquet scenes are depicted is contrary to all other Etruscan banquet iconography.

Banquet scene right panel as seen from main banquet scene:



Figure 7.4: banquet scene right panel (Source: author's own photography)

Two banqueters are shown, reclining on a single mattress. They are both male. The first banqueter is wearing a tunic and a mantle wrapped round his waist. He has a cap on his hair. The second banqueter is wearing a mantle wrapped over his left shoulder and round his waist, with the upper body underneath the mantle bare of clothing. He wears a cap and has a beard. His right hand is resting on the shoulder of his banqueting companion. Nothing is shown in their hands. However, the first man's right arm and hand is raised as if he is holding something, which may have been painted onto the urn. The onlooker may perceive the relief as an amorous scene between two males, one older than the other. The scene can be read as a display of sexual love between two male friends or family members, which makes this scene unique.

Banquet scene left panel as seen from main banquet scene:



Figure 7.5: banquet scene left panel (Source: author's own photography)

Two banqueters are reclining right to left on a single mattress. A man and a woman are shown. They both wear identical tunics. The man has a mantle wrapped round his waist and a cap on his head. Whether the female is wearing a similar garment cannot be made out with certainty due to the way the two figures are shown overlapping. She wears a *tutulus* and disk earrings. She displays softer, rounder facial features in comparison to the male. Her bosom may be distinguished against the background of the male's mantle. The male holds a small item in his right hand. It may be an egg (see discussion of the egg in subsection 5.3.3.). All other hands are empty of objects. He has the left arm round the shoulders of the female. A very amorous embrace of the two people is shown. Such near-erotic intensity is not known from other scenes where a male-female couple is shown reclining at banquet. It is also unique, in comparison to all other Etruscan banquet scenes that the male is reclining to the left of the female. Such an arrangement is not known from any other scene of conviviality where male and females recline together.

Showing a male reclining to the left of a female banqueter is a spatial arrangement otherwise not known in any Etruscan banqueting scene. The notion that the scenes on the urn are non-Etruscan forgeries is also supported by the fact that the atmosphere of the two side panel scenes is rather erotic. Erotically charged scenes are not shown in Etruscan banquet iconography. Conviviality among friends and family are the topics. When couples are shown in amorous embrace, as for example in the Tomb of the Old Man (cat. No. 37) or in the Querciola Tomb I (cat. No. 55), the scenes convey a marital love and the coy love of newlyweds respectively. The observation that erotic scenes are not part of the Etruscan banquet repertoire is independent of chronology because throughout the era examined, no Etruscan banquet scene was ever shown with such a subject matter.