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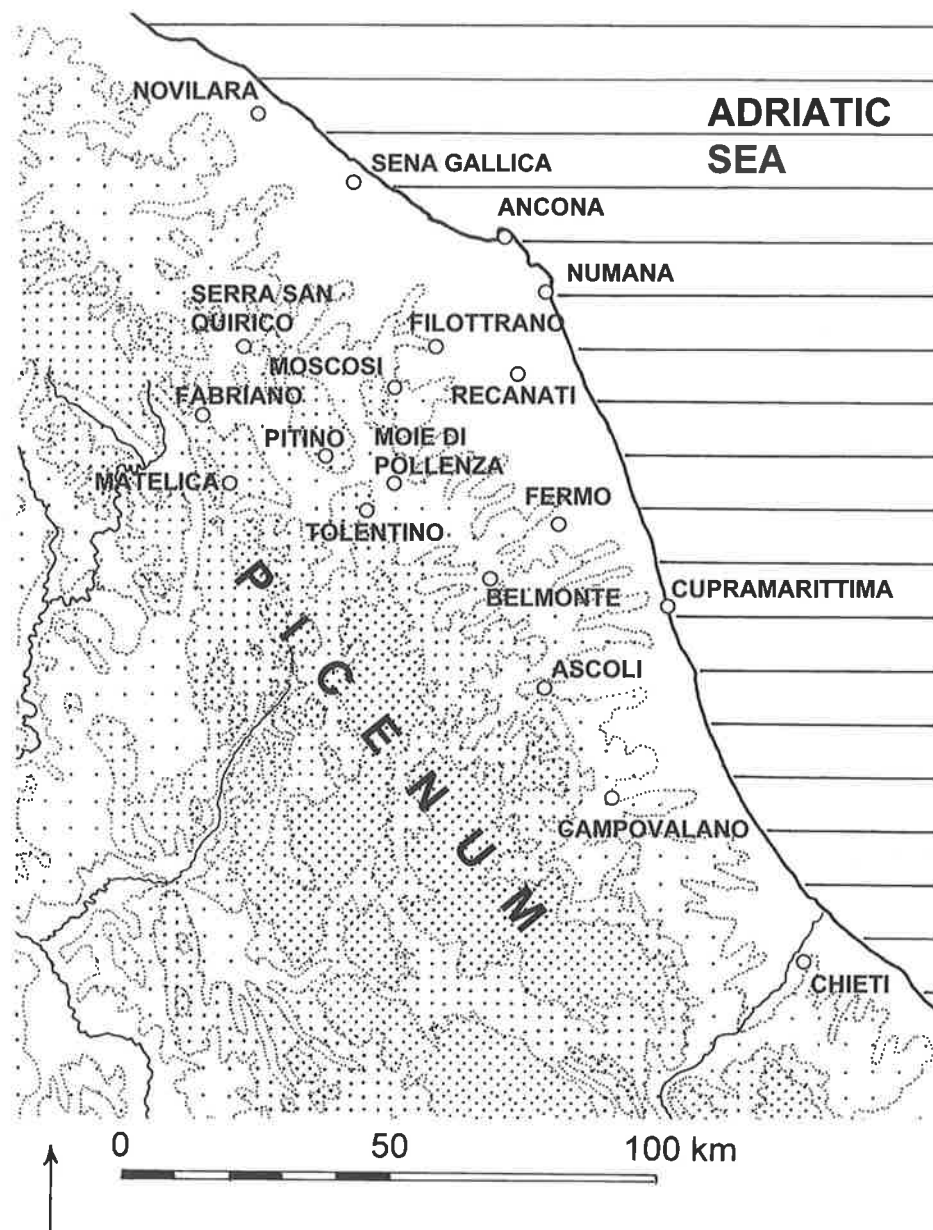
The Archaeology of Picenum

The Last Decade

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Introduction: The Cultural Definition of Picenum

With the term Picenum (Piceno) Italian archaeologists today refer to a region roughly corresponding to modern Marche and northern Abruzzo on the eastern seaboard of central Italy (Figure 17). Extending to just less than ten thousand square kilometres, the Marche faces the Adriatic Sea on its eastern side, and Umbria on its western side where the Apennines ('appennino umbro-marchigiano') form a natural barrier. The region as a whole is characterized by a mountainous landscape reaching altitudes over two thousand metres near Umbria. The high reliefs inland become lowlands as they approach the coastal plain, which forms a rather narrow strip of land. Parallel river valleys running from the mountains to the sea are wide and almost perpendicular to the coast, but begin very narrow at their sources in the mountain ranges inland. Here, some water courses cut through spectacular deep gorges, the most notable being the Furlo Gorge cut by the Burano River, tributary of the Metauro River, through which the Roman Via Flaminia, built in the third century BC, passed, ending at Fano on the coast. In antiquity as much as in the modern era, movement occurred along these river valleys, and communication with the west side of the Apennines was possible along passes over the high ground.

The peculiar geographical configuration of the region strongly determined the pattern of contact in antiquity, although, as we shall see, physical obstruction did not inhibit socio-cultural interaction. On the contrary, a characteristic trait of the history and archaeology of Picenum is its high level of interaction with other neighbouring regions both in Italy and beyond. This is partly the result of the geographical configuration of the river valleys making travelling to other regions along river courses easier than from valley to valley within the region.

17   Map of Picenum (drawn by Howard Mason, with additions by Corinna Riva)

Added to this is Picenum's position in the central Mediterranean, set between the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic Sea regions, both acting as maritime conduits of interaction with faraway regions, particularly the eastern Mediterranean. Research and fieldwork of the last decade or so are increasingly putting the mid-Adriatic region at the centre, rather than the margins, of the map of first-millennium BC Mediterranean-wide trade and exchange.

Cultural interaction and mobility were therefore critical to the development of Picenum as a whole, yet those traits that we often associate with the development of Iron Age central Italy, such as urbanization and ethnicity, do not comfortably apply to it. The ancient sources, which say little about Picene people, are not very helpful; modern scholarship, on the other hand, sometimes has difficulties in pinning down a clearly identifiable Picene material culture. This is due to the pervasive influences from elsewhere at different points in time, be it Villanovan, Etruscan or Celtic, all of which make Picenum a truly fascinating region to explore archaeologically. Today new archaeological fieldwork, excavations and surveys are exponentially increasing our knowledge of the region, and we have, as a result, an incredibly rich material culture together with growing data on the archaeological and historical landscape.[2] Despite this, however, our interpretations are somehow held back by attempts to fit Picenum into well-defined patterns of socio-political and cultural development such as state and ethnic formation.

The absence, for example, of urbanization in the seventh century BC, which we see in other central and southern Italic regions, may be due to the particular topographical formation inland, which impeded the centralization of, and accessibility to, resources. Yet, the evidence available today gives glimpses of a society that was fully caught up in the central Italian Iron Age exchange network, had complete access to resources from both east and west of the region, and produced a sophisticated material culture not unlike that of Etruscan urban elites on the other side of the Apennines (Riva 2004; 2005). Current scholarship has put forward a chiefdom 'big-man' society model to interpret this evidence, but this explanation loses sight of other developments occurring along the river valleys and the coast: these developments reveal a far richer picture of increasing social complexity that stimulated, and in turn was stimulated by, outside interaction.

In this chapter, I would like to suggest that, although they are convenient, the socio-historical categories of chiefdom, urban and state formation are not particularly helpful for understanding what appears to be a rather variable picture of settlement dynamics and socio-cultural change in Picenum. As for Samnium (see Bispham, this volume), scarcity of resources and key trade routes may account for the lack of centralization and hence lack of urbanization in

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2   Pasquinucci and Menchelli 2005; Pasquinucci et al. 2005; Vermeulen et al. 2005 with further bibliography; Riva et al. 2005; Pearce et al. forthcoming.

Tyrrhenian central Italy. However, Iron Age Picenum offers a different picture: distinct areas of socio-cultural growth, which developed out of flourishing exchange relations such as Fermo and Matelica, lived side by side seemingly isolated communities that experienced the impact of burgeoning neighbours such as Novilara. The existence of these discrete locales within the region surely must be seen as the outcome of the multi-directional thrust of exchange dynamics, from the east and along the coast via the Adriatic Sea, on one hand, and from the west and inland via the central Tyrrhenian exchange system on the other. Trade, however, cannot fully provide the rationale for the variety of these locales, nor can forms of colonization explain what scholars have judged 'intrusive' types of material culture. Rather, I suggest that mobility, and multifaceted patterns of material cultural production and consumption deriving from it, can be valuable models to explain this variety and socio-cultural change in Picenum that was as profound as urbanization in other Italic regions.

Recent work by anthropologists and cultural historians on consumption in complex societies (Appadurai 1986; Friedman 1994; Miller 1995; 1998; Douglas and Isherwood 1996; Dietler 1999) can provide a useful framework for understanding the active role of material goods in socio-cultural definition and differentiation. Although rarely exploited by archaeologists concerned with material culture studies and materiality (although cf. Meskell 2004; 2006), consumption is intended as a process whereby artefacts, which individuals use and identify with but not necessarily produce, are cultural forms and constitutive objects of social and cultural relations; consumption is therefore a social and cultural practice. More importantly, studies on consumption highlight the identification of subject and object in consumption, but see this as a positive rather than negative process of objectification: whilst objecting to the notion of alienation resulting from objectification, they emphasize the ways in which value and meaning, which the subject communicates through social practice, are materialized through objects (Miller 1987; 2006 with further bibliography). The importation, profuse local production and wide range of goods deposited in Picene burials, from personal ornaments, to weapons, banqueting and drinking equipment, and the extensive movement of such goods within and outside the region indicate a high level of social differentiation underlying the production, exchange and consumption of these goods; at the same time, these processes underline a high level of socio-cultural definition through objects by individuals and human groups.

In the detailed account of Iron Age Picenum that follows, I will critically evaluate current interpretations in light of existing archaeological debates rather than providing a wholly new approach to the material in question. Unlike other Italic regions, most conspicuously Etruria (Izzet, this volume), Picenum has had virtually no exposure to theoretically informed and anthropological discussions of material culture, partly because of the dearth of published work in English on Picenum (Betts 2003, as well as others mentioned in the text). This chapter

therefore aims to open up Picenum to current debates and the possibility of new theoretically informed perspectives.

I will begin by considering a key question, namely the actual extension of Picenum as a culturally defined region, which is by no means clear cut. The name Picenum was assigned to Regio V in the first century BC under Augustan administration. Regio V bordered Regio VI, Umbria et Ager Gallicus, to the north along the Esino River, and Regio IV, Sabini et Samnium, along the Pescara River to the south. Although the limits of these and other Italic regions were politically defined by Roman administration, and hence do not strictly or necessarily reflect culturally-defined regions, scholars often use them to identify the geographical extension of pre-Roman Italic cultures (see other contributions in this volume). Both the northern and southern boundaries of Picenum, however, are blurred by the distribution of what scholars define as a Picene material culture beyond these boundaries.

To complicate matters further, historical sources, namely Pliny and Strabo, attest to the existence of other, non-Picene communities living on and across the southern border. The territorial extension of these communities fluctuated through time, if we are to believe Strabo, who refers to two different southern boundaries of the territory inhabited by the Pikentines. These were Italic tribes whose territory was never politically recognized by the Romans (see Bispham, this volume). To what extent can these scraps of information from ancient authors help us? Archaeologists studying other Italic regions have exploited the wealth of written sources available to them sometimes to the extent that the validity of their own views has been tainted by the ancient writers' perceptions of a certain region or ethnic group (see Bispham, this volume; Dench 1995). However, the sparse written sources on Picenum and their silence on any connotation of its supposed character leave us relatively free of any preconceived ideas about a 'Picene' people. More than this, they leave us free from conceptualizing Picenum as a culturally, let alone ethnically, defined region as the Romans did later on in the wake of its incorporation into the empire.

Recent studies have attempted to settle the issue by proposing that Roman administrative borders, particularly the northern border, did indeed reflect a cultural distinction based on material culture (Naso 2000a). In the next few paragraphs, I critically examine the ways in which scholars have used material culture for identifying Picenum's regional boundaries. Whilst the Esino River marked the limit of Regio V, changes in the Iron Age material culture north of the river may, in fact, reflect a cultural boundary as well. From the eighth to the sixth centuries BC, there is a dearth of settlements between the Esino River and the area north of the Cesano River, which contrasts sharply with the widespread distribution of settlements south of the Esino. The state of the evidence may, however, be the result of the state of research. With the exception of a few necropoleis and/or settlements such as San Costanzo and the high-altitude site of Montedoro di Scapezzano (Baldelli 2001a), other sites

in the area, some of which have been found fortuitously, are poorly known; they are furthermore largely overshadowed by Novilara, which is located a few kilometers inland from modern Pesaro on the coast between the Foglia and Metauro river valleys.

Novilara is known mainly from its necropolis of over three hundred tombs that have been the subject of detailed studies since the end of the nineteenth century. In use from the eighth to the sixth centuries BC, the necropolis is composed of two sections, the earlier Molaroni and the later Servici sections. The graves were inhumation trenches excavated in the earth or soft local sandstone: the deceased was placed lying curled up on one side, on a layer of clay or sea gravel: scholars identify this as a distinctively Picene ritual. Some of the earlier burials were marked by a stone stele or cippus, presumably to indicate eminent deceased individuals in the community. The Servici section burials of the seventh century were laid out by family group, and weapons were deposited in some (presumably) male burials—either a single arrow, or a combination of knife or short sword with helmet, or even full armour. Here, a distinct group of burials, known as the *recinto*, also contained infant graves with grave goods, indicating some form of hereditary status. Apart from this, however, the necropolis has no signficantly wealthy context in the seventh century BC, which is a contrast to the picture afforded by other contemporary necropoleis in and outside Picenum.

In her analysis of the armed depositions, Bergonzi interprets Novilara as a clan community with an oligarchic social structure controlled by warrior clan-heads (Bergonzi 1992). Yet, the distinctiveness of Novilara does not end here. Scholars have identified Novilara as the centre of a distinct cultural sub-region marking the northern boundary of Picenum, and other sites as minor settlements gravitating around it on the basis of two factors. The first is the strong affinity of the material from Novilara and from other known sites in the vicinity, which is particularly noticeable in specific types of metalwork and weaponry (Baldelli 2001b). The second factor is a series of decorated stone stelai, the so-called Novilara stelai, of which four examples, dated to the sixth century BC, were inscribed. Of these, only one, the so-called Pesaro stele, found in the Servici section of the necropolis, has a secure provenance (Baldelli 2001b). The language of these four extant stelai is not related to the so-called South Picene language that characterizes the far more numerous inscriptions located south of the Esino River. It furthermore cannot be ascribed to any of the Italic or Greek languages despite some morphological, lexical and phonetic similarity. Possibly an Indo-European language, it might have affinity with languages on the eastern side of the Adriatic, although this is a hypothesis yet to be confirmed by linguists (Agostiniani 2003). The writing system of the stelai is related to the north Etruscan system of Verucchio, located further north overlooking the Marecchia river valley, making it likely that the executors of the stelai adopted this system in the seventh and sixth centuries BC.

Besides the graphic form of the inscriptions, material culture also gives us important clues to contacts with Verucchio in this period: Novilara and Verucchio shared specific types of bronze personal ornaments such as fibulae and pins, and weapons, namely the Novilara-Verucchio short sword, which may have originated from eastern Adriatic types, and the Novilara crested helmet (*elmo a calotta composita*), so called because it was probably produced at Novilara. Contacts with the north from the eighth century BC are attested by imports from elsewhere, namely Felsina (Bologna), Veneto and beyond. Helmets and swords of Novilara type dated to the seventh century and local variants of the Novilara helmet have been found in the Caput Adriae region and Slovenia, and to the south, beyond the Esino River, at Pitino di San Severino and at other locations, but with no secure provenance. Another type of bronze artefact, the so-called Novilara *cista*, a bronze bucket-shaped vessel probably produced at Novilara on the model of the Ancona-type *cista*, is found in Romagna, at Bologna, and in the Alpine region, Slovenia and Istria. This evidence shows that the community at Novilara entertained lively exchange relations with the outside, but did not show or did not choose to show accumulation of wealth in its cemeteries or other contexts, in the way that other contemporary communities in the region did. We must nevertheless consider the relative, culturally dependent value of wealth, which may have been expressed differently at Novilara.

Verucchio and the amber trade that generated its wealth from the Early Iron Age doubtless had an impact upon Novilara and the dynamics of its exchange relations (Forte 1994). The precious resin had been traded from the Baltic Sea to the eastern Mediterranean via the Adriatic since the Bronze Age, the Caput Adriae acting as the first Mediterranean port for this trade: the settlement of Frattesina di Fratta Polesine at the Po river delta near Rovigo flourished as a manufacturing and distribution centre of various raw material such as amber and glass between the eleventh and the ninth centuries BC. To date, however, no significant context of Bronze Age date for amber is known in Picenum, except for some fragmentary elements from Moscosi di Cingoli and Santa Paolina di Filottrano, although future research may add more to the current picture. The Po delta further north and Capitanata and Coppa Nevigata further south are the only findspots for Bronze Age amber on the western Adriatic coast, but more finds are known on the eastern coast, which was the route northwards to the Caput Adriae (Negroni Catacchio 2003). The earliest Iron Age amber in Picenum is found in Novilara's burials of the first half of the eighth century as beads/nodules inserted on the arch of fibulae and as discs covering the arch of leech-type fibulae.[3] From the eighth century at least, however, Verucchio became the main centre for the distribution and manufacture of amber and amber-decorated objects. If Naso is right in assigning a Verucchio provenance to a

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3   Fibulae decorated with amber nodules are also found at Bologna, at various locations in Picenum, and also in southern Italy and on the eastern Adriatic coast.

fibula decorated with bone and amber found amongst amber intaglios in relation to an eighth-century votive deposit at the Artemis sanctuary at Ephesus on the coast of Asia Minor (Naso 2001, 173–74, fig. 3), we can well assess the extent of Verucchio's place in Mediterranean trading networks, following the demise of Mycenaean activities. The control that Verucchio exercised over the amber trade, and its burgeoning wealth that stemmed from it, must partly account for the pattern of socio-cultural development at Novilara, which was caught up at the periphery of its neighbour's exchange network.

From the seventh century, wrought amber ornaments reproducing geometric and figurative patterns such as pendants, elements of fibulae and necklaces and earrings were deposited in female Picene graves, particularly at coastal sites south of the Esino River; here, we now see a richer variety of wrought amber designs than at Novilara. These objects were presumably produced at these sites and subsequently traded along river valleys, as witnessed by the quantities of sixth-century amber intaglios at inland sites such as Belmonte Piceno and Castelbellino (Mastrocinque 1991, 70–88). East Mediterranean craftsmen may have also manufactured some seventh-century amber figured intaglios in the shape of female figures coming from southern Picene sites and stylistically close to north Syrian models. All this is evidence of changing trade routes in the seventh century BC and wider Mediterranean exchange dynamics, of which the Tyrrhenian Sea region became a central node.

This is further corroborated by the contemporaneous increasing wealth of inland Picene sites along river valley routes leading to the Tyrrhenian side of the peninsula. Novilara and other coastal sites further south such as Ancona and Numana, were left outside this loop of exchange relations. However, unlike these latter two, which flourished in the sixth century, Novilara never became a sizeable centre. The archaeological evidence north of the Cesano River shows a sparse settlement distribution and the lack of a dominant centre in the sixth and fifth centuries; settlements have been located on high grounds near the Metauro River, such as Monte Giove di Fano overlooking the Arzilla river valley, indicating a strategic positioning of sites for the control of river traffic. Coastal sites, namely Santa Marina di Focara and Pisaurum (modern Pesaro), probably flourished as distribution centres of imported material, particularly Attic black- and red-figure and black gloss pottery, which were transported inland.

The evidence at Novilara thus described barely helps us identify a culturally defined northern boundary or indeed designate Novilara as a distinct sub-region. That certain types of artefacts such as the Novilara-type *cista* or the Novilara-type helmet were locally produced and were distinct from those that were produced further south is not an incontrovertible criterion of cultural distinction.

The sole clear indication of a distinct northern boundary is the claim by literary sources that the area between the Esino and the Marecchia rivers was inhabited by the Umbrians, before the Etruscans and later the Gauls displaced them (Pliny, *HN* 3.19.112). Scholars have taken this as evidence of Umbrian

expansion into this area from the sixth century BC (Naso 2000a, 23, 214–15, with further bibliography), yet the archaeological evidence shows no particular break or change that might support these assumptions, other than an upsurge of Attic ceramic imports, which characterized the whole Adriatic coast from the late sixth century. Influences from the outside are evident as in previous centuries, as seen in the writing system adopted at Novilara; moreover, it is not unreasonable to suppose a heightened mobility of human groups stimulated by the blooming of Attic trade interests in the fifth century, as shown by the growth of Adriatic *emporia* of Adria and Spina. The language of the stelai remains our sole evidence of Novilara's singularity, yet even that evidence has its problems. First, it is based on only four inscriptions, of which three have no secure provenance, having been acquired via the antiquarian market. Secondly, the analysis of the language has largely, if not exclusively, been carried out only on one of the four inscriptions, since the other three inscriptions, amongst which is the securely provenanced Pesaro stele, have an incomplete, and hence very short text. Lastly and most seriously, the only secure piece of evidence is the Pesaro stele, the others possibly being forgeries (Agostiniani 2003).

So much for the northern boundary of Picenum. The southern limit, usually ascribed to the Tronto River beyond which lies modern Abruzzo, is even less clearly-defined. Here too, scholars are reliant on ancient sources stating that the river Helvinus, south of Cupra Marittima and identified as the Acquarossa River, was the northern border of the territory inhabited by the Pretutii. However, the extant twenty-three South Picene inscriptions on stelai or cippi dated to the fifth and fourth centuries BC—which are distributed north and south of the Tronto River, as well as inland in the modern provinces of L'Aquila and Rieti—blur this border. Linguists place South Picene within the group of Sabellic languages of which Umbrian is also member, and point to Sabine as the linguistic lineage of these inscriptions. Much of the material culture from northern Abruzzo still awaits further analysis aimed at clarifying the distinction of this area from Picenum.[4] Since the 1980s and 1990s, however, a staggering amount of data has begun to emerge from cemetery sites in northern Abruzzo; on the other hand, settlement sites are still poorly known save for a few exceptions such as Tortoreto, Teramo, Colle della Battaglia, and Castel del Monte near L'Aquila in inland Abruzzo (D'Ercole 2001c).

At Campovalano, a cemetery in use from the Final Bronze Age to the second century BC, where six hundred or so tombs have been excavated, the grave goods and tomb types are largely congruous with the material culture of northern Abruzzo. This is especially visible in the case of weaponry; other aspects of the funerary ritual however, such as the deposition of chariots in Orientalizing and Archaic burials, which we also find in contemporary Picene burials, are rather

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4 Cf. Dench 1995, 204–7 on the coexistence of a broader shared identity stretching from Picenum to northern Abruzzo in the fifth and fourth centuries BC.

idiosyncratic. Some grave goods, particularly Picene personal ornaments and the so-called Picene small amphorae (*anforette picene*), found in female depositions dated from the mid-seventh to the mid-sixth centuries BC, have been interpreted as either evidence of close contacts with Picenum or as evidence of a Picene identity of Campovalano (Chiaramonte Trere' 2003, 484). The nature of this identity and how it might be articulated remains unclear and little defined.

The site of Fossa, located on the Aterno River in the province of L'Aquila, is another example of a large Abruzzese cemetery. Since 1992, archaeological investigations have unearthed over five hundred burials, which attest to a thriving community from the tenth century BC (D'Ercole 2001a, 68). The objects and personal ornaments from Fossa, such as the Mozzano type of *dischi-corazza*, are distinctive to the Abruzzo. The *dischi-corazza*, forming part of the warrior panoply, were bronze pectorals worn in pairs over the shoulder to protect the trunk, as shown by the famous seventh-century Guardiagrele stele. They were also conspicuous prestige items, decorated with geometric and figurative patterns, and hence deposited in male burials. The main centre of production in Abruzzo was the Fucino area, but locally produced examples are also known from Picenum, where they occurred in both male and female burials (Figure 18) (Papi 1990; Tomedi 2000). The type of *dischi-corazza* found at Fossa in association with an eighth/seventh-century male deposition is represented on the famous sculpture of the warrior of Capestrano, and has been identified as distinctive of the surrounding area, the territory of the proto-Vestini (D'Ercole 2001a, 68). Overall, the archaeology of northern Abruzzo offers a highly fragmented picture: prehistorians largely see these cemetery sites as underlying multiple territorial political entities (Bietti Sestieri 2001).

18   *Dischi-corazza* from Pitino San Severino (Tomb 17). Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche. Photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici per le Marche (photography archive)

The above discussion demonstrates that defining the cultural boundaries of Picenum is no easy task, yet such difficulties are perhaps best seen as the result of the mobility and complex interaction of communities within and outside Picenum. This may be gauged from the ancient sources, which present a culturally intricate panorama of the mid-Adriatic region. This included the Etruscans, who were said to have founded a sanctuary dedicated to Cupra on the Picene coast, and the Ombrikoí/Umbrians on the Adriatic coast between the Conero peninsula to the Po delta, according to Greek ethnographic accounts and the fourth-century periplous of Scylax. This multifarious ethnic identity of Picenum is exemplified by the claim by ancient authors that the Picenes were not an autochthonous people. Like the peoples settled further south in Abruzzo, the Picenes originated from Sabina; they arrived in the region following the *ver sacrum*, or sacred spring, a Sabellic ritual, involving the dedication of all produce of a spring or a whole year to Mars (Pliny, *HN* 3.18.110; indirectly, Strabo 5.4.2). Besides animal sacrifices, the ritual also demanded the later emigration of those born in that year to other places, accompanied by totemic animals. These animals later gave the ethnic name to the group that emigrated, the name Picene deriving from *picus*, or woodpecker. Some scholars argue that the *ver sacrum* may have been the ritual expression of a social mechanism for coping with overpopulation problems or scarcity of resources following ecological crises. We may concede, on the other hand, that the myth has no historicity, and in fact may have functioned as an assertion of a shared identity in the historic period (see Bispham, this volume). Yet, the picture of heightened mobility that the myth offers corresponds well with the archaeological evidence so far discussed and as follows.

From Bronze Age Mycenaean Contacts to the Iron Age

Mobility and contact with the outside, namely the Aegean world, is detected at some key settlements from the Late Bronze Age (fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC). Late Bronze Age settlements grew mainly in the central and northern part of the Marche, the main sites being located at Arcevia, Serra San Quirico, Moscosi di Cingoli, Fabriano, Pianello di Genga and Ancona (Colle dei Cappuccini) on the coast. The settlement of Moscosi and the necropolis of Pianello di Genga are perhaps the most notable sites. Located in the upper valley of the Musone River, Moscosi was occupied from the fifteenth/fourteenth centuries to the second half of the twelveth century BC, with a last phase of occupation from the eighth to the fourth centuries BC (Sabbatini and Silvestrini 2005, with further bibliography). The Bronze Age levels of the site show areas devoted to activities for the manufacture of bone, antler and bronze objects. The striking quantity and quality of antler artefacts, including agricultural tools, show highly sophisticated levels of craftsmanship. The bronze objects, which

were used to work the antler, were also manufactured on site, as demonstrated by a pure copper ingot and slag remains in the Early Recent Bronze Age levels and a whole range of bronze artefacts in later levels, from weapons and tools to personal ornaments. Raw metal may have been acquired from Tyrrhenian or Adriatic sources, but Moscosi's contacts went beyond the Adriatic Sea, as attested by these remarkable finds: amber fragments and pearls, three locally manufactured glass paste pearls showing the transmission of Aegean technology, and stone weights that have parallels from sites in the Po Valley and at Coppa Nevigata in the south, and may be congruous with the Aegean weighting system (Sabbatini and Silvestrini 2005).

Developing over an earlier settlement of Recent Bronze Age date (1350–1200 BC), Pianello di Genga is a vast Final Bronze Age cemetery not far from Ancona. The term proto-Villanovan is sometimes used to describe Pianello's funerary rite and ceramic styles that are found elsewhere on the Italic peninsula. The rite consisted of the cremation of the body and the deposition of the cremated bones and grave goods in a vessel that acted as an ossuary; the urn was covered with a bowl and buried in a pit. Having been excavated over several decades in the twentieth century, Pianello has over one thousand burials, probably related to a number of settlements located in the surrounding area. Lack of data from the surrounding landscape, however, prevents us from understanding the settlement dynamics of the area. Scholars have been able to reconstruct the spatial organization of the necropolis, and have identified two main burying groups: these were probably family groups, within which two main social categories as well as age and gender distinctions were articulated. The burying community, which would have comprised less than two hundred individuals at any one time, was probably socially organized by clan and family groups, as deduced by the study of the grave goods and the spatial relations between burials. Where discernible, the funerary associations were found to be common to other contemporary cemeteries in central Italy; these associations included the combination of large bronze pins and razors in male graves, and certain types of fibulae in male and female graves.

Though smaller than Pianello, the Final Bronze Age settlement of Colle dei Cappuccini at Ancona located on a high ground is another key site because it shows a continuity of use into the Iron Age when the lower levels of the settlement were turned into a burial ground. At Colle di Montagnolo, not far from this site, come two fragments of Mycenaean or Mycenaean-type ceramics. Other such ceramic fragments numbering fifty or so come from Cisterna di Tolentino, located inland in the Chienti River valley. Here, recent excavations have unearthed another stone weight, a single glass paste pearl showing the same manufacturing technique as those from Moscosi in the Recent to Final Bronze Age levels (Percossi 2005). Although Aegean imports have not been excluded, an initial analysis of the ceramic fragments has pointed to southern Italian production, but an archaeometric analysis suggests a different provenance,

namely a local production centre at Cisterna itself. If confirmed, this analysis would strengthen the view that Picenum was at the centre of the prehistoric Mediterranean-wide exchange network, which was largely driven by Mycenaean trade for the procurement of amber and other raw materials. Such a scenario foreshadows the Iron Age, when growing socio-economic complexity is noted at a greater number of sites.

In the Early Iron Age (ninth and eighth centuries BC), the largest settlements were located on the coast, although inland sites that developed along communication routes such as Moie di Pollenza in the Potenza river valley were not negligible. At Ancona, a settlement developed on the southern edge of Colle dei Cappuccini overlooking the Conero promontory, a natural landing point along the coast. Here, some scholars have argued for the continuity of occupation from the Final Bronze Age, but the evidence from the site stratigraphy has been questioned by others (Naso 2000a, 53–54). The inhabited area expanded westwards on the adjacent Colle Guasco in the seventh century. The cemeteries of these settlement areas extended onto the southern slopes of Colle Cardeto, where about seventy burials dated from the ninth to the seventh centuries have been excavated on an Early Bronze Age habitation area. Of these burials, three are incinerations, and others are inhumations showing the 'Picene' burial custom: as mentioned above, the deceased was buried in a trench, with the body lying on one side, sometimes placed on a pebble bed. Some eighth-century burials show differentiation in the treatment of the deceased and the quality of the grave goods: particular sets of objects, such as *parures* of bronze and amber ornaments and weapons, above all axes and swords, characterized socially eminent individuals. Continuity of occupation from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age has also been documented at Numana, Moscosi di Cingoli, Moie di Pollenza and Belmonte Piceno. At Numana, strategically positioned on the other side of the Conero promontory, ninth- and eighth-century BC burials have been located in more than one area in the modern centre.

At Moie di Pollenza, on the south side of the Potenza river valley, not far from Passo di Treia, a necropolis developed from the ninth century near a Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement at Montefrancolo. Apart from a single ninth-century burial (Tomb 3), eight eighth-century inhumation tombs showing the Picene rite were excavated, together with multiple inhumations within stone circles of five to seven metres in diameter and other inhumations nearby dated to the seventh to fifth centuries BC. In addition to three circles excavated in the 1960s, a fourth one and four other inhumation graves nearby were excavated in the early 1990s by E. Percossi, who sees these circles as belonging to family groups (De Marinis and Percossi 2005). More recently, in 2002 and 2003, fourteen other burials were excavated, amongst which were two ninth-century cremations and one seventh-century disturbed inhumation. This latter contained, amongst the grave goods, a single horse and a single horse bit, indicating the use and importance of the riding horse (De Marinis and

Percossi 2005). Amongst the recently excavated graves, Percossi has highlighted a distinctive type of grave, a *fossa con ripostiglio*, a rectangular trench grave with a smaller trench (*ripostiglio*) dug at one of the four corners of the grave and used for the deposition of grave goods. This type of grave is found nowhere else in Picenum except at Recanati, further down the valley on the coast, where some *ripostigli* also contained faunal remains, probably residues of funerary banquets (Percossi Serenelli 2003). The grave goods of male, female and infant burials at Recanati reveal a socially stratified community; yet no specific social distinction or ideological choice seems to have determined the use of this grave type, as opposed to the simple trench grave where the grave goods were deposited alongside the body of the deceased.

The *fossa a ripostiglio* is first found in the mid-eighth century in the low and middle Tiber Valley, in inland southern Etruria, Latium and the Faliscan territory, from where it allegedly originated. In these areas, however, its use denotes increasing social differentiation as the individuals buried in these graves also displayed wealthier *corredi*. This tomb type was also used in the Sabine territory (Sabina Tiberina) for socially prominent individuals from the second half of the seventh century BC. The cemeteries at Moie and Recanati display another funerary custom that is distinctive of Umbrian cemeteries located between the Topino and Nera river valleys, namely, the deposition of vessels along one side of the deceased. Percossi has hypothesized that both this mode of grave-goods deposition and the presence of the *ripostiglio* may indicate mobility of human groups from these Umbrian valleys and the nearby Tiber Valley (Percossi Serenelli 2003, De Marinis and Percossi 2005).

Further south, around Ascoli, a distinct settlement dynamic took place. Here, from the ninth century BC some major central settlements, Porto Sant'Elpidio, Acquaviva Picena, Ripatransone, Castignano and Rotella, developed on high ground a good ten kilometres distant from one another and each surrounded by a cemetery. A series of other sizeable settlements, Colli del Tronto, Spinetoli and Monsampolo were strategically placed for river traffic and flourished along the Tronto River.

In northern Abruzzo, two areas, north and south of the Pescara River respectively, went through distinct changes at the end of the second millennium BC. Settlements on high ground north of the Pescara River continued to be occupied. South of the river, in the Fucino basin, lowland, lakeside settlements were abandoned and high places settled. In the region as a whole, large settlements of over ten hectares, such as Tortoreto near Teramo, Caporciano near L'Aquila, Alba Fucens in the Fucino basin, and Chieti overlooking the Pescara River, flourished and acted as central places for smaller settlements nearby (D'Ercole 1998; 2001c). At the beginning of the first millennium BC, large-scale cemeteries, in use to the end of the millennium, grew at Fossa, Bazzano near L'Aquila, Capestrano and Campovalano. The custom of marking burials with stone stelai characterized these cemeteries: from the thirteenth to the eighth centuries, stelai were arranged in rows, while in the seventh and sixth centuries a highly individual characterization and anthropomorphization distinguished the stelai.

The Early Iron Age evidence reveals a remarkably varied socio-cultural scenario underlying the multifarious and multi-directional nature of exchange relations. Human mobility may be an explanation for the presence of idiosyncratic funerary customs such as those identified at Moie di Pollenza or objects in the material record although we should be careful with equating artefacts or tomb types with people. Nowhere is this truer than at Fermo, a key Iron Age site south of the Tenna River, which some scholars have called a Villanovan 'enclave'. The site comprises a sizeable settlement located on a hilltop, the Colle del Girifalco, and two surrounding cemeteries, Mossa and Misericordia. The extension of the settlement, which scholars have judged to be in the order of one hundred hectares, and its clearly defined organization, a hilltop settlement with encircling cemeteries overlooking the coastal plains, make Fermo comparable to contemporary large 'Villanovan' centres of southern Etruria. Scholars have, in fact, postulated that Fermo was settled at the beginning of the ninth century BC by incoming groups from southern and inland Etruria on the basis of this and the finds from Mossa and Misericordia (Naso 2000a, 62–72).

The grave goods are strikingly similar to those of 'Villanovan' cemeteries in Etruria, and the burials—pits dug into the ground closed by stone slabs and containing the cinerary urn—displayed the Villanovan incineration ritual. In the ninth century, although locally made, the urns are akin in type and decoration to the biconical urns of southern and inland Etruscan cemeteries of Tarquinia, Veii, Chiusi and Bologna. The style of the earlier urns, decorated with a series of bosses on the neck of the vessel and metopes on the neck and interior lip, is particularly akin to the biconical urns of Chiusi. As at Bologna, male burials did not display armour or the crested helmet, a southern Etruscan custom, but were accompanied by the razor, sometimes a fibula or a large pin. Deceased women were offered a spindle whorl and one or more bronze fibulae. In the eighth century, increasing wealth was displayed in the burials; pit cremation was the preferred rite, but some deceased individuals were inhumed in a trench grave, and a pebble bed was added to the grave of exceptional individuals. The personal ornaments of female burials increased in quantity and quality, and some inhumations were offered a rich array of necklaces, sets of fibulae and beads. A bronze spindle together with several spindle whorls and a bronze belt, which also denoted prominent female individuals at Bologna and in southern Etruria, were deposited in the richest burials. Ceramic, and more rarely metal, vessels were placed outside the urn or in the trench grave, and male burials were distinguished by the deposition of weapons, long and short swords, a helmet, and pectorals of Etrusco-Latial type.

The visible wealth and the deposition of two or three individuals in single trenches indicate a significant level of social stratification from the eighth

century that went hand in hand with the appearance of the 'Picene' rite and of Picene objects such as fibulae with a flattened arc and the *cothon*, a type of ritual vessel. The earliest burials displaying the 'Picene' rite are all male warrior graves containing distinctively 'Villanovan' grave goods. One of the most notable eighth-century warrior burials, Tomb 8, contained the crested helmet, as found in warrior graves at Tarquinia and Veii, a fibula and a pebble bed at the bottom of the trench. Could intermarriage at the highest social levels be an explanation for this burial (Drago Troccoli 2003, 48)? This is a difficult question, and other studies on cultural interaction in Iron Age Italy have seriously questioned the reliability of burial ritual variability for distinguishing different groups in a community (Shepherd 2005).

In the eighth century, the urns and grave goods at Fermo show an increasingly wide range of typological parallels with objects from a variety of sources, from south Etruscan centres, particularly Veii, as seen in the occurrence of crested helmets, bronze belts and serpentine fibulae types, to Umbria, Verucchio and Bologna, as seen in the deposition of specific types of fibulae and pins. Two distinct phases can be discerned corresponding to changes in the pattern of occupation of the landscape around Fermo (Drago Troccoli 2003). From the Final Bronze Age to the ninth century BC, when the burial goods show a narrower range of typological parallels with objects from elsewhere, the area around Fermo is empty of settlement evidence, and the corridor of the Tenna and Nera river valleys linking Fermo to the Tiber Valley appears sparsely occupied. From the eighth century, smaller settlements around Fermo are documented, showing a systematic occupation of the landscape. Drago Troccoli (2003) has proposed that the burial record must be understood against these and wider dynamics in which the occupation of strategic locations by large-scale communities underlay important changes in the organization of the central Italian landscape. She further sees the settlement of Fermo as the result of a similar occupation of groups from inland Etruria, namely the Chiusi and Orvieto areas. These groups had no maritime access and thus exploited the strategic corridor of the Tenna and Nera river valleys linking the Adriatic with the Tyrrhenian regions that had already been an important communication route in the Late Bronze Age (Bietti Sestieri 2001).

This is a conceivable scenario, and the study that supports it rightly takes into account contemporary wider developments in central Italy and focuses on changes in the occupation pattern of the territory around the settlement. However, this interpretation still acknowledges people's movements behind 'intrusive' archaeological material, without conceding equally possible complex processes of exchange, production and consumption (cf. Peroni 1992; 2004, 436). In particular, it does not fully account for the variety of 'Villanovan' grave goods that is certainly distinctive of Fermo and might indicate specific choices in articulating a material discourse in the grave that is visible, for example, in the occasional deposition of biconical urns in inhumations.

Fermo appears as somewhat isolated in the following century when the growth and urbanization of Tyrrhenian coastal centres went hand in hand with intense interaction with newly founded Greek and Phoenician centres in the Tyrrhenian Sea region and southern Italy. As a result, Picene settlements flourished inland along the river routes in the central Marche that allowed access to the Tyrrhenian Sea, and established exchange relations with these centres. Occupation at Fermo continued through the seventh century, but ended in the early fifth century.

Orientalizing Elites in the Seventh Century BC

The seventh and sixth centuries BC are what scholars have called the cultural climax of Picenum. An upsurge of finds on the coast and inland shows that the region was increasingly opening up to outside contacts: Picene communities were acquiring larger quantities of imported goods as well as the technological know-how for manufacturing sophisticated objects locally, which brought about the growth of workshops and manufacturing centres working in different media, from metal to amber, ivory and bone. As a consequence, these communities became richer and more socially stratified as particular social groups or elites gained the ability to accumulate a hitherto unseen wealth. This is mostly apparent in the funerary evidence, where some burials stand out for the particular wealth of their grave goods and/or the monumental structure of the grave. Unfortunately we still lack a sizeable amount of non-funerary data and a good record on the settlement distribution across the landscape, although new excavations and current survey projects will doubtless add to our knowledge. At any rate, the burial evidence in Picenum is fully consistent with the general upsurge, all over central Italy, of wealth and imports coming from the eastern Mediterranean, which the scholarship has defined as an Orientalizing phenomenon (Dore et al. 2000; Naso 2000b; Riva and Vella 2006).

Occupation at coastal settlements continued from the previous centuries as already noted for Ancona and Numana. Inland centres grew in the subapennine zone, along the river routes and close to the mountain passes where they controlled the flow of goods from the Tyrrhenian region, now a centre of trade and exchange between Phoenician and Greek settlements and Etruscan, Latial and Campanian urban centres (see other contributions in this volume). Fabriano and Matelica were located in the upper Esino Valley looking over the Fossato di Vico pass that led to the Gubbio basin in Umbria. The cemetery of Monte Penna at Pitino di San Severino in the upper Potenza Valley grew on one of the primary river routes along which several other settlements, for example Moie di Pollenza, were distributed. Tolentino was located on the river Chienti leading up to the Fornaci pass and into the Nera Valley.

These inland sites share two important characteristics: first, the earliest monumental and wealthiest burials are found at these sites, demonstrating that accumulation of wealth was indeed a result of the exchange of goods and resources with the western side of the peninsula and of the control of the routes of access to this exchange. Secondly, human groups using these cemeteries were not as sizeable communities as their Tyrrhenian counterparts. Having said that, we must give due consideration to the possibility, attested elsewhere in socially stratified societies (e.g. Morris 1987), that the burial rite was exclusive to a selected social group within the community, and the burial record does not reflect the actual size of the living population at a certain settlement. In addition we must be careful of drawing this conclusion on the rather patchy available evidence. At Fabriano, for example, twelve *fossa* tombs and three tumulus tombs were found at Sacramento and Santa Maria in Campo respectively, but more burials were located by aerial photography and resistivity survey by the Lerici Foundation in the 1960s; furthermore, the development of modern Fabriano has doubtless erased several other graves. At Pitino, the excavation of the Monte Penna necropolis unearthed less than forty burials, of which only ten have been published. Similarly, at Tolentino several burial grounds were located, and tombs dated from the seventh to the fourth centuries were properly excavated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of these, a fair number of seventh-century burials show the growth of the site during this phase, but many of the finds remain unpublished, while sporadic ones attest to the existence of other burials (Massi Secondari 2003; 2005).

The exception to this rather fragmentary state of the archaeological record is Matelica, the object of extensive ongoing excavations since the 1990s (De Marinis and Silvestrini 1999a; 2001b; Baldelli et al. 2003; De Marinis and Silvestrini 2005). Here, four distinct large cemeteries and related settlements dating from the eighth to the sixth centuries have been excavated—Brecce, Crocefissio-Zefiro, Cavalieri and Pian dell'Incrocca, and one area known as Via Spontini and Via Tiratori in the modern centre. The cemeteries at Brecce and Crocefisso-Zefiro were in use from the second half of the ninth to the eighth centuries, and contained some of the wealthiest burials in the whole of Picenum for this period; this shows a remarkably early growth of Matelica, set at a particularly strategic point of communication between two mountain passes, Fossato di Vico to the north and Colfiorito to the south, and close to the Potenza river valley. The most renowned amongst the earlier tombs is the tomb of Villa Clara, a *fossa* burial placed within a circular ditch, probably covered by a pebble mound and found intact at the edge of the Crocefisso-Zefiro necropolis. The tomb contained a male individual, accompanied by a helmet, two arrows and two short swords, two horse bits and other iron elements possibly pertaining to a horse harness, two bronze laminated 'sceptres', fibulae and other personal ornaments in bronze, iron and silver. On one side of the body was placed the funerary banqueting and drinking service, composed of more than

19   Red impasto cauldron with animal protome attachments from Matelica (Tomb 53/Brecce). Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche. Photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici per le Marche (photography archive)

twenty ceramic vessels, a bronze vessel containing remains of wine grapes, and an embossed decorated situla. Near these vessels was found a knife adjacent to the remains of a piglet, which had most probably been sacrificed, together with the wine grapes as a funerary offering (De Marinis and Silvestrini 1999a; 2001a). Contemporary to this tomb are two other burials, Tomb 53/Brecce, containing a red impasto stand and cauldron with griffin protome attachments (Figure 19) (De Marinis and Silvestrini 2001b), and Tomb 93/Crocifisso, displaying an ivory *pyxis* engraved with mythological scenes.

By the early seventh century, the extraordinary quality and quantity of the objects from the richest graves, which included full panoplies, chariots, precious artefacts, and ceramic and bronze drinking and banqueting equipment, show that the wealth of Matelica reached its acme. This is exemplified by two recently excavated tombs. The first tomb is located at Boschetto, on the opposite edge of the Crocefisso necropolis from the Villa Clara Tomb (De Marinis and Silvestrini 2005). The burial trench was encircled by a ditch of over twenty-five metres in diameter, and contained, on the upper level of the burial, the body of the deceased covered in several silver fibulae accompanied by two dogs. Next to the skeleton remains was a lower trench packed with objects: dozens of ceramic vessels, including a Daunian import and a proto-Corinthian type *olpe*, two bronze helmets, a couple of *dischi-corazza*, several bronze situlae, various weapons, some of which were decorated with ivory and bronze, firedogs and two chariots (De Marinis and Silvestrini 2005, 142). A near contemporary to this tomb is another grave located at Passo Gabella, a newly investigated burial ground on the route to Fabriano. The grave had a similar structure: a trench with two deposition levels enclosed by a very large ditch. Although the skeleton and personal ornaments of the deceased on the upper level were no longer preserved, the lower trench displayed over two hundred ceramic vessels, amongst which was a red impasto cauldron complete with a stand, a dozen bronze vessels and banqueting equipment including a bronze grater and a footed cup with amber, gold and silver decoration, and an ostrich shell engraved with mythological scenes (De Marinis and Silvestrini 2005, 142).

In addition to the astonishing wealth on display, it is striking to see the virtual absence of imported goods, as far as we can tell from such recent excavation reports. This indicates that the elites at Matelica were not simply acquiring imports but were buying-in technologies and exploiting new styles and techniques very fast. This was no simple wealth accumulation or conspicuous consumption; what we see at Matelica is a well-organized and stratified society where elite groups were capable of assembling skilled craftsmen for producing highly sophisticated objects. We must envisage that in order to acquire the craftsmanship, these elites fully and aggressively exploited the contacts they had with their Tyrrhenian partners, particularly from the Etruscan and Faliscan areas, bypassing, so to speak, their neighbours in Umbria, where we see none

of the lavish wealth displayed or any imported or locally made prestige objects (Riva 2005).

Furthermore, the funerary ceremony was no simple affair, but consisted of new and complex rituals; these rituals were presumably adopted from Tyrrhenian elites who took them on themselves from Euboeans arriving in the Tyrrhenian Sea region. This is gauged from the goods of the most recently excavated tombs, particularly the bronze grater from the Passo Gabella tomb. In his study of cheese graters from seventh-century wealthy burials in southern and northern Etruria, Ridgway (1997) has suggested that these instruments alluded to 'heroic' drinking rituals practised in Euobea as early as the ninth century, as indicated by the graters from three warrior graves at Lefkandi in Euboea. Lastly, the sheer quantity of vessels and tools for banqueting and drinking demonstrates the wide participation of the burying community at these most exclusive ceremonies, which would have been repeatedly taking place, given that the burials dated to this period number in the hundreds.

As regards the funerary structures, the type of burial that we find at Matelica, the trench enclosed within a circular ditch and probably surmounted by a pebble mound, is found elsewhere, not only in the Marche but also in the Abruzzo. In the Marche as elsewhere, this tomb type, the so-called *tomba a circolo*, is associated with wealthy depositions, and has no particular ethnic connotation, but one of social distinction (Bonomi Ponzi 1996). Besides the inland cemeteries such as Fabriano, Pitino di San Severino, Tolentino, where the pebble mound of some tombs was excavated in the nineteenth century (Massi Secondari 2003), and Moie di Pollenza, circle tombs were built at Numana from the late seventh century. Here, more than ten monumental circle tombs containing groups of single burials have been found at three burial grounds (Quagliotti-Davanzali, Montalbano-Cimitero and Sirolo). The circle tomb is particularly common in Abruzzo, at Campovalano, Teramo and Fossa and elsewhere in the province of L'Aquila, and is also widespread in inland central Italy, from Etruria to Umbria and Romagna.

The habitation areas of Matelica were located on the river terraces at a distance of roughly one and a half kilometres from one another, and were clearly related to the burial grounds. The excavators believe that each area may have belonged to distinct communities of different sizes: whilst Crocifisso had an extension of four hectares, Piani dell'Incrocca reached forty hectares in size (Gobbi and Biocco 2003). The habitation structures were mostly rectangular huts, some of which were apsidal and very large—reaching up to twenty-five metres in length—and may have been used for various activities, from manufacturing to cultic practices. The lavish material from Matelica's cemeteries ultimately raises the question of the origin of their wealth. Part of the answer lies with local elites' control of communication routes, which gave them access to raw materials as well as skilled labour, and to the transport of precious materials such as amber from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian side of central Italy.

If the position of Matelica was particularly strategic for controlling multiple access routes, we must also consider the possibility that we have a skewed view of this particular centre due to the lack and/or damage of data from other important sites. One of these sites is Belmonte Piceno on the Ete Vivo River south of the Tenna river valley, where more than three hundred tombs and large huts were excavated before the Second World War, but the finds were destroyed during the war. Besides isolated prestige objects, the finds from Belmonte include a large corpus of seventh- and sixth-century amber and ivory intaglios, demonstrating that the amber trade contributed to the wealth of these river settlements. Another less-known site is Pianello di Castelbellino in the middle Esino Valley, the provenance of the largest corpus of ivories in Picenum. The style of these amber and ivory intaglios is varied, suggesting Ionian, south Italian and Etruscan craftsmanship (Rocco 1999; Franchi dell'Orto 2001, cat. nos. 337–42).

The craftsmanship of these intaglios must be considered alongside seventh-century imports; many of these imports came from Etruria, in particular bronze vessels such as basins with pearled rims, and proto-Corinthian and Corinthian ceramics of Etruscan manufacture, and reached mainly inland sites south of the Esino River. Imports of Geometric and sub-Geometric pottery from Daunia reached both inland and coastal sites from the eighth century, but clearly increased in the seventh century and continued into the sixth century, as attested from finds at Ancona, Numana and Grottamare-Cupra Marittima. Daunian imports are important evidence of cabotage or coastal trade routes in the Adriatic, which, scholars argue, may have been controlled by traders from the eastern Adriatic coast, also a location of Daunian and other Italic imports. A better knowledge of the archaeology of the eastern Adriatic region is surely needed to enrich the picture considerably. Coastal Picenum participated fully in this trade that was to bloom in the sixth century when Greek trade interests shifted from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic.

The Sixth and Fifth Centuries BC

The settlement of Numana, which flourished as a coastal *emporion*, epitomizes this growth. Its importance, however, dates back to the previous century, when a colossal stone sculpture, of which the helmeted head remains, was manufactured under the influence of contemporary large-scale statuary from Etruria (Colonna 1992a; 2001). Numana had in its vicinity four separate cemeteries with over one and a half thousand burials dated to the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Besides the earlier three burial grounds, a new area developed at I Pini not far from Sirolo. Although most burials were single trench graves, some wealthy graves were grouped together within a circular ditch and probably pertained to high-ranking family groups. The so-called Circolo delle Fibule, dated to different phases of the sixth century, encircled up to nine graves containing lavish goods:

a chariot and weapons were deposited in the central grave, and others arranged around it contained large numbers of fibulae—up to five hundred in Tomb 7. The settlement itself is not well known due to coastal erosion and its position beneath the modern town, but the size and wealth of the cemeteries reveals a lively coastal *emporion* keeping up with other newly settled *emporia* further north, Adria and Spina. Although the quantities of Attic black- and red-figure pottery reaching Numana from the end of the sixth century and throughout the fifth century are nowhere near the bulk of Attic imports at Adria and Spina, other finds indicate that Numana entertained a wider range of contacts with the Greek world and Etruria.

The burial that shows these contacts most spectacularly is the monumental circle tomb at I Pini, a female deposition enclosed within a circular ditch with an extensive assortment of grave goods (Fig. 20) (Landolfi 2001a). The tomb contained several trenches of which only four have survived intact. One small trench was an early fifth-century grave of a boy; the other three belonged to the earlier burial of a woman and her grave-goods. In the pseudo-chamber trench at the centre of the circle were deposited over two hundred objects; these included banqueting equipment including spits, firedogs and iron knives, sympotic metal and ceramic vessels, imports from Greece and Etruria and local Picene vessels, an iron vase-stand, and a wooden kline with bone, ivory and amber decoration. Parallels for the kline have been found at the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens and in the princely tumulus burial of Grafenbühl in the Halstatt region. These klinai are likely to be eastern Greek products, possibly from Miletus, and to have reached the Alpine region via Picenum.

Other Greek imports that found their way further north via Picenum are a particular series of bronze *hydriae* or water-carriers that were produced either in the Peloponnese or in Magna Graecia at Tarentum from the early sixth century. The bronze vertical openwork handles of these vessels are richly decorated with animals and fighting groups and thus unfit for use; they are different from the

20   Monumental circle tomb at 'I Pini' (Sirolo), Numana (photograph: Sally Worrell)

functional handles of the more widely distributed Laconian bronze *hydriae*, of which traces now have been identified in Picenum too (Shefton 2003, 320). The vessel was thus a prestige object. Only the handles of two vessels survive from Treia, but local imitations were made in Picenum and probably exported elsewhere as indicated by their wide distribution at Picene sites, with a few examples found in Umbria and even fewer in Etruria and Campania. Brian Shefton has noted a close parallel of the Treia *hydriae* in the more famous and earlier example from a tomb at Grächwil in western Switzerland. Another example of the functional type from a Schythian tumulus burial at Ártánd in Hungary on the Romanian border has led him to suggest that both vessels reached their final destinations via the Adriatic, probably Picenum, through gift exchange among local warrior chieftains (Shefton 2001; 2003).

Another type of bronze vessel, the so-called Rhodian *oinochoe*, shows a connection to eastern Greece: these jugs were imported either from eastern Greece via Phokaian traders or Etruria, where many examples were manufactured, or from both places concurrently, but no examples are so far known north of Picenum along the Adriatic (Shefton 2001; 2003, 317). Eastern Greek connections are further documented by two early sixth-century silver *phialai* or ritual bowls from the monumental burial at I Pini and from a late fourth-century Gallic tomb at Santa Paolina di Filottrano (Tomb 2) (Rocco 1995; Shefton 2003, 317).[5]

These finds offer a picture of extreme cultural liveliness at Numana and high receptivity of prestige objects and other imports in sixth- and fifth-century Picenum. This is particularly true from the second quarter of the fifth century, when high-quality Attic red-figure vessels such as monumental volute kraters reached a few sites, namely Numana, and the inland sites Pianello di Castelbellino and Pitino di San Severino (Paribeni 1991; 1992; Landolfi 2001c; 2001d). Prior to this, substantial quantities of Attic pottery arrived at Adria and Spina only, somehow bypassing the coast further south. Noting the correspondence in the provenance of these high-quality Attic vessels and the earlier bronze imports, Shefton has emphasized the role of indigenous chieftains who controlled the flow of prestige goods inland from the coast to the north in acquiring these goods (Shefton 2003, 325). Interestingly, when high-quality monumental Attic vases reached Picenum, no such material was imported north and south of the region besides Spina, showing that communities were in full control of the flow of goods.[6] What exactly these goods were is difficult to assess. Scholars have hypothesized that Picene communities exchanged perishable goods such as textiles and rawhide; however, it is more likely that raw material like metals

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5 Rocco (1995, 18–19) argues convincingly that the *phialai* are evidence of direct links with East Greece because no similar sixth-century *phialai* are known in Etruria and Magna Graecia except for a less richly decorated example from Populonia.

6 For this and other extremely important arguments on Attic trade in the mid-Adriatic region see Shefton 2003. He convincingly argues that the Attic material of Picenum came directly through Attic traders rather than via Spina.

from Etruria or further north in Europe reached Greek traders at Picene and other Adriatic coastal *emporia* where oil, wine and Attic ceramics were acquired in exchange and distributed further north.[7] Greek inscriptions on Attic vases found at Numana may furthermore point to resident Greek traders (Landolfi 1987).

Contacts with other Italic regions are not only attested by imports, particularly from Etruria and the Tiber Valley in the form of bronze sympotic vessels, but also by a series of Picene bronze, mostly female, personal ornaments, found in Veneto, Etruria, Latium and Sabina, and in Abruzzo. These ornaments were mostly pendants, shaped like miniature *oinochoai*, hands, human figures, and animal heads, but also included torques, pectoral ornaments and fibulae (Bergonzi et al. 2001). In Abruzzo, where a remarkable array of personal ornaments was deposited in female burials at Campovalano from the sixth to the fifth centuries, we find a striking similarity of these ornaments with Picene types; this perhaps suggests mass production and distribution of these ornaments across the two regions (for a gender-focused perspective see Luttikhuizen 2000). This complex picture shows how interaction and trade contacts were a powerful catalyst for change in Picenum, and this is gauged in the changing sacred landscape and internal organization of settlements underlying socio-political transformations.

Cultic activities in Iron Age non-funerary contexts are difficult to identify, partly because of the lack of systematic analysis of these contexts, and partly because of the loss of traces of these activities. As elsewhere in central Italy, Iron Age cult was practised at selected outdoor locations across the natural landscapes, such as lakes, natural springs or mountain tops, and our only evidence of this are votive deposits across the landscape (cf. Edlund 1987 for Etruria). In Picenum, traces of early votive deposits are sometimes found in domestic contexts, as in the tenth-century levels of Colle dei Cappuccini at Ancona and at Moscosi di Cingoli (Franchi dell'Orto 2001, 195, cat. nos. 80–81, 271, cat. nos. 572–74). In the course of the Iron Age, votive deposits were strategically located at a distance from settlements and cemeteries: an example is the sixth-century deposit of Sant'Andrea at Cupra Marittima consisting of miniaturistic vessels packed into a ditch on the route from the nearby settlement to its cemetery (Baldelli 1997; Franchi dell'Orto 2001, 232, cat no. 359; see Pacciarelli 1997 in general for votive deposits in Marche and Abruzzo). No substantial sanctuary inside settlements is yet known, although Roman-period temples may have erased any traces of earlier religious structures. The existence of pre-Roman sanctuaries is known from historical sources, namely a temple of Diomedes and a sanctuary of Cupra (the Etruscan Hera, according to Strabo) at Cupra Marittima founded by Etruscans, but the archaeology has not yet confirmed this. Other sanctuaries of Cupra have, however, been suggested by the findings of bronze sheets inscribed

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7 This is attested by fifth- and fourth-century Greek amphorae at Numana and Camerano (Landolfi 2001d) besides those found elsewhere in the mid-Adriatic region (Sassatelli 1994).

with the name of this deity at Colfiorito di Foligno and Fossato di Vico, on the mountain pass between Umbria and Marche (Rocca 1996, 79–94).

At the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth centuries, a changing aspect of these votive deposits is noted in the offerings themselves: ceramic objects virtually disappear and metal statuettes of human figures, made either in Etruria or at nearby Umbrian locations, take their place. Many figurines are representations of the dedicant, but the majority represent deities borrowed from the Greek and Etruscan pantheon. Interestingly, the distribution of votive deposits or isolated figurines is similar to that of the imports of Attic ceramics, and whilst warrior/Mars figurines are common at coastal sites, Herakles figurines are mostly found inland at Apenninic locations. With a few exceptions, metal figurines are less common in southern Marche and northern Abruzzo. Here, two notable sanctuary sites with votive deposits of pottery and metal figurines were situated on territorial boundaries at Monte Giove near the cemetery of Penna Sant'Andrea (Teramo), where stelai decorated with South Picene inscriptions were found, and, further south, at Grotta del Colle, a cave site near Rapino (Chieti) (D'Ercole et al. 1997). Although we see no contemporary development towards the use of permanent sacred structures as in Etruria and Latium, these metal votives point to a fundamental transformation in the cultic sphere involving the anthropomorphic conceptualization of worship.

Concomitant changes are detected in the settlement evidence. Overall, this evidence is rather uneven across the region, our knowledge being based on a few recent excavations, but it is likely that transformations related to habitation marked a significant change in the settlements' internal organization (Biocco 2000, 27). These transformations mainly consist of the introduction of more permanent structures replacing huts built in perishable material. At Matelica, where we have some of the best settlement evidence, the Early Iron Age rectangular huts were succeeded by rectangular structures built with dry walls of river pebbles and covered with tiles. These later structures have been excavated beneath the modern town (Biocco 2000, 24–27) and in later levels of the Iron Age settlements (Gobbi and Biocco 2003, 160). The use of tiles is attested as early as the sixth century at Moscosi di Cingoli (Silvestrini 2001), and habitation structures with stone walls are also known from Colle dei Cappuccini at Ancona (Luni 2001a). Further north, two rectangular habitation structures with wall foundations of river pebbles and roof tiles containing abundant fragments of Attic black- and red-figure and black gloss pottery have been excavated at Pesaro (Luni 2001b).

With the end of the fifth century, maritime contacts with the Greek world and cultural interaction with other Italic regions became more complex: Dionysius I of Syracuse expanded his political and economic interests in the Adriatic and founded a colony at Ancona around 385 BC; at the same time, groups of Senone Gauls, a Celtic tribe presumably originating from Champagne and moving south from northern Italy, settled in northern central Picenum.

The Fourth Century and the 'Celtic Invasion'

Quite a different type of settlement context is embodied in the colonial foundation of Ancona: this was part of Dionysius' expansionist policy into the Adriatic, which involved other similar foundations, namely Adria further north and Lissus on the eastern coast. Contemporary and later historical sources report differing accounts as to who settled in Ancona in the wake of the colonial foundation, clearly reflecting the city's range of trade and cultural contacts. The Periplous of Pseudo-Scylax (Pseudo-Scylax 16) describes Ancona as an Umbrian city, Pliny (*HN* 3.110-12) describes it as a Sicilian city, whilst Strabo, the most trusted source by historians, claims that Greek exiles from Syracuse founded the colony (5.4.2). In all likelihood, Ancona's colonial status refers to its submission to the political influence of Dionysius, who aimed at strengthening his control of maritime traffic in the Adriatic, thus competing with Etruscan and Athenian economic interests. Archaeologists have attempted to reveal traces of the Syracusan foundation, in particular the temples of Aphrodite and Diomedes known from historical sources, but with little success due to the urban development of the modern city. Remains of a fourth-century temple foundation beneath the Duomo of San Ciriaco have been tentatively related to the Temple of Aphrodite, but this is supported exclusively by the Latin poet Juvenal's remark about a *domus Veneris* sustained by Doric Ancona (Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.40). Although not attested archaeologically, the existence of a cult of Diomedes may have been the effect of the political control over Ancona by Dionysius, who identified himself with the Greek mythical hero in an act of political legitimization (Sordi 1960, 161; Braccesi and Coppola 1996, 114–15).

In his expansionstic policy, Dionysius encountered groups of Senone Gauls who, according to Livy, led the Gallic incursion over Rome in 390 BC, and settled north of the Esino River. Having established friendly relations with them on the occasion of the sack of Rome, Dionysius may have hired them in his mercenary army against Etruscan cities and Rome (Sordi 1960, 62–72). The archaeological evidence for the presence of the Senones in Picenum is generally used to show that they were the earliest groups to settle in Italy, contrary to Livy's remarks (5.34.5) that the tribe was the last to invade the peninsula. On the other hand, the evidence comes almost exclusively from cemetery sites and isolated graves, the most notable being Montefortino di Arcevia, Serra San Quirico, Santa Paolina di Filottrano, San Filippo d'Osimo, and the isolated warrior graves at Moscano di Fabriano and San Ginesio: this makes it difficult to understand fully the dynamics of the Senones' encounter and coexistence with Picene communities and their relations with the Greeks (Grassi 1991, 54–80). Senone graves, for example, are characterized by a wealth of weaponry, which has convinced scholars of their mercenary activities (Figure 21): the graves of Montefortino hold a higher number of weapons than one finds in other La Tène cemeteries, and the common deposition of helmets even in poorer graves strikes a contrast

with La Tène graves where the helmet characterizes high-ranking individuals only (Kruta 2001; see Häussler, this volume, on the definition of such terms as Celtic and La Tène). Whilst these finds do not exclude the mercenary status of these individuals, the assumption must nevertheless be treated with caution.

Besides the wealth of weaponry, Celtic graves are distinguished from Picene graves for their extravagant display of objects, reflecting the wide range of contacts with other Italic regions: precious jewellery in female graves, Greek bronze objects such as strigils also occurring in female graves, bronze and silver sympotic vessels imported from Campania, Latium, Etruria and Magna Graecia, as well as red-figure and black gloss pottery from Greece, Magna Graecia and Picenum. Although less lavish and with different funerary associations, Picene grave goods are, however, comparable, making it often impossible to distinguish graves on ethnic grounds: Celtic weapons occur in warrior inhumations otherwise identified as Picene from their grave contents at Camerano, Numana and Ancona (Landolfi 2001d). Intermarriage may explain this evidence, but a closer look elicits caution in supposing such specific relations besides cultural

21 Celtic bronze helmet from Santa Paolina di Filottrano. Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche. Photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici per le Marche (photography archive)

and economic interaction. The finding of Latial and Campanian bronzes, particularly from Praeneste, in both Picene and Celtic graves reveal lively contacts with Latium and Campania, which had already existed in the Archaic period (Colonna 1992b), but may have been rekindled by fourth-century mobility of Celtic groups across central Italy (Landolfi 2001d, 178).

We must envisage that the settling of Senone groups in search of land and other economic resources in sparsely-inhabited areas of northern Picenum led to intense interaction and coexistence with Picene communities, which was not confined to the north but also concerned areas further south (Grassi 1991, 69; D'Ercole 2001b). However, the exclusively funerary nature of the archaeological record prevents us from establishing the nature of this interaction. Ultimately, we must reconsider whether we can speak of a migration at all, despite Livy's account, by asking what a migration in fourth-century Picenum might have looked like: were the Senones migrating as a group or as individuals (cf. Ramsl 2004)? This question may be unanswerable from our current knowledge of the archaeology, but is one that is barely addressed when discussing the motives of Celtic movements; yet it is a crucial question for Picenum where no particular break or 'crisis' can be identified in the archaeological record, despite the insistence on defining the fourth and third centuries as an era of 'crisis' (Franchi dell'Orto 2001). Coastal and inland Picene centres continued to prosper thanks to, rather than in spite of, new Senone settlers who entertained lively commercial and cultural relations with both Greek traders and Italic communities. Even when Attic trade begins to dwindle around 325 BC, the widespread circulation of *ceramica alto-adriatica*, a class of Picene-manufactured red-figure pottery that takes over the demand for specific Attic ceramic shapes in the fourth and third centuries, shows the high degree of interaction amongst different communities in and outside Picenum as far as the eastern Adriatic coast and the Po delta.

Only in the third century do maritime trading activities no longer leave their traces further inland. Inland sites begin to show a clear shift of commercial relations directed towards the western side of Italy, Etruria and the Faliscan region. The first political relations with Rome are documented at this time, in the wake of Rome's hostilities with the Samnites. These are first an alliance treaty against the Gauls in 299 BC, and in 295 BC a battle on the river Sentinum where Rome defeated Samnites and Gauls allied with Etruscan and Umbrian cities. In the following years, Rome's military campaigns against the Gauls led to Rome's domination over central Italy and the subsequent foundation of colonies. Sena Gallica (Senigallia) was founded in 283 BC, and the surrounding territory was named Ager Gallicus. Although Picene communities supported Rome's campaigns against the Senones, they clashed against Rome once they found themselves surrounded by Roman territory. When Ariminium (Rimini) became a Latin colony in 268 BC, Rome fought two campaigns against Picenum and eventually conquered the region.

Mobility, Exchange and Consumption

In the attempt to open up Picenum to recent debates of material culture and theoretically informed perspectives, I have highlighted some issues with current methods and interpretations, suggesting possible ways in which we can read a Picene material culture.

Throughout the first millennium BC, heightened mobility across the region encouraged a constant exchange amongst communities, the directions of exchange recurrently shifting within the region. Whilst it may be possible to recognize such shifts broadly through time, the multi-directional nature of contact at any one time hardly shows a clear, uniform picture; this appears most distinctly in the ninth and eighth centuries BC, with Fermo being an typical case. However, it is also true later when trade towards the Tyrrhenian region flourished inland alongside exchange northwards, as seen with Novilara, at the same time as eastern Greek and later Athenian commercial interests expanded in the Adriatic basin. The result was continuous cross-cultural interaction with other nearby and distant regions, the material culture showing a variety of traits and characteristics. Mobility of Celtic groups from the fifth century greatly intensified this scenario, which remains doubtless partial until more work on interaction with the eastern Adriatic coast is done to enrich it. This long-term picture of continuous interaction and mobility, together with difficulties in accessing and centralizing resources, may have hindered those socio-political processes that led to urbanization in other Italic regions, and possibly even prevented the crystallizing of a unified cultural or indeed ethnic identity across the region. Ultimately, we must ask ourselves whether we can truly speak of a Picene material culture and distinguish it in regional terms.[8] The difficulty of identifying regional boundaries well illustrates the problem, which is by no means restricted to Picenum (Isayev forthcoming, on Lucania, where she sees the fallacy of regionalism supplanting ethnicity).

At the same time, however, the sophistication of the material culture, visible in the ways in which social groups and communities chose to combine and exploit diverse cultural traits in their own material discourses beyond the simple acquisition of goods, indicates a high degree of societal self-construction through objects, most distinctly seen from the newly excavated material at Matelica. Although we are still lacking a good deal of non-funerary evidence, the high degree of exchange, consumption and material manipulation displayed in the highly ideologically charged arena of burials—from Moie di Pollenza and Fermo, to Matelica and Numana—does not simply indicate increasing social differentiation, but more critically underlies a specific structure of demand

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8   Interestingly, the first volume of the exhibition *I Piceni Popolo d'Europa* (1999) shows on the front cover the famous warrior of Capestrano, whose provenance in the Chieti region is outside the traditionally defined boundaries of Picenum.

directing social reproduction (Friedman 1994a, 16). I have suggested that one way of analysing the complexities of these contexts and material is through the anthropological perspective of consumption. Studies on consumption in antiquity have emphasized the culturally specific 'political logic of consumption' behind the demand of goods and a society's political economy (Dietler 1999, 485). Recent anthropological discussions have also stressed the process of social reproduction and identity involved in consumption (Friedman 1994a). The rich material of Picenum offers an ideal setting in which to explore further these as well as other problems that are only waiting to be unravelled by more theoretically informed perspectives.

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