Childhood among the Etruscans: Mortuary Programs at Tarquinia as Indicators of the Transition to Adult Status

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CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDHOOD IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ITALY

EDITED BY
ADA COHEN AND JEREMY B. RUTTER

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“Where have all the children gone?” This question has commonly emerged during the analysis of human skeletal populations in central Italy as well as at many archaeological sites throughout the world. Perinatal and young children’s remains often are absent from among the recovered skeletons. Lawrence Angel, as well as some recent scholars, believes that these fragile bones simply decayed past recognition or were lost as a result of imperfect skeletal recovery techniques. In much of Italy, however, the small bones of perinatals are not less well preserved than those of adults and are as likely to survive as any others. The absence of perinatal remains in a cemetery often reflects the use of separate burial locations for the bodies of “people” at this stage of life. In Etruria, and other culture areas, the bodies of perinatals, infants, and even children up to the age of five may be interred in contexts that are removed from the formal cemeteries used for “adults,” or individuals who have passed to the next stage of life.

Evaluations of perinatal skeletons are essential to the discussion of “infant” mortality rates. The absence of infant remains from a cemetery...
population produces a common distortion in the expected percentages of age groups, a skewing often called “the osteometric paradox.” Biological studies of nonindustrial societies reveal normal infant mortality rates of 50 percent or greater, with perinatal mortality accounting for most of these figures. The last months of a pregnancy, the process of parturition, and various stresses during the months after birth provide a frightening trio of challenges that lead to what is commonly called “infant mortality.” For clarity in the use of terms, “perinatal” deaths (perinatal mortality) will include all aborted or stillborn children from the third trimester of pregnancy to those who survive through the first month (28 days) after a live birth. The designation of “infant mortality” will be used only for those deaths that take place from age 29 days to one year. Perinatal and infant mortality are usually combined, and sometimes include children who die at the age of weaning, under the term “child mortality.” Expected child mortality rates of 50 percent or greater are considerably higher than those generally estimated by historians. High rates of infant mortality can be inferred without elaborate studies, based solely on what is known of present third world nations.

“Life expectancy” is the average age of all the people who are born into the society. Since high infant mortality significantly lowers the average, what we call life expectancy strongly reflects perinatal and child mortality rates. A low life expectancy indicates a high death rate among children. Life expectancy also varies depending on whether an infant is calculated as a live birth if it survives for only a few hours or days after birth. Thus various definitions of when life begins impact calculated life expectancy. In premodern or traditional societies a person surviving to age twenty-five can be expected to live to age sixty-five to seventy-five or longer with nearly the same probability as people in modern societies. Data on the people in ancient Tarquinia and elsewhere who can be documented to have lived longer than seventy-five years, and some as many as ninety or more, reflect the potential of survival and are important to our general understanding of population dynamics. Yet studies of infants may be much more revealing of archaeological populations that we find—or do not find—in cemeteries. Reports of finds of perinatal burials may be absent from the archaeological literature because of the limited attention previously directed to this subject, or alternatively because there genuinely are no burials of children to report. With all the above considerations in mind, archaeologists working in Etruria should indeed wonder, “Where have all the children gone?”

ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA: ANCIENT AND RECENT TEXTS

Perinatal mortality rates are so high in preindustrial societies that disposal of the tiny bodies is a significant task for the poor. Finding even a simple place to bury, or dispose of, a small corpse can be a serious concern. Placement in construction fills, abandoned wells, and other non-cemetery locations

6. Angel 1945, pp. 311–312, fig. 12; Little 1999.
often resolved the problem in antiquity, as in colonial America\textsuperscript{7} and even in many parts of the modern world. The disposal of these great numbers of stillborns, plus infants who died soon after birth, forms a principal “birthing” role for the male members of the society.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the considerable numbers of small bodies involved, only recently have scholars in the Mediterranean area become interested in this basic aspect of mortuary behavior.\textsuperscript{9}

Information on perinatal mortality rates rarely appears in the ancient texts. David Miles’s study of high infant mortality rates in antiquity quotes the two most frequently noted comments on the subject from ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{10} The earlier is Aristotle’s observation (\textit{Hist. an.} 588a 8–10) that for infants in Athens in the 4th century b.c., “Most are carried off before the seventh day; that is why they give the child its name then, as by that time they have more confidence in its survival.” Hundreds of years later the Greek moralist Plutarch (ca. 46–ca. 120) observed (\textit{Num.} 12. 2) that there was no formal mourning for children who die under three years, an age probably relating to the weaning process. Miles notes that later in antiquity, perhaps by the 4th century, this ancient “cut-off” age had been changed to one year, suggesting that the age of weaning may have changed or that survival rates may have improved.

The rich collection of surviving Roman documents relating to the Roman child generally pertains to those between the ages of five and fifteen. The fetal stage of development is rarely noted, and then only in relationship to matters of abortion. Newborn children in Rome commonly are noted as having been subject to sale or fatal exposure, but their status was subject to the laws that covered these matters.\textsuperscript{15} By the 3rd century deliberate exposure of newborns had become a crime in Rome.\textsuperscript{12} An excellent review of what is known about the Roman birthing process is provided by Beryl Rawson. Of particular interest to this study of infant mortality rates is the ritual of \textit{lustratio} that took place 8 (for a girl) and 9 (for a boy) days after birth. The difference of a single day may reflect a Roman awareness of the greater biological fragility of males. The \textit{lustratio} ritual involved conferring a name on the child after which, as Rawson notes, “the infants ‘existed’ in a formal sense.”\textsuperscript{13}

The ethnographic literature, most of which was gathered prior to the emergence of interest in the lives of women and children in traditional societies, includes only a few brief observations on the customs involved in disposing of the bodies of children who die at birth, or before the age of weaning. Data from living cultures provide important insights into ancient behaviors and beliefs. One of the more extensively documented ethnographic accounts relating to perinatal mortuary activities derives from modern India.\textsuperscript{14} In the early 20th century in the area of Dacca, now Pakistan, the differential disposal of “babies and little children” had been recorded.\textsuperscript{15} Hooper’s study, using data from a historical context, employs the London Bills of Mortality for 1762–1771 as a direct piece of evidence for mortality patterns.\textsuperscript{16} These data indicate that in the urban environment of London some 50 percent of all live births died by the age of two; by the age of five this had grown to 67 percent.\textsuperscript{17} A complete skeletal record for any city, town, or other community would include very large numbers of

\begin{thebibliography}{17}
\bibitem{7} Burnston 1982.
\bibitem{8} Hanson 1994.
\bibitem{9} Becker 1983; Bassett 1995.
\bibitem{10} Miles 1986; Hooper 1975.
\bibitem{11} Rawson 1991c, p. 4; Rawson 1991b, pp. 9–10.
\bibitem{12} Eyben 1991, p. 123.
\bibitem{13} Rawson 1991b, pp. 11–14.
\bibitem{14} N. Kelly 1975.
\bibitem{15} Godden and Godden 1966, pp. 149–151.
\bibitem{16} Hooper 1975, p. 375, who derives his data from Still 1931.
\bibitem{17} Steel 1988, pp. 150–155; Rousséau 1762, vol. 2, p. 189.
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A R C H A E O L O G I C A L E V I D E N C E F O R
H I G H I N F A N T M O R T A L I T Y A N D S E P A R A T E
B U R I A L A R E A S

High rates of child mortality were noted as a factor in the archaeological interpretation of cemeteries more than three decades ago. These rates, however, continue to be overlooked in discussions of cemetery populations and child burials. Failure to recover every scrap of bone, any of which might provide vital evidence regarding an individual, may allow the presence of perinatals and other interesting cultural information to be missed. Complete absence of the remains of infants and children from a skeletal collection often is ignored by archaeologists who may assume that their small skeletons will not or cannot be found. This approach confounds any attempt to reconstruct the age structure of that population. Richard Reece’s expressions of concern for the integration of all the data recovered in cemetery excavations commonly are ignored. Today, the publication of a cemetery’s excavation without reference to the skeletal material, or what I call the “boneless cemetery,” reflects a dated approach to archaeology. Only the recovery and evaluation of all skeletal fragments and the integration of these data with the archaeological record can provide confirmation of the many hypotheses offered by the excavators in matters relating to human biology. Archaeologists involved in the excavation of human skeletal remains from any site should consider documentation of culture-specific mortuary patterns rather than borrowing data or models from other areas. Special attention needs to be directed toward locating the bones of subadults, here defined as persons up to 16.5 years of age. Children’s roles in every society vary with age, but few skeletal studies are oriented toward eliciting cultural information from the biological evidence derived from living populations.

In the reconstruction of an ancient society, archaeological finds of clusters of perinatal burials rarely have been contextualized using basic information on expected morbidity patterns. Published reports lacking specific analysis of skeletal materials from any cemetery render difficult an evaluation of what authors mean when they identify the remains of “children.” Finds of specialized cemeteries, including Phoenician

tophets, often are interpreted as evidence for infanticide. Gowland and Chamberlain addressed this question by reassessing the data relating to 396 perinatal burials from 19 Romano-British sites, using modern evaluative techniques. Finding that the age distributions for these children are similar to natural mortality profiles, they conclude that these deaths cannot be attributed to anything but natural causes. The specific context reviewed by Gowland and Chamberlain, as it relates to child morbidity patterns, is important in addressing any example of ancient demography, particularly those that relate to finds of clustered infant burials. Myths relating to the supposedly extensive practice of infanticide, in ancient Greece as well as in ancient Rome, are continually discussed using only texts as sources of evidence. The archaeological evidence, in the form of skeletal remains, points to a very different, but less dramatic, interpretation of the data. The perinatals in specialized cemeteries died from normal causes or from diseases that were extremely common, and which remain so in parts of the modern world. These separate cemeteries are a function of cultural rules regarding the burial of perinatals and should not be interpreted as evidence for infant sacrifice. These pieces of direct evidence suggest that historians and others studying the social histories of Rome and Etruria might wish to consider how the available biological evidence relates to their interpretations of the written records.

TARQUINIA AND CHILDREN’S BURIALS

Study of the skeletal material recovered from several major cemetery areas of Tarquinia (Fig. 14.1) provides a significant database from a major South Etruscan city. In addition to 62 individuals identified from early excavations, over 200 individuals have been identified from recent excavation of 77 tombs of all sizes. Two points of interest emerge from the data from Tarquinia. First, perinatals are not represented at all. Second, subadults (children 5.5 to 16.5 years of age) are represented in normal numbers as an expected percentage of the total population. These percentages for subadults apply equally to cremations as well as to inhumations, with only 4 of the 23 cremations excavated at Tarquinia after 1981 (17 percent of the total) being subadults. These 4 cluster between 13 and 16 years of age. These observations regarding a largely ignored part of daily life among the Etruscans help us formulate questions about boundaries and traditions that require new considerations in conducting excavations in this and other parts of Italy.

23. The best-known specialized cemeteries for perinatals are the tophets used by Carthaginians. Tophets generally have been interpreted as burial areas for sacrificed infants (e.g., S. Brown 1991), following Roman claims regarding Carthaginian barbarities. I have suggested that tophets were simply cemeteries for perinatals and not used for sacrificial victims. Boric and Stefanovic 2004, in their study of sub-floor perinatal burials at Mesolithic and Neolithic sites, also reject the idea that these were the result of infant sacrifice (see Becker 1996).
Despite the high rate of infant mortality in preindustrial societies, relatively few subadults die between the ages of weaning and 16.5 years (ca. 10 to 15 percent of the total population). Generally the age group from 5.5 to 16.5 years is well represented in cemeteries, as is the case at Tarquinia and at other Etruscan sites for which we have data. Of a total of 62 individuals from excavations at Tarquinia dating from before 1981, 6 (9.7 percent) were found to be subadults between the ages of 11.5 (the youngest) and 16.5 years (Table 14.1).

In a second sample (Table 14.2), three times as large (198 individuals), studied in a later program of skeletal research, a total of 19 subadults (ages 5.5–16.5) were identified (9.6 percent), a figure in remarkably close agreement with the earlier study. Similar percentages are found in the Hellenistic sample from Blera (Table 14.3), another South Etruscan site. At Blera the 7 children between 5.4 and 16.5 years of age form 16 percent of the available population and so are within the range of expected mortality figures for this age group.

These mortality rates for children ca. 5.0 to 16.5 years of age are similar to those inferred from the Isola Sacra (Rome) cemetery populations of Roman imperial date.

28. The early literature relating to analyses of human skeletal remains recovered from Tarquinia covers tomb numbers up to and including T 6101 (Mallegní, Fornaciari, and Tarabella 1980). The two burials identified in Table 14.1 only as “juveniles” are both cremations. Sex was not evaluated for these subadults.

29. If the individual in Tomb 7 actually is older than 16.5 years, this would lower the percentage to near 12 percent (Becker 2004).

### Table 14.1. Children 16.5 years and younger from tombs at Tarquinia identified from excavations prior to 1981 (n = 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomb No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cremation/Inhumation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3855</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5070E</td>
<td>Juv.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5511D</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5672A</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5859C</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6020A</td>
<td>Juv.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14.2. Children 16.5 years and younger from tombs at Tarquinia excavated between 1982 and 1995 (n = 19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomb No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Cremation/Inhumation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6179B</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6191</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6192</td>
<td>Subad. (12–15 years?)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6203</td>
<td>16?</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6204</td>
<td>Adol.</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6205</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6225B</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6251</td>
<td>16?</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6254G</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6255B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6262C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6264H</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6268D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6272E</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6276D2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6316B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6330A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6330D</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6355</td>
<td>Child?</td>
<td>&lt;not studied&gt;</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
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Intensive studies of the bones from newly discovered chamber tombs at Tarquinia that all date from after the 6th century B.C. produced notable results. The complete absence of skeletal remains of children below the age of 5.5 years indicates that the Tarquinians, and perhaps all South Etruscans, treated children and infants under the age of 5.5 years in the same way that they treated stillborn perinatals. Of note are findings that the population age 5.5 to 16.5 years has a normal (expected) distribution. In cases such as Tarquinia where we lack direct archaeological evidence for high infant mortality rates, what can archaeologists do to estimate such rates? Consideration of cases where we do have direct skeletal evidence for high infant mortality rates is a first step.

Skeletal populations recovered from the extensive Etruscan-period cemeteries that are the usual focus of excavations in this region uniformly lack any evidence for the remains of perinatals, infants, and younger children. Two “children” reported from the 19th-century excavations at an adult cemetery near Tarquinia both date from the Villanovan period and their ages have not been verified.  

The evidence for children’s burials in Etruria during the Villanovan period (Prima Età del Ferro or ca. 900–800 b.c.) and immediately thereafter remains poor. Bartoloni discusses child burials of the Villanovan period, commonly inhumed within amphoras, but without citing specific examples. The use of amphoras for the interment of perinatals and small children provides archaeologists with an easily identifiable context from which tiny skeletons may be recovered. Extensive as well as careful excavations in settlement areas of the Archaic period in central Italy have yielded numbers of infant burials from the vicinity of houses. Prayon’s study of early Etruscan grave and house architecture provides considerable evidence for the burial of perinatals within residential areas.

Extensive recent excavations within the actual ancient city of Tarquinia have been conducted under the direction of Maria Bonghi Jovino. The discovery of several neonates and young children interred in rude graves within the walled area of Tarquinia (Fig. 14.2) provides evidence for early mortuary practices at the site. All of these date from before the 6th century B.C. This evidence suggests that up to the early 7th century, sug-grundaria burial, or the inhumation of perinatals “beneath the eaves” of the house, was the norm at Tarquinia as well as at Ficana, while children of 5.5 years and older were buried in “adult” cemeteries. Special, separate cemeteries for perinatals developed at Tarquinia after the 7th century B.C. with the rise of the Etruscan cities. Is the perinatal mortuary pattern at Tarquinia similar to that known from Rome and Latium in general, or do specialized perinatal cemeteries in southern Etruria predate the period of Roman domination as part of a long tradition that continues into the early Christian era and beyond?

### Table 14.3: Children 16.5 Years and Younger Identified in Five Hellenistic Tombs at the Casacce Necropolis at Blera (Viterbo) Excavated by G. Barbieri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomb</th>
<th>No. of People</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Locus of Child</th>
<th>Age of Child</th>
<th>Sex of Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10B</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 5 N = 45 N = 38 N = 7 Range: F = 3, (84%) (16%) 5.4–15 M = 1, ? = 3

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Cultural rules regarding the separate interment of perinatals and infants might be expected to include a few individual or special exceptions in any society. The unfortunate death of the mother, from childbed fever or other causes, at about the same time as the newborn, for example, might result in both mother and child being consigned to a common grave, unless a strong cultural rule expressly forbade this type of interment. The death of a woman before the delivery of her child or in the process of childbirth might leave the bones of the unborn child within those of the mother, as is reported in a Greek example recently published by Liston and Papadopoulos.  

Data on selective placement of the dead by age or sex help clarify problems relating to the age structure of a population. There are a number of challenges that distort our ability to use the dead to reconstruct the lives of the living population. These include mortuary customs that distort the skeletal record, such as cremation and selective cremation, and intracultural differentials in mortuary customs for perinatals or other members of the society, such as women who died in childbirth. In combination with social class differences in the use of burial containers, or placement within large tombs as distinct from rude graves, these cultural rules create difficulties in understanding population dynamics.  

The complete absence to date of any example of the burial of a mother with an infant or perinatal at Tarquinia leads me to suggest that a separate cemetery may exist for women who died in childbirth, distinct from the cemetery predicted for children under 5.5 years of age. We simply do not know why no examples of mother plus infant burials have been found, but an example of a cemetery for young adult women only has been identified at Late Roman Anemur in Turkey. The possibility of a separate cemetery for women who died in childbirth could explain why the numbers of adult women from the tombs at Tarquinia are far lower than the numbers of adult males.  

The identification and publication of two specialized infant cemeteries in Etruria provide direct evidence for separate burial programs for children below 5.5 years of age during the Late Roman period, suggesting cultural continuities within the entire Etruscan realm. At Poggio Gramignano in
Lugano in Teverina, Soren, Fenton, and Birkby⁴³ have identified 50 small children, including 44 perinatals, 5 infants aged from one to five months, and one aged two to three years, probably a weanling death. A second infant cemetery, at Cazzanello near Tarquinia, includes only 12 burials, 11 perinatals and one weanling (Fig. 14.3). The find of four “adults” in another burial area at Cazzanello provides evidence for two separate burial locations at this one site for population subgroups differentiated most obviously by age. The Cazzanello and Poggio Gramignano cases provide important evidence that in the South Etruscan region all children up to the age of perhaps 5.4 years were interred in special cemeteries. Since perinatals, as well as foreigners, are buried in specialized areas distinct from that used for the other residents of the community in modern Italian cemeteries, it is possible that this behavior represents a continuity in basic mortuary practice extending back in time for two millennia or more.

Figure 14.3. Cazzanello infant burial area in the general area of the two cisterns. Burial numbers 1 through 3 are repeated, but no burials were numbered 5 through 7. The pair of cisterns, built onto the “east” apse of the 4th-century A.D. bath, predate the burials. Many of the bodies of the perinatals in this 6th–7th century A.D. infant cemetery were placed into old or broken transport amphoras for burial. Drawing R. J. Robertson

⁴³ Soren, Fenton, and Birkby 1995.
The two principal studies of skeletons from extensive excavations in cemeteries that have produced only the remains of adults and children above the age of weaning are of cemeteries from Etruscan Tarquinia and Punic Marsala. In both cases the absence of perinatals as well as children of less than 5.4 years of age provides indirect evidence for the existence of separate perinatal burial areas. The possibility that perinatal and infant skeletons, or parts thereof, were missed appears improbable. The ages of the youngest children found in these cemeteries is evidence for an age of transition to a new social status.

### DISCUSSION

Every culture has its own complex set of beliefs and rituals surrounding birth, often including specific treatment for stillbirths and those who die soon after birth. The length of time that a surviving neonate remains in the perinatal category is a cultural belief that can be identified by archaeological research and subsequent skeletal analysis. Interesting cultural variations in these beliefs may enable us to use archaeology to define cultural boundaries, or borders, as they existed in the past.  

Mortuary rituals at Tarquinia and in several other specific cultural areas of Italy during the period from ca. 700 B.C. to the Late Roman period (ca. A.D. 600) involved the disposal of bodies of infants and children who died before their second year of life, or before weaning. The negative evidence from Tarquinia, in the form of absence of bones from the main

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**TABLE 14.4. CHILDREN 16.5 YEARS AND YOUNGER FROM GRAVES AT PITHEKOUSSAI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomb Number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Inhumation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Inhumation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>389</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomb Number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Inhumation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Inhumation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>515</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>519</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>529</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 15 Range:</th>
<th>F = 1</th>
<th>N = 10 Range:</th>
<th>F = 2</th>
<th>N = 5 Range:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.5–14 M = 5</td>
<td>C: 3</td>
<td>2.0–4.0 M = 1</td>
<td>C: 0</td>
<td>? = 4 I: 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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44. See Vargiu and Becker 2005.
45. There are numerous indications that Etruscan perinatal cemeteries were located with an eye to nearby water sources, as distinct from the cemetery areas used for all other members of the community. This placement differs considerably from that of the Archaic period Romans, who buried perinatals outside their houses, beneath the eaves, as *suggrundaria*, or *sub-grundaria* (Becker 1996, 2005a).
cemeteries from which we have nearly 300 people represented, suggests that children below the age of 5.5 years were buried elsewhere. The absence of children below the age of two years has also been reported at Pithekoussai, where the bones of 134 individuals have been identified (Table 14.4).  

CONCLUSIONS

Infant “cemeteries” at Tarquinia may be inferred from the evidence for separate burial areas for perinatals, such as those found elsewhere in Etruria, although at later periods. At Tarquinia the absence of remains representing children below the age of 5.5 years from the principal cemeteries leads me to expect that separate means of disposal were used for the remains of children who died before reaching 5.5 years of age. As of this date we have not located any infant cemeteries for ancient Tarquinia, suggesting that they were located some distance from the principal burial areas used for older children and adults.

The burials now identified from tombs at Tarquinia indicate that approximately 10 percent of the population died between the ages of 5.5 and 16.5 years of age. This percentage is consistent with rates found elsewhere, such as at Pithekoussai, as well as with our expectations of mortality profiles from preindustrial societies. These percentages indicate that all children in this age range known from cemeteries at ancient Tarquinia were afforded a place of burial along with adults in this population.

High infant mortality rates were normal in antiquity. Cultural rules that cluster perinatals and small children in specialized cemeteries should not be taken as indicators of human sacrifice or infanticide. Specialized infant cemeteries should be recognized as providing important insights into each culture’s views of life and death.

The evidence suggests that the use of special cemeteries for very young children is a pre-Christian trait observable in Etruria by the 7th century B.C., not one introduced to Italy as a Christian custom, as I once believed. Disposal of perinatals outside the traditional or principal cemeteries is indicated for Tarquinia and other Etruscan cities. While this Etruscan pattern is known elsewhere in Italy, the Messapians included perinatals within their principal cemeteries.

46. The remains of these people are believed to represent Greek colonists, but other ethnic groups also may be present. A total of 134 people, from 127 tombs, were studied, with the age of 133 evaluated. All the bones recovered and preserved from 113 cremations were studied. Twenty-one of the many extremely fragmentary inhumations recovered from this site were studied before the research program was canceled. A total of 15 subadults (11 percent) were among the 133 people from the cemetery area for whom age could be determined. This percentage of the total population is within the normal range, but as J. Rutter points out, the fact that 12 (i.e., 7 plus 5 Is from Table 14.4) of the 21 inhumations were subadults is noteworthy. The distribution within the cemetery should be examined (see Ridgway 1992). Children as young as two years of age are represented. Possibly children below two years of age were buried elsewhere, perhaps interred beneath house floors. Ten individuals, or 7.5 percent of all the 133 evaluated individuals in this sample, died between 5.6 and 16.5 years of age.
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*ΑΕΜΤΘ = Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη, Θεσσαλονίκη.*


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