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Accordia Research Papers

Volume 15 2016–2018

Editor

Ruth D. Whitehouse



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She's can be "heroes"

Female status and the Daunian stelae

Edward Herring

INTRODUCTION

In *Accordia Research Papers* 11, Guilia Saltini Semerari published a thought-provoking article on 'high status' female burials in 6th century BC Basilicata. In this paper, she contended that 'wealthy' female burials should not be regarded either as anomalous or as a temporary manifestation of an unstable sociopolitical situation (*contra* Markantonatos' argument (1998: 190) for such burials having belonged to female power brokers, who mediated intensifying relationships with South Italy's Greek communities). Furthermore, Saltini Semerari maintains that élite women enjoyed a high status in their own right, because of important spheres of influence dominated by women, and not by virtue of their association with their husbands, fathers and other male relatives. She goes on, "...it was a long-standing feature of Basilicata society to allow women to gain and express power according to the prevalent élite ideology..." (Saltini Semerari 2009: 130).

Prior to reading this paper, although I had acknowledged the possibility of independent female status (Herring 2007a: 280–1), I had, in truth, always considered 'wealthy' female burials as evidence of a kinship-based social structure: thereby, effectively relegating female status to that of a derivative of male status, i.e. that women enjoyed or, more correctly, were buried with the trappings of status by virtue of being the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of high status (and probably powerful) men. The fact that there are 'wealthy' tombs belonging to children suggested that status could be acquired by association or birthright alone rather than independently (a particularly striking example of a 'wealthy' child burial would be Tomb 102 from Braida (Vaglio Basilicata, Potenza) (Setari 1996)). That notwithstanding, the power of Saltini Semerari's argument has led me to think again about female status. In this paper I shall consider a different part of South Italy, the Tavoliere plain, from which there is another roughly contemporary, potential source of evidence for female status, the so-called Daunian stelae.¹

The evidence

The Daunian stelae are large, roughly rectangular limestone slabs, which are normally decorated with incisions on all four faces. There are a few plain examples, while a small number are effectively simple relief sculptures. Some of the stelae retain evidence of paint

but it is impossible to say whether painting was *de rigeur*. The stelae are in broad terms anthropomorphic. A number of heads and head fragments survive, but few remain attached to the rest of the monument. The stelae are interpreted as grave markers, although very few have been found in direct association with a burial.² While other explanations of their meaning are possible (e.g. that they were statues of people or of supernatural beings), the standard interpretation will be followed for the purposes of the present paper.

The stelae are dated on stylistic grounds to the period between the final quarter of the 7th century BC and the first half of the 5th century BC. They are large, very distinctive monuments. They can stand up to c.1.30m in height; many would have been at least 1m tall, although their visible height would have been significantly reduced if they were set into the ground and meant to stay upright for any length of time. They are normally between c.0.3m and c.0.5m across with a depth of c.7-9cm.

Their core distribution area is the Tavoliere, the large flat plain of northern Puglia (Fig. 1). There are no obvious sources of the limestone from which the stelae were made in the Tavoliere, so it seems likely that the stone was brought from the Gargano promontory (Nava 1980: 12). They are referred to as Daunian stelae from the name given in ancient written sources for the local indigenous population.³ The term Daunian is used here

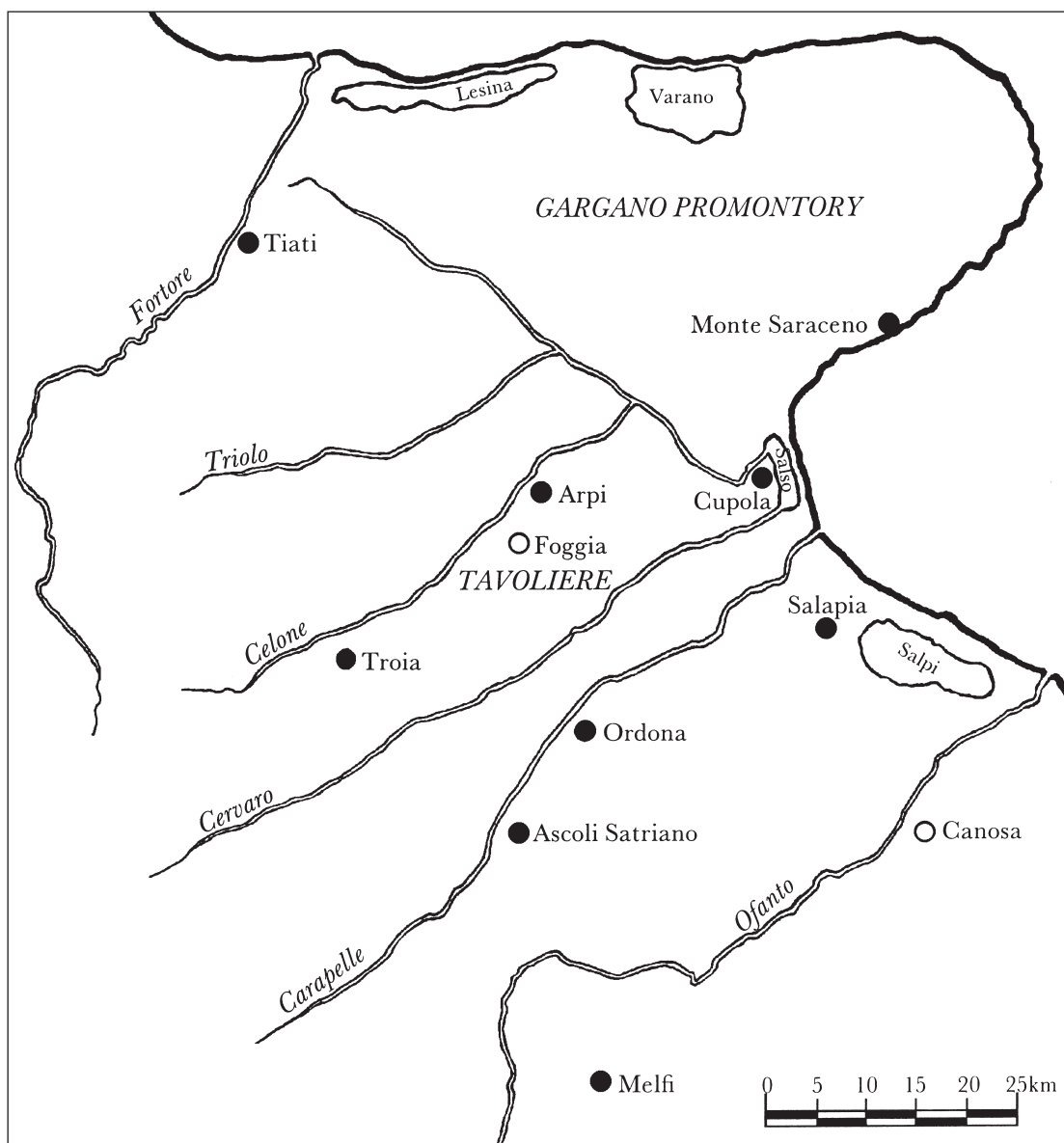


Fig. 1 Map showing find-spots of the stelae (filled circles) and other places mentioned in the text (hollow circles)
adapted from Nava 1980

merely as a convenient label for the monuments, it does not imply that the communities that created them considered themselves Daunian; though some, if not all, were probably considered so by later Greek and Roman writers.

The stelae represent a considerable investment of labour in the commemoration of the dead. It, therefore, seems unlikely that every individual was remembered in this way. Presumably, the stelae marked the graves of people of high status (see discussion below), but not necessarily every high status person received such a monument.

In 1980 Maria Luisa Nava published a thorough corpus of some 1211 fragments and near complete stelae preserved in the Museo Nazionale di Manfredonia. The study presented here is reliant upon data from her catalogue.⁴

Although anthropomorphic, the stelae are not naturalistic in their treatment of the human form. Nava (1980) divided the well-preserved stelae into two basic groups, those decorated with depictions of weaponry (*con armi*) and those decorated with depictions of jewellery (*con ornamenti*) (Nava 1980: 14–26) (Figs 2 and 3).⁵ However, the majority of the preserved fragments cannot be assigned to either class; for full figures see Norman 2009: 38, which offers both Nava's figures and her own revised numbers, which, while greater in terms of those in both classified groups, preserve roughly the same proportion of stelae *con armi* versus those *con ornamenti*. The warrior equipment depicted on the stelae *con armi* consists of swords, round shields and *cardiophylakes* (or heart-protectors). The ornaments on the stelae *con ornamenti* consist of representations of jewellery, mostly fibulae but also necklaces and pendants.

Sometimes these two categories have been interpreted as representing gender distinctions. Predictably, those *con armi* are seen as 'male' and those *con ornamenti* as 'female' (Nava 1979). It is, of course, more methodologically sound to discuss the stelae in terms of their own attributes, i.e. the features of their decoration, rather than on the basis of a secondary interpretation, i.e. that these features suggest an association with a particular gender. Nevertheless, if the stelae were grave markers, then it seems logical that there would have been a correlation between the gendered artefacts depicted on the stelae and the gender identity (and probably biological sex) of the deceased. However, as none of the stelae has been found in direct association with a grave containing reliably sexed skeletal material, this cannot be proven.

Out of 494 fragmentary and near complete stelae in Nava's (1980) catalogue, 360 are assigned to either the *con armi* or *con ornamenti* categories (Tables 1 and 2). Thus, assignable fragments make up nearly 30 per cent of the total sample. What is noteworthy is that 65 are decorated *con armi* and 295 *con ornamenti*. Thus, of the assignable fragments, 18.1 per cent are decorated with weapons and 81.9 per cent are decorated with jewellery. Obviously, the fragmentary nature of much of the material could skew the evidence but the sample size does offer some reassurance as to the broad reliability of the pattern. If fragments are

Type	<i>con armi</i>	<i>con ornamenti</i>	total identifiable	grand total by type
Type I	12	13	25	52
Type II	27	50	77	137
Type II-III	7	13	20	26
Type III	6	24	30	45
Type IV	12	116	128	141
Type VA	0	37	37	40
Type VB	1	40	41	51
Type VC	0	2	2	2
Total	65	295	360	494

Table 1 Numbers of stelae by type, identified as being decorated with weaponry and with jewellery, based upon the data in Nava 1980

Type	<i>con armi</i>	<i>con ornamenti</i>
Type I	352, 478, 678, 720, 721, 748, 784, 863, 1008, 1094, 1124, 1149	26, 43, 95, 445, 501, 585, 722, 724, 752, 759, 869, 1102, 1172
Type II	4, 96, 106, 153, 180, 280, 283, 289, 332, 511, 588, 589, 592, 736, 751, 768, 800, 801, 826, 831, 846, 884, 936, 984, 986, 989, 1173	20, 154, 158, 168, 187, 222, 249, 252, 262, 263, 331, 398, 409, 411, 469, 513, 565, 583, 591, 613, 619, 620, 629, 630, 679, 682, 690, 705, 713, 715, 832, 836, 843, 845, 859, 874, 883, 895, 916, 959, 987, 1014, 1054, 1061, 1113, 1114, 1122, 1134, 1162, 1185
Type II-III	148, 248, 412, 574, 621, 637, 778	67, 70, 86, 468, 552, 671, 677, 739, 775, 842, 949, 985, 1152
Type III	623, 694, 706, 962, 970, 1168	37, 58, 64, 182, 243, 250, 615, 617, 695, 729, 732, 742, 769, 779, 783, 793, 794, 797, 818, 865, 998, 1081, 1085, 1123
Type IV	53, 89, 93, 94, 160, 193, 319, 417, 424, 900, 901, 1192	1, 6, 12, 17, 18, 40, 55, 57, 62, 63, 65, 81, 98, 114, 119, 129, 133, 139, 140, 147, 161, 171, 174, 175, 196, 200, 219, 221, 224, 228, 230, 237, 241, 245, 251, 264, 309, 330, 360, 396, 435, 441, 451, 465, 546, 561, 578, 581, 584, 586, 590, 593, 598, 599, 614, 616, 622, 632, 634, 680, 692, 693, 723, 735, 743, 757, 773, 774, 781, 787, 788, 795, 798, 812, 815, 825, 827, 835, 848, 850, 862, 864, 872, 876, 877, 880, 881, 909, 910, 920, 923, 963, 969, 976, 980, 999, 1012, 1016, 1033, 1044, 1050, 1051, 1058, 1084, 1101, 1111, 1121, 1132, 1137, 1141, 1157, 1159, 1170, 1177, 1200
Type VA	0	85, 115, 137, 146, 173, 179, 190, 210, 220, 240, 247, 255, 295, 298, 324, 361, 611, 636, 666, 667, 710, 808, 828, 834, 851, 861, 867, 882, 957, 997, 1095, 1116, 1117, 1136, 1188, 1193
Type VB	734	45, 51, 186, 189, 205, 209, 215, 233, 246, 276, 318, 326, 327, 347, 404, 410, 447, 548, 576, 676, 747, 786, 796, 811, 837, 840, 973, 991, 1001, 1020, 1034, 1045, 1099, 1100, 1115, 1125, 1155, 1195
Type VC	0	87, 254

Table 2 Catalogue numbers of stelae by type, identified as being decorated with weaponry and with jewellery, based upon the data in Nava 1980

taken into consideration, Nava identifies 83 (13.76% of those identifiable) as *con armi* and 520 (86.24%) as *con ornamenti*; Norman's count has 118 (or 15.53% of those identifiable) as *con armi* and 642 (84.47%) as *con ornamenti*. Taking the data at face value, it would appear that stelae decorated with jewellery are perhaps five times more common than those decorated with weapons. This is quite striking, especially if we assume a correlation between the two decorative types and gender. There is a further difference that is suggestive of gender differentiation. All of the stelae *con armi*, where the relevant area is preserved, have a simple rectangular shoulder. (e.g. Fig. 2) There are other stelae that have a more articulated shoulder area (e.g. Fig. 3). All of these are stelae *con ornamenti*. However, not all stelae *con ornamenti* have this kind of shoulder. Some have the simple rectangular shoulder (e.g. Nava 1980: no. 585, pl. CLXVIII and CLXIX). It is possible that all of the stelae with the more elaborate shoulder shape represented women. This might imply that all the stelae with the simple rectangular shoulder represented men, including those that are *con ornamenti*.

DISCUSSION

Assuming that the stelae were funerary monuments, it seems likely that they marked the graves of members of the social élite. There are some strong arguments to support this



Fig. 2 A stele *con armi*, with sword and *cardiophylax* (inv. 0972- 0974; Nava 1980: 159, no. 748 A, pl. CCXIVI)

photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Puglia



Fig. 3 A stele *con ornamenti*, with necklace and fibulae (inv. 1207 and 1395; Nava 1980: 187-8, no. 949 A, pl. CCCXIV)

photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Puglia

assumption. First, there is their comparative rarity. The stelae were probably in production for roughly 150 years, yet the numbers of surviving fragments is quite small. Although stelae would have been broken up, ground down, or reused in later building projects, the level of survival suggests that they were never particularly common – certainly not common enough that we can assume that everyone receiving a formal burial also received a stele.

At least nine sites have produced stelae fragments (Fig. 1). Some of these sites, such as Arpi, Ortona, and Tiati, covered massive areas, at least in prehistoric terms. Although population densities were probably quite low, as the ‘occupied’ areas presumably also contained zones for agricultural use, storage, and cemeteries, nevertheless, these sites must have been home to sizeable populations. The scale of the sites and the earthworks that surrounded some of them, notably Arpi, where the enclosed area is roughly 1,000ha, suggest the existence of a powerful leadership that was able to harness the labour of significant numbers of people.

A second factor that supports the idea that these are the memorials of the social élite is the use of stone. The limestone is not available in the Tavoliere itself and would have had to have been brought from the Gargano, perhaps, as Nava (1980: 12) suggests, from the area around Monte Sant'Angelo. The sourcing, quarrying, and transporting of the stone, together with its dressing, carving, and, at least in some instances, painting, represent a considerable expenditure of time and effort, even before we consider the erection of the monument and any associated religious ceremonies. It would not seem to be too great a supposition to suggest that only the élite would have had the resources available to commission such grave markers.

Third, there is an element of conspicuous display about this form of commemoration of dead. This too is suggestive of the behaviour of the dominant group in a hierarchical society. Finally, there are the artefacts and other activities depicted on the stelae. Both jewellery and weapons can be seen to be indicative of wealth and (at the risk of circular reasoning) perhaps status and possibly power, too. Among the scenes depicted, albeit rarely, on the bodies of the stelae are hunting and weaving, both of which can be seen as high status and gendered activities.⁶ It should be noted, however, that a depiction is not the same as the object or activity itself. A depiction could potentially be more aspirational. In other words, the activities depicted may not have been practised by the deceased in life, but that the burying community employed such images in idealisation of the deceased's lifestyle.

If we accept that the stelae were the grave markers of the élite class, what might we make of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the attributable fragments are decorated with jewellery as opposed to weaponry? The standard gender associations of these artefact classes in Italian pre- and protohistory would associate women with jewellery and men with weaponry (see Vida Navarro 1993 for a memorable attempt to propose a methodologically sound approach to the gendering of artefacts from early Italy). These associations are stereotypical and the equation of artefacts with people has been widely critiqued. Nevertheless, stereotypes are often resonant because they contain some grain of truth. It should be noted, however, that men used and were buried with fibulae, but they do not normally seem to have been seen as gender signifiers of men. Thus, depictions of fibulae may not necessarily be intended to signal a female identity, although the case for necklaces and pendants may be stronger. By contrast, weaponry does seem to have had a clear and almost exclusive association with maleness; indeed, the association of weaponry with male identity had a long pedigree in Italian prehistory (Whitehouse 1993).

If we begin with the stelae decorated with weapons, there would seem to be little difficulty in assuming that these were the gravestones of élite men, who either were warriors or, at least, were characterised as such in death. Few scholars would question the assumption that such men enjoyed this status in their own right, although factors such as birthright and age may have been as or more significant than personal prowess in the arts of combat. Moreover, the depiction of weaponry might support the conclusion that such men enjoyed real power over others, as they are depicted as having the equipment that allowed them to impose their authority by force. The fact that roughly one in five of the stelae appears to have belonged to men characterised as warriors would not, of itself, appear to be incongruous. It does not seem unreasonable that the social élite was made up of men and women in roughly equal numbers and that of the élite males only a proportion (perhaps young adult men) were seen as active warriors.

When we turn to the stelae decorated with jewellery, again there seems no especial reason to contest that these were the gravestones of élite women. However, the question of whether they enjoyed status in their own right rather than by virtue of their association with their male kin, brings us back to Saltini Semerari's argument. Do the gender biases of our own society make it more difficult for us to accept the status of women in Iron Age Italy? We may be usefully reminded of Linda Hurcombe's antidote to gender bias in archaeological thinking: the mental sex-change operation (Hurcombe 1995).⁷ If we have no difficulty in accepting that stelae decorated with weapons were the grave markers of élite

men, who enjoyed high status on their own account, we should have no greater difficulty in accepting that stelae decorated with jewellery were the grave markers of élite women, who also enjoyed high status on their own account – again notwithstanding that birthright and age may have been significant factors in individual status. Indeed, we might go further, just as weapons may perhaps be seen as the accoutrements of power for men, so we might regard jewellery as indicative of female wealth, rather than seeing it as an enhancement of a woman's decorative role as an adjunct to male status: in the modern vernacular, the trophy wife's bling.

It is worth reiterating a point made by Saltini Semerari (2009: 130–1), referring to the role that scholars with a Classical training have played in the interpretation of indigenous culture in Iron Age Basilicata. It would be just as unwise to impose views on the position of women in society, derived from later Greek, and especially Athenian sources, on northern Puglia in the late 7th to earlier 5th century BC.⁸ At this time, knowledge of Greek culture was only beginning to grow in the region and the level of influence on indigenous life remained comparatively limited.

If we accept that women could enjoy high status in their own right in Iron Age northern Puglia, then we may ask what was the basis of that status. It is very likely that society was organised on kinship grounds and that being born into an aristocratic family was essential to high status. While such status has nothing to do with personal quality and is entirely dependent on the association with one's relatives, both men and women benefitted from such acquired status. Importantly, women would have had equal access to aristocratic birth as men. Indeed, it is possible that having an aristocratic mother was essential to both men and women in order to be recognised as a full member of an élite family.⁹ Thus, women may have played a role in the transmission of élite status and the maintenance of the aristocratic system through marriage and childbirth¹⁰ and may have been celebrated for these roles. In addition, there were probably spheres of life in which women enjoyed important roles and, thereby, high status, if not also power. These are likely to have included religion, and numerous stelae show processions of women, often with vases on their heads, which may be interpreted as female-dominated rituals. There is significant evidence, albeit mostly later in date, from other parts of southern Italy for female roles in religion (Herring 2007b). Norman (2016: 874) goes so far as to suggest that women were “responsible for the organization and conducting of ceremonial occasions”. Another area where women probably dominated, and which is documented on the stelae, is weaving. The stelae provide evidence for the elaborate patterned clothing worn by the people of northern Puglia, which were presumably made locally by highly skilled individuals. Norman (2011; 2016: 874) has argued that a particular type of procession scene, which shows two lines of women, one led by a man, coming together over a handloom or, less plausibly, a lyre, is a representation of ritual exchange of gifts between families conducted at the time of a wedding. If this is correct, the commemoration of this ritual (and this crucial moment in women's lives) on the stelae indicates how significant female roles were in weaving, religion, and the maintenance of élite familial relations. By the later Iron Age, weaving operated on a massive scale at many North Apulian sites, including Arpi and Tiati, as is evidenced by the sheer number of loomweights that litter the surface of the modern fields. Moreover, by Roman times, Apulia was famous for its wool (Pliny *HN* 8.189–90). In each of these areas of life, women's roles were important to the community's well-being and distinct from those of men (see also Norman 2016: 873–5). Thus, it is not difficult to understand how women could have enjoyed high status by virtue of these roles.

Norman (2009) examined the figurative scenes (the “secondary iconography” as she terms it) in an attempt to cast greater light upon the matter of gender as depicted on the stelae. She identified three broad categories of scene, whose production was “remarkably stable over time” (Norman 2009: 48). These are: scenes depicting weaving and procession; scenes depicting hunting and horsemanship; and scenes depicting the production, gathering and processing of food. A fourth possible group depicting ritual/cult and mythology was

considered problematic due to the diverse and idiosyncratic nature of the images assigned to this category. Of the three reliable groups, weaving and procession were only depicted on stelae *con ornamenti* and such iconography was rarely depicted with other scene types. The scenes depicting hunting and horsemanship occurred only on stelae *con armi*. Although scenes of hunting and horsemanship sometimes occur alongside images of warriors, the latter can also be found on stelae *con ornamenti*. The scenes depicting the production, gathering and processing of food occurred on both types of stelae in an almost equal distribution. Although these patterns are interesting, as Norman herself notes, they neither corroborate Nava's view that while the stelae *con armi* depict men only, the stelae *con ornamenti* represent both men and women, nor do they falsify it (Norman 2009: 53).

Having come this far, a fundamental question remains: what does it tell us about indigenous society that stelae decorated with jewellery outnumber those decorated with weaponry by perhaps five to one? There are several possibilities.

One possibility is that there were more high status women than men. If we rule out the idea that Iron Age Northern Puglia had a matriarchal society, and there is no other evidence to support such a notion, then we must ask why might there be more high status women than men.¹¹ Although there may have been some disparity in life expectancy, it is difficult to see how this could skew the ratios to the required extent. We might expect young men to run a risk of early death, due to their involvement in combat and other high risk activities, such as hunting, but this would be more than matched, if not exceeded, by the loss of young women to the perils of childbirth.

Another possibility would be that female status was acquired by marriage and that polygamy was practised. Again, there is no evidence to support such an idea. We do have ancient sources who, albeit briefly, discuss the Daunians and other south Italian populations. We may be sure that if ancient Greek writers had heard of such exotic practices, they would have been commented upon unfavourably. A further objection to this argument is that it brings us back to the notion that female status was acquired by virtue of relationships with men.

It is also possible that women were more likely to be commemorated by a stele than were men of equivalent status. Obviously, we cannot hope to reconstruct the beliefs, customs and values that contributed to the decision-making of burying communities in Iron Age northern Puglia. However, it is possible, for instance, that only those men defined as warriors were commemorated with a stele and that other high status males were not. Here factors such as age, i.e. being too young or too old for military service, or physical prowess might have contributed to the mode of memorialisation. Perhaps all the roles played by high status women, whether in reproduction of the community and/or religion and/or weaving, were considered worthy of commemoration by means of a stele but male roles were treated in a more varied way, this could explain the discrepancy between the relative numbers of stelae *con armi* and *con ornamenti*.

Yet another possibility is that, as Nava suggested (1988: 179–80), while stelae *con armi* were the preserve of men only, stelae *con ornamenti* could be used to mark the graves of high status men, who were not characterised as warriors, as well as those of high status women. Although this may seem like special pleading, it could explain the discrepancy. While it is true that both men and women used and were buried with fibulae, necklaces and pendant ornaments seem more likely to be specifically female signifiers. The fragmentary nature of the material could be a factor here as many of the surviving pieces of stelae only preserve images of fibulae. Nevertheless, there is a clear methodological weakness in this argument. That said, it throws up the intriguing possibility that the grave memorials of high status men, who were not designated as warriors, were indistinguishable, at least to the modern eye, from the grave markers of women.¹² To take this line of thought to its logical extreme, it might suggest that weaponry was absolutely fundamental to notions of masculinity in northern Puglia.

Yntema (2013: 85) argues that some of the figures depicted on procession scenes on the stelae are non-sword-bearing men, who wear tall, pointed hats. He argues that such men may have been shamans. Notwithstanding the methodological objection noted above, it is possible that some of the stelae *con ornamenti* belonged to such men.

A final possibility is that the relative frequency of stelae with weaponry compared with those decorated with jewellery changed over time (Table 2). Nava's typology has a chronological dimension. She suggests that Types I–III date from the late 7th century to the middle of the 6th and that Types IV and V belong to the later 6th and earlier 5th century BC (Nava 1980: 44).

For Type I stelae we have almost as many stelae *con armi* as stelae *con ornamenti* (12 vs 13). Type II show that stelae *con armi* are roughly half as common as those *con ornamenti* (27 vs 50). Type II–III show a similar pattern (7:13). However, the pattern changes with Type III stelae (6 vs 24) and declines spectacularly thereafter. For Type IV (12 vs 116) and for Type V A (0 vs 37), V B (1 vs 40), and V C (0 vs 2). This suggests that when the stelae were first introduced, the graves of men and women were equally likely to be marked in this fashion but that the custom with regard to male graves changed quite rapidly, already declining by the middle of the 6th century BC, whereas stelae continued to be considered a suitable means of marking high status female graves for a much longer period. Certainly, the evidence would seem to support a change of practice over time but explaining it remains elusive.

CONCLUSION

The Daunian stelae were a striking way to commemorate the dead. The level of effort required to produce the stelae suggests that the burying community placed a high value on those singled out to receive this form of memorial. This alone is enough to establish the status of the individuals whose graves were marked in this fashion. If we strip out gender biases, deriving either from the imposition of Classical Greek ideas on North Apulian society or from the modern world, there is no compelling reason to argue that female status was derived by association with high status men.

If we accept that those whose graves were marked with stelae enjoyed a high status within their communities, related questions would be whether they also enjoyed power and, if they did, what form that power took (i.e. power over others, the power to achieve certain goals, or collective power working with others, cf. Allen 1998). Assessing power relations on the basis of archaeological evidence is difficult at the best of times, as the material signifiers of power may not have survived or be obvious even when they do. In the case of the stelae, where the relationship between the grave marker and the rest of the funerary assemblage has been lost, we can only speculate. The stelae decorated *con armi* show depictions of swords as well as armour. A sword is an offensive weapon that could have been used to impose an individual's will on other members of the community. Alternatively, it may have been a signifier of having played a role in serving the wider community. Thus, the same visual depiction can be interpreted as symbolising either power over others or of sharing a collective value system (power-with). Moreover, it is possible that swords are less about power in this context than masculinity.

When it comes to the stelae *con ornamenti*, there are no obvious symbols of power but who is to know what meanings were attached to jewellery or, indeed, even of the other patterning, representational or abstract, depicted on the stelae. It does seem likely that there were spheres of life in which women were especially prominent, including religion and weaving. It is highly plausible that there were hierarchies within these spheres and that women from elite families would have occupied the leading roles. However, there are no signs, which are obvious to the modern viewer, within the stelae themselves to support such contentions.

That said, the burying community, presumably members of the deceased's family, were able to exercise enough power to ensure that the graves of their relatives were marked with

stelae. Furthermore, they were every bit as willing, if not more so, to use that power to mark the graves of women as they were for men.

The evidence of the Daunian stelae suggests that the status of women in north Apulian society was similar to that argued by Saltini Semerari (2009) for Basilicata; indeed, we may hypothesise that such values were shared across indigenous south Italy. Women from élite families in northern Puglia enjoyed high status in their own right. In the late 7th century BC, it seems that men and women were equally likely to have their graves marked with a stele. By the middle of the 6th century BC it appears that the stelae had begun to fall from favour as a means of marking male graves, whereas they retained that role in respect of female graves. At the present time, we cannot explain why this change happened or why the stelae went out of production in the 5th century BC. Nevertheless, they are a striking reminder of a society with a different set of values from those of better known communities from Classical Greece and, indeed, our own.

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I thought of the dreadful word-play in my title before David Bowie's death. It was not, therefore, my intention to commemorate his passing in this way. However, given how much his work has meant to me throughout my life, I am happy to do so, though I wish I could have come up with something better.

NOTES

- 1 The issue of gender as it relates to the 'Daunian' stelae has been discussed on several occasions by Camilla Norman, notably in her 2009, 2011 and 2016 papers. The present paper comes at the same issue from a different methodological starting-point.
- 2 Most of the surviving stelae were recovered during rescue work undertaken by Silvio Ferri in the 1960s. Although this endeavour saved a huge number of fragments, it did not extend to detailed recording of their context. It seems likely that most were in secondary locations: re-used in walls and roads, etc. Consequently, only general site provenances are available for most of the surviving stelae. Smaller fragments continue to turn up from time to time on the surface of major sites, such as Arpi. As Norman (2009: note 1) has noted, some fragments from Ortona were found re-used in a later tomb, while the first stele ever recovered was said to have been found lying over a *fossa* grave from Salapia.
- 3 In Greek sources, three tribal names figure prominently in discussions of South-East Italy: the Daunians who occupy Northern Puglia, the Peucetians from Central Puglia, and Messapians who reside in the heel of Italy. The issue of possible archaeological correlates to these names has been discussed many times, notably in Whitehouse & Wilkins 1985 and Herring 2007a.
- 4 It is estimated that there are some 2000 surviving fragments of stelae, representing of the order of 1200 individual monuments (Yntema 2013: 81).
- 5 Out of 1211 items in Nava's (1980) catalogue, 78 are complete or fragmentary heads (6.4% of the sample). They are not included in the analysis presented in this paper, as too few heads are associated with bodies. However, on the rare occasions that heads are associated with bodies the conical head would seem to be associated with stelae *con ornamenti*. Seven stelae are undecorated and, therefore, not relevant to this study (0.6% of the sample). 494 items (40.8% of the total sample) are decorated and can be attributed to Nava's eight typological categories (Types I, II, II-III, IV, V A, VB, and V C). Of these, 360 (29.7% of the total sample) can be identified as being decorated either *con armi* or *con ornamenti*. The remaining 632 fragments (52.2% of the total sample) come from unattributed parts of stelae, which cannot be used in the present analysis. It should be noted, however, that many of the fragments are small and, therefore, one cannot presume that the 1211 pieces represent the remains of anything like 1211 discrete monuments.
- 6 For a good example of a hunting scene, see the reverse of a stele *con ornamenti* (inv. 1257; Nava 1980: 192, no. 986 B, Tav. CCCXXVII). For a scene of weaving, see the reverse of a stele *con ornamenti* (inv. 0699-0700; Nava 1980: 134, no 585 B, Tav. CLXIX); Nava does not definitively recognise that the two "enthroned" figures are probably weaving, Norman, however, does (2009: 43).
- 7 "When an archaeologist makes an interpretive statement about a person or group of one sex and their relationship to objects or society, they mentally switch the sex around and examine whether their interpretation changes. If it does, then further justification for the interpretation is needed. If the difference cannot be justified, then it cannot be made!" (Hurcombe 1995: 96).

- 8 Athenian views on the status of women were not necessarily typical of the Greek world (Blundell 1995: 113).
- 9 At the risk of imposing an analogy from a Greek source, we may call to mind the status of Teukros in Homer's *Iliad*. Teukros is the illegitimate son of Telamon, king of Salamis, and half-brother to the mighty, Aias. Although, he is clearly a member of the élite group and is loved by his half-brother, his status is somewhat different and decidedly lesser. Indeed, Agamemnon draws specific attention to Telamon's love for Teukros, despite his origins, as a tactic to urge him on to even greater efforts (*Il.* 8.283-285). Teukros is unsurpassed in the Greek contingent for his skill with the bow and is significant enough a hero to receive an *aristeia* (Book 8), yet in the passage just before it commences (*Il.* 8.266), he is compared to a child seeking its mother's protection in the way that he shelters behind his half-brother's shield.
- 10 Camilla Norman (2011: 152) has argued that it was women's ability to bear children that explains the evidence for tattooing that is found on some Daunian stelae (e.g. Fig. 3). If she is correct, it could be indicative of the high regard, in religious and symbolic terms, in which this specifically female ability was held.
- 11 Although dating to much later than the Daunian stelae, there is firm evidence for élite males from Northern Puglia. Strabo (6.3.4) refers to a "king of the Daunians", while various individuals with the name Dazos or derivatives thereof are documented on coin legends and inscriptions (in Messapic, Greek and Latin), from Arpi, Canosa, Ruvo, Salapia, and Tiati in Northern Puglia, from Brindisi and Herakleia further south, and from Greek sanctuaries at Delos and Dodona (Parlangèli 1960: 296). Probable members of same family are also mentioned by Livy (21.48.10; 24.45.32; and 26.38.6). Élite women are not so clearly documented. Such evidence is incompatible with the existence of a matriarchy.
- 12 If more of the stelae preserved the heads intact, it might help resolve this issue.

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