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## THE TIBER BETWEEN LATINIS AND ETRUSCANS

### IL TEVERE FRA LATINI E ETRUSCHI

*Gilda Bartoloni*

RIASSUNTO: Dopo 40 anni dal convegno “Il Tevere e le altre vie d’acqua del Lazio antico”, in cui con Giovanni Colonna affrontammo i confini dei Latini e degli Etruschi la nostra documentazione si è notevolmente arricchita con le scoperte a Vaccina e Casale Nuovo della presenza micenea e i nuovi scavi da Roma e dintorni.

Il quadro non sembra sostanzialmente cambiato: da una sostanziale omogeneità delle popolazioni a nord e a sud del Tevere a partire dallo scorcio dell’XI secolo emergono nette le differenze e le caratteristiche culturali degli Etruschi e i dei Latini e la nascita dei grandi centri come Tarquinia o Roma.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Tevere, Etruschi, Latini, mar Tirreno, *populi Albenses*

ABSTRACT: Forty years after the conference “Il Tevere e le altre vie d’acqua del Lazio antico”, in which Giovanni Colonna and I addressed the boundaries of the Latins and the Etruscans, our documentation has significantly expanded with the discovery of Mycenaean presence at Vaccina and Casale Nuovo and the new excavations from Rome and its surroundings.

The overall picture does not seem to have fundamentally changed: from a substantial homogeneity among the populations north and south of the Tiber up until the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, clear differences and cultural characteristics of the Etruscans and the Latins emerge thereafter, along with the rise of major centers such as Tarquinia or Rome.

KEYWORDS: Tiber, Etruscans, Latins, Tyrrhenian Sea, *populi Albenses*

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## THE TIBER BETWEEN LATINS AND ETRUSCANS\*

*Gilda Bartoloni*

In the Late Bronze Age, the attraction towards the lower course of the Tiber appears to have been common<sup>1</sup>: the river seems to play the same role in the life of the population on both banks<sup>2</sup>. This choice is reflected in the substantial cultural affinity of the communities on both sides. From the recent phase of the Bronze Age a strong affinity is observed in settlement options, in material culture that shows contacts with the Aegean world, and in funeral rituals.

As is well known, the transition from MBA to LBA marks a turning point in the ways of occupying the territory. Many small sites, sometimes seasonal and spread out in the territory, were abandoned and the transition to settlements on defended hills and plateaus (of no less than 2 hectares) took place. They were founded to control natural resources or nodal points of the territory<sup>3</sup> and selected for strategic purposes more functional to new needs.

Recent findings at Casale Nuovo (near Anzio) and Vaccina (near Cerveteri) seem to confirm how myths and rituals of the Aegean Bronze Age circulated widely in this region, as well as in southern Italy, and throughout the islands. However, archaeological evidence

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\* The text revisits, with some additional bibliographic references and more recent findings, the contribution “The Tiber between Latins and Etruscans”, presented in 2013 at the International Conference in Cambridge “Frontiers of the European Age,” with a regional focus on central Italy. Unfortunately, it was never printed, even if cited in subsequent works (e.g., *Ostraka XXII/XXIII*, 2013-2014, p. 193).

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the populations of the middle Tiber valley, see DI GIUSEPPE 2018.

<sup>2</sup> BARTOLONI 1986; COLONNA 1986.

<sup>3</sup> DAMIANI 2010.



from these two sites, analysed so far, refer to products from southern Italy and occasionally from the Peloponnese<sup>4</sup>.

Vaccina is located on the left bank of the river of the same name, where most of the evidence dates to the Recent Bronze Age (1325-1175 BC), attributable to the Sub-Apennine facies. This site yielded numerous fragments of fine wheel-made ware, which can be traced to Mycenaean-type workshops, technologically and stylistically<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 1). This “exotic” pottery testifies the importance of the Vaccina River, possibly navigable, and suggests a new role for this settlement<sup>6</sup>.

It does not seem unreasonable, albeit with the caution imposed by the available documentation, to propose the existence of a “territorial system”, already in the Recent Bronze Age. Within this system, Vaccina played the role of an outpost towards the sea for Monte Abbadone, a major well-defended site that survived until the Final Bronze Age<sup>7</sup>.

The well-known fragments from Monte Rovello, San Giovenale, Luni sul Mignone and Scarceta can now be regarded under this new perspective<sup>8</sup>. The metal workshop in Scarceta<sup>9</sup>, together with all the discoveries in the mining area of northern Latium<sup>10</sup>, confirms the hypothesis that linked the post-Mycenaean movements to skilled artisans (such as the *Gastarbeiter* according to Renato Peroni<sup>11</sup>). The wheel-made pottery, appearing sporadically, suggests isolated movements with no continuity in the area, unlike what happens in southern Italy<sup>12</sup>.

Metallurgical activity along the Tyrrhenian coast, as documented by hoards since the Early Bronze Age, is exemplified by the recent

<sup>4</sup> BETTELLI *et Alii* 2006; JONES *et Alii* 2014.

<sup>5</sup> BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a; BARBARO *et Alii* 2012b.

<sup>6</sup> BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a, pp. 20

<sup>6</sup> BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a; JONES *et Alii* 2014.3-229.

<sup>7</sup> BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a, p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a; JONES *et Alii* 2014.

<sup>9</sup> POGGIANI KELLER – RONDINI 2019; POGGIANI KELLER – RONDINI 2020.

<sup>10</sup> GIARDINO – POGGIANI KELLER 2012.

<sup>11</sup> PERONI 1983.

<sup>12</sup> BETTELLI *et Alii* 2006.

excavations at Punta Ala<sup>13</sup>. Here the remains of a settlement with evidence for copper processing and bronze working dating back to the Middle Bronze Age were unearthed. A few centimetres below the floor, a pit filled with copper processing residues and bronze fragments, as well as a pottery vessel, were discovered at a depth of approximately 30 cm. The pot contained its original contents, consisting of a mixture of mineral aggregates concretized into clusters – the ‘load’ of mineral ready for smelting.

Similarly, at Casale Nuovo, along the Astura River, fragments of fine ware painted in Aegean style were found together with sub-Appennine ceramics<sup>14</sup>. The slightly later Rimessone hoard documented a local metallurgical production of good quality<sup>15</sup>. Evidence of activities connected with bronze metallurgy are documented on the Capitoline Hill from the Final Bronze Age<sup>16</sup>. This represents the most ancient direct evidence of frequentation or even occupation of the site. An imposing structure reshaped the hill in the direction of the saddle of the Arx<sup>17</sup>: a reassessment of the materials from the Capitoline Hill has identified fragments of Italo-Mycenaean pottery<sup>18</sup>.

At the end of the Recent Bronze Age cremations were found both north of the Tiber at *Lucus Feroniae* and south at Cavallo Morto. At *Lucus Feroniae* recent discoveries by Flavia Trucco, Vincenzo d’Ercole, and others have revealed a small area (12×7 m) with 12 pit tombs containing cremations, some of which are evidently aligned, perhaps to create a circle<sup>19</sup>. Most of the burials (or at least the better-preserved ones) were protected by stone slabs forming a stone

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<sup>13</sup> ARANGUREN *et Alii* 2011, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> ANGLE *et Alii* 1993; ANGLE *et Alii* 2004a; BARBARO *et Alii* 2012a, pp. 232-233.

<sup>15</sup> DELPINO – FUGAZZOLA DELPINO 1979.

<sup>16</sup> GIARDINO 2022.

<sup>17</sup> CAZZELLA 2001.

<sup>18</sup> From contemporary residual levels, four Italo-Mycenaean fragments have been recovered. Chemical analyses conducted on clay samples suggest a regional or even local production: DAMIANI – PARISI PRESICCE 2019, pp. 265-266 (M. Bettelli), pp. 267-268 (I. Baroni, V. Copat), pp. 269-270 (R.E. Jones).

<sup>19</sup> TRUCCO – D’ERCOLE – CAVAZZUTI 2014.

‘cassetta’, similar to those discovered in the better-known proto-Villanovan cemetery in Etruria: Poggio la Pozza, at Allumiere, in the Tolfa mountains<sup>20</sup>. The bronze artifacts are numerous and well preserved: fibulae, razors, bracelets and rings together with a dagger<sup>21</sup>.

The necropolis of Cavallo Morto<sup>22</sup>, connected with the later fortified settlement of Colle Rotondo<sup>23</sup>, consisted of 40 tombs (the excavated portion), dating to an advanced stage of the Recent Bronze Age. The artifacts find *comparanda* with the ceramics found at Vaccina or at Narce, north of the Tiber, and at Colle della Mola, in southern Latium.

The changes in the settlement choices, noted above, continued at a slow pace in the Final Bronze Age. The prevalence of settlements on naturally defended hills becomes predominant. Alongside naturally fortified sites, areas connected with production activities continued along the seacoast or lake shores. This occupation pattern, especially connected with the production of salt, continued into the first phases of the Iron Age<sup>24</sup> and is well represented at Maccarese – Le Vignole<sup>25</sup>. Here relatively small platforms (5×5 m), isolated by wooden and vegetal fibre fences, similar to those of Poggiomarino di Langole on Sarno<sup>26</sup>, were discovered. Ceramic fragments were found connected with productive activities, sometimes involving the use of fire and sometimes not (metal, glass, deer horn, amber and ivory).

The consistency of some necropolises seems to confirm the hypothesis of a trend towards the formation of increasingly numerous

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<sup>20</sup> BARBARO 2010, pp. 253-2544.

<sup>21</sup> TRUCCO 2016.

<sup>22</sup> ANGLE *et Alii* 2004b.

<sup>23</sup> GUIDI – NOMI 2013.

<sup>24</sup> ARANGUREN *et Alii* 2014: they are usually interpreted as installations for salt production in analogy with the Atlantic coasts briquetage sites. More recently they are linked to activities related to the treatment and processing of fish, in view of its preservation.

<sup>25</sup> DE CASTRO *et Alii* 2018.

<sup>26</sup> CICIRELLI – ALBORE LIVADIE 2012.

communities, also evidenced by the extent of defended areas<sup>27</sup>. Illustrative of this phenomenon is the recent discovery of the Pozzuolo necropolis<sup>28</sup>: 25 burials have been uncovered, often damaged by modern plowing or clandestine excavation, but approximately 50 have been identified in total. Pozzuolo can thus be placed among the largest southern Etruria necropolises of the Final Bronze Age (Fig. 2). The materials seem to be assignable to the Final Bronze Age 3. The necropolis may belong to the settlement of the Final Bronze Age of Isola Farnese<sup>29</sup>, located no more than 700 meters away, where two structures have been investigated (Fig. 3), partly contemporary to the tombs and no more recent than Final Bronze Age 3, for the moment. Close comparisons can be made, for example, between the ceramics of Pozzuolo and the tomb-groups of the forum of *Lavinium* (13 at least)<sup>30</sup>. This similarity has already been stressed for the tombs from Ardea, Campo del Fico<sup>31</sup> and those of Sasso di Furbara<sup>32</sup> (Puntone al Norcino and others) in the Caere area, recalling the mythical tradition of Mezentius<sup>33</sup>. The substantial similarity of cultural aspects north and south of the Tiber is evident until the advanced phase of the Final Bronze Age. These analogies, observed also in settlement choice, have been attributed to a predominant role of the peoples of northern Latium all over Latium and Campania. The Tiber certainly does not appear as a definite boundary at this time<sup>34</sup>.

An exemplary naturally defended centre is the one on the Capitol, near the ford of Isola Tiberina<sup>35</sup>. On the other bank of the Tiber, more

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<sup>27</sup> BARBARO 2010, pp. 112-118.

<sup>28</sup> See DI GENNARO 2014.

<sup>29</sup> DI GENNARO 2019.

<sup>30</sup> IAIA 2010.

<sup>31</sup> DELPINO 1987.

<sup>32</sup> BARBARO 2010, p. 305.

<sup>33</sup> DELPINO 1978, pp. 26-27; DELPINO 1987, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Recently, DE SANTIS 2023. As Giovanni Colonna has demonstrated, ethnic and linguistic differences existed (COLONNA 1986, p. 92) and did not take place from one day to another, even if they were not perceived as a break.

<sup>35</sup> CAZZELLA 2001.

distant from the river, the settlement of Monte Roncione appears isolated at this time<sup>36</sup>.

Along the shore of Latium, more than half a dozen sites have been identified from Ostia to the Aniene, dating sometimes during the Final Bronze Age, but not at its end: typical Protovillanovan ceramics come from the settlements, mostly in secondary deposits of Acqua Acetosa Laurentina, Ficana, Decima, Casal di Perna and Ostia<sup>37</sup>.

Funerary evidence from the early stages of the Final Bronze Age consists of some burials found in the outskirts of Rome: one from Osteria del Curato, seven, already damaged in ancient times, from Quadrato di Torre Spaccata, connected, as we will see, to a settlement of the same period (Fig. 4); one from Ciampino in the Marcandrea area. Thirteen burials, also damaged, have been found in Acilia (Ficana) around the protohistoric settlement<sup>38</sup>. In most cases, the burials are devoid of grave goods; occasionally they contain a cup or another type of vessel, or some ornamental objects such as amber beads or large fibulae with two bends and two knobs (for example, in Ficana)<sup>39</sup>.

As a reference for this type of context, it seems appropriate to present the settlement and the necropolis (at least 7 tombs) of Quadrato di Torre Spaccata, at the XI km along the via Tuscolana excavated in recent years on behalf of the Archaeological Superintendence of Rome by Anna De Santis. A series of domestic evidence has been unearthed, including an elliptical hut with three post-holes on the long side, a drain pit, and a series of fireplaces<sup>40</sup>. The funerary set, consisting in a biconical ossuary is undoubtedly dated to the Final Bronze Age<sup>41</sup>.

North of the Tiber, the necropolis of Pozzuolo recalls that of Pozzo La Pozza in terms of the number of burials. The necropolis was likely

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<sup>36</sup> BARBARO 2010, p. 319.

<sup>37</sup> BARTOLONI 1986; MALMGREN 2001.

<sup>38</sup> DE SANTIS 2023 with references.

<sup>39</sup> DE SANTIS c.s.

<sup>40</sup> DE SANTIS 2007; MALVONE *et Alii* 2007. It is worth noting the fibula with a slightly thickened and lowered arch, found in the settlement (BARONI *et Alii* 2020).

<sup>41</sup> MALVONE *et Alii* 2007, pp. 94-97.

connected with the settlement of Monte Rovello which survived during the entire Final Bronze Age (BF2A-BF3B), with at least 100 excavated tombs<sup>42</sup>. This evidence has been related with the emergence of an advanced social and political organization. The excavations at Veii and Poggio La Pozza indicate that the necropolis was used for the greatest part of the Final Bronze Age, a continuity also observable in metallurgical production<sup>43</sup>.

In the following period (final stage of the Final Bronze Age, *i.e.* First Latium period), ancient Latium moves away from the orbit of southern Etruria and re-establishes its traditional connection with the southern Tyrrhenian regions. In southern Etruria there are necropolises probably used by entire communities; in Latium only small groups or individual cremation tombs are known, which do not reflect the real size of contemporary communities<sup>44</sup>. In Latium, this innovation is also recognized in the autonomous development of funeral rituals, which are still reserved exclusively for very few individuals: cremation, with entirely miniaturized grave goods, clearly aims to reproduce in every detail the sum of roles performed by the leaders of the communities<sup>45</sup>. In contrast, in Etruria, roles are not materially represented in the grave goods, from which weapons are systematically absent, and instead, ritual and symbolic elements appear, associated with miniaturized vessels and normal-sized personal ornaments<sup>46</sup>.

As we have seen, in Etruria settlements and necropolises are continuously used, as is well documented by funerary rituals and the decoration and morphology of the vessels. On the contrary, in the region of Latium throughout the entire First Period (BF3), great necropolises are lacking and only small groups of tombs are documented as in the previous phases<sup>47</sup>. The ritual was limited to a

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<sup>42</sup> BARBARO 2010, pp. 253-254 with references. The tombs found are likely part of a larger necropolis, especially towards the end of the period.

<sup>43</sup> DE ANGELIS 2010, p. 109.

<sup>44</sup> DE SANTIS 2023.

<sup>45</sup> DE SANTIS 2021.

<sup>46</sup> BARBARO 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Recently, DE SANTIS 2023; DE SANTIS c.s.

few individuals, generally less than ten, a number that obviously does not reflect the real size of contemporary communities. Burials with this particular ritual were probably reserved only for individuals holding the most important social and political roles, while the burial of the majority of the community, at least until the beginning of the Iron Age, did not occur in a specific space and according to a formally defined ritual.

Both north and south of the Tiber, funeral depositions are enriched with more containers<sup>48</sup> of symbolic value: bowls, boat-shaped vessels, a couple of *askoi*, double vessels. According to Renato Peroni, double vessels were the imitation of the rich imported objects used by the dominant classes such as tripods, cult trolleys or as the small cauldron set on a tripod from the Piediluco Contigliano hoard<sup>49</sup>. All these objects have been considered Cypriot from the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, the presence of chariots and double shields in the armories of Latium leaders should be referred to the Mycenaean world.

Despite the clearly recognizable common matrix, significant differences emerge between southern Etruria and Latium in the formal aspects and meaning of ritual: the Tiber serves as a border now with the Latin centers located on the river, the Etruscan ones at a certain distance (4/5 km)<sup>51</sup> (Fig. 5).

In Etruria the ceramic assemblages are miniaturized, while the ornaments are in real dimensions; furthermore, weapons are completely absent from male graves. It seems likely that Southern Etruria adheres to the ritual prohibition of depositing weapons. It does not seem possible, at least on the basis of the studies conducted so far, to recognize specific role indicators, particularly masculine, while women can be characterized by particularly rich grave goods. The miniaturized vessels in Etruria (Fig. 6) often have details that suggest a symbolic or ritual value (for example, double plastic elements with figurative elements). In Latium isomorphic reproductions of everyday

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<sup>48</sup> BARBARO 2010, p. 111, fig. 37.

<sup>49</sup> PERONI 1981.

<sup>50</sup> VAGNETTI 1974.

<sup>51</sup> COLONNA 1986.

vessels prevail, often in largely recurring functional associations<sup>52</sup>. Large vessels for food (jars) and pots for individual food consumption (cups and bowls) are the containers that appear most frequently.

In the Latium ritual, cremation with miniaturized grave goods clearly aims to faithfully reproduce the roles held by the leaders of the communities in every detail (Fig. 7). In contrast, in contemporary cremation tombs of southern Etruria (so-called *Allumiere facies*), hierarchical roles are not materially represented in the grave goods, and instead, ritual and symbolic elements appear, associated with miniaturized vessels and personal ornaments of normal size<sup>53</sup>.

There seems to be an almost conscious effort to get rid of the cultural and ideological influence from Etruria and the will of expressing and consolidating the establishment of a local cultural identity through the mortuary customs.

As known, the area of Colli Albani became the centre of the region: settlements and necropolises are concentrated between the territories of Grottaferrata, Marino, Castel Gandolfo and in the area that reached the Tiber. The other previously occupied sites were abandoned between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC<sup>54</sup>. Santa Palomba was not a proper necropolis, but rather a cultural reference point for the entire region, devoted to the burial of leaders, priests and some members belonging to different communities of the Ancient Latium<sup>55</sup>. This evidence may indicate that between the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age we are still dealing with small communities (*populi albenses?*), with a direct derivation from the Late Bronze Age<sup>56</sup>.

This scenario contrasts with what has been recently proposed by Mario Torelli<sup>57</sup> regarding groups of Protovillanovan culture in

<sup>52</sup> BIETTI SESTIERI – DE SANTIS 2012; DE SANTIS 2018.

<sup>53</sup> IAIA – PACCIARELLI 2012.

<sup>54</sup> BIETTI SESTIERI – DE SANTIS 2012.

<sup>55</sup> DE SANTIS 2021.

<sup>56</sup> DE SANTIS 2011a, 2011b, 2021.

<sup>57</sup> TORELLI 2009; TORELLI 2014; BARTOLONI 2024. Against the *communis opinio*, which has always imagined Latium being dominated by Etruscan culture, Mario Torelli sees a superiority of the Latins, considered at the end of the Bronze Age more powerful and prestigious than their neighbours.

Tuscany and Latium, expressing a culture with evidently low complexity in a clear subordinate position compared to the neighboring Latin *ethnos*<sup>58</sup>.

Turning now to the Tiber, in Etruria I will focus on Veii. The most recent excavations confirmed, also for Veii, the occupation of the plateau with a massive movement of population from the surrounding territory since the end of the Final Bronze Age. It is now possible to anticipate the Villanovan revolution to the end of the Final Bronze Age. Recent excavations at Campetti revealed that rampart fortifications, only on the side of the plateau not naturally well defended, began precisely in the Final Bronze Age (Fig. 8)<sup>59</sup>. The same

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According to him, Latium culture transmitted very significant cultural traits to the Protovillanovan facies, showing the clear hegemony exercised by Latin religion over the Etruscans. The period when this possible transmission took place is the Final Bronze Age, during which the Latium culture, as an expression of the highly structured and strongly warrior-like Protolatins, dominated over the less organic and less warlike Protovillanovan culture of the 12-11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. This fact can only be traced back to a time before the explosion of Villanovan culture, which was strongly characterized in military terms and endowed with a vigorous socio-economic power. Torelli's thesis is based on ethno-anthropological parallels, such as non-integration of artisans, especially metallurgists, into primitive societies. He explains the marginality of the Etruscan embryo, and therefore its subordination to the emerging Latin *ethnos*, through acceptance of Latin rituals and deities.

The original pre-eminence of the Protolatin world would be evidenced by the famous passage in which Hesiod (*Th.* 1011-1018) narrates about *Latinus*, *Agrios*, and *Telegonus*, sons of Circe and Odysseus, destined to rule over the Tyrrhenians. See also ERCOLANI 2012 and CERCHIAI 2020, who discuss the contextual implications of the Hesiodic passage from different perspectives.

<sup>58</sup> Several objections arise regarding the limited consideration of settlement and burial emergences throughout the late Bronze Age in Etruria, which did not fit well with a group of simple artisans even if immigrants: BARTOLONI 2014 or CERCHIAI 2014. Consensus on Torelli's hypothesis can be found, for example, in SASSATELLI 2019, pp. 17-18, BELLELLI 2021.

<sup>59</sup> BIAGI 2019.

chronology was suggested for tomb 838 at Casale del Fosso<sup>60</sup>, and by sporadic finds on the plateau and at Piazza d'Armi<sup>61</sup>.

After the abandonment of Isola Farnese and other sites in the area, such as Monte Roncione, the population concentrated on the plateau, also defining collective boundaries. The first intervention, starting from the oldest, was the creation of a deep ditch (width 5 m; depth 2.5 m) excavated on the tufa bank. It was explored through a very narrow transverse trench: it runs parallel to the edge of the plateau, has V-shaped profile, and its access is on the north side, at least. The intentional obliteration of the ditch, achieved through a massive filling of tufa, is followed by the establishment of an embankment, composed of alternating layers of earth more or less regularly interspersed with beds of stones and covering stones. These latter elements are connected to a supporting structure consisting of mighty rough-hewn tufa blocks (width 0.70 m; maximum preserved height 1 m), which must have also formed the outer front of the fortification, partly removed by subsequent defensive structures.

The foundation of this fortification was accompanied by a ritual culminating in a libation and the subsequent deposition of vessels<sup>62</sup>. This marks the beginning of the urban formation process of Veii<sup>63</sup>.

In my opinion, the proto-urban definition of Rome occurred a few generations later. Unlike the small settlement of Isola Farnese, which was abandoned not too late in the Final Bronze Age, the village of the Capitoline hill shows continuity of life. Between the Final Bronze Age and the beginning of the first phases of the Iron Age (I-IIA) production areas continued to be attested. Tombs dated at the beginning of the Early Iron Age are documented in the area of the Giardino Romano: excavators thought to have discovered a marginal sector of the settlement used for metallurgical production activities, considered dangerous due to the use of fire, alongside a burial area. Therefore,

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<sup>60</sup> BARBARO 2010, n. 219 with references.

<sup>61</sup> BARBARO 2010, n. 218 with references.

<sup>62</sup> BIAGI 2019.

<sup>63</sup> PIERGROSSI 2022.

unlike in the Forum, there would be no clear distinction between inhabited areas and burials<sup>64</sup>.

During these phases (I-IIA), the analysis of the archaeological record in Rome suggests the existence of a least two distinct villages, with their respective necropolises in the valley: on the Capitoline hill, Palatine (with a primary role). Probably a third, on the Quirinal, could be echoed in the Livian list<sup>65</sup>. Recent excavations at Caesar's Forum have confirmed the presence of distinct nuclei continuing up to the Latium period IIB<sup>66</sup>.

The fundamental turning point in Rome occurs in the following period, namely with the relocation to the Esquiline of the main burial area<sup>67</sup>. The settlement of the Palatine expands to include the Velia, encompassing the *Forum Romanum* and the Capitoline hill, as well as the Caesar's Forum<sup>68</sup>. During period IIB recent excavations revealed huts and especially workshops both on the Capitoline hill and at Caesar's Forum, together with the evidence of the *Germalus* at *Scalae Caci*, on the northern slopes of the Palatine beneath the *domus Augustana*, the *Equus Domitiani* and the *Regia*<sup>69</sup>.

At this time, we have to imagine a significant demographic increase in the main inhabited area with a principal necropolis. It seems that the areas of the united settlement might be the Palatine, the Velia, the Fora, and the Capitol, perhaps including the slopes of the Quirinale. The necropolises have been developing in relation to the main roads: the Esquiline, along the road leading to *Gabii* and *Praeneste*; the Quirinal, in connection with the path that become later the Via Salaria, towards the Sabine region<sup>70</sup>. By the end of this period, regardless of the interpretations of the latest discoveries, Rome, as other cities in Latium, was surrounded by earthen rampart<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> CAZZELLA 2001.

<sup>65</sup> BARTOLONI 2009.

<sup>66</sup> DE SANTIS *et Alii* 2010.

<sup>67</sup> DE SANTIS 2022.

<sup>68</sup> BARTOLONI 2009.

<sup>69</sup> CAZZELLA 2001; DE SANTIS *et Alii* 2010.

<sup>70</sup> BARTOLONI 2009.

<sup>71</sup> FONTAINE – HELAS 2016.

In Rome, we find the earliest example of proto-urban structuring of the *Latium Vetus*. Between the end of phase IIB and the beginning of phase III, Latium appears to be increasingly involved in new and intensified interregional contacts and exchanges in the central-southern Tyrrhenian area, likely due to the intensification of precolonial contacts and afterwards the foundation of the earliest colonies. This process enhances Etruria's interest in Campania, directly involving Latium in both land and maritime connections<sup>72</sup>. The innovations are first noticed in Rome, which becomes now the focal point in the region's development process, due to its advantageous position on the northwestern border of the region at the ford of the Tiber River on the Tiberine Island: this is the most favorable point for relations with Etruria, in very close proximity to Veii. Evidence of this role can be seen in the abundant imported or Greek-inspired ceramics found in the sacred area of Sant'Omobono and in the burials of the Esquiline necropolis<sup>73</sup>.

Previously abandoned sites along the Tiber, such as Ficana, Acqua Acetosa Laurentina, and Castel di Decima are reoccupied, fortified<sup>74</sup> and equipped with extensive necropolises, in competition with the establishment of Rome as a proto-urban centre<sup>75</sup>. The massive demographic and topographic growth of Rome, compared to other Latin settlements, has been explained precisely by adopting the territorial relationship model offered by Veii, involving the concentration of settlement in a single urban center<sup>76</sup>.

The Tiber assumes strong vitality for the first time<sup>77</sup>. While the Etruscans of Veii create ports and productive areas along the river, the

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<sup>72</sup> DE SANTIS 2022.

<sup>73</sup> Recently, DAMIANI – PARISI PRESICCE 2019, pp. 271-292.

<sup>74</sup> FONTAINE – HELAS 2016.

<sup>75</sup> BEDINI 2020; BARTOLONI – DE SANTIS 2021. The comparison with the process of urban formation in Etruria, supported by written sources, makes it highly unlikely to consider these minor settlements in the territory as being under Roman hegemony as early as the 8th century BC, see CIFANI 2020, p. 542.

<sup>76</sup> COLONNA 2001.

<sup>77</sup> COLONNA 1988, p. 452 e 468; COLONNA 1994, p. 351.

Latins establish their settlements precisely along its bank and attempt to occupy the opposite one, on several occasions. The location of the *Septem pagi* and the *Ager Vaticanus* seem to confirm this theory<sup>78</sup>. On its side, Veii not only consolidated its privileged relationship with *Fidenae*, a sort of gateway to *Gabii* and Campania, but also enhanced the inland access to the mouth of the Tiber and the riverbank towns of Latium, along the Galeria River, towards *Puilia Saxa* and the nexus of Ficana. From here both the *Salinae* and the nearby river port could be easily reached, as well as Castel di Decima and *Lavinium*<sup>79</sup>.

In the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the two centers of Castel Malnone in the Veientan territory<sup>80</sup> and Ficana<sup>81</sup>, still independent from Rome according to literary sources<sup>82</sup>, were situated right on the border of the two territories on the most advanced hills overlooking the Tiber, its estuary, and the coastal plains with the *salinae*, true outposts on the Tyrrhenian Sea<sup>83</sup> (Fig. 9). It was probably at the time, between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, that the *Veientes* took possession of the *Silva Maesia*, the largest of the coastal forests of Latium, apparently located on the Latin bank of the Tiber<sup>84</sup>, named after the Umbro-Sabine connections increased by the salt trade<sup>85</sup>.

The early presence of Greek imports along the Tiber route and the continuity with which they are distributed with original objects and

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<sup>78</sup> On the territory of Veii towards the sea, see DE CRISTOFARO – PIERGROSSI 2015-2016.

<sup>79</sup> COLONNA 2006.

<sup>80</sup> MOFFA – PIERGROSSI – SACRIPANTI c.s.

<sup>81</sup> BRANDT 2002.

<sup>82</sup> BARTOLONI – DE SANTIS 2021.

<sup>83</sup> Ficana was directly on a bend of the Tiber, Castel Malnone approximately 5 km away from the sea, like the majority of Etruscan sites that are located at a distance from the river or the sea.

<sup>84</sup> This, accepting a proposal from R.M. Ogilvie: ZEVI 2000, p. 234, nt. 23.

<sup>85</sup> CAMPOREALE 1987.

imitations throughout the course of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, presume a continuity of contacts that indicates secure landings<sup>86</sup>.

Centres like Ficana are populated and established as fortified sites when the river route is structured, connecting Veii and its hinterland with the sea and the maritime trades. The system was organized starting from Veii: among the richness of the Etruscan city, Dionysius (2, 55.4) highlights the “river boats laden with many goods”, an image that can be well represented by the engravings on the *kantharos* from via d’Avack, that has been recently discovered in the Veii territory (Fig. 10a-b)<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Recently KOUROU 2020. On Veii see BOITANI 2019; on Latium BARTOLONI 2005; M. Franco in DAMIANI – PARISI PRESICCE 2019, pp. 271-278.

<sup>87</sup> Recently, BENTINI *et Alii* 2019, pp.156-159, n. 95.5 (D. Rossi) with references.

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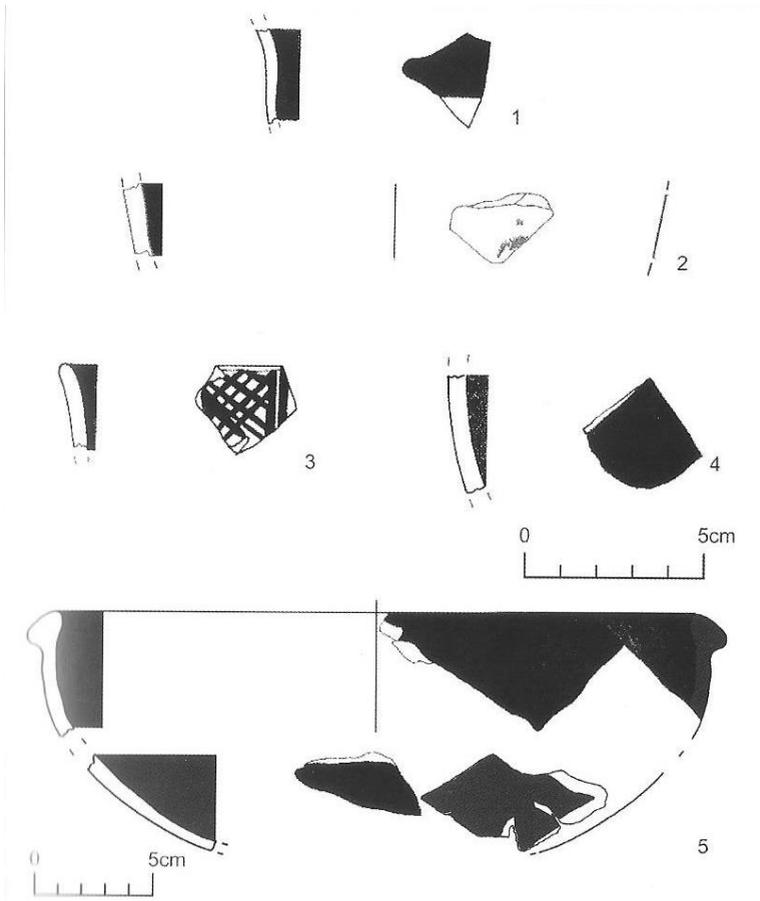


Fig. 1. Rome, Mycenaean pottery (after BARBARO et Alii 2012a)



Fig. 2. Pozzuolo (after DI GENNARO 2019)

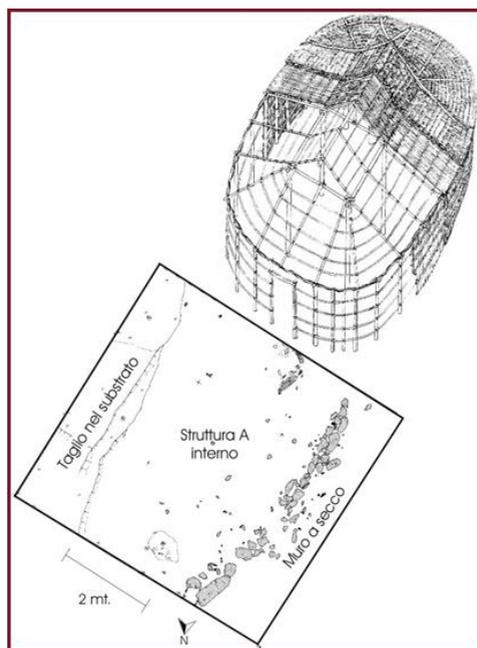


Fig. 3. Hut (structure B-BFA 1-2) (after BABBI et Alii 2003)

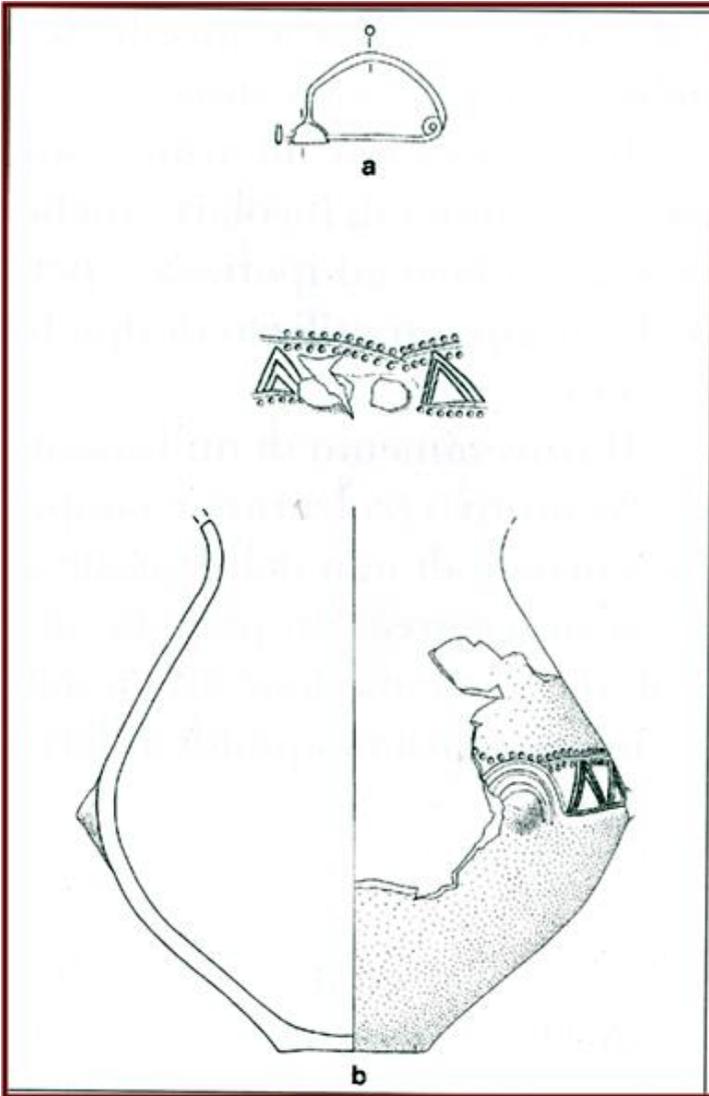


Fig. 4. *Quadrato* (Rome): a) fibula from the settlement; b) tomb 7, funerary urn, excavation by A. De Santis (after MALVONE et Alii 2007)

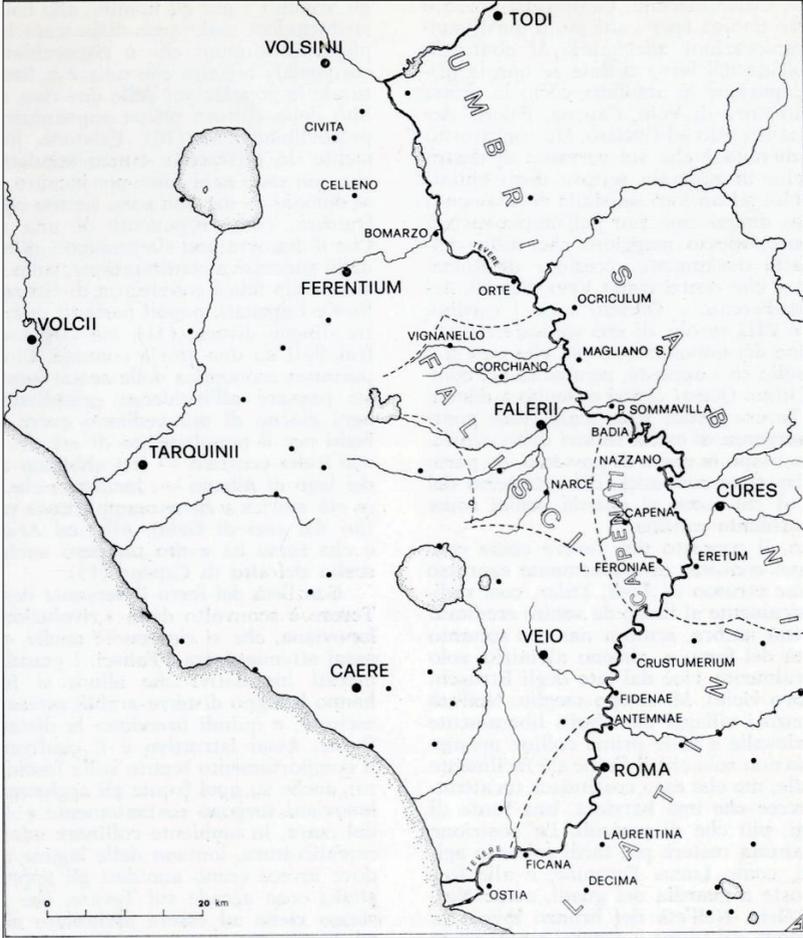


Fig. 5. The Tiber between Latins and Etruscans (after COLONNA 1986)

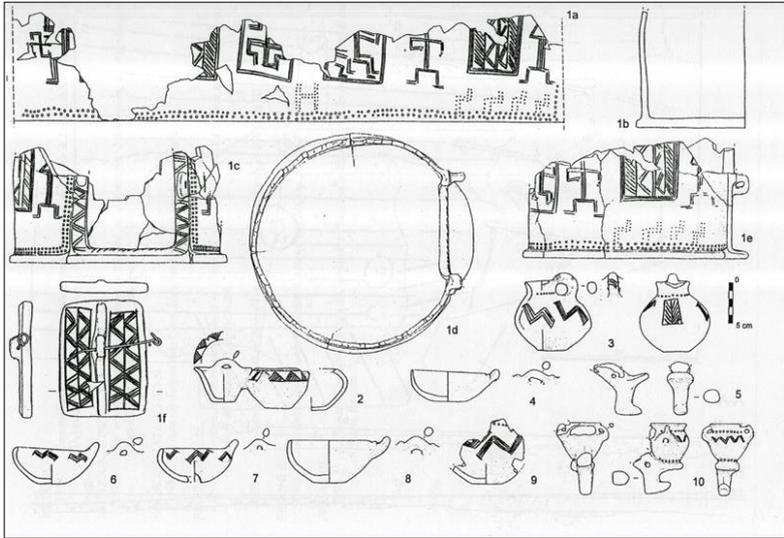


Fig. 6. Montetosto Alto (Cerveteri): tomb 1, excavations by F. Trucco (after TRUCCO et ALII 2000)



Fig. 7. Rome, Foro di Cesare, tomb 2 (after DE SANTIS)

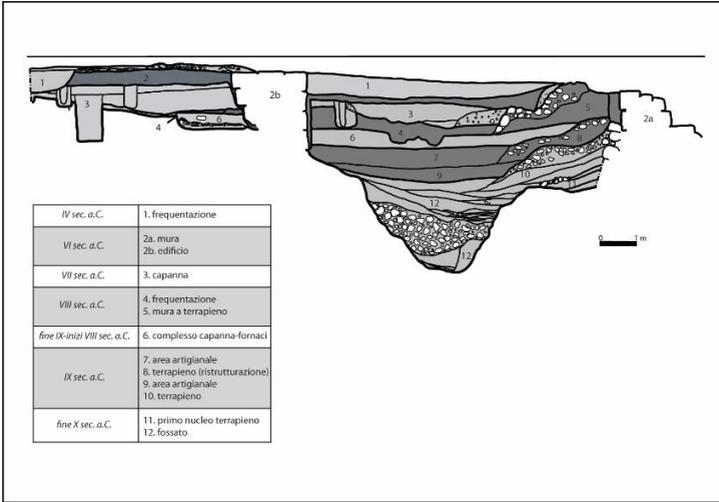


Fig. 8. Veii, Campetti: rampart fortifications (after BIAGI 2019)

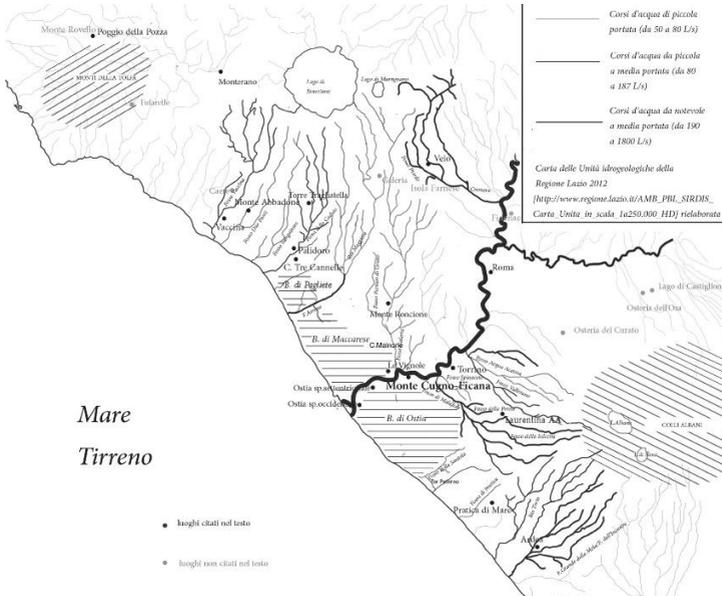
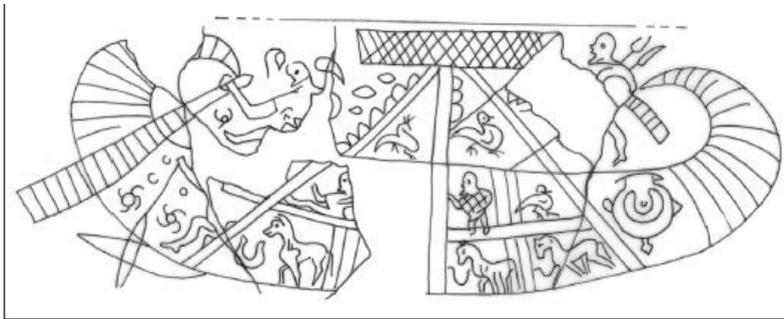


Fig. 9. The Tiber and the Salinae (revised after MAGAGNINI 2021)



*Fig. 10. Territory of Veio, necropolis via d'Avack: Kantharos (after ARIZZA et Alii 2013)*