

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF EARLY STATE IN ITALY\*

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## ABSTRACT

*The main cultural change in central and northern Italy protohistoric communities between 1000 and 500 B.C. is the appearance of the first cities and of a state society.*

*The A. analyzes the archaeological correlates of this phenomenon (settlement structure, burials, cult places, and ethnicity), enunciating three succeeding phases:*

*1) Pre-state society with a complex social differentiation and the first nucleation of settlement, a widespread type of organization during the Final Bronze Age 3 (the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).*

*2) Initial early state (or, adopting the terminology of Leonid Grinin, early state analogue) a phase beginning with a sudden change marked, overall, by the birth of protourban centres and the first outline of hierarchical settlement system but, at the same time, by the evidence of a heterarchical organization of the élites reflected in the peculiar type of management of the big centres, subdivided in territorial tribes (the curiae of the Roman tradition) and in the funerary record.*

*There is also some evidence of organised ritual activities and, in the late phase, of increasing social differentiation coupled, in the territorial organization, with the establishment of a more hierarchical settlement pattern.*

*This type of society is well documented, between the Final Bronze Age 3 and the early Early Iron Age 2 (1000–830 ca. B.C.), in Etruria and Latium, in the Early Iron Age 2 (830–750 ca. B.C.) at Bologna, Verucchio and in north-eastern Italy, in late EIA 2 – early EIA 3 (800–625 ca. a.C.) in north-western Italy.*

3) *Early state, characterized by a definitive urban systematization (= construction of the first buildings, evidence of road systems, new complex fortifications, etc.) of the biggest centres, evidence of a strongly hierarchical society with an élite of warriors and rich women at the top of which it is often possible to recognize real 'kings', organized religion with priests and civic cult sanctuaries.*

*The transition to the early state can be dated to the late EIA 2 (800–750 B.C.) in Etruria and Latium, to early EIA 3 (750–700) at Bologna and Verucchio, between EIA 3 and EIA 4 (700–600 ca. a.C.) in northern Italy*

In the 1984 handbook on *Prehistoric Europe* the authors state that in the Mediterranean 'Contacts with Greeks and Phoenician brought a new source of wealth and a new way of expressing it. From the late eighth century the variation in grave wealth increases enormously, and imported items from Greece and Levant are regularly found in the richest graves... The climax of this phase occurred in Italy in the seventh century... What *followed* in all these areas was a new form of social organization, the state...' (Champion *et al.* 1984: 259; italics are mine). A similar perspective permeates a famous 1993 article by Andrew Sherratt, where it's possible to read that by 750 B.C. the contacts with Phoenicians and Greeks '... were initiating a fundamental transformation of peninsular Italy which was to lead to the urbanization of Etruria' (Sherratt 1993: 39).

These quotations from English literature illustrate quite well the prevailing opinion (though now with the same exceptions, like the recent book of Robert Chapman on the *archaeologies of complexity* [Chapman 2002]) on the nature of the pristine Italian early states in the middle Tyrrhenian area: as a matter of fact, the most widely accepted explanation for their emergence is the contact of local communities with the first Greek and Phoenician colonists, bearers of a highly civilized culture.

This diffusionist approach matches very well with the Classical Archaeology and Ancient History tradition of Italian studies; nevertheless, thanks to the enormous progresses of field archaeology and to the researches of prehistorians we can today outline a totally different pathway toward state formation in peninsular Italy.

The most evident phenomenon is the emergence, between the end of the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, in Central

Italy, in Campania, and in Northern Italy, of many protourban centres, whose main characteristics are the radical change in size with respect to the settlements of the preceding phases with a corresponding growth of their functions and, at the same time, their transformation in true urban sites in the following phases (for a list of the biggest protourban sites, with some indications on the absolute chronology here adopted, see Tables 1 and 2).

This 'event' took place for the first time in Etruria, at the turn of the millennium, between the end of the Bronze Age (= FBA 3) and the beginning of the Iron Age (= EIA 1). More than 70 proto-villanovan settlements (average size 5–6 ha) disappeared with the accompanying concentration of people in the Villanovan big protourban centres (average size more than 100 ha), corresponding to the future Etruscan cities of *Veii*, *Caere*, Tarquinia, Vulci and *Volturni* (the present Orvieto); we can add to this list *Visentium*, on the Bolsena lake, the only centre destined to decline in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Each centre resulted from the aggregation of 15–20 villages of the preceding Final Bronze Age period (di Gennaro 1982, 1986; di Gennaro, Peroni 1986; Peroni 1988, 1989, 2000; Bietti Sestieri 1997; di Gennaro, Guidi 2000; Pacciarelli 2000).

With regard to the internal structure of the protourban sites, the old idea of Ward-Perkins concerning the existence at Iron Age *Veii* of two or three villages, corresponding to the Villanovan cemeteries, unified into a protourban centre only in the second phase (Ward-Perkins 1961), has been definitively overcome, thanks to the surveys performed on the plateau in the late Seventies by Marcello Guaitoli and his collaborators (Guaitoli 1981) and to analogous researches at Vulci (Pacciarelli 1991a, b; 2000) and Tarquinia (Mandolesi 1994). Villanovan pottery found in many parts of the plateau shows a distribution totally inconsistent with the theory of villages (in this case, one could expect to find 'clusters' of ceramic material); at the same time, the distribution does not demonstrate the existence of a capillary occupation, giving rather the idea of a scanty but diffused occupation that has been defined as 'leopard spotted' (Guidi 1989). This picture of huts divided by more or less empty spaces, well detectable in each big protourban centre (Fig. 1), unfortunately is still largely based on surveys; it has been however interpreted, using ancient sources about the Romulian distribution of land to the elder males (*pater-*

*familias*), as the archaeological correlate of a situation in which each family owned a plot of land (Colonna 1988; Pacciarelli 1991a). The recent excavations of *Caere* (Izzet 2000) and Tarquinia (Bonghi Jovino 2000; Locatelli 2001) have demonstrated that cult sites and some graves (often those of children) were also present on the plateaux among the huts (Fig. 12); from these data we can imagine a structure based on territorial tribes (the *curiae* of the Roman tradition), perhaps coinciding with people coming from the Final Bronze Age territorial districts responsible for the formation of each protourban centre (Carandini 1997).

At first sight, the territory controlled by each centre in the EIA 1 seems to be, with some exception, 'empty' (Ceci, Cifarelli 1992, 1995). The discovery of coastal sites specialized in salt production, north and south of the Tiber, dated between the Final Bronze Age and the EIA 1 (Pacciarelli 2000; Attema *et al.* 2003), allowed to demonstrate, yet in this period, the importance of the control of each protourban centre on a resource of primary importance.

In the Early Iron Age 2 (= EIA 2) the situation changed again, with the fulfillment of occupation on the biggest plateaux which coincided with a new colonization of the country, directed by the protourban centres and resulting in the creation of a strongly hierarchized settlement system (Iaia, Mandolesi 1993). During the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. we can demonstrate the existence, in some of these centres, of the first tufa defence walls and buildings. In Tarquinia there is evidence of a foundation rite found under early seventh century buildings, with the votive deposition of three spectacular bronze power insignia, the axe, the shield and the lituus-shaped trumpet (Bonghi Jovino, Chiaromonte Trerè 1997; Bonghi Jovino 2000): this exceptional discovery again demonstrates that, already by the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., these centres had reached a full urban character.

The process is different south of the Tiber, where it consists of the progressive enlargement of settlements on plateaux occupied from the Late or even Middle Bronze Ages that between EIA 1 and the beginnings of EIA 2 reached a protourban dimension, even if on a minor scale (average size 40 to 60 ha) (Pacciarelli 2000; Guidi 2003).

A more ancient development seems to be documented at *Lavinium* (the modern Pratica di Mare), where recent excavations demonstrate that during the end of the Final Bronze Age the

graves, originally on the plateau and corresponding to the first, little hamlet, were located outside the perimeter of the future Latin city, suggesting that the entire surface had already been assigned to the settlement (di Gennaro, Guidi 2000).

The other important exception to this picture is Rome, where the formation of the city can be defined as a synoecism process (Guidi 1982). After a long phase, characterized by different villages (one, recently excavated on the Capitol Hill, begun yet in the Middle Bronze Age, a date recalled also in the literary tradition [Cazzella 2001]) and relative graveyards, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the displacement of the Forum necropolis on the Esquiline hill coincided with a definite formation of a unitary centre, the size of which can be estimated about 150 ha (Fig. 2), comparable to that of the Villanovan protourban centres (Carandini 1997). The recent excavations by Andrea Carandini have led to the important discovery of a defence system of the Palatine hill (ditch and wall) dated to the last quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It is worth remembering that, if the 'new' absolute chronology is accepted, this defensive system can be dated around 750 B.C., a traditional period (repeatedly mentioned by ancient sources) of the Romulian foundation of the city. As a matter of fact, the urban phase, beginning in the late eighth century B.C., is characterized, in Latium, by a further enlargement of cities. So, in the EIA 3 Ardea and *Gabii* reached 80 ha, Rome 300 ha. A recent excavation in the *Meta Sudans* area brought to the light an impressive stratigraphy of ancient roads near a sanctuary of the *Curiae*: the most ancient are datable at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Panella, Zeggio 2004).

The archaeological record of Northern Etruria, under this point of view, is still poorly known, also if Vetulonia has an extension of 35–40 ha in the EIA 1 and other centres may have gained a 'protourban' status in the course of the EIA 2; the result of recent excavations demonstrate that Chiusi, between EIA 2 and Early Iron Age 3 (= EIA 3), reached the considerable size of 120 ha (Pacciarelli 2000).

The Thyrrhenian area has to be considered the 'core' of urban formation between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. In the 'peripheral' areas (Sabine territory and middle Adriatic area), if we exclude the controversial case of Fermo (a Villanovan foundation?) and Ancona, a centre probably reaching a considerable size in the EIA 2,

this process appears, on a minor scale and with different characteristics, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. (Bistolfi *et al.* 1996; Guidi, Santoro 2003). One example is the Sabine city of Cures, where I excavated between 1981 and 1993. Here, the original settlement, dated between the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., is a 1 ha hamlet, located on a small hill at the confluence of two watercourses; at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. the settlement already covered two other hills, reaching the dimension of 25–30 ha. To this period belongs a very well preserved hut where at least 60 vases were found, many of them belonging to one of the early banquet services, well-known in the succeeding Orientalizing period, accompanied by the only examples of Greek imported pottery found on the site (Guidi *et al.* 1996; Guidi *forthcoming*).

Guillermo Algaze has demonstrated that the creation of outposts is a characteristic of the early states from the beginning of their formation (Algaze 1993). As a matter of fact, the third type of protourban centres are the ‘colonies’ created in the Early Iron Age by Villanovan people in Campania (Pontecagnano, Capua and Sala Consilina) and in Emilia-Romagna (Bologna and Verucchio). In Campania, we can note how Capua and Pontecagnano (respectively 180 and 80 ha) are the only protourban centres of Southern Italy in the EIA 1 (Pacciarelli 1994). More important, for the subject of this paper, is the creation of an outpost at a strategical geographical junction, such as the site of Bologna.

Probably formed by little groupings of huts, this centre rapidly developed, reaching a size of about 300 ha during the EIA 2 – a size reached by Rome only in the following century – when many other smaller centres around it disappeared (Fig. 3). In the graveyards there is evidence of a well-developed road-system (Sassatelli 1988, 1992), while very recent excavations are revealing a complex fortification (von Eles and Peroni, pers. comm.); even more important is the well-known S. Francesco hoard, dated between EIA 2 and 3. Containing 15,000 bronze objects (for a total weight of 14 quintals of bronze), S. Francesco is the greatest European hoard. At the time of its discovery, in 1888, it was interpreted as a ‘communal’ bronze deposit; Giovanni Colonna has studied the inscription on a bronze ingot, interpreting it as a person's name, the proof, according to him, that the immense quantity of bronzes was owned by a single person or a family (Colonna 1986).

The centre of Verucchio, in Romagna, a well-defended site whose estimated size is 50 ha, with a necropolis containing typically Villanovan pit tombs, also arose in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The excavations in the settlement area brought to light three bronze shields (an impressive analogy with the Tarquinia votive deposition) of the EIA 2 and a big 'ritual' pit whose utilization began in the same period (Sassatelli 1996).

Beyond the Po river, surveys and excavations are revealing a very complicated framework of developments and collapses rather barely explainable with the old idea of a diffusion of urbanism from Etruria.

In the Final Bronze Age we know, in Northern Italy, some complex polities with big central places (in some case more than 50 ha of size!), evidence of craft activities and imported items, as Frattesina, Montagnana, near Padua, Casalmoro and, further west, Badia Pavese (Arenoso Callipo, Bellintani 1994; Pearce 1996; Bianchin Citton *et al.* 1998; De Marinis 1999). These polities declined at the end of the period or at the beginning of EIA 1, giving space to the formation of the first protourban centres.

In north-eastern Italy, the core of the Venetian area, Padua was characterized, in the EIA 1, by limited and dispersed occupation, while Este, previously occupied by a Final Bronze Age settlement, between EIA 1 and the EIA 2 saw a total reorganization of the settlement. A beginning of occupation at the end of Final Bronze Age seems to characterize the centre of Oppeano Veronese, where recent surveys conducted from the author allowed to reconstruct a settlement size, between EIA 1 and EIA 2, of more than 80 ha (Fig. 4). Some other centres, like Concordia and, especially, Oderzo, in the north-eastern fringe of the area, show in this period a well-structured plan (Malnati 1996b, 2000; Malnati *et al.* 1999; Guidi 1998; Ruta Serafini 2002; Candelato *et al.* 2002; Guidi, Peloso 2004; Guidi *et al.* 2005).

In the EIA 2, while these sites acquire the status and the size of a protourban centre (Oderzo, with the evidence of roads and craft quarters 50 ha, Concordia 40 ha) the real central places of the area become the big, unitary settlements of Este (100 ha, Fig. 5A; Malnati 2000; Ruta Serafini 2002) and Padua.

In this last site, the excavations and other researches made following the transformations of the city in the last 15 years allowed one deeper understanding of the urban formation processes.

A careful reconstruction of the paleoenvironment demonstrates that the settlement occupied two opposing bends (today only partially detectable) of the river Bacchiglione (Fig. 6A). In the light of the recent discovery of a graveyard (Fig. 6A/15 and 6B/3), it's now possible to reconstruct a hypothetical settlement area (Fig. 6B) of 120 ha. Traces of at least two perpendicular streets were also detected (Fig. 7A) (Balista, Ruta Serafini 2004; Ruta Serafini, Tuz-zato 2004; Cupitò 2004).

In the EIA 3 Altino, near the present Venice lagoon, reaches the extension of 100 ha. Between EIA 3 and the Early Iron Age 4 (= EIA 4) the formation – on a minor scale – in the region east of the river Tagliamento of new protourban centres, such as Palse (40 ha), Montereale Valcellina (more than 20 ha), and Sticna (30 ha) seems to indicate a sort of core-periphery relationship between areas corresponding to the present Veneto and the territories between Friuli and Slovenia (Dular 1994; Cassola Guida 1996; Protostoria e Storia 1999; Ruta Serafini 2002).

A developed urban organization, with a district devoted to trade and craft activities and the creation of new cross-roads, is postulated for Padua in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Fig. 7B) At the same time, a careful reconstruction of the Este archaeological record in EIA 4 shows a well-structured plan, with 'blocks' of buildings and roads connected with a 'crown' of cult-sites around the city (Fig. 5B) (Malnati *et al.* 1999; Ruta Serafini 2002; Balista, Ruta Serafini 2004).

In north-western Italy, an area occupied by Iron Age Golasecca culture, the first significant nucleation of settlement is documented in the EIA 2 in the 80 ha site of Castelletto Ticino (Fig. 8), on a height dominating the river Ticino (Gambari 2004). Even more impressive is the development of the protourban centre of Como (Fig. 9), risen in the Final Bronze Age 3 and acquiring a hegemonic role yet in the EIA 2. Raffaele De Marinis has demonstrated that here, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., it is possible to identify a settlement area of more than 150 ha (de Marinis 1996, 2004; Malnati 1996a; Gambari 2004).

If we compare the settlement evidence with the data derived from the burials, the picture will appear apparently contradictory.

As a matter of fact, many graveyards of FBA 3 show an evident hierarchical pattern, with few tombs displaying an impressive amount of wealth and in some cases – like the grave that I excavated at Le Caprine, near Guidonia, which was double the size of the oth-



ers and contained a very rich furniture in a wooden box, with more than 50 miniature objects, belonging to a 2-year-old baby girl – a clear evidence of the inheritance of rank (Pacciarelli *et al.* 1996; Pacciarelli 1998; Damiani *et al.* 1998; di Gennaro, Guidi 2000).

In the EIA 1 and in the early EIA 2, the periods contemporary to the formation of the first protourban centres in peninsular Italy, the funerary record displays, on the contrary, notwithstanding the existence of furnitures with precious material or imported bronzes, an ‘egalitarian’ character, with prevailing sex and/or age distinctions (a famous example is the Latial graveyard of Osteria dell'Osa [Bietti Sestieri 1992]; for a different opinion, see Pacciarelli *et al.* 1996; Pacciarelli 2000).

This evidence, not dissimilar from analogous processes detected in the archaeological record of ancient early states (*e.g.* the Greek *poleis* or Mesopotamia), needs to be interpreted.

With regard to the Villanovan and Latial situation some scholars viewed this fact as the result of a ‘democratic’ process coinciding with the distribution of land to each family, as previously mentioned (Peroni 1989, 1996; Carandini 1997), others explained the apparent ‘isonomy’ of the earliest graveyards as a careful ideological masking of social differences (Guidi 2000). On the ground of the peculiar process of demographic agglomeration that gave rise to the protourban sites it's possible to suggest a further interpretation: the reflection, in the burial customs, of a sort of heterarchical organization, with the functions of government jointly held by the élites coming from the villages incorporated in the new big centres (di Gennaro, Guidi 2000).

The appearance, during the EIA 2, of rich warrior and women graves throughout Central and Northern Italy (Fig. 10) marks the evolution toward a strongly hierarchical society (Pacciarelli *et al.* 1996; Morigi Govi *et al.* 1996; Boiardi, von Eles 1996; Bartoloni 1997). The end of this process, characterized by true ‘regal’ graves, like the famous warrior tomb in Tarquinia (the end of the Early Iron Age 2), the Verucchio tomb with a wonderful wooden throne (the beginning of the Early Iron Age 3), the rich tombs with decorated bronze buckets and lids of Bologna and Este (during or at the end of Early Iron Age 3), the two rich warrior graves of Sesto Calende, in north-western Italy (the transition between the EIA 3 and 4) significantly coincides, in each area, with the definitive affirma-

tion of a mature urban and statal structure (Capuis 1993; Balista, Ruta Serafini 1998; von Eles 2002; Fulminante 2003; Bartoloni 2003; de Marinis 2004).

The third set of archaeological correlates of these processes regards the religion.

An opinion shared among scholars was that in Etruria and in Latium, before the stone built temples of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the protohistoric cult sites had been open-air sanctuaries. In the article on the cult practices of ancient Latium published in 1980, I already noted how many Latial votive deposits associated with temples (also at Rome) contained materials of the late EIA 2 and that, at the same time, in many cases the excavations brought to light proto-historical huts under the temples (Guidi 1980). A clear demonstration of this fact comes from *Satricum*, where it is possible to appreciate the central position of the hut under the temple (Fig. 11) and where we have hut-shaped clay temple models. Also at Ardea, under the archaic temple, a group of huts with a bigger one in the central position can be recognized (Crescenzi, Tortorici 1988; Guidi 1989–1990, 2000, 2004).

In the excavations made by Maria Bonghi Jovino, in Tarquinia, we can detect, in the same area, the following sequence:

- 1) open air cult site dated between the end of Final Bronze Age and EIA 1;
- 2) hut, very similar to the *Satricum* one, of the EIA 2;
- 3) hut-shaped temple with stone foundations and precinct associated with the aforementioned votive deposition of bronze axe, shield and trumpet, dated at the very beginning of EIA 3 (Bonghi Jovino 2000; Locatelli 2001).

One of the results of the recent English excavations in Cerveteri, in a sacred area of the archaic period, was the identification of some impressive huts (Fig. 12), again interpreted as structures with a ritual function (Izzet 2000). At *Veii* a big oval hut was found under the archaic sanctuary of Portonaccio (Colonna 2002: 146–147).

In conclusion, during the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. we can perceive the existence, in many of the Etruscan and Latial protourban centres, of the first ‘civic’ sanctuaries. At the same time, a careful examination of the grave furnitures (and what we know from the written sources on the archaic Latin religion) between FBA 3 and EIA 2 allows us to detect, in the archaeological

record, some interesting male and female graves that indicate a progressive splitting between leadership and ritual functions and the consequent emergence of cult activities:

1) the incineration male warrior graves from *Lavinium*, Rome and surroundings of FBA 3 and the beginning of EIA 1 with miniature shields very similar to the *ancilia* (Fig. 13), the shields of the *Salii* (a group of priests of archaic Rome), whose full-size examples are known from a famous late EIA 2 grave (Fig. 14) from *Veii* (Colonna 1991; Bietti, De Santis 2003);

2) the votive clay statuettes (offerings or cult images) of Latin early EIA 1 male and female graves (Bietti Sestieri 1992);

3) an EIA 1 female grave, found in the English excavations (Fig. 12), carefully saved and protected in the construction of the Cerveteri archaic sanctuary (Izzet 2000);

4) a rich female grave of EIA 2 in the Ardea sanctuary (Crescenzi, Tortorici 1988);

5) the recent discovery on the *Veii* acropolis, Piazza d'Armi, of a male fossa grave (without furniture) preserved in a EIA 1 hut, interpreted as a very peculiar cult-site (Bartoloni 2002–2003).

Apart from the aforementioned four-metres deep pit with many beautiful bronzes whose deposition began in EIA 2, found in the central area of the Verucchio settlement (Sassatelli 1996), the best evidence for a gradual increase of the importance of cult activities comes from north-eastern Italy.

Here, also if the first miniature pottery found in votive depositions is dated to EIA 2 (Dämmer 1986; Capuis 1993), a real evidence of the presence of 'civic' sanctuaries, strategically located around the biggest centres is now demonstrated for Este in EIA 4 (again, the period of the definitive urban evolution) (Ruta Serafini 2002).

A preliminary interpretation of the data here briefly reviewed brings us to identify in the better known geographical areas (middle Tyrrhenian area, Emilia-Romagna, north-eastern Italy) three distinct phases:

1) Pre-state society with a complex social differentiation and the first nucleation of settlements, a widespread type of organization during the Final Bronze Age.

2) Initial early state (or, adopting the terminology of Leonid Grinin, *early state analogue* [Grinin 2003]), a phase beginning

with a sudden change marked, overall, by the birth of protourban centres and the first outline of hierarchical settlement system but, at the same time, by the evidence of a heterarchical organization of the élites reflected in the peculiar type of management of the big centres, subdivided in territorial tribes (the *curiae* of the tradition) and in the funerary record.

There is also some evidence of the first organization of ritual activities and, in a late period of this phase, of increasing social differentiation coupled, in the territorial organization, with the establishment of a more hierarchical settlement pattern.

Another important feature is a strong differentiation of material culture between the different geographical districts, more or less coinciding with the *ethne* (Etruscans, Latins, *Veneti*, etc.) of the historical tradition (Pallottino 1981; Torelli 1988; D'Ercole *et al.* 2002).

This type of society is well documented, between the Final Bronze Age and the early EIA 2, in Etruria and Latium, in EIA 2 at Bologna, Verucchio and in North-eastern Italy, in late EIA 2 in North-western Italy.

3) Early state, characterized by the following features:

- a definitive urban systemation (= the construction of the first buildings, evidence of road systems, new complex fortifications, etc.) of the biggest centres;

- an evidence, in the funerary record, of a strongly hierarchical society with an élite of warriors and rich women in the top of which it is often possible to recognize real 'kings';

- an organized religion with priests and civic cult sanctuaries.

The last but not the least, is documented an early spread of writing in each area, a short time before this phase.

The transition to the early state can be dated to the late EIA 2, in Etruria and Latium, to early EIA 3 at Bologna and Verucchio, between EIA 3 and EIA 4 in Northern Italy.

In no more than four centuries (accepting the new chronology between 1000 and 600 A.C.) this type of society was well established in Central and Northern Italy, while in Southern Italy, in Sicily and in Sardinia an analogue evolution took place only due to the Greek and Phoenician colonizers.

The autochthonous elites certainly didn't live in isolation, as the rich Orientalizing grave furnitures and the spread of the Greek style of life (symposia, heroic ideology, etc.) from EIA 2 onwards demonstrate.

As a matter of fact, the spread of Greek influence operated at the ideological level, providing the Italian Iron Age élites with the kind of legitimacy they needed to optimize their leadership: in other words it was the result, not the cause of the formation of the first state societies.

## NOTE

\* A paper dealing with the same subject was published some years ago in *Acta Archaeologica* (Guidi 1998). I must deeply thank the organizers of the 2004 Moscow Conference on *Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations* for the kind invitation to give a paper on the same argument, compelling me to change and to update the first version.

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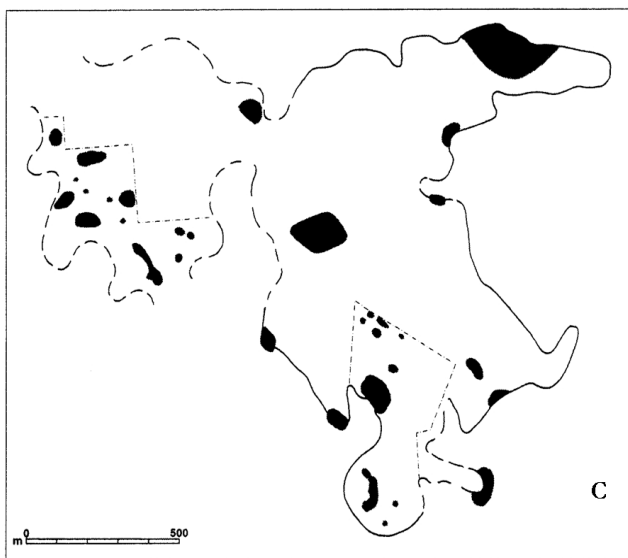
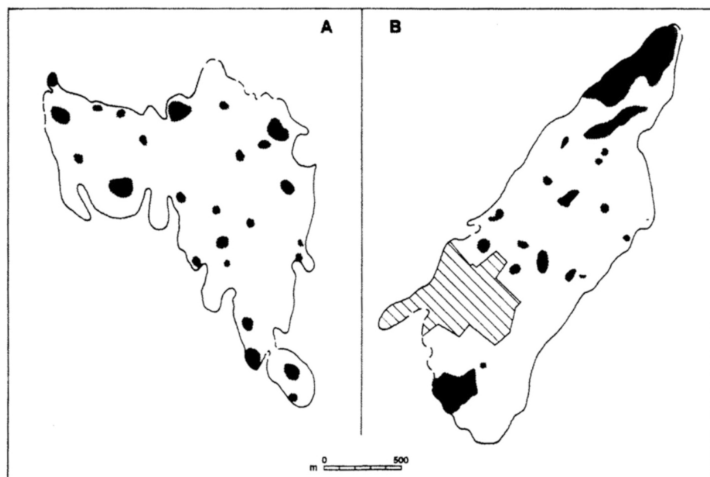
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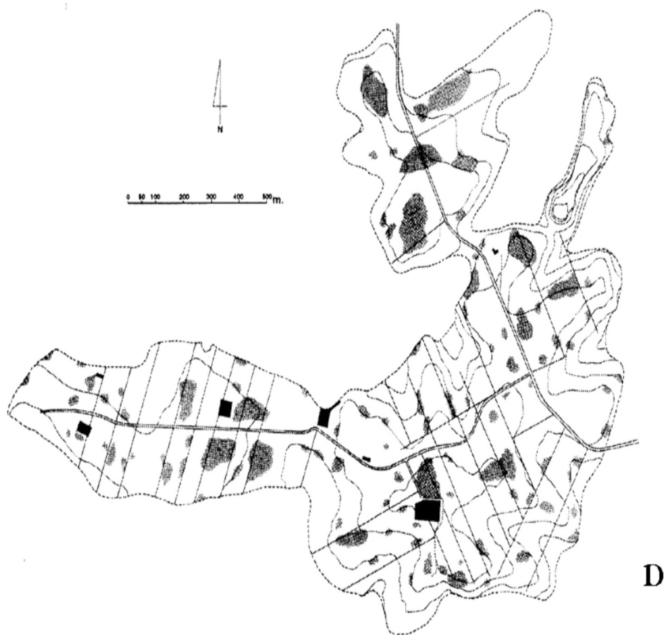
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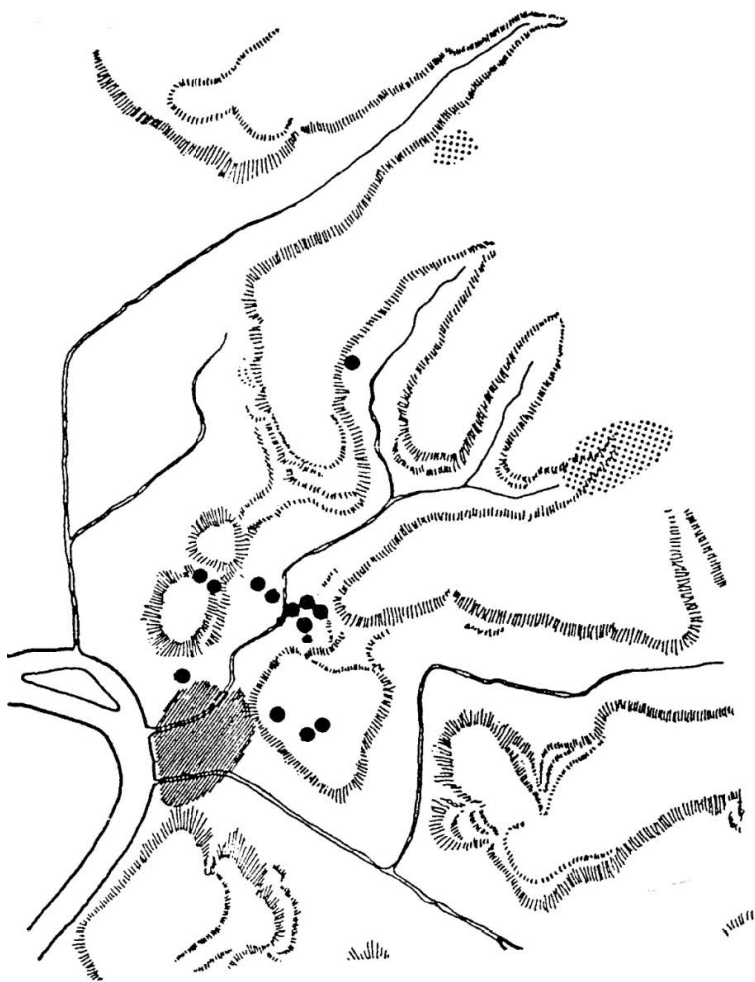
## Appendix



**Fig. 1. Distribution of the Villanovan pottery (in grey) found at Veii (A), Caere (B), Vulci (C) and Tarquinia (D). After Pacciarelli 1991b and Mandolesi 1994.**



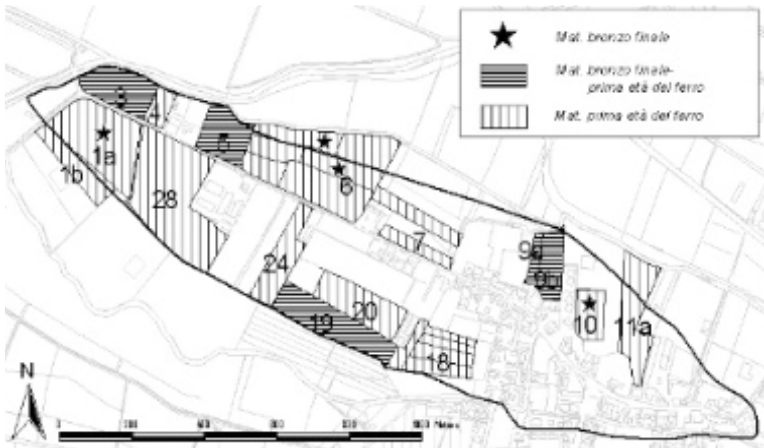
**Fig. 1 (cont.). Distribution of the Villanovan pottery (in grey) found at *Veii* (A), *Caere* (B), *Vulci* (C) and *Tarquinia* (D). After Pacciarelli 1991b and Mandolesi 1994.**



**Fig. 2. Rome, late EIA 1-EIA 2; circles are settlement find-spots, dotted areas graveyards. After Guidi 1982.**

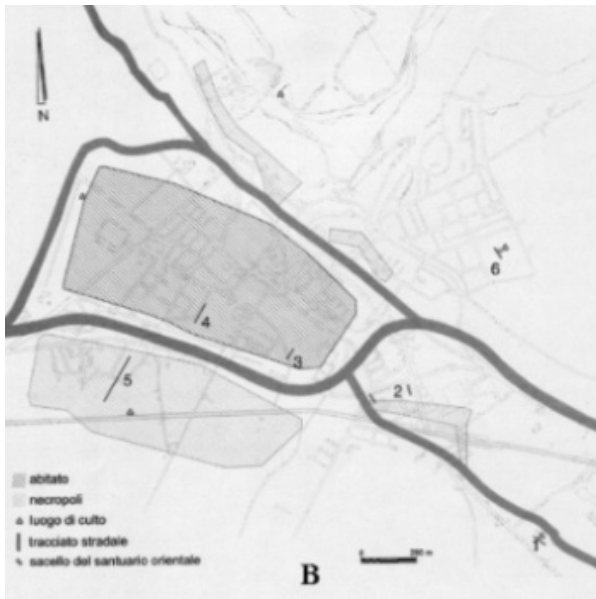
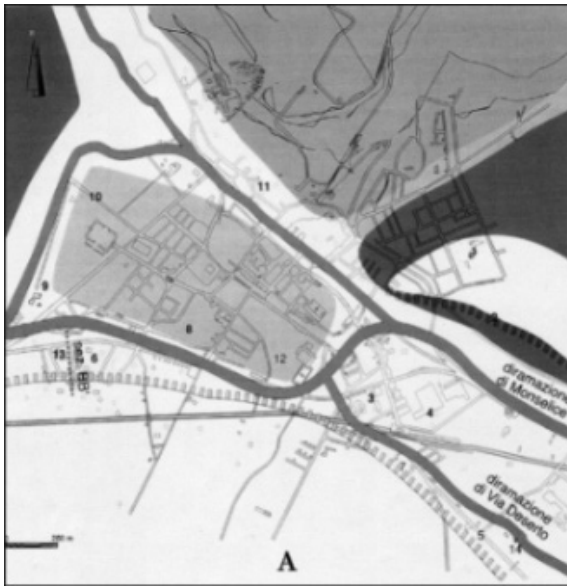


**Fig. 3. Bologna.** The dotted area indicate the supposed extension of the settlement in EIA 2; the circles are graveyards. After Sassatelli 1988.

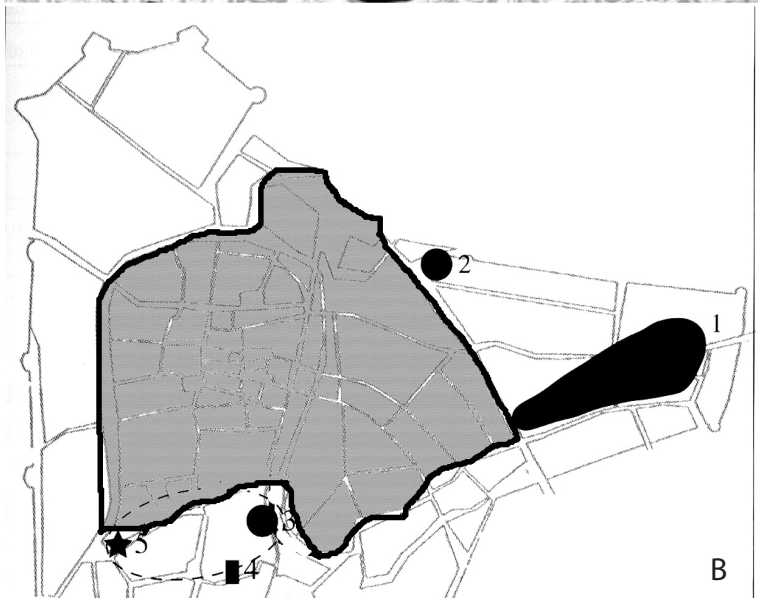
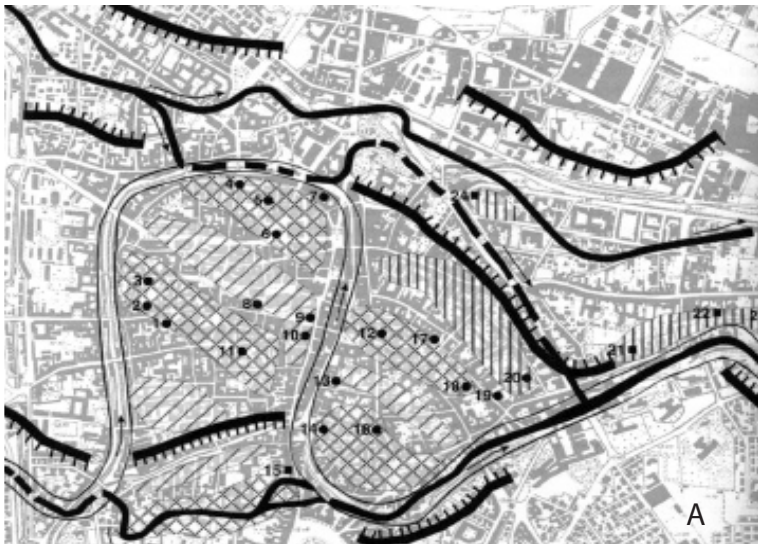


**Fig. 4. Oppeano Veronese.** Fields with archaeological material of FBA 3 (= bronzo finale) – EIA 1 (= prima età del ferro).

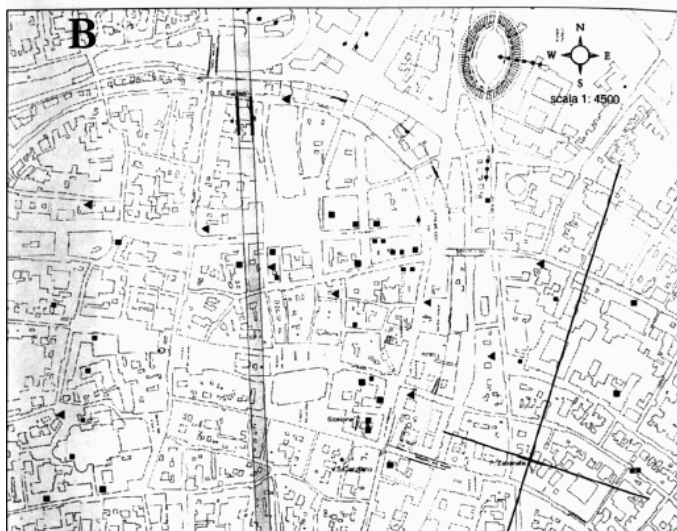




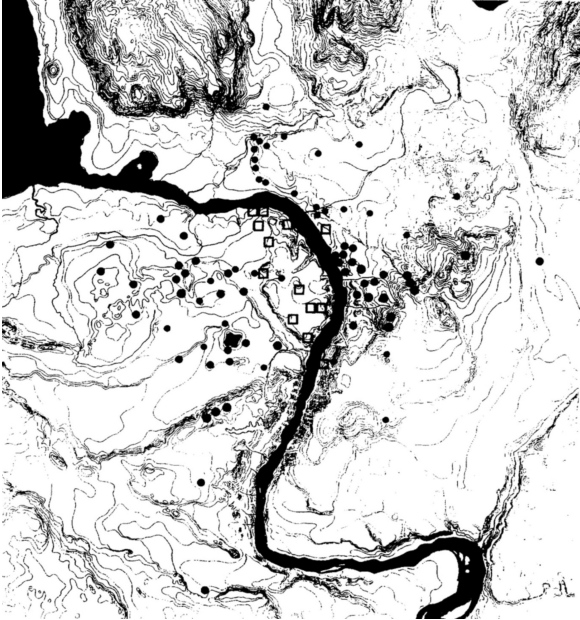
**Fig. 5. Este. The situation in EIA 2 (A) and 4 (B; abitato = settlement; necropolis = graveyard; luogo di culto = cult place; tracciato stradale = road). After Ruta Serafini 2002.**



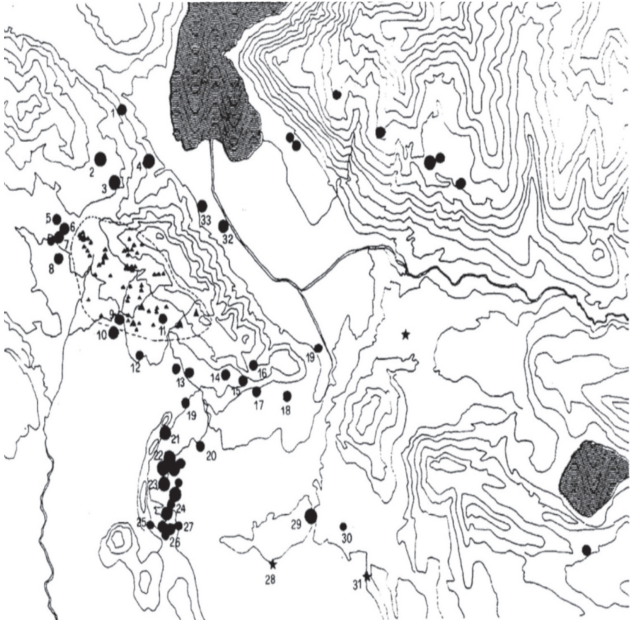
**Fig. 6. Padua. A:** map showing settlement (circles) and graveyard (squares) findspots with the indication of slopes, channels and palaeomeanders. After Ruta Serafini, Tuzzato 2004.  
**B:** supposed extension (in grey) of the protourban centre in EIA 2; nn. 1-5 are graveyards. Modified, after Cupitò 2004.



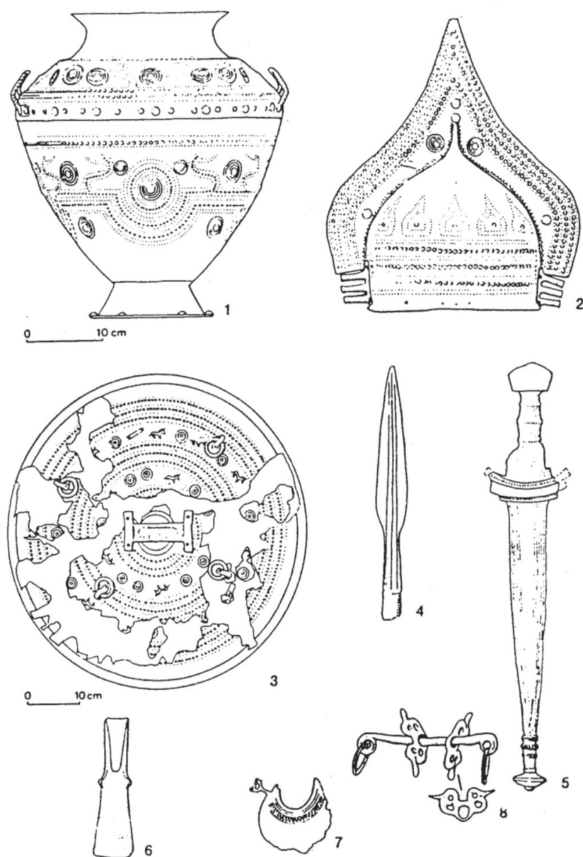
**Fig. 7. Padua. Road alignments in EIA 2 (A) and 4 (B).  
After Balista, Ruta Serafini 2004.**



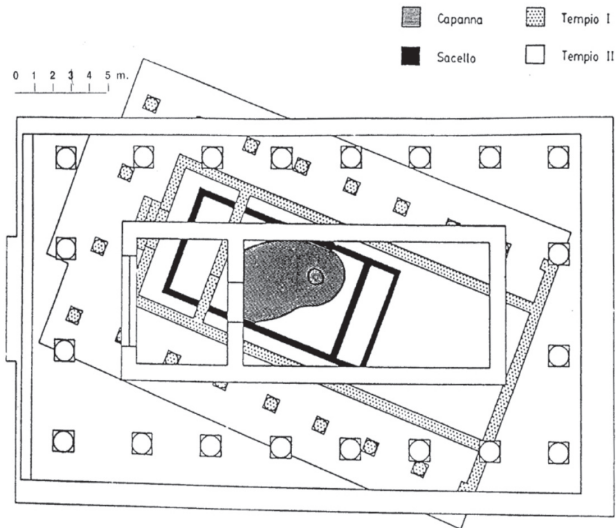
**Fig. 8. Golasecca-Castelletto Ticino-Sesto Calende. Squares are settlement find-spots, circles isolated graves and graveyards. After De Marinis 1996.**



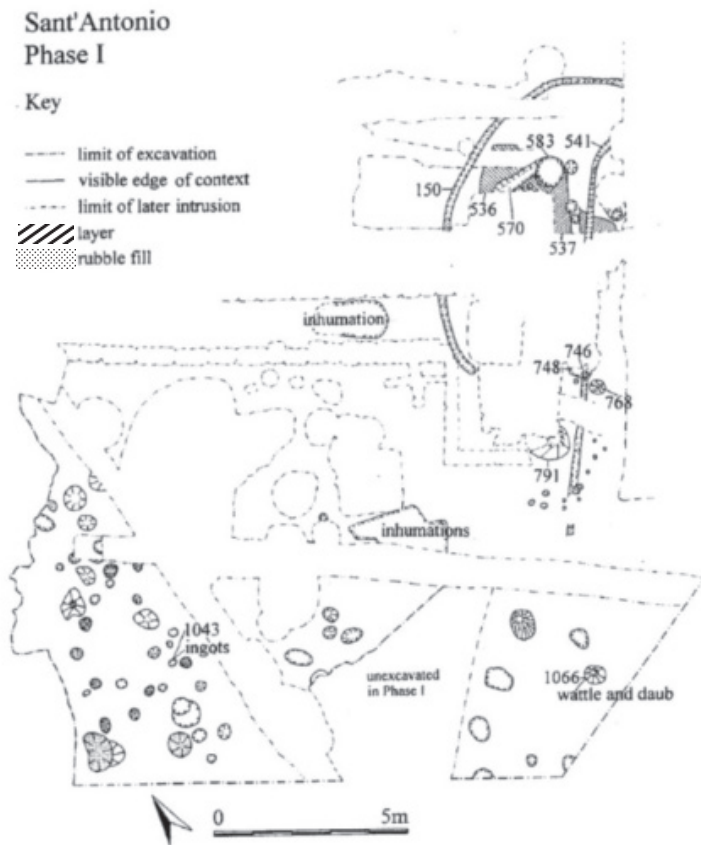
**Fig. 9. Como. Triangles are settlement find-spots (the hatched line being the supposed extension of the EIA 4 protourban centre), circles isolated graves and graveyards. After De Marinis 1996.**



**Fig. 10. Some bronze objects (1: amphora; 2-6: weapons; 7: razor; 8: horse-bit) of the rich AA1 grave, from the *Veii* necropolis of Quattro Fontanili. After Bartoloni 1989.**

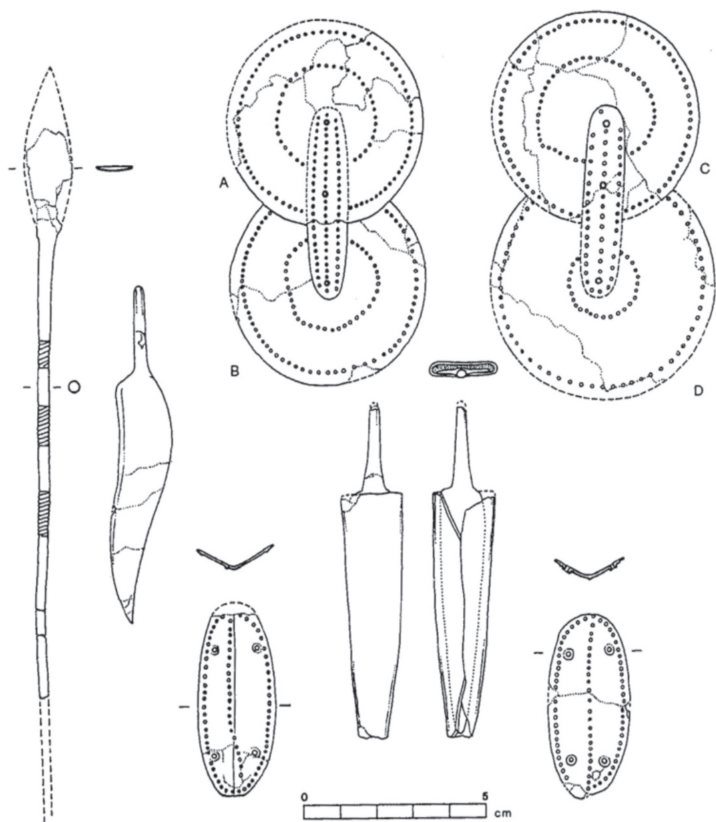


**Fig. 11. *Satricum*. Plan of the EIA 2 hut (= capanna) and of the following *sacellum* (EIA 3), temple 1 and 2 (archaic period). After Peroni 1989.**



**Fig. 12. Caere. Graves and huts under the archaic sanctuary of Sant'Antonio. After Izzet 2000.**





**Fig. 13. Miniature weapons from Pratica di Mare, grave 21.  
After Colonna 1991.**

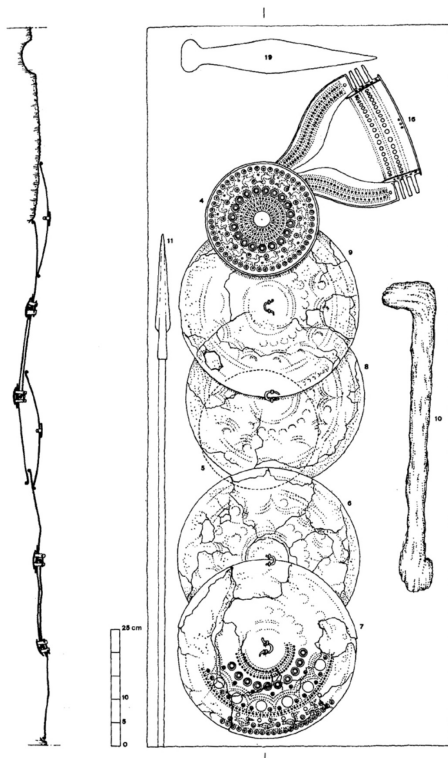


Fig. 14. Plan of *Veii-Casale del Fosso*, grave 1036, with full-size *ancilia*.  
After Colonna 1991.

Table 1.

**Compared relative and absolute chronology of Italy,  
Central Europe and the Aegean between 1700 and 525 a.C.**

	ITALY	CENTRAL EUROPE	AEGEAN
1700 B.C.	Middle Bronze Age I	Bronzezeit B 1	Middle Helladic
			Late Helladic I
	Middle Bronze Age 2	Bronzezeit B 2	Late Helladic II
1350 B.C.	Middle Bronze Age 3	Bronzezeit C	Late Helladic IIIA
	Late Bronze Age	Bronzezeit D	Late Helladic IIIB
1200 B.C.			Late Helladic IIIC
	Final Bronze Age 1	Hallstatt A 1	Submycenaean
	Final Bronze Age 2	Hallstatt A 2	
975 B.C.	Final Bronze Age 3	Hallstatt B 1	Protogometric
850 B.C.	Early Iron Age 1	Hallstatt B 2	Early Geometric
	Early Iron Age 2	Hallstatt B 3	Middle Geometric
750 B.C.			Late Geometric
625 B.C.	Early Iron Age 3	Hallstatt C	
525 B.C.	Early Iron Age 4	Hallstatt D	

**ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS APPROACHING OR OVERCOMING 100 HA  
(FINAL BRONZE AGE 3 - EARLY IRON AGE 4)**

<b>Final Bronze Age 3</b>	
1	2
Tarquinia	150 ha
Vulci	126 ha
<b>Early Iron Age 1</b>	
Veii	185 ha
Capua	180 ha
Caere	160 ha.
Roma	150 ha
Volsinii	85 ha
Visentium	85 ha
Pontecagnano	80 ha
<b>Early Iron Age 2/Early Iron Age 3</b>	
Oppeano Veronese	80 ha
<b>Early Iron Age 2</b>	
Bologna	300 ha
Padua	120 ha
Este	100 ha
Castelletto Ticino	80 ha.
<b>Early Iron Age 2/Early Iron Age 3</b>	
Chiusi	120 ha
<b>Early Iron Age 3</b>	
Roma	300 ha
Altino	100 ha
Ardea	80 ha
Gabii	80 ha
<b>Early Iron Age 4</b>	
Como	150 ha