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ANCIENT WEAPONS

NEW RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES ON WEAPONS AND WARFARE

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PREFACE

A strong bond connects the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum and the research on ancient weapons and warfare. The study of defensive weapons, in particular, has become a sort of »speciality of the house« since the 1970s, as shown by many contributions dedicated to helmets and cuirasses, published as monographs or as papers in different volumes of the RGZM series.

An ideal turning point in the history of the research was represented by Markus Egg's monograph on Italic helmets in 1986 (Monographien des RGZM 11) and, two years later, by the almost encyclopaedic catalogue of the Berlin exhibition »Antike Helme« (Monographien des RGZM 14), dedicated to the helmets collection of the Berlin Museums, including the famous collection Lipperheide. This book in particular set a milestone not only for the investigation of this specific type of weapons, but also for ancient weapons in general.

While the typological method had been the main research approach for many scholars for a long time, the meticulous research carried out on helmets by different specialists certified that the study of weapons had definitely emerged from the narrow recess of enthusiastic collectors and cataloguers of rarities to reach a more complex dimension, in which weapons needed to be seen as active agents of the archaeological and historical debate. In this respect, modern archaeology goes beyond the interest in the exterior appearance of ancient weapons and focuses on the study of single objects to explore new research avenues. Technological transfer, social interaction and conflict dynamics of ancient societies can be investigated through the analysis of weapons and warfare, including considering their material and symbolic features.

Aspects like their ergonomic design, the finest selection of materials, and the highly developed technological background still make pre- and protohistorical, as well as classical weapons, some of the most appreciated items by warfare specialists all over the world. However, weapons gain a special interest with specific regard to the investigation of social phenomena, such as the mobility of individuals and the recruitment of mercenaries, in order to study some features of the past for which no information from written sources is available, or to reveal unexpected traces of their ancient biographies. It is not all about warriors and war: better than other ancient objects, weapons allow to reflect on cultural transfer, since they are often the expression of identities and the result of negotiation processes. Far from being objects for amateurs and collectors, ancient weapons become protagonists in historical and scientific reconstructions, with a huge potential as sources of knowledge.

Since 2014, the department headed by Markus Egg at the RGZM has taken part in the organisation of three conferences on ancient weapons: »Waffen für die Götter« (Innsbruck 2013), »Armas de la Hispania Prerromana« (Madrid 2016) and »Armi Votive in Magna Grecia« (Salerno-Paestum 2017). Colleagues from many different European countries have participated in these congresses and published their contributions in the respective proceedings (RGZM – Tagungen 24, 28, 36). These experiences represented more than an opportunity to expose new research results and have transformed these meetings into a very dynamic network for academic exchange between scholars. Beside offering extensive updates on complex subjects, the results of the conferences are now essential references for the advancement of weapons research, especially concerning the social, religious and cultural implications of ancient warfare.

Why another conference on ancient weapons then? Considering the very positive results of the previous three meetings and the wide impact of the following publications, we thought it was interesting to go beyond the thematic approach which characterised those conferences and to propose a meeting independent from any specific region or restricted chronological frame, focusing only on the comparison between dif-

ferent methodological approaches. For this purpose, we decided to invite some colleagues who have been dealing in recent years with the study of weapons from different archaeological perspectives.

As one can see, we have chosen the format of a small meeting with the idea to compare and discuss very concrete topics. Consequently, our personal research methods and strategies to investigate ancient weapons have been the common thread to stimulate the debate.

The research presented here derives from different projects, including the results of doctoral and post-doctoral programs, some of which are still ongoing. Some contributions deal with large series of weapons, while others focus on single case studies. We looked mainly at weapons from sanctuaries, graves, hoards, and iconographic sources, considering several archaeological sites as well as large areas and different chronological periods. The aim was to deliberately create a sort of controlled chaos.

The range of different situations, questions, and archaeological realities presented in this book is as wide as possible. Therefore, the title »Ancient Weapons« does not entail any spatial, chronological, cultural, or contextual limitation. The experiment was to test the potential of this research field, and how different methods can be applied to various topics in order to develop new questions for future research. The concrete result of this idea was immediately evident in the stimulating discussions that followed each talk and in the final debate. Although no detailed account of these can be presented here, we do believe that the author of each contribution learnt something and was inspired by unexpected ideas and advices.

Unfortunately, we could not include all the papers presented during the conference in this publication. Be that as it may, we prefer to blame it on the *annus horribilis*, 2020. As adequate compensation, we are pleased to present Joachim Weidig's paper, which was originally planned for the conference, but could not be presented in September of 2019.

The organisation of this conference was possible thanks to a funding of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. We would like to thank Christopher Pare and the department of Pre- and Protohistory of the »Institut für Altertumswissenschaften« of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz for having hosted our event in their conference room. Thanks also to the RGZM staff (Vera Kassühlke, Regina Molitor, Patrick Zuccaro) for the great assistance before and during both days of the conference. As always, this publication is the result of the meticulous work of the editorial staff of the RGZM: thank you Claudia Nickel and Marie Reiter; it was, as always, »einwandfrei«.

Finally, our deepest gratitude goes to Markus Egg. He inspired, funded, and encouraged much of our research, teaching us that, despite the love for weapons, »*nulla salus bello: pacem te poscimus omnes*«.

Mainz / Alicante, March 2021

Giacomo Bardelli

Raimon Graells i Fabregat

**LIVE BY THE SWORD, DIE *WITH* THE SWORD.
THE TOMBS WITH WEAPONS OF THE »CIRCOLO DELLE FIBULE«
OF SIROLO-NUMANA (PROV. ANCONA / I),
FROM RESTORATION TO INTERPRETATION**

Under ideal circumstances, the modern investigation of archaeological objects requires a perfect combination of good excavation data and thorough restoration. In fact, many items proceed from undocumented excavations or need urgent conservation treatments. The lack of information on many findings is often worsened by their poor state of conservation, which can truly be dramatic in the case of metallic artefacts, especially if these are made of iron. Even a well excavated object can completely disappear a few years after its discovery because of the irreversible process of iron corrosion, if this has not been treated properly. Good conservation practice is particularly compelling in the case of ancient weapons, due to the fact that the majority of the preserved record consists almost exclusively of metallic items.

The following case study shows a good example of how the interpretation of old excavation data can be combined with the results of restoration treatments carried out on metallic weapons. The achievements of the new restoration of some weapons from the »Circolo delle Fibule« of Sirolo-Numana (prov. Ancona/I) have been integrated with data deriving from a restudy of the grave assemblages. As it will be demonstrated, the tombs with weapons from the »Circolo delle Fibule« are one of the keys for understanding the chronological and spatial development of the whole archaeological context.

THE »CIRCOLO DELLE FIBULE«

Our knowledge of ancient Picenum is based almost exclusively on the evidence proceeding from several necropoleis, discovered and excavated mainly during the 20th century. Among them, the necropoleis of ancient Numana have a prominent place thanks to the high number of unearthed tombs (most likely over 2000) and their typological variety, documented in a chronological frame that embraces all the archaeological phases between the Early Iron Age (9th century BC) and the Roman Period¹.

One of the main burial contexts of the necropoleis of Numana is represented by the »Circolo delle Fibule« (fig. 1). Following a funerary structure particularly common for the local area, it consists of a large circular ditch with a nearly triangular section, which defines and at the same time isolates the funerary space². Nine tombs »a fossa« were discovered inside the »Circolo delle Fibule«, all of which are cut with an approximately rectangular shape in the local clayish ground (»marna«). After their discovery in 1970, the grave assemblages were partially restored, and a preliminary publication appeared in 1972³. A few years later the »Circolo delle Fibule« was taken into consideration by the archaeologist and future Soprintendente of Marche D. G. Lollini in her typo-chronological overview of Picenum as a crucial finding for the definition of the phases »Piceno IV A« and »Piceno IV B« (580-470 BC)⁴. However, a detailed scientific publication of the tombs never followed.



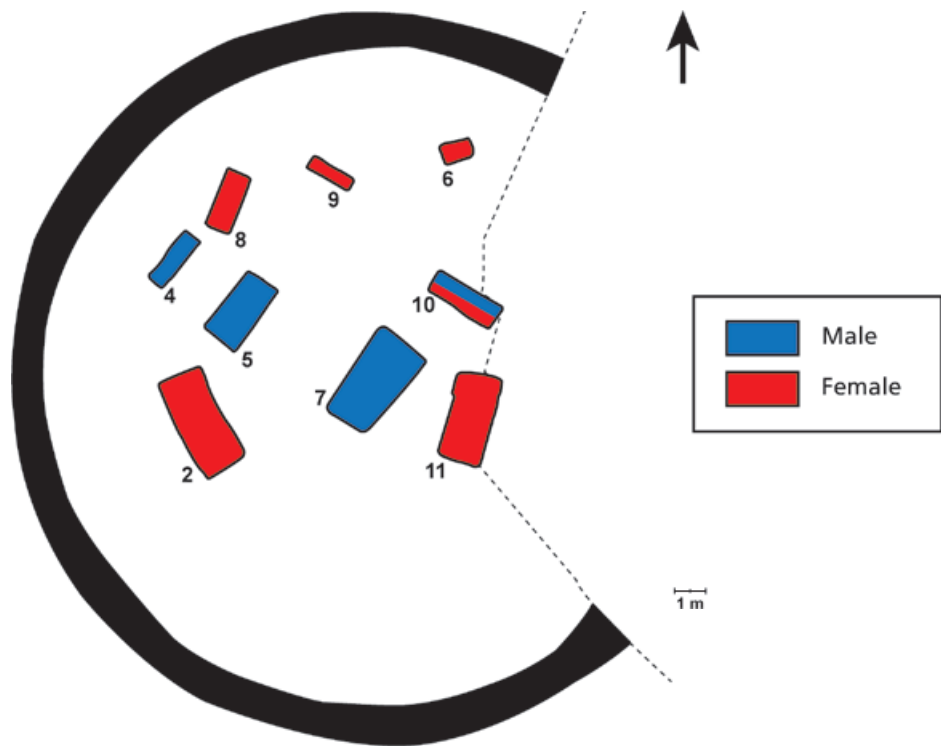
Fig. 1 The «Circolo delle Fibule» of Sirolo-Numana (prov. Ancona/I) after its discovery and excavation in spring 1970. – (Photo © SABAP Marche).

Between 2015 and 2017 I carried out a research project on the «Circolo delle Fibule» thanks to a cooperation between the former Soprintendenza Archeologia of Marche⁵ and the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) in Mainz⁶. The aim of the project was to classify and study the nine grave assemblages in order to provide a scientific edition of the funerary complex. Furthermore, a parallel conservation program on a selection of objects was carried out by the RGZM⁷.

Although the anthropological remains of the deceased are not preserved, the composition of the grave assemblages allows one to define with a certain degree of precision the gender and age of each individual (fig. 2). The central grave (tomb 7⁸) belonged to an adult male buried with a two-wheeled chariot, a panoply of defensive and offensive weapons, and a rich banquet set that included almost exclusively local pottery. Next to him was laid an adult female (tomb 11), whose body was literally covered by several types of fibulae and pendants, mostly of bronze, ivory and amber. Very similar to the latter grave was one of another adult female (tomb 2), where a small set of bronze vessels⁹ and a few pieces of imported pottery (i. e., a bucchero *kantharos*¹⁰ and a Samian *lekythos* of form A¹¹) were also found. Other two graves belonged to adult male individuals with weapons (tombs 4 and 5). In two further tombs (6 and 8) there were most likely an infant and a young female, both buried with attire that recalls that of adult women. The last two burials belonged to a male and a female adult buried together (tomb 10), and to a young female (tomb 9). In both graves Attic black-figure pottery was found, dating to about 480 BC¹².

The «Circolo delle Fibule» owes its name to the astonishing number of fibulae found inside the tombs – more than 1200 specimens, mostly of bronze, recovered in female as well as in male burials. Tombs 2 and 11 alone contained together more than 800 specimens, placed all over the bodies and around them. This burial custom seems to be very specific of Numana, with few comparisons in other centres of Picenum and almost no parallels in other regions of ancient Italy¹³.

Fig. 2 Plan of the »Circolo delle Fibule« with indication of the tombs' numbering and the gender of the deceased. – (Graphic G. Bardelli).



It is possible to postulate a close relationship between the deceased, probably as members of the same familial group – I will return later to this topic. It is, however, impossible to determine which individuals were blood relatives. The archaeological record of the grave goods allows one to date the tombs between the end of the 7th century BC and the first quarter of the 5th century BC, but a more detailed chronological sequence of the burial phases is also possible thanks to the study of the associations of the grave assemblages.

THE TOMBS WITH WEAPONS

Weapons were found in four of the nine tombs of the »Circolo«. A brief description of the burials and their grave assemblages with a short catalogue of the weapons are presented as follows:

- tomb 4 (**fig. 3, a**): rectangular grave (190 cm × 80 cm). The body was oriented NE-SW and crouched on the left side. Two bronze fibulae and a bronze ring belong to the attire. A dagger was placed above the right upper arm of the deceased, while an iron spearhead was found above the ceramic set beyond the feet of the body, pointing towards the south-western side of the grave.
- tomb 5 (**fig. 3, b**): rectangular grave (250 cm × 140 cm). Similar to the previous one, this body was also crouched on the left side, but it was covered by many fibulae in its upper portion – about 50 specimens, carefully arranged in parallel rows. Unlike the individuals of tombs 4 and 7, this one was buried with his head oriented towards the SW. Also in this case the pottery service lay beyond the feet of the deceased. The set of weapons and two spits were placed together to the right of the body. The weapons included a long iron sword, an iron dagger, and a spear with its *sauroter*.
- tomb 7 (**fig. 3, c**): rectangular grave (320 cm × 190 cm). The deceased was buried with a NE-SW orientation under a two-wheeled chariot and laid on a ground covered by sea gravel. The body was crouched on the left side, with more than 60 fibulae arranged in parallel rows between the torso and the upper left arm. The panoply was placed on its right and included a bronze helmet, an iron dagger, and four spears

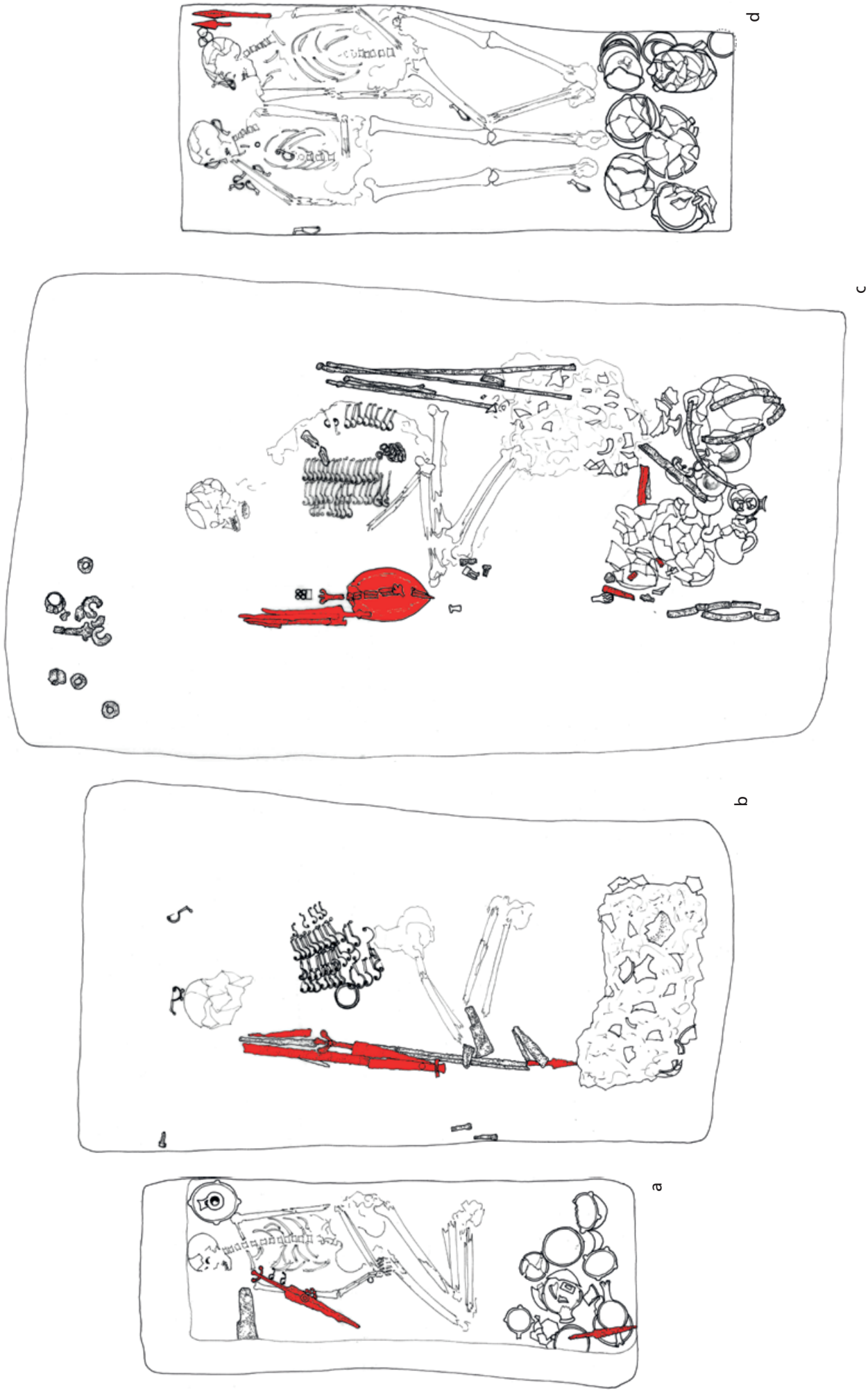


Fig. 3 Plans of tomb 4 (a), tomb 5 (b), tomb 7 (c) and tomb 10 (d) of the «Circolo delle Fibule», with indication of the weapons. – (Drawings © SABAP Marche, edited by G. Bardelli). – Scale 1:20.

with *sauroteres*. The grave assemblage included four iron spits placed along the left side of the body, and a set of several impasto ware vases, located beyond the feet of the deceased, under the wheels and the chariot box.

- tomb 10 (fig. 3, d): rectangular grave (210 cm × 85 cm). Two individuals were buried with orientation SW-NW, most likely a man and a woman. The man lay on his back, with two spearheads to the left of his head. The attire consisted only of three bronze fibulae. As in the other graves, the ceramic set was placed beyond the feet.



Fig. 4 The bronze helmet from tomb 7 of the «Circolo delle Fibule» before the restoration. – (Photo G. Bardelli).

THE RESTORED FINDS

Before discussing the burials in detail, I would like to focus on some weapons taken for conservation treatments by the RGZM between 2016 and 2017. Beside the generic wish of an aesthetic restoration, the main scientific aim of these treatments was to gain as much information as possible concerning the construction technology of the selected objects. As I will show, their restoration helped not only to specify their typological and chronological attribution, but also, together with the examination of other archaeological data, to contribute to a more accurate interpretation of the whole burial context.

The helmet from tomb 7

While checking the grave assemblage of tomb 7 in the storage rooms of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Ancona, I found the shattered remains of a bronze helmet (fig. 4). Its extremely poor state of preservation was mostly due to the strong mineralisation of the bronze sheets of the cap, which caused their breaking and consequently the very high amount of small fragments. A picture of the helmet was taken before it was removed from the grave, thus allowing us to reconstruct its approximate dimensions and proportions (fig. 5). Thanks to a patient and accurate puzzle of about 70% of the fragments, it was possible to put most of the bronze sheets back together and to mount them on a specific support which recreates the volume of the helmet (fig. 6).

The results of the restoration confirm the impressions deriving from a preliminary examination of the fragments. The helmet belongs to the »Fabriano



Fig. 5 The bronze helmet from tomb 7 of the «Circolo delle Fibule» after its discovery. – (Photo © SABAP Marche).



Fig. 6 The helmet from tomb 7 of the »Circolo delle Fibule« after the restoration, front view (a) and side view (b). – (Photos R. Müller, RGZM). – Scale 1:2.

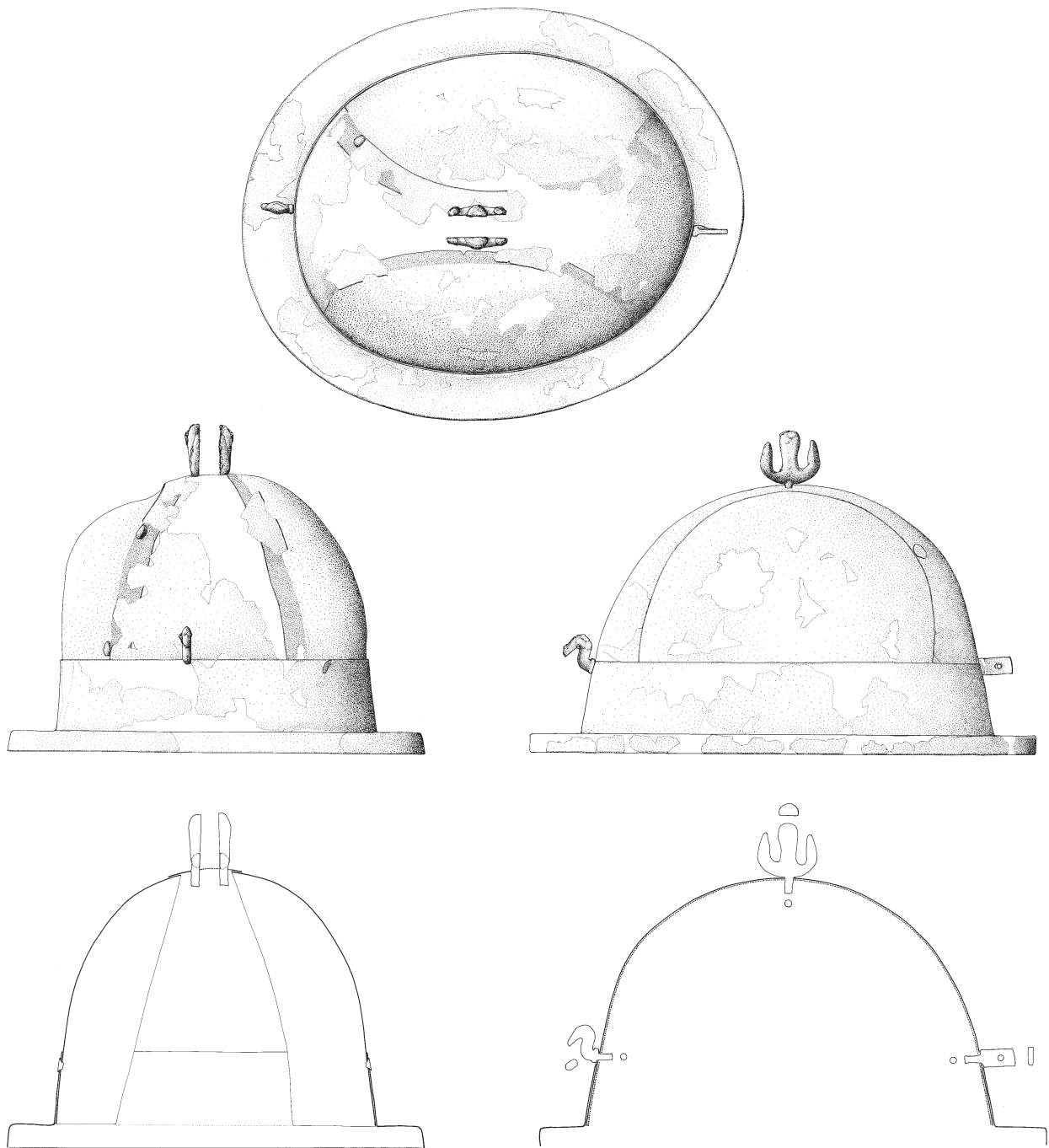


Fig. 7 The helmet from tomb 7 of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. – (Drawing M. Ober, RGZM). – Scale 1:4.

variant« of the so-called »mit zusammengesetzter Kalotte« type, as defined by M. Egg¹⁴. Characteristic of these helmets is the construction of the hemispherical cap, which consists of three bronze sheets nailed together and kept in place by a fourth sheet, which also forms the brim. Typical of the »Fabriano variant« are the four small bronze fittings which served as hooks for the fastening of the crest. Two of them are placed on the top of the cap and are usually interpreted as a stylised rendition of two winged sphinxes. The other two fittings are placed at two diametrically opposite points of the cap, right above the transition to the brim: the one on the front of the helmet is shaped like a horse protome, whereas the one on the rear is a short rectangular bar with a small hole (fig. 7).



Fig. 8 The antenna-hilted daggers from tomb 5 (a) and tomb 7 (b) of the «Circolo delle Fibule» before the restoration. – (Photos R. Müller, RGZM).

Unlike other specimens of this type, the helmet from tomb 7 does not seem to have an internal sheet for the fastening of the lining, since none of the remaining bronze fragments suggests its presence. A few helmets like this were found in Numana, but almost all of them are not preserved¹⁵. Other exemplars come from Belmonte Piceno (prov. Fermo/I), Fabriano (prov. Macerata/I), Fabbrecce (prov. Perugia/I), Novilara (prov. Pesaro-Urbino/I), and Sovizzo (prov. Vicenza/I). According to M. Egg, the «Fabriano variant» dates to the second half of the 7th century BC, which is valid also for the helmet from tomb 7.

The iron daggers («pugnali a stami») from tombs 5 and 7

Two iron daggers from the «Circolo delle Fibule» were selected for conservation (fig. 8). Since the RGZM had already been entrusted with conservation treatments of similar items in the past¹⁶, this circumstance represented an optimal premise for further investigations on the construction features of the daggers.

The daggers from tomb 4 and tomb 5 had already undergone quite invasive conservation treatments in the 1970s and were preserved in a decent state. First of all, in both cases it was necessary to remove the old products used for the gluing in order to free the surface of every fragment from the corrosion products and verify if the old reconstruction of the single parts was correct. In this respect, the results of the conservation treatments (fig. 9) revealed some differences between the two daggers, especially for what concerns the hanging system of their scabbards.

The daggers consist of a double-edged blade and a hilt crowned by two diverging arms (the typical «stami» or «antenne»). As shown by some traces on the dagger from tomb 5, the hilt was originally made of horn, which covered the tang and the upper part of the blade with a squared section (fig. 10, a).



Fig. 9 The antenna-hilted daggers from tomb 5 (a) and tomb 7 (b) of the »Circolo delle Fibule« after the restoration. – (Photos R. Müller, RGZM). – Scale 1:2.



Fig. 10 Residue of organic materials on the dagger from tomb 5 of the «Circolo delle Fibule»: horn rests on the tang (a) and animal fur on one side of the scabbard (b). – (Fotos J. Schmidt, RGZM).

The framework of both scabbards includes two iron sheets connected to each other through a vertical rod with a squared section. The lower sheet is folded and forged with a slightly tapered cylindrical part at the bottom. This part was decorated by bronze inlays on the dagger from tomb 5. The upper sheet is folded on itself. Two further slim sheets are inserted on the sides of this structure and give the scabbard its characteristic »window-like« appearance. The case of the scabbard was once made of leather, as demonstrated by some rests preserved by the corrosion on the inner surface of the example from tomb 5. Likewise, some organic traces on both surfaces of the sheets of the same scabbard suggest that this was enveloped by animal fur (fig. 10, b).

The most significant result of the restoration is represented by the identification of the hanging system on the dagger from tomb 7. This could not be understood in detail, since the corrosion had been stabilised through an adhesive during the old conservation treatment. Consequently, a solid mass was hiding the iron surface at different points, together with the corrosion products. After the mechanical removal of the corrosion layer, it was finally possible to see two »Σ«-shaped elements, which were still connected to the remains of four rings with different diameters, and to a small iron fibula with bronze inlays (fig. 11).

Both daggers can be attributed to type 5 of the classification of antenna-hilted daggers by J. Weidig, also called »Picene« type, whose main feature is represented by the open framework of the scabbard¹⁷ (fig. 12). However, some variety in the construction of the scabbard and its hanging system existed, as already pointed out by Weidig. The evidence of a previously unparalleled hanging system on the dagger from

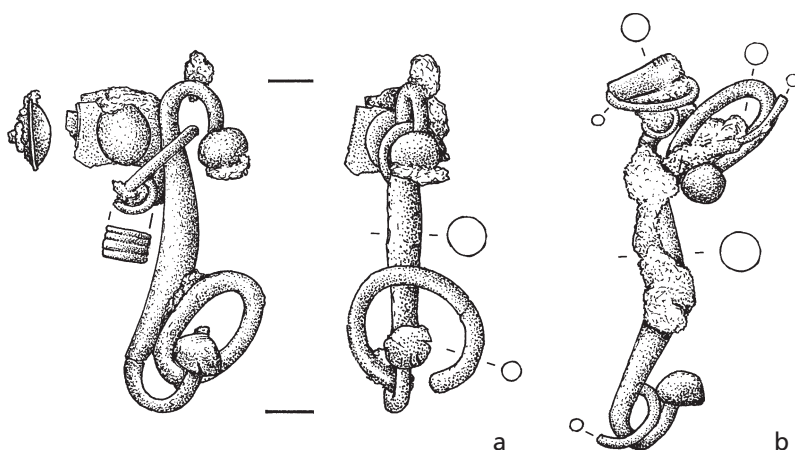


Fig. 11 Hanging system of the scabbard of the dagger from tomb 7 of the «Circolo delle Fibule». – (Drawing G. Bardelli). – Scale 2:3.

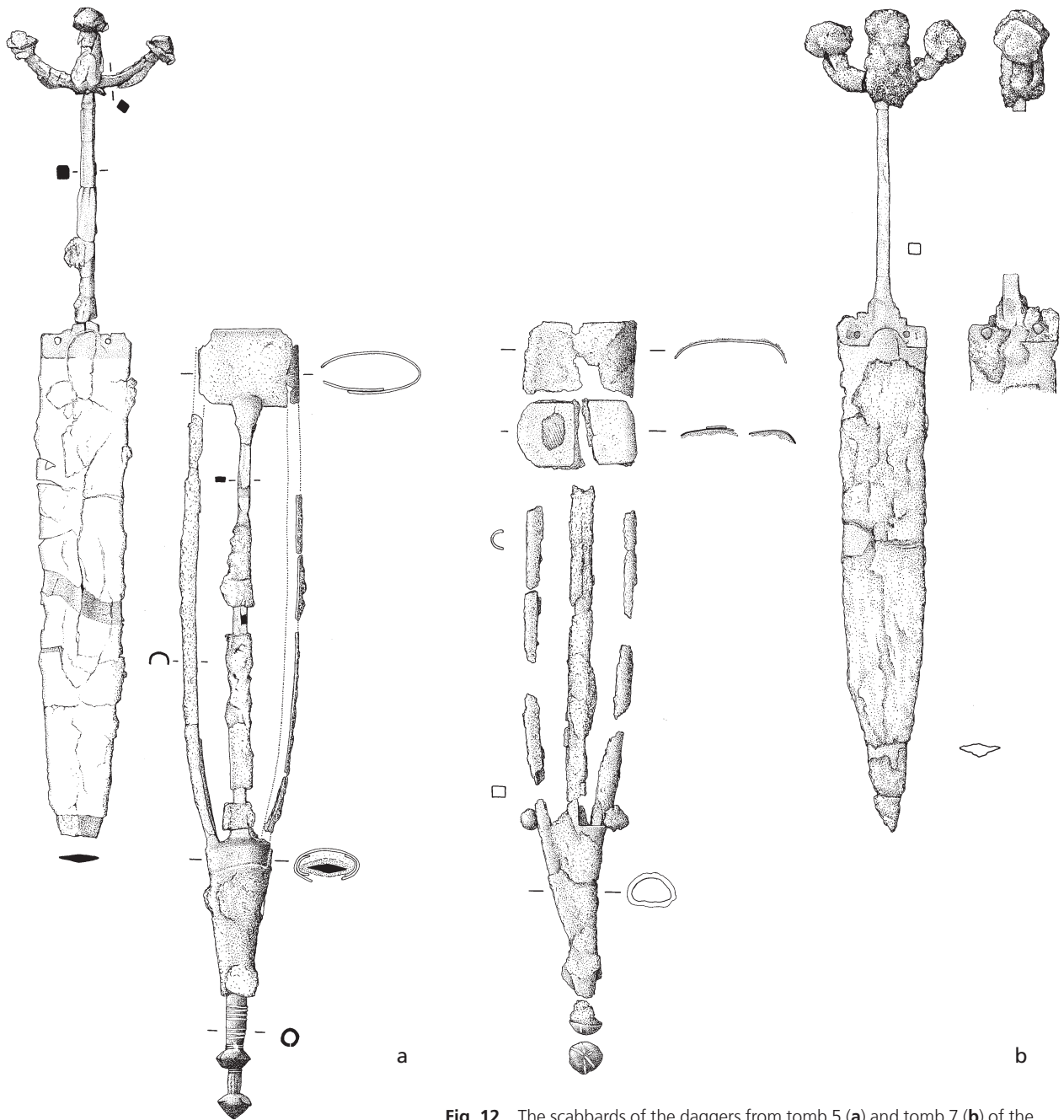
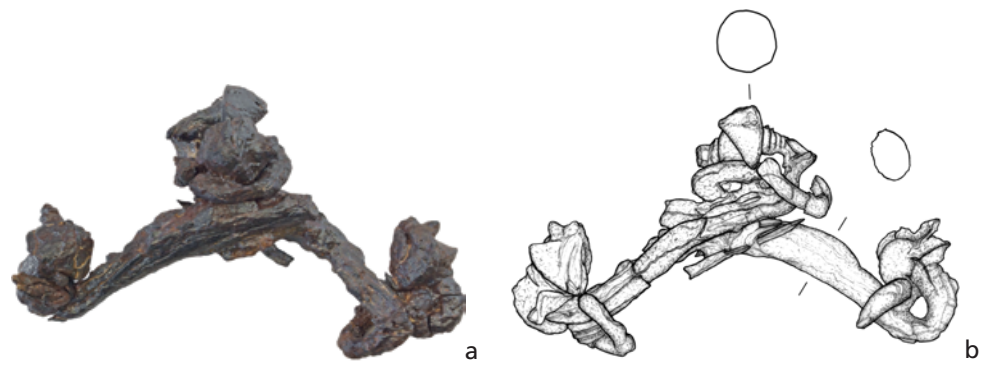


Fig. 12 The scabbards of the daggers from tomb 5 (a) and tomb 7 (b) of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. – (Drawings G. Bardelli, M. Ober, RGZM). – Scale 1:3.

Fig. 13 Hanging system of the scabbard of the dagger from tomb 16 in the necropolis of Contrada Cugnolo, Torre di Palme (prov. Fermo/I). – (a-b after Postrioti/Voltolini 2018, 77 pl. 11 n. 13). – Scale 1:2.



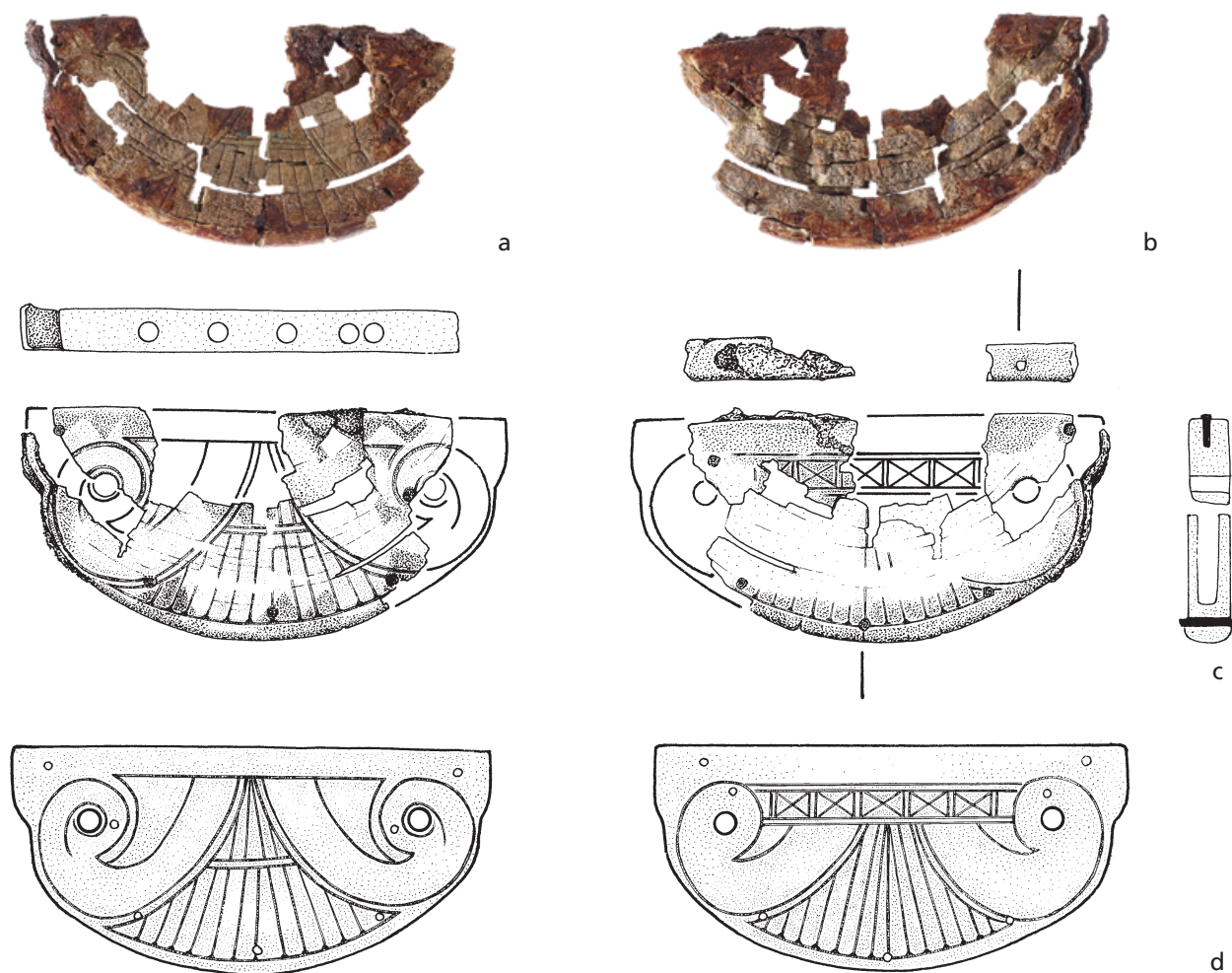


Fig. 14 Ivory plaque of the scabbard of the long sword from tomb 5 of the »Circolo delle Fibule«: front side (a), rear side (b), drawings (c) and graphic reconstructions (d). – (a-b photos R. Müller, RGZM; c drawing M. Ober, RGZM). – Scale 2:3.

tomb 7 was immediately corroborated by the parallel discovery of an almost identical dagger from tomb 16 in the necropolis Contrada Cugnolo in Torre di Palme (prov. Fermo/I)¹⁸ (fig. 13). In this case, the two parts of the hanging system were badly preserved, but the comparison with the dagger from tomb 7 during its ongoing conservation helped to identify this peculiar part of the object.

Antenna-hilted daggers of »Picene« type date from the second half of the 7th century BC to the middle of the 6th century BC¹⁹.

The long sword with scabbard from tomb 5

The last case I present is the result of an unexpected and lucky discovery. Among the finds brought to the RGZM in 2016, there were also some bone and ivory fragments from tomb 11. As for the helmet from tomb 7, only the patience and the precision of thorough conservation allowed a breakthrough in the interpretation of what seemed to be only a bunch of hopeless fragments. Some of the ivory fragments actually matched together and formed a small plaque with a carved decoration, displaying a palmette between two outer volutes. The plaque was originally encased in an iron band along its border, of which only a few rests

are preserved. Three small iron nails on the arched part of the object suggested that it was fastened to some kind of support (fig. 14).

Since we were expecting to recover parts of some pendants or a necklace belonging to the jewellery of the woman buried in tomb 11, the surprise was great, as a few comparisons revealed what was undoubtedly the decoration of the chape belonging to a scabbard of a long sword. The logical consequence of this identification was to connect the ivory plaque to the bronze sheet that decorated the wooden scabbard of the sword from tomb 5 (fig. 15), discovering that the shapes of both finds and the traces of the iron nails perfectly matched (fig. 16a). As a matter of fact, the ivory fragments were found inside tomb 5, as indicated also on the grave plan and in the list of the excavated finds. It is likely that they had been put in the wrong box at a certain moment in the past, together with the grave assemblage of tomb 11.

The iron sword is the only one of this type known in the Marche region and it belongs to a group of double-edged swords from central Italy recently investigated by J. Weidig in his study of the necropolis of Bazzano (prov. L'Aquila/I)²⁰. Thanks to the rediscovery of the ivory plaque, the sword can be compared to some examples belonging to type 2 of Weidig's classification, which are also characterised by the presence of a metallic chape with ivory inlay²¹. The oldest chape with this kind of decoration comes from Capena (Rome), tomb XLI, and dates to the second half of the 7th century BC²². Very similar to the ivory inlay of tomb 5 is the one of the sword from tomb 411 in Bazzano, which shows identical holes by the volutes, but is enclosed in an iron chape²³ (fig. 16b). Tomb 411 dates to the phase IIB2 of Bazzano (2nd-3rd quarter of the 6th century BC)²⁴.



Fig. 15 Long iron sword with bronze chape from tomb 5 of the «Circolo delle Fibule». – (Photo G. Bardelli). – Scale 1:4.

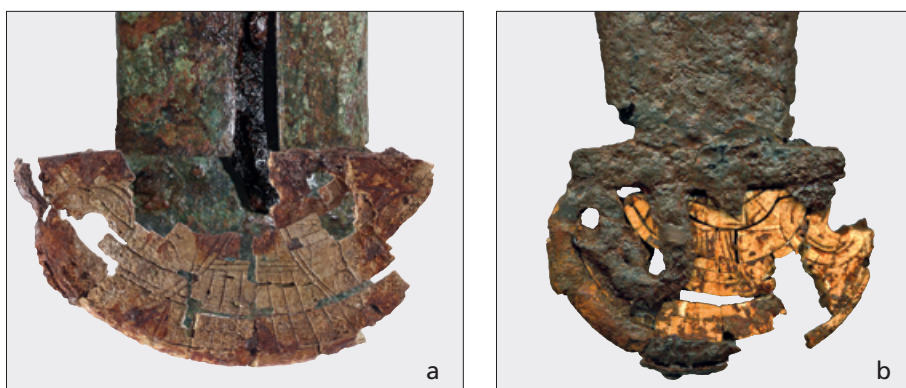


Fig. 16 **a** The ivory plaque in its original position on the bronze chape of the sword from tomb 5 of the «Circolo delle Fibule». – **b** Iron chape from tomb 411 in the necropolis of Bazzano (prov. L'Aquila/I). – (a graphic G. Bardelli; b photo A. Weidig).

SQUARING THE CIRCLE. AN INTERPRETATION OF THE «CIRCOLO DELLE FIBULE» THROUGH THE WARRIOR TOMBS

At first glance, the selective conservation of a few finds could seem like a small contribution if compared to the high number of objects from the «Circolo delle Fibule» that needed urgent conservation treatments – mainly pottery, and several iron and bronze objects²⁵. Nevertheless, these weapons were selected because of their precarious state of preservation and their high symbolic value in the grave assemblages. Indeed, their conservation provided new data that allow us not only to study each find in detail, but also to add considerable information to the archaeological record of the «Circolo delle Fibule».

Concerning more general aspects, like, for example, the hypotheses about the fighting style, a comparison with better known areas is mandatory²⁶. Focusing on Numana, even though it is still impossible to consider the tombs with weapons in an overview valid for the whole local necropolis, we can draw a few conclusions from the burials discussed here. As for tomb 7, the rank suggested by the grave assemblage is quite average if compared to some important warrior tombs of the orientalising phase, for example tomb 31 of the necropolis Monte Penna in Pitino di San Severino Marche (prov. Macerata/I; 650-625 BC)²⁷, or tomb 182 of the necropolis Crocifisso in Matelica (prov. Macerata/I; 625-600 BC)²⁸. A comparison with tomb 31 of Pitino especially displays the disparity: although some objects are identically associated in the grave assemblages of both tombs (two-wheeled chariot, horse bits, bronze helmet, antenna-hilted dagger, iron spears, sceptre), the qualitative difference between some of them is evident (e. g., the helmets, the sceptres) and, unlike in tomb 31 of Pitino, bronze vessels are completely missing in tomb 7 – as in every other male burial of the «Circolo delle Fibule»²⁹. Warrior tombs with opulent grave assemblages like the comparisons mentioned above have not been documented in Numana so far. This is likely due to our incomplete knowledge of the archaeological context, but the importance of weapons and warfare for the local community at ideological and symbolic level is beyond dispute, as the well-known stone sculpture of the warrior's head³⁰ or the exceptional bronze double edged axe of the Rilli collection attest³¹. Further research should try to explain to which extent Numana was connected to the regional network of warrior ideology, since the current – indeed, very fragmented – state of research seems to indicate a minor role³². Other aspects deserve also more attention, like the custom of placing a lot of fibulae in many rows over the body of the deceased, thus suggesting a sort of symbolic cuirass³³ (fig. 17) – a peculiar funerary tradition or a symbol of military rank?³⁴

Going back to the weapons, the new acquisitions presented here are particularly significant concerning their typology and chronology, which can now be defined more precisely and add new evidence to con-

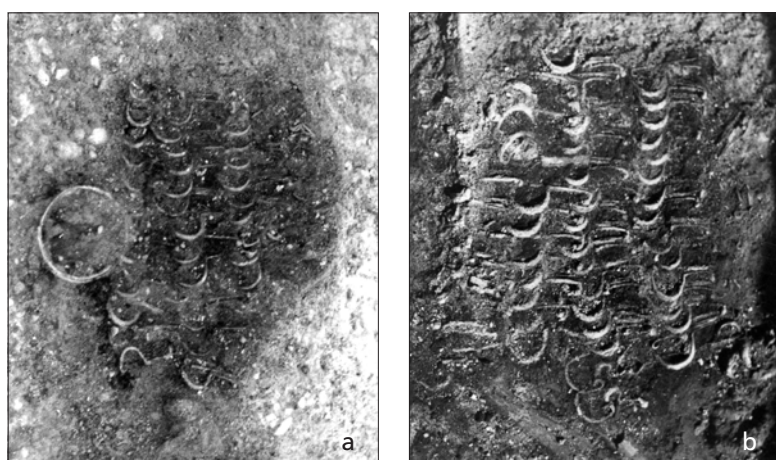


Fig. 17 «Cuirass» of fibulae found between the breast and the abdomen of the deceased of tomb 5 (a) and tomb 7 (b) of the «Circolo delle Fibule». – (Photos © SABAP Marche).



Fig. 18 »Etrusco-Corinthian« *oinochoe* (a) and cup with a tall foot (b) from tomb 5 of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. – (Photos G. Bardelli). – Scale 1:2.

firm the chronology of the single tombs. Regarding tomb 7, the attribution of the helmet to the »Fabriano variant« represents a relevant proof for dating the grave assemblage at the end of the 7th century BC or the beginning of the 6th century BC, as indicated also by other finds, like two »a drago« type fibulae and four spear-heads with flamed and elongated shape³⁵. Also, the iron dagger from the same tomb does not contradict this chronology, since daggers of the »picene« type are documented from the middle of the 7th century BC; the good comparison mentioned above from tomb 16 of the necropolis Contrada Cugnolo in Torre di Palme has also been dated to the first half of the 6th century BC³⁶.

As for tomb 5, the similarity between the long sword and the example from tomb 411 from Bazzano is important not only for the typological classification, but also for the indication of a chronological frame between the second and the third quarter of the 6th century BC, which this comparison suggests. Still, this find alone would not be enough to determine the chronology of the tomb. Since among the finds of tomb 5 there were no clear indicators of a more specific chronology, a great help came in 2017 from the rediscovery of some fragments of pottery which had been neither restored nor considered before. The fragments allow for a partial reconstruction of an *oinochoe* and a cup with a tall foot (fig. 18), whose characteristics are the finely depurated clay of the ceramic body and the decoration with simple geometric patterns, mostly consisting of parallel and wavy lines. Although the localisation of the production centres of this pottery is still undefined, it is generally labelled as »Etrusco-Corinthian« or »Italo-Geometric« and seems to be specific of the phase »Piceno IV A« (580-520 BC)³⁷. Therefore, a chronology of tomb 5 in the central decades of the 6th century BC is convincing, as the sword already indicates.

Solving the chronological issues is only one target of the investigation of the whole burial complex. However, an exact definition of the chronology of tomb 5 seems to be the key to a possible explanation for the horizontal stratigraphy of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. Considering the information from all grave assemblages, four burial phases can be identified (fig. 19). As suggested by its central position, tomb 7 is the oldest burial of the complex, created in the late 7th century BC, or at the beginning of the 6th century BC; tomb 11 is next to this one, both spatially and chronologically. A second phase begins with the period »Piceno IV A« (from about 580 BC) and includes four tombs (2, 5, 6, 8), all of which share the common presence of the peculiar »Etrusco-Corinthian« pottery among the grave assemblages. Tomb 4 can be placed in the last

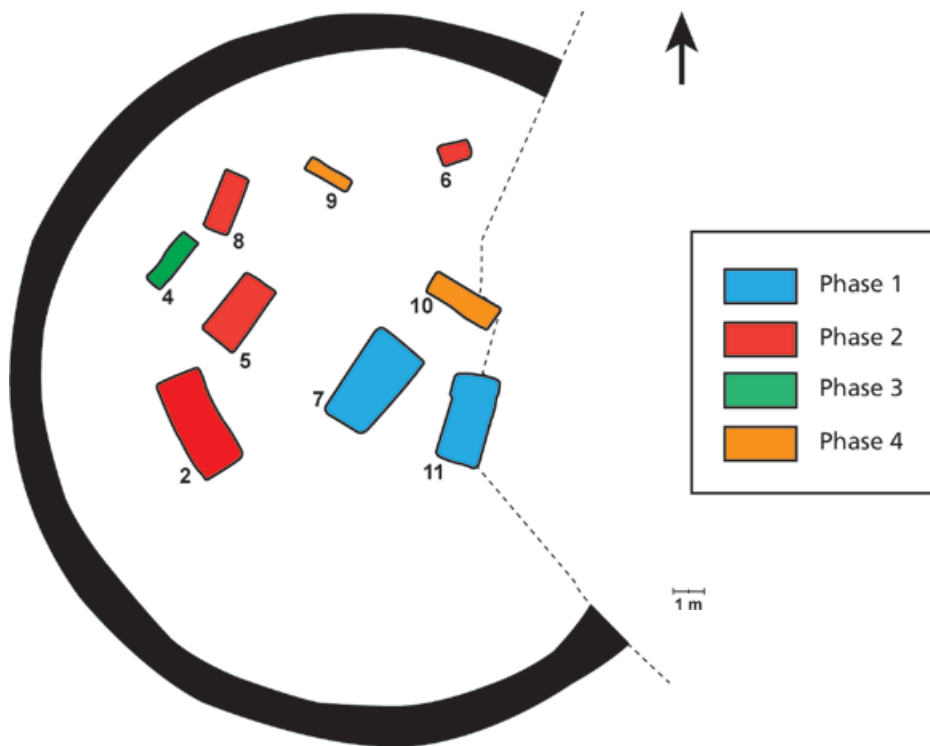


Fig. 19 Plan of the «Circolo delle Fibule» with indication of the deposition phases. – (Graphic G. Bardelli).

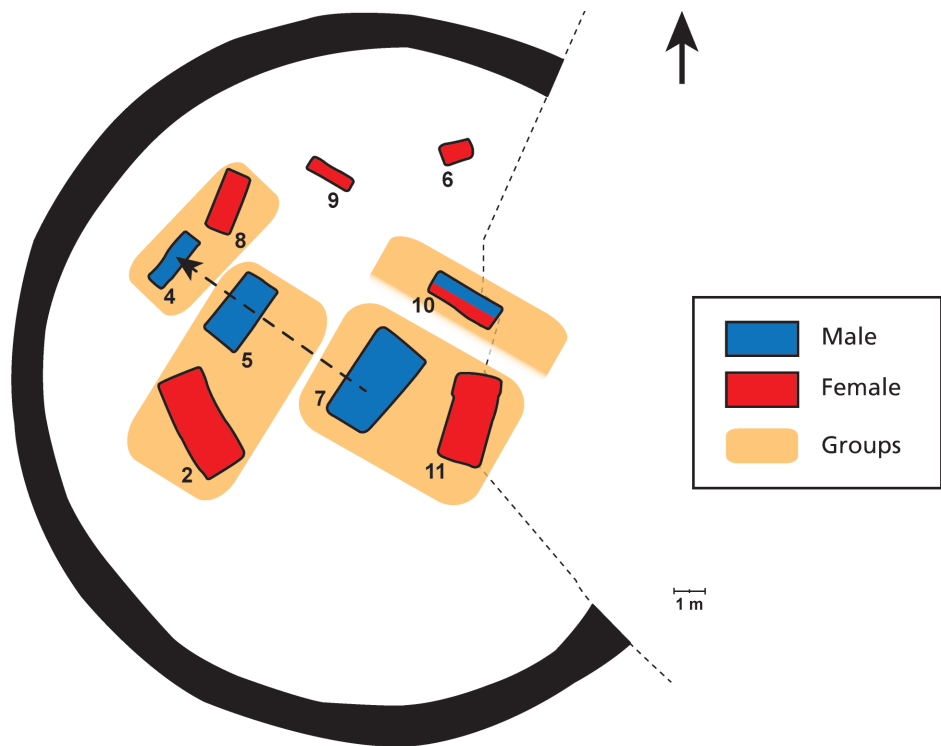
quarter of the 6th century BC, as suggested by two »Certosa« type fibulae (phase 3). Finally, the deposition of Attic black-figure pottery and the change in the orientation of the graves characterise both tombs 9 and 10 (phase 4, corresponding to the beginning of the 5th century BC)³⁸.

Bearing in mind this chronological sequence, it is interesting to look back at the plan of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. One detail in particular leaps out: the spatial alignment of tombs 7, 5 and 4 is due not only to a possible desire of symmetry or linearity by the mourners' community, but also it clearly mirrors a chronological order in the deposition of the deceased, proceeding from the centre towards the border of the circle (**fig. 20**). The fact that three individuals with panoplies were buried in a row from the end of the 7th century BC until the end of the 6th century BC is probably more than a coincidence.

The risk of over-interpreting the archaeological evidence is certainly high. Apart from a hypothetically symbolic or ideological reason behind the alignment of these tombs, there is no proof that the three deceased were linked by biological descent, since this, unfortunately, cannot be demonstrated. Nevertheless, the chronological hiatus between each deposition could correspond with the possible gap between three generations³⁹.

Other alignments between the graves do not seem to be accidental. Next to each warrior's tomb there is the tomb of a woman with a very rich grave assemblage and with a similar chronology. Tomb 11 is immediately to the right of tomb 7, tomb 2 seems to be connected to tomb 5, and tomb 8 is placed directly to the north of tomb 4. The link between tomb 2 and tomb 5, in particular, is quite evident: the individual of tomb 5 is the only one in the »warriors row« buried with his head towards the southwest – pointing exactly in the direction of tomb 2. Finally, it is probably not by chance that the couple buried in tomb 10 (a man with two spearheads and a woman) is placed almost in the middle of the »Circolo«, immediately north of tombs 7 and 11. Does the position of the tomb intentionally refer to the oldest burials of the whole complex, as a desire of reaffirming the connection to a legitimating past?

Fig. 20 Plan of the »Circolo delle Fibule« with indication of significant alignments of certain tombs. – (Graphic G. Bardelli).



Of course, these hypotheses should be considered only as possible interpretations of the main evidence deriving from a combined analysis of the chronology of the tombs and their disposition inside the circle. One should not forget that the »Circolo delle Fibule« was excavated for about three quarters of its surface, due to the presence of a small house which stands on part of the context. This means that we do not know if there were other graves in the missing sector and, if so, how they could influence the guesswork illustrated above⁴⁰.

The complete lack of anthropological data deprives us of a potential resource to understand the nature of the relationships between the deceased buried in the »Circolo«, thus leaving the question open whether this funerary context displayed the self-representation of a familial lineage or rather that of a more articulated social structure. On a less specific level, the difference could be provisionally put aside if one considers this and other similar contexts as the result of social mechanisms which ruled the community of Numana between the 7th and the 5th century BC. As pointed out recently by C. Smith in some remarks concerning the definition of the Roman *gens*, »the issue is less whether two people are related to each other, and more how they conceptualise and mark that relationship«⁴¹.

In this sense, the interpretation here presented endeavours to outline a possible model in order to »crack the code« behind the distribution of the tombs inside the other »circoli«. A thorough investigation in this sense has yet to be done, but it is clear that the »grammar« of these burial contexts was more varied than expected. For example, as already seen for the tombs 2, 8 and 11 of the »Circolo delle Fibule«, the rank of some female tombs is clearly outstanding. In some cases they also occupy the central position inside the circle, as tomb 9 of the »circolo« in the area »via Colle Sereno«⁴² or tomb 1 of the »circolo 9« in the area »via Peschiera«⁴³, and, of course, the most famous »Tomba della Regina« in the area »I Pini«⁴⁴. The subject requires an in-depth analysis and can not be discussed here, but it is clear that being a male and possessing weapons in 6th century BC Numana were not the only parameters which determined a higher visibility in the funerary ritual – and, most likely, not even during life.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1) Finocchi 2018.
- 2) On the »tombe a circolo«, see Naso 2000, 137-140. – Baldelli/Pocobelli 2015. – Weidig/Bruni 2015, 541-544.
- 3) Vighi 1972, 19-26.
- 4) Lollini 1976a, 133-148; 1976b, 137-155.
- 5) Before the reform in November 2015 which separated the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio (SABAP) from the Polo Museale of Marche.
- 6) The project was funded for 28 months between September 2015 and December 2017 by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.
- 7) A publication of the whole funerary complex, including the results of the conservation, is currently in preparation.
- 8) In the former publications the tombs were indicated with Roman numerals (I-IX) deriving from a preliminary chronological sequence presented in Vighi 1972, 19-26. Each tomb is indicated here with the original Arabic numerals given during the excavation. Here the correspondence between the two tombs numbering: 2 = VII; 4 = III; 5 = IV; 6 = VI; 7 = I; 8 = V; 9 = VIII; 10 = IX; 11 = II. Other two tombs (tomb 1 = XI and tomb 3 = X) were found outside the circular ditch.
- 9) Bardelli in print.
- 10) Landolfi 2000, 131. – Coen 2015, 193.
- 11) Martelli 1978, 171-173 n. 24. – Landolfi 2000, 131. – Coen 2015, 193.
- 12) Landolfi 1982 (*kalpis* and *lekythos* from tomb 9). – Baldelli 1991, pl. VII (*kalpis* from tomb 9). – Landolfi 2000, 132.
- 13) Comparable tombs were discovered in Cupra Marittima (prov. Ascoli Piceno/I), but their grave assemblages were seriously damaged by the bombing of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Ancona during the Second World War (for example: Dall'Osso 1915, pl. 433. – Percossi/Frapiccini 2004, 99). Rich female and male burials with the deposition of a high number of fibulae are also known from Belmonte Piceno, but they suffered the same destiny of those in Cupra Marittima. J. Weidig is currently leading a project funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) with the aim to classify and reassemble the finds from the old burial contexts of Belmonte Piceno (on Belmonte, see now Weidig 2016; 2017, and the contribution in this volume). The most astonishing comparison for this peculiar accumulation of fibulae is still represented by the »Tomba della Regina« of Numana, with about 1,000 specimens (on this burial context, see further in this paper).
- 14) Egg 1986, 27-29. 157-162; 1988, 233-236.
- 15) Egg 1986, 159-160 nos 92-94. Recently J. Weidig found a helmet of this type that had been wrongly included among the finds from Belmonte Piceno. Its entries in the register of the SABAP Marche (inv. nos 1200 and 18766) confirm that it belonged to the collection of Girolamo Rilli, which included finds from Numana and was donated in 1910 to the former Regio Museo Archeologico of Ancona (on the Rilli collection, see Fabrini 1984, 21-24. – Baldelli 1991, 102 note 12; 104 notes 2. 9; 106 note 12).
- 16) Egg/Goedecker-Ciolek 2004, 53-54.
- 17) On antenna-hilted daggers from central Italy, see Weidig 2008; 2014, 62-95 (type 5 is discussed at the pages 73-74).
- 18) Postrioti/Voltolini 2018, 75-89 n. 12 (dagger) and n. 13 (hanging system) pl. XI, 12-13.
- 19) Weidig 2008, 119 pl. 1; 2014, 92.
- 20) Weidig 2014, 95-160.
- 21) Weidig 2014, 107. 108 fig. 39 (e-l); 125-126 (Fundliste 1).
- 22) Naso 2003, 140-142 n. 183.
- 23) Weidig 2014, 996-997 n. 5. pl. 123 n. 5a-b. Upon close inspection, this ivory plaque also seems to be decorated with the same palmette and volutes motif of the plaque from tomb 5, but the ivory surface is quite damaged by the iron corrosion.
- 24) Weidig 2014, 650-651 fig. 211.
- 25) A group of objects was restored immediately after the discovery, especially a selection of fibulae (ca. 40 % of all items) and of ceramic vessels (less than 40 % of all items, mainly from tombs 2, 4, 8, 9 and 10).
- 26) See for example Weidig 2014, 659-667.
- 27) Sgubini Moretti 1992. – Naso 2000, 114-115.
- 28) Silvestrini/Sabbatini 2008, 197-244.
- 29) For a preliminary publication of the bronze vessels from the »Circolo delle Fibule«, see Bardelli in print.
- 30) Baldelli 2001; in press.
- 31) Dall'Osso 1915, 153-154. The majority of doubled edged axes (»bipenni«) from archaeological contexts were found in warriors tombs, thus indicating a link between the military sphere and the symbolic value of these objects as signs of power (see now Naso 2020, 132-136. 152-154).
- 32) For some remarks on ideological connections between warriors elites of central Italy, see Weidig 2020 and in this volume.

- 33) I. Dall'Osso already noted the similitude for the »Tomba del duce« of Belmonte Piceno (prov. Fermo/I; Dall'Osso 1915, 53; for this tomb, see now J. Weidig's contribution in this volume).
- 34) This particular feature is documented for the »Circolo delle Fibule« only in tombs 5 and 7. The custom lasted at least until the last quarter of the 6th century BC, as the recent discovery of a male individual buried with weapons and at least 20 fibulae attest (Finocchi 2021).
- 35) It seems that these spearheads were combined as pairs, with differences in the length (ca. 40cm vs. ca. 30cm) which could implicate their use as spears or as javelins. In Numana, two iron spearheads of this form were found in tomb 4 of the Via Diaz necropolis (Delpino/Finocchi/Postrioti 2016, 297 fig. 9 – n. 3-5 on the grave plan), and two bronze examples are part of the Rilli collection (Dall'Osso 1915, 152). Two similar spearheads were also discovered in tomb 31 from the necropolis Monte Penna of Pitino di S. Severino Marche (prov. Macerata/I; see Sgubini Moretti 1992, 184. 189 fig. 9d – the extremity of both spearheads is probably missing). Another similar example comes from tomb 437 in the necropolis of Bazzano (prov. L'Aquila/I; see Weidig 2014, 1017 n. 5 pl. 146, A n. 5). All these tombs indicate a chronological frame between the middle of the 7th century BC and the first quarter of the 6th century BC (for tomb 4 of the Via Diaz necropolis in Numana, see Landolfi 2009, 50; for tomb 31 of Pitino, see Naso 2000, 114-115; for tomb 437 of Bazzano, see Weidig 2014, 650).
- 36) Postrioti/Voltolini 2018, 84.
- 37) Coen 2014, 180-182; 2015, 196-197.
- 38) A more detailed discussion will be presented in the final publication of the »Circolo delle Fibule«. Beside the generic indication of a chronology »tra la fine del VII e la fine del VI« (Vighi 1972, 19), a preliminary chronological sequence of the tombs is presented by Bergonzi 1992, 81 note 18 (who set the beginning of the deposition only in the phase »Piceno IV A«), and by Landolfi 2000, 131-132 (who suggested to identify three or four generations »dalla prima metà del VI secolo, se non dalla fine del VII secolo, ai primi decenni del secolo seguente«, but focused only on the tombs with Greek pottery).
- 39) The actual duration of a generation in the Early Iron Age has been debated in the last years by Italian protohistorians (Delpino 2003, 15 note 24. – Bartoloni/Delpino 2005, 483-484. 490-491). A duration of 20-25 years for each generation, as suggested by F. Delpino referring to the data from the Villanovan necropolis of Veio/Quattro Fontanili (Rome; Delpino 2003, 15 note 24. See also Nizzo 2010, 65) would reduce the gap between the three tombs with weapons too much, as postulated on the basis of archaeological data. Beyond any possible speculation, a comparison between archaeological and anthropological evidence for a large number of tombs from the necropolis of Numana would be necessary in order to estimate approximately the average life duration of at least a segment of the local population. The only available data proceed from the areas Quagliotti and Fabiani of the necropolis and were published in the late 1960s (Corrain/Capitanio 1969. – Capitanio 1973): in a sample of 93 individuals from burials dating between the 8th and the 4th centuries BC, only 35 % died before reaching 20/30. Though this number is surely not representative enough, the percentage of over-30 is remarkable.
- 40) According to G. Bergonzi, there could be from none to four tombs in the unexcavated part of the circle (Bergonzi 1992, 81 note 18).
- 41) Smith 2019, 30.
- 42) Landolfi 2009, 49. – Finocchi 2018, 266.
- 43) Landolfi 2009, 52. – Finocchi 2018, 263.
- 44) I am currently investigating this tomb in a research project led by M. Egg, thanks to an international collaboration between the RGZM, the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio, and the Direzione Regionale Musei of the Marche region. The project is funded for three years (2018-2021) by the DFG. On the tomb, excavated in 1989 by M. Landolfi, see: Landolfi 1997; 2001. – Bardelli/Vollmer 2020 (with several bibliographic references).

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Summary

This paper presents select results of a detailed study carried out over the past few years on one of the main Picene burial complexes of the Archaic Period, the so-called *Circolo delle Fibule* of Sirolo-Numana (Ancona), focusing on the tombs in which weapons were found. In particular, the results of the restoration and conservation of a group of weapons, which was conducted at the *Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum*, are presented, illustrating some achievements concerning their technological features and their reconstruction. In addition to some general remarks about the tombs with weapons in their local and regional dimension, the data from the restoration contribute to integrate the archaeological interpretation of the whole burial context, suggesting some considerations about the chronology and the horizontal stratigraphy of the »*Circolo delle Fibule*«.

ZU DIESEM THEMA / ON THIS TOPIC



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Joachim Weidig

Bazzano – Ein Gräberfeld bei L'Aquila (Abruzzen) Die Bestattungen des 8.-5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.

Bazzano bei L'Aquila gehört zu den größten vorrömischen Bestattungsorten im apenninischen Mittelitalien und übertrifft in der Zahl der Gräber sogar die Nekropolen von Fossa und Campovalano. Über 500 Bestattungen der orientalisierenden und archaischen Zeit (8.-5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.) aus den Grabungen der Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Abruzzo von 1992-2004 werden in dieser Publikation erstmals vorgelegt und ausgewertet.

Neben Fragen zu Bestattungsbräuchen und Sozialstrukturen ist der Hauptteil der Arbeit der Klassifizierung und zeitlichen Einordnung von typischen mittelitalischen Objekten gewidmet, die weit über Bazzano hinaus verbreitet sind. Mit den ergänzenden anthropologischen Beiträgen wird das Bild einer mobilen eisenzeitlichen Bevölkerung entworfen, die sich in ihrer Lebensführung von den in der benachbarten Nekropole von Fossa bestattenden Individuen unterschied. Möglicherweise geht dies auf eine ausgeprägte Weidewirtschaft, auf Transhumanz oder aber auf eine sehr aktive Kriegerschicht zurück, deren Stellung auch durch die hohe Anzahl von waffenführenden Gräbern hervorgehoben wird.



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Armas de la Hispania prerromana Waffen im vorrömischen Spanien

Actas del encuentro Armamento y guerra en la península ibérica prerromana (s. VI-I a. C.): problemas, objetivos y estrategias

Akten der Tagung Bewaffnung und Archäologie des Krieges auf der iberischen Halbinsel in vorrömischer Zeit (6.-1. Jh. v. Chr.): Probleme, Ziele und Strategien

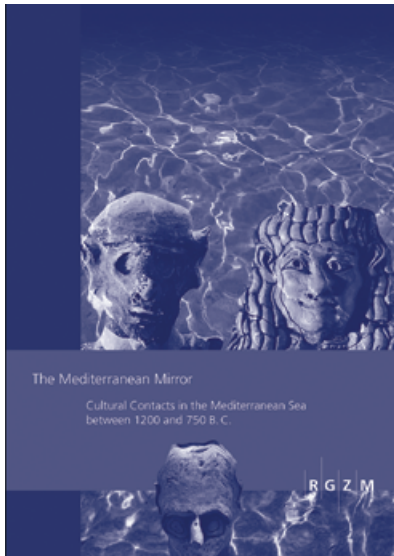
Die umfangreichen archäologischen Datenbanken, die heutzutage zur Verfügung stehen, ermöglichen einen neuen Blick auf die vorrömischen Waffen der Iberischen Halbinsel.

Hier wird eine komplette Synthese vorgelegt, die sich nicht nur auf technologische und formale Fragen erstreckt, sondern auch auf soziale, kulturelle, ökonomische und sogar politische Wechselbeziehungen. Die jüngsten und weitreichenden Ergebnisse erlauben es, die technischen Neuerungen zu untersuchen und die Chronologien genauer anzupassen. Insbesondere aber lassen sich mediterrane Einflüsse auf die Produktion der iberischen Waffen identifizieren sowie der Einfluss einer iberischen Waffenart auf die Herstellung fremder Waffen, konkret der römischen.

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Andrea Babbi · Friederike Bubenheimer-Erhart · Beatriz Marín-Aguilera
Simone Mühl (eds)

The Mediterranean Mirror

Cultural Contacts in the Mediterranean Sea between 1200 and 750 BC

Between 1200 and 750 BC, the Mediterranean world saw the breakdown of Bronze Age civilizations, and the rise of Iron Age cultures. These chronological stages which unfortunately are often taken into consideration separately, have been bridged.

The editors' introduction and a picture of the theoretical framework of Mediterranean studies, are followed by five geographical parts. Each of them is introduced by a senior scholar's comprehensive overview article followed by papers of highly competent younger researchers. By commenting on cultural changes and interculturality in the sub-regions of the Mediterranean, new important insights into interregional mobility, connectivity, and decentering phenomena are provided. The vision of the Mediterranean parts as equally important for understanding the significance of contacts represents a special feature of the volume.



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Raimon Graells i Fabregat · Fausto Longo (a cura di)

Armi votive in Magna Grecia

La ricca documentazione archeologica della Magna Grecia e dell'Italia anellenica proveniente da scavi recenti e passati consente di studiare presenza e significati delle armi difensive e offensive (reali o simboliche) in contesti votivi. Confrontare il dossier di dati delle città greche con quello del mondo indigeno non solo mostra la complessità e la diversità del fenomeno, ma consente di riaprire la discussione sul rapporto tra guerra e culto nel mondo antico e, più specificamente, sulla modalità e sulle pratiche rituali riferibili al mondo delle armi e alla rappresentazione della guerra tra il periodo arcaico e la romanizzazione. In passato l'argomento è stato studiato poco, quasi mai nel mondo italico e magnogreco dal momento che nella letteratura archeologica sono stati presi in considerazione quasi sempre solo gli oggetti più significativi o meglio conservati mentre gran parte dei materiali sono ancora nei depositi in attesa di essere editati; spesso nelle pubblicazioni mancano i riferimenti ai contesti, ai dati quantitativi o ai dettagli utili per comprendere la manipolazione subito prima e dopo la deposizione. I rinvenimenti effettuati negli ultimi anni in alcuni santuari della Magna Grecia (ad es. Caulonia), le «scoperte» nei depositi di alcuni musei (ad es. Paestum) e gli studi monografici su casi particolari (ad es. le corazze), consentono oggi di avviare uno studio sistematico delle armi in contesto votivo, di indagare le modalità e le caratteristiche della loro deposizione e di restituire le vicende storiche riferibili ad esse.

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