

CHAPTER 1

Beginnings

Protovillanovan and Villanovan Etruria

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1. Introduction

This chapter provides the terminological, typological and chronological basis of the second millennium and the early first millennium BCE, otherwise known as the Bronze Age and first Iron Age of Etruria. For scholars of the European Iron Age, the Etruscans were also part of the Iron Age, but Italian Classical scholars tend to separate the later phases of the millennium into a different field of study for historiographical reasons. All study of what was later to be designated Etruscan, however, needs to start in the second millennium BCE to demonstrate the nature of the social and political transformations that led to Etruscan identity. This chapter covers the material forms of that identity, whereas the human geography of these developments is treated elsewhere (see Chapter 5).

2. Origins and Dating

All debates on origins are dependent on the creation of well-structured frameworks of dating. Lengths of periods and cross relationships with other parts of the Mediterranean are at the heart of understanding the nature of the radical changes in political organization in central Italy. A crucial problem for all dating is the reconciliation of dendrochronological and radiocarbon dates (where available) with the traditional sequences of material culture. This latter framework has been traditionally tied into more easterly parts of the Mediterranean by cross-dating to create an apparently secure historical sequence. Early attempts at forming a new dating framework were more radical than the more recent relatively nuanced changes in the traditional framework. The dating below follows the more recent, less radically altered, chronologies, appropriate for broad trends, and does not attempt the fine chronologies posited by some scholars which will, in any case, be subject to further research.

The traditional approach to the question of origins was established by Pallottino (1978). He covered the historiography of this issue in great detail in many of his works. He critiqued the Eastern and northern provenance of the Etruscan ethnos, and replaced these ideas with

the idea of a formation *in situ*, drawing on the political change of populations present from at least the Middle Bronze Age (see also Chapter 13). Although the terminology has changed, modern scholars have built on this reworking of our understanding of the second and first millennia BCE. The contribution of the study of settlement organization in its various forms (see Chapter 5) has been crucial in providing complementary evidence to the data on material culture and burial which form the main thrust of this chapter. Different scholars, in no small measure influenced by their period and field of study, give different prominence to different periods as thresholds or tipping points in the process. However, in spite of this difference of important detail, most scholars are agreed today that political changes were already under way at least by the beginning of first millennium BCE, and that these became entangled with, rather than were caused by, developments in the rest of the Mediterranean.

3. The Transition from Prehistory

The Early Bronze Age is difficult to define in central Italy, but can be broadly dated to 2200–1700/1600 BCE (Bietti Sestieri 2010). The succeeding first phase of the Middle Bronze Age is a little clearer and often given the designation Grotta Nuova, dated broadly in the period 1600–1400 BCE. This phase is defined by pottery forms and styles that have been subdivided into regional groups. The forms include plates, carinated bowls, jars, and biconical vases. Once the Bell Beaker tradition went out of fashion, there was little decoration beyond cordons, although upright elbow and protruding handles began to be distinctive, in a manner detected in later Bronze Age forms. On this basis, regional groups have been identified within central Italy in the lower Arno valley (e.g., Sesto Fiorentino, Candalla, Asciano), focused on the Grossetano, in the Val di Chiana (e.g., Grotta dell'Orso, Cetona, Grotta Bella) and bridging north (e.g., Lago di Mezzano, Crostoletto di Lamone, Contigliano, Palidoro) and south (e.g., Torre Spaccata) of the Tiber in an area that includes much of the modern administrative region of Lazio. We can also infer from the forms of these vessels that the socially embedded practice of drinking and eating together was already important in these societies.

Recent work by Dolfini (2014) has dated a local tradition of copper and arsenical-copper working in central Italy as early as the Early Copper Age (c.3600–3300 cal. BCE). Dolfini suggests that arsenical and arsenical/antimonial alloys were still exclusively manufactured during the first phase of the Early Bronze Age, although he admits that some tin bronzes may have appeared at broadly the same date (c.2200 BCE). In the Early Bronze Age, metalwork continued to be relatively rare, or at least highly curated, redeployed and thus not left in the archaeological record. Most analysis has been restricted to the study of axes, with most material coming from hoards of well-preserved (rather than broken or obsolete) objects, and generally found outside settlements, or other stratigraphic contexts. The main concentration of hoards appears, at least in part, to be related to mineral-rich areas (e.g., Cervara Alfina in the Viterbo area, Campiglia d'Orcia, Castelnuovo Berardenga, and Sovicelle in the Siena area, Capalbio, Montemerano, Montagna di Santa Fiora, Saturnia and Scansano in the Grosseto area, and S. Michele di Campiglia Marittima and Torrenuova S. Vincenzo in the Livorno area).

The range of metal types is restricted and related to prestige forms. The axes are flat, with raised margins; their sides also appear to become less straight and more concave over the course of time with a more rounded splaying cutting edge and higher raised margins. The interpretation has been traditionally drawn from the stylistic analysis of hoards (Carancini and Peroni 1999) but, in fact, also relates to more efficient hafting and cutting, as mold techniques became more effective. Other metal forms do exist, including sickles, points, halberds, daggers, and pins. New forms such as swords and more sophisticated axes begin to appear towards the end of the phase. Metalwork was retained because of its intrinsic value and entered the

archaeological record in greater quantity in deliberate deposits, such as hoards. Evidence for exchange, other than metalwork, was limited to some amber beads, probably from the Baltic, and glass beads, probably from the Aegean. The location of some settlements along the coast or on islands such as Giglio suggests an increased maritime connectivity by this stage.

Evidence of ritual and settlement (see Chapter 5) was also rare, apart from hoards. The most prominent funerary ritual is the collective tomb that had been so prominent in the preceding millennium. The best example is the tomb of Prato di Frabulino near Farnese, which preserved at least two individuals who were accompanied by glass beads, a faience necklace spacer, and silver hair spirals, as well as a ceramic bowl with an upright elbow handle (Casi et al. 1995). More substantial skeletal remains, supporting the collective rite, have been found at Naviglione, also near Farnese. These were accompanied by a wider range of pottery forms and arms, and it has been suggested that they are indicative of some social differentiation within society, where burial was only offered to more highly ranked groups, and where rich females were distinguished by personal jewelry and males by arms (Casi et al. 1995: 95). Other rituals included deliberately structured deposits in caves, namely of agricultural produce in Grotta Misa, and of human remains, including children, at Grotta dello Sventatoio south of the Tiber (Tusa 1980).

The full middle Bronze Age (Macchiarola 1987; Bietti Sestieri 2010), often designated Apennine (c.1400–1300 BCE), is much more easily defined in material terms and settlement organization (Chapter 5). The term Apennine was first coined by Puglisi (1959) and has endured as a well-defined ceramic style zone across much of the peninsula, associated particularly by Puglisi with a new form of pastoral and transhumant economy. More recent authors (e.g., Barker 1981; Bietti Sestieri 2010) have continued to stress the link between interconnected economy and interconnected styles, primarily in ceramics, but subsequently in the Recent Bronze Age in metalwork as well. Connectivity between the Aegean world and central Italy was much less marked since the evidence has primarily been found in southern Italy. If connectivity were to be considered essential for sociopolitical change, all expectations might have been for a major sociopolitical development in southern Italy on the back of this interaction, but it was in central Italy that the later more prominent developments occurred.

The Apennine ceramic forms comprise bowls and cups of gentle and carinated profile, as well as oval and biconical containers of larger dimensions. The cups are sometimes accompanied by concave handles with raised edges and a cut-out interior. It is, however, the incised or cut-out decoration that is their most prominent feature, arranged in bands of zig-zags and points. Some chronological and spatial distinctions have been interpreted from this evidence, reaching perhaps a peak of conspicuous display in the later phases. The Apennine ceramic style has been divided into three groups for central Italy (and a further nine for the rest of the peninsula). The northerly group is concentrated on the Monte Cetona (Belverde/Grotta Lattaia/Grotta dell'Orso) and a cave slightly to the south (Tane del Diavolo). The dominant decorative motifs here are undulating lines, rectilinear meanders, and lines of inset squares resting on their apices, as well as zig-zag motif set within oblong squares for the later phase. The middle Tyrrhenian group to the south is much more numerous and includes 28 sites north of the Tiber such as Tuscania, Luni sul Mignone, S. Giovenale, Narce, Tofa, Sasso di Furbara, and Palidoro. Distinctive motifs include simple festoons, ribbons with fine dense dots, repeated lunate impressions, lines of herringbone, and, in the later phase, chessboard patterns. In the zone in between, a transitional group has been identified in the Fiora Valley, including sites such as Scarceta, Mezzano, Grotta Misa, Grotta Nuova, and Crostoletto di Lamone. The motifs here overlap with neighboring regions. The whole pattern has been interpreted as representing high levels of connectivity, although this might be better stated as displaying no distinctive regional identities that show absolute boundaries. The pottery can also be employed to infer a new elaboration of eating and drinking of small-scale

communities together, given the focus on distinctively decorated drinking and eating vessels as well as storage containers.

Metal production still remained relatively restricted in the Middle Bronze Age, with the formation of local traditions of production. Most of the types, including weapons, had qualities of prestige, and others a utility for deforestation and some wood carpentry. There is, though, an increase in the range of types since new forms, such as swords, lances, razors, and hair combs appear for the first time. Palstave axes became more sophisticated in their hafting arrangements, with the introduction of heightened borders. Spearheads were already of shaft form, requiring a more sophisticated use of molds. Swords tended to be hafted by means of a few rivets, and it was only later that tangs become more common, increasing their strength in combat.

In the succeeding Subapennine or Recent Bronze Age phase (c.1300–1150) (Cocchi Genick 2004; Bietti Sestieri 2010), the whole focus of stylistic attention switched from the body of the vessels to the handles. These distinctive handles took the form of cylinders and snail *antennae* in the early period, and handlebar, lobe, and duck shapes in the later one. The main forms continued to be bowls and carinated cups, generally with a large opening, as well as forms with a more sinuous profile, mugs, jars, and storage vessels of varying size. All the pottery was hand-made in central Italy, although the southern regions of the peninsula were already coming into contact with Mycenaean ceramic traditions.

Metal production not only began to increase in the Recent Bronze Age, but also became consolidated as one major regional tradition throughout Italy, with a tin content of between 9 and 11 percent, and more sophisticated forms of multiple-piece molds (Carancini 2004). The quantity of objects increased, and began to be found in settlements, including tools (knives, chisels, sickles, and axes) as well as weapons. The axes developed from externally hafted palstaves to more efficient, more sophisticated, internally hafted palstaves. Swords developed in response to their use as slashing weapons in various degrees of robustness, and there is some evidence that spears were employed more frequently in their own right. It is also notable that knives and sickles were important innovations. Dress pins continued to be important in a range of stylistic forms, but violin bow fibulae were added to the repertoire of costume. In general, there was an increase in the variation of forms of personal adornment with pendants, tweezers, bracelets, rings, and hair rings increasing in their range. Razors continued from the previous period. Evidence for all stages of bronze working, probably dated in part to this period, has been discovered at Scarceta, and molds have been found at Pitigliano and Grotta a Male. In central Italy, it is only at Scarceta that sociopolitical developments based on production appear to be more prominently visible, albeit on the basis of one metallurgical workshop which continued into the final Bronze Age. Hoards were less frequent from the period, but have been found on the coast at Piano di Tallone in the Grosseto area. The composition of hoards started to center on objects at the end of their use life, rather than the pristine objects that predominated in the earlier phases. This change in the composition of hoards suggests a difference in their symbolic meaning, perhaps related to closure of the cycle of life (cf. Brück 1999), rather than a strictly metallurgical function.

Evidence for burial continued to be relatively rare in the central regions of Italy, particularly in comparison with the south. Some caves on Monte Cetona had limited evidence. The Antro del Poggetto had personal ornaments of amber as well as bronzes and pottery. The Antro della Noce had a deposition of three swords. Further south, some tumulus tombs at Crostolletto di Lamone, Tufarelle and Pian Sultano can be dated to the Middle/Recent Bronze Age. Cremation, so important in the Final Bronze Age, does not seem to have appeared until the later Bronze Age.

The Final Bronze Age marked the major transition in material culture and society in central Italy, and provided the foundation for the even more marked sociopolitical changes that took place in the Iron Age (Peroni 1980; di Gennaro and Guidi 2000; Bietti Sestieri 2010).

In these respects, central Italy contrasted with the other regions of Italy which, for reasons of connectivity with the rest of the Mediterranean, had been more prominent in earlier periods. Central Italy was also a region which maintained an upward trajectory (Mathers and Stoddart 1994), while to the north the so-called Terramare populations seem to have suffered a crisis and a reorientation towards the eastern Po valley centered on the site of Frattesina at the head of the Adriatic, while to the south, the connectivity with the Mycenaean world underwent a substantial pause. A broad stylistic unity was maintained in the Final Bronze Age, even if subdifferentiated by many scholars, whereas regional differentiation began to be visible in the Iron Age.

One differentiated stylistic area in the Final Bronze Age was centered on the Marche, Umbria, and (mainly eastern) Tuscany. The pottery repertoire comprised closed biconical or oval forms, with a clear neck and out-turned lip; jars with rounded or oblique shoulders and restricted openings; carinated cups and bowls; and bowls with a turned-in rim. Decoration, particularly in cordon form (especially meanders) and channeling, and with raised horned handles, was more elaborate than in surrounding regions, and had a relatively plastic feel. This is attributed by some authors, such as Bietti Sestieri, to contacts with the regions north of the Apennines. It may also be related to the identity of place linked to the new process of bringing systems of sites together on high parts of the landscape such as on Monte Cetona and above Gubbio (see Chapter 5).

Funerary evidence remained scarce in this northern region of central Italy, albeit consistently following the rite of cremation. Many of the tombs are few in number and lacking grave goods. Some smaller cemeteries with low, even single figures, of burials existed at Ponte San Pietro and Sticciano Scalo in Tuscany and Panicarola, Monteleone di Spoleto and Gubbio in Umbria. The main exception is marginal to the future Etruscan area at Pianello di Genga, where some 650 cremations were recovered from what must have been a much larger cemetery (Bianco Peroni, Peroni and Vanzetti 2000); this collectivity suggests a higher order network of identity. There is also a comparable and notable connectivity with the wider continental and peninsular world through solar symbols (Dolfini, Malone and Stoddart 2006). In addition, gender identity seems to have begun to surface more distinctively at this time with differentiation between male and female grave goods.

The knowledge of metal production is still based mainly on hoards as well as single finds and artifacts from settlements. Hoards include one from between Manchano and Samprugnano. From this evidence the dominant metalwork includes picks, socketed axes, and winged palstaves from hoards, and knives with twisted handles and arch fibulae with multiple nodules. It is suggested that some of these metal types were derived from exchange to the north. Some hoards from northern Tuscany (e.g., Limone, Pariana, and S. Martino) show evidence of a more local scale of production (including winged palstaves, serpentine fibulae, chisels, and fish hooks). It has been suggested, however, that some bracelets were exchanged along the west coast of Italy into France.

The Final Bronze Age of southern Etruria comprised a distinct style centered on the Tolfa mountains. This style emphasizes incision, particularly associated with cremation, in comparison with the plastic styles of northern Etruria. A distinctive element was the incised imitation of hut roofs on the covers of cinerary urns. It is conceivable that this well-formed identity was linked to the more developed hierarchical and fortified status of settlement in the same region (Chapter 5).

Metallurgical production also achieved new levels in this period (Massi and Babbi 1996). Tools for agriculture, cutting, working of wood and fishing, metallurgy, and personal adornment became very common. The range and sophistication of production can be seen in hoards such as that of Coste del Marano (Tolfa), an assemblage of 142 objects, which comprised sophisticated prestige objects such as cups made out of bronze sheet (two with

elaborated bull handles), large, violin-decorated, sheet bow fibulae, and another fibula with a decorated bow, hair pins, small rings, needles, wheel pin heads, and pendants as well as a range of tools, both small (tweezers, decorated chisels, tanged spatula) and large (winged axe). Another substantial hoard from Limone near Livorno, deliberately deposited in a stone structure, contained decorated bracelets, elaborate chisels, a sickle, a spear head, a razor/knife, fibulae, a horse bit, axe fragments, and tweezers (Cateni 1977). The latest Final Bronze Age hoards from Santa Marinella (swords and axes) and Monte Rovello (socketed and winged axes) show a new intensity of production, and range of intra-peninsula and Sardinian contacts. The technical prowess of these objects had reached a new level, and an entanglement with a transalpine, central, and even eastern Mediterranean “koine” with shared stylistic affinities is apparent. The metallurgical production was probably local, although reaching a level of sophistication of reuse of metals and alloying where metal ore sourcing would now be difficult, unlike in the earlier phases of the Bronze Age. Bietti Sestieri (2010) also emphasizes the role of Frattesina in the eastern Po valley and Maccarese at the mouth of the Tiber, employing the term “central place” and considering such places new centers for the production of ceramics, metalwork, cloth, horn, ivory, glass, and amber as well as the foci of the new types of material culture. The primary evidence of metallurgy shows the interrelationship of this technology with less researched economic fields of cereal, animal, and even tree agriculture, fueled by new demographic levels. Metals, as well as animals, had very probably become forms of accumulated portable wealth. Tree agriculture (although not securely present until the Iron Age in central Italy) may have tied individuals more tightly to particular parts of landscape. In these cases, the defense of both portable wealth and property invested in the landscape may be the circumstances in which defended sites and, ultimately in the Iron Age, military ideology became more important. However, the emphasis on what has been described by some as a proto-urban landscape is, perhaps, overworked by scholars specializing in the period.

There is much debate over the status of hoards as elsewhere in the Bronze Age of Europe (Rowlands 1980; Bradley 1990; Hänsel and Hänsel 1997). Some authors have considered them to be a mere by-product of metalworking, a frozen moment in time of the production process. For this interpretation, the quantity of apparent scrap metal may be supportive. Others have emphasized other forms of intentionality, whether the accumulation of wealth, the deliberate choice of liminal parts of the landscape for the placing of hoards, or some deliberate ritualization often embedded in daily activities such as the cyclical closure of houses and the creation of middens. Support for ritualization is given by the breakage, and more emphatically, by the deliberate manipulation of fragments of metal in locations such as the hoard of Rimessone, the caves of Belverde, or the middens of Monte Ingino or Monte Ansciano above Gubbio. The presence of middens on the mountaintops of Umbria may also show that our concept of hoards is wrongly conceived. Deposits of wealth may not have focused exclusively on collections of metalwork, but should perhaps be more broadly conceived in terms of the other dense collections of pottery, food and metalwork (Malone and Stoddart 1994a, b). All of these would have demonstrated the mobilization of resources in more or less conspicuous locations.

4. The Villanovan Period

The first Iron Age (Bietti Sestieri 2010), or Villanovan period, marked a considerable intensification of this process; it centered on two areas, the unifocal point of Bologna in the middle Po valley to the north of the Apennines and the multifocal points of Veii, Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Orvieto and Vulci in southern Etruria, north of the Tiber. These were important nodes in networks of trade, both riverine and maritime, rather than directly centered on areas with the potential for metal ore

extraction. For the first time, local populations gathered into major nucleations of population requiring substantially different modes of political organization (see also Chapter 5).

The changes in production of material culture are more difficult to characterize because of the relative lack of investigation of settlements. Pottery appears to have remained at a household level of production. Ceramic forms were dominated by the biconical shape, but also included small and large amphorae, globular jugs, bowls with turned in rims and horizontal handles between two protuberances, troncoconic bowls with a horizontal lip, small jugs or small mugs with a rounded body and restricted mouth, deep cups and low broad cups with an uplifted vertical two opening handle. The most frequent decorative design was geometric, executed with a comb, as well as grooves, incisions and various forms of dimple. In the later phases of Quattro Fontanili, one of the best known cemeteries from Veii, comb decoration decreased, while imports from the Euboean Cycladic area increased, accompanied by imitative forms (Toms 1986).

Metallurgical production continued to intensify during the Villanovan period, although most of the evidence comes solely from the cemeteries (such as the Ripaie cemetery of Volterra), as well as some hoards (notably Goluzzo and Santa Marinella). The early phases were characterized by skillfully crafted, prestigious metalwork. Fibulae, for example, had highly worked and decorated arches. Spearheads were also elaborately decorated, along with winged palstaves; other forms included socketed axes of modern format, knives, horse bits, swords, and many other types of tools. One of the most important hoards from Piediluco-Contigliano at the transition from the Final Bronze Age to the Iron Age, contained bronzes and tripod fragments from Cyprus (Bonomi Ponzi 1970). This same hoard also included fragments of sword types (Torre Galli and Contigliano), socketed spearheads, horse bits and numerous fibula styles. Some of the latter seem to have had specific gender associations, the swollen arch with women and the serpentine with disc with men. The sword also appears to have taken on a particular role of identity, with both the blade and the sheath displaying a considerable decorative focus in examples found in the centers of Vetulonia, Populonia, and Vulci. In the later phases of the Villanovan, an even greater level of specialization was achieved in both ceramic and metal production. Sheet metalworking for containers and defensive weapons such as helmets (Figure 1.1) and shields became highly developed, suggesting the presence of specialized bronzeworkers. At Veii there was a production of wheel-turned, painted ceramic cups in a development that was entangled with the Greek world in terms of technology and stylistic interpretation. Vulci, Bisenzio, and Tarquinia had other ceramic forms entangled with the local and Greek worlds that had a more geometric decoration.

It is in the funerary sphere, however, that the best evidence of the period has been researched. For the first time, cemeteries were made up of hundreds (if not thousands) of tombs, in a manner that began to have a more clearly structured relationship to the communities from which they derived. Situating tombs in well-defined areas around the powerful focal place of the newly expanded Villanovan communities added a further weight of identity to the power of community. From this pattern, we can interpret the *longue durée* tension seated within future Etruscan society between the corporate community and the descent groups that comprised the parts of that community. This heterarchical relationship was never conclusively resolved in Etruscan society, and ran in tandem with a dynamic equilibrium between roughly equally ranked primate communities, where, unlike south of the Tiber, no single community achieved dominance. This tension between community and descent group was also played out in ritual practice, where the component elements expressed their shared and differentiated identities by buying in, or not, according to their expressed allegiances within the very fluid politics of this formative and changing political landscape. The communities of Vulci and Bisenzio, for example, specialized in miniaturized grave goods. Populonia and Vetulonia, on the other hand, specialized in chamber tombs and those set within circles of stones.

In addition to an expanding understanding of the social context of these developments, we have an increasing appreciation of the thick description of the ritual involved. The temporal dimension at the beginning of the Iron Age involves an exclusive cremation rite (except in Cerveteri and Populonia where some inhumation was present from the beginning) and, in the second phase of the first Iron Age, an increasing presence of inhumation, expanding, at least in south Etruria, into a substantially inhuming ritual by the Orientalizing period that followed. The tradition of cremation continued into the Roman period in northeast Etruria in communities such as Chiusi and Perugia.

In some cases, the funerary ritual can be reconstructed with some precision. Iaia (1999) has shown that in the case of rich graves at Vulci, the funerary rite of passage can be teased out of the material record in the ground where burnt and intact material culture can be readily distinguished in careful excavation. The deceased was first placed on a funerary pyre accompanied by objects that related to him or her as an individual, such as fibulae, and by objects of great symbolic redolence. A good example is the Cavalupo tomb where a lozenge-shaped belt of sheet bronze, seven fibulae with swollen arches and disc feet, one of the leech fibulae, two wheel pin heads and two formless bronze objects were heavily contorted by fire. It is often forgotten that the funerary pyre would have entailed the mobilization of perhaps a ton of wood to achieve effective combustion of a 75 kilogram corpse, entailing an expenditure considerably out of proportion to the ash residue of as little as 1.75 kilograms. During open-air cremation, the sinews of the body can tighten, providing evocative effects of movement in the body as well as an active metaphor for the transition from life to death. Once the cremation had taken place, the remains were gathered and placed in an ossuary together with the most personal items that had accompanied the deceased to the funerary pyre. This ossuary was generally a biconical urn with incised geometric decoration with a single horizontal or vertical handle. The ossuary was often covered by a clay helmet that was itself surmounted by miniaturized representation of the roof of a hut, indicated by the crossing beams at the apex of the roof. As a third stage, this ossuary was itself dressed with a necklace and cloth, separating the bodily remains of the deceased from the living and perhaps symbolically adumbrated by the solar and bird motifs on the belt of Cavalupo. As a fourth stage, the basal earth of the pyre was placed in a stone custody chamber on which the ceramic ossuary was eventually placed. As a fifth stage, more generalized, less personal objects were placed around the ossuary (e.g., ones that had not been on the funerary pyre) along with offerings. Finally, at the end of ritual, vases were deliberately broken and libations made over the grave.

The earlier phases of Iron Age ritual comprised very small numbers of grave goods, generally only a fibula, a razor, and a spindle whorl, and a few distinctive graves with different grave goods. Scholars have struggled to detect emerging rank or status in these tombs, even suggesting that conspicuous consumption was forbidden by the funerary ideology of the time, masking the emergent inequalities that may have been present in these demographically burgeoning communities. One of the most developed analyses was undertaken by Iaia (1999) for Tarquinia for the first phase of the Iron Age, although, as he admits, the analysis is a prisoner of the presence of distinctive male or female material culture since the bones are not independently sexed. One set of male burials has ashes placed in cinerary urns with a bowl cover, usually in a simple cutting in the ground. Most of these (87%) have a simple razor and, sometimes, a serpentine fibula (13%). Another set of male burials had ashes placed in a cinerary urn with a helmet cover. In this case, the grave goods are sometimes absent (36%) or highly varied, including fibulae (23%), a razor (6%), a miniature cart (9%) or full-size arms or horse bits (21%). The female burials are generally equally simple. The vast majority (73%) have a spindle whorl, up to four fibulae and some ornaments. A small number have fibulae and a hair spiral or more elaborate spindle whorls or dress decoration. Some exceptions have been pointed out by scholars that may show multiple strategies for legitimizing power. Only five known, principally

male, burials from Tarquinia were placed in a hut urn, and these were accompanied by combinations of razor, fibulae, bracelet and lance head. There were similar house urn burials at Veii. Likewise, some female burials at Tarquinia showed elements of distinction. One at Arcetelle included an incense burner cart, another at Rose had Nuragic bronzes, and some others much more elaborate dress items: gold fibulae at Impiccato and Arcatelle or 41 fibulae, glass beads, and a more elaborate burial structure at Arcatelle (Hencken 1968). There was also a category entirely without grave goods, except a bowl lid: these may have contained infants.

A small number of other tombs particularly from Tarquinia have been identified as having a very close linkage to the preceding Final Bronze Age ritual, such as Tombs 25 and 51 at Poggio dell'Impiccato, Tomb 3 of Monterozzi, and Tomb 179 of Selciatello di Sopra. A further group breaks the explicit avoidance of militaristic grave goods by including a single sword, a practice that appears to have been concentrated in the cemetery of Impiccato and Monterozzi. These graves may indicate individuals whose descent groups were testing the limits of control of conspicuous consumption, showing their relative status compared with others, and preparing the ground for a much more substantial breaking of these limits in the later second phase of the first Iron Age (from the eighth century onwards) and above all in the Orientalizing period that followed, as shown most explicitly by the Tomb of the Warrior at Tarquinia dated to the late eighth century BCE (Babbi and Peltz 2013).

The ideology of these rich graves from the second phase of the Iron Age/Villanovan period was focused on the warrior. Graves were arranged by descent group with explicit display of multiple dimensions of wealth. The grave goods typically included a range of sheet bronzes (biconical urn, drinking vessels, ritual cart, a crested Villanovan helmet (Figure 1.1), a shield



Figure 1.1 Villanovan crested helmet, c.800–750 BCE. Bronze. London, The British Museum, Inv. GR 1968.6-27.1. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

and cuirass), sword, spear and other prestigious items. Typical examples include the AA1 grave at Quattro Fontanili in Veii, Tomb 871 at Grotta Gramiccia in Veii and the Tomb of the Warrior at Tarquinia (Babbi and Pelz 2013).

The presence of weapons in graves can thus be interpreted in a substantially ideological framework, perhaps as a counter-identity to that of the female. However, the broad trends, taken together with the presence of defended sites (see Chapter 5), can be taken as an indication of the presence and/or nature of warfare (Osgood, Monks, and Toms 2000; Harding 2007). As has been pointed out more generally for the Bronze Age and early Iron Age of Europe, raiding may have become an important feature of the lives of the second millennium BCE, as the valuable resource of metal, as well as tethered resources such as living places, perennial tree crops, and even perhaps terraced landscapes required defense. There is also the fact that the heightened production of metal was strongly interconnected not only with more efficient agricultural production, but also with the more elaborate use of secondary products ranging from cheese to textiles. In the varied socioeconomic circumstances even of a relatively small region such as central Italy the implementation of a pattern of high-prestige male war bands both to raid and defend these resources may not have been all pervasive, but was likely to be emerging. Unfortunately, we do not have much direct evidence of trauma on human remains, mainly because of the prevalence of the practice of cremation.

Daggers (less than 30 centimeters in length) appear to have been the earliest weapons, and as many as 1700 have been found on the whole peninsula, from their first use until the early Iron Age. These weapons suggest close-quarter encounters, although there is some evidence for the continued use of bow and arrow. The dagger continued in use, although diminished, even when the sword was introduced in the Middle Bronze Age, and the knife (a one-sided blade) in the Late Bronze Age, suggesting a role of dispatch once swordfighting had been completed. Some of these latest finds were imports from Sardinia. A rarer, long-distance version of the dagger was the halberd, in many respects a dagger on a pole.

The next technology, introduced in the Middle Bronze Age, was the sword. Some 400 examples have been found on the whole peninsula. At first, this took a thrusting, piercing, rapier form, but was replaced over time with the more robust slashing sword. The rapier technique required greater technique or luck to be effective. The splaying leaf-shaped sword could, however, be more adventurously employed in different ways, and reward both a greater range of skill and sheer physique. Its mere weight would probably have had a severe punitive effect on the opponent, in addition to providing defensive blows. The stronger sword blade, the more effective hilt, and the throwing of spears thus changed the effectiveness of warfare.

In the early Iron Age, certain sword types were, in broad terms, shared between Italy and central Europe, including the distinctive antenna sword and the related full-grip type, whereas tanged swords, including those with a mushroom shaped pommel, were distinctively Italian. These were accompanied by large spearheads and axes, as well as parade armor and crested helmets. Stary (1981) and Harding (2007) suggest that a melee type of warfare, preceded by the throwing of javelins in the ninth century, was replaced in the course of the eighth century by greater emphasis on close-quarter fighting with hand-held spears and shorter swords and axes, defended by round shields.

5. Conclusion

The evidence of burgeoning material culture, warfare and settlement combine to suggest a strongly upward trajectory of political development in the course of the second and early first millennia BCE. Unlike many other Mediterranean regions in the Bronze Age, the economic

and political cycle moved onwards and upwards in terms of production and demography. This momentum was the driving force that gave birth to the identity which we define as Etruscan.

When and what should be defined as Etruscan is an interesting question. In terms of timing, it is probably anthropologically incorrect to define anything as Etruscan until the seventh century BCE, when the level of political organization was of sufficient scale to sustain a crystallization of such a terminology by the communities themselves. However, even in this later political phase, much of Etruscan identity was vested in the descent group and the community (often a city), and thus the concept of Etruscan primarily represents an externally imposed category, in no small measure influenced by the written sources and the external communities from which these writers derived. The role of prehistory and protohistory is more to define the economic basis on which the considerable political achievements of the Etruscans were made. The response of central Italy, and parts of northern Italy, to connectivity with the rest of the Mediterranean was dependent on the nucleations of populations and the creation of community (detailed in Chapter 5). These communities have sometimes been considered by scholars (Renfrew 1986) to be of equal rank and influence on their territories. In fact, more detailed examination shows that the level of political hierarchy in each community was as different as their modes of production and practices of burial suggest.

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GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Bietti Sestieri 2010 is the best general overview of the whole peninsula during the period. Mathers and Stoddart 1994 provides the background of the Bronze Age in the rest of the Mediterranean. Puglisi 1959 remains a seminal account of the economic foundations of the Middle Bronze Age. Peroni 1979 remains the seminal account of the sociopolitical changes during the period. Iaia 1999 gives an excellent flavor of the depth of information available from Iron Age burials.