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Tumuli Graves – Status Symbol of the Dead in the Bronze and Iron Ages in Europe

Les tombes tumulaires – symboles du
statut des défunts dans les âges du Bronze
et du Fer en Europe

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BETWEEN ETRUSCAN, GREEKS AND CELTS: CHANGEMENT IN THE GOOD GRAVES OF THE LIGURIAN IRON AGE NECROPOLIS

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Abstract: Liguria, since Neolithic time the region had been stayed in the middle of various sea and land way, between Italian peninsula, Provence and northern Italy. In the Iron Age the region is characterized by autonomous ethnic group, Ligurians. In the early Iron Age (VIII-VI cent. BC) is surrounded by various cultural groups, Villanova and Golasecca, in the second Iron Age will create, respectively, some of the pre-Roman peoples in the 'north-central Italy (the Etruscans) or will be the other substrate (Insubres and Boi Celts). During these periods, the Ligurians in their community structures and funerary rituals, retain their identity, while showing, depending on the era, influenced by these people, and the westerns Greeks, with which it interacted until the Romanization

Keywords: Ligures, Iron Age, interaction, identity, grave goods

Resumé: La Ligurie, a toujours été dans la préhistoire au milieu des différents chemins de mer et de terre, entre la péninsule italienne, la Provence et l'Italie du Nord. À l'Age du Fer la région est caractérisé pour un group ethnique défini, les Liguriennes. Dans la Première Age du Fer est contourné pour les groups culturels, Villanova et Golasecca, qui dans la seconde partie de l'Age du Fer formeront ou des peuples préromains (Etrusques) ou la base culturelle pour autres (Celtes Insubriens et Boiennes). Pendant ces périodes, les Liguriennes dans leurs horizons funéraires, préservent une propre identité, amis aussi manifestent, dépendant des périodes, influences pour part de ces peuples préromains, et des Grecques d' Occident, avec les quels interagissent jusqu'à la romanisation.

Mot Clé: Liguriennes, Age du Fer, interaction, identité, kit funéraire

INTRODUCTION

Historical Liguria does not coincide exactly with the administrative region today: caught between the Maritime Alps to the west, the Apennines to the north and east of the river Magra, the latter is equivalent to the territory of the ancient Ligurian Sea. The region occupied in the Iron Age by the Ligurian people, also included part of Provence, the foothill areas of the Po Valley and northern Tuscany to Emilia to the River Arno; from west to east the tribes that made up the Ligurian people were Salluvii, Ossibii (Provence), Taurine, Libues, Bagenni, Statielli (Piedmont), Intemeli, Ingauni, Sabazi, Genuates, Langates, Tigulles (Ligurian Sea), Veleiates, Friniates (Western Emilia) and Apuanes (northern Tuscany) (Colonna, 2004, p. 12; Giannattasio 2007, pp. 11-12). (Fig. 1).

The formation of ligurian *ethnos* has a substrate in the Bronze Age (XIII century BC.), evidenced by the material culture (Gambari, Venturino Gambari 2004; Del Lucchese 2004, Delfino 2010; Giannattasio 2007, p. 19), that becomes even more evident between the First and Mid Iron Age (De Marinis 2004): population mainly allocated in small walled at hilltop settlement (*castellari*) that control pathways ridge and small territorial units, relatively poor in material culture, economics-based herding and subsistence agriculture.

Living in a mountainous region, with a few conditions for agriculture, with few natural resources (but sufficient for local needs), the ancient Ligurians were found to be in

contact with the cultures in the second Iron Age termed the 'pre-Roman Italy (Golant and Villanova): in spite of their land was poor, however, was in an important strategic position between the Alps and the Mediterranean, the Ligurian which became a major trading or military partner with pre-Roman peoples (Etruscans, Celts Insubres and Boi), both of which already by the Greeks since VIII century. BC. had settled in Marseille (Giannattasio 2007, p. 162).

To understand the dynamics, the intensity of interaction and the consequences of these on the Ligurian substrate between the first and the second Iron Age, we will proceed to an analysis of the contexts that best explain these phenomena: the burial contexts. In fact, do you have about these, sufficient data for the duration of the Iron Age; however, cover only the area of the maritime Liguria for reasons of space in this publication. We will adopt the tripartite division of the Iron Age of Liguria: the early Iron Age (IX-VII century BC.) Middle Iron Age (VI-V century BC.), and the late Iron Age (IV-II century BC.) (Giannattasio 2007, p. 162).

DATA

First Iron Age (IX- VII cent. BC)

In the early Iron Age the landscape around the geo-strategic Ligurians was as follows: on the mainland had developed a dynamic trade route between the Villanova area and the transalpine culture of Hallstatt, mediated in

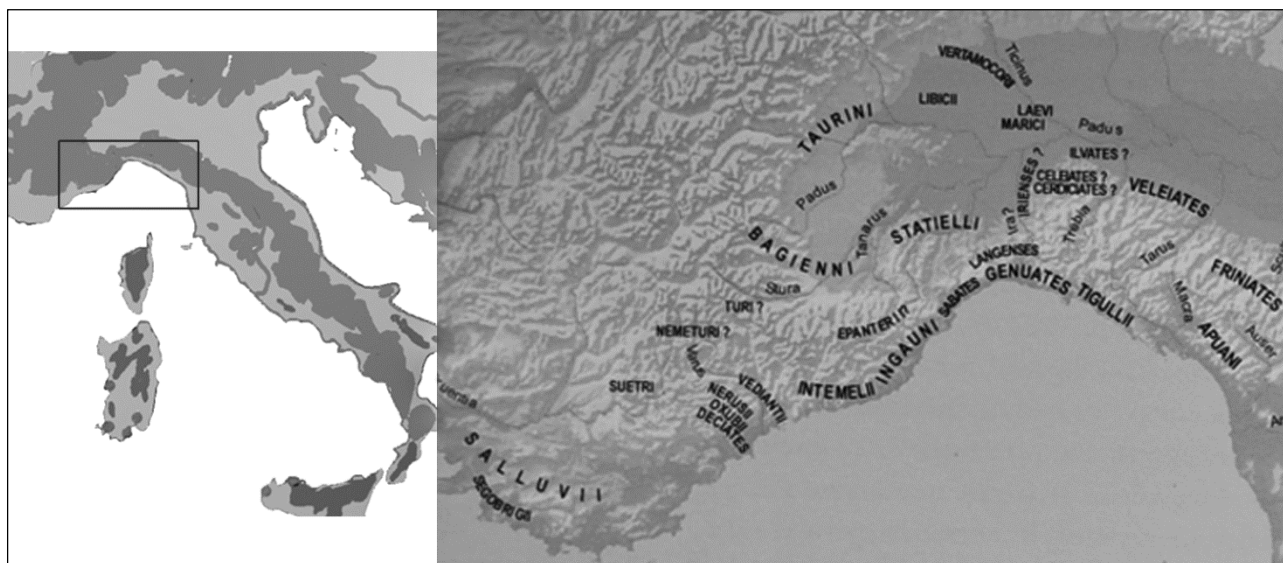


Figure 1 – Liguria in the Tyrrhenian Sea; the ancient Liguria with ligurian tribes (De Marinis, Spadea 2004)

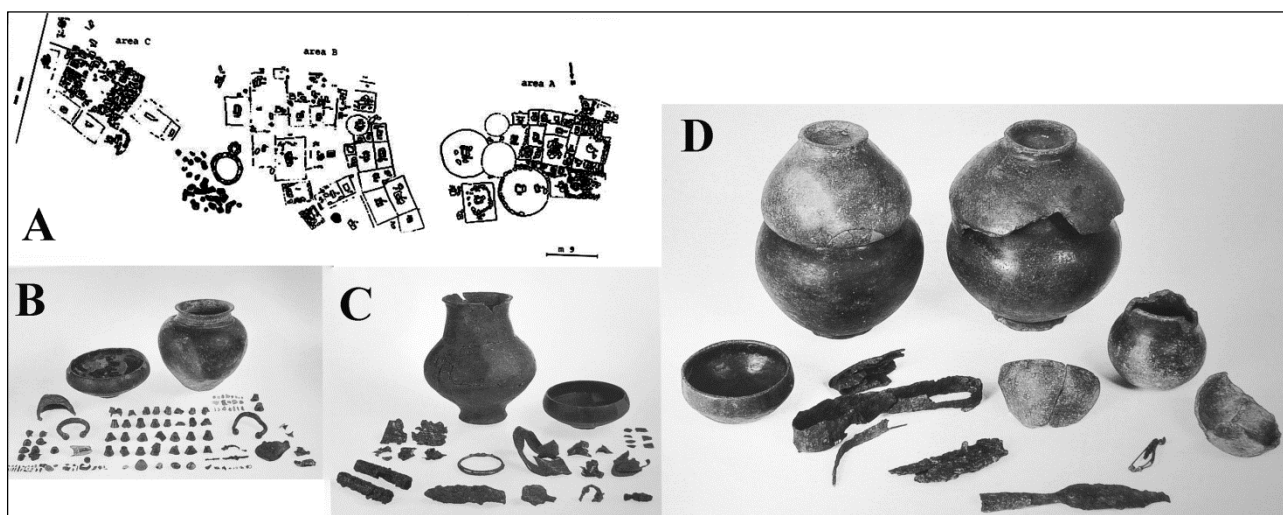


Figure 2 – First Iron Age graves. A) Chiavari cemetery; B) female grave in Chiavari cemetery; C) male grave in Chiavari cemetery; D) male grave of Savignone (De Marinis, Spadea 2004)

the foothills of Po valley by Culture Golasecca; in Tyrrhenian northern coast of the commercial hegemony of the Greeks of Marseilles made the rich interaction between these groups of the Ligurian coast and the protoetruscan cities the Tuscan coast. With regard to this period, in the Liguria coastline there are two cemeteries that are significant of this geo-strategic situation: Chiavari and Albenga. For this chronologic stage, you do not know, unfortunately, settlements on the Ligurian coastal territory, there are some *castellari* that have some frequentation steps in the Late/Final Bronze Age (Uscio, Camogli, Zignago) and re-frequented only in the second Iron Age.

Chiavari cemetery

Discovered and excavated by Nino Lamboglia since 1959 (1963), it is a cremation burial placed on one of the few

coastal plains of Liguria. It consists of distinct burial areas, enclosed by fences round or square, which often contained one cist stone and in some cases two (Fig. 2A, B and C). Each cist contains a cremation urn, but it could be reused for more evidence over time (Leonardi, Paltinieri 2004, p. 212). The cemetery has not been fully excavated, but knowing a reasonable extension. According to the materials in the kits, we can distinguish three periods: 1) late VIII or early VII Century. BC, 2) Start the VII Century. BC, 3) Full VII Century. BC.

– In the first-period distinguish, where it is possible, male and female graves only present in the kit metal urns, which are undifferentiated type. An example comes from the grave n.º 43 where you have two cremation distincts in a single cist: one male, with razor-like crescent Sarteano type common in northern and internal Etruria, and one female with three buckles

“navicella” Este type widespread in northern Italy (Paltrinieri 2004, p. 250). At this chronological stage, including imported materials, are noted in the tomb n.º 9, like *bucchero* amphora decorated with pendants (Tyrrhenian area) and a vase with globular body and slip-painted decoration with concentric red painted circles, like geometric style in Italic area (*ibid.*, p. 253).

- In the second period, the import of materials are distinguished from Etruscan Orientalizing area, like the urn of grave n.º 10, lid with plastic zoomorphic (*ibid.*, p. 254).
- Better documented is the third period (*ibid.*), for which completeness of kit are available with various male and female cremation. These are respectively characterized by iron swords and spearheads bent cusps iron spear, crescent razors and fibulae (graves n.º 60 and n.º 55) and bracelets, buckles, studs and spindle whorls truncated (graves n.º 23 and n.º 61) and rarely with gold jewels (graves n.º 5, 73 and 74A). How to import material, you can see a bowl with *bucchero* mold of a Greek gem (tomb 55) a *kylix bucchero* like southern Etruscan type (tomb n.º 47B) and a Protocorinthian *kylix* (tomb n.º 60D). For this period can be observe also metallic products (like bracelets “Chiavari” type) and ceramic (urn over painted of the grave n.º 25B, cover with decorative shiny dough local stamp) that are the result of local reworking “exotic” products

Albenga cemetery

Located in western Liguria, on the other side in respect at Chiavari, is regarded as the “Chiavari of the West”. It is a relatively recent discovery, in 2004, and as in the case of Chiavari, excavated in urban context and is located in one of the rare coastal plain of the region: there not was an opportunity to highlight a wide area as in Chiavari, but only 10 tombs were documented. These revealed some similarities with Chiavari, regard to the stone cist containing the urn; but some differences were noted, like the absence of the ballot boxes for urns, and lids for the presence of non-uniformity to hold ashes and equipment, not in full cases in urn. In this case, the objects that accompanied the deceased were always related to gender: weapons made in iron and bronze crescent razors for men, spindle whorls for women. Preliminarily, based on the type of metals in the kits, the necropolis dates from the VII century. BC (Massabò, 2004).

Isolated graves

Outside of the necropolis contexts, know an isolated grave, anomalous in this region: a chariot tomb at Mount Trabocchetto (Pietra Ligure): discovered in a ravine in 1929, contained numerous pieces of bronze and iron, of which 10 are conserved spearheads and a short sword to Hallstatt-type “antennas”, dating the tomb of the VII century. BC (Odetti 1996, pp. 80-81). The whole context of the tomb, probably inhumation (the only in Ligurian region in the First Iron Age), indicate that it is a ritual typical of Hallstatt culture and, probably, the buried was a personage of high rank, not Ligurian.

Other evidences of funerarian status symbol

In the eastern part of Liguria, have some *statuae-stelae*, but no with archaeological context of origin, as found in situations of reuse architecture from the medieval age. Probably depict warriors, judging from who display weapons, are dated at the Iron Age. Examples are:

- The six *statuae-stelae* of Pieve di Sorano, who seem to have been Eneolithic *stelae* adapted in the Iron Age to represent a warrior. Of these one (Filetto V) is enough to be able to appreciate the full arming of the warrior: an “antennas” type sword, an rectangular axe and two spears. Just based on the type of “antennas” sword, it is possible to give a representation of the warrior in the VII century. BC (Paribeni 2001, 13). On his chest you can see what remains of an inscription in Etruscan characters, which suggests a funeral finality (Paltinieri, 2004, p. 268).
- The Filetto I *stelae* thread reveals the same weapons represented the *stelae* Sorano V, so it’s also attributable to the VII century. BC (*Ibid.*, p. 269). You can probably think of a funeral function, even in the absence of an inscription, this may be gone disappeared.

Middle Iron Age (VI-V cent. BC)

Starting from the VI century BC the geostrategic framework around the Liguria change significantly, as throughout the central Mediterranean: after the battle of Alalia (541 or 535 BC) the Greeks (Phoceans) of Marseille are replaced in the hegemony of the market in the northern Tyrrhenian by the Etruscans (Bernardini, Spanu, Zucca 2000). Throughout the second half of the VII century BC C. and until the beginning of the IV century BC, the Etruscans were the undisputed masters of maritime trade in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea and the land in the Po valley in the direction of Hallstattian Central Europe (Grassi 1991, pp. 14-15; Bandelli, 1988). It was founded in this period the North Etruscan emporium of *Genua* (Genoa): here is established, at least since 525 BC, a community business or Etruscan or strongly Etruscanized, as evidenced by the language and writing, the funeral rites, the ceremonies and techniques craft (Melli 2004a, p. 288). From the beginning of the IV century BC then another change takes place in the area of northern Italy, which also has an impact on the Ligurian: an invasion by tribes related to the culture of La Tene (De Marinis 1988, p. 237), above all Boi and Insubres, put into crisis Etruscan territorial structure in the Po valley, and so allowing at the Ligurian settled in the Northern Apennines and in northern Tuscany, to resume its political independence, failing territorial control Etruscan (Malnati 2004, p. 361). For the second Iron Age are known in the territory of the maritime Liguria, several hilltop walled settlements (*castellari*), many new plants and, of these, a substantial number gravitating in the territory of *emporium* of Genoa (Bernabo Brea 1946; Isetti 1959, 1984 Melli, Gambaro 1999, p. 57-59, Launaro 2007)



Figure 3 – Medium and Late Iron Age graves. A) Genoa cemetery; B) Cafaggio cemetery, male grave; C) Cafaggio cemetery, female grave

Genoa cemetery (Fig. 3A)

Associated to Ligurian- north Etruscan *emporium* of Genoa, was discovered between 1898 and 1910 and, later, between 1952 and 1960, a large cremation cemetery with grave goods and funerary not typical of Ligurian ritual, dating back to the whole V century BC and the beginning of the IV (Melli 2004b, p. 315; Giannattasio 2007, pp. 112-123), counting a total of 122 graves, such as recognizable 11 female and 12 male. Its publication was more complete is at the time of its discovery (Paribeni 1910). The funeral structures are circular pits dug in the limestone, the grave good reflects Etruscan costumes: in the male graves you have bronze items related at the symposium, the gymnasium and some arms (helmets) (Tomb n.° 10, 84, 112), while in female burials are watch adorned with personal items (Tomb n.° 30). Common to the many male and female burials are *krateres*, *kylikes* painted with red figures, black-painted cups with stamped: all of which lead back to the ritual of the symposium, which according to the Etruscan custom (and visible in this cemetery) was extended to the participation of women (Melli 2004b, pp. 309-315). The bronze elements and ceramic production are related to the symposium to Etrurian part of Po valley and Central Etruscan, while the jewelry and other items for female adornment (fibulas “Certosa”, “Sanguisuga” and “composit arc” type and amber jewelry) are more related Golasecca’s area. It was found one tomb like Ligurian rite: urn in stone cist (Giannattasio 2007, p. 114).

Isolate graves

Immediately in the hinterland of the territory of Genoa, since the end of the XIX century were encountered some isolated graves in stone cist with a cinerary urn, typically Ligurian: in Savignone (1884) (Fig. 2D), in Roccatagliata (1889), in Valbrevenna (1934). In the first two graves kit includes a iron sword and a few spears, as well as fibulae “Certosa” type (most prevalent in the Golasecca’s area) dating from the late V century. BC, while the third kit was composed of a plate and a belt to leech fibula, found mainly in the Golasecca’s area and datable to the first

half of the V century. BC (De Marinis 1988, p. 213-214). In western Liguria is known a likely burial cave, the Cave of Ponte di Vara (Pietra Ligure) (Odetti 1996, pp. 82-83), which was probably part of a kit a bronze helmet shell “Negau” type dating from the late of the V century. BC. (Egg, 1986, pp. 51-61).

Other evidences

Although the Middle Iron Age seems to persist the tradition of *statue stelae*, mostly Eneolithic reused in Iron Age, used as probable grave mark. To strengthen this hypothesis we have the evidence in the necropolis of the II century BC of Filattiera, a reuse of prehistoric *statue stelae* in funerary context of the Iron age (Paribeni 2004, p. 380). Among the *statue stelae*, these from Reusa and Bibliolo (which has an inscription in Etruscan characters on the chest) and Zignago (which has an inscription in Etruscan characters): all were found in medieval or modern contexts of reuse and depict warriors with square axe or in the case of Zignago, simply shaped head like “carabiniere hat” and are all dated, especially on a paleographic, not before the VI century. BC (De Marinis, Spadea 2004, pp. 268-270).

Late Iron Age (IV- III sec. aC)

Cafaggio necropolis (Ameglia) (Fig. 3B and C)

In the far eastern Liguria, you know a necropolis with typical Ligurian funerary ritual and structures that reveal careful planning of construction of fences funeral. The necropolis of Cafaggio, probably near an hilltop settlement at the sea coast between Liguria and northern Tuscany, is characterized by 21 structures in dry stone, for the most part squared, home to them with a stone cist cineraria and grave good, while only in two structures, the largest, other lytic cists are huddled outside. A total, the graves, 34 are recognizable as female and 27 as male graves (Giannattasio 2007, p. 154). In all the monuments, the cists have multiple incinerations. The grave good are distinguished by gender: male are characterized by the presence of iron weapons, especially spears and swords

sheath typical La Tène type, decorated with dragon pair, typical of La Tène art of Waldagesheim phase, or “Continuous-style vegetable” (Kruta 2003, p. 177-118), and defensive armament as bronze helmets with cheek-pieces close to the dome types as the Celtic-Italic Montefortino; female burials are characterized by gold jewelry of Etruscan influence, adorned with personal items and elements of Golasecca’s tradition related to domestic work. Common to the grave of the two genders, the impasto pottery urns and lids made of black-glazed bowls decorated with stamped (Durante 1982, 1987). The elements of metal equipment indicate the use of the necropolis between the end of IV and III cent. BC. (Durante 2004, pp. 404-420). The clear belonging to the La Tène culture of accompanying elements related to males with a status of warriors, while female burials in the grave good is also related to traditions Golasecca’s / Ligurian. It is plausible to think of a group of warriors came as a result of the Celtic invasions of northern Italy in the IV century. BC and implanted in eastern Liguria contracting marriages with native women.

Pulica Cemetery

Also in the territory of eastern Liguria, one can consider the necropolis of Pulica fairly recent discovery (2004). These 5 lytic cists containing cinerary urn and grouped on a hill, like a familiar mound were buried males with the status of warriors, judging by the outfit composed of iron swords, and are dated between the end the IV and early III century BC (Paribeni 2004).

Isolated graves

The Pegazzano grave show for the late IV or early III century BC a other La Tène component in the territory of Apuanes Ligurians. It is a grave stone cist tombs with two cremation in urn: one female and one male, with this grave good consists of a bronze helmet shell, a spearhead and a iron sword “La Tène” type (Giannattasio 2007, p. 160), indicating the burial of a probably celtic warrior with ritual Ligurian.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that one of the elements that characterizes the Ligurian culture of Iron Age and the ritual burial: cremation urn in stone cist. But in burial you have other different elements

Common burial elements and little tribal differences

This ligurian burial feature, which is present throughout the Iron Age and throughout the region, however, seems associated with small differences depending on the territory: in Chiavari (Central / Eastern Liguria, the territory of Ligurian Tigulli) is a constant the cinerary urn in stone cist included in a funerary monument, which sometimes contains more cysts; in Albenga (western Liguria, territory of the Ligurian Ingauni) the cremation urn seems to be not always, not always in a stone cist,

and always without a funerary monument; in central hinterland of Liguria (territory of Ligurian Genuates and Langates) the constant seems to be the cinerary urn not in the stone cist and not in funerary monument without of the cemetery gathering; in Cafaggio Pulica (eastern Liguria, territory of Ligurian Apuanes) seems to be the constant funerary urn in the cist with stone funerary monument, which always contains only a cist and sometimes it is home to some of its outer edges. This nuance of the funeral ritual tied to the Ligurian territory coincides with the traditional version given to us, including all those of Greek and Latin writer Livius (XXX, 10.1) (Maras, 2007) of the Ligurian people divided into tribes, but with customs in common. The fact that a given diachronic, being based on data and synchronic contexts often ranging from VIII to III century BC, can be a confirmation that the funeral ritual of Liguria is a testimony of Ligurian *ethnos*, having lasted for more than five centuries.

Diacronical constant burial element, and intertribal

It should be considered in another consistent feature in the funeral ritual of Liguria, which changes over time in the form of objects, but essentially unchanged until Roman domination: the individuals Ligurian males buried with a kit that symbolizes the status of warrior and women individuals with items of equipment which symbolized the status of matron.

Albeit with different materials during the Iron Age, another important element that characterizes the Ligurian funeral ritual is the introduction of elements of prestige in the grave good that recall the direct or indirect relationship of the deceased, were living, with civilizations around to Liguria: Golasecca, Villanova, Phocians of Marseilles, the Etruscans and Boi and Insubres Celts. Relationships that can be seen in these optics:

- Mercenary service for the northern Etruscan city or Greek colonies orbiting in the Tyrrhenian area, already documented in the battle of Himera in 480 BC (Giannattasio 2007, p. 163);
- Contraction of marriages with people related to Golasecca and the culture of Villanova and Este;
- Role of commercial intermediaries between the Tyrrhenian area and the Po valley and alpine area.

For the former, may be indicative of the weapons found in male graves constantly, sometimes associated with elements of a set of Etruscan and Italic direct import (ceramics): This could mean that Ligurian warriors who served in the mercenary for Villanovian and Etruscans first and then Greeks, they were buried with the element that characterized their status (weapons) together with elements linked to the places and peoples with whom they fought (ceramics import). These two elements, iron weapons ceramics import more, it could provide another justification for interpretative hypothesis, the third: the weapons indicate the status of warrior proper, but a free

man (and medium-high social rank) and ceramics import would be the true status symbol indicating that the deceased had the power of business with the Villanova area / Etruscan and Western Greek. To strengthen this hypothesis, might just be the element that imported ceramics are present only in rare cases, while the weapons are a constant.

Regarding the latter, the contraction of marriages with women from Golasecca area, Este, and Villanova, are indicative of decorated metal objects found in personal grave good. These are all types of spread in the three respective areas and thus could be objects related to the territory of origin of women buried. This contraction of marriages with neighboring cultures, it would make sense in the context of trade relations with the Ligurian entertained with Goasecca, Villanova, Etruria and Greek Tyrrhenian area, thus being directly related to the phenomenon seen only in the event proposal relating to the funeral male.

Allogeneous elements (Fig. 4)

During the Iron Age there are different manifestations of funeral totally alien to the classical view of Liguria, with

varying degrees of difference. In the early Iron Age, the probable tomb of the chariot of Rocca delle Fene shows a typical ritual area Hallstatt (Egg, Pare 1998), but also widely available starting from VII century BC in villanovian central Italy, and in Golasecca (Camerin, 1998). The presence of an “antennas” type sword, clearly from transalpine area, suggests more of a warrior coming from Hallstatt area. The tomb is almost contemporary of the necropolis of Albenga and the most intense period of the necropolis of Chiavari. This could be explained by the coming and death in Liguria coming from a warrior chief from Alpine area, which could be supported by the presence of depictions of “antennas” type swords on some of *statue stelae* of eastern Liguria, a case that would not insulated. The reasons for this are, however, came subject to different interpretations: military expedition, the contraction of marriage, mercenary.

In Middle Iron Age, the necropolis of Genoa can be anomalous phenomena (Melli 2004b, p. 315). There are two hipotesis:

- With it we know only the north Etruscan tombs of the community to install its own emporium of Genoa, and the tombs of the possible ligurian community who lived

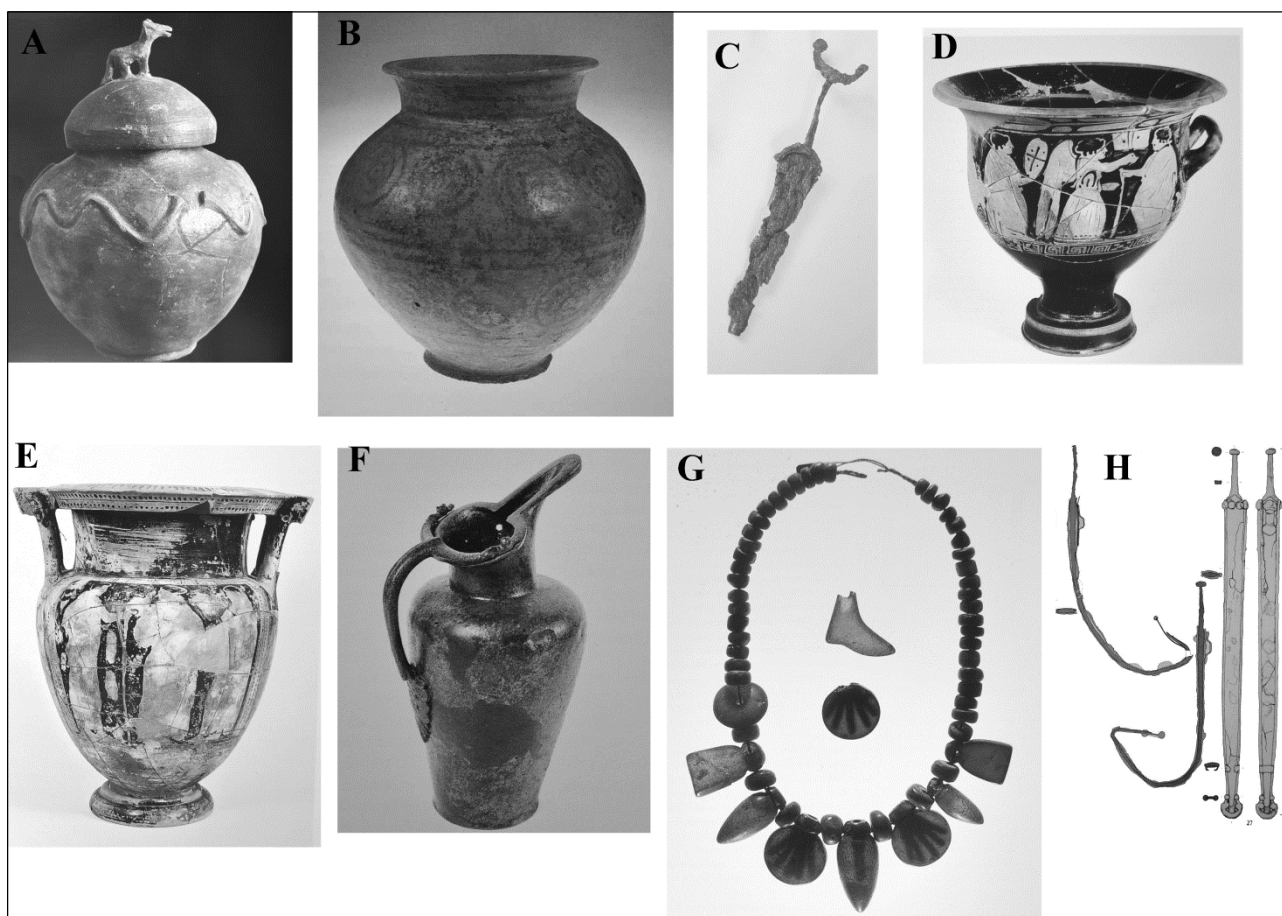


Figure 4 – Example of foreign grave element in Iron Age. A) Orientalizing urn, Chiavari cemetery (First Iron Age); B) Italic geometric ware, Chiavari cemetery (First Iron Age); C) Hallstattian short sword, Rocca delle Fene grave (First Iron Age); D and E) Attic red figures kraters, Genoa cemetery (Medium Iron Age); F) Etruscan *schnabelkanne*, Genoa cemetery (Medium Iron Age); G) Amber necklace, Genoa cemetery (Medium Iron Age); H) La Tène's swords, Cafaggio cemetery (Late Iron Age) (De Marinis, Spadea 2004)

with the Etruscans in Genoa has not yet been discovered;

- The necropolis is the manifestation funerary cult of the of the whole *oppidum-emporium*, thus giving the idea that Genoa was an Etruscan enclave in Liguria.

Probably the latter hipotesis is to be discarded: Strabo calls Genoa as a “emporium of the Ligurian” (IV, 6, 1-2, V 1.3). Now, if it was an emporium of only Etruscan Ligurian area, Strabo would have attributed to the Etruscans and the Ligurians. Also the only tomb discovered like Ligurian type could be the signal of the 'existence of others. Therefore you can think of Genoa as a commercial city like emporium, where he lived and Genuiates Ligurian with merchants from north Etruscan area. Moreover, the fact that a good number of male burials have weapons in the kit, it may indicate that it was the rich merchants of Liguria, who adopted Etruscan rituals as a status-symbol, while maintaining a native ritual component indicating their role as free men, however. This hypothesis is already proposed in Giannattasio 2007 (p. 122). This can be confirmed by the mixture of Greek production (vessels) and Etruscan (bronze) in the grave good.

Finally, in the late Iron Age necropolis of Cafaggio clearly shows two ethnic groups that were buried with the same ritual, Ligurian, but they took to the grave objects characteristic of the respective memberships: Celts and Ligurians. The first are the warriors that have supplied weapons in their latent type, the second-ranking women are likely to medium-high and probably indigenous. The common ritual, funerary urn with stone cist and placed in tombs, typical of the Ligurian Levant from Early Iron Age (Chiavari), could be an indicator of an integration of a group of Celtic warriors in the territory of the Apuanes Ligurians, with probable marriage with local women. This phenomenon may be related to the dynamics of the Celtic invasions in northern Italy, which began in the early IV century BC, but continued until the III century BC: at this juncture, where even small groups of warriors used to do raids to search for new territories, it is possible that one of them has gone up in the Apuan Ligurians territory, probably coming from the Northern Apennines, and is permanently installed and integrated into the local community, while maintaining their status symbols. The presence of Latenians in Apuan territory, is confirmed by the tomb of Pegazzano.

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