
BRONZE AGE HYPOGEAN CHAMBER TOMBS IN CENTRAL ITALY

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Résumé

In central Italy the funerary sphere of the Chalcolithic age (until 2300 aev) was well known from the first half of the 20th century. For the subsequent Early, Middle and Recent Bronze Age (2300-1200) the burials remained unknown until 1990, while in the Final Bronze Age (about 1175-950) the funerary aspect with cremations treatment has been archaeologically evident since the 19th century (although the burials were initially attributed to the Early Iron Age) .

For the Recent Bronze Age the turning point was given by the discovery in 1980 of the burial ground of Cavallo Morto (Anzio), then of few tombs at Matelica (Regione Marche), and of a third group at Lucus Feroniae not far from Rome.

Only in 1990, working and discussing with Renato Peroni, I argued that the chamber tomb of Luni sul Mignone and others in the same area were referable with this ghost-period of the Early and Middle Bronze Age. The later excavations of the robbed chamber of Prato di Frabulino near Farnese (1992) confirmed this suspect.

The hypogeal tombs of the transition from the Ancient Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age and of the full Middle Bronze Age are concentrated in the Farnese-Ischia di Castro and Barbarano-Blera areas, and the models are not very different from those of southern Italy, while in the North now begins the rite of the urnfields.

It is very difficult to understand the reasons for the exclusive geographical concentration of the Bronze Age chamber tombs in the two areas of Farnese-Ischia di Castro and Barbarano Romano-Blera.

On the one hand, it can be thought that the presence of two geographical groupings of maximum attestation of the monuments and a few doubtful units outside reflect a complex ancient reality.

On the other hand, as this concentrations seems anti-historical, it is perhaps necessary to give greater weight to finds such as those of Piansano and Sutri (respectively funerary vases of this period found in building excavations and not-official news of tombs with pre-Etruscan shards) and perhaps also to the old drawings of Tarquinia-Ripagretta, waiting for the archaeological documentation to demonstrate a greater diffusion, in the territory of the future

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Etruria, of this category of underground tombs.

The latest discovery, that occurred at Civitella Cesi, is very different and contributes to complicate the overview because the existence of dolmens in Etruria - denied for Etruscan specimens erroneously attributed to the Middle Bronze Age - restarts from the presence of a dolmen made with the unknown technique of cutting tufa slabs.

Mots-Clés: Artificial hipogeum, Chamber tomb, Dolmen, Etruria protohistory