

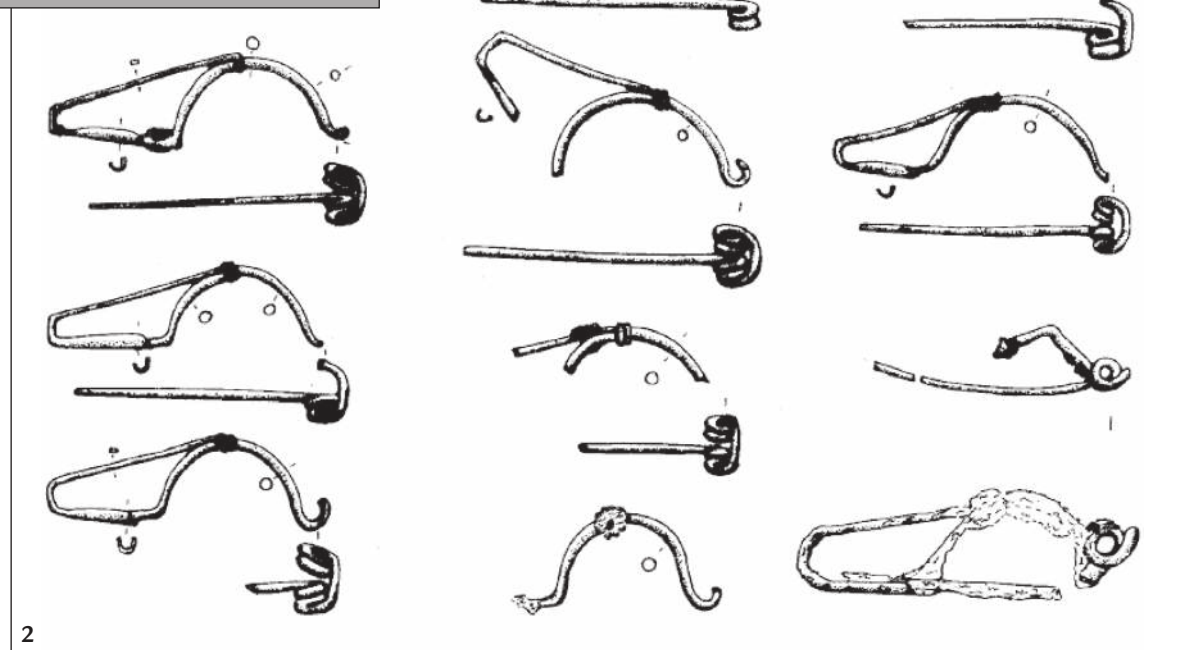
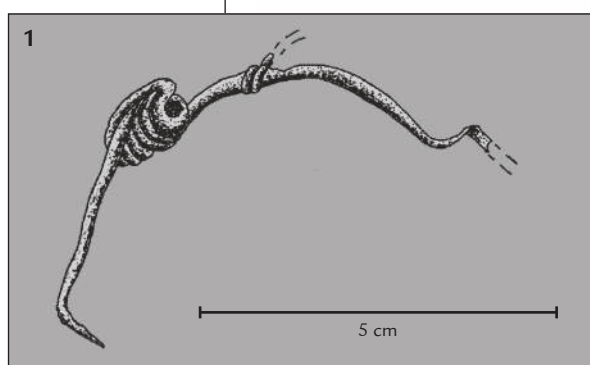
Tarquinia and the Celts?

Some thoughts on several examples of material culture in the Tarquinian territory and its vicinity

During the excavation season 2014, in so called 'Monumental Complex', part of Etruscan Tarquinia,¹ a bronze fibula of the middle La Tène scheme was uncovered (*Bagnasco-Gianni et al. in press*, fibula was identified during the uncovering of the superficial layer in sector H-M). The occurrence of this artefact of the 'Latenian' character opened the question of other possible indicators reflecting the Celtic presence in other sorts of material culture, known from the sites in Tarquinian territory or in its vicinity. Considering that the presence of Celtic tribes in many parts of Italian peninsula is attested by numerous sites ascribed to Celts and also by various examples of their perception in Hellenistic Italian art, it seems logical that such indications could exist also in Tarquinian territory.

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The scope of this contribution is to give consideration to some examples of the locally-found Hellenistic material culture in the Tarquinian area, which may be of

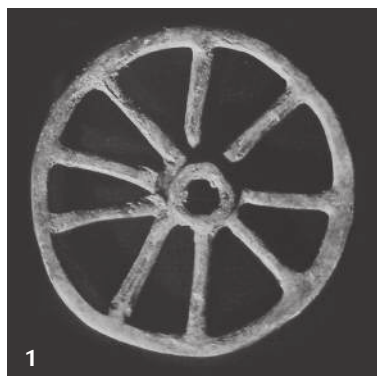


■ Fig. 1 1 Latenian fibula from the Tarquinian Monumental complex, 2 hoard of Latenian fibulae from the vicinity of the Vesta temple in Rome (after Piana Agostinetti 2006, fig. 2).

a Latenian origin or could demonstrate the presence of a 'Celtic theme' by depictions or representations of these Barbarians. Attention is especially paid to small bronze artefacts and figural art of red-figured vase painting, in terracotta or stone. Since this is the first study of the kind focused on Tarquinian territory, it must be understood that many thoughts presented here are necessarily at a hypothetical level. On the other hand this contribution should represent an initial point from which this topic will be further developed and researched.

Small bronze artefacts

Above mentioned Latenian fibula (**fig. 1: 1**), may be compared with the pieces from Stenico (Marzatico 1988, fig. 45; Adam 1996, Tav. 13: 310), Marzabotto (Kruta 1990, Tav. VI: 27); Valeggio sul Mincio (Salzani 1995, Tav. VIIIA: 13b) and Pontevecchio di Magenta (Tizzoni 1983, Tav. CXXVI: fig. 2f). The fibula from Valeggio sul Mincio is classified as an example of the Middle La Tène scheme, being part of the inventory of the LT D tomb (Salzani 1995, 22). The example from Pontevecchio di Magenta is dated to the 1st century BC (Tizzoni 1983, 34) and the fibula from Marzabotto to the second half of the 3rd century BC (Kruta 1990, Tav. VI). However, the abovementioned analogies slightly differ, especially in the way of the attachment of



■ **Fig. 2** 1 bronze ring from the Tarquinian Monumental complex, 2 metal finds from Celtic cemetery in Mannersdorf in eastern Austria, 3 metal finds from Celtic oppidum Trisov in southern Bohemia (after Bonghi Jovino 1986, fig. 85, and Moscati et al. eds. 1991, 299, 544).

- 1 Excavations are organized by the Institute of Etruscology of Università degli studi di Milano with participation of the Department of Archaeology of the Philosophical faculty, University of Hradec Králové (Czech Republic).
- 2 See Piana Agostinetti 2006, 102. Later date is preferred by Sheila Cherubini (2010) which proposes the date of the filling of the well in 2nd–1st century BC. According to all relevant opinions it is possible to conclude that the deposit was put to the ground between 220–50 BC (Lejars 2015, 158). But it would not exclude the date of the fibulae to the end of the 3rd or to 2nd century BC, in compliance with the consideration of Paola Piana Agostinetti.

the foot to the bow, from the Tarquinian fibula.

The closest analogies, even in the same way of attachment of the foot to the bow are represented by the fibulae of the Middle La Tène type (**fig. 1: 2**) found in the filling of the well close to the temple of Vesta at the Forum Romanum in Rome (*Bartholi* 1961, 103, Abb. 46; 139 Nr. 738–764; *Krämer* 1996, 140, Taf. 12; *Piana Agostinetti* 2006, Fig. 2; *Cherubini* 2010; *Baitinger* 2012, 378–390). These fibulae from Rome indicate also the date of the Tarquinian piece, which may be that of the period of the end of the 3rd–2nd century BC.²

Here we want to draw attention to another artefact found in Tarquinian 'Monumental Complex'. This is a bronze ring with radial rays, reminding one of a wheel of a wagon (**fig. 2: 1**). It was found in the strata dated to the early iron age (*Bonghi Jovino* 1986, 98). The item itself has been interpreted as a part of a model of a wagon (*Niro* 1987; *Tabone* 2001, 495, Tav. 145, 150). Such interpretation is absolutely logical, but considering the newly identified Latenian component (fibula) of the local material culture, it is possible to see this find too in the 'Latenian perspective'. The same items are known in Celtic Europe being predominantly interpreted as pendants. A convenient comparison may be represented by the bronze ring from the necropolis of Mannersdorf in Lower Austria (**fig. 2: 2**), which has been found in the tomb Nr. 13, dated to the final decennia of the 4th and initial part of the 3rd century BC (*Moscatti et al. eds.* 1991, 299). Another example from the transalpine area (**fig. 2: 3**) comes from the Celtic oppidum Třísov (1st century BC), located in the southern Bohemia (Central Europe; *Moscatti et al. eds.* 1991, 544). Similarly, two finds of this kind have been found also in second important Bohemian oppidum, namely Stradonice in Central Bohemia (*Filip* 1956, pl. 127: 26, 30).

It is not the purpose of this contribution to list all the finds of a kind. However, the significant occurrence of such artefacts in the Latenian material culture, and also that this representation of a wheel was

a mythological symbol ascribed to Celtic deity Taranis – god of Thunder –, we cannot completely exclude an alternative interpretation of this find in the terms of its possible 'Latenian' origin. It might be well argued by different chronology of presented analogies against such a presumption, but a possibility of later intrusion in earlier stratum also cannot be completely eliminated.

Figural depictions in terracotta and stone

During the excavations of a well in the sector I of the Tarquinian Monumental complex one Hellenistic (probably late 3rd – first half of the 2nd century BC) figural architectural terracotta was uncovered (*Bagnasco-Gianni* 2012, 27; for detailed stylistic analysis, analogies and chronology see *Chiesa* 2014). The figural depiction is represented by a torso of semi-naked fighting warrior in a crouched position, dressed in a lorica and mantle (**fig. 3: 1**). On the breast runs a strap from the quiver on his back. Head, hands, major part of one leg and feet are missing.

Regarding the interpretation of this figure in its dramatic posture, similar representations in the Hellenistic sculpture are often interpreted as depictions of Celtic or Barbarian warriors generally.³ An excellent example of such sculpture is for instance the so called Galatian monument in Delos (**fig. 3: 2**), dated to the period of about 100 BC.⁴ This monument was originally placed in the Agora of Italics. The figure of the warrior is associated with a stone base with Greek and Latin inscriptions including the signature of author Agasias, son of Menophilos of Ephesus. The monument could have been related to the victory of Romans over Cimbri and Teutoni between 102–101 BC. However the possible connection of the sculpture and base is not absolutely sure. Another interpretation puts the monument into relation with the Attalid testament in bequeathing the Pergamum Empire to Rome. Such an interpretation may not be too far from the truth since the struggles with Galatians play an important role in history of Pergamum.

Regarding the stylistic comparison of the Barbarian figure from Delos and terracotta depiction from the Tarquinian Monumental complex, the parts of the body, as well as the position, correspond well to each other. Although we are far from an unambiguous interpretation of the Tarquinian figure directly as Celtic warrior, this depiction may indicate an adoption of certain canonical model of figure of a young warrior in a dramatic fighting pose by Italian artists. This model was frequently repeated in the Hellenistic sculpture and its creation could have had a certain relationship to the sculpture produced by the workshops in Asia Minor (for example Pergamum Attalid donations and related sculptures), where the Celtic theme played an important role (cf. for ex. *Steingraber* 2000). A similar mechanism may be observed for example in the Hellenistic terracotta figurines from the Asia Minor, where numerous depictions with Barbarian attributes such as a specific haircut, beard or oval shield with a central rib, represent an universal model of a Barbarian (Celtic) enemy of the Hellenistic world (*Pottier – Reinach* 1887, 314, 318, 321; *Winter* 1903, 384–385; *Bienkowski* 1928, 126, 141; *Mollard-Besques* 1963, 124–125; *Leyenaar Plaisier* 1979, 281).

Another example deposited in the Tarquinian National museum, using the 'Celtic' theme, is represented by stone sarcophagus (**fig. 3: 3**) found in one tomb in the necropolis of Poggio del Cavalluccio near ancient Tarquinia and dated to the second half of the 3rd century.⁵ The battle scene shows a group of combatants, some of them naked and having typical oval shields. The scene is interpreted as a battle of Etruscans or Romans with Celts. Again here the main 'ethnic indicators' are these shields and the nudity of the warriors.

The Celtic theme in Etruscan figural art is mainly represented on urns.⁶ Sixteen examples are known from Chiusi, five examples from Volterra and two from Perugia (*Steingraber* 2000, 239). Some of the depictions come also from sarcophagi. In this sense a note of Stephan Steingraber has a great significance (*Steingraber* 2000, 240), namely that

the major part of these representations come from the 2nd century BC, which is contemporarily a period of negligible influence of Pergamene art on the art of Etruscans. The occurrence of the Celtic theme in Etruscan figural art might be thus understood as probably not being a reflection of historical events in the Etruscan area but rather as an evidence of using of certain ideological archetypes of the Barbarian enemy – Celt – as adopted from Pergamum art.

Vase painting

The depiction of Celts on the red-figured pottery is especially documented by some Faliscan pieces – the stamnos in Bonn, crater in Leipzig and crater in Louvre (Bonn – No. 1569: *Beazley* 1947, tav. 24: 1–2; Leipzig – No. T. 952: *Eberhard* 1988, 251, fig. D1.15; Louvre – No. 9830001: *Jolivet* 1984, pl. 1: 1). All of these depictions show representations of ‘Celtic’ weapons such as swords including their suspenders, helmets, shields and of course combatants with typical nudity. Other series of red-figured pottery – Volterranean Kelebai – are typical with representations of oval shields or shields with central rib, which are also associated with Celts (*Mangani* 1983, 72; *Montagna Pasquinucci* 1968, 59, Nr. 52, 82, Nr. 95–96, 42, Nr. 23; *Martelli* 1987, fig. 197: 2; *Vitali* 2003, fig. 1–2, 4). Finally we may point out the vases with similar representations from Milano (*Belloni* 1959, tav. 1: 1; *Servadei* 2003, fig. 8), Ferrara (*Servadei* 2003, fig. 4) or Tuscania (*De Lucia Brolli* 1983, 57, tav. 66; *Servadei* 2003, fig. 9).

The occurrence of the middle La Tène fibula in Tarquinian ‘Monumental complex’ opened hypothetical question of similar representations of the ‘Celts’ on the red-figured pottery of Etruscan provenance from the Tarquinian territory. At first sight, especially considering the vases from the Hellenistic necropolis of Fondo Scatagliini and Calvario, it is possible

to conclude that typical depictions of various attributes or aspects of the Laténian material culture as is the case of above mentioned pieces are not typical of these. However, it is possible to trace certain elements, which could have been influenced by the ‘Celtic theme’. We may point out especially the fragments of the red-figured calyx crater (**fig. 4: 1–2**) from the tomb Nr. 1786 at the necropolis of Calvario (*Cavagnaro Vanoni – Serra Ridgway* 1989, 41, fig. 18; *Cavagnaro Vanoni* 1996, tav. XIXa–b), dated to the end of the 4th century BC



■ **Fig. 3** 1 figural terracotta from the Tarquinian Monumental complex, 2 the Galatian monument in Delos, 3 sarcophagus depicting the battle with Gauls in the Tarquinian national museum.

- 3 Cf. *Federica Chiesa* (2014) considers in her study mainly the interpretation of the whole scene of which the figure was a part, as Amazonomachy, Centauromachy, Iloupersis or Galatomachy. For the appearance of the Celts in the Etruscan art see also *Pirson* 2005.
- 4 Cf. *Wenning* 1978, 27, and *Ridgway* 1990, 297ff. The Delos monument is substantially later than described Tarquinian scene, however it may represent a persistence of certain model defined in earlier period.
- 5 For the list of bibliography connected to this site see *Perego* 2005, 134–135.
- 6 Of course except of famous depiction on the terracotta frieze from Civitalba, Arezzo-Catona or terracotta fragments from Sovana. As other important example of figural art possibly depicting Celts see the paintings from Tomba Arieti in Rome (cf. *Moreno* 2003).

(Cavagnaro Vanoni 1996, 157). The first side of this vase shows two nude men bearing double axes; other shows two nude bearded men, one of them holding a sword and touching the shoulder of other man with his left hand. The scene gives impression of pursuance of the first-mentioned by the second man with the sword. Especially, the physical characteristics, musculature, 'ruffled' hairstyle and beard – and including nudity – correspond well with the imagination of a typical Barbarian (Celt) as known for example from the famous Great Attalid Pergamene donation or related sculpture (cf. Wenning 1978; Özgan 1981). But using the latter for this comparison, it must be emphasised, that the Attalid sculpture, as well as other examples of 'Celtic' representations in sculpture during the Hellenistic period (cf. Wenning 1978; Hintzen-Bohlen 1990; Ridgway 1990; Ridgway 2000; Lenz 1998; Andrae 1991), are substantially later than that of the aforementioned red-figured pottery. Such comparison is thus to a considerable extent only relative.

Again, in comparing the figural scene on mentioned red-figured calyx crater from the Tarquinian necropolis of Calvario with some representations on the above mentioned and chronologically better comparable pieces of Faliscan red-figured vases, one may find particular similar elements. For example there is the case of a sword which finds parallel in the sword of a warrior from the crater in Paris (Jolivet 1984, pl. 1: 1), although it is true that especially representations of weapons may evoke a certain amount of a stylization (fig. 4: 3). Also the position of a warrior on this vase is similar with that one from Calvario, with the exception that Paris-crater warrior is also equipped with a shield. The elements of the head, particularly the coiffure, are

hard to compare unfortunately with the representations of above mentioned Faliscan vases, because the major part of the warriors are equipped with helmets. But regarding the beard, which is so typical for the representations of the Celts in sculpture, here we have to pronounce a difference, because majority of the depicted warriors on the Faliscan or Volterranean vases are clean shaven.

Another example of representation of the material culture of a Celtic or Latenian character from Tarquinian area is represented by a red-figured oenochoe with a trefoil mouth in the Faliscan style (fig. 4: 4), deposited in Tarquinian National Museum (Jacopi 1955, tav. IVB 1: 3; the finding circumstances of the vase are unknown). The main scene comprises of a galloping Amazon on a horseback and falling nude youth. Under the horse is situated a large oval shield with lateral incisions (of a Boeotian type) but with a distinctive central rib that may be understood as a typical feature of the shields associated with Celts (cf. Beazley 1947, 67). Although the provenance of the vase is Faliscan not Tarquinian, it gives no problem since Faliscan territory is located close by. The possible historical event which inspired the Faliscan painter to use this theme could have had influence or could have been reflected also within the Tarquinian territory. Furthermore the relationships between Tarquinia and Falerii are attested not only by literary sources (Livius, *Ab urbe cond.* VII.12.6–7, VII.15.10, VII.16.2, VII. 16.7–8, VII.17.3–10, VII. 18. 2, VII. 19.2–3, VII. 19. 6–10, VII. 20. 1–9, VII. 22. 3–5) but also by the negligible influx of Faliscan pottery to the Tarquinian area in the 4th century BC (Del Chiaro 1967, 59–60, note 2; Pianu 1978).

The presented examples of red-figured pottery found in or produced

near Tarquinia indicate the possible presence of a 'Celtic theme' in this category of the material culture too. Although the above mentioned ideas cannot be fully confirmed, it is also impossible to definitely disprove them. However, research on this topic is still in its initial phase and the ideas thus presented should be rather understood as a starting point for future study.

Conclusion

Considering the questions of possible Celtic presence in the Tarquinian territory, it is necessary to distinguish two different groups of archaeological evidence. The first of these comprises the artefacts of 'Latenian' character or form – bronze fibula or hypothetically a ring with radial rays – with parallels in the Central Europe and Northern Italy. These artefacts may perhaps be associated with historical movements of Celts, documented by historical sources (see Lejars 2015, 166–168), or generally with their presence in particular region or site. Such explanation corresponds with the presence of Celtic tribes in various Italian regions as attested by existence of many sites or finds (cf. for ex. Vitali ed. 1987; Chieco Bianchi et al. 1988; Kruta – Manfredi 2000; Piana Agostinetti ed. 2004; Pirson 2009, 240; Schönfelder ed. 2010 with other bibliography). This is also the case of the broader vicinity of Tarquinia, where some finds of Celtic character have been found, namely the helmets, in Vulci, Montefiascone and Castel d'Asso.⁷ However it is absolutely necessary to avoid automatic identification of the finds of a Latenian character with the historical Celts, because it is impossible to exclude their use by other entities, or other possible interpretations of their presence.⁸

The second group of finds represents the depictions of the Celts

7 Cf. Stary 1979, 109, Abb. 1, and Lejars 2015, fig. 8: 2. The site of Montefiascone yielded also the finds of a 'Latenian' sword and scabbard (see Lejars 2015, fig. 8: 1). In this respect see also helmet and the 'Gaulish' shields in the so called 'ripistiglio di Genio militare' close to the temple in Talamone (see Sensi 1987, fig. 20–21, 36). Both types of shields presented here, circular and oval, find very similar analogies on the sarcophagus with the battle scene with Gauls in the Tarquinian national museum. For the distribution of 'Celtic' militaria in broader vicinity of the Tarquinian territory see Stary 1979, Abb. 1. For a brand-new picture of the 'Celtic' militaria, mainly swords, and fibulae in Latium see Lejars 2015, 135–159, fig. 11.

8 In this respect it is worth of noting the theory of Giovanni Colonna regarding the adjustments of the Celtic swords by Etruscans, as indicated by a statuette of a warrior from Vignaccia or some depictions in the Tomb of Reliefs in Cerveteri or Tomb Bruschi in Tarquinia (all late 4th – early 3rd c. BC) – see Colonna 2002, 175.

in figural art, such as terracotta, pottery, sculpture etc. These depictions, including our terracotta figure from the Tarquinian Monumental complex and sarcophagus in the Tarquinian National Museum, could be promptly classified as a result of the perception of the Barbarian Celts by local communities resulting from their presence in Italy and military conflicts with them. But it is necessary to distinguish two levels here. The history of the 4th or 3rd century BC knows the Celts during the siege of Rome in 390 BC, the battle of Anio in around 360 BC, battle between Rome and Etruscans near Lago Vadimone in 283 BC, battle with Romans near Talamone in 225 BC and other clashes or events (Vitali ed. 1987; Chieco Bianchi et al. 1988; Kruta – Manfredi 2000; Piana Agostinetti ed. 2004; Pirson 2009, 240; Schönfelder ed. 2010). Regarding the relationship between these historical events and the contemporary art, the mentioned historical events could have had an impact on the imagination of the Celts as expressed in Italic red-figured vase painting of the 4th century BC. But considering that major part of important military clashes or events with some relationship to Etruria and Etruscans with participation of Celts occurred mainly in the 4th or early 3rd century, then it is a question what was the source of Celtic inspiration in the Etruscan art of 2nd or 1st century. Here the most likely explanation seems to be not historical events but a certain persistence of Celts as an archetype of Barbarians or, as stated above, a substantial influence of Pergamum art, where the Celts have ever been a strong theme (Steingraber 2000, 239–240; Pirson 2009, 240).

The slowly emerging examples of Latenian material culture or representations in figural art in the settlement of Tarquinia and its surrounding suggest that the Celtic impacts, presence or movements could have left traces also here. This contribution should be thus perceived as a trigger for future study in this area, which may bring specific knowledge of various forms of the symbiosis of the local developed culture with the culture of Barbarian Celts.



■ Fig. 4 1–2 red-figured fragments from the Hellenistic cemetery of Calvario in Tarquinia, 3 warrior with the 'Celtic' oval shield on the red-figured crater in Paris, 4 oval shield with the central ridge on the Faliscan oenochoe, deposited in Tarquinian National Museum (after Cavagnaro Vanoni – Serra Ridgway 1989, 42; Jolivet 1984, pl. 1 and Jacopi 1955, tav. IVB: 1: 3).

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Souhrn

Tarquinie a Keltové? Několik poznámek k některým příkladům hmotné kultury na území Tarquinií a v jejich okolí

Během výzkumné sezóny 2014 došlo v prostoru tzv. monumentálního komplexu na území etruských Tarquinií k objevu spony středolátské konstrukce. Objevení tohoto artefaktu podnítilo otázku dalších možných indikátorů, reflektujících přítomnost hmotné kultury laténského charakteru nebo eventuálně keltského etnika v dalších složkách hmotné kultury ve vlastních Tarquiniích nebo jejich okolí. Uvážme-li, že přítomnost keltských kmenů v mnoha částech Apeninského poloostrova je doložena mnoha archeologickými lokalitami a rovněž mnoha příklady jejich reflexe v italském helénistickém umění, nezdá se nelogické, že by podobné indicie mohly být identifikovány i v materiální kultuře etruských Tarquinií či jejich okolí.

Účelem příspěvku je prezentace několika relevantních úvah týkajících se několika příkladů místní materiální kultury, která může být laténského původu nebo může být nositelem „keltského tématu“ díky hypotetickému ztvárnění těchto barbarů. Příspěvek se tedy zaměřuje na některé druhy drobných bronzových artefaktů, figurální zobrazení v červenofigurové vázové malbě, terakotě nebo kameni. Poněvadž jde o první studii svého druhu zaměřenou na území Tarquinií, je třeba zdůraznit, že mnoho postřehů či úvah zde prezentovaných je prozatím nutno chápat v hypotetické rovině. Tento příspěvek by měl být zároveň určitým podnětem, který povede k důkladnějšímu průzkumu daného tématu.

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