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## **The Belt in Prehistoric Central Tyrrhenian Italy**

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# The Belt in Prehistoric Central Tyrrhenian Italy

Sanna Lipkin

**ABSTRACT** This article explores the use and meaning of belts within four cultural regions with several centres of population in central Tyrrhenian Italy: the Etruscan, the Latin, the Faliscan and the Capenate regions. The main focus is on the Iron Age and the Archaic period. In these regions, lozenge-shaped and rectangular bronze belts and textile or leather belts with bronze clasps have been used. The belt has been an important item of attire, and there are clear differences in models and manners of use through time and between cultures. This article discusses the meaning of the belt in relation to status, gender, age, and ethnicity, conceptualises the issue of dress in archaeology, and explores important facts related to trade and marriage agreements.

## KEYWORDS

bronze belts, attire in archaeology, ethnicity, central Tyrrhenian Italy

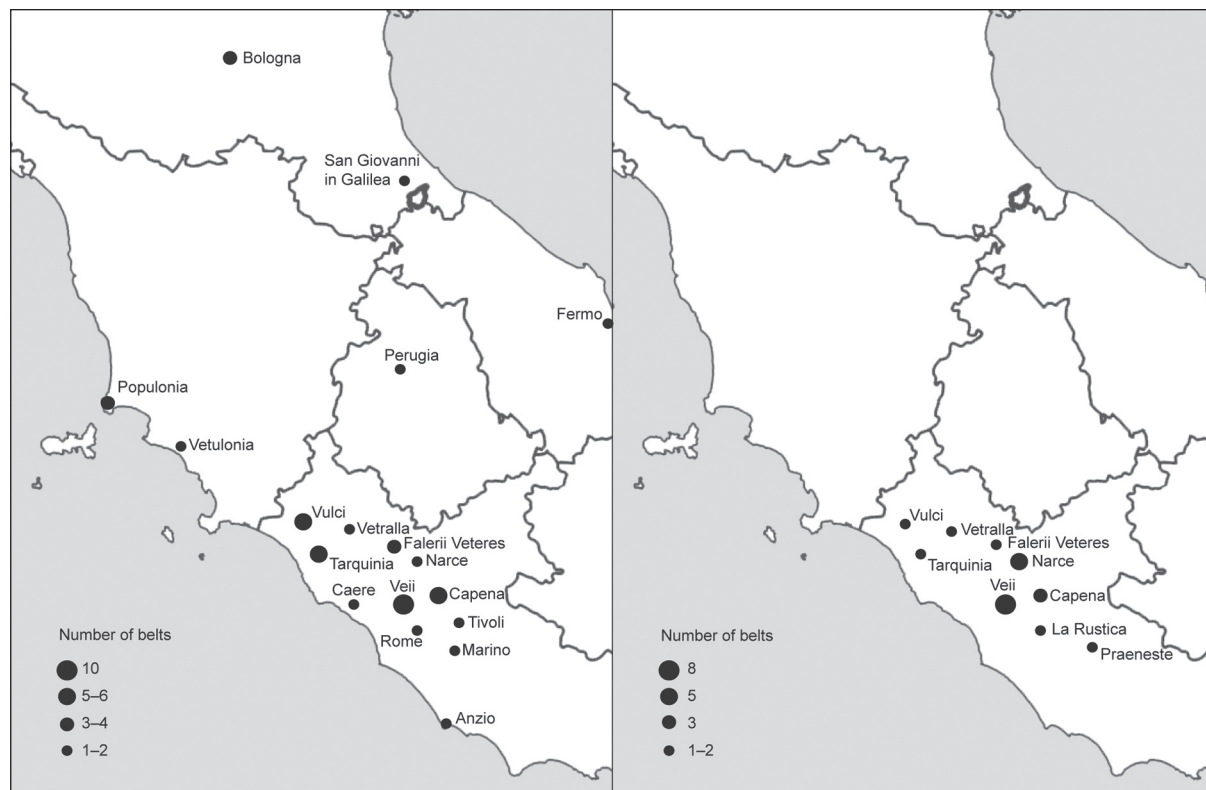
## Introduction

Clothes and dress accessories are perhaps among the most important signs of an individual's identity and personhood. What we wear defines who we are and what group we belong to in a way that is clearly and straightforwardly visible to others. Usually in archaeology, personhood defines how the individual perceives himself or herself as being different from the group to which he or she belongs (Fowler 2004). Personhood allows the individual to make choices that may differ from the social rules defined by the surrounding culture. This may be expressed by the choice of attire. In archaeological material, personhood is difficult to distinguish, especially in the case of rarely preserved materials, such as belts in the case of central Tyrrhenian Italy. For this reason, this article discusses the concept of identity. Identity refers to a person's own understanding of belonging to a certain group according to gender, age, rank or status, religion, or ethnicity (Díaz-Andreu 2005:17). Self-notion is largely affected by the sanctions of the surrounding cultural context. For this reason, identity is always born of social inter-

action and is therefore not an inborn characteristic. If social roles – the expected and normative rights and obligations that direct behaviour – are accepted as a part of life, they become a part of the person's identity (on roles, see Inkeles 1970:413). Roles are full of expectations, related to other roles (mother and child, man and woman), and defined by group identities. Generally speaking, identity is defined through sameness and difference.

## Theoretical background – aspects of identity and attire in central Tyrrhenian Italy

In central Tyrrhenian Italian archaeological material, gender is often defined through grave goods. This is due to the fact that in many cases, human remains have decayed in such a way that biological sex cannot be defined. This also applies to the age of the deceased. In the study of preserved human remains, it has been observed that sex and gender defined through artefacts are the same, with few exceptions (for example Toms



**Figure 1.** Map of Central Italy. Left: distribution of the lozenge-shaped belts; right: distribution of the rectangular belts.

1998). Female deceased are predominantly buried with textile-making implements and/or certain types of brooches (for example arch fibulae), jewellery, and other small ornaments. Men, on the other hand, have received weapons as goods, and male attire can be distinguished by a certain type of brooch (for example, a serpentine fibula). In burial grounds where the ages of the buried can be recorded, it has been discovered that individuals belonged to certain social groups also according to age. For example, in Osteria dell'Osa, older women were predominantly buried with a spindle, whereas young women, teenagers, and even some children were buried with multiple tool sets of spindles and spool (Bietti Sestieri 1992:110–116; see below for interpretation).

For ancient central Tyrrhenian Italian cultures, it is characteristic that only a small proportion of children are buried in cemeteries. Reasons for this may be sought in the ways childhood and adulthood were perceived. Most probably children were not full mem-

bers of the society (Lucy 2005:63; Lipkin 2012:85). For these reasons, most children were buried in their own cemeteries or parts of cemeteries, which has been the case in Crustumerium<sup>1</sup> and presumably in all population centres. Latin and Faliscan cultures differ from Etruscan and Sabine cultures in that child burials occur below the eaves of houses (Modica 2007; Baglione & De Lucia Brolli 2008). This phenomenon has not yet been fully explained, but so far, it does not seem to be related to the rank of the children.

Symbols of rank include weapons, armour, and shields made of bronze and iron in male burials and bronze, iron, or glass distaffs and large numbers of jewellery in female burials, as well as other metal artefacts (Iaia 1999:129–135). In addition, exotic or otherwise rare materials such as amber, ivory, silver, and gold may be regarded as markers of high rank. Only a small percentage of burials hold these objects, indicating that

<sup>1</sup> For preliminary results, see Jarva *et al.* 2013.

only a few members of society had enough wealth to obtain valuable objects and give them as grave goods. In comparison to these princely tombs, the majority of excavated graves are so-called middle-class burials. They contain pottery and elements of dress such as fibulae (see, for example, *Veii* 1963; 1965; 1967; 1970; 1972; *Osteria dell'Osa* 1992). Significant differences in the elements of dress between princely and middle class burials can be seen in the size of the fibulae (larger ones have more valuable bronze), their amount (richer tombs contain more fibulae and ornaments), and their material (gold and silver elements are found only in princely burials). Even though there are many similarities in the dresses of different social classes, for example, in the placement of the fibulae, the differences suggest that people of higher rank were dressed more elaborately. Most likely also the quality and appearance of the textiles have been better and more decorative in the clothing of higher-ranking people.

As with children, the burials of the poorest members of society are mostly unknown to researchers. For this reason, it is impossible to say much about their clothes in life or afterlife.

Ancient central Tyrrhenian Italy can be culturally divided into the following regions: Etruscan, Latin, Falisco-Capenate, and Sabine (**Fig. 1**). Interaction between these cultures has resulted in some common features in belts and other archaeological materials, but there is variation even between population centres within one cultural sphere. The importance of one's own centre was emphasised by distinctive artefact features. For example, in the Latin centre of Crustumerium, burials show a mixture of influences from the surrounding cultures, but as Crustumerium is located in the border area of Latium close to Etruria and the Faliscan and Sabine territories, during the Orientalizing period its inhabitants felt a need to create their own type of pottery vessels with three cusps in the handle (di Gennaro & Bellelli Marchesini 2010:21). This can be explained by the need to differentiate themselves from the other centres and create a feeling of uniformity between the members of the community. This is a general description of ethnicity, which was probably most visibly demonstrated in everyday attire. Clothing made one's origin visible outside the home and even

in neighbouring centres. As we will see in the case of belts, ethnicity was from time to time more important than other aspects of identity. Ethnicity and cultural differences, however, are not always one and the same, since a person may acquire some or all material aspects of a "foreign" culture if living among this culture. On the other hand, s/he may bring along something new when entering a new home. A foreign ethnicity may be the reason for a deceased person to have as grave goods something that is unusual in the prevailing culture but common in another one.

Even though dress has already been acknowledged as an important indicator of identity (Stig Sørensen 2000; Lucy 2005), research into this issue is limited on the European scale. Larissa Bonfante has studied different styles of Etruscan dress and briefly refers to belts as well (2003:22–24). Her research concentrates on different articles of clothing, such as chitons, mantles, perizomas (short trousers), and hats, as well as their types and variation through time. By comparing the accessories included in inhumation burials, different social groups can be identified based on their attire. In Italy, this important connection was acknowledged and one of the first syntheses was made already in the 1980s on funeral materials from Este (Boiardi 1981). From then on, attire has been studied (most recently, for example, von Eles 2012; Serges 2012) as a marker of gender or rank, but further theoretical considerations remain rather vague. However, there are exceptions. Important research on dress and its meaning has been carried out by Iaia (2007a; 2007b), who studies female status based on dress in Verucchio and more widely in the Adriatic area, as well as the meaning of large Orientalizing rings hanging from fibulae on the breasts or the pelvis of female deceased in Iron Age Latium and southern Etruria. Bartoloni has previously proposed that these rings suggest the reproductivity of the deceased (2003:133), even though the rings are found among all age groups from infants to senior women. Iaia (2007b) studies this find group further and notes that the rings are a significant indicator of ethnicity. His research proves that concentrating on a single centre (Verucchio) or find group (large rings) and comparing the occurrence of the phenomena within a wider area can provide useful information.

**Table 1.** The chronology (Bietti Sestieri 1992:8; Pacciarelli 2000:Fig. 38; Nijboer *et al.* 2001; Bartoloni 2003:29; Guidi 2008, Tab. 1).

Traditional chronology	Pacciarelli	Nijboer <i>et al.</i>	Cultural definition	Latium	Veii	Tarquinia
c. 900–830 BC	950/925–900/875 BC	c. 1020–875 BC	Early Iron Age	IIA	IA	IA
c. 830–770 BC	900/875–875/850 BC	c. 875–845/820 BC		IIB1	IB	IB1
				IIB2	IC	IB2
c. 770–740 BC	850/825–770 BC	c. 845/820–780 BC		IIIA	IIA	IIA
					IIB	IIB
c. 740–730/720 BC	770–730/725 BC	c. 780–770 BC		IIIB	IIC	
c. 730/720–630/620 BC		c. 770–630/620 BC	Late Iron Age	IVA	Early Orientalizing	
c. 630/620–580 BC				IVB	Late Orientalizing	
c. 580–480 BC			Archaic Period			

Belts, in addition to their practical purpose, have had several meanings in antiquity. In central Tyrrhenian Italy, the most visible differences may be seen between different ranks, genders, and ethnicities. Leather belts have been preserved only occasionally, and in these cases preservation is caused by the presence of metal rivets (Tarquinia, Monterozzi 1, Tomba del Guerriero, see Montelius 1904:Pl. 288.6; Hencken 1968:211, Fig. 192; Lanuvium, Tomba del Guerriero, Galieti 1935/1976; Colonna 1977; Zevi 1990). Textile belts were also most likely used, but no examples of them have been found in the area.<sup>2</sup> Objects for which valuable materials were used have been prestige items, and for this reason this article refers primarily to aristocratic ways of using belts. Different kinds of belts and their fastening types indicate variations in fashion, which was different according to gender. Furthermore, ethnic groups have used different kinds of belts. In this article, I concentrate on the differences and similarities of wearing belts or belt buckles in the Etruscan, Latin, Faliscan, and Capenate regions from the early Iron Age to the Archaic period (for chronology, see **Table 1**). Based on the belt materials I have explored until now, clear differences between these cultures can be seen.

<sup>2</sup> Two woven belts of linen have been discovered in northern Italy, Molina di Ledro. Both belts date from the Bronze Age and have been preserved for a length of around two metres. They are 3 and 6.8 cm wide. One belt has a woollen loop at one end and fringes at the other. This belt is woven in plain weave, whereas in the other belt, diamond decoration is achieved with twill weave (Bazzanella & Mayr 2009:36–46, 75–79).

### Early Iron Age (1020–770 BC)<sup>3</sup>

Prestige belts reflect the rank and role of the deceased in the family or community. Such items are the lozenge-shaped and rectangular bronze belts found in central Tyrrhenian Italy. Lozenge-shaped belts are made of a sheet of bronze that is bent into a semicircular shape. One end of these belts has a hook turned to the inside and the other end is wider and has two adjacent holes. Apparently the belt was attached to a textile or leather ribbon that was strung through the holes at the other end and knotted. The loop of the ribbon was then attached to the hook. These belts are quite wide in the middle, between 11 and 15 cm (variation 8.8–16.3), and clearly narrow down towards the ends. Rectangular belts are long belts, varying mostly from 55 to 80–90 cm in length. They are tied around the waist and usually attached with a small hook to holes at the other end.

<sup>3</sup> This dating is according to Nijboer *et al.* (2001) who have presented a new chronology for the early periods of Central Italy. The prevailing “traditional” chronology of Latium and early Rome was first presented in *Civiltà del Lazio primitivo* (1976). Later, materials from archaeological excavations such as the Corinthian and the Euboean ceramics have provided a more accurate dating (Bartoloni 2003:27–29). The traditional dating is widely accepted in research literature, but Albert Nijboer *et al.* (2001) and Marco Pacciarelli (2000: early Iron Age 950/925–730/725) have made new suggestions based on radiocarbon and dendrochronology measurements. Instead of absolute datings, I have chosen, whenever possible, to speak of periods in order to prevent misunderstandings related to datings.

In inhumation burials, the belt is usually located around the waist of the deceased, but it can also be found at the feet or above the head. In cremation burials, belts are sometimes tied around cinerary urns (Veii 1972:262, Figs. 41–42, 46–47; Baglione & De Lucia Brolli 1990:90–91, Tav. II.a, III.c, d).<sup>4</sup> The urn has been interpreted as a representation of the body of the deceased (Berardinetti & Drago 1997:52). Sometimes the belts in cremations have been deliberately folded.<sup>5</sup> In five cases, one deceased has more than one belt, and they are of different types: lozenge-shaped and rectangular (three times in Veii: Veii 1963:239, 276, Figs. 101, 105; Bartoloni *et al.* 1997:100; Berardinetti & Drago 1997:51–52, Fig. 19; Buranelli *et al.* 1997:69, 73, Fig. 20; once in Vetralla: Colini 1914:Tav. 1.B; Iaia 1999:Fig. 32D; once in Vulci: Dohan 1942:94–95, Fig. 63, Pl. 50. Turfa 2005:100–101, nos. 30–31).

## Belt types

### Lozenge-shaped belts

Bronze belts are quite common in aristocratic tombs, especially in female and child burials. For example in Veii, where most of the belts of this article have been found, some of the female and child burials have a bronze belt, most frequently a lozenge-shaped one. The lozenge-shaped belt is associated with the female sphere of life and the matrimonial status of women (Iaia 1999:62). However, the presence of these belts in child burials indicates that they are not only a symbol for married women. We cannot always know whether the burial is a child burial or not, because in many cases human bones have not been preserved. However, the dimensions of the grave and the dimensions of the jewellery may be suggestive of a child burial. In Narce, Monte lo Greco Tomb 18, both an aristocratic female and a child right next to her have lozenge-shaped belts around their waists (Fig. 2; Cozza 1894:139, Fig. 56; Pasqui 1894:440–442). The child's belt in this burial is

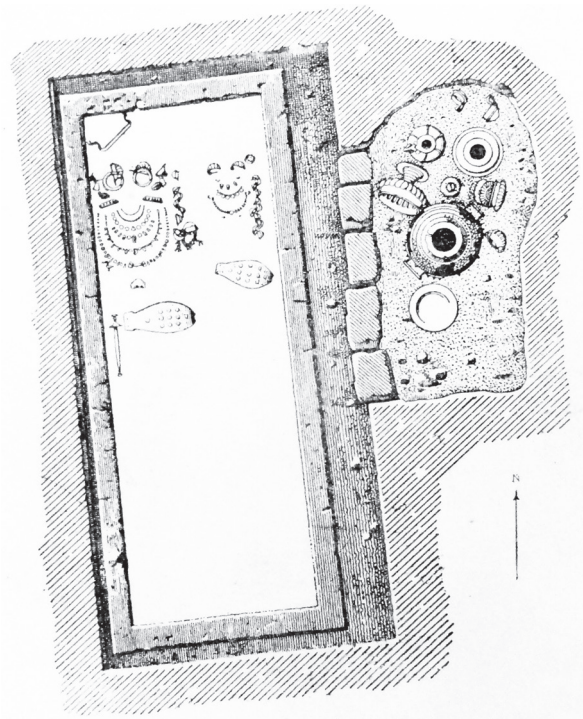


Figure 2. Narce, Monte lo Greco Tomb 18 (Cozza 1894:139, Fig. 56).

smaller than the adult's, but in general, it cannot be distinguished whether the deceased is a child or an adult based on the size of the belt. The length of the belts varies between 27 cm and 55.5 cm. The shortest one is from Capena, Le Saliere Tomb 94 (Stefani 1958:91, 94, Fig. 23–24.), and it may belong to a full-sized deceased (stature around 160 cm), whereas a nine-year old deceased in Veii, Quattro Fontanili Tomb EE12, has a belt that is 44.2 cm long (Period IIA,<sup>6</sup> Veii 1965:96, Fig. 29, 30). As the belts are bent, it is of course the largest diameter (varies between c. 20 cm and 33.6 cm) that defines the maximum width of the abdomen of the deceased.<sup>7</sup> However, there is still no difference in diameter in the belts found in adult and child burials. This leads to the conclusion that these belts were not specifically made in children's sizes, even though Monte lo Greco Tomb 18 suggests otherwise. Belts were acquired for other reasons than a perfect fit for the indi-

<sup>4</sup> In Verucchio, there are examples of dressed urns, as indicated by fibulas, belts, and jewellery (Iaia 1999:114; Trucco 2006:99–100, Fig. 1; von Eles 2006:73; von Eles 2012:14–16). For more on the dressing of urns, see Gleba 2008:87–88.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Grotta Gramiccia, Tomb 732 (Berardinetti & Drago 1997:52, Fig. 19).

<sup>6</sup> For datings of Veii, Quattro Fontanili, see Toms 1986.

<sup>7</sup> There is no consistency between the length and diameter of the belts. They were bent at different curvatures.

vidual using them, and as they are prestige items, they could have been passed from mother to daughter as “inheritance” for the afterlife.

The belts have been hammered so that the ornaments made with incisions and reliefs are on the exterior. The earliest lozenge-shaped belts are from the early Iron Age. One of them comes from the Tomba dei Bronzetti Sardi in Cavalupo, Vulci (dating Villanovan IB1, Falconi Amorelli 1966:10, 15, Fig. 4.24, Iaia 1999:88–89, Type A3). It has nine solar motifs in the middle in three lines and one solar motif at both sides, and there is a knob in the middle of each sun (Type A2). Another early Villanovan example from Bologna (Benacci 543A) also has this kind of solar decoration (Type A3, Fig. 3.A3). Later belts usually have the same number of suns around knobs made of concentric circles or simply only the knobs.

Lozenge-shaped belts can be divided into six types according to their decorative motifs and material (Table 2; Fig. 3):

- A Bronze belt with birds (eleven knobs)
  - A1 Realistic birds at both ends
  - A2 Realistic birds at both ends and in the middle
  - A3 Figurative birds at both ends and in the middle
  - A4 Figurative birds in the middle
  - A5 Birds and other animals
- B Bronze belt with animals (eleven knobs)
- C Bronze belt with geometric decoration (eleven knobs)
  - C1 Geometric decoration with variations of meander, lines, wolf’s teeth, zigzags, and St. Andrea’s crosses
  - C2 Geometric decoration and buttons encircling the belt and central knobs
- D Bone belt with eleven solar motifs and wolf’s teeth
- E Bronze belt with three knobs and buttons encircling the belt and central motifs
- F Bronze belt with varying number of bosses (2–17)

For this article, I have recorded 67 lozenge-shaped belts, a couple of which have been found outside central Tyrrhenian Italy (Fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> Etruscan wide-spread connections are evidenced also by the presence of exported lozenge-shaped belts in Euboea, Greece,

<sup>8</sup> Three of these are from the Orientalizing period and are discussed in the next chapter.

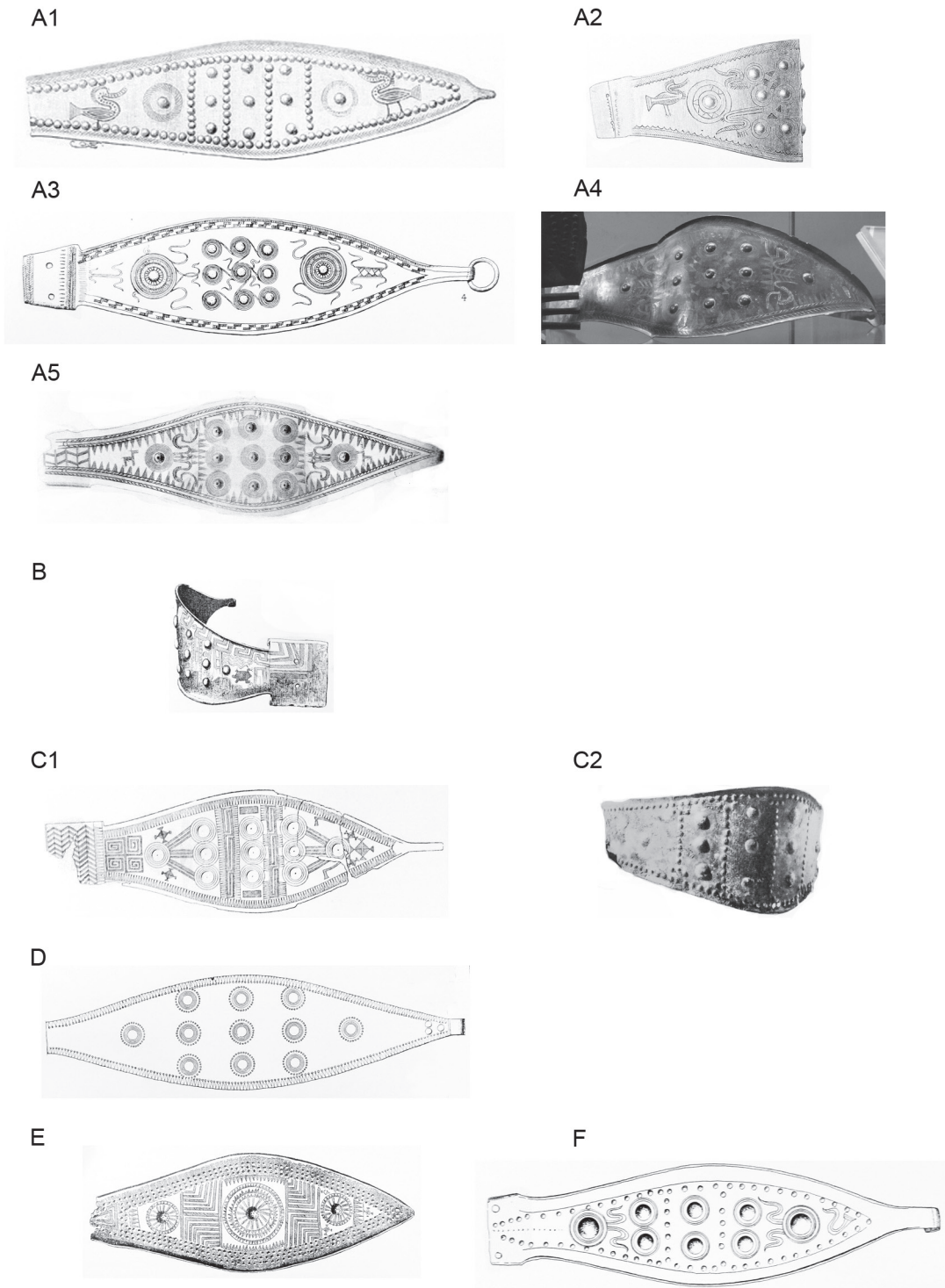
where an 8th-century-BC belt has been purchased at the antiquity market (Close-Brooks 1967). However, most of the belts in Table 2 have been found in southern Etruria (28 items). Tarquinia, Caere, Vulci, and Veii are possible production centres, whereas in central Etruria, belts were most likely made in Populonia and Vetulonia, which are also known for the production of other bronze artefacts.<sup>9</sup>

In general, the belts share similar decoration, but there are differences in their style. These differences most probably indicate certain workshops that manufactured the belts. For example, in Veii, as many as twelve lozenge-shaped belts and eight rectangular belts with similar features have been found. They differ from those found in Tarquinia and Vulci. In addition to geometric elements, such as wolf’s teeth, zigzags, and crosses, the most common decorative element is a bird (Type A). Birds may occur in either fairly realistic or figurative form.

There is no chronological difference in the style of the birds, as both realistic and figurative birds occur in Villanovan I and II periods, but most Type A2 belts with birds at both ends and in the middle are dated to the earliest periods (Vulci, Osteria, IB; Veii, Tomb OP4–5, IC; Populonia, Poggio delle Granate 1, Villanovan I). The birds are waterfowl and sometimes have a plumed head (Fig. 3.A5). Sun boats with birds (*barca solare ornitoforma*)<sup>10</sup> are the most common. The variation in the style of the birds is notable, even though, for example, the birds in both belts from Vulci, Osteria, are almost similar (Type A2). None of the birds are similar to the bird types collected by Iaia (2004, Fig. 1B) based on other bronze funerary artefacts, such as armour, banquet vessels, and urns. He has also noted that styles are different between and within centres. However, some birds in belts are almost similar. It is possible that the Type A4 specimen from Anzio and Tarquinia (Monterossi, Cassa with a Bronze

<sup>9</sup> The homogeneity of different artefact groups, such as spades, helmets, and metallic vases, has led to suggestions that these objects would have been manufactured in certain centres, such as Vetulonia, Populonia, Volterra, Tarquinia, and Caere, from which they were distributed elsewhere (Camporeale 1985:25; Bietti Sestieri 2010:260–261).

<sup>10</sup> This figurative element has its origin in the final stage of the Urnfield Age culture in the Danube basin (Iaia 2004:308).



**Figure 3.** Lozenge-shaped belt types: A1 Perugia (Montelius 1904:Pl. 251.8), A2 Tarquinia, Monterozzi, Fossa with a bronze girdle with birds (Montelius 1904:Pl. 285.4), A3 Bologna, Benacci 543A (Randall-Maclver 1924, Pl. 4.4), A4 Tarquinia, Monterozzi, Cassa with a bronze girdle (photo by S. Lipkin), A5 Capena, Le Saliere 25 (Stefani 1958:Fig. 15), B Tarquinia, Monterozzi 6, Dolio with the girdle with a tortoise (Montelius 1904:Pl. 282), C1 Falerii veteres, Montarano 15 (Cozza 1894:Fig. 56), C2 Falerii veteres, Montarano 17 (Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:Tav. X.31), D Velletra, Poggio Montano 52 (Randall-Maclver 1924:Fig. 59), F Bologna (Randall-Maclver 1924:Pl. 4.6).



**Table 2.** Lozenge-shaped belt types (early Iron Age – Orientalizing period).

Type	N	Distribution	Dating	References
A1	5	Veii (2), Perugia, British Museum (2)	QF EE12 IIA, ZZ11–12 IIA	<i>Veii</i> 1965:96, Fig. 29, 30; <i>Veii</i> 1967:213, Fig. 73, 77; Montelius 1904:Pl. 251.8; Pigorini 1908:108, Fig. I; <i>British Museum</i> :Museum numbers 1857,1013.2; 1975,0703.1.
A2	7	Veii (2), Tarquinia, Vulci (2), Populonia, Falerii Veteres	QF OP4–5 IC, Vulci IB, Populonia 800–775/750 BC (trad.)	<i>Veii</i> 1972:295, Figs. 62, 70; Berardinetti & Drago 1997:52, Fig. 19; Montelius 1904:Pl. 285.4; Pigorini 1908:110, Fig. N; Hencken 1968:269, Fig. 252; Mandolesi 2005:198–201, nos. 75, 76; Minto 1922:72, 102, Fig. 11.2; Ducati 1927:Tav. II.38; Bartoloni <i>et al.</i> 1980:100, Pl. LXII1; Camporeale 1985:51–52; Barnabei 1894:218, Fig. 99Z; Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:370–372; Montelius 1904:Pl. 307.7; Pigorini 1908:106, Fig. L; Cozza & Pasqui 1981:44.
A3	5	Rome, Tarquinia, Vulci, Bologna, Este	Tarquinia II, Vulci TBS IB1, Bologna first half of the 8th century BC (trad.)	Pigorini 1908:103, Fig. E; Müller-Karpe 1962:94, Taf. 34.8; Randall-Maclver 1924:53, Pl. 14.18; Hencken 1968:183–186, Fig. 169; Iaia 1999:Tav. 6, Fig. 15; Fugazzola Delpino 1984:104; Iaia 1999:89; Randall-Maclver 1924:Pl. 4.4; Briquet 1986:IV-6; Pigorini 1908:115, Fig. Q.
A4	5	Rome, Anzio, Tarquinia, Vulci, Vetulonia	Anzio I?, Vulci 8th century BC (trad.)	Pigorini 1908:103, Fig. D; Müller-Karpe 1962:94, Taf. 34.7; Gierow 1966:343, Fig. 97.1; Hencken 1968:273, Fig. 255; Proietti 1980a:Fig. 15; Fugazzola Delpino 1984:91; Pigorini 1908:107, Fig. H.
A5	2	Capena (2)		Stefani 1958:50, 91, Figs. 15, 23–24; Fugazzola Delpino 1984:41.
B	4	Veii (2), Tarquinia, Capena	QF I17 IIA?, AABBB IIB, Tarquinia Arcatelle 34 IIA2, Capena IIA	<i>Veii</i> 1972:265, Fig. 47; <i>Veii</i> 1976:180–181, Figs. 24, 27; <i>Ns</i> 1885:447, n. 8; Montelius 1904:Pl. 282; Hencken 1968:191–193, Fig. 173; Iaia 1999:130–134, Fig. 30; Stefani 1958:99–100, Fig. 27.
C1	14	Veii (4), Tarquinia (2), Caere, Capena (2), Falerii Veteres, Narce (2), San Giovanni in Galilea (near Verucchio), Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum	QF AA12A IIA, KKLL18–19 IIC, Tarquinia SS137 IIA	<i>Veii</i> 1963:239, 276, Figs. 101, 105; <i>Veii</i> 1965:68, Figs. 8, 11; <i>Veii</i> 1972:345, Fig. 100; Berardinetti & Drago 1997:Fig. 22; Müller-Karpe 1959:240, Taf. 29.9; Pigorini 1908:111, Fig. O; Hencken 1968:167, Fig. 155; Stefani 1958:73, 191, Fig. 50; Barnabei 1894:218, Fig. 99Z; Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:370–372; Montelius 1904:Pl. 307.7; Pigorini 1908:106, Fig. L; Cozza & Pasqui 1981:44; Cozza 1894:139, Fig. 56; Pasqui 1894:440–442; De Lucia Brolli 1991:104–105, Fig. 72; von Eles 2012:16; Naso 2003:no. 261.
C2	1	Falerii Veteres	8th century BC (trad.)	Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:370–371, Tav. X.31; Cozza & Pasqui 1981:48; Proietti 1980b:Fig. 312.
D	1	Bologna	I	Randall-Maclver 1924:Plate 2.14.
E	6	Marino (Riserva del Truglio, 2), Velletra (2), Falerii Veteres, Populonia	Marino Orientalizing, Vetralla II, Falerii Veteres first quarter of the 8th century (trad.)	Gierow 1964:217–218, Figs. 49, 50; Gierow 1966:343–344, Fig. 97.2; <i>Civiltà del Lazio primitivo</i> 1976:88, Tav. IX; Colini 1914:Tav. 1B; Randall-Maclver 1924:Fig. 59; Iaia 1999:Fig. 32C, D; Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:370–372; Cozza & Pasqui 1981:24–2; De Lucia Brolli 1991:26; Minto 1922:102, Fig. 11.1.
F	9	Tivoli, Vulci, Populonia, Bologna (2), Fermo, Potenza, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, British Museum	Tivoli Latial IIB–IIIA (Villanovan IIA), Vulci 7th century (trad.), Populonia first quarter of 8th century (trad.)	<i>Civiltà del Lazio primitivo</i> 1976:196–199, Tav. 36; Dohan 1942:94–95, Fig. 63, Pl. 50; Turfa 2005:100–101, no. 30; Camporeale 1985:48–49; Randall-Maclver 1924:Pl. 4.6, von Kossack 1949:Taf. 2.4, Hencken 1968:Fig. 478; Pigorini 1896:Fig. 2; Pigorini 1908:103, Fig. D; Randall-Maclver 1924:Pl. 4.5; Müller-Karpe 1962:94, Taf. 34.7; Bietti Sestieri 2010:243, Fig. 1; Pigorini 1908:105, Fig. F; Naso 2003:no. 260; <i>British Museum</i> :Museum number 1814.0704.1055.
Not identified	8	Velletri, Veii (3), Vulci, Narce (2), Limone	QF Yα, IIC, Vulci Orientalizing, Narce, Petrina 36 IIB	Gierow 1964:Fig. 230.8; Nardini 1934:172, fig. 4; <i>Veii</i> 1970:257–286, Figs. 45, 47; Buranelli <i>et al.</i> 1997; Dohan 1942:94–95, Fig. 63, Pl. 50; Turfa 2005:100–101; Cozza 1894:137, Fig. 54; Pasqui 1894:422–423, 504; Barnabei & Pasqui 1984:371; Orsi 1887:122, Tav. IV.10.
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>			

QF = Veii, Quattro Fontanili, TBS = Tomba dei Bronzetti Sardi in Cavalupo, SS = Selciatello Sopra, trad. = Traditional dating given by researchers

Girdle) and the Type A5 belt from Capena (Le Salire Tomb 25) were made by the same craftsman (**Fig. 3.A5**). There are also a couple of belts with representations of deer and fish [two from Veii, Quattro Fontanili, AABBB (IIB), I17 (IIA?) and three from Capena, 25, 94, 104 (the last is one of the oldest examples of type IIA, Iaia 2008:38), Types A5 and B] and one with a tortoise<sup>11</sup> (from Tarquinia, see **Fig. 3.B**; **Table 2**, Type B). Belts with animals that have thus far been dated are from the Villanovan II period.

Geometric decoration without any animal figures is the second most common type (C, see **Table 2** for references). In the belts<sup>12</sup> found in Veii, Vulci, and Tarquinia, the geometric elements are clearly different from each other. All Type C1 examples from Veii, Quattro Fontanili, are dated to the Villanovan II period (KKLL18–19, IIC; AA12A, IIA; Tuβγ). Type C2 is represented by one example from Falerii Veteres (Montarano 17, Villanovan II, **Fig. 3.C**), but similar buttons encircling the belt are found in all Type E examples (**Fig. 3.E**) and a Type F belt found in Bologna with eight knobs (**Fig. 3.F**), as well as around central knobs in Type A1 belts found in Perugia (**Fig. 3.A1**) and the belt in the collections of British Museum (for notes, see **Table 2**).

Even though the preserved lozenge-shaped belts are usually made of bronze, one example from Bologna, S. Vitale (Tomb 491), is made of deer bone (Type D, **Fig. 3.D**). It is also one of the earliest belts dating to Villanovan I. It is of the same size as the bronze belts, but less decorated. It has only eleven solar motifs placed similarly as on bronze belts and some wolf's teeth decoration encircling the edges of the belt.

The most distinctive variation in the decoration of these belts is the varying number of knobs (Types E and F, Villanovan IB–Orientalizing period, **Fig. 3.E, F**). Most of these belts are found outside southern Etruria to the north, east, and south, and they are probably local products. In the southern Etruscan centre of Ve-tralla (**Fig. 3.E**), the central Etruscan Populonia, and

the Faliscan centre of Falerii Veteres, altogether four belts have been found with three solar motifs, a larger one in the centre and two smaller ones at both sides.

### Rectangular belts

Information on twenty-four rectangular long belts has been collected for this article.<sup>13</sup> Most of these belts have been found in Etruria (eight in Veii, **Fig. 1**) and dated to the Villanovan II period, but there are also couple of Orientalizing examples. Rectangular belts can be divided into four different types (**Table 3**; **Fig. 4**):

- 1 Organic belt (leather or textile)
  - 1A with metal rivets
  - 1B with swastikas
- 2 Bronze belt with a hook
  - 2A with rivet copies
  - 2B with rivet copies and other decoration
  - 2C with concentric circles, triangles, and ducks
  - 2D with meander and wolf's teeth
- 3 Bronze belt with rounded buckles
  - 3A no decoration
  - 3B with rivet copies and other decoration
- 4 Broad bronze belt
  - 4A with rivet copies
  - 4B with rivet copies and other decoration

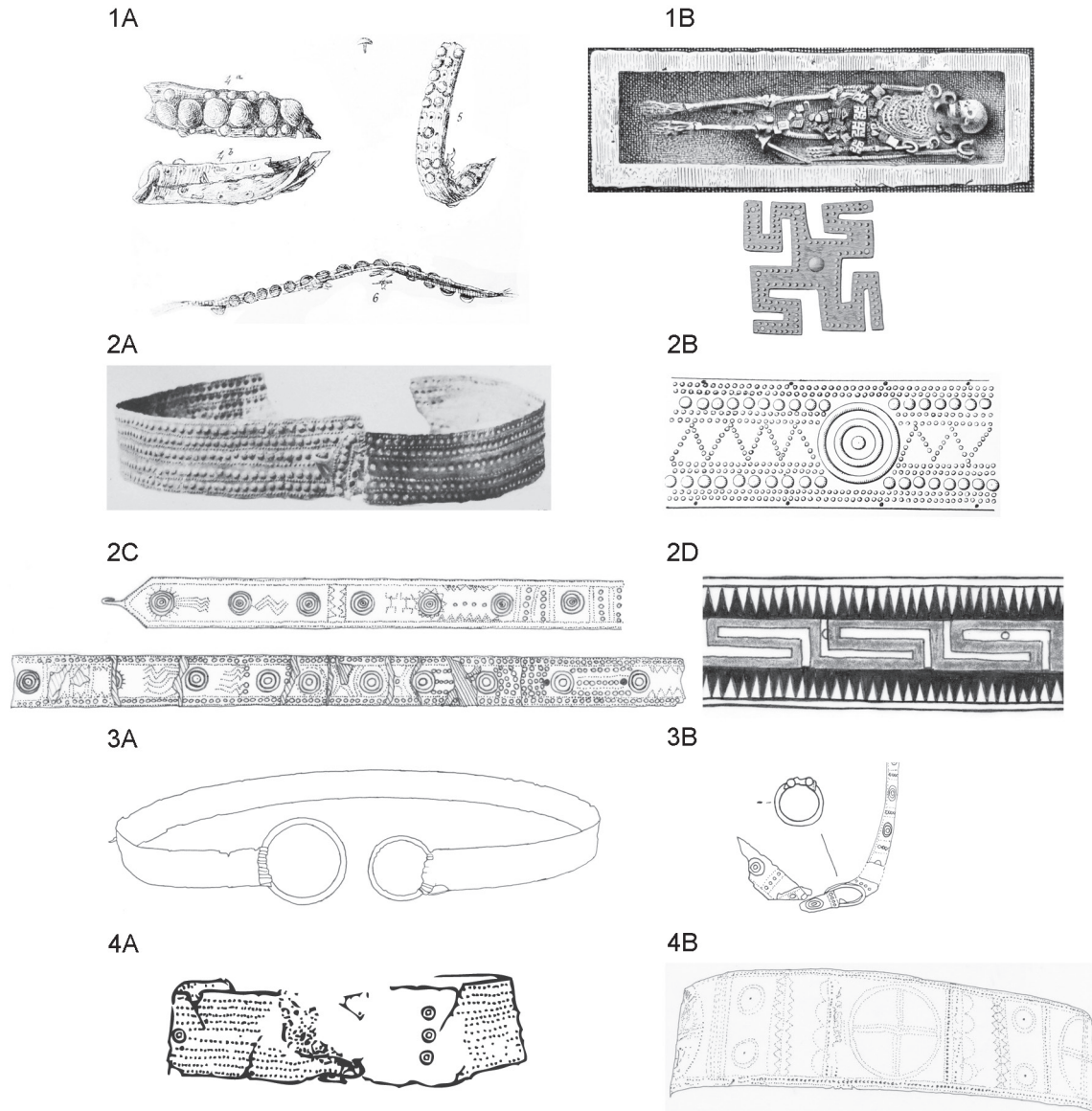
Rectangular belts were modelled after leather and textile belts that might have had similar decorative motifs. There are two examples that provide information on the use of organic material in belts. In Tarquinia, Tomba del Guerriero (Period IIA), metal rivets have been attached to leather strips about two cm in width (Type 1A, **Fig. 4.1A**).<sup>14</sup> Most of the metal belts probably imitated this kind of belts (Type 2). Belts with so-called rivet copies are sometimes decorated with other elements as well. They are usually concentric circles and zigzags. A clear example of the use of organic belt material comes from Narce, Petrina Tomb 30, where

<sup>11</sup> In this same burial, there was also a piece of bronze 27 x 2.8 cm in size that was attached to a cloth. At the moment of discovery, it had some threads in holes that were most probably used for attachment. (Ns 1885:447, n. 8; *MonInst* 1883:Tav. LIX.5).

<sup>12</sup> These include belts with and without animals.

<sup>13</sup> Nineteen of these are from the early Iron Age, but belts from Narce, Petrina Tomb 14 (decoration not recorded), Vulci Tomb 42F, Falerii Veteres, Montarano 29 (Type 2B), and Narce, I "Tufi" 8 (Type 2C) are from the Orientalizing period, and the leather and bronze belt from Lanuvium (Type 1A) is from the Archaic period. They are discussed in the following chapters.

<sup>14</sup> The preserved pieces are 8 and 11 cm long.



**Figure 4.** Rectangular belt types: 1A Tarquinia, Tomba del Guerriero (Montelius 1904:Pl. 288.6), 1B Narce, Petrina 30 (Pasqui 1894:Tav. IX.7; Montelius 1904:Pl. 316.14), 2A Narce, Petrina 16 (Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:Tav. X.27), 2B Capena, Le Saliere 112 (Stefani 1958:Fig. 30), 2C Narce, "I Tufti" 8 (drawing by Sanna Lipkin after Davison 1972:40), 2D Tarquinia, Selciatello Sopra 160 (drawn by S. Lipkin after Hencken 1968:Fig. 131), 3A Narce, "I Tufti" 5 (drawn by S. Lipkin after Davison 1972:Pl. IV.d), 3B Veii, Quattro Fontanili Tomb HH11-12 (drawing by Sanna Lipkin after Veii 1965:Fig. 50), 4A La Rustica (drawing by Sanna Lipkin after Civiltà del Lazio primitivo 1976:Tav. XXV), 4B Praeneste (drawing by Sanna Lipkin S. Lipkin after Civiltà del Lazio primitivo 1976:Tav. LVI.D).

four large swastikas (height 6 cm) were found on the waist of female deceased (Fig. 4.1B).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The swastika is used as a decorative motif of the dress, for example, in Veii, Quattro Fontanili (for example Veii 1965:Fig. 53.), and golden swastikas have also been found in an early 8th-century burial at Tarquinia (Cygielman 2011:Fig. 99).

The belts could be attached with a hook into small holes at the other end (Type 2). In the belt from Quattro Fontanili, Tomb II9-10 (dating IIB), the distance between the holes is 2.5 cm (Veii 1965:202, Figs. 101, 104). The existence of multiple holes suggests that the belts could be adjusted according to the wearer and

**Table 3.** Rectangular belt types (early Iron Age – Archaic period)

Type	N	Distribution	Dating	References
1A	2	Lanuvium, Tarquinia	Lanuvium Archaic, Tarquinia IIA	Galiati 1935/1976; Colonna 1977; Zevi 1990; Montelius 1904:Pl. 288.6; Hencken 1968:211, Fig. 192; for dating, see laia 2008:37.
1B	1	Narce	IIB	Pasqui 1894:419, Tav. IX.7; Montelius 1904:Pl. 316; De Lucia Brolli 1991:109, Fig. 84.
2A	7	Veii (4), Capena (2), Narce	QF I19–10 IIB, KK13–14 IIB, GG6–7 IIC, Narce 730–720 BC	Veii 1963:229, Fig. 96H; Veii 1967:250, Fig. 94, 98; Veii 1965:202, Figs. 101, 104; Berardinetti & Drago 1997:52, Fig. 19; Stefani 1958:46, 79; Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:370–371, Tav. X.27; Montelius 1904:Pl. 316.3; De Lucia Brolli 1991:104, Fig. 71.
2B	6	Veii (3), Vulci, Capena, Falerii Veteres	QF KKLL18–19 IIC, JJ16–17 IIB–C, Vulci Orientalizing, Falerii Veteres Orientalizing	Veii 1963:214, 239, 276, Figs. 88G, 105, 106; Veii 1965:128–132, Figs. 48, 50; Buranelli <i>et al.</i> 1997; Dohan 1942:94–95, Fig. 63, Pl. 50; Turfa 2005:101–102, no. 31; Stefani 1958:106, Fig. 30; Cozza & Pasqui 1981:67–70.
2C	1	Narce	Orientalizing	Davison 1972:40; Baglione & De Lucia Brolli 1990:90–91, Tav. IIIc–d.
2D	1	Tarquinia	IIA1	Hencken 1968:142–143, Fig. 130, 131.
3A	1	Narce	Villanovan II	Davison 1972:40, Pl. IV.d–g.
3B	1	Veii	QF HH11–12 IIB	Veii 1965:128–132, Figs. 48, 50.
4A	1	La Rustica	Latial IIIB	Civiltà del Lazio primitivo 1976:158, Tav. XXV.
4B	1	Praeneste	Latial III	Gierow 1966:344; <i>Civiltà del Lazio primitivo</i> 1976:247, Tav. LVI.D.
Not identified	3	Vetralla (2), Narce	Vetralla II, Narce Orientalizing	Colini 1914:Tav. 1.B; laia 1999:Fig. 32C, D; Barnabei & Pasqui 1894:372; Pasqui 1894:409.
Total	25			

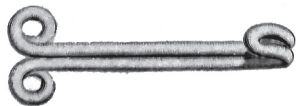
QF = Veii, Quattro Fontanili

were thus made to be used, not only to be buried. Perhaps bronze belts were a common part of aristocratic, usually female, ceremonial dress. The belts could also be attached with ring buckles (Type 3). A belt from Quattro Fontanili (Tomb HH11–12, IIB) has a ring buckle that was found around one end of the belt (Type 3B, **Fig. 4.3B**). It seems that the other end was slipped through the ring and then the length was adjusted. A belt found in Narce Tomb V (burial A, Villanovan II, **Fig. 4.3A**) is contemporary with the Quattro Fontanili belts. It was attached with rings at both ends, one larger than the other. The belt was found near a cinerary urn that held human remains and personal ornaments. It could originally have been tied around the urn. In the middle of the belt is a hook made of wire, which is attached to the outer surface. There is a similar hook also near the larger ring (Davison 1972:40, Pl. IV.d–g). These hooks could also have been used for attachment.

In Veii, the rectangular belts vary between 2 and 4 cm in width, but two examples from Latium are wider (Type 4). In La Rustica (Tomb 11), the width of the belt found around the pelvis of the female deceased is 13.5 cm (Dating Latial IIIB, **Fig. 4.4A**), and a belt from Palestrina, found as a stray find, varies between 9.4 and 10.5 cm in width. This belt is 52.7 cm in length (Latial III, **Fig. 4.4B**). Most of the rectangular belts are long enough to fit adults. There is only one example that is so short that it must have been a child's belt. It was found in Narce (Petrina 16) and measures less than 40 cm in length (Type 2A, **Fig. 4.2A**).

### Hooks

In the burials of middle-class people, belts are represented by simple hooks usually found at the waist area (**Fig. 5**). These hooks are similar to Narce Tomb V (burial A) hooks attached to the outer surface of a



**Figure 5.** A simple hook, Volterra, Guerruceia Tomba 12 (Montelius 1904:Pl. 190.17).

rectangular metal belt (Davison 1972:40, Pl. IV.d–g). Hooks have been found in all areas, in Latium and Etruria as well as the Capenate and Faliscan regions, in both child and adult burials (For example Osteria dell’Osa: Osteria dell’Osa 1992:417, type 86a, Tav. 44.86a; Veii: Veii 1965:Figs. 39, 41.f, 68, 69f, h, 91, 94h, 105, 108.g; Veii 1967:Figs. 21.17, 85, 90, 100, 104.24; Tarquinia: Hencken 1968:147, 328, Figs. 134, 325). The hooks were probably attached to one end of the belt and then hooked around a hole in leather or textile loop. Some belts have only one clasp hook, but occasionally several hooks may be found side by side. One hook is large enough (around 2–4.5 cm in length) to hold a narrow belt, but with several hooks, wider belts could be attached.

Hook clasps in aristocratic burials may be more elaborate in Latium than in Etruria and the Capenate and Faliscan areas (where more bronze belts are found). In Latin Osteria dell’Osa, one to three hooks, twisted of bronze wire, are attached to a ring (Latial IIIB–IVA1, Osteria dell’Osa 1992:794–795, Fig. 3b.24). Leather or textile belts around 5 to 6.5 cm in width were attached to these clasps. In female burials (Tombs 251 and 510), the clasps were found on either side of the deceased, suggesting that the belts were either buckled on the side or that the belts were not worn by the deceased but put next to them in a manner similar to that observed in a male burial (Tomb 239), in which a belt was found lying from the right shoulder to the knee (Osteria dell’Osa 1992:417–418, 807, 828, Fig. 3b.42, 3c.20, tav. 44.86). A similar hook and ring clasp (diameter 4.5 cm) was found in Narce, Montarano 19 (Fig. 6). An even more complex clasp with four hooks and rings was found on the left shoulder of a probable adult male deceased in Tomb 32 (Latial IIIB, Osteria dell’Osa 1992:764, Fig. 3a.417). This belt clasp is fragmentary, and the minimum width of the leather or textile belt has been 3.8 cm.

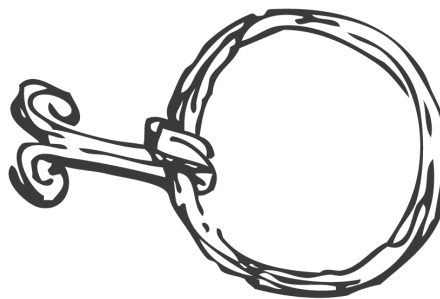
### Aristocratic women and textile-making

As Iaia (1999:62) states, it is likely that a bronze belt describes the rank of the deceased rather than her age or even solely her marital status. One point of view is provided if the occurrence of belts is compared to the occurrence of textile tools. Textile-making is considered as the virtue of a married woman (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.57–60; Lipkin 2012:91)<sup>16</sup>, but as with bronze belts, textile-making tools are found in both female and child burials.

Textile tools were recovered in about three quarters of all burials containing bronze belts (both lozenge-shaped and rectangular) with precisely recorded contexts (Figs 2; 9).<sup>17</sup> A distaff and/or a spindle whorl is present in many of the burials (distaff in 18/31 burials recorded with textile tools; spindle whorl in 15/31), and tablet-weaving tools, spools, and occasionally clasps are almost as frequent (10/31). The textile tools found along with the belts are also in themselves prestige items: they are usually made of bronze and would not actually have been practical to use (Gleba 2004:2; 2008:174; Lipkin 2012:91). Rather, the textile tools suggest the virtuous life of a married woman. In general, the presence of spinning or weaving tools in burials indicates female gender. Textile-making was something

<sup>16</sup> Even though Livy wrote between 59 BC and AD 17, his stories took place in a Rome that was considered historical even in his time. It should be considered that Republican Roman ideals had their roots beyond history, especially if the importance of and time consumed by textile-making in the daily life of women is taken into account. For further interpretation, see below.

<sup>17</sup> The context of many bronze belts is currently unknown, since many of them were found in the 19th century, when recording of the burials was not as precise as it has been in the 20th and 21st centuries. Moreover, some of the belts have been acquired for museum collections from the antiquities market.

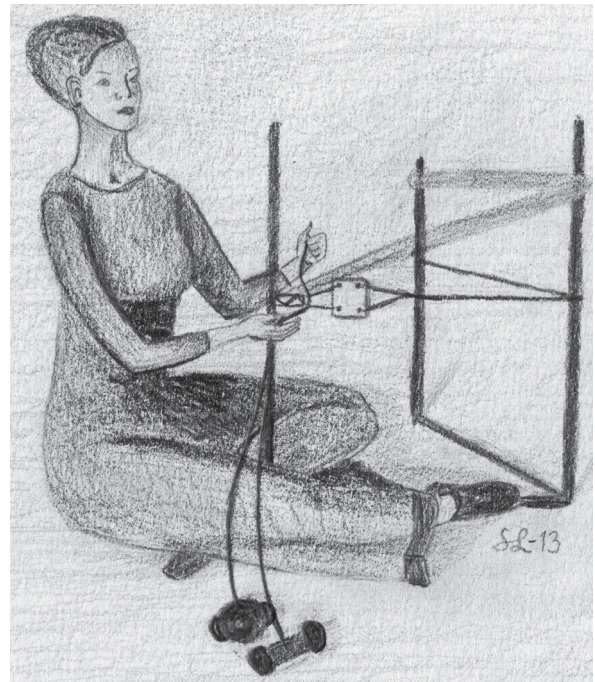


**Figure 6.** A ring clasp attached to a hook, Narce, Montarano 19. Drawing by Sanna Lipkin (after Cozza & Pasqui 1981:53).

women were expected to do. Multiple tools found in a burial and variation in tool measurements is, however, a sign of specialisation and professionalism in textile-making. If a woman was buried with spindle whorls of different sizes, it suggests that she was talented enough to produce different kinds of threads, and if spools were also given as grave goods, she most likely knew the tablet-weaving technique (Lipkin 2012:91–92). The belt in Tomb I17 in Veii Quattro Fontanili was placed at the feet of the supposedly female deceased (Dating IIA?, *Veii* 1976:180–181, Fig. 24). This tomb contains a spool, eight spindle whorls, an axe, fibulae, and many ornaments such as pearls. The number of spindle whorls is quite high and may indicate that the deceased was a talented spinner. Such is also the case with the deceased in Tomb ZZ11–12, in which 13 spools, 17 spindle whorls, and a distaff were found (IIA, *Veii* 1967:213). This kind of specialisation is not visible in all female burials with bronze belts. These possibly talented wool-working women were at least of high rank. In Quattro Fontanili, Veii, textile tools were found in 132/567 burials (Lipkin 2012:141, Table 4.7), but only nine of these included a bronze belt.

The locational relationships of the belts and textile tools in burials, however, require more attention, since they provide some ideas on the association of the use of belts in textile-making. In Quattro Fontanili Tomb KKLL 18–19 (IIC), a rectangular and a lozenge-shaped belt were located in the waist area of the deceased, and in a space between them, twenty-two spools were found. The tomb also had one distaff (*Veii* 1963:239, 276, Figs. 101, 105, 106). There are two individuals in the tomb, an infant and an adult c. 20 years of age. Both belts belong to the adult. The placement of the spools is noteworthy, since they, as well as belts, were needed in the tablet-weaving technique.

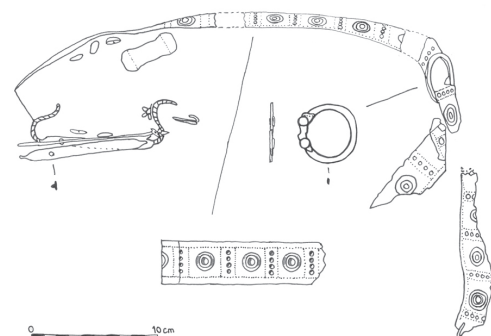
In spite of their common name, spools were in fact more likely to have been used in the tablet-weaving technique as small weights for weaving a decorated side-selvage (Raeder Knudsen 2002:228–229; Gleba 2008:141) or as weighted spools when the beginning cord was woven (Fig. 7; Lipkin 2012:62). Tablet-woven ribbons are relatively narrow and thus need small weights. Furthermore, the weaving of the beginning of a piece of cloth is much easier if the thread comes



**Figure 7.** Warping with the tablet-weaving technique. Spools are used as weighted balls of thread. Drawing by Sanna Lipkin.

from a weighted ball of thread. In Veii, Quattro Fontanili, spools and bronze belts are found in eight burials.<sup>18</sup> The association is further emphasised by another rectangular belt found in Tomb HH11–12, where 34 spools and a clasp (IIB; Fig. 8; *Veii* 1965:128–132, Figs.

<sup>18</sup> KKLL18–19: 22 spools and a distaff (*Veii* 1963:239, 276); JJ16–17: spool (*Veii* 1963:214); AA12A: 15 spools, spindle whorl and distaff (*Veii*, 1965:70–71, Figs. 8, 9, 11); HH12: 34 spools and clasp (*Veii* 1965:128–132); ZZ11–12: 13 spools, 17 spindle whorls, distaff (*Veii* 1967:213); OP 4–5: 9 spools (*Veii* 1972:295, Figs. 62, 70); I17: spool, 8 spindle whorls (*Veii* 1976:180–181); Yα: 35 spools, fragmentary distaff (*Veii* 1970:257–286, Figs. 45, 47).



**Figure 8.** Rectangular belt, spools, and a tablet-weaving clasp in Veii, Quattro Fontanili Tomb HH11–12 (drawn by S. Lipkin after *Veii* 1965:Fig. 50).



**Figure 9.** A burial with suspended rings and a lozenge-shaped belt in Capena, Le Saliere 94 (Stefani 1958:Fig. 23).

48, 50), a device also needed in the tablet-weaving technique, were found in the leg area. A clasp was attached to a belt when narrow ribbons were woven with the aid of tablets. Tablet-weaving in itself is not a difficult technique, and it is likely that girls learned it already in their childhood. However, tablet-weaving gives the weaver an opportunity to create complicated and beautiful decorations for hems, and this technique was most likely used for weaving textile belts. The complicated patterns required a thorough attention to the work, a good memory, and the ability to think abstractly (Lipkin 2012:83). Most of the patterns were probably traditional, taught from one generation to the other, and they could have been memorised with the help of songs or stories (Grömer 2005:85; Raeder Knudsen 2004; Tuck 2006). The making of these complicated patterns required specialisation, and these skills were appreciated and probably remembered in death. It is possible that spools found alongside bronze belts not only demonstrate the virtuous aristocratic status of a married woman, but refer also to her skills as a textile maker.

### Ethnicity and geographical distribution

In this article, 40 out of 70 bronze belts (both lozenge-shaped and rectangular) have been found in Southern Etruria (57 %). Eight belts have been found in the Capenate area (11 %), which belonged to the territory of Veii. Thirteen belts have been found in the Faliscan area (19 %) and nine in Latium (13 %).

Lozenge-shaped belts have frequently been found in Etruria and the Faliscan and Capenate areas, but only occasionally in Latium and Rome. A belt from Tivoli with bird decoration probably<sup>19</sup> made in Etruria during the Villanovan IIA (in traditional chronology, 770–740 BC) was found in a contemporary female burial (Tomb 43) (*Civiltà del Lazio primitivo* 1976:196–199, Tav. 36). The contexts of the belts found in the following centres are not dated, but they are likely to date from the early Iron Age: Anzio (Gierow 1966:343, Fig. 97.1) and Velletri (Gierow 1964:Fig. 230.8; Nardini 1934:172, Fig. 4). Two examples have been found in Rome (Pigorini 1908:103, Figs D, E; Müller-Karpe 1962:94, Tafel 34.7, 8). Only two rectangular belts have been found in Latium (La Rustica, Palestrina). Among the 595 burials at Osteria dell’Osa, neither rectangular nor lozenge-shaped belts have been found. The rarity of these belts in Latium gives the impression that at least lozenge-shaped belts were worn particularly by the Etruscans and also by the Faliscans and Capenates, but in Latium, textile or leather belts with (as suggested by the few examples in Osteria dell’Osa) or without metal clasps were used.

Iaia (2007b) notes that occasionally bronze belts are associated with rings suspended from the fibulae in Latium (such as in La Rustica, Tomb 11). The suspended ring is a Latin phenomenon, but a belt is one of the new elements of Etruscan origin linked to the manifestation of rank. Suspended rings occur only occasionally outside Latium, for example in the Etruscan Caere and Sabine areas, but in Capena they are frequent (Iaia 2007b). There, one burial (Le Saliere 94) has also a lozenge-shaped bronze belt (Fig. 9; Stefani 1958:91, 94, Fig. 23–24). The Capenate area was culturally and politically dominated by Veii, but like the Faliscan area, it

<sup>19</sup> This belt has only seven buttons in the centre, whereas the Etruscan examples usually have nine.

was in many respects heterogeneous, which in the case of the Capenate area was largely due to its geographical location in the border zone of Latin, Etruscan, Faliscan, and Sabine cultures (Iaia 2007b:527–528). Iaia (2007b:529–530) sees the suspended ring as an identifier of Latin female ethnicity that was maintained as a part of funeral dress also in marriages outside the women's own culture, and is of the opinion that its distribution corresponds to the marriage circle<sup>20</sup> with political and economic importance. Vice versa, it is possible that rare examples of bronze belts in Latium were used by women married to Latium from neighbouring cultures. As markers of difference they would have stressed the ethnicity of the deceased.

Bronze belts were probably not used outside funerals or festive occasions. For this reason, the belts found from burials do not inform us of everyday attire. However, it is probable that in some manner the bronze belts represent those used in daily life.

### Orientalizing period (770–580)

The Orientalizing period is characterised by changes in belt use. A couple of lozenge-shaped belts are found, but they are slightly different than their precedents, and according to iconographic evidence, they were used in different social contexts. Also another type of belt attached with two bronze clasps becomes more frequent both in male and female burials throughout the area.

### Old types with new features

During the 7th century BC, the shape of the lozenge-shaped belt is a bit different. In the Alban Hills (Riserva del Truglio, Marino), two lozenge-shaped bronze belts were found in one burial (Tomb 30, the first decades of the 7th century BC, *Civiltà del Lazio primitivo* 1976:87–91, Tav. IX). They are clearly made based on the Villanovan examples. They have three large buttons in the middle (Type E), but it is their form that

makes them clearly different from earlier belts. They are attenuated, whereas the earlier Villanovan specimens are usually clearly wider in the middle than at the ends (these belts are 6.5 and 8 cm wide). A similar example is in the collections of the British Museum (Type F), and another one has been found in Vulci Tomb 42F (Type F). It depicts three horses and has concentric bosses and dots framing them (Dohan 1942:95, no. 24, pl. 50; Turfa 2005:100–101, no. 30). Another belt of this type was also found in this tomb. It is highly fragmentary, but has features that are similar to the Villanovan lozenge-shaped belts with nine bosses in the middle. It is possible that this belt is earlier and was inherited by the wearer. The third belt in this tomb is a rectangular one. It has two perforations at a distance of 4.5 cm from each other and a hook.<sup>21</sup> The belt has concentric circles, some of them with rays depicting suns. A couple of these have also a tail similar to shooting stars. There are also two human figures. In Narce, I “Tufi” Tomb 8 (Type 2C), concentric circles, triangles, and ducks are represented (Davison 1972:40, Pl. IV.d–g.; Baglione & De Lucia Brolli 1990:90–91, Tav. IIIc–d).

As can be seen, during the Orientalizing period artistic illustrations in belts become more diverse. This may be noted also through the iconographic material. A group of female bronze statuettes in the mid-7th-century Regolini-Galassi Tomb in Caere wear a *chiton* and a rectangular belt over their shoulders. The *chiton* is attached with a belt at the waist. The belts of the statuettes are different from each other, but all have geometric decoration and are rectangular in shape. A late 7th-century chalk female statue found in Vetulonia, Tomba della Pietrera, has also a rectangular belt, but it has ornamental decoration. This woman has braided hair and both hands between her breasts. The belt is quite wide and decorated with winged feline animals (Maggiani 1999:Fig. 20; Rafanelli & Spaziani 2011:251). Bronze belts and the statue from Vetulonia suggest that the Orientalizing style in art was used also in belts.

<sup>20</sup> Including Latium, Capenate, and Sabine areas and a small part of southern Etruria (Caere and its surroundings), but excluding centres like Veii and Tarquinia in southern Etruria and the Faliscan region.

<sup>21</sup> Turfa (2005:101–102, no. 31) has calculated that the waist of the wearer of this belt would have been around 66–68.5 cm measured over her clothing.





**Figure 10.** Man in a chequered loincloth, short chiton and lozenge-shaped belt in an early Orientalizing terracotta vase from Caere. Drawing by Sanna Lipkin (after Bonfante 1986:Fig. VIII-29).

Illustrations also provide another interesting fact. Whereas during the early Iron Age, the lozenge-shaped belt is clearly a part of the female dress, during the Orientalizing period, a few iconographic representations depict men wearing these belts. All belts around men's waists are different from their precedents, since they are similar in form on both front and back, whereas earlier the belts had a bronze plate only in the front. For example, a painted scene in an early Orientalizing terracotta vase from Caere (c. 650 BC) depicts a couple (**Fig. 10**; Bonfante 1986:Fig. VIII-29): the man in a chequered loincloth, short *chiton*, and diamond-shaped belt, and the woman with long braided hair in a simply belted ankle-length *chiton*. Similar belts over loincloths or *perizomas* are represented also in small bronze statuettes from Siena depicting male acrobats and warriors, as well as in the handle of a bucchero vase from Caere (all c. 600 BC; Maggiani 1999:36, Fig. 25–26; Bonfante 2003:35–38). In the Barberini Tomb (Palestrina), a male figure jumping over a lion in a piece of ivory has a belt that is similar to that of two male bronze statuettes from the same tomb, as well as male “eroi” from the carriage of the Bernardini Tomb (Maggiani 1999:36, Fig. 23, 24).

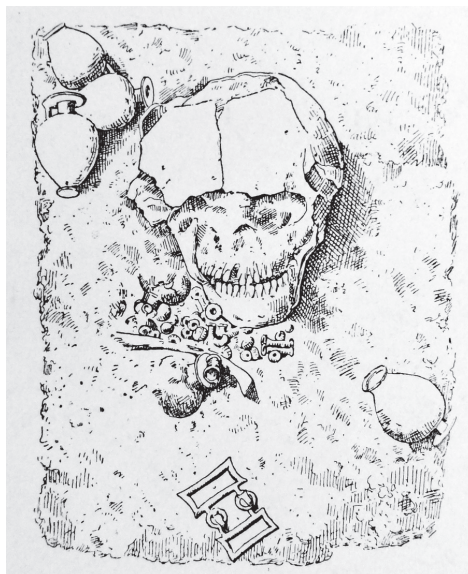
Furthermore, two early 7th-century BC chalk statues found in Casale Marittimo, Casa Nocera, also have lozenge-shaped belts with traces of red paint (Maggiani 1999; 2000; Esposito & Maggiani 2006:Tav. 1; Bonamici 2012:314–316, Fig. 9.2). Both of the individuals are dressed in a loincloth attached with a belt.

The belts are geometrically decorated with wolf's teeth. The belt of one man has a large solar motif in front. The other male is in a position similar to that of the warrior in the later Archaic statue from Capestrano (see below) with one hand on his chest. During the Orientalizing period, the lozenge-shaped belt may have been associated with a warrior status that can also be distinguished in male burials and, as we will see, in other ways of wearing a belt.

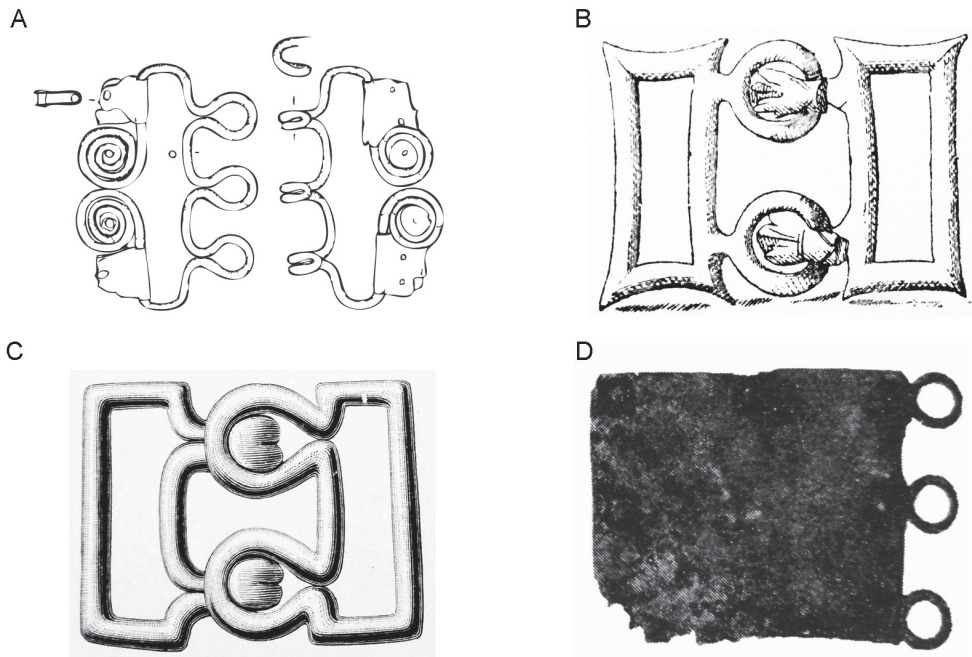
### New types – Textile or leather belt attached with bronze clasps

Already during the Latial IIIB period in one male burial in Osteria dell'Osa, a belt was attached on the shoulder (*Osteria dell'Osa* 1992:764, Fig. 3a.417). During the Orientalizing period, this way of wearing a belt becomes more frequent in male burials. A horse-head belt in the 7th-century burial at Vetulonia is also found in a similar position (**Fig. 11**). These belts may have been used to attach a baldric slung over one shoulder similar to the manner of Roman soldiers, who had a sword hanging from the military shoulder belt, *balteus* (Hoss 2012:30).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> These belts were elaborately decorated with attachments such as metal plates, and were heavy and jingly.



**Figure 11.** A horse-head clasp found on the shoulder of a male deceased in Vetulonia, Tumulo della Pietrera (Montelius 1904:Pl. 200.2).



**Figure 12.** Orientalizing-period clasp types: A Osteria dell'Osa (drawing by Sanna Lipkin after Osteria dell'Osa 1992:Fig. 3c.34), B Vetulonia, Circoli della Sargona (Montelius 1904:Pl. 190.7), C Chiusi type from Volterra (Montelius 1904:Pl. 171.19), D Capena, Le Saliere 122C (Stefani 1958:Fig. 44).

During the Orientalizing period, belt clasps become more common and the number of whole bronze belts in burials diminishes. In Etruria, clasps are found particularly in middle-class burials (von Hase 1971). These clasps could have been attached to elaborately decorated textile or leather belts. Even though many of the clasps found throughout central Tyrrhenian Italy are quite simple, Orientalizing art symbolism can be seen in some of them. For example, at Lago dell'Accessa (Massa Marittima, the necropolis of area B, Tomb 1), a clasp with winged horses and lions on both sides has been found (Camporeale 1985:171, Fig. 407). In another clasp in the Detroit Institute of Arts, Potnia Theron (Mistress of the Animals) holds two birds. She wears a belted, short-sleeved "Proto-Ionic" *chiton* with a herringbone pattern and possibly a back mantle. (Caccioli 2009:105, Pl. 65).

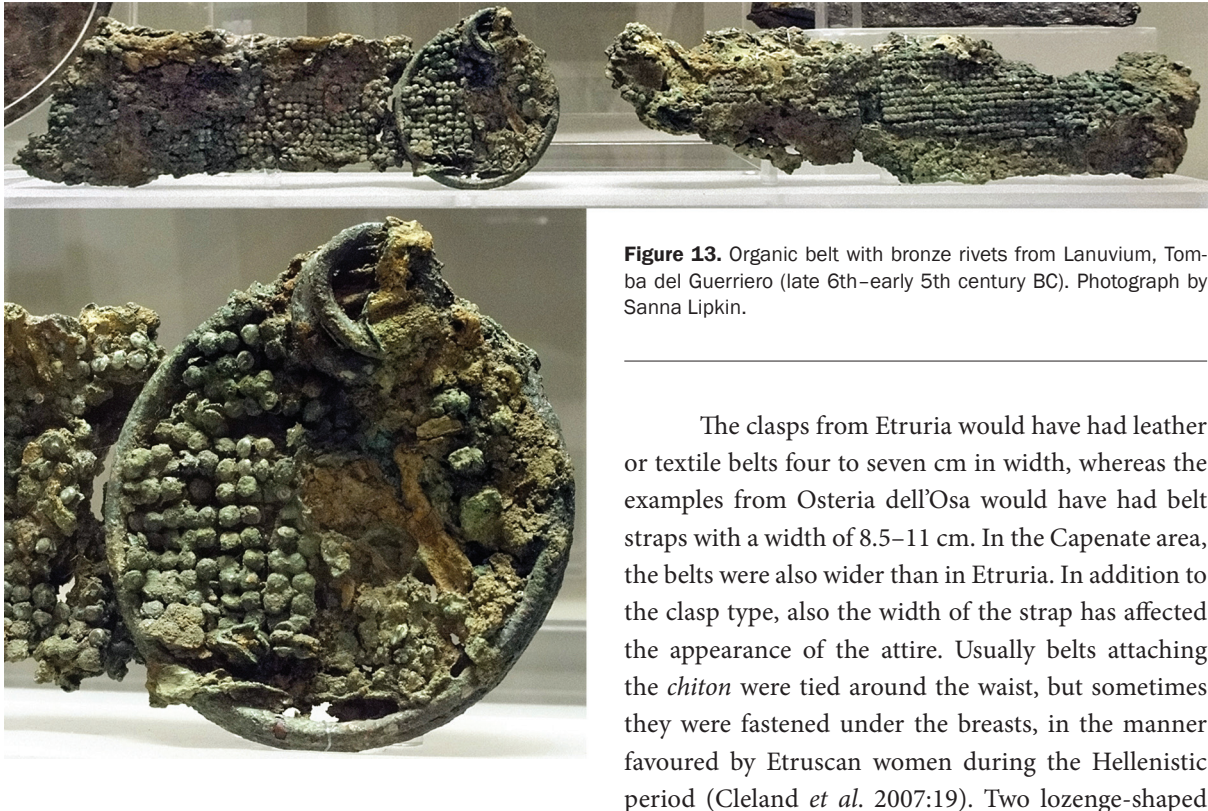
### Geographic and ethnic differences

It is clear that also during the Orientalizing period, belts were different in Etruria and Latium. In general, the differences in belt clasps between centres become clearer in all areas, which may be interpreted as

a stronger need to express ethnic identity. In Etruria, large city-states were established and boundaries were closed to maintain control over the land, which resulted in more fixed ethnic boundaries (Iaia 2007b:530).

Latin clasps of this period (Latial IV) are found in three burials in Osteria dell'Osa and at least in one burial in Crustumium. In Osteria dell'Osa, the hooks are fixed to bronze plates that were attached to the leather or textile. The belt found in Tomb 401 in Osteria dell'Osa (Latial IVB) was found open and placed over the individual from skull to waist. It was around 85 cm long. Another two clasps in female or possible female burials were found on the waist or next to the left femur (Tombs 116, Latial IVA1 and 236, Latial IVA2). (Fig. 12.A, Osteria dell'Osa 1992:789–790, 835–836, 838–839, Fig. 3b.16, 3c.34, 37, 41, 44, Tav. 44.86d.) In Crustumium, Monte Del Bufalo Tomb 232 (Latial IVA2), three adjacent hooks were found below the waist of an aristocratic woman (Attema *et al.* 2013:Fig. 3; Nijboer & Attema 2011:32).

In Etruria, a new belt clasp type with two horse-head prongs is found in both male (on the shoulder) and female (on the waist) burials, but not in so-called



**Figure 13.** Organic belt with bronze rivets from Lanuvium, Tomba del Guerriero (late 6th–early 5th century BC). Photograph by Sanna Lipkin.

“princely tombs”. These clasps are common in the northern parts of central Etruria during the second half of the 7th century BC, with the southernmost example coming from Satricum. The main production centre is in Vetulonia. Von Hase has noted the eastern inspiration and wide distribution of this type of clasp (**Fig. 12.B**; von Hase 1971; Donati & Michelucci 1981:133–134; Jucker *et al.* 1991:79–80, no. 95; Sannibale 1998:127; Naso 2003:188). In Chiusi, clasp hooks with plain or tapered knobs were produced (**Fig. 12.C**, von Hase 1971:40, Fig. 41; Camporeale 1974:100–101; See also Naso 2003:190–191).

In the Capenate and central Adriatic areas, plaque belt clasps are frequent. They are dated from the second quarter of the 7th century to the middle of the 6th century BC (**Fig. 12.D**; Colonna 1958; 1974:94; Sannibale 1998:129–130; Naso 2003:192). They include two different types. In the first type, the female part of the clasp has two to three rings, to which the hooks of the male part are attached. In the other type, both parts have a rectangular staff, one larger than the other, that are attached. (Colonna 1958:69–70.)

The clasps from Etruria would have had leather or textile belts four to seven cm in width, whereas the examples from Osteria dell’Osa would have had belt straps with a width of 8.5–11 cm. In the Capenate area, the belts were also wider than in Etruria. In addition to the clasp type, also the width of the strap has affected the appearance of the attire. Usually belts attaching the *chiton* were tied around the waist, but sometimes they were fastened under the breasts, in the manner favoured by Etruscan women during the Hellenistic period (Cleland *et al.* 2007:19). Two lozenge-shaped belts in Tarquinia are recorded to have been found at the height of the ribs of the individual, suggesting a high-waisted costume (Hencken 1968:269, 273, Figs. 252, 255). One of these belts also has textile traces or imprints on the upper surface of the belt (Monterozzi, Cassa with a bronze girdle), similarly to the lozenge-shaped belt found in Caere (Cava della Pozzolana 72, currently at Villa Giulia Museum in Rome) and the Archaic leather belt in the Tomba del Guerriero in Lanuvium (**Fig. 13**). This suggests that at least in these burials, the deceased was covered with a shroud.<sup>23</sup>

### Archaic period (580–480 BC)

There is decidedly less knowledge of the location of Archaic-period burials, and they usually also include a smaller number of burial gifts (for reasons, see Colonna 1977:158–161). For this reason, our knowledge of belts of this period is largely based on iconographic

<sup>23</sup> There is also evidence for a shroud in an inhumation burial from Tomb 3 from Osteria dell’Osa, where the outlines of the funeral shroud are visible as small bronze spirals (Osteria dell’Osa 1992:Fig. 3a.391.).

sources. Women wearing belts are seen, for example, in Boccanera plaques from Caere (c. 550–540 BC; Briguet 1986; IV-89) in which the *chitons* are attached at the waist. We have more knowledge of male warrior status belts, which had their roots already in the Orientalizing period. The belt was an important part of the attire of the warrior, as it tightened the loincloth, and in the baldric belt, one could easily carry heavy weapons and use them if necessary.

A 6th-century statue from Capestrano (L'Aquila) depicts a warrior whose sword hangs from



**Figure 14.** Statue from Capestrano (L'Aquila, 6th century, Böethius 1939: Fig. 1).

a baldric belt (**Fig. 14**, Böethius 1939; Bianchi *et al.* 1973:104–106; Bonfante 2003:99, Fig. 27). In both back and chest, the belt has a large ring or disc, into which the sword holder and reddish-brown leather and/or textile straps are attached with clasps. Two wide straps and one narrow one go over the shoulder and two narrow straps below the armpits. A war axe is also attached to the belt. The warrior also has another belt around his hips to support his loincloth.<sup>24</sup> Another 6th-century stone statue with a baldric belt that has a ring or disc over the heart is found in Guardiagrele (Chieti *et al.* 1973:Fig. 119).

In Lanuvium, Tomba del Guerriero (late 6th–early 5th century BC), a belt with large bronze rivets attached to organic material, most likely leather, was found on the waist of a soldier wearing a full armour with corselet, helmet, and weapons (**Fig. 14**). The preserved length of the belt is 56 cm and its width is 7 cm. It was attached with a bronze ring that was 8 cm in diameter. On the large ring, there are also two smaller rings, as well as rivets (Galieti 1935/1976; Colonna 1977; Zevi 1990).

### Conclusions: The identity of the belt wearers

Identity cannot be regarded as a simple starting point in studying attire. As has been shown, different aspects of identity are tightly interwoven, and as identity is not a static concept, but can change through time and space, it is not always easy to recognise. However, when researching different aspects of identity (status, rank, age, gender, ethnicity etc.), we can discover the prevailing aspect and study it with respect to other aspects. In central Tyrrhenian Italy in the early Iron Age, the preserved belt material offers a good opportunity for studying aristocratic attire. It seems that the most visible differences appear between different groups of the female gender. The burials containing lozenge-shaped belts strongly suggest the female gender of the wearer, but as these belts are also found in child buri-

<sup>24</sup> The sex of the warrior has been debated, as Kristina Berggren (1990) has interpreted the vertical groove in the lower part of the loincloth as female genitalia. The clothes of the warrior, the large hat that is often found on priests, the belt, and the loincloth, however, suggest the male sex.

als, they do not indicate only the marital status. The valuable bronze belt needs to be regarded primarily as a sign of high rank. However, it could also define the virtue of the deceased as a woman who took care of her marital duties, such as textile-making. Some of these women may also be seen as talented textile workers, which is suggested by their grave goods containing spools, clasps, and spindle whorls of various sizes. Since the lozenge-shaped belts were similar in their decorative subjects and have been found in burials from the Etruscan, Capenate, and Faliscan regions, these cultures do not show any clear differences in the use of these belts. However, different belt materials were used in Latium during the early Iron Age. There, whole bronze belts are rare, perhaps indicating women of “foreign” origin. In Osteria dell’Osa, which provides the widest belt material yet known, belt clasps were used by both women and men.

During the Orientalizing period, ethnic differences between different centres become clearer. Belts in central Etruria frequently have horse-head clasps, which are also found also in southern Etruria and occasionally in Latium. In the Chiusi area, clasps with simple plain or tapered knobs are used. In the Capenate area, the belts were attached with plaque clasps. In Etruria, belts were generally slightly narrower than in the Capenate area and possibly in Latium. The clearer boundaries between different cultures were a consequence of the closed borders and smaller amount of interaction. From the Orientalizing period, we have more information on belts worn by the middle class than on those worn by aristocrats, but as the burials of the poorest people have not been recorded, the picture is still fragmented.

Whereas during the early Iron Age, the belt material provides strong information for female identities, during the Orientalizing and Archaic periods,

the male warrior identity is more straightforward to distinguish. During the Orientalizing period, iconographic art depicts young athletic men or warriors using on their loincloth a belt almost similar to that which previously was a part of female dress: a lozenge-shaped belt. However, as this belt earlier had a bronze plate only in the front, now it is depicted as two-sided. In burials of the Orientalizing period and Archaic sculptures, men are seen with a baldric belt slung over the shoulder.

This article provides some new starting points into the study of identity through attire. It turned out that in order to draw conclusions, the examination of different social groups or even cultures is needed in order to find out differences between them. Identity is most clearly seen in comparison with something different. Concentrating on one culture may reveal aspects between different genders, ages, or ranks, but wide geographical comparisons between cultures reveal ethnic differences, which may be one of the most important aspects of dress, especially in areas such as central Tyrrhenian Italy, where interaction between cultures through change, trade, and marriage was common and widespread. It is possible to acquire information on trade networks and marital circles. So far, however, the belts do not provide information on these issues that would be as straightforward as that provided by the Latin phenomenon of suspended rings during the early Iron Age. Interaction between Etruscans, Faliscans, and Capenates is, however, clearly visible in the belt material of that time. Even though some blurring occurred, it was still important to belong to one’s own group and define oneself through its rules and practices. Identity was largely based on seeking acceptance from the people surrounding the individual, and for that reason it was very important.

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