

7-2016

# Book Review of La Tomba del Guerriero di Tarquinia: Identità elitaria, concentrazione del potere e networks dinamici nell'avanzato VIII sec. a.C., by Andrea Babbi and Uwe Peltz

Marshall Joseph Becker

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, mbecker@wcupa.edu

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## Recommended Citation

Becker, M. J. (2016). Book Review of La Tomba del Guerriero di Tarquinia: Identità elitaria, concentrazione del potere e networks dinamici nell'avanzato VIII sec. a.C., by Andrea Babbi and Uwe Peltz. *American Journal of Archaeology (AJA Online)*, 120(3)  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3764/ajaonline1203.Becker>

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# La Tomba del Guerriero di Tarquinia: Identità elitaria, concentrazione del potere e networks dinamici nell'avanzato VIII sec. a.C./Das Kriegergrab von Tarquinia. Eliteidentität, Machtkonzentration und dynamische Netzwerke im späten 8. Jh. v. Chr.

By Andrea Babbi and Uwe Peltz (Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 109). Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz 2013. Pp. xiii + 439, figs. 138, color pls. 91. €95. ISBN 978-3-88467-207-5 (cloth).

Reviewed by  
[Marshall Joseph Becker](#)

The impressive artifacts recovered from the eighth-century B.C.E. Tomb of the Warrior at Tarquinia (Lazio, Italy) have long been touchstones for comparative descriptions of material culture from throughout Etruria as well as other areas in the Etruscan trading sphere. The authors of this massive volume have brought together 30 other specialists to provide an unparalleled examination of the spectacular tomb, including the history of its discovery, detailed study of the artifacts, and evaluations of their relationships with material culture of that period. They then tell us what this means for the history and social dynamics of that era. This definitive overview will remain a benchmark for research into all things Etruscan and will provide insights into the lives of the people who created, purchased, or otherwise acquired the materials that are at the center of the volume.

Babbi's careful introduction reveals details of the 1869 discovery of the tomb by the brothers Angelo and Pietro Marzi, during the final years of the Risorgimento. The village of Corneto, later renamed Tarquinia, was then part of the Papal States. The turmoil of that period led to the creation of a unified Italy, but these decades also witnessed what I term the "mining" of archaeological resources. The process brought to light dozens of rich Etruscan tombs. The story of the sale of the contents of the tombs, either as single items of interest or as entire "tomb groups," is exemplified in Babbi's careful review of this phase of the history of the Tomb of the Warrior. Kästner continues the story of the 100-plus artifacts once they arrived in Germany, including a concordance of three inventories created by the time they had entered the Berliner Antikensammlung. Babbi then offers a review of the several earlier studies of the items and the many problems of interpreting and conserving this amazing collection.

The following section, focusing on the artifacts, opens with Babbi's concise review of matters relating to chronology, followed by a long review of the social history of the site, which is supplemented by two extensive tables folded into an end pocket. This innovative exploration of Etruscan society uses interpretations and aspects of cultural history that were barely imagined only 25 years ago. Babbi offers views on elite identities and on concentrations of power and networking in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E., views that incorporate ideas best seen in Sestieri's landmark 1992 volumes (*The Iron Age Community of Osteria dell'Osa: A Study of Socio-political Development in Central Tyrrhenian Italy* [Cambridge 1992]; *La necropoli laziale di Osteria dell'Osa* [Rome 1992]) that used cutting-edge archaeology combined with models developed in cultural anthropology. Babbi provides provocative ideas concerning strategies of negotiation and resistance that become essential to our understanding of later interactions with an expanding Roman polity and the demise

of the Etruscan language. Readers may not agree with Babbi's interpretations, which will be developed in his forthcoming work *Mediterranean Elites: Interconnections Between ca 900-670 BC*, but the presentation and discussion of these topics in this context are critical, and they are fundamental to the direction that archaeology is now taking.

Following the interpretive discussion, the second section returns us to the more traditional presentation of basic archaeological evidence, beginning with a review of the limited linguistic evidence. The sparse "textual" material from this tomb includes a letter "M" (Etruscan *san*) inscribed on a wooden bowl and some unrelated evidence from the text on a lead curse-tablet. Here, and in all aspects of this study of the material culture, important comparative evidence is provided. The artifacts of gold and silver (Niemeyer) lead the listing of materials involved, followed by separate studies by other noted specialists of the bronzes, ceramics, wood, and textiles. These overviews are followed by a section providing a variety of scientific analyses. Several authors contribute to an interesting subsection regarding how various vessels from the tomb were rendered waterproof in order to hold liquids. A comparative study of a bronze pilgrim's flask in the Vatican Museums, described by Sannibale and the organic material in it presented by Cibrin, complement the studies that all point to the use of pine pitch for waterproofing. The results of the radiocarbon dating of items from this tomb and others at Tarquinia reveal some of the difficulties in using this technique.

The fourth section reviews ancient and modern restorations applied to the metal, ceramic, and wooden objects from the Tomb of the Warrior. The extent of the survival of wood, leather, and textiles and their careful preservation should be particularly noted. Wooden containers are reviewed by Peltz (155–56), with conservation issues later discussed by Schilling, in addition to excellent descriptions in the catalogue (382–88). The analysis of the bronzes reveals them all to be tin alloys. Sadly the two gold items recovered were lost by 1945. The tomb dates from about the time when the parting of gold from the silver found in naturally occurring electrum was just beginning. An analysis of these items would shed light on that development. Extremely valuable is the detailed and extensively footnoted catalogue of all the objects, by far the longest section of the volume. As readers would expect, the authors also provide an appropriate bibliography. In addition to the 91 color plates, a great number of the 138 illustrations also are in color. Fourteen tables within the text help clarify the presentation.

Babbi dates this burial to 730–720 B.C.E. (69) and offers an oversized table (15) that provides a chronological record of the 101 artifact types from the tomb in evidence. Table 15, along with table 16 (a valuable summary of data from the 29 important tombs discussed on pp. 66–8), are folded into a pocket inside the back cover; the foldouts provide essential information regarding each of the many artifacts from the tomb. The early excavators' traditional disregard for skeletal remains leaves us without the possibility of using bones to suggest the sex of the person, but table 16 provides information that could generate considerable discussion regarding the gender identifications of the individuals buried in these very elaborate Etruscan tombs.

There is so much to laud about the heroic effort that went into creating this landmark trilingual work that the few minor typographical errors and omissions reveal just how well this difficult task has been achieved. Note might be made that the McGovern and Hall analysis of sample C116-6 indicates that it derives from one of "two bronze cauldrons/vases in the Warrior Tomb" (194); one needs to recall an earlier discussion (121–29) to identify *Kegelhalsamphora* Kat. 48 as the source of the collar that is separately identified as Kat. 111, a Lehmring (388–89). The following analysis, by Schmitt-Kopplin et al. (195–99), tests the same sample with similar results. These studies confirm that a resinous material, possibly pine pitch, was in general use as a sealant for porous containers. Most of the impressive plates lack scales, but the detailed individual object drawings invariably provide them. The flimsy end-pocket feature is not as robust as the other aspects of this important volume. The

book, the result of cooperative efforts of so many scholars, merits the highest praise and should be on the shelf of every comprehensive library relating to the Etruscans.

Marshall Joseph Becker  
Department of Anthropology  
West Chester University  
[mbecker@wcupa.edu](mailto:mbecker@wcupa.edu)

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*American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 120, No. 3 (July 2016)

Published online at [www.ajaonline.org/book-review/2832](http://www.ajaonline.org/book-review/2832)

DOI: 10.3764/ajaonline1203.Becker