

## From the Battlefield to the Tomb: An Analysis of Etruscan Warfare as Evidenced by Funerary Contexts

Etruscan warfare is a subject much understudied, both within the discipline of Etruscology and in comparison to Greek and Roman warfare. Past scholarship too often has been bogged down by the much debated issue as to whether the Etruscans adopted hoplite warfare (D'Agostino 1990). The answer to this important question remains elusive, but this subject has hindered further study on Etruscan warfare. Too often have interpretations of Etruscan warfare ignored the vast regional variation that existed between north and south Etruria and between cities (George 2013). This has unfortunately resulted in an overly simplistic reading of Etruscan warfare, where emphasis is placed on “the Etruscans” and not individual cities or geographic areas.

Most archaeological and iconographic evidence of Etruscan warfare comes from funerary contexts (Stary 1981). Archaeological evidence includes panoplies of arms and armor that were deliberately deposited in graves, like the Tomb of the Warrior at Vulci (Spivey and Stoddart 1990). Iconographic materials include funerary stelai, like that of Aule Feluske, tomb paintings as seen in the Giglioli Tomb and scenes on pottery, as seen on the famous Certosa Situla (Saulnier 1980, Martinelli 2004, Cowan 2013).

There is certainly a relationship between Etruscan warfare and the afterlife given the fact that objects related to warfare were placed in tomb contexts and often have funerary functions; however, it is critical to take into consideration chronological and regional preferences when interpreting these objects (Becker 2002, George 2013). In the Orientalizing period objects related to warfare, such as a 64 centimeter tall helmet found in Tomb 871 at Veii, tend to promote the status of the deceased individual and his family. The primary function of this

helmet must have been for adornment and established reverence for the deceased because its height made it impractical to wear in an actual battle setting. The existence of non-functional arms and armor deposited within graves suggest a heroic warrior ideology during the Orientalizing period. This phenomenon, however, does not remain constant throughout Etruria during later periods. One interesting phenomenon occurs during the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries within the interior of northern Etruria. In Orvieto, for example, multiple cippi containing images of warriors indicate the presence of non-elite individual who served in the army. The large numbers of these grave markers suggests they do not denote an elite warrior class, but rather a sort of hoplite class within the city and region (George 2013).

This paper aims to interpret this relationship between Etruscan warfare and views of death and the afterlife through a regional approach. This method avoids the pitfall of viewing the Etruscans as a single group, but rather takes into consideration the complexity and diversity of Etruscan cities and their multitude of political and social practices, which directly affected regional ideology of warfare and afterlife.

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