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Cultural Characteristics of the Ancient Community living at *Crustumerium* and the Excavations of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology at the Monte Del Bufalo Necropolis

The title of this session, "*Crustumerium: i Latini tra Etruschi e Sabini*", assumes that we are primarily dealing with Latins at *Crustumerium* and secondarily with other peoples such as Etruscans and Sabines. However, one should add the Faliscan-Capenate tribes, located within a day's walk on the other side of the Tiber, to this list of ethnic units because they were probably also instrumental for the cultural development of *Crustumerium* (fig. 1)¹.

The Groningen Institute of Archaeology, from now onwards abbreviated as GIA, collaborates with the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma (SSBAR) in the excavations of the Monte Del Bufalo cemetery since 2006.

In the excavations, we encountered an archaeological record with distinctive features. These features can be interpreted as the reflection of the cultural identity of *Crustumerium*. This paper will concentrate on some of these features such as the white-on-red ceramics found at the site and the existence of a considerable number of chamber tombs during the 6th century BC. A third feature is a specific female ornament that we found in Tombs 76 and 232 and that we interpret as a headdress. So far we haven't

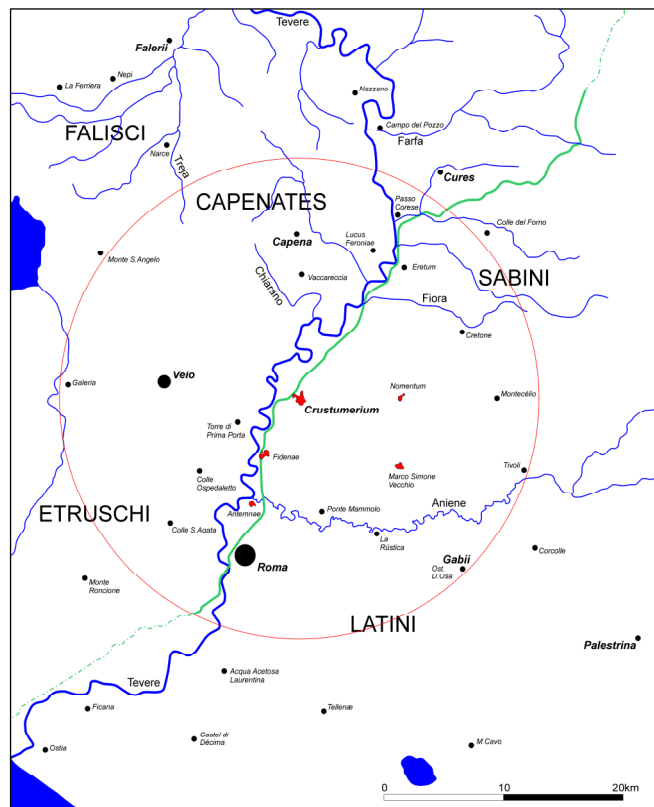


Fig. 1 – *Crustumerium* at the centre of a circle with a 20 km. radius, a days' walk, at the crossing of four different ethnic groups. The green line represents the Via Salaria.

¹ This topic of regional differences and the archaeological record at *Crustumerium* is also discussed in DI GENNARO 2007 and in DI GENNARO ET ALII 2007.

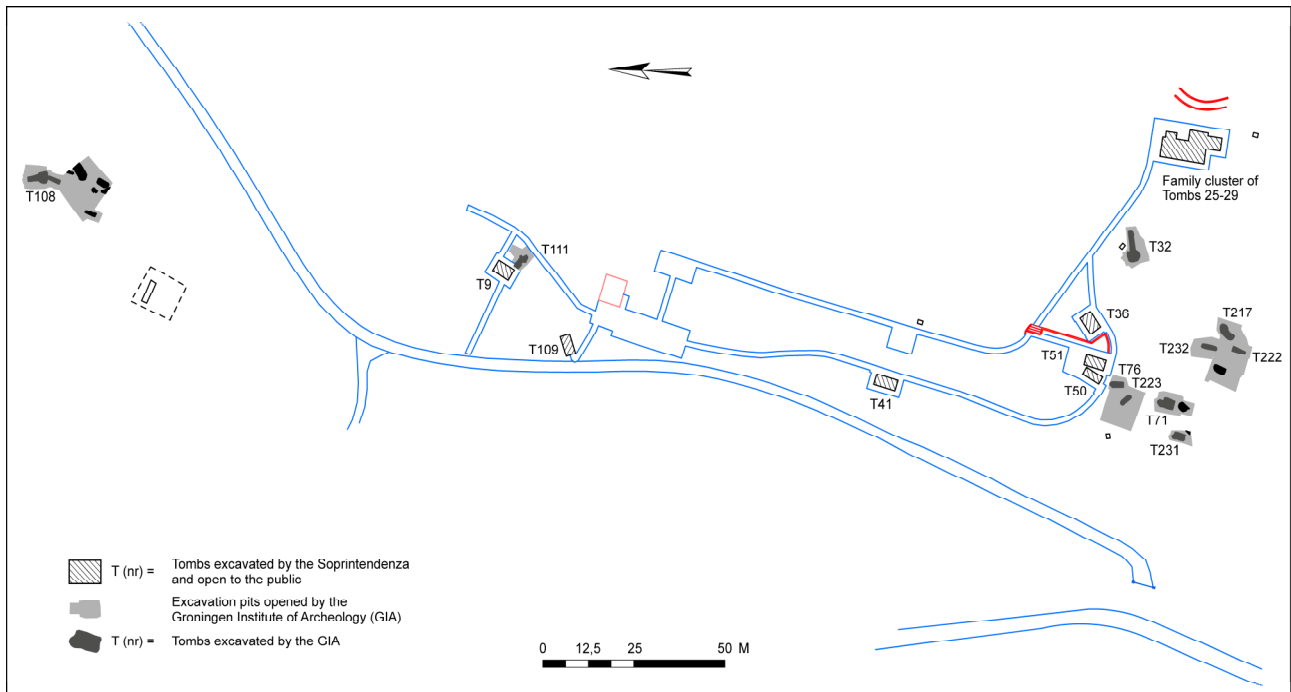


Fig. 2 – Detail map of the Monte Del Bufalo necropolis with tombs excavated by the GIA, 2006-2008.



Fig. 3 – Crustumerium MDB Tomb 222, *dromos* and entrance to chamber tomb and dislocated terracotta tiles in front of a *loculus*.

found parallels for this ornament elsewhere thus documenting another unique feature of its archaeological record.

The excavations in which GIA was involved at the Monte Del Bufalo necropolis are illustrated in fig. 2. We excavated a variety of *fossa* tombs but also chamber tombs of which there are many at Crustumerium.

The GIA has so far been involved in the excavation of three chamber tombs at Crustumerium, MDB Tomb 222, Tomb 32 and Tomb 108, which are assigned to the 6th century BC. All three are different in their architecture and other features. As an example of a chamber tomb that was excavated by us, we will present here Monte Del Bufalo Tomb 222 (fig. 3).

Tomb 222 is a fine example of a subterranean chamber tomb with *dromos* that could be accessed by a flight of steps. The stair into the *dromos* is very steep giving the impression of a shaft *dromos*. The low



Fig. 4 – MDB Tomb 222 with skeletal remains of a young woman of 20 years on a wooden bier or in a coffin placed on the floor of the chamber. At her feet a small child of about 6 years of which we recovered milk teeth.



Fig. 5 – MDB Tomb 222. Male skeleton as unearthed in the *loculus* with row of closing tiles in front. Man was aged 30 to 40 years and had exceptional length of 175 cm.

entrance into the chamber was closed with four vertically placed tuff blocks and some smaller tuff fragments. The chamber, somewhat irregularly shaped, measured 440 x 470 x 140 cm, giving its maximum dimensions. It had three laterally placed *loculi*, one to the left, one to the right, one to the right and one at the rear of the entrance to the chamber. Upon entering the chamber, the floor was covered with a thick deposit of fine clay alternating with large sheets of *tufa* that had come down from the walls and ceiling. The chamber was fully excavated. The skeletal remains of five individuals were recovered in the chamber who had been buried in a relatively short period of time judging from the associated finds.

The first burial excavated was of a young woman of ca. 20 years who was found in supine position on a wooden bier or in a coffin placed on the floor in front of the *loculus* at the rear of the chamber (fig. 4). At her feet a small child of about 6 years had been put to rest; we recovered some of the child's milk teeth.

In the *loculus* at the rear of the chamber another young female was found, aged 16 to 18. The *loculus* was closed with large tiles of red clay as were the other two *loculi* of MDB Tomb 222. The *tegulae* had slid slightly downwards towards the floor of the chamber. On account of the associated artefacts in tomb 222, the tiles must date around 600 BC and this also documents that houses at *Crustumerium* at that time were roofed with *tegulae*. The *loculus* to the right of the entrance contained the skeleton of a third female, 20 to 30 years old. In the *loculus* to the left of the entrance, the well-preserved skeleton of a man was excavated, aged 30 to 40 years. This man had a quite exceptional length of 175 cm (fig. 5).

Fig. 6 presents some of the associated artefacts in the chamber such as etrusco-corinthian ceramics as well as a coarse ware olla. The *aryballos*, *pyxis* and *alabastra* were found near the female skeletons. For example, the *pyxis* was found next to the skull of the young woman buried in the *loculus* at the rear of the chamber². Similar etrusco-corinthian ceramics as in MDB Tomb 222 are dated to the late 7th century BC but also occur in contexts assigned to the early 6th century BC. The majority of the finds were found on the floor of the chamber. Some finds miss fragments as is the case with the coarseware olla. The artefacts might not

² Cf. MARCHETTI 2006, 369–371; COLONNA 2002, 187, 235, tav. XLVII. A comparable *pyxis* is recorded, for example, in Tomb VIII at Poggio Buco, a tomb that is assigned by Bartoloni to the first half of the 6th century BC though it did contain also artefacts dated to the late 7th century BC (BARTOLONI 1972, 135).



Fig. 6 – MDB Tomb 222. Some of the associated artefacts, the Etrusco-Corinthian ceramics and a coarse-ware olla.



Fig. 7 – MDB Tomb 222. Some of the associated artefacts.

have been complete when the burial chamber was last used. Artefacts could also have been relocated during a subsequent funeral or they might even have slid from a *loculus*. Most artefacts were found on the right hand side of the entrance to the chamber and it will require further research to allocate finds to a specific burial. Eventually, it may not be possible to assign all artefacts to an individual funeral.

In the clay fill of the coarseware olla, we found the oldest shard recovered from the chamber, a rim fragment of an Iron Age *impasto tazza* decorated with geometric incisions. It is probably an accidental intrusion in the tomb on account of its reopening in antiquity for a subsequent burial. One shard of comparable age was also found in the fill of the *dromos*.

Fig. 7 presents two *olle* of *impasto rosso* from tomb 222 as well as a *bucchero oinochoe*. The *bucchero* pouring jug resembles *oinochoe* type 7 in the classification of Rasmussen³. This type of *oinochoe* is found in Etruscan tombs dated around 600-575 BC.

As mentioned before, the GIA has so far been involved in the excavation of three chamber tombs, MDB Tomb 222, Tomb 32 and Tomb 108, which are all assigned to the 6th century BC. These are definitely not the only 6th century BC chamber tombs at *Crustumerium*. The SSBAR and also the Cambridge/Finnish team directed by Ulla Rajala, has excavated a number of chamber tombs⁴. More chamber tombs at *Crustumerium* exist and have been located and excavated (for example Sasso Bianco Tomb 2⁵; MDB tombs 25, 29, 109, 110 and at Cisterna Grande, near the Casale) but many others are not yet excavated. The excavation of chamber tombs at *Crustumerium* has not been a priority both because the 6th century BC tombs are poor in their *corredo* and therefore not threatened by *tombaroli* and because working in the chambers is more precarious than in the *fossa* tombs. Thus the excavations at the site did not concentrate on the chamber tombs. Nonetheless combined efforts have revealed the existence of tens and probably even more, 6th century BC chamber tombs at *Crustumerium* which makes the site stand out from the archaeological evidence for the burial custom in *Latium Vetus* during the 6th century BC and, interestingly, also from nearby sites such as *Fidenae* and *Veii*. Excavations at Latin sites such as *Fidenae*, Rome, *Gabii*, *Lavinium*, *Ardea* and some other settlements, revealed one, two or at the most a few chamber tombs of which even less can be clearly assigned to the 6th century BC. At other Latin sites no chamber tombs are reported.

Site	Number of chamber tombs	Date	References
<i>Fidenae</i>	Several	6th/5th cent. BC	2 published: DI GENNARO ET ALII 2004; 2006 ⁶
Rome	2	6th-4th cent. BC	PINZA 1905, 194, 708; CIFANI 2008, 324
<i>Gabii</i>	1, Tomb 62	600 BC	BIETTI SESTIERI 1992, 119-121, 864-872 ⁷
Acqua-Acetosa-Laurentina	At least 5	6th-5th cent. BC	BEDINI 1983; 1990, 171-177, 255-260; CIFANI 2008, 202-204 ⁸
<i>Lanuvium</i>	1	Ca. 500 BC	ZEVI 1990, 166-170
<i>Lavinium</i>	1	575-350 BC	GUAITOLI 1995; FENELLI 1998; CIFANI 2008, 326
<i>Ardea</i>	At least 3	5th/4th century BC	COLONNA 1995

Table I – Chamber Tombs in *Latium Vetus* assigned to the 6th/5th centuries BC:

From Table I, one can deduce that the number of 6th century BC chamber tombs at sites in *Latium Vetus* is limited. Even in nearby Etruscan Veio the quantity of chamber tombs seems to be restricted when compared to the quantity of 6th century BC chamber tombs at *Crustumerium*⁹. We must keep in mind, however, the observation of G. Colonna that the funerary ritual of the 6th and 5th centuries BC in

³ RASMUSSEN 1979, 84–86.

⁴ RAJALA, 2008; BELELLI MARCHESINI 2008.

⁵ DI GENNARO 1999, 26.

⁶ Two chambre tombs at Via Rio nell'Elba; one at Via Castel Focognano and one in the necropolis NE in Tenuta Radicicoli (F. di Gennaro pers. comm.).

⁷ Other chamber tombs are reported in the area around *Gabii*, for example at Fosso di San Giuliano, but these mainly refer to the 4th and 3rd century BC (S. Musco and F. di Gennaro pers. comm.).

⁸ Some other Archaic, Latial chamber tombs at Casal Brunori, Tor de' Cenci and Vallerano are mentioned by Bedini but details are missing (BEDINI 1993, 104). It might well be that some rural, archaic settlements are associate with a small amount of chamber tombs as Bedini suggests, but as long as detailed accounts of these tombs are not published it remains unclear to what extent they were in use from the 6th century BC onwards.

⁹ For the funerary evidence at Veio during the 6th and 5th centuries BC see DRAGO TROCCOLI 1997.

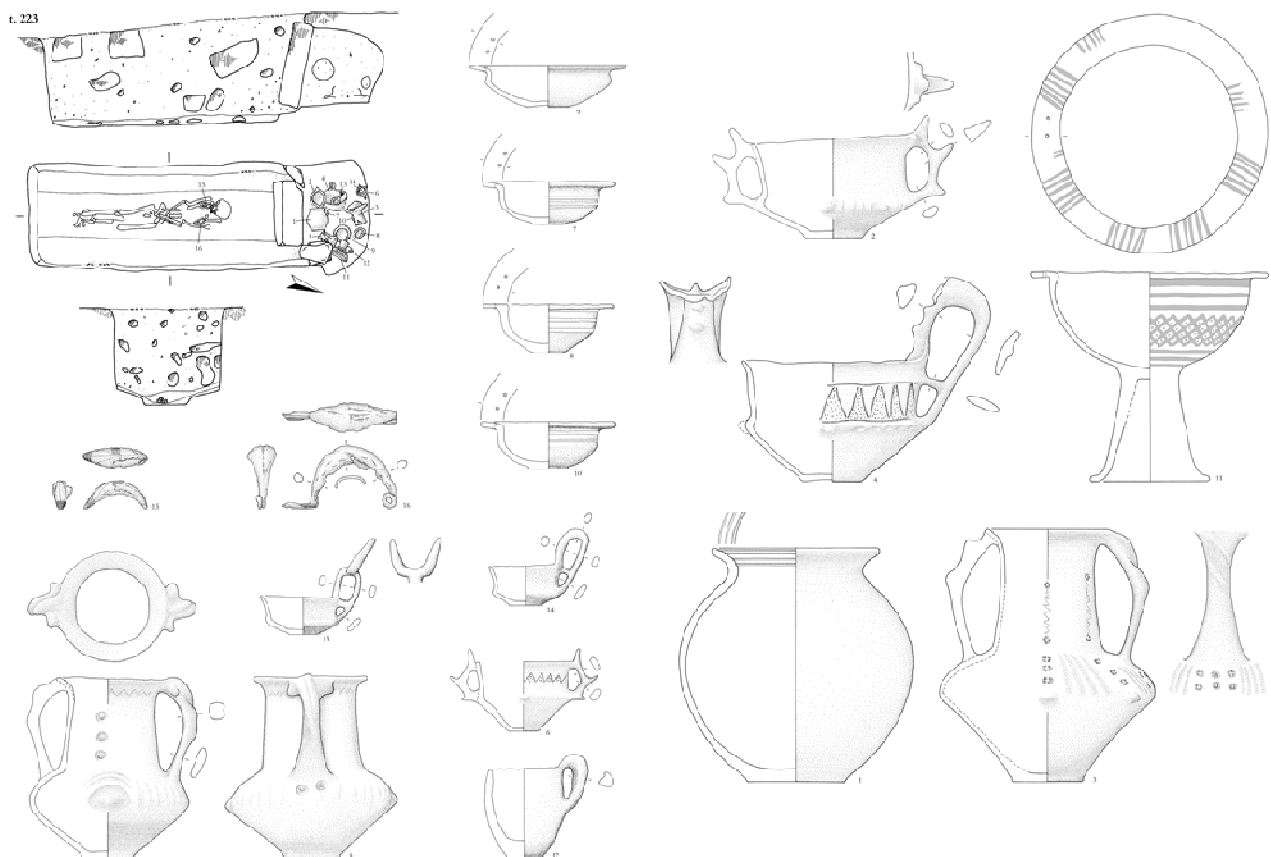


Fig. 8 – MDB Tomb 223 with three small bowls and one bowl on raised foot in white-on-red *impasto*.

Latium Vetus remains ‘*un aspetto oscuro*’¹⁰.

Chamber tombs of the 6th century BC do not appear to be a characteristic feature of the Latin culture while it is typical for *Crustumerium*. The 7th century BC custom in *Latium Vetus* of burying with a *corredo* became restricted in line with changes in the funerary practice in the decades around 600 BC¹¹. No cemetery in *Latium Vetus* can be dated to the full 6th century BC. This relatively sudden and comprehensive change in funerary depositions for the whole region of *Latium Vetus* is a major cultural alteration in which the community living at *Crustumerium* did not partake¹².

The lack of 6th century BC tombs in *Latium Vetus* is in contrast to the evidence available for *Crustumerium*. This significant difference might be caused by the presence of other ethnic groups at

¹⁰ cf. COLONNA 1977; ROSS HOLLOWAY 1996, 168–70.

¹¹ COLONNA 1977.

¹² The result of this premeditated transformation around 600 BC in *Latium Vetus* has been interpreted as a legal restriction, which was probably based on altered political and ideological concepts of an elite network (CORNELL 1995, 105–8). A merely economic interpretation of this break is not valid since a possible decline in prosperity based on the lack of tombs, is contradicted by other archaeological evidence which records preceding urbanisation of this region (cf. NIJBOER 1998). The radical change in funerary custom reflects a definite shift during the late 7th century BC from ‘personal’ hoards, exemplified in the rich burials, to ‘institutionalised, community’ hoards, exemplified in the wealth of some of the votive deposits (NIJBOER 2001; See also Bartoloni for an inventory of the sanctuaries at Rome: BARTOLONI 1989-1990). The elite of *Latium Vetus* could probably remain the custodian of these hoards because they controlled the sanctuaries. Around 600 BC, it seems that the religious authorities had asserted their position. These authorities probably derived from the same families, which in the previous decades furnished the tombs of their ancestors with such extravagance (cf. NORTH 1989, 588–89, 619–22; Livy I. VII. 12-13; SMITH 1996, 185–202).

Crustumium such as Capenates or Sabines who continued to bury in chamber tombs during the 6th century BC. In the Faliscan-Capenate area and in Sabina Tiberina, 6th century BC chamber tombs are fairly common. Cifani considers the chamber tombs at *Crustumium* to be related to the Faliscan-Capenate and Sabine area¹³. It should be noted that the use of chamber tombs at *Crustumium* during the 6th century BC is not based on contacts with nearby Etruscans because at Veio the funerary ideology during the 6th century BC changed as well, in line with the transformation in *Latium Vetus*¹⁴. The use of chamber tombs at *Crustumium* during the 6th century BC appears the result of local selection processes, symbolizing its cultural identity as an urban community.

A second peculiarity of the archaeological record of *Crustumium*, is the presence at the site of a considerable quantity of white-on-red ceramics, which is essentially *impasto rosso* painted with white slip decorations. A local workshop would mainly produce *impasto rosso* ceramics decorating some of its products with stamped or relief motives while some other products would be painted with a white slip. All these products of *impasto rosso*, plain, with relief or stamped decorations and white-on-red, occur at *Crustumium*. The white-on-red ceramics at *Crustumium* include various types of *olle*, small bowls, large bowls on high foot, large *pyxides* and now also a *holmos*, while the decoration in white consists of geometric patterns, Orientalizing motives and all sorts of animals¹⁵. During our excavation of the MDB Tombs 223 and 232 we also found some white-on-red decorated *impasto* (fig. 8).

Tomb 223 is a *fossa* tomb with head *loculus*. On the floor of the *fossa*, we excavated the well-preserved skeleton of a woman aged between 45 and 50¹⁶. The inventory of the *loculus* consisted of an olla of *impasto rosso*, four drinking cups, five bowls, two *amphorae*, a mug and a bowl on a high foot¹⁷. Fig. 8 illustrates the white-on-red ceramics of Tomb 223:

- three hemispherical small bowls of *impasto rosso* with horizontal lines in white slip;
- one hemispherical bowl on raised foot, *impasto rosso* painted with geometric motives.

The pottery assemblage found in the *loculus* of MDB tomb 223, is also clearly associated with eating and drinking, referring to the banqueting rituals of members of the community living at *Crustumium*. A number of the pottery forms have parallels in tombs 5 and 7 of the Monte Del Bufalo cemetery¹⁸ and tomb 34 of the Sasso Bianco cemetery at *Crustumium*¹⁹. This tomb of the Sasso Bianco cemetery at *Crustumium* and Tomb 223 of the Monte Del Bufalo cemetery are assigned to the Latial period IV, phase A/B, first half of the 7th century BC.

Another Tomb excavated by the GIA, containing a white-on-red artefact, is MDB Tomb 232, “La Tomba della Dama Velata”, which we discuss below.

The *loculus* of Tomb 232 was largely destroyed but still contained shards of mainly small drinking cups and the lower part of a white-on-red *holmos* – apparently the first *holmos* of *Crustumium* so far (fig. 9). Its lower part could be restored, to a height of 30 cm. There were at least five fragmentary *tazze*. In the past, *tombaroli* had been digging in the *loculus*. They were not interested in the *holmos* since they buried a large fragment of it in a hole in the NW part of the *fossa*, leaving a cigarette package of the Italian brand MS beneath it.

The red slip of the *holmos* was largely abraded, which caused the partial preservation of the white-on-red decoration. Represented is the rear part of an animal, probably a horse, bordered at top and bottom

¹³ CIFANI 2008, 324.

¹⁴ DRAGO TROCCOLI 1997.

¹⁵ cf. DI GENNARO 1999; 2006A; DI GENNARO *ET ALII* 2007, 139–141; see paper of De Puma in this session.

¹⁶ MDB Tomb 223 is a SSE-NNW oriented, rectangular *fossa* tomb with head *loculus*. On the floor of the *fossa*, we excavated the well-preserved skeleton of a woman, almost 160 cm long and aged between 45 and 50.

¹⁷ One of the bowls in Tomb 223 is a handmade, highly decorated *tazza con ansa bifora* that appears to be specific for female tombs at *Crustumium* (BELELLI MARCHESINI 2006, 223). The *tazza con ansa bifora* from MDB Tomb 223 resembles the *tazza cratera* of tomb 34 of the Sasso Bianco cemetery at *Crustumium* (BELELLI MARCHESINI 2006, 224–225, cat. no. II.196). It was fired at a low temperature making it extremely friable. The bowl is probably made especially for the burial ritual.

¹⁸ DI GENNARO 1988, 117–122.

¹⁹ BELELLI MARCHESINI 2006.



Fig. 9 – MDB Tomb 232 with fragment of white-on-red *holmos*; UV-photograph to improve visibility of white decoration and drawing of the white-on-red *holmos* from *Crustumerium*.

Site	Ceramic types	References
<i>Fidenae</i>	Apparently bowls.	di Gennaro, pers. comm. white-on-red can not have been common in the settlement since it was not included in a detailed article on the ceramics from <i>Fidenae</i> (DI GENNARO ET ALII, forthcoming)
Roma	2 plates.	COLONNA 1988, 306; CARAFA 1995, 113-117
Acqua Acetosa-Laurentina	Tomb 133, <i>holmos</i> and <i>lebetes</i> .	BEDINI 2006, 465-469
<i>Ficana</i>	White slip on griffin <i>protomes</i> of cauldron.	RATHJE 1983, 12, 16

Table 2 – White-on-red in *Latium Vetus*.

by two horizontal lines.

White-on-red or the opposite decorative effect, red-on-white ceramics, appears not to be a common ceramic group in *Latium Vetus* (Table 2). White-on-red or red-on-white is found more often in the other regions surrounding *Crustumerium*, such as south Etruria, the Faliscan-Capenate area and the Sabina Tiberina. Local production of white-on-red at *Crustumerium* is suggested by di Gennaro and Micozzi²⁰. We also have the impression that white-on-red was produced and consumed locally at *Crustumerium* while this pottery is only rarely encountered at sites located elsewhere in *Latium Vetus*, such as Rome, *Gabii* and even *Fidenae*, a centre only 5 km to the south of *Crustumerium*²¹.

The same picture emerges as with the 6th century BC chamber tombs at *Crustumerium*. While some white-on-red ceramics are known in *Latium Vetus* at sites such as Laurentina Acqua-Acetosa, none of the Latial sites so far has revealed as much evidence for white-on-red as *Crustumerium*. Interesting in this respect is the locally produced white-on-red in Sabina Tiberina, at *Cures Sabini* from the 8th century BC

²⁰ DI GENNARO 2006A, 229; MICOZZI 1994, 235.

²¹ For the ceramics found at *Fidenae* from the Iron Age till the Late Archaic period see DI GENNARO ET ALII 2009. The white-on-red ceramics occasionally found in *Nomentum* (cf. PALA 1976, fig. 140, p. 62) and other sites nearby *Crustumerium* are not included in Table 2 because the region is considered in this article as a transitory area between *Latium Vetus* proper and the Sabine territory (fig. 1).



Fig. 10 – MDB Tomb 232, female skeleton with her personal ornaments amongst which a headdress.

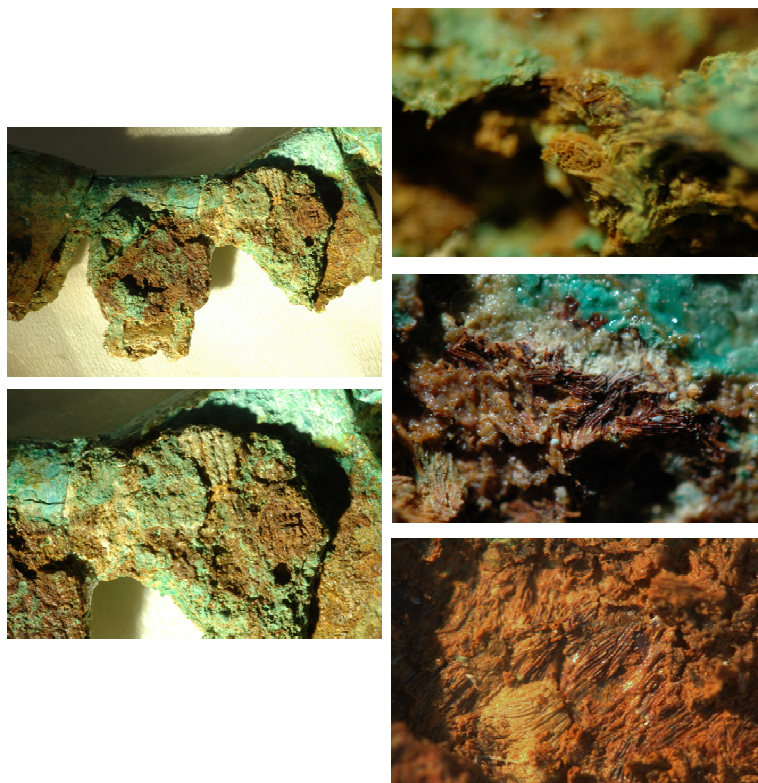


Fig. 11 – Pseudomorphs of organic materials in corrosion of headdress of MDB Tomb 232; pattern of woven textiles, braid and hairlike structures.

onwards²² and probably at Magliano Sabina where excavations of the Colle del Giglio necropolis revealed white-on-red ceramics that appear to be fairly typical for the site²³. The Sabine and Capenate evidence for local production of white-on-red is more in line with the evidence from *Crustumerium* than the data available for *Latium Vetus*²⁴.

The last cultural feature presented here and based on our excavations at *Crustumerium*, is a typical female ornament as encountered in MDB Tomb 232, 'la tomba della dama velata', the veiled lady with headdress/diadem. Fig. 10 gives an overview of MDB Tomb 232 just before the skeleton was removed with the block-lift method. Tomb 232 is a *fossa* tomb with a head *loculus* oriented to the north. The tomb is at present assigned to Latial period IV, late phase A. The skeleton was encountered just below the furrows of recent ploughing and the headdress/diadem was found 5 cm below the surface. Most of the tomb must have disappeared as a consequence of past erosion and ploughing. In the 'coffin area' in the centre of the trench, we found the remains of the skeleton of a lady, 40 to 50 years old, together with her personal ornaments. The skull of the deceased had slid to the right, on her chest. It was crowned with a headdress or diadem, an artefact, so far without parallel, except for a slightly smaller version in MDB tomb 76 that the GIA also excavated. The headdress/diadem is heavily corroded and traces of textiles and hair in the corrosion products demonstrate that it was closely associated with both these materials (fig. 11). We therefore have

²² GUIDI 1988, 323; 1996, 173, 179.

²³ SANTORO 1996, 211.

²⁴ At other Latin sites such as *Gabii* and *Satricum* no white-on-red is reported though *impasto rosso* ceramics were locally produced (Anna De Santis, pers. comm. e-mail 6-06-2008 with comment that she never found any white-on-red ceramics during her excavations in *Latium Vetus*, neither did the GIA at *Satricum*).



Fig. 12 – MDB Tomb 232, headdress partially cleaned, consisting of a screw-thread and moulded and pierced plate, also visible on section of CT-scan.

labelled this tomb, *la tomba della dama velata*. There are other details associated with the headdress that indicate that the lady wore a veil, a sort of *infula* or *cuffia*²⁵.

Her upper arms were each adorned with two *fibulae*. On her chest at least six objects were found, most of them of bronze. Two *fibulae* with a long pin were more or less symmetrically placed just below the skull near the scapulae. They must have kept a shroud or garment in place on the shoulders. In addition, two ivory fibula-bows inlaid with amber knobs, were found in the centre and at the left side of the chest area. Below her waist there were three bronze clasp-hooks indicating that the lady wore a belt.

On account of the intricate nature of the associated artefacts such as the ivory fibula-bows inlaid with amber and the tiny bronze pendants, the skeleton was lifted in two parts using the block-lift method, for which we like to thank Pietro Bassanelli. Two parts of the skeleton were lifted; a large block with the head, arms and chest and a small block of the waist with the clasps. These block lifts were transported to Groningen and have been excavated and investigated at the LCM. In Groningen, CT-scans and X-ray photographs could be taken thanks to the assistance of the Academic Hospital (UMCG), in order to reveal details regarding the artefacts in the block-lifts such as the intricate and advanced construction of the copper-alloy headdress/diadem (fig. 12).

The headdress consists of a ring with what appears to be a screw-thread. The screw-thread must have been functional to prevent associated materials from slipping. The top of the ring was embellished with six copper-alloy plates that were each bent around the screw-thread forming a sort of corona. The plates

²⁵ These details such as the tiny pendants hanging from a wire along her chin, were being studied at the Laboratory of Conservation and Material Studies (LCM) of the University of Groningen (www.lcm.rug.nl).



Fig. 13 – Archaic headdresses in central Italy as illustrated on terracotta's from *Satricum*, Veio and on a bronze statue from *Falerii Veteres* (adapted from: COLONNA 2002, Tav. IXc; BLANCK 1990, Tav. 1).



Fig. 14 – Headdress of Vestal Virgins, known to have been of ancient origin (from: SIEBERT 1995, Abb. 1).

were on one side flat and tapering, while the other half is spherical. A hole through the semi-sphere must have fastened something, probably textiles judging from the associated traces of fabrics in the corrosion products. The pendants surrounding the mandible and hanging from a thin wire are very small and are currently interpreted as a border decorating and reinforcing the hem of the veil. These tiny pendants make no sense as a necklace while the decoration of textiles with copper ornaments is a common feature in Italy from the late 9th till 7th century BC.

Comparable headdresses have so far not been found (fig. 13). Diadem-like constructions are known from archaic terracotta's such as the headdress of the goddess on top of the Portonaccio temple at Veio or a comparable headdress of a late 5th century BC bronze statue from *Falerii Veteres*²⁶. Similar headdresses are depicted for centuries and are also known in Imperial Rome looking at some statues of Vestals (fig. 14), whose hairdo was known to have been of ancient origin²⁷. This typical hairstyle involving a headdress, braids and textiles is referred to with Roman terms such as *tutulus*, *capital*, *infulae*, *vittae* and *suffibulum*, the veil. The exact definition of each of these terms is somewhat debated but Siebert provides us with some clear comments²⁸. Thus the *tutulus* is described as a headdress, a 'Haube' in German or a 'Cuffia' in Italian that consist of a diadem-like contraption with braided hair and textiles. Bonfante describes the *tutulus*

²⁶ COLONNA 2002, TAV. IXc; BLANCK 1990, TAV. 1.

²⁷ SIEBERT 1995; WILDFANG 2006, 11–16.

²⁸ Siebert 1995.



Fig. 15 – Poggio Civitate, terracotta plaque with an enthroned, veiled lady who was apparently allowed to participate in a prestigious assembly but who was simultaneously separated from the others by her veil (after RATHJE 1993, Fig. 3).

as an ancient, ritual hair style sometimes associated with a kind of coronet during the 6th and 5th century BC²⁹.

As one can see from fig. 14 that depicts a Vestal and from the headdress of *Crustumerium* Tomb 232 that also contains evidence for textiles, the hairdo consists of a diadem-like device braided with cloth and strands of hair. It is an intricate hairdo that stems from Archaic times as also depicted by the late 6th and 5th century BC statues illustrated in fig. 13. This hairstyle is associated in Republican Rome with brides, Vestals and other priestesses. The elaborate hairstyle with veil is also correlated with *matronae*, the female pendant of the *patres*, being the honourable women of the main Roman families who were granted as a group, specific privileges from Republican times onwards³⁰.

The 7th century BC headdresses from *Crustumerium* of Tomb 232 and 76, with or without veil, in combination with the associated array of other artefacts, make it possible to assess the social persona of the deceased. The 40 to 50 year old women buried in MDB Tomb 232 and 76 were most likely not put to rest as brides. They probably represented *matronae*. Though their role as priestesses cannot be ruled out, the associated artefacts in both Tomb 232 and 76 do not clearly mark these two women as *sacerdotes*. We have, for example, not recovered sacrificial implements such as knives, in their tombs. Thus we suggest identifying them as *matronae*, the mistresses of the main households in *Crustumerium*. This identification as *matrona*, is not based on the distant links with Roman terms such as *tutulus*, but mainly on the other artefacts deposited in their tombs such as several *fibulae*, a large *anello di sospensione*, bracelets, weaving implements, clasps and the *holmos*.

In this context, one could also refer to one of the Murlo terracotta plaques on which an enthroned veiled lady is depicted who was apparently allowed to participate in a prestigious male assembly but who was simultaneously separated from the others by her veil (fig. 15). Though the Murlo plaque is dated to the early 6th century BC, the symbols of power depicted on it, are much older thus documenting the conservative character of these social emblems. The depicted foot rests and thrones, for example, are found from the late 8th century BC onwards in central Italy.

All the details on the headdresses found in MDB Tombs 232 and 76 remain somewhat hypothetical because comparable artefacts are not known, as far as we know. In case the reconstruction given above can be accepted, it would be the only but also the oldest *tutulus*/headdress so far excavated in Italy. It would trace the origin of such headdresses into the 7th century BC. Since both headdresses were recovered at *Crustumerium*, they can at present be considered as a typical, local, female ornament for the 7th century BC *matrona*.

²⁹ BONFANTE 2003, 75–76.

³⁰ SIEBERT 1995; WILDFANG 2006, 11–16.

Conclusion

At *Crustumerium*, the quantity of 6th century BC chamber tombs, the local production of white-on-red *impasto* vessels and the typical female ornament found in MDB Tombs 76 and 232 stand out in the archaeological record of the site. They are the result of local cultural selections and reflect the identity of *Crustumerium* as an urban community. This cultural identity of *Crustumerium* arose from the considerable ethnic diversity in its surroundings. Within a one day's walk from *Crustumerium*, one could reach Etruscan *Veii*, Latin Rome, *Capena*, *Cures Sabini* and other nearby Sabine sites (fig. 1).

From an historical, linguistic perspective Latins, Etruscans, Faliscans and Sabines can be separated into different ethnic groups but in the archaeological record these distinctions are less marked, especially in border regions such as *Crustumerium* and its hinterland. Moreover, dynamic processes of ethno-genesis were in force during this period, which was characterized by increasing centralisation and developments of early state formation. In fact for the whole of Italy from the Iron Age onwards till the process of Romanization, one can detect a remarkable and rich diversity in peoples, tribes and languages that defies the concept of clear ethnic borders. Tribes such as the Samnites, Picenes, Marsi, Ligurians, Enotrians, palaeo-Veneti and Daunians have their core regions and archaeological oddities but their boundaries are less well defined, partially on account of raids, shifting frontiers, processes of cultural adaptations and mobility. In addition, the ethnicity and make-up of communities alters with centralisation and state formation, often leading to multiple or layered ethnic identification of individuals. Thus one could be born in Rome and be a Roman but still cherish an Etruscan or Sabine family history.

Religion and language or dialect, are considered clear ethnic markers though Hall remarks that neither is exclusive for a specific ethnic group and that in Antiquity, too, people were able to communicate in different languages (Hall 1997). At *Crustumerium* we have hardly any record regarding language or religion. As long as we do not have a corpus of inscriptions at the site, it remains hypothetical to comment on the languages or dialects spoken at *Crustumerium* during the 8th to 6th centuries BC.

Presumed common genealogy or ancestry is another attribute of ethnicity but according to Weber, it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists³¹. Another aspect of ethnicity is geography and it could well be that the River Aniene at an early stage separated Rome and the Latins from their Sabine neighbours.

As has frequently been noted, ethnicity is subjective, indefinite and blends individual as well as group characteristics. Ethnic identity of an individual is based on an often virtual and constructed awareness of his or her family history and its traditions. Ethnic identity of groups reveals communal customs, behaviour and peculiarities frequently expressed and celebrated during specific festivals and rituals. This combination of customs, behaviour and peculiarities, is classified here as culture since it is founded on repetition and thus tradition.

The archaeological record of *Crustumerium* is ambiguous regarding ethnicity though most artefact types excavated at the site can also be found at sites in *Latium Vetus*. As in Rome various ethnic groups may have shared their lives on the site during the 7th and 6th centuries BC. Some archaeological aspects of *Crustumerium* such as the frequent use of chamber tombs during the 6th century BC and the local production of white-on-red ceramics during the 7th century BC, show how its inhabitants shared cultural characteristics with the Sabine, Etruscan and Faliscan-Capenate regions. This specific amalgam seems to be characteristic for *Crustumerium* and makes its archaeological record unique even when compared to nearby *Fidenae*. In this context it would be rewarding if one could compare in detail the archaeological data of *Fidenae* and *Crustumerium* because it would reveal similarities and differences of material culture for early urban communities that inhabited centres nearby Rome and located in 1 or 2 hour walking distance of each other. It requires however a full inventory and publication of the substantial settlement and funerary record of both sites. It remains now crucial to assess the hundreds of 8th and 7th century BC tombs recently excavated at

³¹ WEBER 1978, 389.

Fidenae and to detect whether the cultural identity and ethnic ambiguity encountered at *Crustumerium* is also typical for other Orientalizing and Archaic centres near Rome located along the south-east side of the Tiber Valley³².

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³² See for a comparison of the archaeological record at *Fidenae* and *Crustumerium*, DI GENNARO ET ALII 2007.

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