

STEFANIA CASINI, MARTA RAPI

THE PROTOHISTORIC AGGLOMERATION OF COMO, ITS NECROPOLISES AND SURROUNDINGS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GOLASECCA CULTURE

The Golasecca culture was the fundamental ethnic-cultural entity before the Gallic invasions (388 BC) and Romanization (second–first century BC) of western Lombardy, eastern Piedmont, the Ticino Valley and Misox (de Marinis 2009, 11–30). Its territorial extension is quite well known: almost 200¹ sites allow us to fix the boundaries between the Alpine watershed to the north and the River Po to the south, and between the rivers Sesia to the west and Serio to the east. This broad territory includes a great variety of geomorphological and biogeographical landscapes: Alpine valleys (Ossola, Leventina and Mesolcina), large lakes such as Verbano, Ceresio and Lario, moraine hills, terraced plateaus, and high and low plains with major rivers like the Ticino and Adda. The lakes were important routes affording easy access to the valleys and the Alpine passes, beyond which travellers could head on down along the Rhine and the Rhone.

In this broad geographical space, we can see several consecutive phases of a single culture that lasted – beyond the different labels used by scholars – from the thirteenth century BC (Canegrate culture) to fully historic times. During the Final Bronze Age, which was the formative period (Protogolasecca I-II or Ascona phases, then Protogolasecca III or the Ca' Morta-Malpensa phase), the cultural aspects were almost uniform. With the beginning of the Iron Age, signs of territorial variation emerged, but the gradual differentiation between a western area, an eastern area and an Alpine area was to acquire more consistency in the seventh century BC. The territory, in fact, was organized around a number of settlements/clusters, that of Castelletto Ticino-Sesto Calende-Golasecca (from now on SC-G-CT), that of the surroundings of Como along the south-western slopes of Monte Croce and that of the plain of Ascona, also known as Lepontic territory.

The settlement around Como was the earliest and the longest-lived as concerns the entire Golasecca civilization. This paper briefly examines contexts and sources to outline how it

formed and developed. We will refer to Como's protohistoric settlement as a 'proto-urban settlement', following what has been said by R.C. de Marinis, who was in turn inspired by the functional scheme and the analyses by M. Weber, F.M. Heichelheim, V.G. Childe and A. Leroi-Gourhan.²

Archaeologically, the emergence of the urban phenomenon can be understood not so much from its physical features (i.e. the order of magnitude of the population, the morphology of the inhabited area), but by shifting attention to models of territorial organization and to the occurrence of signs of a society stratified by economic and social classes. In other words, it is a matter of evaluating the type of organization established at the transition from scattered settlements, even if numerous,³ to central places that perform the function of direction and coordination for a whole surrounding area and which imply a transformation of the productive and social organization. The settlement was still devoid of monumental buildings and any regular urban pattern, but it already played the role of a city: it was the first stage and had the same essential functional scheme.

Therefore, we will consider some features from a spatial analysis perspective, such as the presence of production and exchange, community work and spaces, class and rank articulation. The analysis is somehow limited by the status of the sources. Excluding the last 30 years' excavations, often conducted in emergency conditions and mostly in small areas, the most important finds were made long ago, without proper

1 Excluding those around Como and Sesto Calende, Golasecca and Castelletto Ticino, which can be counted in hundreds.

2 See de Marinis 2009, in particular footnotes 10–13, where it is emphasized that M. Weber was the first to underline the economic nature of the concept of city. The city is an inhabited area where most of the inhabitants are not directly involved in the economic activities of primary production. So it is a central place for a whole organically connected territory which is controlled by it. In a city food surpluses produced by the countryside flow and accumulate and are consumed by social groups not involved in primary production: elites who hold military and religious power; artisans who make tools, weapons, ceramics, fabrics and luxury ornaments; merchants and servants.

3 Agricultural villages with essentially a self-sufficient economy.

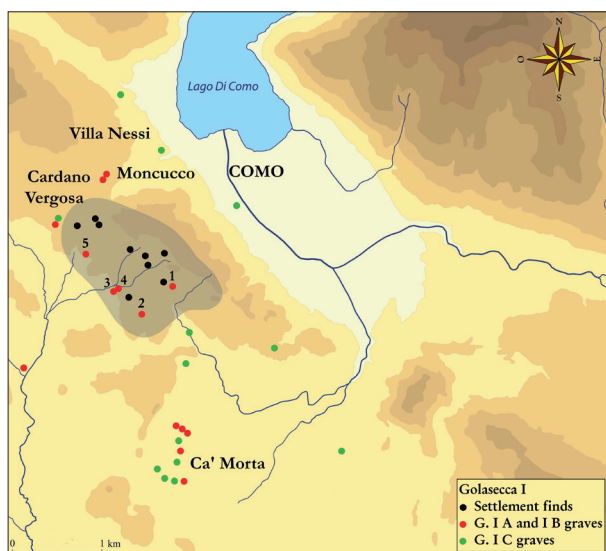


Fig. 1. The area of the protohistoric settlement of Como during the G. I period. The most ancient findings of pottery (black dots) are grouped near tombs (red dots). During the G. I C phase (7th century BC) the graves (green dots) are all outside the settlement area.

excavation campaigns and much of the context was certainly lost. Moreover, the settlement continuity and agricultural and extraction activities of the modern era have been an obstacle to the protection and recovery of contexts. Last but not least, events surrounding above all the relocation of the museum's exhibits during World War II resulted in loss and confusion. In recent years, Lombardy's *Soprintendenza* (Italian Ministry of Culture) has carried out research in the proto-historic settlement area, exploring new sectors of the inhabited area and new funerary areas from which some important news has emanated.

A settlement pattern occupied in a truly concentrated manner only became clearly discernible in the fifth century BC (period G. III A), with spatial distinctions for crafts, markets, residential activities and community infrastructures such as drainage ditches, pits and streets; there also seem to have been signs of a political authority, recognizable from certain epigraphs (Casini *et al.* 2001). The G. III A period, however, was the final step in a process beginning with the formative period of the Golasecca culture (Protogolasecca III or Ca' Morta-Malpensa phase), with the earliest settlements suspected from burials and isolated finds, mostly redeposited and recovered from more recent layers. In this framework, without contexts that can be attributed with certainty to Protogolasecca and Golasecca IA and IB, one exception is the discovery of a house at San Fermo della Battaglia-via Fittavolo (Ravaglia 2017b, 95).

In the inhabited area, the distribution of G. I ceramics, even if in secondary deposition, highlights at least four concentration areas (Casini, forthcoming): Leno/San Fermo (Luraschi

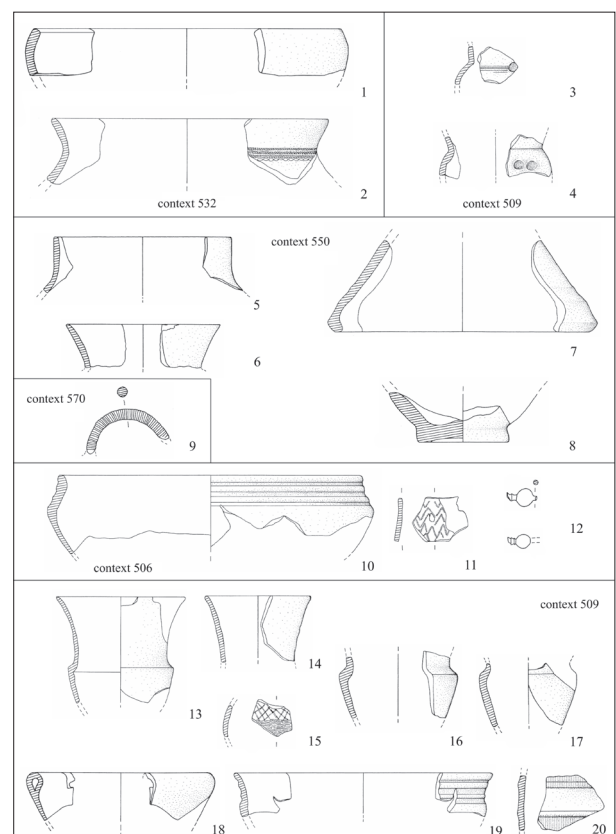


Fig. 2. Pottery of the G. I and II periods found in secondary deposition at the site of Prestino, via Isonzo-La Pesa (drawings by S. Casini).

et al. 1970-73, 144 and 147-163), Prestino-via Isonzo La Pesa (Casini *et al.* 2001, 98-99, figs 1 and 2), Rondineto⁴ and Pianvalle (Luraschi *et al.* 1968-69, 169-178). South of these are some eighth-century BC burials: the G. I A1 burials recently found at via Mornago (Mordeglia 2017), the G. I A2-IB burials from via Tito Livio,⁵ the G. IA burial from Cascina Fontana (de Marinis & Casini 1986, 62), from Fabbrica-podere Vitali (Garovaglio 1873, 30-35) and the Vigna di Mezzo grave (de Marinis & Casini 1986, 63; de Marinis 1988, 178, figs 146-147), dated to the eighth century BC. Their arrangement in clusters enables us to outline the first settlement pattern, consisting of small groups of houses, each probably with its own sepulchral area, forming what could be described as 'leopard spots'.

In this phase, we can observe the first signs of a new social structure related to the formation of proto-urban centres specifically from the composition of grave goods.

Some outstanding burials, mostly graves with a sword (Moncucco: early eighth century BC, Vigna di Mezzo and

4 It deals with two buildings: 'Camera grande' and 'Camera Carugo' (Luraschi *et al.* 1968-1969, 229 and 232).

5 The excavation was directed by D. Caporusso, in Ravaglia 2017a, 35-38, with previous bibliography.

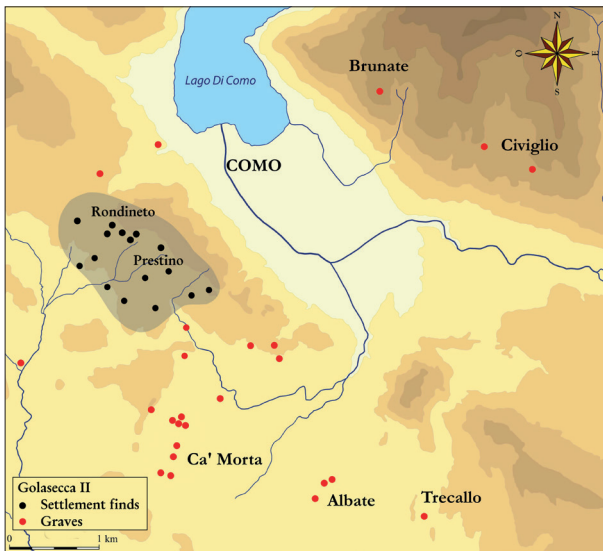


Fig. 3. The area of the protohistoric settlement of Como during the G. II period (6th century BC). The pottery is more frequently than before related to structures.

Ballerini quarry at Ca' Morta cemetery),⁶ seem to be related to the affirmation of lineages which probably resulted from the control of long-distance exchange of goods of exogenous origin with a strong Villanovan component.

In the Vigna di Mezzo grave, discovered around 1878, there was a laminated bronze amphora decorated with small dots and embossed studs; there now remains only a handle with anthropomorphic pendants. The grave goods also included a bronze knife with a winding blade, fragments of a pair of bronze equine bits of the type with jointed braided thread and bells for the reins, and a 'bidente', i.e. something like a fork with a long handle. Its function is unclear, since its most directly functional distal end is broken: it could be a hook for removing meat boiling in cauldrons for sacrifices and banquets or a religious/power sign, as found in Etruria, e.g. in the Circle of the Trident of Vetulonia, or in the insignia of the Etruscan magistrates of the fourth and third centuries BC, which are shaped like a spit, but with a handle similar to that of the Vigna di Mezzo specimen. The burial was masculine, as revealed by the presence of a pin. The pair of bits (two fragments cannot belong to a single bit) suggests that it could be a wagon grave, wholly lost but for the bits.

Within the framework of relationships with the Villanovan area, we also mention a fragment of a diamond-shaped belt and a boot vessel. The lozenge belt dates to the eighth century BC; it was found in via Isonzo-La Pesa and is one of three ex-

6 On these burials, see de Marinis 1975, 247 et seq., Pl. XIV B; de Marinis 1988, 178 et seq., figs. 146-147 and 150-152; de Marinis 2001, 50 et seq., fig. 8; Bertolone 1956-1957; Kossack 1956-1957.

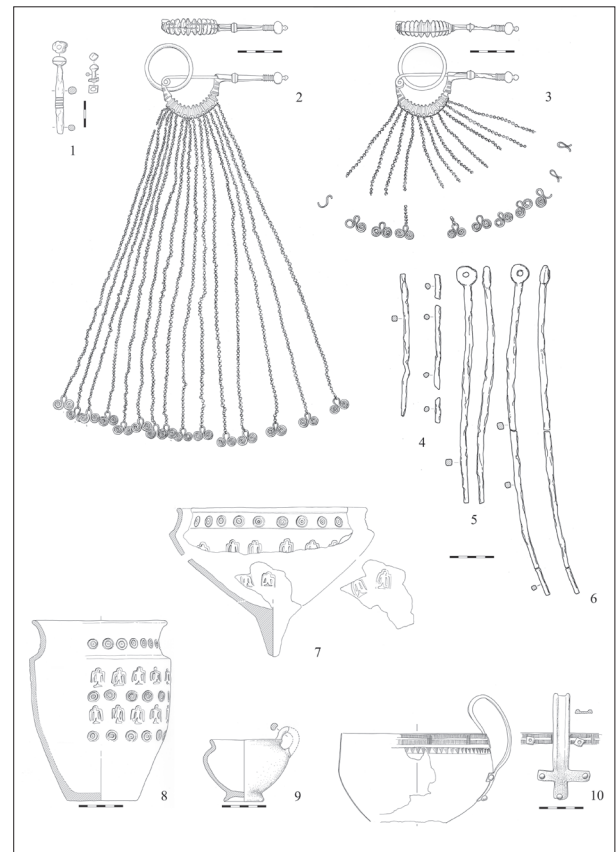


Fig. 4. The grave goods of the tomb Ca' Morta 255 (drawings by M. Rapi).

amples, with those of Vadena and Wörgl, found north of the Po and outside the Etruscan area proper (de Marinis 1999, 605-611, fig. 1-2, fig. 3). The boot vessel from a grave discovered in 1871 in the lands near Villa Giovio, which is part of the Bologna-Vetulonia-Veio group,⁷ is dated to the late eighth-early seventh century BC (G. I B) (de Marinis 1999, 611-616, figs 4-6).

At the beginning of the seventh century BC, the Carretino grave well exemplifies the north-south relationships already entertained specifically by the Como district compared to others of the Golasecca culture (de Marinis 1988, 179-180, figs 150-152). These goods show the existence of substantial relations between Como and Bologna and Etruria proper, in particular Vetulonia, and an ongoing socio-economic differentiation, stimulated by the intensification of long-distance traffic.

The *Carretino* ('Chariot') grave, a fortuitous discovery in 1950 at Gini quarry (the southernmost part of the Ca' Morta cemetery), shows even more clearly that around 700 BC a social stratification process was in full swing. Although the grave goods were only partially recovered, the inventory of materials is large and significant: a bronze amphora decorated with

7 de Marinis 1999, 611-616, figs 4-6.

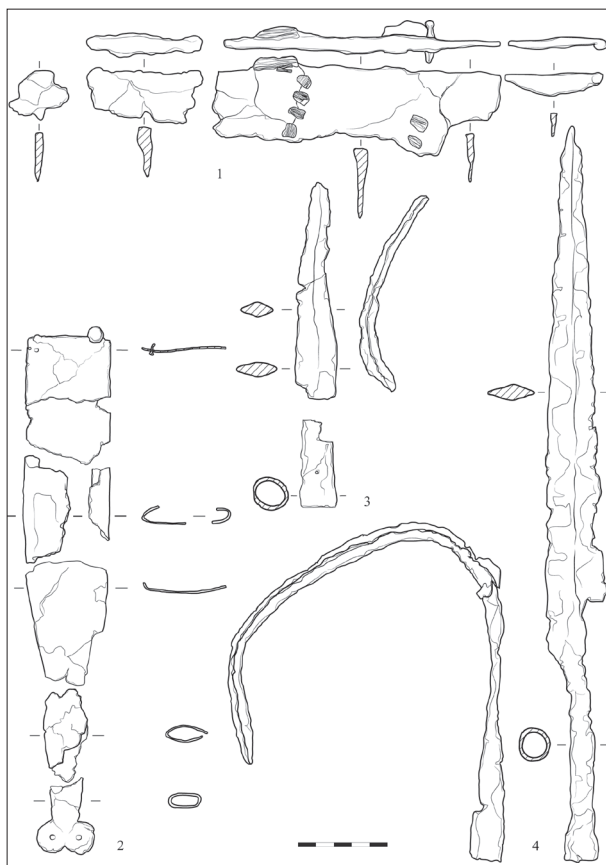


Fig. 5. The grave goods of the tomb Ca' Morta 255 (drawings by M. Rapi).

dots and embossed studs which outline a solar boat motif with bird-shaped ends, comparable to the Veio-Cevelinghausen type; a Bologna-type bronze ladle, with an S-shaped handle ending in a pelta; a S. Francesco type bronze socketed axe; a serpentine knife; two laminated bronze bowls with flat ribbings from Vetulonia, one of which was fixed to a four-wheeled cult chariot; a hook-type bronze key with ring ending; a pair of iron bits of the Platenitz-type of Cimmerician origins. Some fragments of bronze and iron are attributed to a wagon; deformations produced by heat indicate that it had been placed on the funeral pyre (for the wagon see Pare 1992, pl. 132B). The fact that only two bronze angles belonging to the casing were recovered, makes it probable that the cart was two-wheeled. This was certainly the grave of a warrior/chief who wanted to highlight his social superiority in the funeral ritual: he was able to access prestigious objects from the Etruscan world, such as Vetulonia's bronze vessels, but also observed the local traditions, which were more like those of the transalpine than the Mediterranean world, as evidenced by the composition of the drinking service, including an amphora, a ladle and a bowl but not a jug, and the practice of wagon cremation.

From the range of imports, during the eighth century and between the eighth and seventh centuries BC, that is, the ancient Orientalizing, Como engaged in close relations with

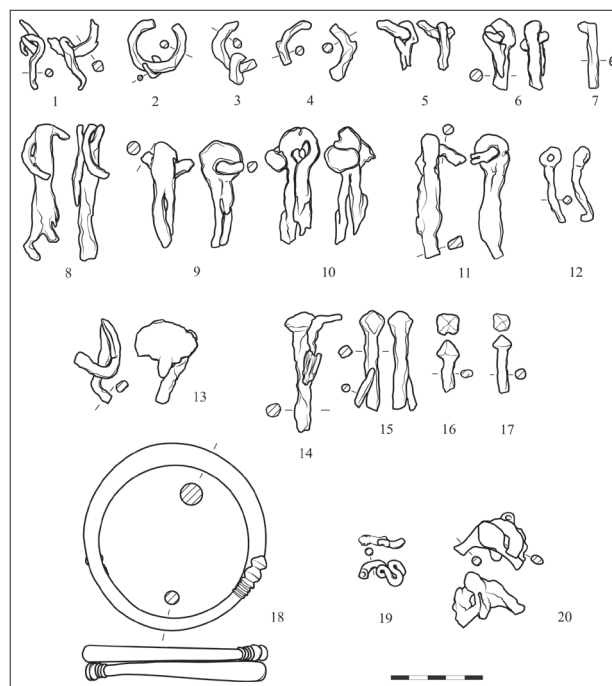


Fig. 6. The grave goods of the tomb Ca' Morta 255 (drawings by M. Rapi).

Bologna and Etruria, and more intensively than the G-CT-SC cluster did.

The G. IC horizon (~675-625 BC) marks a discontinuity with respect to G. IB: grave goods increased in wealth, which was a sign of a wider social articulation, more vessels and of more varied shapes were placed in burials. The range of bronze objects was also more extensive and there were indicators of contacts with the surrounding cultural areas. Moreover, we can now observe stable differentiations between a western (G-SC-CT) and an eastern district (Como) of the Golasecca culture, as concerns artefact types and associations. From a typological point of view, specific to the oriental district are situla-shaped urns that are completely absent at G-SC-CT, biconical-globose urns, beakers with angular but still scarcely standardized profiles, cups with a step-shaped rim, ladles and shovels, which initially were made of bronze and later iron. At Como, bronze vessels are uncommon: in this case, they are usually situlas (with a distinct neck and cordoned shoulder or with a non-distinct neck and rounded shoulder). Particularly relevant for periodization are the large-ribbed fibulas called Ca' Morta type, the rhomboidal boat bow fibulas and the boat bow fibulas with side buttons. A gender distinction among the burials is possible according to the metal objects: the male ones have knives, belt hooks, toiletry kits, serpentine fibulas (dragon type?) and, in a few cases, weapons.

In the mid-seventh and sixth centuries BC, at the Ca' Morta cemetery there were fewer burials remarkable for weapons, wagons, inscriptions and imported objects than in the western

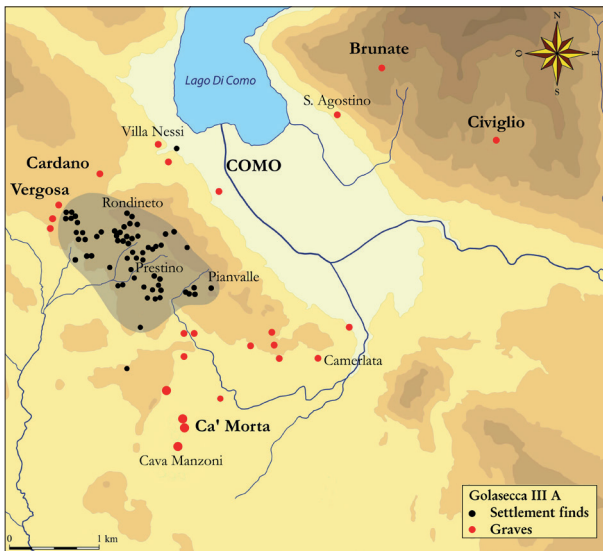


Fig. 7. The area of the protohistoric settlement of Como during the G. III A period (5th-beginning of the 4th century BC).

district of CT-SC-G. The Como district played a secondary role in the leadership for the management of exchanges and relations with the Etruscan world, but closer ties were established with the Venetic people: this is demonstrated by grave 1/1885 of Grandate with a bronze lid from Este's workshops (G. I C) (de Marinis 1992, 182-183, figs 12-13) and, as concerns the G. II A phase, by grave no. 2 from Grandate-via Pradei (Jorio 2017, 40-53), which exhibits a decorated lid and a situla, both from Este (the situla's reinforcement of the lead rim is typical of the area gravitating around the head of the Adriatic, *caput Adriae*), and weapons too: an antenna-hilted sword with a bronze handle of the Neuenegg type and a helmet fragment with a composite cap, indicative of relations with Este and the eastern Hallstatt group of Carniola (Dolenjska).

New funerary areas were also activated, as demonstrated by the recent discovery of a western burial site in S. Anna-Tre Camini, which was in use till the beginning of the fifth century BC and has yielded a male tomb with a Mindelheim iron sword (tomb 16: Chaume 2017), dating back to the end of G. I C.

Alongside this social development, no more burials referring to the seventh century BC (G. I C) are found within the inhabited area; burials were all arranged outside the settlement perimeter outlined at the phase of maximum development. This means that a process of expansion of the inhabited area was also underway; previous small settlement cores were surpassed as a result of planning regulation in using common spaces.

The settlement has not yielded any structures from the seventh century BC but finds were frequently redeposited in later levels (Casini, forthcoming). Two features that have yielded a great deal of G. I pottery are a drainage channel (context

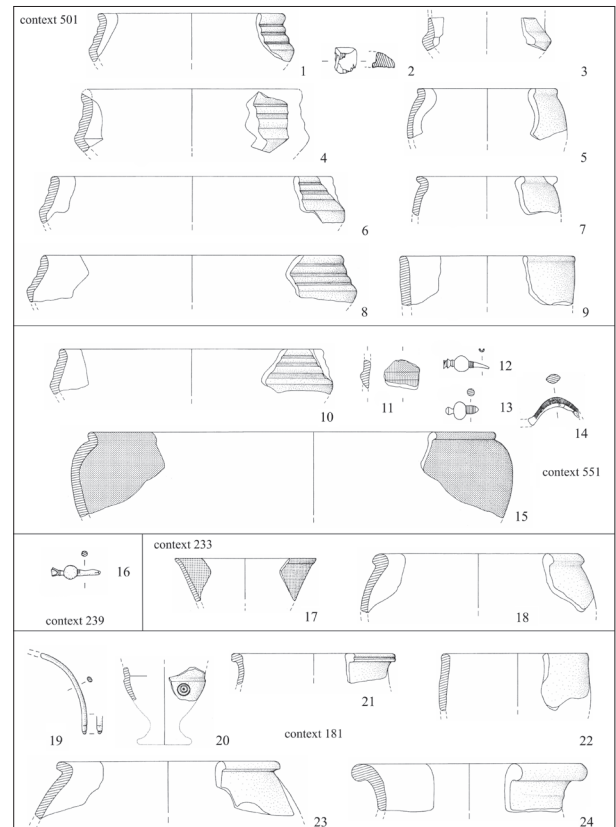


Fig. 8. Pottery of the G. II period (6th century BC) from the site of Prestino, via Isonzo-La Pesa structure no. 1 (drawings by S. Casini).

145) and a large drainage hole (context 125) brought to light during the via Isonzo-La Pesa excavations (Vannini 1997, 43-46 and 129-144); conical bowls with an inflated lip and high flared lip beakers were found; also the fragment of the Villanovan lozenge-shaped belt was recovered from the filling of the drainage channel.

During the G. II period the process of displaying social primacy through female ancestry increased. As for the Ca' Morta cemetery, it has yielded richer burial material (Rapi *et al.* forthcoming). Usually it is the female burials that yield the richest goods: metalwork parures with disproportionate pendants (T. 255), vessel sets including purpose-made pottery and other cult implements such as an iron shovel to collect ashes and remains of the funeral pyre (grave 173).

Grave goods of the G. II period present a rich variety of urns, including globular, biconical situla and ovoidal forms. A production of specifically cultural and funerary pottery includes the so-called 'gutti', which are ornithomorphic vessels with a pouring spout, and 'doppieri'. Doppieri are shapes with a high stem and multiple cups for ritual purposes; they appeared without decoration during the G. I C phase (t.288) but evolved during the G. II period into more complex and decorated variants with moulds and metal lamellas (T. 243). During the G. II B phase, pottery was very richly decorated by a stamp-like deco-

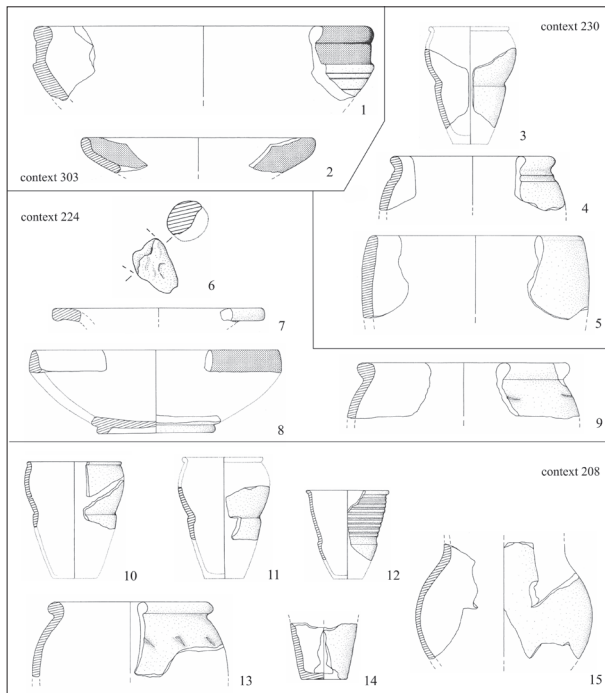


Fig. 9. Pottery of the G. III A period (5th century BC) from the site of Prestino, via Isonzo-La Pesa structure no. 1 (drawings by S. Casini).

ration across the whole surface of the vessel and sometimes alternating with tin lamella motifs (CM 147-148: Rittatore 1966).

In addition to the numerous burials of high-status women at Ca' Morta we note a few outstanding male burials. Grave no. 225 unfortunately was only partially recovered but it contained fragments of an iron knife and an iron scabbard with a double-eyed tip, three iron spears, two iron bits and an iron key of the hub of a wheel; plus, a bronze armilla with overlapping ends and several fragments of bronze and iron serpentine fibulas (dragon type?). For the bits and the hub (symbolically pointed out by a 'pars pro toto') it must have been a wagon grave. The so-called Situla Baserga grave at Ca' Morta (de Marinis 1975, pl. XII:B) was another male grave with a similar scabbard (see also de Marinis 1992, 192-193 and n. 77). The outline of the tips to form two eyelets is known in a knife from the Castelfranco collection (de Marinis 1975, 237, pl. XI:2) and in grave no. 664 of Hallstatt (Sievers 1982, n. 125).

With regard to the growing importance of family clans which self-promoted in the funerary context, at least three elite funerary areas are now identified, namely Roncaia-Cassotta at Albate (de Marinis 2017), via dei Pradei at Grandate (Jorio 2017) and Butti quarry (de Marinis 1981, 51-74) at Ca' Morta cemetery. As concerns Albate, some burials (Natta Roncaia and Malinverno Cassotta quarry) date back to the Final Bronze Age (Protogolasecca); no tombs of the Golasecca I period have been recorded, while most of the findings date back to the Golasecca II, especially to phases II A and II A-B (about 600-525

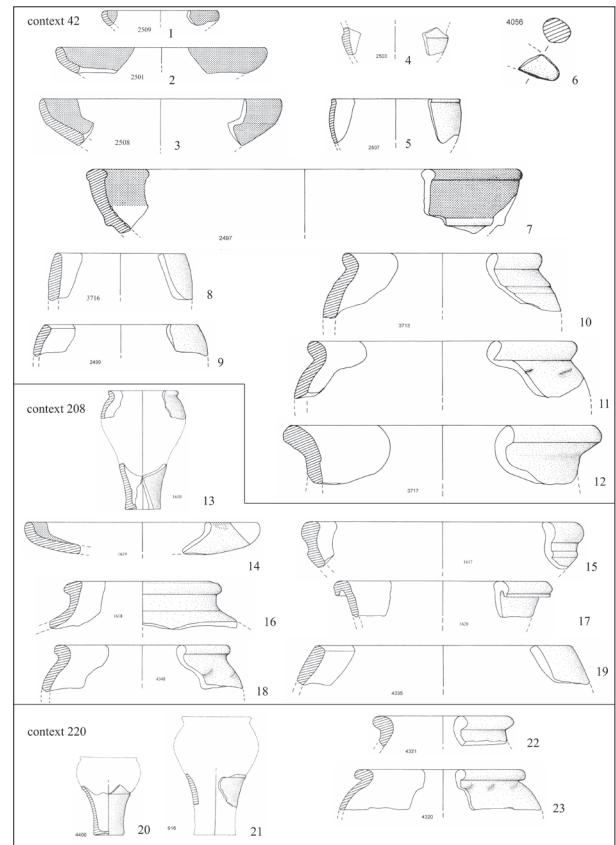


Fig. 10. Pottery of the phases G. III A3-LT B1 (4th century BC) from the site of Prestino, via Isonzo-La Pesa structure no. 1 (drawings by S. Casini).

BC). Etruscan and probably Greek imports confirm that the cemetery of Albate had to host the richest graves in the entire proto-urban area of Como within the first half of the sixth century. Although the Albate burials are the result of occasional and incomplete discoveries, made without scientific supervision, the abundance of bronze vessels (five ladle-cups, a cup, four corded-shoulder situlas, two corded cysts), fibulas with bows covered with amber or coral and imports from Etruria – very rare for the first half of the sixth century BC – clearly indicate that this was the cemetery area of the most eminent families.

The presence of high-rank burials in clearly separate cemeteries could be the expression of increased competition for primacy by different clans or lineages. Despite the fragmentary nature of the sources, the epilogue seems to have turned, during the fifth century BC, to the advantage of the community that was connected to the Ca' Morta cemetery where all the most important burials of the G. III A period have been recovered (Manzoni quarry: see de Marinis 1981, pp. 95-99; Vignaccia field/Butti quarry: see de Marinis 1981, 51-74).

Going back to the settlement topics, within the G. II period, the area that was to be occupied by the fifth century BC settle-

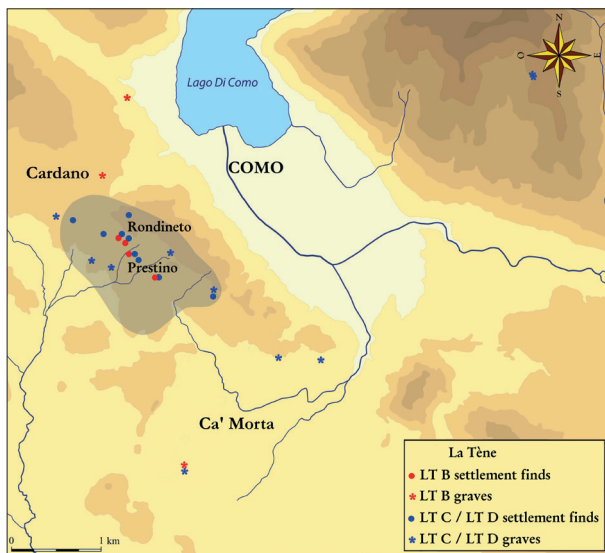


Fig. 11. The area of the protohistoric settlement of Como during the La Tène period (4th-1st century BC).

ment, underwent a clear first expansion and houses now appeared more closely spaced (Casini, forthcoming). Many of the fifth century BC buildings were already inhabited during the sixth century BC. From the nineteenth-century excavations, we know that many of the buildings cut into the rock in the Rondineto locality were in use during the G. II period: the so-called Great Chamber was already inhabited, as was the 'Leno enclosure' (Luraschi *et al.* 1968-69, 219-220). A complex of houses has been brought to light at the S. Fermo-via Rigamonti locality (Jorio 2014, 150-160); here, the sector E occupation dates back to the beginning of G. II with a continuity of settlement up to the G. III A1, that is up to the middle of the fifth century BC, even if they underwent a shift towards the sectors B and C due to the collapse of the hillside around.

Even excavation of building no. 1 at via Isonzo-La Pesa made it possible to document a horizon dating to the sixth century BC. Very few materials came from the lower levels of the dwelling, which was quadrangular in shape with a perimeter of dry stone wall. Almost all the artifacts attributable to this period were found in the cobblestones behind the house (context 506 and context 509, in an open space, as a result of cleaning the structure before it was reoccupied in the middle of the fifth century BC. Finds included decorative bronze objects, above all fragments of fibulas attributable to G. II A and II B periods, pottery sherds such as bowls with step-shaped rims, mainly used within G. II A and A-B periods, carinated vessels decorated with 'stralucido' (shimmering) zig-zag motifs, beakers with high lips and shapes typical of the end of the sixth century BC, and jars including one specimen decorated with red and black bands.

G. II period sherds have been returned from negative features, too (pit no. 125, ditch no. 145), together with G. I period finds; they were probably collected here after cleaning some nearby structures (Vannini 1997, 47-85; 155-164). Forms are similar to those already listed, with numerous cups with corded lips, high-lip jars and carinated beakers of the G II A and B period variants.

In the fifth century BC, the settlement reached its greatest extent and, as already said, was functionally planned with diversified spaces for residential, artisanal, market activities and religious practices. Community infrastructures were built, such as tracks for wagons, paths with steps excavated in the rock, channels for drainage of water, sources adjusted for water supply; there also seem to have been signs of a political authority recognizable in some epigraphs (Casini *et al.* 2001, 104-114).

Imported materials, especially pottery from Attica (Casini 2007, 102-105, 115-121, figs 2-7:86-102) and from the Etruscan Po Valley (Casini *et al.* 2001, fig. 12), were plentiful and distributed throughout the settled area but concentrated in some areas, which highlight residential cores of the more affluent classes, among which Rondineto clearly stands out. Here were also concentrated the so-called 'camera in roccia' (rock chambers), i.e. houses partially excavated in the rock, probably with a second floor that exploited the natural slope of the hill. Other structures with simple dry stone walls, probably the basement of a wooden structure, were widespread throughout the settlement. Rarer were the so-called 'recinti' (enclosures), which were large houses with basements. A building of this sort (structure no. 3) was excavated between 1981-84 at Prestino in via Isonzo-La Pesa and, through the analysis of the pottery, it was possible to establish that it experienced two phases of occupation during the fifth century BC.

The first phase (G. III A1) was marked by median setback shaped beakers, truncated-cone shaped bowls painted with coral red paint and jars with a high flared neck, thickened rim and probably cordoned body. Coarse ware included globular jars and ovoid or hand-shaped cylindrical vases.

The second phase (G. III A2) included forms such as small truncated-cone shaped bowls, invariably decorated with coral red paint. Among the coarse ware were jars with nail-scratched motifs horizontally on the shoulder.

In the same settlement context, structure no. 1, which experienced a sixth century BC phase, seems to have been abandoned in the first half of the fifth century BC but re-occupied from the second half of the century onwards. This is demonstrated by goblet sherds and by coarse ware with nail-scratched motifs on the shoulder. The most interesting thing concerns its final occupation phase, which can be dated to LT

B. The chronology is given by median setback goblets of type E, F and G after de Marinis 1981.

The earlier idea that the inhabited area was abandoned within the first decades of the fourth century BC as a result of the Gallic invasions has to be revised (Casini, de Marinis, Rapi 2001, 121-128; Rapi 2009; Rapi 2014). The settlement probably shrank in size, but we know today that there were at least two areas still inhabited, Prestino and Rondineto, which were also the most ancient cores from which the settlement expansion began. There is other evidence of continued occupation, such as sherds of black-glazed pottery from the early and mid-fourth century BC found at Rondineto and at via Isonzo-La Pesa (Casini 2007, 102-105, fig. 3:28, fig. 6:71-73), confirming how the commercial flows from the Mediterranean and the peninsula were not immediately interrupted.

It cannot be denied, however, that the Gallic invasions were the cause of Como's decline. It lost its strategic role as a trade hub due to the changed connection routes that gave Milan a preferred position in the development of contacts with Genoa, Liguria and then the French Tyrrhenian coast (Casini & Tizzoni 2015 a). The settlement pattern certainly shrank: at via Isonzo-La Pesa, for example, four houses were active in the fifth century, but only one was still in use in the fourth century BC, assuming that this situation reflects reality and not a mere gap in the record.

Celtic movements during G III A 3-LT B1 put an end to the commercial system founded by the Etruscans in the Po Valley. In the brief period repercussions were not felt immediately and not everywhere in the same way. Contrary to what happened at Como, in the Sopra Ceneri territory funerary areas continued, for example at Giubiasco (*Giubiasco II* and *Giubiasco III*), Pianezzo (Gianadda 2000), Gudo (Sormani 2013) and Castaneda (Nagy 2012), proving that settlement was uninterrupted.

La Tène type weapons have been found, but fewer than one would expect. The swords found in Varenna and Esino Lario are the earliest specimens; dated a little later (LT B2) are those from Varenna, a sword with continuous-vegetal style scabbard (de Marinis 1981, 188-190; Rapi 2009, 65-72), and from Barzio, via Parrocchiale, a scabbard associated with a helmet with cheek pieces (Casini & Frontini 1994, 148).

As regards transformations affecting costume objects, the situation reflects what happened in the Sopra Ceneri area; here the dataset is more exhaustive and shows a gradual 'La Tène transformation'. The adoption of La Tène objects was slower in the female costume, which remained true to the local tradition as shown by late 'tardo alpino' leech fibulas and wire earrings with bronze biconical beads (Rapi 2009, 126-130).

The presence of an aristocratic class still eager to express its status through luxury products emerged mostly in banquets. Elements of novelty were the 'Tessiner Kanne', produced in imitation of the Etruscan 'Schnabelkannen' and known both in Como and to a greater extent in the Sopra Ceneri area, which are largely dated to the LT B1 (de Marinis 2000, 390-396, Rapi 2009, 31-32, tav. III). Other bronze vessels still produced were situlas and bronze cups (de Marinis 2000, 356-368 and 374-377), whose spread is well recorded in the Upper Ceneri area; a bronze Cerinasca type situla from Como is notable for the engraved decoration under the edge and towards the bottom (Rapi 2009, 30, tav. I:1).

In the Como area, during the LT C and D phases, the archaeological data set declined; graves are found within the Golasecca IIIA period settlement, as evidenced by those found at Casate (sports complex area), Pianvalle and Prestino (via Tito Livio) (Rapi 2009, 123-124; Rapi 2014, 377). This leads us to believe that the settled area was once again formed by small inhabited cores, among which that of Rondineto and that of Prestino were still active.

If we broaden our view to the whole Como district and mostly to the valleys surrounding Lake Como, evidence is comparable to that observed for Como's surroundings. Furthermore, from the third century BC, findings from the pre-Alpine valleys take on increasing weight. It seems the settlement pattern combined a central place – with more 'urban' features like wealth and high status displayed through the female costume and the use of writing – and a territory where iron could be mined and characterized above all by armed control (Rapi 2009, 125-126; Rapi 2014, 184). In the valleys of the eastern side of Lake Como, Valsassina in particular, find contexts are all funerary: cemeteries of some size are found at Esino and Introbio, small cemeteries or isolated burials at Casargo, Barzio, Varenna, Pagnona and Pasturo (Casini & Frontini 1994; Rapi 2009, 63-78, tav. XXIX-XXXVIII). Among pottery, new ware forms spread: flask vases and 'trottola' (spinning) vessels, which some scholars claim were produced locally and used to contain wine (Casini & Tizzoni 2015b, 224-230). These vessels are common denominators in the Lake Como region, in the Sopra Ceneri area and at Mediolanum-Milan, too, but are also found on the other side of the Alps, for example at Brig-Glis Gamsen, confirming a certain dynamism and capacity for expansion (Casini *et al.* forthcoming).

In burials, offerings linked to banquets were redefined and soon crystallized in standard associations that provided, apart from the flask to pour liquids, a bowl and/or a goblet, the latter two surely inherited from Golasecca culture. In the feminine costume, although Golasecca's influences remained, i.e. bronze thread earrings with biconical beads (Rapi 2009, 112; Casini 2017, 140-142, fig. 80), new types were disseminated.

Some, such as disc-belt hooks (Rapi 2009, 113-114), circulated in the micro-region; others were widespread La Tène products like glass bracelets (Rapi 2009, 108-111) and, finally, some were innovative re-elaborations of La Tène production, such as fibulas with the foot ending in a human mask wearing a helmet (Helmkopffibeln).

Mask fibulas, typical even in the Sopra Ceneri region, in Tyrol, in funerary material north of the Alps, in particular in the Alpine valley of the Rhine, in the upper Valais and in the Aare valley, are the archaeological evidence of movements of people (women) and unions aimed at strengthening alliances (Rapi 2009, 104-105).

The LT D stage marks the epilogue of the protohistoric settlement of Como's surroundings and the beginning of the Roman city, also known from historical sources: firstly a Latin colony settlement (89 BC), then a colonial addition by Gaius Scipio (probably 82 BC), finally the foundation of Comum Novum in 59 BC by Julius Caesar. As the name suggests, it was a new city, settled in a different area almost never inhabited before, on the shore of the lake ('Convalle'), that only became possible after draining the marshes there. The area inhabited during the Golasecca period no longer exerted the same drawing power; small Romanization cemeteries spread south of Grandate and towards the high plain, suggesting a settlement pattern of small, rural villages. There are no archaeological records of the *castella* (fortified settlements) inhabited by Gallic populations (*Comenses*) that surrendered to the Romans.⁸

⁸ Livy (33.36.9), relating the victory of Marcus Claudius Marcellus over a Gallic coalition in the conquest of Transpadana, seems to think there was at least a political-legal capital of the Comenses as a central place for the communities defended by the 28 *castella* that surrendered to Claudius Marcellus.

REFERENCES

- Barral, P., Guillaumet, J.-P., Roulière-Lambert, M.-J., Saracino, M. and Vitali, D., ed. (2014): *Les Celtes et le Nord de l'Italie (Premier et Second Âges du fer)*, Actes du XXXVle colloque international de l'AFEAF (Vérone, 17-20 mai 2012), RAE Suppl. 36, 375-386.
- Bertolone, M. (1956-57): "Tomba della prima età del Ferro, con carrettino, scoperta alla Ca' Morta", *Sibrium*, 3, 37-40.
- Caffarelli, N., dir. (1975): *Archaeologica, Scritti in onore di A. Neppi Modona*, Arte e archeologia - Studi e documenti 9, Firenze.
- Caporusso D. (1998): "Como, via Tito Livio: necropoli del Golasecca I A2 e IB (IX-VIII secolo a.C.)", *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 180, 73-126.
- Casini, S. (2007): "L'area di Golasecca e i passi alpini: considerazioni sulla presenza di manufatti greci", in: Tarditi, ed., 2007, 97-176.
- Casini, S. (forthcoming): *Le fasi più antiche dell'abitato protostorico dei dintorni di Como*, in: *Preistoria e protostoria in Lombardia e Canton Ticino, Atti III Riunione Scientifica, Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria (Milano, 17-21 ottobre 2017)*, Firenze.
- Casini, S., ed. (1994): *Carta Archeologica della Lombardia. IV. La provincia di Lecco*, Modena.
- Casini, S., De Marinis, R.C. and Rapi, M. (2001): "L'abitato protostorico di Como", in: *La Protostoria in Lombardia, Atti del 3° Convegno archeologico regionale, Como 1999*, 97-140.
- Casini, S. and Frontini, P. (1994): "I ritrovamenti archeologici della seconda età del Ferro", in: Casini, ed. 1994, 143-176.
- Casini, S. and Tizzoni, M. (2015a): "Via Moneta: analisi culturale delle fasi preromane", in: Ceresa Mori, ed. 2015, 69-176.
- Casini, S. and Tizzoni, M. (2015b): "La produzione ceramica preromana: analisi delle forme", in: Ceresa Mori, ed. 2015, 177-266.
- Castelfranco, P. (1867): *Stazione litica dell'isola dei Cipressi nel lago di Pusiano e sepolture di Montorfano presso Como*, Atti della Società Italiana di scienze naturali, XX/I, Milano, 81-88.
- Ceresa Mori, A., ed. (2015): *Lo scavo di via Moneta a Milano (1986-1991). Protostoria e romanizzazione*, Notizie Archeologiche Bergomensi 23, Bergamo.
- Chaume, B. (2017): "La spada in ferro di tipo Mindelheim dal nuovo ospedale S. Anna", in: Mordeglià & Uboldi, ed. 2017, 92-94.
- Ciurletti, G. and Marzatico, F., ed. (1999): *I Reti – Die Raeter, Atti del Convegno di Castel Stenico (1993)*, Archaeoalp, 5.
- de Marinis, R.C. (1975): "Le tombe di guerriero di Sesto Calende e le spade e i pugnali hallstattiani scoperti nell'Italia nord-occidentale", in: Caffarelli, dir. 1975, 213-269.
- de Marinis, R.C. (1981): "Il periodo Golasecca III A in Lombardia", *Studi Archeologici*, 1, 43-300.
- de Marinis, R.C. (1988): "Liguri e Celto-Liguri", in: Pugliese Carratelli, ed. 1988, 99-155.
- de Marinis, R.C. (1992): "Tomba con situla bronzea dal Lazzaletto di Golasecca", *Sibrium*, XXI, 157-199.
- de Marinis, R.C. (1999): "Rapporti culturali tra Reti, Etruria Padana e Celti Golasecchiani", in: Ciurletti & Marzatico, ed. 1999, 603-635.
- de Marinis, R.C. (2000): "Il vasellame bronzeo nell'area Alpina della cultura di Golasecca", in: de Marinis & Biaggio Simona, ed. 2000, 341-406.
- de Marinis, R.C. (2001): "L'età del Ferro in Lombardia", in: *L'età del Ferro in Lombardia: stato attuale delle conoscenze e problemi aperti, La Protostoria in Lombardia, Atti del 3° Convegno archeologico regionale (Como Villa Olmo 22-24 ottobre 1999)*, Como, 27-76.
- de Marinis, R.C. (2009): "La protostoria del territorio di Varese: dall'inizio dell'età dei metalli al periodo della romanizzazione", in: de Marinis et al., ed. 2009, 11-30.
- de Marinis, R.C. (2017): "La necropoli protostorica di Albate (Como)", *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica Provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 198, 5-46.
- de Marinis, R.C. and Biaggio Simona, S., ed. (2000): *I Leponti tra mito e realtà*, Locarno.
- de Marinis, R.C. and Casini, S. (1986): "Le tombe della Cascina Fontana e della Vigna di Mezzo", in: *Como tra Etruschi e Celti*, Como, 62-63.
- de Marinis, R.C., Massa, S. and Pizzo, M., ed. (2009): *Alle origini di Varese e del suo territorio*, Roma.
- Grassi, B. and Pizzo, M., ed. (2014): *Gallorum Insubrum fines*, Studia Archaeologica 200, Roma.
- Jorio, S. (2014): "Modalità insediative dei Celti golasecchiani di Como: alcuni esempi dagli scavi recenti", in: Grassi & Pizzo, ed. 2014, 147-168.
- Jorio, S. (2017): "Tombe di rango a Grandate. La necropoli di via dei Pradei", in: Mordeglià & Uboldi, ed. 2017, 39-61.
- Kossack, G. (1956-57): *Zu den Metallbeigaben des Wagengrabes von Ca' Morta (Como)*, *Sibrium*, 3, 41-53.
- Garovaglio, A. (1873): Nuovo sepolcreto gallo, *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 4, 30-35, tav. III.
- Gianadda, R. (2000): "La necropoli di Pianezzo", in: de Marinis & Biaggio Simona, ed. 2000, 269-277.
- Giubiasco II (2006): *La necropoli di Giubiasco (TI). Les tombes de La Tène finale et d'époque romaine, II*, Collectio Archaeologica 4, Zürich.
- Giubiasco III (2010): *La necropoli di Giubiasco (TI). Le tombe dell'età del Bronzo, della prima età del Ferro e del La Tène antico e medio, III*, Collectio Archaeologica 8, Zürich.
- Luraschi, G., Martinelli, P.U., Piovan, C., Frigerio, G. and Ricci, F. (1968-69): "Insediamenti di Como preromana", *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica Provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 150-151, 201.
- Luraschi, G., Martinelli, P.U., Piovan, C., Frigerio, G. and Ricci, F. (1970-73): "Insediamenti di Como preromana. Aggiornamenti", *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica Provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 152-155, 3-191.
- Mordeglià, L. (2017): "Le prime testimonianze: le tombe dalle pendici del colle di Camerano (San Fermo della Battaglia)", in: Mordeglià & Uboldi, ed. 2017, 27-33.
- Mordeglià, L. and Uboldi, M., ed. (2017): *Prima di Como. Nuove scoperte archeologiche dal territorio*, Como.
- Nagy, P. (2012): *Castaneda GR. Die Eisenzeit im Misoix*, Bonn, Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie 218.
- Pare C.F.E. (1992): *Wagons and Wagon-Graves of the Early Iron Age in Central Europe*, Oxford.

- Pugliese Carratelli, G., ed. (1988): *Italia omnium terrarum alumna*, coll. Antica Madre, Milano.
- Rapi, M. (2009): *La seconda età del Ferro nell'area di Como e dintorni. Materiali La Tène nelle collezioni del Civico Museo Archeologico P. Giovio*, Como, Archeologia dell'Italia Settentrionale 11.
- Rapi, M. (2014): "Le Second âge du Fer dans le territoire de Côme et le bassin du Lario", in: Barral *et al.*, ed. 2014, 375-386.
- Rapi, M., Butta, P. and Ravaglia, M. (forthcoming): "Gli orizzonti G. I C e II nella necropoli della Ca' Morta (Como)", in: *Preistoria e protostoria in Lombardia e Canton Ticino, Atti LII Riunione Scientifica, Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria (Milano, 17-21 ottobre 2017)*, Firenze.
- Ravaglia, M. (2017a): "La necropoli di via Tito Livio", in: Mordegli & Uboldi, ed. 2017, 35-38.
- Ravaglia, M. (2017b): "Un aggiornamento sull'abitato protostorico di Como", in: Mordegli & Uboldi, ed. 2017, 95-100.
- Rittatore Vonwiller, F. (1966): "La necropoli preromana della Ca' Morta (scavi 1955-1965)", Como.
- Sievers, S. (1982): *Die mitteleuropäischen Hallstattdolche, Prähistorische Bronzefunde VI/6*.
- Sormani, M.A. (2013): "La necropoli protostorica di Gudo, Canton Ticino: dall'epoca del Bronzo alla seconda età del Ferro", *Rivista Archeologica dell'Antica provincia e Diocesi di Como*, 193-194, 5-159 +CD.
- Tarditi, C., ed. (2007): *Dalla Grecia all'Europa. La circolazione di beni di lusso e di modelli culturali nel VI e V sec. a.C., Atti della giornata di Studi, Brescia, 2006*, Milano, 97-176.
- Vannini, M.C. (1997): *L'abitato protostorico di Prestino-via Isonzo (scavi 1981-1982): le fasi di G. I e G. II*, Tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi di Milano.

Stefania Casini
Civico Museo Archeologico

Marta Rapi
Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali,
Università degli Studi di Milano

Retrouvez la version en ligne gratuite
et ses contenus additionnels



