

Protection of Children? A Case Study from the Early Iron Age Cemetery of Quattro Fontanili, Veii

Katarína Hladíková

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with artefacts with a possible apotropaic function from the Early Iron Age cemetery of Quattro Fontanili at Veii. I have analysed mostly various types of pendants and beads that could have had – besides their ornamental function – also a symbolic meaning of ‘magical’ protection (e.g. as amulets etc.). They appear more often in children’s and women’s graves, less frequently in men’s graves. The gender and age seem likely to be more important factors in the role of protection than social status. However, pendants made of precious metals could have reflected – besides their role as symbols of a higher social status – a protective meaning as well. The frequent use of ‘magical’ artefacts, especially in children’s and women’s graves, reflects the need to protect the weaker members of the society from evil forces.

KEYWORDS

Children; Veii – Quattro Fontanili; Early Iron Age; burial; magic; apotropaic artefacts; evil eye; amulets; protection.

INTRODUCTION

The role of magic was probably very significant for prehistoric societies where it seems to have been a widespread social phenomenon. The nature of its rationality is, however, difficult to understand. In the current archaeological research, the study of magic is considered to be problematic and is marginalised in general (for more see PEREGO 2010 with literature). The importance of magic and its media as the materiality of magic was summed up by E. Perego (2010) and also by J. N. Bremmer (2015). Perego (2010, 68) states that ‘magic is often integrated into official religion and amulets, far from being ‘minor’ artefacts must be considered the ‘materialisation’ of emotional experiences, religious practices and forms of gender, age and class negotiation which deeply affect the functioning of society as a whole.’ A similar idea was formulated in other words by J. N. Bremmer (2015, 12): ‘The material presence of these media (amulets etc.) shaped the living world of the people that used, carried or buried them. In that respect we can indeed see these objects as agents that influenced the lives of those around them as long as they were part of their social or magical imagination.’

The use of apotropaic artefacts – amulets, talismans and charms – is reflected and described in many historical, archaeological and anthropological sources (PEREGO 2010; VARNER 2008; DASEN 2015; GOLANI 2013; PLÁVKA 2015). They must have been used frequently, given the many precarious life risks. They were worn by children, women, men, but also by animals. They were even attached to various objects¹ to protect themselves or their function from the evil eye or other malign influences. It was believed that mainly children, but also women were

1 E.g. potters – on the furnace as protections for the firing process of ceramics (DASEN 2015, 182).

threatened by the evil eye. Men faced various dangers too, and also turned to magic protectives. The ancient authors (e.g. Pliny, *NH*) relatively often describe the practice of 'protective magic' in various situations using various artefacts, or special kinds of food intended for particular protection needs, or to eliminate the problems. Plutarch equates the evil eye to a health threat or a sickness, he even discusses it as a public problem (Plutarch, *Mor.* 484 C; DASEN 2015, 181).

Ascribing the apotropaic or healing function to certain artefacts has been known since prehistory until the present. The amulets have been intended to protect the wearer from the evil eye (*phthonos* or *baskania* – gr.; *fascinum* – lat.) or other evil, dangerous forces, unwanted incidents as well as from health issues. Nevertheless, the charms were also worn to bring luck and happiness (DASEN 2015, 181; VARNER 2008; PEREGO 2010). The apotropaic artefacts could have also provided protection during important transitional phases of human life (birth, puberty, transition to adulthood, marriage and death).

The interpretation of artefacts as apotropaic could be problematic. Regarding the interpretation of their function, the archaeological context is very important – e.g. its location in the grave and position in relation to the body (PEREGO 2011, 70–74; KIVISALO 2011, 264). Various artefacts were used as amulets (beads, stones, animal teeth, representations of deities or certain body parts etc.), but besides the apotropaic function they have also other functions such as, for example, ornamental and/or social – ascribing the social status and/or gender role to the wearer as well as being signs of cultural or religious affiliations. The boundaries between these functions were fluid, they could not be separated. Not only the choice of the artefact was not accidental, but also of the material the artefact was made of, its shape or decoration (material: amber, gold, silver, animal tooth, stones, organic materials; shape: crescent – *lunula*; *phallus*).

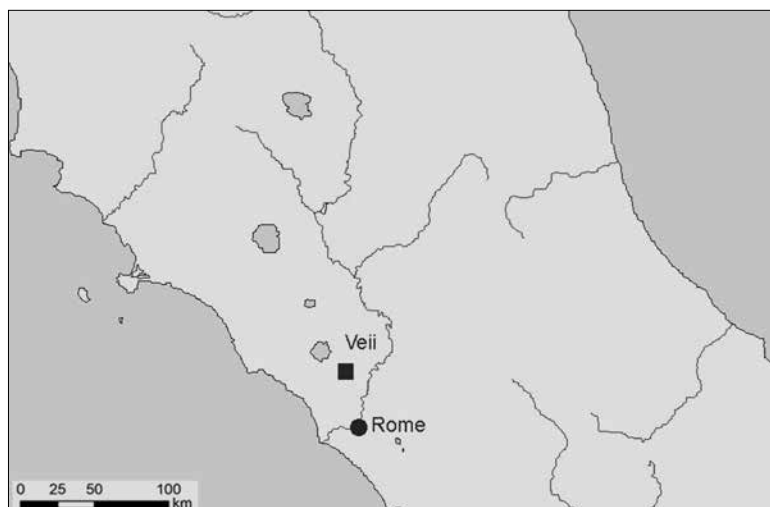


Fig. 1: Location of Veii on the map of Italy.

CHRONOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK

Veii is located in the vicinity of the modern centre of Isola Farnese (near Rome, Latium) (**Fig. 1**). The site is situated on a large tuff plateau and has been continuously occupied since the Late Bronze Age. A more intense settlement however took place in the Early Iron Age (EIA) (at different locations). The majority of the cemeteries were discovered and partially excavated or even plundered in the 19th and early 20th centuries (BARTOLONI – DELPINO 1979, 17; BAR-

TOLONI 1997, 29; BERARDINETTI – DE SANTIS – DRAGO 1997, 317). In this paper, I analyse the Quattro Fontanili cemetery which was continuously used for more than 200 years. In terms of relative chronology, the graves are dated to the EIA I and mainly EIA II phases, but also to the orientalising period (BERARDINETTI – DE SANTIS – DRAGO 1997, 330; TOMS 1986, 47–72).

AIM AND METHOD

The aim of the paper is to discuss the artefacts with a possible apotropaic function, especially from children's graves from the Early Iron Age Villanovan cemetery of Quattro Fontanili at Veii (**Fig. 1**).

These artefacts have been studied as a part of a complex analysis of the Early Iron Age cemetery Quattro Fontanili. The complex analysis has arisen due to the demands for the research on the position of children in the Early Iron Age society in southern Etruria on the basis of burial rites (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b).

The analysis has been affected by several restrictions and problems, such as by insufficient anthropological analyses from the studied area. The method of archaeological identification of children's graves, as well as the gender roles identification is defined and described elsewhere (HLADÍKOVÁ 2011; 2013b; 2013c). Let us recapitulate briefly. Approximately 2,000 graves were identified at Quattro Fontanili cemetery in Veii (BARTOLONI *et al.* 1994, 7; BARTOLONI *et al.* 1997, 89) and 651 of them were excavated (32.55 %). Human remains from 86 inhumation graves (13.21 % of the excavated graves) were anthropologically analysed. Out of these anthropologically determined individuals, 47 children (*infans* I and *infans* II) were buried in 41 inhumation graves. These children were buried separately or with other individuals of similar or different ages. Separately buried children were identified most likely in 36 graves. The gender determination was based on the presence of specific artefacts in the graves (see BARTOLONI 2003; BARTOLONI *et al.* 1997; IAIA 1999a; PACCIARELI 2001; TOMS 1998; BRØNS 2012; HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b).² Since the anthropological analysis has revealed only a limited number of children's graves at the necropolis of Quattro Fontanili, the first step was to identify children's graves archaeologically. As the main indicator of children's graves, the grave parameters have been chosen, mostly the length.³ The upper boundary of the grave length was estimated at 1.6 m, based partly on the results of the anthropological analysis of Quattro Fontanili (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a, 47, fig. 4) and on the expected anthropometric data of children.⁴ In addition to the length of the child graves, other indicators have been used (wooden coffin/bier length, sarcophagus/ 'cassa' length etc.) (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a, 46–49). Using these criteria, a total number of 64 supposed children's graves was discovered at the cemetery of Quattro Fontanili. Including the anthropologically identified individuals the total number is 95.⁵

As the next step, the basic statistics, multivariate statistics and spatial analyses have been applied. For the complex analysis of the cemetery a factor analysis has been used. Its aim was to find out the principal components of the burial rite in the necropolis of Veii-Quattro Fontanili

2 Only the inhumation graves have been analysed since the presence of children in cremation graves was problematic.

3 First, I defined the maximal length of the grave in which a child was most probably present.

4 However, this applies only up to a certain age – when physical differences between bodily constitutions of individuals may be observed.

5 Nevertheless, the possibility that older individuals were buried in these graves cannot be excluded. Moreover, children were sometimes buried in larger graves which are therefore difficult to be distinguished from the graves of the adults.

in general. This step was necessary for analysing the children's graves within the context of the entire cemetery. The extracted factors (structures) have revealed the existence of vertical and horizontal structures which partially correlate with age and gender categories (for further details cf. HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). In these extracted structures the position of pendants and beads can be observed. Especially, in factor 2, there has been a significant combination of pendants, bracelets and beads (**Fig. 2**). This combination indicates a correlation with certain gender and age categories and social status. The latter is suggested by the presence of metal vessels (as the indicator of status) and bow fibulae together with a category of artefacts

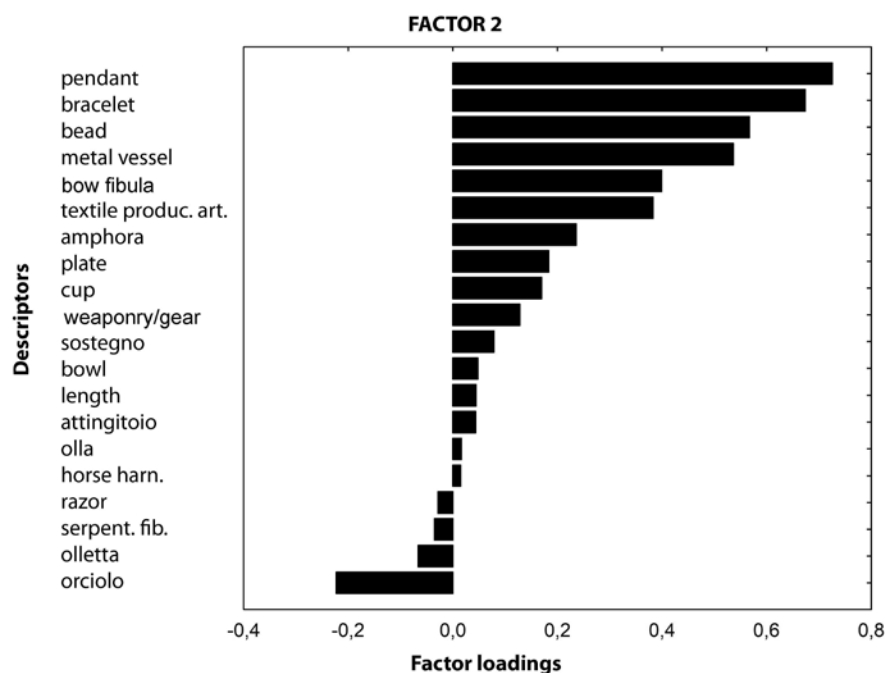


Fig. 2: Factor analysis - factor 2.

associated with textile production (an indicator of female gender). In the other factors the position of the pendants and beads has been variable, which might have been connected to the main aim of the factor analysis not being focused on the identification of structures linked with pendants and beads. The basic statistic (quantification; correlation with age and gender) and spatial analysis (spatial distribution of artefacts in graves) have been used for the partial evaluation of the artefacts, in this case of pendants and beads (**Fig. 4** and **7**). The length of the grave has been chosen as the main indicator of child graves, therefore all the graves within the cemetery have been divided into four groups based on length.⁶ The quantitative analysis of the artefacts associated with these groups has been realized to identify the frequency of the presence of artefacts in these groups. It was used to identify the frequency of artefacts in the groups with a possible presence of children (cf. further HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; for factor analysis see NEUSTUPNÝ 2007; VAN POOL – LEONARD 2011; ŠMEJDA 2003).

⁶ Group 1 – length up to 1.6 m; 2. Group 2 – length from 1.6–2 m; 3. Group 3 – length from 2–2.5 m; 4. Group 4 – length over 2.5 m; the division of length groups in correlation with anthropological data has shown the dominant presence of children in Group 1. A relatively high number of anthropologically estimated children are present in Group 2. In Group 3 the presence of older individuals has been revealed (see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a, fig. 4).

This article is focused on the analysis of pendants and beads (ornaments/ornamental artefacts). The main hypothesis is that the presence of artefacts with a 'magical' function was related especially to the graves of children and women. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that children and women as more endangered groups were threatened by premature death, so they sought special protection (DASEN 2015, 178).

Based on this presumption, I discuss mainly three predefined questions related to children's graves:

1. Can artefacts with a possible amuletic function or their combinations be identified as characteristic for a particular gender and/or age category?
2. Can differences between the occurrence of these artefacts in terms of gender and age categories be detected?
3. Is there a correlation between the occurrence of these artefacts, and social status, and/or gender roles?

The analysed artefacts with an assumed protective function include pendants, beads, and other specific artefacts. The beads and pendants represent the artefacts with a primary ornamental function which can be generally labelled as jewellery. The use of jewellery in daily life as well as in burial rites could have reflected various meanings of the jewellery itself. The significance and function of jewellery within the society was connected to social, religious and economic aspects of daily life. The social,⁷ economic and religious⁸ functions of jewellery were strongly interrelated while an especially religious/amuletic function is not so obvious in comparison to the other functions. Therefore, the identification of the artefacts as artefacts with an amuletic function is not easy (GOLANI 2013, 87; NAKOINZ 2003–2004, 152; PEREGO 2010, 70).

The reason why I consider these artefacts (pendants, beads etc.) as artefacts with an apotropaic function is, in some cases, the material they were made of (e.g. amber). The reason why a certain material was considered suitable for the production of artefacts with an amuletic function might have been its physical properties, and/or assumed prophylactic and medicinal qualities (Pliny *NH* 37, 42–51; GOLANI 2013, 37; BOUZEK 2009, 134–138; BOUZEK 2016, 15; NEGRONI CATACCIO 2009, 193–194; PEREGO 2010, 71). For example, amber has been used (until today) in the production of diverse ornaments because of its specific qualities described in ancient and medieval sources (Pliny the Elder, Plato, Galen, Avicenna etc.). Various symbolic aspects of amber use have survived in folk belief not only across the Europe (BOUZEK 2009, 138).

The amuletic aspect might have been strengthened also by the form and decoration of these artefacts (circular shape, zoomorphic shape). The circular form of pendants bore a certain symbolic meaning which is frequently interpreted in connection to a solar cult. Also, pendants in the form of animals such as birds or horses are interpreted as symbols related to the afterlife (BOUZEK 1997, 122–145). Nevertheless, the meaning of some other symbols will remain unknown to us. The decoration of these artefacts could have accentuated the apotropaic aspect as well, e.g. the ornamental motif of the beads in the form of a circle could have symbolized protection against the evil eye (PEREGO 2010, 72). The effects of amuletic artefacts could have been further strengthened by a combination of material, form, decoration or shape of the used elements in the final product ('amulet'; PEREGO 2010, 72). Also, the provenance of the artefact could have played an important role in its choosing as an amulet.

7 A sign of self-expression, gender determination, social status, a sign of rank or office, a cultural or ethnic marker (GOLANI 2013, 87; NAKOINZ 2003–2004, 152).

8 A sign of amuletic function (form, material, colour) (GOLANI 2013, 87).

The find context of the artefacts with an amuletic function have played an important role in their interpretation. The contexts of these artefacts in Quattro Fontanili have not directly indicated their apotropaic function. Most of the artefacts were placed directly on the body of the deceased (in the neck and chest area) in a similar way as they were worn during life as suggested by later iconographic and written sources. The references of ancient authors and the results of ethno-historical studies are very helpful as well. They allow us, albeit to a limited extent, to identify some artefacts as those with an apotropaic function (such as amulets). Given that some later references relate to the territory of Italy, I assume the survival of certain traditions from earlier periods within the examined area (e.g. Plinius *NH* XXVIII, 123; Ovid *Met.* II, 365 etc.).

Sex	Individuals (Nr.)	Grave length	Grave (Nr.)	Age category	Individuals (Nr.)
indeterm.	9	to 1.6 m	6	INF.	2
M + F	2	to 2.0 m	9	INF. I	3
M	6	to 2.5 m	7	INF. II	4
F	24	over 2.5 m	18	IUV.	2
		indeterm.	1	ADULT.	5
				MATUR.	1
				PRESENL.	0
				indeterm.	24

Fig. 3: Pendants - tables of the number of anthropologically determined individuals/graves according to sex, age categories and length groups.

PENDANTS

The pendants were found in graves individually or they formed parts of necklaces. They were found predominantly in children's and women's graves, but they were also found in men's graves (**Fig. 3**). Besides the decorative function, they likely had an apotropaic function. Finds of pendants showed considerable variability in terms of shapes and used materials. The pendants were made mostly from bronze (they were coated with gold foil in some cases), amber, glass paste, faience and bone (GUIDI 1993, fig. 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25). They were found mainly in graves from the phases Veii IIA-IIC (GUIDI 1993, 72-76), around the neck or chest of the skeletons.

Pendants were found in 41 graves, out of which 24 % were children's graves (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b, 262, fig. 2). The spatial distribution of the pendants shows that they are spread across the cemetery, mainly in the northern and southern parts (**Fig. 4**). Pendants were detected in ten children's graves.⁹ They represent a very inhomogeneous group of artefacts. The children's graves did not contain any type of pendant specific only to them. According to the results

9 Graves KK15 (*infans* II, 6-7 y.) (Veio NSc 1963, 229-230), DD7-8 (1.34 m) (Veio NSc 1967, 117), Va (1.42 m) (Veio NSc 1970, 240), BBCC3-4 (1.46 m) (Veio NSc 1970, 282), EE3-4 (1.46 m) (Veio NSc 1970, 231), KK19 (*infans*, *infans* II) (Veio NSc 1963, 230-233), II18-19 (*infans* I, 1-2 y.) (Veio NSc, 1963, 205-208), JJ18-19B (*infans* II, 8 y.) (Veio NSc 1963, 222-223), GG6-7 (*infans* I, 3 y.) (Veio NSc 1967, 244-250), EE7-8B (*infans* I, 3-4 y.) (Veio NSc 1967, 129-134).



Fig. 4: Distribution of pendants, cemetery Quattro Fontanili, Veii. Black - children's graves; grey - other graves (plan digitalized and adapted by author after Veio NSc 1963-1976).

of the factor analysis, they occurred most frequently together with bracelets. Regarding the results of the factor score, the most typical graves are wealthier women's and children's (girls') graves (see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b, 56). Other graves with pendants were mostly women's graves based on anthropological or archaeological analyses (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a; 2013b). The pendants were found in graves with lengths from 1.34 m to 3.44 m and were more frequent in the graves up to 2.5 m long. They were a little less frequent in the graves with a length over 2.5 m (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013c, 263, fig. 3). This observation suggests the presence of pendants mainly in women's and children's graves whose length was smaller compared to the average length of men's graves (see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013c, 261, fig. 1). Only six graves with pendants were identified

as children's in the age category *infans* I and *infans* II.¹⁰ As for the other graves, there were four individuals classified in the age categories *iuvenis*, *adultus*, and *maturus*. As for the sex of the individuals with pendants, the prevalence of the pendants in women's graves is quite significant (**Fig. 3**).

BRONZE AND AMBER ZOOMORPHIC PENDANTS

Zoomorphic pendants did not occur very frequently at the cemetery. They come mostly from wealthier graves, so they could be seen as status symbols as well. They were made of bronze or amber. They include pendants in the form of aquatic birds (bronze), horses (amber; bronze) and monkeys (amber). Zoomorphic pendants¹¹ were found in the anthropologically analysed grave KKLL18-19 with a child and an adult (Veio NSc 1963, 234-241). In grave HH11-12 (2.66 m long), the presence of an older individual is assumed, based on the grave's length; however, the position of the zoomorphic pendants in the overall find context could indicate the presence of another individual (perhaps a child) (Veio NSc 1965, 123-138). Grave II9-10 (2 m long) revealed the pendants in the form of an aquatic bird and a horse that were found together in context with a *bullae* and other types of pendants (Veio NSc 1965, 200-203). In this case, it is difficult to comment on the assumed age of the individual.

Bronze pendants

The symbolism of these animals in the ancient world varied. Bird imagery played an important role in the 13th-6th/5th century BC in Europe (BECKER 2012-2013, 5; NEBELSICK 2015, 6) and its occurrence indicates a great significance in religion and/or mythology. In mythology birds represented personifications of gods or of divine will. They were also seen as gods' messengers. Birds were associated with the solar cult as part of the so called 'bird solar barque' (WIRTH 2010, 501). In eschatology, the bird images are related mostly to the afterlife, connected with the souls of the dead persons. In Egypt amulets in the form of a duck have been the symbols of regeneration. The aquatic birds (ducks) were multivalent symbols and they could have had also protective qualities.

Depictions of horses are often associated with the sun cult as well. Horses seem to have carried several connotations but usually they are seen as symbols of life and death (KMEŤOVÁ 2014, 36). The motif of a monkey appeared more often in later periods, especially in the Orientalising Period, and was reproduced also in other materials than amber (NEGRONI CATACCHIO 1993, 191, fig. 2a).¹² The amulets in the form of a monkey started to appear in Egypt during the Old Kingdom, but they were typical for Phoenicians as well. Monkey representations as amulets might have ensured its bearer good luck, regeneration, love, sexual fulfilment, protection of newborns etc. (CAUSEY 2012).

Besides the form of the pendants, their material could be of significant importance for the choice of the artefacts as amulets. The strong apotropaic significance of these pendants

10 Children were also identified anthropologically in graves HHII9 (*infans* II, 7-8 y.) (Veio NSc 1965, 198-199) and KKLL18-19 (*infans*, *adultus* - 20 y.) (Veio NSc 1963, 234-239) (see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a, 45-46 for more details). However, the context of grave HHII9 is problematic. A possible burial of a child with another individual should be considered.

11 A pendant in the shape of a cat was found in the grave EE3-4 (see below).

12 The types of the amber pendants from Italy (8th-7th century BC) were probably invented by the Egyptians, but they might have been inspired by eastern types and symbolism (CAUSEY 2012).

could have been seen in their mutual combination as well as in the use of material, ornaments and shape.

The amber itself had some symbolic qualities (BONFANTE 2009, 224; BOUZEK 2009, 134–138; 2016, 15; NEGRONI CATACCHIO 2009, 193–194; CAUSEY 2011, 49–52). It is mentioned by several ancient authors, e.g. Pliny the Elder, although this idea was known in the ancient world even earlier. Pliny (*NH* XXXVII, 42–51) specified its prophylactic character and described the use of amber against tonsillitis and other throat diseases, as a preventive of delirium, and as a cure for fever and other diseases. In the chapter dealing with amber (*NH* XXXVII, 50) there is even a reference to the wearing of amber amulets by small children: ‘It is also beneficial hung around the necks of infants as an amulet.’ Also, in modern superstition(s) the belief in amber’s apotropaic and healing qualities is still alive (e.g. the wearing of amber bracelets by small children for easier dentition).

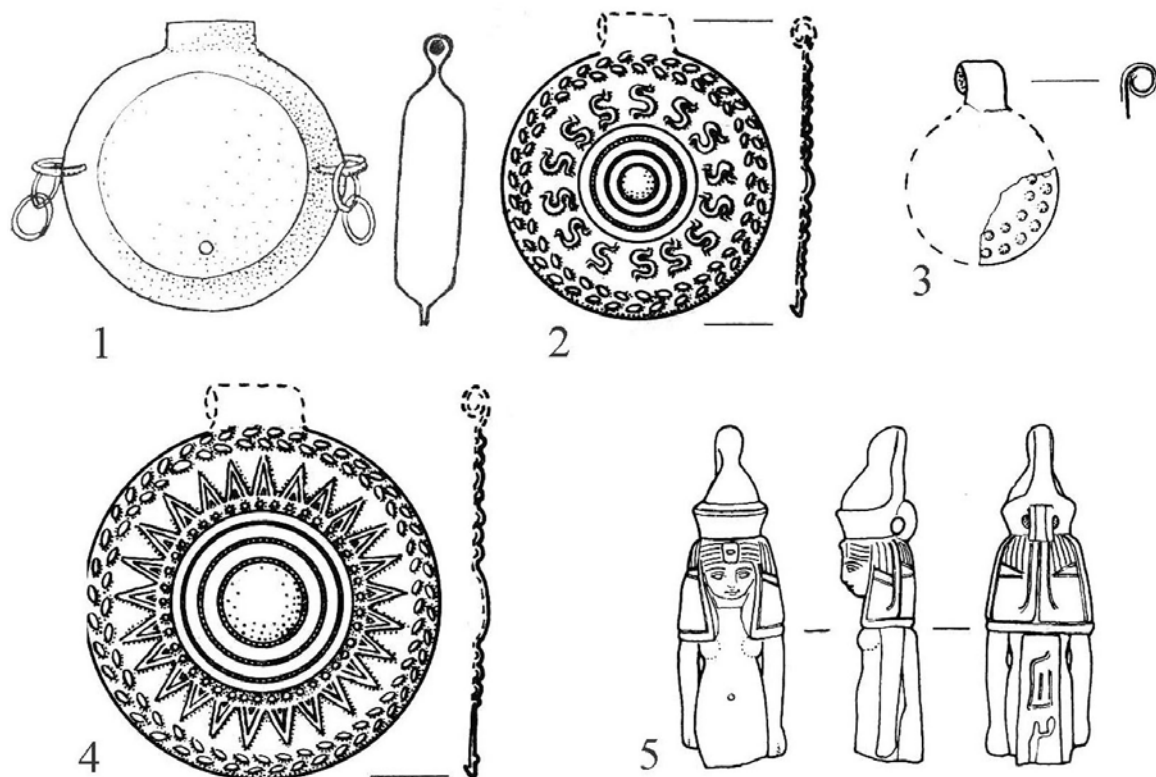


Fig. 5: Pendants (adapted by author after Veio NSc 1963–1976).

Bronze pendants

Among the bronze pendants the most significant were the flat circular pendants¹³ which were found in women’s and children’s graves (Fig. 5:2–3). Child graves EE7–8B (*inf.* I, 3–4 y.) (Veio

¹³ Graves EE7–8B (*inf.* I: 3–4 y.) (Veio NSc 1967, 129–134) and GG6–7 (*inf.* I: 3 y.) (Veio NSc 1967, 244–250). They belong to wealthy children’s graves.

NSc 1967, 129–134) and GG6-7 (*inf.* I, 3 y.) (Veio NSc 1967, 244–250) containing the flat circular pendants belong to the category of wealthy children's graves. Circular-shaped pendants include pendants called *bullae*. Overall, these types of pendants are documented in wealthier women's graves. In Quattro Fontanili, only four *bullae* were found in three graves, and only one of them came from a child burial. It was a burial of a girl 8–9 years old (grave MMNN19, *inf.* II, 8–9 y.: Veio NSc 1963, 261) (**Fig. 5:1**). Another specimen was found in the grave of a 25-year-old woman (Grave KK10-11: Veio NSc 1965, 210–225). Other *bullae* were found in graves that were not analysed anthropologically. The graves with circular-shaped pendants and *bullae* are dated to the phase Veii IIC.¹⁴

The so-called *bullae* are known from the Roman written sources, referred to as round or globular objects, worn in Rome by children from their birth until the time of wearing a toga (RAWSON 2003, 110–111). *Bullae* were a symbol of freeborn boys, together with the *toga praetexta* clothing which they received at birth and removed during the initiation ritual which symbolised the transition to adulthood, associated with the change of clothing to *toga virilis* (WARDEN 1981, 69; RAWSON 2003, 110–111). *Bullae* also worked as protective amulets to avert evil (RAWSON 2011, 111). Ancient authors attribute their origin to the Etruscans. Children whose families could not afford a *bullae* made of gold or another metal wore a knotted leather lace (PINCKERELLE 2007, 41–45). Warden (1981, 69) attributed the presence of *bullae* and circular pendants in graves in Tarquinia¹⁵ to the children's graves, although it is difficult to prove, given the absence of anthropological analyses. Though, based on the anthropological analyses and also on the presence of the *bullae* in graves with larger pits at the Quattro Fontanili cemetery, their use cannot be connected exclusively with children. This type of *bullae* must have had a different social function in comparison to the Roman *bullae*. Later Etruscan depictions (in small scale sculpture and other art) show that the *bullae* were worn by infants and young children (votives depicting swaddled babies) (COMELLA 1982; BEER 1987, 25; BONFANTE 1984, 1; HAYNES 2005, 304) as well as by adults and animals (horses – vase painting; terracotta horses Tarquinia – Ara della Regina: HAYNES 2005, 363; CAMPOREALE 2003, fig. 210). The circular form and various decorations of other types of pendants could have also had a symbolic meaning, since the shape is usually connected with the solar cult (ZIFFERERO 2004, 330–331; WIRTH 2010, 507). Their reminiscences can also be found in later Etruscan art, although in the form of more elaborate types (in depictions of females).

Amber and faience pendants (ornaments)

Amber pendants are rare and usually have simple forms. They are even rarer in the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms (see above). In the children's graves, simple circular and biconical forms or amber rings prevailed (GUIDI 1993, fig. 20).

14 In addition to pendants of a circular shape, children's graves contained sporadically spindle-shaped pendants with three biconical charms (grave KK15: Veio NSc 1963, 229–230). In the excavation reports, they were classified as pendants, but I suppose that they served as a decorative application or as a part of an unspecified artefact.

15 In Tarquinia, two specimens were found in assumed children's graves (Cassa with a child burial, *Cassetta* with a knobbed jar: HENCKEN 1968, 260–262). A *bullae* was also found in a pit with the remains of approximately an 8-year old child (boy) with epilepsy, located in the settlement area of Pian di Civita (Tarquinia) (BONGHI JOVINO – CHIARAMONTE-TRERÉ 1997, 158; BONGHI JOVINO 2010, 161–180; LEIGHTON 2004, 40).

Faience pendants or decorative objects appeared only in five children's graves (**Fig. 5:5**).¹⁶ The majority of them are the so called *aegyptiaca* (SCHWEIZER 2006; 2012) which along with the Greek pottery are evidence of extensive long-distance contacts. Based on analogous finds, some of these anthropomorphic and zoomorphic pendants represent Egyptian deities (SCHWEIZER 2006; HÖLBL 1979). These pendants are most frequent in women's graves and less frequent in children's graves. Two children's graves EE7-8B (*Veio NSc* 1967, 129–134) and EE3-4 (*Veio NSc* 1970, 231) contained small pendants depicting the goddesses *Mut* and *Bastet/Bes*(?).¹⁷ Some other graves also contained scarabs which represent specific artefacts with an apotropaic function (SCHWEIZER 2006; HÖLBL 1979). These artefacts appeared in men's and women's graves and less frequently in children's graves.¹⁸

The few examples of *aegyptiaca* found in the children's graves at the Quattro Fontanili cemetery probably functioned as amulets. They were in the form of Egyptian deities and scarabs. The pendant in the form of a cat from the grave EE3-4 (*Veio NSc* 1970, 231)¹⁹ most likely represents the goddess/god *Bastet/Bes*(?), as can be assumed on the basis of many analogies from Egypt (CAUSEY 2011, 135). The pendant from the grave EE7-8B is interpreted as the goddess *Mut* (**Fig. 5:5**) (*Veio NSc* 1967, 129–134). Figurines of *Bes* were a common part of child grave inventory in Egypt. They were also documented in the settlement contexts on domestic altars or in sanctuaries (SCHWEIZER 2006, 170–171; SCHWEIZER 2012, 134). These Egyptian deities were mostly associated with fertility and the protection of children and mothers during and after giving birth. For example, *Patakoi* had to be worn on the breast and their function was to help with birth (CAUSEY 2011, 135; SCHWEIZER 2006, 164; SCHWEIZER 2014, 132–134).

Pendants in the shape of Egyptian deities were found mostly in women's graves and sometimes also in children's graves. At the cemetery in Pithekoussai (second half of the 8th century BC) these finds (including scarabs) were found mostly in inhumation child graves, less frequently in the graves of juvenile individuals of both sexes. Only four of them were found in the cremation graves of women (SCHWEIZER 2014, 132–134). Except for burial contexts, *aegyptiaca* are also found in sanctuaries mostly in those of female goddesses in the Mediterranean area. They were brought there by Greek, Phoenician or Cypriot merchants. On the contrary, scarabs were found not only in the graves of women and children²⁰ at Quattro Fontanili but also in the graves of men. A similar situation is recorded at the Byrsa cemetery in Carthage and also in Salamis in Cyprus (SCHWEIZER 2014, 140).

The symbolism of these finds was probably also known to the inhabitants of southern Etruria in the Early Iron Age. It is suggested by their presence in the graves of children and women. They were both threatened by death associated with pregnancy and childbirth, and children particularly by a premature death. Scarabs may have also functioned as amulets for the protection of the soul, since in ancient Egypt they symbolized regeneration or rebirth or they could have served as seals (SCHWEIZER 2006; 2014; HÖLBL 1979).

16 Graves: EE7-8B (*Veio NSc* 1967, 129–134), EE3-4 (*Veio NSc* 1970, 231), JJ18-19B (*Veio NSc* 1963, 222–223), KK15 (*Veio NSc* 1963, 229–230), FF9-10 (*Veio NSc* 1967, 156–161).

17 The amulets of the *aegyptiaca* type were found not only in the Quattro Fontanili cemetery, but also at other sites (Vaccareccia, Grotta Gramiccia, Tarquinia – PALM 1952; HÖLBL 1979; SCHWEIZER 2006; HENCKEN 1968).

18 They were found in three children's graves: JJ18-19B (*Veio NSc* 1963, 222–223), KK15 (*Veio NSc* 1963, 229–230) and FF9-10 (*Veio NSc* 1967, 156–161).

19 The pendant from grave EE3-4 was identified by the authors of the excavation report as a rabbit (*Veio NSc* 1970, 231). Moreover, pendants of *Sekhmet* and *Ptah-Paitakos* made of Egyptian blue faience were found in other graves.

20 Graves JJ18-19B (*Veio NSc* 1963, 222–223) and KK15 (*Veio NSc* 1963, 229–230).

BEADS

Beads were basic elements of necklaces²¹ or so-called colliers, and of other decorative artefacts, such as applications on bow fibulas, bronze rings (earrings). They could have also been a part of clothing, sewn directly on textile. In addition to the decorative function, they could also have had an apotropaic function, indicated by their material, or by their decoration. Beads were found mostly in women's graves, but they show no regularity as to their number and combinations (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b, 164; for glass beads see KOCH 2011, 162). They have been found mainly in the area of the neck or chest of the skeleton. The beads were made from glass paste, bronze, gold, silver sheet, amber, bone and quartzite (Veio NSc 1963–1976).²² The beads from golden, silver or electron sheet were documented only rarely and their number ranged from 1 to 3 pieces per grave.²³ The available documentation makes it most difficult to reconstruct the possible position of the beads within the necklace.

Sex	Individuals (Nr.)	Grave length	Grave (Nr.)	Age category	Individuals (Nr.)
indeterm.	76	to 1.6 m	23	INF.	1
M + F	0	to 2.0 m	32	INF. I	15
M	18	to 2.5 m	34	INF. II	11
F	62	over 2.5 m	64	IUV.	2
		indeterm.	3	ADULT.	10
				MATUR.	3
				PRESENIL.	0
				indeterm.	114

Fig. 6: Beads - tables of the number of anthropologically determined individuals/graves according to sex, age categories and length groups.

They were found in children's graves as well as in those of adults. The beads were found among the men's grave goods as well, but they appeared more frequently in the women's grave goods (**Fig. 6**). The beads show a variability of form and colour. Their occurrence, even though sporadic, started in the phase Veii IC/IIA and increased in the phases Veii IIB and Veii IIC. The graves contained from one to more than 1,000 beads. The beads were found in 156 inhumation graves, 25 % (39 graves) of which are children's graves (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013c, 262, fig. 2). According to the spatial distribution, the beads are spread equally across the cemetery (**Fig. 7**). The finds of beads come from the anthropologically identified children's graves and from the assumed children's graves as well.²⁴

21 The necklaces consisted of beads or beads with pendants.

22 The material of some beads is described as 'cristallo' or 'vetro' in the excavation reports (Veio NSc 1965, 1967). L.C. Koch (2011, 151) emphasises that the beads are made from transparent glass paste.

23 Graves BB7A (Veio NSc 1970, 211–213), JJ18-19B (Veio NSc 1963, 222–223), GG13 (Veio NSc 1965, 112), EE7-8B (Veio NSc 1967, 129–134), AABB6 (Veio NSc 1967, 231–233), GG6-7 (Veio NSc 1967, 244–250).

24 Graves EE17-18B (*infans*), FF19B (*infans* I, 3–4 y.), II18-19 (*infans* I, 1–2 y.), IIIJ13 (L2: *infans* II, 7–8 y.), JJ18-19B (*infans* II, 8 y.), KK13-14 (*infans* I, 3–4 y.), MMNN19 (*infans* II, 6–8 y.), EE12 (*infans* II, 9 y.), GG13 (*infans* I), GG13-14 (*infans* II, 6–7 y.), II13-14B (*infans* I, 3 y.), II15 (*infans* I, 5 y.), GGHH10 (*infans* I, 4 y., *infans* II, 8 y.), HHII7-8 (*infans* I, 3 y.), BB8-9 (*infans* II, 7–8 y.), EE7-8B (*infans* I, 3–4 y.), EE8 (*infans* I,



Fig. 7: Distribution of beads, cemetery Quattro Fontanili, Veii. Black - children's graves, grey - other graves (plan digitalized and adapted by author after Veio NSc 1963-1976).

The factor analysis revealed beads in the structure together with bracelets and pendants (**Fig. 2**). According to the factor score, the most typical graves were mainly wealthier women's and children's (girls') burials. Graves with poorer grave goods were less typical (see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b, 56).

3-4 y.), FF9-10 (*infans* II, 7-8 y.), AABB6 (*infans* I, 3 y.), GG5-6 (*infans* II, 12, *infans* II, 10-11 y.), GG6-7 (*infans* I, 3 y.), HH6-7 (*infans* I, 5 y., *infans* II, 9-11 y.), BB7A, G16 (1.1 m), S1 (1.16 m), DD14 (1.3 m), DD7-8 (1.36 m), NN17 (1.38 m), DD13-14B (1.41 m), Vα (1.42 m), U3-4 (1.45 m), V2 (1.48 m), II17-18 (1.5 m), S1a (1.51 m), M7b (1.52 m), B13 (1.53 m), DDEE7 (1.6 m), LL19 (1.6 m), CC5-6B (1.72 m) (Veio NSc 1963, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1976).

The length of inhumation graves with beads ranged from 1.1 m to 3.74 m. The beads were found quite frequently in the graves with a length up to 1.6 m and up to 2 m. The highest occurrence of beads, however, was documented in the graves exceeding a length of 2.5 m (for more details see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013c, 263, fig. 3).

The anthropologically analysed individuals were classified as age categories from *infans* I up to *maturus*. In terms of gender categories, women's graves were predominantly found, although it was not possible to identify the gender in all the graves. Men's graves with beads seem to be less frequent. Moreover, it must be emphasised that almost a half of them are graves of children (boys) (Fig. 6).

Glass beads

The most frequent beads in children's graves were beads from glass paste (for a more detailed analysis and categorization see KOCH 2011). Blue beads with white circles (also without pattern or with yellow circles, fish bone pattern or white or yellow line) were predominant. Yellow, turquoise, brown (without pattern, with white circles or with yellow circles) and black (without pattern or a bead with a yellow zigzag line) were less frequent. The occurrence of red beads was documented only in the child's grave GG6-7 (Veio NSc 1967, 244-250). Regarding the number of beads in children's graves, they ranged from one to 40 pieces. In addition to the scarce occurrence of red beads in this cemetery (one child's grave), black beads were also rarely found. They seem to be specific to graves of younger girls in the *infans* I and *infans* II age categories.

A specific glass-paste bead category which was documented not only in children's graves is the so-called special-form beads. These beads did not appear very frequently. The categorisation of so-called special-form beads (*Sonderform*) was drafted by L. C. Koch (2011, 154). Child's grave Va contained two examples classified as the B4 type (cylindrical) and the C4 type (spherical) by L. C. Koch (2011, 170). Other children's graves BB8-9 (Veio NSc 1967, 106) and GG13 (Veio NSc 1965, 112) contained beads identified according to L. C. Koch (2011, 170) as so-called special form A (*Sonderform A*). The beads from the child double grave IJJ13²⁵ (Veio NSc 1963, 208-209) were identified by their shape as a special form of type C3 according to Koch (2011, 170). The child's grave WX1 (Veio NSc 1970, 242) contained the special form of types B3 and B5 and it is considered a child's grave by L. C. Koch. Beads decorated by a wavy line (*Wellenbandperlen*) appeared more frequently. The presence of ornitomorphic beads in grave D8 (Veio NSc 1975, 126) and II7-8 (Veio NSc 1967, 258-260) is uncertain due to the absence of anthropological analysis. These graves were not incorporated in my analyses according to the results of the archaeological analysis, since their determination as children's graves seems to be less likely.²⁶ The special forms of beads show a higher occurrence in children's graves compared to the other graves.

25 L. C. Koch does not include grave IJJ13 (Veio NSc 1963, 208-209) into the group of children's graves, although the remains of two children were identified anthropologically. The find of 9 C3-type beads is located in the so-called *loculo* 2, where a female of 7-8 years was placed.

26 L. C. Koch considers these graves to be children's graves. Grave D8 - child grave according to Koch 2011, 170 was the grave with a sarcophagus, the length of the grave was 3.4 m. Grave II7-8 - child grave according to Koch 2011, 170 - the length of the grave was 1.72 m. I have not included these graves into the children's ones (HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b).

Amber beads and beads from other materials

Amber beads were often documented in combination with glass-paste beads. Only sporadically did they form exclusively amber necklaces. Amber beads from children's graves show a variable spectrum of forms – cylindrical, oval, spherical, asymmetrical, spindle-shaped and biconical²⁷ (GUIDI 1993, 72, fig. 6, 16, 18, 25). They were found predominantly in women's and children's graves and less frequently in men's graves. Usually, 1 to 10 pieces were present in graves on average. Nevertheless, there are also exceptions with more numerous finds of amber beads, e.g. grave EE7-8B which contained 160 amber beads from a necklace (Veio NSc 1967, 129–134).

Glass and amber beads could also have had a protective function against the evil eye. Both of them were found in the graves of 'poor', as well as 'wealthy' children and women. Eye beads were the most frequent of all the glass beads. Their decoration suggests that they most likely served not only for ornamental purposes, but also as amulets against the evil eye (compare with PEREGO, 2011, 70–74). The amber beads and the pendants were less frequent, but they were still characteristic for children's and women's burials. The presence of a single amber bead or several beads as parts of a necklace could have symbolised permanent tears in the mourning ritual (CAUSEY 2011, 141; BOUZEK 2009; BOUZEK 2016, 15). The interpretation of amber beads as symbolic tears is connected to the ancient myth on Phaeton and the metamorphosis of his mother Climene and sisters Heliades into poplars and their tears to amber by the gods (Ovid. *Met.* II, 333–365). A possible explanation of the lower frequency of the amber beads in graves is given by Nucia Negroni Catacchio (2009, 194–198). On the basis of ancient sources and archaeological records she supposes that even the poor people (lower classes of society) had access to a certain amount of amber (a few finds in the graves, not luxury equipment). She sees the cause for that probably in its apotropaic and protective qualities – or in the need of protection. The combination of glass and amber beads has been observed quite often also by other authors. Larissa Bonfante (2009, 224) considers a special connotation of the combination of glass and amber. She presumes that the symbolic qualities of amber have probably been stressed through the glass elements; parallels are available in modern superstition (for further details cf. BONFANTE 2009, 224). The colour of the beads could have also been of importance in forming the necklace but more detailed evaluation in this matter is needed.

CHIPPED STONE TOOLS AS PROTECTIVE AMULETS?

Chipped stone tools (flints) were rarely found in the Quattro Fontanili cemetery, including the children's graves. Flints could also be considered as objects with a possible apotropaic function. The flints are (traditionally) dated to the Palaeolithic and Eneolithic period. These artefacts were documented only in six graves and a single flint was found in the quadrant (excavation sector), not in a grave.²⁸ Two flints were found in two graves with anthropologically identified child remains.²⁹ The children from these graves were actually the two youngest individuals in the necropolis. Since grave DD8-9 (Veio NSc 1967, 117–118) contained the remains of adult

27 Types 200–214 according to GUIDI 1993, 70–72.

28 Graves: HH16 (Veio NSc 1963, 199), IJJ16 (Veio NSc 1963, 209), II18-19 (Veio NSc 1963, 205–208), CC4 (Veio NSc 1970, 218), DD8-9 (Veio NSc 1967, 117–118), G8-9 (Veio NSc 1975, 99–106) and quadrant Z3Q (Veio NSc 1970, 273).

29 Graves: II18-19 (1–2 y.) (Veio NSc, 1963, 205–208); DD8-9 (2–3 y., *maturus*, *adultus*) (Veio NSc 1967, 117).

individuals as well, I can only assume that the flint was given to the child. In the graves with flints HH16 (1.7 m long) (Veio NSc 1963, 199) and IJJ16 (1.75 m long) (Veio NSc 1963, 209) the presence of children or young individuals could be assumed according to the length; however, the presence of older individuals cannot be excluded. The occurrence of flints is difficult to interpret. Not much attention was paid to the occurrence of these types of artefacts in later contexts. Given a similar situation (context, low occurrence) in the area of Veneto (PEREGO, 2011, 70–74), I assume that flints were most likely used as amulets for the deceased. A similar use of antique artefacts as protective amulets has been documented in many ancient cultures as well as in more recent ones (PLÁVKA 2005; VARNER 2008). The symbolic protection could also be indicated by the sharpness of the flints (see e.g. KIVISALO 2011, 274).³⁰

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The role of magic in a society is conditioned by several factors, including the effort to protect oneself from evil forces. This question is more complex and it was not our objective to analyse it in detail (see e.g. PASI 2006; BREMNER 2015; DASEN 2015; VARNER 2008; PEREGO, 2011 with further bibliography). The belief in the evil eye and in the apotropaic power of amulets was probably a widespread, but not universal phenomenon in later prehistory and it is still common even in present-day societies across the world (BOWIE 2008, 224). The material aspects of magic have long been neglected in archaeological research. Even though, in later prehistory jewellery probably often had a magical significance, a certain symbolic meaning associated with apotropaic protection and religious beliefs (GOLANI 2013, 74–75).

The pendants and bead necklaces might have had the symbolic apotropaic function alongside the more obvious social and economic ones. The artefactual analysis of the cemetery of Quattro Fontanili has shown a higher occurrence of these artefacts in children's graves and in women's graves as well. The high mortality and morbidity of children (BEILKE-VOIGT 2004, 271; NEUSTUPNÝ 1983, 24; VÉLOVÁ 2014, 321–322; BIETTI SESTIETI 1992, 101; KRAUS 2006, 8; MOLLESON 1981, 20–21) were probably the main reasons for equipping them with amulets and other protective artefacts. In archaeological and anthropological literature, the connection among artefacts with a possible amuletic aspect and their occurrence in women's and children's graves is mentioned quite often (DASEN 2015; PEREGO 2010; PLÁVKA 2005). In the case of the artefacts with an assumed protective function in children's graves it is more likely that the artefacts were predominantly given to children post-mortem by the adults, to ensure them protection in the afterlife (more beads), but I cannot exclude the possibility that some of these artefacts were also used by children in everyday life.

As can be seen, these artefacts were found mainly in the graves of children of both sexes and in the graves of women. Their sporadic occurrence in men's graves underlines the hypothesis that they served as artefacts with an apotropaic function for the weaker members of the society. Based on the (insufficient) anthropological analysis (PASSARELLO – ALCIATI 1963, 273–279; PASSARELLO 1965, 232–236; PASSARELLO 1967, 281–286) and archaeological analysis

30 The presence of chipped stone industry in the examined graves could be explained also as a result of the production of chipped stone industry. However, it was apparently not the case, given the low number or absence of artefacts of this kind at Early Iron Age sites (Villanovan period), not only in connection with the earlier research which could have somehow eliminated these artefacts, but also in connection to more recent research (e.g. Villa Bruschi Falgari – TARQUINIA – TRUCCO 2006a; 2006b). Also, other types of stones were found in child graves, e.g. pebbles.

(for the results see HLADÍKOVÁ 2013a; HLADÍKOVÁ 2013b; HLADÍKOVÁ 2013c, 261, fig. 1), it may only be assumed that boys and girls passed some kind of a transition ritual within the age group *infans II/iuvenis I*. From this point, men's graves contained artefacts with an assumed apotropaic function only to a lesser extent, while these artefacts continued to occur in women's graves relatively regularly. The increased occurrence of these artefacts reflecting the preference for a particular gender category (feminine) or age category (children – probably up to *infans II/iuvenis*) is significant. The explanation could be, for example, the stronger need for the protection of children and women because they could have been seen as more vulnerable.

Considering the reflection of the social status in the burial rite, it is evident that the artefacts with the assumed protective function occurred in both rich and poor graves. On the contrary, pendants made of precious metals also served as symbols of a higher social status. Pendants in general have had, except for their symbolic function, also the role of a status and gender role indicator as was suggested by the factor analysis. In terms of variability in the occurrence with other artefacts, the pendants were found most frequently with bracelets. However, there are distinctions across the categories of artefacts.

The use of specific material itself could have expressed the wealth and status (GOLANI 2013, 87; NEGRONI CATACCHIO 2009, 207), but it could have pointed out the apotropaic significance as well. As an example, amber seems to have been a very important part of the necklaces probably because of its symbolic qualities associated with magic and healing. The glass beads with the specific circle ornaments might have served to ward off evil forces. As for the presence of amulets of foreign provenance in children's and women's graves, it seems that the perception of the belief in mother and children protection associated with these amulets in the original context has not changed much in Veii. On the other hand, the *bullae* seem to have a different meaning in the Villanovan context in comparison to the *bullae* in the Roman context where the connection with a passage ritual is evident. In ancient Rome, the *bulla* was a multivalent symbol, a symbol of social status, a symbol of gender identity and a symbol of protection. The archaeological evidence of *bullae* in Villanovan cemeteries indicates distinctions in their use which was not related only to children of a certain age and gender category.

A different perception of children and women from the rest of the society was one of the likely reasons for the more frequent occurrence of pendants and beads in their graves. The high morbidity and mortality were likely reasons for giving pendants and necklaces to children, since these artefacts functioned not only as decorative objects, as signs of social status and gender identity but also as apotropaic elements. This fact indicates the perception of the members of these groups as 'weaker' individuals who were endangered by premature or sudden death more frequently than men.

This article has attempted to demonstrate the importance of the study of artefacts with possible apotropaic functions mainly in relation to child graves. As I have already mentioned, the material aspects of magic have been neglected in archaeological literature, so I have tried to demonstrate the potential of this topic for further archaeological research. For a better understanding of the beliefs associated with these artefacts and with their use in a living society, more detailed analyses of this issue in other burial sites as well as in other archaeological contexts (settlement areas, temple/sacred areas etc.) in the area of southern Etruria and Latium in the Early Iron Age are needed.

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Katarína Hladíková

Department of Archaeology
Faculty of Arts
Comenius University in Bratislava
Gondova 2, SR-814 99
katarina.hladikova@uniba.sk