

# ETRUSCAN STUDIES

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*Hats Off:  
The Entry of  
Tarquinius Priscus  
into Rome?*

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BY JOCELYN PENNY SMALL

Iconography and divination have much in common.<sup>1</sup> Both are divinely inspired. Their practitioners need years of training and inculcation in the art of interpretation before formal admission into the priesthood. The interpretation invariably depends on details, or should I say signs. Fourth and finally, the validity of the interpretation is often apparent only to the interpreter. While my first two points are obvious and need no proof, the last two may be illustrated by the omens seen by Romulus and Remus, when they were about to found Rome. According to Livy (1.7.1):

*Remus is said to have been the first to receive an augury from the flight of six vultures. The omen had been already reported when twice that number appeared to Romulus. Thereupon each was saluted king by his own followers, the one party laying claim to the honour from priority, the other from the number of the birds.*

Although we know the results in this case – more is better than first – today’s practitioners of iconography all too often achieve only the next or middle stage, which Livy described as “They then engaged in a battle of words...” A group of late Etruscan funerary urns from Volterra, made in the first century B.C., not only demonstrates the shared principles of iconography and divination, but also represents an act of divination, at least in the interpretation of this “priestess” of iconography.

I start with Volterra 177 for two reasons (Fig. 1). The scene on its cask includes all the characters and the urn is fairly securely dated in the last period of urn production, roughly between 50 and 30 B.C.<sup>2</sup> The major part of the scene is taken up by a quadriga moving to the right. At the head of it are three figures. On the far right, a bearded, winged man, wearing a crown, a long garment with “detached” long sleeves, and an Etruscan “girdle,” holds a smallish round object with “swirls” in each hand, which he appears to brandish at the horses. Below him a youth, wearing a tunic and chlamys, supports a fallen,



figure 1 – Volterra 177. After Brunn/Körte II pl. 51 No. 6.

bearded man, who is stabbing the nearest horse in its breast. This man is dressed similarly to the male demon, but with the addition of a chlamys knotted below his neck, a shield, and, instead of a crown, a Phrygian cap. On the far left are four figures. The first is an unbearded man, dressed like the fallen bearded man, but with boots. He is helping a woman down from the chariot, which is decorated with a griffon, facing right. The woman wears a necklace and her garment has slipped from her left shoulder. Behind her in the chariot is another man, dressed like the first one on the left. He rests his left hand on his sword. Between him and the horses' heads is a winged female demon, wearing, like the men, a long garment with an Etruscan "girdle" and detached sleeves. She holds a torch in her hands, as she moves right, but looks back at the three figures on the left.

Gustavo Körte, in his magisterial work on late Etruscan funerary urns, identified the scene as a representation of Pelops and Hippodameia returning from the infamous chariot race against Oinomaos.<sup>3</sup> The fullest accounts of the story appear in Apollodorus (*Epitome* 2.3-9) and Diodorus Siculus (4.73).<sup>4</sup> Oinomaos had learned from an oracle that when his daughter, Hippodameia, married, he would die. Such foreknowledge naturally made him discourage all suitors, which he did by challenging them to a chariot-race with the odd twist that Hippodameia got to ride with the suitor. Something like twelve young men lost not only the race, but their lives. Then Pelops, one of the fairest of them all, volunteered, enchanted Hippodameia, and defeated her father. For my purposes it does not matter whether it was Pelops or Hippodameia who was the one responsible for corrupting Myrtilos, the charioteer of Oinomaos. The end result was the same. Myrtilos fiddled with the linchpins to the wheels of Oinomaos' chariot either by removing them completely or by substituting wax ones. Hence the chariot fell apart, Oinomaos became entangled in the reins, and was dragged to his death by the horses. In some versions, Pelops personally and directly kills Oinomaos. The subsequent death of Myrtilos, who

was also enamored of Hippodameia, does not concern us.

The urn, according to Körte and accepted by most scholars today, shows the chariot of Pelops about to trample the fallen Oinomaos, who responds by trying to kill the lead horse. On the left, Myrtilos helps Hippodameia down from the chariot, driven by Pelops. The remaining figures are considered typical Etruscan supernumeraries: a winged female fury, a youthful assistant to Oinomaos, and a horse-demon. Körte suggests that the horse-demon may be Taraxippus, whom Pausanias (6.20.15-19) discusses at length in his account of the race-course at Olympia.<sup>5</sup> Pausanias says:

*...there stands, at the passage through the bank, Taraxippus, the terror of the horses. It has the shape of a round altar, and as they run along the horses are seized, as soon as they reach this point, by a great fear without any apparent reason. The fear leads to disorder; the chariots generally crash and the charioteers are injured.*

Pausanias speculates as to exactly who Taraxippus is and what his origins were, but we can leave all of that aside, except that Pausanias directly associates him with Oinomaos:

*Pelops made here an empty mound in honour of Myrtilus, and sacrificed to him in an effort to calm the anger of the murdered man, naming the mound Taraxippus...because the mares of Oenomaüs were frightened by the trick of Myrtilus. Some say that it is Oenomaüs himself who harms the racers in the course.*

Körte interprets the two small round objects, which the demon on the urn holds, as swirling metal disks that are used to blind the horses with their flashing light.

There are problems with this interpretation of the urn. First, the type is an anomaly among the depictions of the chariot-race.<sup>6</sup> Oinomaos is never killed by being run down by Pelops' chariot either in other visual representations or in the literary sources. Remember that it is his own chariot that falls apart. That this action, however, is shown simultaneously with the end of the chariot-race is not an issue, since such a combining of episodes within one visual space happens often enough.<sup>7</sup> This method lets you know the important events, even if you have to sort out the sequence yourself. And, more significantly, perhaps, for our purposes, the combination of two events exists no matter what interpretation is proposed. The three-figured group on the left, however, does not quite fit the story. Why does Hippodameia seem so intimately helped down from the chariot by Myrtilos? And why does Pelops not seem to mind their closeness? The three figures together like this are unusual in the series of representations of the horse-race. Why is the horse demon present? According to Pausanias he appears as a permanent fixture on the race-course at Olympia only *after* the race between Pelops and Oinomaos.<sup>8</sup> The literary sources stress that it was the treachery of Myrtilos that enables Pelops to defeat Oinomaos. A demon would ruin the point of the story. In the other major version, Pelops has his own magic horses, a gift from Poseidon, to match the divine horses of Oinomaos.<sup>9</sup> Again, no demon is necessary. Scholars do not always consider





figure 2 – Florence 78495. Photograph: Soprintendenza alle Antichità d'Etruria, Firenze.

this kind of argument, which I believe is quite important. The point of a visualization of a story is to tell the story in such a way that the elements of the story are there in the same way they would be in a written or oral rendering. Artists, like verbal tellers of tales, must not spoil the punch line and I do not think that they do spoil the punch lines. An iconographer must distinguish between the problems that are

unique to a visual representation and those that do violence to the plot.

In antiquity the artistic representations rarely match the literary descriptions with exactitude. Classical artists are not illustrating texts, but stories.<sup>10</sup> This difference is crucial. If you have a text in front of you and want to render it in another medium, chances are that you can have a good correspondence. If, however, you are relying on your memory, then discrepancies are bound to creep in. You may even conflate different written and different oral versions of the same story. Furthermore, each medium obviously can do things that the other cannot. The visual scene will have to make concrete much that is omitted from the text or oral telling, but that necessity does not mean that the two different media have to have contradictory renderings. So, the question becomes whether or not a particular representation contradicts too much of the core of the story. Oftentimes, like divination, the conclusion is in the eye of the beholder.

For an example of the artist supplying a detail not in the literary sources, consider the beard of Oinomaos. Only once in all the visual representations of Oinomaos does he appear without a beard and, in that instance, at least one scholar thinks the inscription is wrong.<sup>11</sup> Yet this particular tidbit of information is not mentioned in the main literary treatments of the story by Diodorus Siculus and Apollodorus. Instead, artists had a rule of thumb that said that all men who were kings should have beards in order to be readily recognizable. This particular detail is important, because some of the urns assigned to the story about Oinomaos show a youth, not a king, being run down by horses. Either this set of urns is another exception *or* the set shows another story. I believe that the latter is true, because the action is also different (Fig. 2).<sup>12</sup> The youth tries to escape from under the horses by crawling off to the right, but he is unarmed and does not attack the horses. Moreover, the figure helping the king is omitted and a dog is added in some renderings. So I have eliminated the group with the trampled youth from consideration.<sup>13</sup>

The next problem with Volterra 177, our main urn, is more theoretical than the previous issues. Can there be two divergent representations of the same story contemporane-

ously in the same place on the same type of object? Certainly no one questions that idea for literary versions. The most obvious example is the three divergent versions about Orestes and Electra by the three great tragedians from the fifth century B.C. But, as I mentioned before, art is not the same as literature in how it tells a story. With words you can make it quite clear what has happened to whom and how. With pic-

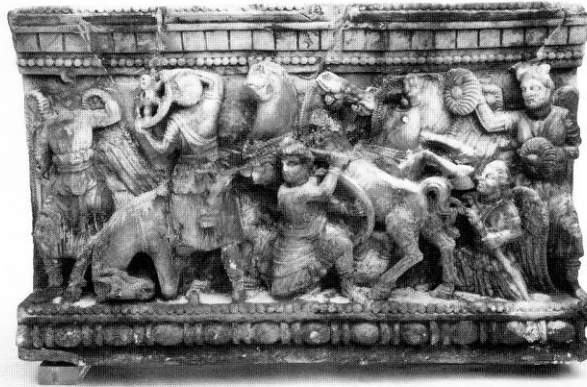


figure 3 – Florence 78479. Photograph: Soprintendenza alle Antichità d'Etruria, Firenze.

tures the artist has three choices. First, he can label the figures like Attic vase painters and Etruscan mirror engravers. Second, he labels the scene with a title, something rarely done by classical artists.<sup>14</sup> Third, he makes the scene distinctive enough through the figures and the action portrayed to make it securely identifiable. So, we assume today that there was an unwritten rule to always render any story in one place in one period in exactly the same way. Otherwise, how else would someone know what was depicted? To take a simple case, if you arbitrarily change the attributes of Athena, how will you recognize her? Iconography depends on conservatism for understandability. Of course, this rule does not relieve the viewer of all problems. The viewer may not be able to tell Athena/Minerva from Roma, who also appears fully armed; or Herakles and the bull may be indistinguishable from Theseus and the bull.

When discussing the scene on Volterra 177 and related urns, Körte discards an interpretation as the abduction of Helen for this scene on precisely the grounds that an extensive series of urns shows that scene.<sup>15</sup> That identification is quite secure, because Paris takes Helen by ship back to Troy and the urns show a ship, along with her possessions. Yet the alternative Körte offers, the death of Oinomaos, was also depicted in all three urn centers in a similar manner, but quite differently from the scene on Volterra 177. As a typical example, consider Florence 78479, another urn from Volterra (Fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> Here Oinomaos is smack in the center of a collapsing chariot. The four horses are falling or have already fallen to the ground. The two wheels of the chariot are no longer attached to the chariot: Pelops holds one over his head; and the other is not depicted, though in some examples, Pelops, the central figure, kneels on it.<sup>17</sup> The horse-demon appears again on the far right. In addition, a winged female figure, just below the demon, looks as if she is rising from the ground and a winged male figure, now missing his head, stands on the left. These “extras” do not affect the interpretation of the scene. Only one other story focuses on a chariot killing its driver: the death of Hippolytos, whose chariot comes to grief when a bull rises from the sea to panic the horses. Now this scene too is repre-



figure 4 – Chiusi 563. After Brunn/Körte pl. 35 No. 5.

sented on urns, but only on ones from Chiusi.<sup>18</sup> On Chiusi 563 we see the same melee as on Florence 78479, but when we look at it more closely the differences are obvious (Fig. 4).<sup>19</sup> I pass over the added supernumeraries to focus on the essentials: no wheels have parted from their chariot and amidst the writhing animals, right in the center, is the bull. Again, there is no question about the correctness of this identification.

Körte tries to get around the problem of the same event in the same story being depicted in two different ways in the same place at the same time by calling the scene on Volterra 177 not the death of Oinomaos but the “Return of Pelops and Hippodameia from the Fatal Course.”<sup>20</sup> Yet the representation misses the dramatic quality of the wheels flying off the chariot, at the same time as it seemingly postulates a different death, for Oinomaos was trampled by his own horses, not those of Pelops. Because of these anomalies, I believe that the scene on Volterra 177 must represent something other than the death of Oinomaos.

Another urn with the same scene has a minor, but for us quite significant, addition that suggests the proper identification. Volterra 180 shows the same cast of characters in the same positions (Fig. 5).<sup>21</sup> An armed warrior, instead of the youth, now helps the so-called Oinomaos. But that is not the crucial difference. The difference that makes a difference is the bird on the head of the so-called Myrtilos on the far left (Fig. 6).<sup>22</sup> Körte describes it as “more like a dove which has landed on the head (of Myrtilos) with its beak on the rim of the cap.”<sup>23</sup> He believed that the bird did not affect his interpretation, but merely indicated that Myrtilos was marked for death.<sup>24</sup> Yet I know of no other case on Etruscan urns or even in Etruscan art where a bird in this position performs this function, and, certainly, the urns do not lack for scenes of death. I think it very important to

keep in mind that these are Etruscan urns made for Etruscans. Birds play an important role in the lives of the Etruscans, as well as the Romans. Hardly a major action would be undertaken by either of them without a consultation of the birds first, as my opening quote about Romulus and Remus demonstrates. Hence the story should be an Etruscan or Roman legend, because the Greeks were less concerned with avian matters. Two Etrusco-Roman stories involve birds on heads, one disastrously and one benignly.<sup>25</sup>

The first, more Roman story, concerns Marcus Valerius, a tribune in 348 B.C. He accepted the challenge of a Gaul to a duel. Livy (7.26.3-5) says:

*But the human interest of the combat was eclipsed by the intervention of the gods; for the Roman was in the very act of engaging, when suddenly a raven alighted on his helmet, facing his adversary. This the tribune first received with joy, as a heavensent augury, and then prayed that whosoever, be it god or goddess, had sent the auspicious bird might attend him with favour and protection. Marvellous to relate, the bird not only held to the place it had once chosen, but as often as the combatants closed, it rose on its wings and attacked the enemy's face and eyes with beak and talons, till he was terror-struck with the sight of such a portent, and bewildered at once in his vision and his mind, was dispatched by Valerius, – whereupon the raven flew off towards the east and was lost to sight.<sup>26</sup>*

The story appears on the ends of two urns from Chiusi and now in Florence.<sup>27</sup> In both cases a fully armed warrior has collapsed to his knees, as a bird perched on his helmet leans down over it to peck at the warrior's eyes. This rendering differs markedly from the many-figured scene on the Volterrann urns. It could be a different choice of moment within the same story. That is, the Volterrann urns portray not the bird attacking the Gaul,

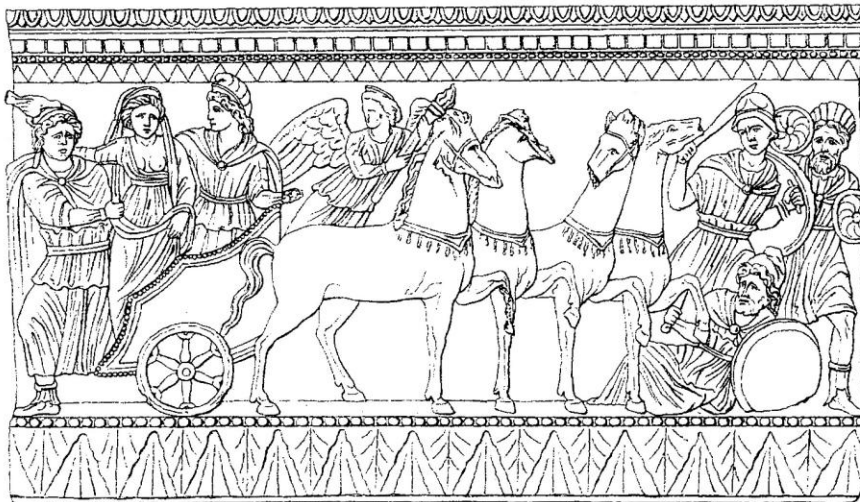


figure 5 – Volterra 180. After Brunn/Körte II pl. 52 No. 7.

but rather the bird first landing on Valerius's head.<sup>28</sup> This interpretation, however, is far more difficult to apply to the urns than an interpretation as Oinomaos and Pelops, because the scene should be a duel between two warriors and not a kingly figure being trampled by horses attached to a chariot. Why is the so-called Valerius not armed at all? Who is the woman, who is not mentioned in the sources and therefore should not be present? In short, this identification does not work.

The other, benign Etrusco-Roman tale involves the emigration of Tarquinius Priscus with his wife Tanaquil from Tarquinia to Rome. Again, I quote Livy (1.34.7-10):

*They [Tarquinius Priscus and Tanaquil] therefore gathered their possessions together and removed to Rome. They had come, as it happened, as far as the Janiculum, when, as they were sitting in their carriage [carpento], an eagle [aquila] poised on its wings gently descended upon them and plucked off his cap [pilleum], after which, rising noisily above the carriage and again stooping, as if sent from heaven for that service, it deftly replaced the cap upon his head and departed on high. This augury was joyfully accepted, it is said, by Tanaquil, who was a woman skilled in celestial prodigies, as was the case with most Etruscans. Embracing her husband, she bade him expect transcendent greatness: such was the meaning of that bird, appearing from that quarter of the sky, and bringing tidings from that god; the highest part of the man had been concerned in the omen; the eagle had removed the adornment placed upon a mortal's head that it might restore it with divine approbation.<sup>29</sup>*



figure 6 – Volterra 180, detail. Photograph: Author.

This story matches the scene on the urns much better than the tale about Valerius. Most importantly, we have the bird on the head. While the bird clearly is not an eagle, depicting an eagle in that space would not have been easy. A late Etrusco-Roman gem, now in Bloomington, Indiana, however, does show a young, unbearded man facing right with an eagle perched on his head in a unmenacing manner, though in this case the cap has been omitted (Fig. 7).<sup>30</sup> This person, both on the gem and on the urn, is Lucumo or Tarquinius Priscus, as he came to be called. On the urns, he is helping his wife, Tanaquil, descend from the chariot. Beside her stands a charioteer. The fallen kingly figure should then be Ancus Marcius.

Now for the problems with this interpretation. I start with the biggest thorn. The change in rulership from Ancus to Tarquinius was supposed to be peaceful.

As Tim Cornell puts it, “Ancus Marcius died in his bed...”<sup>31</sup> But the scene on the urn implies that the king dies violently. If you think about it, the idea of Ancus Marcius of Sabine origin passing on his realm without a fight to an Etruscan seems strange. We know that the Romans, especially those from the late Republican era and after, were not at ease with the idea of Etruscans ruling Rome. R. M. Ogilvie says:

*Roman pride was always aware that the Tarquins were interlopers and that Rome had fallen into the hands of a foreign power but was equally reluctant to explain this humiliation by an Etruscan conquest of Rome. In this dilemma the historians, while accepting the appearance of the Tarquins in the king-list of tradition, were anxious to dispute their legitimacy. Hence two legal niceties are inserted to discredit the claims of the Tarquins to the Roman throne. Lucumo [that is, Tarquinius Priscus] was not legally the sole heir...and he was guilty of fraudulent behaviour in his capacity as tutor [to the sons of Ancus Marcius]... These legal points are of a piece with the other legal insertions of the second century.<sup>32</sup>*

Hence Aurelius Victor says (6): “Named in the King’s will [of Ancus Marcius] as tutor to his children, Tarquin usurped [intercept] the kingdom and ruled as if he had obtained it justly.”<sup>33</sup> Virtually all knowledge of the Etruscans’ dominant role in Early Rome had been suppressed in at least one other case. Only throwaway mentions by Tacitus (Histories 3.72) and Pliny the Elder (Natural History 34.39 (139)) record that Lars Porsenna took Rome. Could an earlier event about the initial violent Etruscan entrance into Roman affairs have been similarly buried? Moreover, one modern hypothesis maintains that there were not two, but only one Tarquin ruling Rome.<sup>34</sup> As time passed, their various accomplishments, both good and bad, were divided between the two men. In that case, the violent take-over by the so-called second Tarquin, Tarquinius Superbus, reflected the reality, but was removed from the so-called good Tarquin, Tarquinius Priscus. One final support of my hypothesis may come from Ancus Marcius himself. Remember that the urns in question were all made in the first century B.C., a period when Marcius was considered not to be a peaceful, but a warlike king due to his cognomen, which through a false etymology was related to Mars.<sup>35</sup>



figure 7 – Indiana University Art Museum 64.70.40. Photograph: Courtesy of the Indiana University Art Museum.

The other problems with the interpretation of Volterra 177 and 180 as the entry of Tarquinius Priscus into Rome involve only details. Livy says Tarquinius Priscus and Tanaquil rode into town in a *carpentum*, which is identified by archaeologists today as a covered wagon rather than an open chariot. The *carpentum* appears comparatively frequently on urns from Volterra in scenes identified as the journey to the Underworld, as on Volterra 135.<sup>36</sup> The *OLD*, however, more broadly defines *carpentum* as “two-wheeled carriage” which could fit a wide range of opened and



closed vehicles, including the chariot on Volterra 177 and 180. This kind of substitution is not major and may possibly be an iconographical compromise, when the artist decided to combine two events: the entry of Tarquinius Priscus with the death of Ancus Marcius. The entry should have been in a *carpentum*, but the death of the king occurred as a military encounter in a chariot.

The composition of the two types, one with the *carpentum* and the other with the chariot, are quite similar. They both proceed to the right with flanking figures. And, perhaps, most curiously, the scenes with the *carpentum*, as on Volterra 135, sometimes include the so-called horse demon from the urns with the chariots. Since the horse demon also appears in secure Greek scenes such as the death of Oinomaos on Florence 78479, which I have already mentioned, this demon would seem to function somewhat like the winged female demons. He appears in scenes of death and separates the living from the dead. Rather than actually fostering the death of the horses, he saves them from dying.<sup>37</sup> So, in the scenes with the *carpentum* the horse demon allows the recently deceased humans to pass, but not the horses drawing the *carpentum*.

A charioteer is a plausible addition to the scene. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (3.47.2) in his version implies a more elaborate entry into Rome than that described by Livy. He says:

*he [Tarquinius Priscus] resolved to get together all his riches and remove thither [to Rome], taking with him his wife and such of his friends and household as wished to go along; and those who were eager to depart with him were many.*<sup>38</sup>

The entire story in combination with Dionysius's mention of "riches" and "household" reminds me of the scene on the archaic procession frieze from Murlo (Poggio Civitate).<sup>39</sup> There a cart with two seated figures moves left, as it is led by two male figures and followed by two figures carrying household goods on their heads. The covered container may be related to the *doliolum* with the *sacra* from Troy that is carried by Creusa on an Etruscan red-figure amphora.<sup>40</sup> The Murlo scene would then represent the founding of Murlo.

The basic composition of the scene with a focus on a quadriga proceeding from left to right appears in one other non-Greek, non-mythological context: the triumph of an Etruscan magistrate. In this case, the magistrate stands alone in the chariot and is flanked on the ends by various members of his retinue.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, some of these figures carry fasces and writing cases. The fasces, in particular, mark these scenes as Etruscan and not Greek. I believe that whatever an Etruscan artist might do to change a Greek model, he would never misplace a fasces, a local symbol of power.<sup>42</sup> It would be like an American artist putting a crown on the head of a president not in jest, but as a symbol of the president's office. While the urns with the triumph often portray the magistrate in a toga, this garment was worn in the first century B.C. by both Romans and Etruscans. Now many of the male figures on the urns with the entry of Tarquinius Priscus wear a kind of cummerbund that I have called an Etruscan "girdle." In actual practice it seems to be a type of dress limited to Etruscans and not worn by either Greeks or Romans. Nonetheless, unlike the fasces, it is also worn by men in Greek scenes, such as the abduction of Helen.<sup>43</sup> In other words, this Etruscanization indicates that the Etruscans had, like the Greeks and Romans,

only a minimal sense of period costume and who should wear what garments. So changes from putative Greek models have to be examined for their natures and origins.

Four out of the twenty-one urns with the entry of Tarquinius Priscus absolutely have the bird on Tarquinius's head.<sup>44</sup> Ten of the urns are fragmentary and some of them may also have included the bird. I do not think the presence of the bird indicates a different story, because the bird is too small an element visually. It adds to and deepens the interpretation; it does not change it. While the bird is crucial to my interpretation, clearly it was not essential to the visual representation of the Etruscans. It was the combination of the other elements, both figures and action, that enabled them to understand what story was represented. A bird, generally an eagle in the sources, similarly marks Augustus as destined for ruling.<sup>45</sup> It swoops down, picks up a piece of bread from Augustus, and flies off only to return it to him. Ogilvie believes the Etruscan story pre-existed the Augustan variant and probably depended on some Oriental prototype. In any case, the idea of a bird indicating that a man will become king is a basic folktale motif listed by Stith Thompson.<sup>46</sup> As for Augustus, I would assume that the story was attached to him after he acceded to power in the same way that Parson Weems in the nineteenth century created major events to display the character of George Washington. In other words, the urns predate the Augustan legend. As Tarquinius Priscus began a new order in Rome, so Augustus, similarly singled out by the gods, would too.

The last possibly anomalous detail is the bared breast of Tanaquil. Etruscan matrons ordinarily, or at least in tomb paintings and on the lids of the urns, are fully, if not over dressed. The two most common explanations for such exposure are either brazenness, such as with Helen on the urns with her abduction, or vulnerability, as in some representations of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia on urns from Perugia.<sup>47</sup> To a certain extent, the iconographer or interpreter of signs can read this characteristic either way in the case of Tanaquil. From the point of view of a sympathetic Etruscan, she is jarred and upset from the death of Ancus Marcius. From the point of view of a not so sympathetic Roman such as Livy, she brazenly prophesies not only her husband taking over Rome, but also later helps Servius Tullius to succeed him.<sup>48</sup>

Now consider the inscription on Volterra 177. It is one of the rare inscriptions in Latin to appear on a late Etruscan funerary urn. Part of the inscription has not survived, but it has been reconstructed as: C. Caesi[us] S.f. IIIIvir iu[re dicun]do / Iter[um] visxit annos LX [...]. That is, "Caius Caesius, son of Sextius, magistrate for administering justice twice, lived 60 something years."<sup>49</sup> The inscription was uniquely placed on the bottom moulding to accommodate its length rather than as customary along the base of the reclining figure on the lid, probably because Caesius was so proud of his attainments.<sup>50</sup> Both the inscription and the style of the cover place this urn in the last phase of production of urns at Volterra, sometime after the Social Wars, that is post 80/60 B.C. and most likely somewhere between 50-30 B.C.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, our scholarly luck runs out here. We do not know from what tomb it came. Nonetheless, this Caesius offers us two possibilities: an Etruscanized Roman or a Romanized Etruscan.

In the first case of the Etruscanized Roman, we know that Roman citizenship was first granted to Volterra in 90 B.C., and then taken away when the city opposed Sulla in 80



B.C. Not until 45 B.C., however, did the Volterrans have to actually give up any land to the Romans.<sup>52</sup> Now the Caesii are a good Roman family and one of them could have settled around Volterra.<sup>53</sup> Even more important for our Caesius, the family name probably derived from the Etruscan name of *ceinzna*.<sup>54</sup> Hence Caesius was returning, as we would say today, to his roots. Being Roman and of Etruscan extraction, he would be a good candidate for public office. When he died, he celebrated his joint heritage with an Etruscan form of burial, but with a Latin inscription, because he was more at home with Latin. At the same time, a scene on his cask, which portrayed a story drawn from both Etruscan and Roman history, seemed truly appropriate. Since he now lived in Volterra, a city that no doubt retained a fair amount of anti-Roman sentiment, the scene has a decidedly Etruscan slant.

Let us turn to the second case, that of the Romanized Etruscan. As William Harris points out, there is a limited stock of names and some Etruscan names are “common elsewhere in Italy.”<sup>55</sup> Once the Tarquins and their followers were in Rome in the archaic period, shared family names obviously proliferated. So, the better known Caesii from Rome need not have supplied the Caesius of Volterra 177. Instead Caius Caesius was very much an Etruscan from Volterra, but more in the mould of a Caecina, the friend of Cicero, than like one of the diehard Etruscans who would not contemplate Roman things.<sup>56</sup> Caius represents the tail end of the Romanization of Volterra. He was a local man elected to a Roman magistracy in an Etruscan city no longer organized according to Etruscan principles, but now governed in a Roman way. He was obviously fluent in Latin. The explanation for the scene on Volterra 177, again, is explicitly ordered by either Caesius himself or one of his family. It portrays a scene from the days of Etruscan glory, when the Etruscans and not the Romans ruled Rome. I tend to think this explanation, the simpler of the two, is more likely to be right. Moreover, because archaeological surveys of Volterra and its environs show only limited and localized evidence of Romanization, the likelihood of a Roman immigrant is extremely low.<sup>57</sup>

Thus we can now add another candidate to the group of scenes drawn from Etruscan history: the entry of Tarquinius Priscus into Rome. Whether the Etruscans had their own historians, who wrote in Etruscan, remains hotly contested, but surely they told tales about their past, if only orally to each other.<sup>58</sup> And they preserved some of these tales for us not in literary renderings, but in pictorial representations. That we know for a fact because of, among others, the frescoes in the François Tomb in Vulci from the fourth century B.C. As far as survival is concerned, the late Etruscan funerary urns from the late second through the first century B.C. present one of our fullest sources.<sup>59</sup> Yet, as with so much from classical antiquity, all we have are tantalizing bits and pieces. Like the augurs of yesterday, we try to fashion them into reasonable interpretations, but ones that accurately foretell the past rather than the future. Whether or not you believe I have correctly read the sign of the bird, I do hope that you have a better idea how the iconographer, if not the diviner, goes about interpreting the entrails of visual evidence.

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NOTES
 

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1. I thank Dee Clayman, Phyllis Culham, and Richard De Puma for their comments and for saving me from pursuing a red herring or two. Judith Swaddling not only invited me to the second colloquium on Etruscans, *Etruscans Now*, at the British Museum in December 2002, but also has most generously allowed me to publish this fuller version of my paper separately from the rest of the colloquium. All translations are from the *Loeb Classical Library*.
2. Appendix No. 12. Brunn/Körte II 128 No. 6, with pl. 51. Martelli 1977, 184 fig. 25 = the lid, and fig. 26 = cask. For the date, see Nielsen 1975, 301-302. Maggiani 1976, 34 Group Ga1. *LIMC* 7 Oinomaos No. 32, with drawing on p. 22. The urn is made of alabaster and has a man holding a rhyton on the lid. For a list of all the urns in this group, see Appendix Section B Nos. 5-21.
3. Brunn/Körte II 121-129. Four entries in the *LIMC* deal with the four main figures of the story. These entries include the basic bibliography for both the literary sources and artistic representations of the tale. See: Hippodameia 1 in *LIMC* 5, 434-440 (Maria Pipili); Myrtilos in *LIMC* 6, 693-696 (Ismène Triantis); Oinomaos and Pelops in *LIMC* 7, 19-23 (Ismène Triantis) and 282-287 (Ismène Triantis).
4. Gantz 1993, 540-545 for an excellent discussion of the literary sources.
5. Taraxippus is not in the *LIMC*.
6. Maria Pipili, "Hippodameia I," *LIMC* 5, 440. She also has trouble interpreting the scene: "The exact meaning of the scene (Pelops abducting H. by force, or Myrtilos embracing her after the race as a prize for his help in Oinomaos' defeat) is not clear."
7. Körte (Brunn/Körte II 122) finds the two moments within the one frame rare on late Etruscan funerary urns, but like me feels that that is not a sufficient reason for discarding a particular interpretation.
8. It may or may not be important that the race does not take place at Olympia, but is from Pisa to the Isthmus of Corinth. Diodorus Siculus 4.73.3.
9. Pindar, *Olynthian Ode* 1.75-85.
10. Small 2003 is devoted to the relationship between art and text from archaic Greek art through the late antique. See especially Chapter 6.
11. Campanian red-figured hydria. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 977. *LCS* 228 No. 11 (9). *LIMC* 7, 21 Oinomaos No. 22. Ismène Trianti (*ibid.*, p. 23) for this information. She believes that the figure should have been labeled "Myrtilos".
12. For example, Appendix No. 23 – Florence 78495, from Volterra, the Tomba Inghirami. Brunn/Körte II p. 125 No. 2, pl. 49. *CUE* I 98-99 No. 138 (with illustrations). For a list of the others in this group, see Appendix Group C Nos. 22-26.
13. Ismène Triantis (*LIMC* 7, 287 on "Pelops") notes that Pelops is nearly always represented unbearded. In this way artists could make a visual contrast between the father of the bride and her suitor. Pindar (*Olympians* 1.67-69), however, does refer to the appearance of Pelops's beard in order to poetically allude to the time when Pelops's thoughts first turned to marriage.

14. For example, Pliny the Elder in the *Natural History* does not, in my opinion, use titles, but briefly describes the work of art.
15. Körte in Brunn/Körte II 123. For the series of urns, see Brunn/Körte I 22-29, pls. 17-25. *LIMC* 4 Helene/Elina, 564-566 Nos. 12-15 (Ingrid Krauskopf).
16. Florence 78479, from Volterra, Tomba Inghirami. Brunn/Körte II 112-113, pl. 41 No. 3. *CUE* 1 88-89 No. 121. Nielsen 1975, 307-309, 313. *LIMC* 7, 285 Pelops No. 33.
17. Florence 5703 is an example of Pelops kneeling on the wheel, for which see Brunn/Körte II, 111 and pl. 41 No. 2; and Laviosa 1965, 104-105. Körte (Brunn/Körte II, 122-123 [no number] pl. 52; now Perugia, [Green] 42) places one urn from Perugia in the group of Volterran urns with the "Return from the Fatal Course," as he puts it, but it actually best matches the type with the Death of Oinomaos, since it shows the collapsing chariot with Pelops wielding a wheel. The two middle figures of an unbearded man carrying a small "woman" are anomalous. See also *LIMC* 5, 438 Hippodameia 1 No. 32.
18. Körte in Brunn/Körte II p. 90; for full discussion of the set, see 90-96, pls. 33-36. *LIMC* 5, 458-459 Hippolytos 1 Nos. 107-114.
19. Brunn/Körte II 93-94, pl. 35 No. 5. Thimme 1954, 123 fig. 54. *LIMC* 5, 458 Hippolytos 1 No. 114.
20. Körte in Brunn/Körte II p. 121.
21. Appendix No. 4. Brunn/Körte II 128-129, pl. 52 No. 7. Alabaster. Cover is a man with a bowl. Nielsen 1975, 304-305, 312 n. 7 = "Idealizing Group" dated 80/60-30 B.C. Not in *CUE*. *LIMC* 7, 22 Oinomaos No. 33 with drawing on p. 23.
22. Gregory Bateson 1979, 246 defines "information" as "Any difference that makes a difference."
23. Körte in Brunn/ Körte, II 128 *ad* Volterra 180.
24. Körte in Brunn/ Körte II, 124. Later (p. 129) he calls it a "strana aggiunta."
25. At least one other story about a bird on the head exists, but it clearly does not match the scene on the urns. Pliny (*Natural History* 10.20 [41]) relates that a woodpecker settled on the head of Aelius Tubero, who thereupon caught it in his hand and then killed it to avert "disaster...to the empire."
26. Other extensive accounts of the encounter are: Dionysius of Halicarnassus 15.1 and Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 9.11.
27. Left end of Florence 74232 and right end of Florence 75509. Brunn/Körte III 157-159 No. 8b (Florence 74232), 159 fig. 30; and Brunn/Körte II 190-191 No. 2a (Florence 75509). Pairault-Massa 1985, fig. 28 (Florence 74232). Both urns were found near Città della Pieve. Davies 1979, 131 n. 7 with bibliography and his pl. 79 figs. 1-2. Halm-Tisserant 1996, 179 fig. 10 (Florence 75509). Davies concentrates on the motif of the bird pecking out the eye with Celtic comparanda and Halm-Tisserant stresses the motif of the bird in general with a consideration of related examples in early Greek art.
28. Implied by Davies 1979 (129, 131 n. 21, and pl. 81 fig. 6), who identifies Volterra 180 as *Corvus*.
29. Translation adapted from the *Loeb Classical Library*.

30. Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Art Museum 64.70.40. Previously in the Burton Y. Berry Collection. Carnelian ringstone. Berry 1968, 39 No. 69, where the gem is identified as Greek and depicting Perseus with a griffon on his head. Clearly the creature on the head is an eagle.
31. Cornell 1995, 127.
32. Ogilvie 1970, 142 *ad* 1.34.
33. Translation from Sherwin, Jr. 1973, 19.
34. For example, Ogilvie, *Commentary*, 145 *ad* 1.35-38; and Cornell 1995, 127-130. Cornell does analyze one particular episode, the construction of sewers in Rome, and shows how this project was connected with both Tarquins. Ergo, there is only one Tarquin. Yet there is no reason why centuries later the *res gestae* of the two could not have been mixed and matched between them. Human memory is frail. Compare also Grandazzi 1997, 205 who makes a nice analogy between the two Tarquins and the much later, two Napoleons.
35. Ogilvie 1970, 126 *ad* 1.32-34. Even if I am wrong about a violent succession between Ancus Marcius and the Tarquins, I still do not subscribe to the hypothesis that the Etruscans never ruled Rome, as, for instance, Tim Cornell posits (1995, 151-172 = Chapter 6 “The Myth of Etruscan Rome”). Against whom among others, see Ogilvie 1970, 142: “The Etruscans led by Tarquins came to Rome towards the end of the seventh century. Salt and the passage of the Tiber led them on. They created the city and, by whatever means, controlled it.” Far too many Roman references exist to the Tarquins as rulers. In addition so many of the archaeological remains from the archaic period are clearly Etruscan, though Cornell, 1995, especially 130 and 172. is right that the finds *per se* cannot prove that the Etruscans were the ones in charge. The archaeological evidence in this case, nonetheless, in no way contradicts the literary sources. Grandazzi 1997 devotes an entire book to wending his way between the two extremes of the hypercritical tradition, represented by Cornell, and the “fideists,” those who believe that the tradition is virtually without flaw. For instance, he says (p. 134): “Must we then abandon legend and definitively take our leave from it? No, since even when it lies, legend continues to tell the truth.”
36. Brunn/Körte III, 97 and pl. 81 No. 5. *CUE* 2 146-147 No. 191.
37. My interpretation is closer to that of Bettina von Freytag gen. Löringhoff 1986, 129-130 who sees the figure as a local version of a horse demon. She also gives an excellent summary of the scholarly history of the figure of Taraxippos. Massa-Pairault 1985, 16, 206, 221-222 briefly discusses Taraxippos, whom she believes has solar associations.
38. For a discussion of Tarquinius Priscus and his entry to Rome, see Musti 1987, especially 148 on this passage.
39. Gantz 1974.
40. Munich, Antikensammlungen 3185, from Vulci. *EVP* 195 No. 3. Praxias Painter. *LIMC* 1, 388 Aineias No. 94 with pl. 303; and *LIMC* 6, 130 Kreousa 3 No. 38 with pl. 59. Galinsky (1969, 60 with figs. 45a-45b) identified the object on Creusa’s head as a *doliolum*.

41. For example, Volterra 168 and Volterra 173. Volterra 168: Brunn/Körte III pl. 84 No. 2; *CUE* 2, pp. 162-163 No. 222. Volterra 173: Brunn/Körte III pl. 85 No. 4; *CUE* 2, pp. 166-167 No. 226. In general, see Holliday 1990, who illustrates Volterra 173 on p. 87 fig. 13; and Holliday 2002, 43-47 with 44 fig. 14.
42. See extensive discussion in Small 1991, especially 247-252. On the permutations of the type with the quadriga, also see Nielsen 1993, 335.
43. See note 15 above.
44. For all the urns with this scene, see the list given in the *Appendix*, Groups A and B Nos. 1-21.
45. Ogilvie 1970, 144 *ad* 1.34.8. Ogilvie says that a similar story was also associated with Cyrus, but does not give a specific source. For Augustus, see Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, 94.7.
46. Thompson 1955, vol. 1, 390 H171.2.
47. Perugia, Necropoli Palazzone: Brunn/Körte I 42 with pl. 36 No. 4. Rome, Villa Giulia 50311: Brunn/Körte I 44-45 with pl. 40 No. 10; Helbig<sup>4</sup>, vol. 3, 471-473 No. 2492; *LIMC* 1, 264 Agamemnon No. 37 with plate 195; *LIMC* 5, 730 Iphigeneia (In Etruria) No. 6 (dated there to the middle of the second century B.C.).
48. Ogilvie 1970, 144 *ad* 1.34.9 says that “Women, both in Etruria and at Rome, did not divine nor did amateurs make prophecies without the assistance of a professional seer.” Compare Ogilvie 161 *ad* 1.41.2 “L.’s picture of a clever and unscrupulous woman”; and 143 *ad* 1.34.4 “her character as a *femme fatale*.” Also see Martin, 1985 and Johner, 1992. Johner discusses the type of the woman in the chariot and draws an interesting analogy between the death of Oinomaos and Tullia running over her father, Servius Tullius, as recounted by Livy 1.48. As I said in the text, the bird is too small visually to indicate a different story on the urns without the bird. Hence I do not believe that those urns, Appendix Group B, could represent Tullia running over Servius. Moreover, Servius was dead at the time and the kingly figure on the urns is clearly still very much alive.
49. This reconstruction is from Martelli 1977, 90 with fig. 1. The inscription is *CIL* XI 1744. Note that I have assumed that the “S.f.” is the usual Latin abbreviation for “son of Sextius”, but it is possible that some other name, even an Etruscan one, beginning with the letter “s” is meant. On Etruscan inscriptions on the covers of late Etruscan funerary urns, see Nielsen 1986, 53. This is a very good introduction to late Etruscan funerary urns.
50. For the date and the reason for the inscription’s placement: Nielsen 1975, 301-302.
51. Both Nielsen, 1975, 301-302 and Maggiani 1976, 34 Ga1. Also see Pairault-Massa 1985, 222. In other words, everyone who has worked with this urn agrees on placing it within the last period of urn manufacture.
52. On the Romanization of Volterra, see, among others: Harris 1971, 257-259, 276-284, 335; Pfiffig 1966, 68-69; Pasquinucci and Menchelli 1999; and most crucially Terrenato 1998. For an overview of official Etruscans and Rome, see Hall 1996, especially 164-170 for the late Roman Republican period.
53. *KlPauly* 1, 1008 s.v. Caesius I. Harris 1971, 199.

54. “*Ceinzna*” is based on a variant reading of *TLE*<sup>2</sup> No. 521. Harris 1971, 199. The suffix “-*na*” means “family of,” on which see Bonfantes, 1983, 74.
55. Harris 1971, 199-200. For a list of the family names, both Latin and Etruscan, attested in Volterra, see the comment of Osanna Luchi in Martelli and Cristofani 1977, 143-4. On the “Latinization” of Etruria, see Kaimio 1975, 215-216 specifically on Volterra.
56. On Caecina, see Hohti 1975.
57. Terrenato 1998, especially 106ff., is the best discussion of the archaeological remains in their political context. Various delaying tactics were used, and Volterra did not become a colony until at least as late as Julius Caesar.
58. Harris 1971, 1-31 presents a good summary of the sources for Etruscan history. Sordi 1989, among others, favors the idea of Etruscan histories in addition to books about the *etrusca disciplina*, the existence of which most everybody accepts.
59. Nielsen 1993 presents a very good overview of choice of subject on late Etruscan funerary urns from Volterra, as that choice changed over the three centuries during which the urns were produced. While she does not always accept my interpretations of Etrusco-Roman legends, it is clear from her chart (pp. 322-323) that such an interest develops around the mid-second century B.C. and reaches its height in the first century B.C. Particularly note the number of unidentified stories in her final two periods (post 40 B.C.), most of which I believe probably represent Etruscan legends not yet identified by us or perhaps even known to us.

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#### APPENDIX

##### *Checklist of Urns with Tarquinius Priscus?*

Note: All urns were made in Volterranean workshops. To make the list easier to consult, I have divided the urns into three groups: (a) "With Bird", (b) "Without Bird", and (c) "With Youth and not King." All friezes are more or less intact, unless otherwise noted. Most fragments are listed in the second group ("Without Bird"), because it is often impossible to tell, depending on what is preserved, if the fragment belongs to the first or third group. The urns are then ordered by city, by collection, by inventory number. All urns now in Volterra are in the Museo Guarnacci. Only brief references are given.



A. URNS WITH BIRD

1. Cortona AE 1023 AM  
Brunn/Körte II p. 129 No. 7b.
2. Manchester Museum 29947 (old inv. VII.A.9)  
Not in Brunn/Körte. Turfa 1982, 119 No. 115; pl. 29b.
3. Volterra 175  
Brunn/Körte II p. 129 No. 7a. Not in *CUE*. Nielsen 1975, 312 n. 8 = "Idealizing Group."
4. Volterra 180 [Figs. 5-6]  
Brunn/Körte II p. 128-129 No. 7, pl. 52 = drawing on p. 23 of *LIMC* 7, 2  
Oinomaos No. 33. Not in *CUE*. Nielsen 1975, 304-305, 312 n. 7 = "Idealizing Group."

B. URNS WITHOUT BIRD

5. Florence 584; 5652  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127 No. 4, pl. 50.
6. Florence 595  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II, p. 128 No. 5a.
7. Florence 78519, from Volterra, Tomba Inghirami  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127-128 No. 5, pl. 51. *CUE* 1, 112-113 No. 160 with illustrations.  
Maggiani 1976, 22 Group Ba11, pl. 4 fig. 21. Nielsen 1975, 304 n. 2, 306 n.4. *LIMC* 7, 21 Oinomaos No. 31.
8. Florence, Villa Ernesto Rossi (once Casamorata)  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3e.
9. Volterra (no number)  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127 No. 3g
10. Volterra (no number)  
Fragment.  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127 No. 4a.
11. Volterra 176  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3, pl. 50. Nielsen 1975, 355 No. 6, fig. 34 (cover).
12. Volterra 177 [Fig. 1]  
Brunn/Körte II p. 128 No. 6, pl. 51 = drawing on p. 22 of *LIMC* 7, 22 Oinomaos No. 32.  
For other references, see text.
13. Volterra 179  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127 No. 3f.. Nielsen 1975, 365 No. 9; 361; fig. 42.
14. Volterra 439  
Brunn/Körte II p. 129 No. 7c. Nielsen 1975, 306-309, 313.

15. Volterra 471  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3b.
16. Volterra 472  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3c.
17. Volterra 593  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3d.
18. Volterra 594  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 129 No. 7d.
19. Volterra 595  
Brunn/Körte II p. 125 No. 2c. *CUE* 1, 62-63 No. 73 with illustration. *LIMC* 7, 285  
Pelops No. 37c.
20. Volterra 596  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 127 No. 4b. *CUE* 1, 62-63 No. 74 with illustration. *LIMC* 7, 21  
Oinomaos No. 30.
21. Volterra 597  
Fragment  
Brunn/Körte II p. 126 No. 3a.

C. URNS WITH YOUTH INSTEAD OF KING [definitely not Tarquinius Priscus]

22. Fiesole 11  
Not in Brunn/Körte. Unpublished?
23. Florence 78495, from Volterra, the Tomba Inghirami [Fig. 2]  
Brunn/Körte II p. 125 No. 2, pl. 49. Pairault 1972, 64, pl. 23. *CUE* 1, pp. 98-99  
No. 138,  
with illustrations. *LIMC* 5, 438 Hippodameia 1 No. 31, with pl. 313.  
*LIMC* 7, 285 Pelops No. 37a.
24. Florence 583, 5704/14  
Brunn/Körte II p. 125 No. 2b. Pairault 1972, 64, pl. 25.
25. Volterra 178  
Brunn/Körte II p. 125 No. 2a. Pairault 1972, 64, 65 n. 2, pl. 24. *LIMC* 7, 285  
Pelops  
No. 37b.
26. Volterra 187  
Brunn/Körte II p. 124 No. 1, pl. 49. *LIMC* 5, 438 Hippodameia 1 No. 30.