

Looking at Etruscan Art in the Meadows Museum

Jocelyn Penny Small

NOTE: Supplementary Material at Back
(not published with article)

FROM THE
TEMPLE AND THE TOMB
ETRUSCAN TREASURES FROM TUSCANY



MEADOWS MUSEUM • SMU

JANUARY 25 – MAY 17, 2009

CREDITS

© 2008 Meadows Museum, SMU

© The text of this publication is held in copyright by the authors.

This exhibition has been organized by the Meadows Museum in association with Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (Italy); Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana (Italy) and Centro Promozioni e Servizi di Arezzo (Italy). This exhibition has been funded by a generous gift from The Meadows Foundation.

Meadows Museum, SMU
January 25 – May 17, 2009

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publishers.

Printed and bound in China
With assistance from HeuleGordon, Inc.
Grand Rapids, MI

Design by Anne Humes

ISBN 978-1-60702-755-3

ORGANIZATION

Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana
Centro Promozioni e Servizi di Arezzo
Meadows Museum, SMU

SCIENTIFIC PROJECT

Dr. Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni
Director, National Museum of Archaeology, Florence

With the collaboration of

Debora Barbagli
Archaeological Museum of Siena

and

Professor P. Gregory Warden
Southern Methodist University, Dallas
Co-Director, Mugello Valley Archaeological Project

GENERAL COORDINATION

Daniel Virtuoso
Director of Cultural Activities and Promotions
Centro Promozioni e Servizi de Arezzo

Bridger LaRocque Marx
Collections Manager and Curator of Exhibitions
Meadows Museum, SMU

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana
National Museum of Archaeology, Florence
Museum of Archaeology, Siena
Private Collection, Florence, Italy

CATALOGUE

Introductory Text
Dr. Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni

Translations
Maria Gloria Bastieri
Centro Promozioni e Servizi de Arezzo

Alex Ross
Rosene Zaros
Albert Brandt
Queen Sofia Spanish Institute, New York City

Graphic Design

Anne Humes
AHHA Graphics

Photography

Daniel Virtuoso
Luca Calugi
Archivio Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici
della Toscana – unless otherwise noted

Printing

HeuleGordon, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI

MUSEUM PROJECT

Centro Promozioni e Servizi de Arezzo

Installation

A.B.B. di Bruschini de Arezzo
Displays Unlimited, Inc., Arlington, TX
Holly Hutzell

Electrical Installation

Sabatino Marchi
Centro Affari e Convegni de Arezzo

CONSERVATION

franco Cecchi
Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana

Cover image:

234 – Urn, Siena, MA, Inv. B731. 3rd century B.C.E.

Back cover image:

81 – Leech-Shaped Fibula, Florence, NMA, Inv. 77261.
7th century B.C.E.

Spine image:

99 – Female “Canopic” urn, Florence, NMA,
Inv. 72782 a-b. 7th century B.C.E.

Title page:

102 – Cinerary Amphora, Florence, NMA, Inv. 73087.
7th century B.C.E.

NOTES:

MA = Museum of Archaeology, Siena
NMA = National Museum of Archaeology, Florence



LOOKING AT ETRUSCAN ART

IN THE MEADOWS MUSEUM¹

Jocelyn Penny Small



IN 1967 JOHN BOARDMAN WROTE: "THE ART OF ETRURIA HAS ATTRACTED far more attention than it deserves."² It is ironic that his statement begins a chapter on Etruscan art in a book devoted to Greek art and takes up nearly 10% of that book. Boardman explained: "[Etruscan art] earns a place in this book less for its intrinsic merit or its contribution to the history of western art, than for the revealing contrast it affords to the achievements of the Greeks, and for the way it shows what the effect of Greek art could be on a relatively primitive people." Boardman has compacted into this sentence the major issues confronting anyone studying the Etruscans. Their—shall we say—products are mere reflections of a greater art, that of the Greeks. And, of course, the Etruscans weren't too sophisticated—rich enough to afford Greek art, but certainly not educated.

Twenty-seven years later Boardman has mellowed: "Etruscan art holds a great appeal for the twentieth century. It affords a degree of relief from the apparent austerity of classical Greece. Its color, life and assumed passion, together with the mystery that generally accompanies discussion of the origins and language of the Etruscans, make it more glamorous, more artistic, even Artistic [with a capital "A"]."³ Boardman still has difficulty with the idea that Etruscans produced "art", even though he now grants that its products are appealing. "Art with a capital 'A,'" however, is an entirely different matter. Fifteen years after Boardman's second book, a session at the annual meetings of the College Art Association in February 2008 confronted the same question: "whether there is an Etruscan "gaze," a characteristically Etruscan mode of representation."⁴ And so, here, by way of an introduction to Etruscan art and in hopes of putting the idea of incompetent Etruscan artists to rest, once again I am going to put the case for the Etruscans as having a culture that was sophisticated, wealthy, and knowledgeable and, most importantly of all, a culture that not only produced Art with a capital "A" but artistic objects that no Greek could ever have made.⁵ Please note both Boardman and I refer to Greek art, because scholars define the Etruscans as a derivative of a "greater" civilization.

First, an aside on the phrase "Art with a capital 'A'" is necessary. It is perhaps best known from Ernst Gombrich's "Introduction" to his *Story of Art* where he devotes considerable space to damning the whole idea. He says: "as long as we realize that Art with a capital A has no existence. For Art with a capital A has come to be something of a bogey and a fetish."⁶ Despite Gombrich's stature and the sixteen editions and additional reprintings of his book, the idea stubbornly persists, as my quo-

18
HEMISPHERICAL HELMET. Florence,
NMA, Inv. 83380 a. 8th century B.C.E.

tation from Boardman shows, or even in Gregory Warden's more contemporary phrasing of the issue as "Etruscan gaze." The full-blown concept of the Artist with a capital A we have today doesn't occur until the 18th century at the earliest. Before then there were just lower-case artists and in Classical Antiquity, with a capital A, those artists were considered craftsmen. When I googled the particular phrasing that I've been using, the earliest citation I came upon was a poem by Gelett Burgess, entitled literally "Art with a Capital A," published in 1913 as "a metrical plea" to avoid the phrase entirely.⁷ So, it would seem that the concept must have become popular in the late 1800s to early 1900s, and once the idea of Art with a capital A and its relatives took hold, it has been impossible to get rid of. I believe its catchy wording does less to keep it alive than the fact that it neatly encapsulates how we view the production of artists from any time any place today. And so I am forced to perpetuate the phrase, if only to save the Etruscans from its collateral damage, because modern scholars persist in viewing what the Greeks produce as Art with a capital A, but what the Etruscans make as ill-formed, misunderstood copies of the greater Greek culture.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETRUSCAN AND GREEK ART

And speaking of culture, no one questions the idea that the Etruscans had a distinct culture. Somehow or another—whether one admires or despises Etruscan art—there is a consensus that Etruscans did produce objects that can be called Etruscan for something like 800 years. They had their own language that they shared with none of their trading partners, even though their leftward writing has affinities with other Mediterranean scripts. They had their own religion and even something referred to as the "Etruscan rite" by the Romans. They had names for their religious and legendary figures that defy many people's ability, including mine, to pronounce. They also made objects that were never made by Greeks, such as biconical urns (4 and 15) used for burial. Their burial rites differ from those of the Greeks, and, in particular, the Etruscans are notable for their formal, built cemeteries such as at Cerveteri, Tarquinia and Orvieto, as well as their painted tombs, especially at Tarquinia, Chiusi and Vulci. They traded all over the Mediterranean, as we know from foreign objects, like Phoenician plates and ostrich eggs, found in Etruria and Etruscan objects found abroad. They had their own history that has been sporadically preserved for us, such as in the tantalizing fragment from the emperor Claudius' history of the Etruscans that correlates with one of the scenes depicted in the François Tomb in Vulci. The Etruscans, then, were rooted in a particular geographical area, roughly modern-day Tuscany, and continued as an independent political group until the first century B.C.E.



20
HELMET. Florence, NMA, Inv. 85531.
8th century B.C.E.



4
BICONICAL URN WITH VESSEL-
SHAPED LID. Florence, NMA, Inv.
83676/A. 8th century B.C.E.



26
FEMALE BELT. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 74280. 8th century B.C.E.

The scholarly issues with Etruscan art begin not with the earliest Etruscans, but in the seventh century B.C.E., when the Etruscans started importing vases from Greece in vast quantities. That the Etruscans were receptive to Greek art is undeniable. But it is equally undeniable that the Etruscans produced objects that are equal in quality to contemporary Greek objects, if not better, before the seventh century B.C.E. For example, Villanovan bronze helmets (20) have a certain elegance in their balance of bosses and lines echoed in the design of a contemporary Villanovan bronze belt (26). Another bronze helmet (18) without the crest works simultaneously in two modes: a design that can be interpreted as an abstraction and as a face. The “face” is placed between two decorative rectangles with bosses and birds’ heads. In particular, note the precisely formed circles for the “eyes” and the center of the “mouth” placed between a more roughly produced brow and nose line. Full-bodied birds can be seen painted on an olla and its supporting holmos (50). The two hut urns (2 and 13)—containers shaped like huts to hold the ashes of the deceased—are similarly decorated with geometric patterns that particularly on 13 exhibit a sense of design and balance with their removable “door” decorated with a central incised square with two triangles that meet and are surrounded by pendant triangles. Five ridges accentuate the opening. The roof reflects actual huts with its series of supporting spines, but with the added decorative effect of incised geometric motifs.

The question, however, is whether the Etruscans in the Archaic period and after produced only objects that are bad, misunderstood imitations of Greek art or whether they knowingly selected elements from Greek objects to create their own distinctive Etruscan objects. It is easier to answer the question by rephrasing it in the negative. Does any Greek art exist that they neither buy nor copy? The best known example of a Greek object not found in Etruria is the *lekythos*.⁸ Despite the thousands that the Greeks produced and sent abroad, this shape was used in Greek



rituals and has been found only on sites inhabited by Greeks. Of course, that situation may be due to the Greeks not being willing to sell objects sacred to them, although the vast number of Panathenaic amphorae found in Etruscan tombs might disprove that idea.⁹ More importantly, since a stray Attic lekythos could turn up in Etruria, the Etruscans, who do adopt a number of Greek vase shapes, do not themselves produce lekythoi. Nor can it be claimed that the Etruscans never saw a lekythos, since they actively traded with the Greeks both on the mainland and in South Italy (Magna Graecia). In short, because the shape had no purpose for the Etruscans, they felt no need to buy or copy it. When the Etruscans do adopt a Greek vase shape, they often transmute it by altering the proportions, the placement of the handles, or how the scene is viewed on the vase. For example, note how the handles spring from the lips on some Etruscan amphoras (125, 130 and 186), but from the middle of the neck on an Attic black-figure amphora (171)—a long-lived trait of Etruscan pottery. Do note, however, that some Etruscan amphoras follow the Greek fashion (126 and 221), but Greek vases, except for a small subset known as Nikosthenic amphoras, made expressly for the Etruscan market, never adopt the Etruscan mode.

Similarly the Etruscans do not copy every Greek scene that appears on Greek vases found in Etruria. The birth of Erichthonios and other stories about the founding of Athens never occur in Etruscan art. Sometimes the Etruscans choose events not depicted by the Greeks, such as the remarkable image of Pasiphae cuddling her baby the Minotaur.¹⁰ Even those subjects that the Greeks depict are often changed by the Etruscans. For instance, the Etruscans flip the direction in which the scene unfolds in the judgment of Paris on a Pontic amphora.¹¹ (Figure 1) The depiction also exhibits a playfulness that doesn't appear in Greek art.¹² The figures here are not the staid ones of their Greek models. Aphrodite in the rear has to restrain herself from bumping into Athena as she bounces along. Moreover, each goddess is clearly recognizable by her different clothing and action. Finally, the artist has added a second herald who turns his head back to chat with Hera. Two centuries later on a calyx-krater by the Nazzano Painter the end result of the Judgment of Paris is

125
ETRUSCO-CORINTHIAN AMPHORA.
Florence, NMA, Inv. 73397. Circa 610–580
B.C.E.

171
ATTIC BLACK-FIGURE AMPHORA.
Florence, NMA, Inv. 3800. 540–520 B.C.E.

221
ETRUSCAN RED-FIGURE AMPHORA.
Florence, NMA, Inv. 91369. 490–470 B.C.E.





portrayed.¹³ In the lower left register Menelaos is reunited with Helen. He drops his sword, as a rather matronly Aphrodite negotiates with and separates him from Helen who pulls back her mantle to reveal not just her face but all of her bodily enticements, as she minces her way to the right, while looking back to make sure she has his full attention. The Greek artists emphasize the besotted Menelaos, but the Etruscans switch to a knowing, amused Helen—the Angelina Jolie of her age—

aided and abetted by Aphrodite, a conniving woman of a certain age.¹⁴ The reuniting of the two lovers has become the subject of domestic comedy.

While I could give more examples of the explicit and conscious Etruscan use of Greek art, I think that we have a sufficiency to support my case and we can move on to the larger question of whether the Etruscans produced “art with a capital ‘A.’” Otto Brendel offers an example, the Detroit rider, from around 430 B.C.E.¹⁵ (Figure 2) He said:

here for the first time we find a reflection of the art of the Parthenon in Etruscan sculpture. The telling symptoms are not only details such as the easy folds of the mantle, but the whole bearing of the figure... As he meets us squarely, his earnest face bowed slightly to the left, he shows himself equally remote from the eccentric mannerism as from the forced abstractions that hallmark so much Etruscan imagery of this time; instead, he is calm and collected.... these attributes... bespeak a certain attitude of art which favours understatement, avoids exaggeration, and tends to minimize the artist's interference with natural appearance.... Its dignity, which seems so artless, is a stylistic trait; it represents the most mature response to Greek Classicism of which the Etruscan tradition proved capable.¹⁶

FIGURE 1 – PONTIC AMPHORA. JUDGMENT OF PARIS. Circa 550-540 B.C.E. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, Inv. 837. Photographs by C. und M. Koppermann.

FIGURE 2 – RIDER. Circa 430 B.C.E. Detroit, Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase, 42.260. © 1985 The Detroit Institute of Arts.





165
"CANOPIC" URN. Siena, MA, Inv. B 878.
6th century B.C.E. © Massimo Listri/CORBIS.

I find it remarkable that Brendel does not find anything of comparable high quality in Etruscan art until after the height of the Etruscan power in the Archaic period and about 400 years after Etruscan art began. Even then he ends on a somewhat sour note: "it represents the most mature response to Greek Classicism of which the Etruscan tradition proved capable." Shades of Samuel Johnson: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."¹⁷

The real problem is that Brendel and other scholars are searching not for Etruscan art that is distinctive to the Etruscans, but for high quality reflections—and they can only be reflections in their minds—of high quality Greek art that has not survived. But it is a mistake to think the Greeks produced only great art. If nothing else, 21 years as Director of the U.S. Center of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* taught me that the Greeks made an incredible amount of kitsch, if not outright junk.¹⁸ Instead of focusing on the derivative and equivalent crummy pieces of Etruscan art, I would like to present some examples of Etruscan art with a capital "A." I am tempted to add that you can be the judge of my judgments, but that route is invidious, because aesthetic assessments change with time, as is apparent from the two quotations from John Boardman with which I began. Instead let me give you a brief, roughly chronological, tour of the Art of Etruscan art, as exemplified primarily by the objects in this exhibition.

See Supplementary Pictures at Back



98
MALE "CANOPIC" URN. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 79197. 7th century B.C.E.

TOUR OF ETRUSCAN ART

Early Etruscan Art through the Archaic period

Consider this seemingly unprepossessing "Canopic" urn from Siena dating to the seventh century B.C.E. (165) (Note that the term "Canopic" is a misnomer that has stuck. These objects tend to be made of clay and were used to store the ashes of the deceased.) From the front, according to my students, he looks like Mr. Potato Head. His facial features are simple forms: gashes for the eyes and lips, a small slightly raised section for the chin. He looks woebegone. Yet, unlike Greek sculpture of the same period this head works three-dimensionally by providing the viewer with dramatically more information from the side. His head is thrown back with a slight downward cast to his mouth, which gives him a somewhat supercilious look that recalls Alfred Hitchcock.¹⁹ While their noses differ, the overall impression is remarkably similar, as can be seen in the way the two heads are poised, the look to the eyes, and the wonderfully fat neck springing from the tiny chin. In other words, the urn that seems at first glance to be unrealistic and cartoon-like actually may capture an Etruscan who bore an uncanny resemblance to Hitchcock. Greek art doesn't achieve recognizable likenesses until the fifth century B.C.E. at the earliest, and not consistently



164
"CANOPIC" URN ON A THRONE.
Florence, NMA, Inv. 25962. 6th century B.C.E.

90
FEMALE FIGURE. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 8514–8553. 7th century B.C.E.

until the Hellenistic period. Objects that work three-dimensionally slowly appear anatomical part by anatomical part in Greek art until, again, in the Hellenistic period they work totally in the round. Greek art never achieves the Etruscan combination of the abstract with the real.

The exhibit at the Meadows Museum is particularly fortunate in displaying a number of "Canopic" urns that are not ordinarily seen together. A closer examination of some of them will demonstrate that the Siena "Canopic" urn is not an anomaly. Women also were buried in these urns and one of the most interesting is a seventh century example now in Florence (99). As with the Siena urn, one's impression of her changes from view to view and even angle to angle. Her form is conveyed by simple masses that depend more on outline or exterior shape than detail for their definition. In profile, the smooth arc of the head is balanced by the sharp, raised curve of the arm which accentuates the roundness of the woman's and the pot's belly. The stylized ear, lying sideways, completes the bend of the arm, and also interrupts the smooth back of the head. She truly works three-dimensionally, for the side view does not prepare the on-looker for the high, bat wing-like shoulders or the broad face with its gash for a mouth and soulful, deep-set eyes. While in profile the pointed nose, slightly parted lips, and jutting chin appear inquisitive, yet noble, they become dubious and concerned from a three-quarter's frontal view, and then rather well-fed and satisfied when seen head on. In other words, despite an abstract design determining the parts and their relationships to the whole, she has as much, if not more, personality than if strict rules of anatomy were followed, as they were on the Detroit rider whose expression resembles every other silent, stoical Classical figure.

Three other "Canopics" on display in Dallas resemble the Florence woman in that they have either arms and hands clasping their bellies, or at least handles on the body that can be interpreted as arms (100). The last, as is common with the later urns, sits on a throne and has holes for metal attachments. 98 is remarkable for his inset eyes that grab the viewer. Like the Siena and Florence "Canopics," his expression seems to change depending on the view. As time passes, some of the "Canopics" get more developed bodies. 164 is portrayed to below the waist and sits on an elaborately decorated throne. The way his arms cross his body recalls the more or less contemporary





limestone statue of a woman from Vetulonia (90). With her we have left the realm of the “pure” Etruscan, if I may put it that way, and have entered the world of objects combining Etruscan with Greek elements. Finally, related to the “Canopics” is the statue of “Mater Matuta” (199) holding a child across her lap. She shares the mix of Etruscan and Greek elements with the Vetulonia woman, but in her case she also functions as a container for funerary ashes that is just under her removable head. On the whole, like the Vetulonia woman, she seems massive, inelegant and clunky. In short, adding Greek elements to an Etruscan base often does neither style justice, though, as will be seen, sometimes the results are masterful.

Another area Etruscan artists excelled at was jewelry. A gold fibula or pin from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb in Cerveteri, one of the major Orientalizing princely tombs, shows five lions on two levels parading on the disk and surrounded by three bands, two of which consist of palmettes with connected stems separated by a plain band.²⁰ (Figure 3) The artist has achieved a balance between detailed and undetailed areas. Brendel, however, finds the absence of a ground line for the top lions deeply disturbing, in his words “an irregularity; indeed, an offence”, because “[w]ithout base lines the silhouetted images would lack stability and firm direction; they would look haphazard, prehistoric even; that is, less civilized.”²¹ Brendel does not seem to grasp that art does not always aim at imitating nature, as the Greeks put it. In any case, if one is interested in reality, then lions do not belong on a pin keeping a woman’s garment in place. In other words, the aim of Etruscan art differs, sometimes radically, from that of the Greeks. One other aspect of this pin is important. Look at its hinge and the arc with its griffins. There you’ll see minuscule beads of granulated gold that are barely discernible. In fact, the Etruscans excelled all other artists until modern times in their mastery of this technique. The Greeks do not come even close, as even with my increasingly myopic eyes, I can still see their beads unaided. Fibulae with granulation appear in the Dallas show, of which the one from Vetulonia (81) has exceptionally fine pulviscolo granulation.

The next century—the sixth—marks the height of the Etruscans in terms of their wealth and



81
LEECH-SHAPED FIBULA. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 77261. 7th century B.C.E.

FIGURE 3 – GOLD “LION” FIBULA
FROM THE REGOLINI-GALASSI TOMB,
CERVETERI. Circa 675-650 B.C.E. Varian
City, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Vatican
Museums, Inv. 20552.



FIGURE 4 – TARQUINIA. TOMB OF THE TRICLINIUM. Male and Female Dancers. Circa 480-470 B.C.E. Scala/Art Resources, NY.

the amount of land they controlled in Italy—as far south as Campania and as far north as the Po Valley. It is during this era that the Etruscans import thousands of Greek vases not just from Athens, but also Corinth, Sparta and Ionia (roughly eastern Turkey today). It is also the period when elaborately painted tombs become relatively common. Consider a segment from the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing in Tarquinia dated to circa 510 B.C.E. In the outer chamber men are dancing with abandon—again something that the Greeks never quite manage.²² For instance compare the scene on the Attic black-figure amphora (171) with a satyr dancing on either side of a maenad. Notice how the satyr on the left who, instead of throwing back his head in joy, looks down so he can figure out where to put his feet. The finest Etruscan example of this emotion occurs in the female dancer, on the right, from the Tomb of the Triclinium in Tarquinia, dated to circa 480-470 B.C.E.²³ (Figure 4) She throws her head back and spins round in total ecstasy with her skirt and shawl swirling, her left foot in profile, and her right delicately pointed in front. She feels just sublime. No Greek representation comes near to portraying such an emotion. The composition exhibits the Etruscan interest in design. They take poses that cannot be held—typical of Etruscan art. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the differences between Etruscan and Greek art is that Etruscan figures are like movie stills—a single moment excerpted from a continuous action,

while Greek figures resemble snapshots—an action captured at a point that can be easily held for all eternity. In spite of poses that cannot be held, the two Etruscan dancers attain a visual stability through corresponding gestures. They balance on their outer feet with outer arms bent in opposite directions. The central tree divides them symmetrically, yet pulls them together by its vertical support. Simultaneously as his powder blue mantle gives him a sense of lightness, her dark brown cloak keeps her from flying off the ground.

In short, while Brendel may extol the rootedness of Greek art with its figures firmly entrenched on a ground line unlike the lions on the gold fibula, the Etruscans instead portray their figures with a *joie de vivre* not matched by any other ancient culture. Even a routine Etruscan black-figure stamnos by the Micali Painter (174) portrays its running figures as truly rushing. Note the distance between their feet and their long hair streaming behind them. Moreover, when the Etruscans model their figures closely on Greek examples, such as a Greek Corinthian oinochoe (122) with the usual parade of animals as decoration, the Etruscan take-offs tend to be less earnest and more loopy, as on an Etrusco-Corinthian olpe from Vulci (128). Look at the rubbery neck and expression on the panther in the bottom register. Also in this show is one of the distinctively Etruscan amphoras in the Etrusco-Corinthian style. 125 has handles springing from the rim of the vase—something typically Etruscan as I said above. The body of the vase has three animals incised and painted on its broad band: a lion with an Etruscanized extended body with patches of white and red, an eagle in flight and a grazing deer.

Bucchero pottery is made only by the Etruscans. It is produced from a fine black clay and comes in two main varieties: bucchero sottile or “light” bucchero, generally earlier, and bucchero pesante or “heavy” bucchero, generally later. Both types are well represented in the Dallas show. 92 and 93 are two similar oinochoes with ribbed bodies that differ in the width of their ribs in a way analogous to modern corduroy that comes in narrow and wide wales. Both have stamped animal and monster processions around their necks and lids with handles in the shape of quadrupeds, an ass for 92 and a sphinx for 93. The handle of the latter takes the shape of a roughly formed man. A pair of simple, but elegant chalices (153 and 154) have typical high stems, but are elaborated with a series of rounds that balance the lozenges around the cups. When a single handle is added to this basic shape, it becomes a kyathos. The simplicity of 134 is made up for by its size. Imagine drinking from a cup more than 13 inches high! Also typically Etruscan (and not Greek) is an amphora with four handles (130), each with a stamped design and handles springing from



92
VASE WITH FIGURAL LID. Florence,
NMA, Inv. 71212. 7th century B.C.E.

93
VASE WITH FIGURAL HANDLE. Florence,
NMA, Inv. 73040. 7th century B.C.E.

134
KYATHOS. Florence, NMA, Inv. 96484.
6th century B.C.E.

132
CARYATID CHALICE. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 81527. 7th century B.C.E.



the lip. Instead of the typical standing winged women on the supports, a chalice (132) has a woman seated on a throne and a woman holding a spear among its motifs.

Also from the sixth century B.C.E. are two ivory plaques (180 and 181) that were used to decorate a box or chest. Both have scenes in low relief that exhibit the Etruscan sense of design and its *joie de vivre*. On 180 two men wrestle a stag. The man on the left takes it by one of its antlers and his right rear leg, as his companion grasps it by the neck. This man is particularly interesting because of the way the stag covers most of him, but, nonetheless, lets us see just enough of his face to show his tell-tale "Archaic" smile. The other plaque portrays two men chatting together, as they recline together on a couch. The man on the right raises his chalice, while his companion holds a low bowl. The Etruscans are fond of showing themselves talking, whether at the games as in the Tomb of the Chariots or in the double-sarcophagi with husbands and wives engaged in eternal conversation.²⁴

180 AND 181
REVTMENT PLAQUES. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 01507 and 01506. 540–520 B.C.E.





30
WHEELED-BIRD ASKOS. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 73463. 8th century B.C.E.



151
DEER BALSAMARIUM. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 72862. 6th century B.C.E.



145
LOCUST-SHAPED ALABASTRA. Florence,
NMA, Inv. 71197. 600 B.C.E.



FIGURE 5 – WOMAN. BRONZE STATUETTE. From the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, Italy. Circa 350 B.C.E. Paris, Louvre. Photographer Hervé Lewandowski; Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY.

CLASSICAL PERIOD

The Dallas exhibit has fewer objects from the Classical period, roughly the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., than from either the earlier or later periods. In addition to some routine Etruscan red-figure vases, such as the two stamnoi (220 and 222), two askoi in the form of birds from the fourth century B.C.E. continue the long-lived tradition of making vases in the shape of birds and animals. Four of the earlier examples are 30: the bird on wheels from the Villanovan period; 151, an oil jar in the form of a deer from the 6th c. B.C.E.; and 145, two grasshoppers who also function as alabstra, again for holding either oil or perfume. The grasshoppers have cartoon-like faces with their bodies neatly forming the container. Their wings, legs and body are distinguished by different patterns. Similarly the two Etruscan red-figure bird askoi (270 and 271) from the Classical period are well-adapted to their shapes. The parts of the bird receive distinctive decoration. Note the striated tail feathers compared to the neck and chest with its scalloped feathers. On the bodies, one includes just the front half of a female head in profile and the other portrays a winged woman, perhaps a Nike, holding a helmet and flying to the front of the bird. Note how her wings are set off from that of the birds.

Two candelabra (214 and 215) and a thymiaterion (216), an incense burner, give an idea of what the Etruscans could accomplish in bronze in the Classical period. All three have tripod bases with feet ending in animal paws (215) or hooves (216), and long stems ending in either the cup for burning the incense or “petals” with “spikes” to pierce the candles just above their bottom ends. The thymiaterion has a dancing woman at its base and the candelabrum tops its stand with a bird. Because these bronze pieces belong to a larger group, (204-217) from a single tomb in Populonia with hydriai by the Attic red-figure Meidias Painter, they give an idea of what a reasonably well-off person would be buried with in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Also present were a number of bronze vessels (204-207 and 209-210) and a bronze mirror (217) incised with a youth reclining on a couch and a bearded man standing at its end.

While we are discussing bronzes, consider one of the magnificent Etruscan statuettes from the fourth century B.C.E. and now in the Louvre.²⁵ (Figure 5) It portrays a woman. Her head recalls, in Brendel’s words, the “calm and collected [Detroit rider whose]... attributes... bespeak a certain attitude of art which favors understatement, avoids exaggeration, and tends to minimize the artist’s interference with natural appearance.... Its dignity... seems so artless.” Yet when she is viewed as a whole, something radically different has happened to her body. Brendel says that she is “fantastically lengthened [and that]... these strange inventions [are] so clearly out of step with their times.”²⁶ Certainly this figure is out of step with both contemporary Greek art and art as Brendel defined it. Giacometti, however, was entranced by the “skinny figurines” as they are sometimes called. I believe that the overall impression is one of extreme elegance from the aristocratic face through the attenuated body to the pointed shoes. The difference in textures between

the head with its wavy hair, cross-hatched diadem, and precisely delineated features and the smooth surface of the body imparts a pleasing visual balance. The knobby knees and breasts appropriately punctuate the body to indicate the bare minimum of anatomical structure, and all occur where we expect them to be. The contrasts in forms, patterns, and two- and three-dimensionality produce a geometric, almost stark effect—a masterpiece of design. Like the Siena “Canopic” head (165) she, too, needs to be viewed not just from the front, but from the side and the back. Also like the Siena head, she combines the realistic with the abstract.

HELLENISTIC PERIOD

At this point let us turn to the Hellenistic period. While the Etruscans are considered to be on the decline politically, nonetheless, many clearly were still very well off, if one can judge from their tombs and their burial containers. This exhibition is remarkable for having on display some of the most notable urns as well as the terra cotta pediment from Talamone (293), which served as a source for scenes on one group of the urns. As in the earlier periods, cremation was popular among Etruscans who lived in the more northerly areas, like Chiusi and Volterra, while inhumation was favored in the south at Tarquinia, Tuscania and Vulci. As a result, the north buries their dead in smaller urns and the south in larger sarcophagi to accommodate the full body. Despite the two different choices—still the most popular today—the urns and sarcophagi share the same basic structure. The deceased reclines, as if at banquet, on the lid that tops a cask, which generally carries a figured scene. Often the narrow ends are decorated, but only the sarcophagi sometimes have scenes on the other long side. The heads of the reclining figures can be particularized to the point that they are not mere stock heads but actual portraits, as one would expect from the tradition that goes back to the time of the “Canopic” urns, such as the Siena man (165) and the Florence woman (99).

Keep in mind that the Greeks are also making portraits in the Hellenistic period of real people that resemble those people, but two differences set them apart from the Etruscans. The Greek portraits we have tend to be only of notables like rulers or philosophers, while the Etruscans have an extensive number of wealthy, but not otherwise notable, people portrayed on the lids of sarcophagi and urns with inscriptions that tell us precisely who they are. At the same time the Greek portraits never lose their idealistic quality. It is almost as if their faces had been air-brushed, albeit in stone or bronze. The Etruscan heads, on the other hand, often capture physical likenesses. I am particularly fond of a gentleman from Volterra who looks not straight out at the viewer, as most do, but up to our right.²⁷ His right hand plays with his garland, as his left hand holds a scroll—indicating that he is literate and probably was once with an inscription—and he wears a rather large signet ring. In his pose he resembles a gentleman from Siena (234) who, somewhat unusually, is actually looking at a small child. Also typical are the reclining men with their enormous, almost Buddha-like, bellies, such as 224, that led Catullus (39.11) to refer to the “*obesus Etruscus*,” a label that needs no translation.



Some of the heads on the late Etruscan funerary urns (233 and 234) seem to resemble each other more than one might expect for portraits. First, the lids may have stock faces that were only superficially modified to represent a recently deceased person, especially if the person died suddenly. Unfortunately, we know nothing about how Etruscan artists went about making portraits and even what they thought constituted a likeness. In recent years, however, developments in forensic science have been applied to the remains of ancient bodies. Perhaps best known is the scanning of Egyptian mummies to learn more about who they were and what happened to them, including the causes of their deaths. A particular subset applies to portraits, because one late, second century C.E. Egyptian mummy, that of Artemidorus, with a painted “Fayum” portrait in the Graeco-Roman tradition, has been scanned and his face reconstructed from his skull.²⁸ When we have a number of such reconstructions, we will be able to compare them to the actual remains to understand what this group of Romanized Egyptians thought was a likeness. Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasha, a woman, who now resides in her terra cotta sarcophagus in London at the British Museum is the lone Etruscan to have had her skull analyzed, reconstructed and compared to her portrait on the lid of her urn.²⁹ I find the resemblance between the reconstruction and the sculpted head rather general—another one of those plump, full-faced Etruscans. The analysis of her bones, however, and what they tell about the kind of life she led is fascinating from her horse-riding accident as a teenager to her severely rotting teeth as an adult.

Second, the physical resemblances between portraits may reflect actual resemblances, since many

234
URN, Siena, MA, Inv. B731. 3rd century
B.C.E.

of those depicted were, indeed, related to each other. In fact, 231 and 232 both belong to members of the Purni family, as can be seen by their inscriptions identifying their occupants.³⁰ Unfortunately only 231 still has his head. At Volterra the Inghirami Tomb, named after the owner of the land where the tomb was discovered, contained nearly fifty urns arranged on a bench around a central pillar as if gathered together in an eternal banquet.³¹ In some cases, what the deceased did is indicated either by a title in the inscription or in his actual depiction.

Women often received the same amount of attention in their burial containers as did the men. I have already mentioned the case of Hanunia. In this exhibition note 228, another urn from Volterra, with a woman elaborately dressed and holding a fan in her left hand. Women do not wear garlands like the men, but like the men who often wear more than one ring (227 and 231), she is bedecked with jewelry. She sports a bracelet on her right wrist, probably had rings on the missing hand, and a choker. Her cask carries a common scene of the husband taking his leave of his wife who reclines on a couch in the center. Cinerary urns for the less wealthy were made of terra cotta and produced in numbers from molds, such as 237-242. They were personalized by the names of the deceased generally painted in red on the top molding of the cask. In addition the colors and painted details in the stock scenes on the casks vary from urn to urn.

Although Etruscans exhibiting the "poor" taste to paint their sculpture would not seem surprising to some scholars, the fact that Greek and Roman sculpture was just as gaudily painted has become evident in the past decade through scientific examination of its surfaces.³² One urn (234) from Siena has remarkable preservation of the color, especially for an object made of alabaster. On the cask appears a seven-figured scene with a winged woman in the center with her left foot resting on an altar. Note her blonde hair, bluish-black wings, but with a yellow eye in her left wing. On either side of her are two three-figure groups consisting of a dying warrior on the ground being supported by a youth with two more warriors on the ends, each gripping a shield. The right fallen warrior is remarkably vivid with his black beard, staring eyes, cuirass, and his left arm hanging limply in his shield with its bright red interior. He wears an animal-headed helmet in contrast to the other fallen warrior who is beardless and in heroic nudity. A spear has pierced his gut with spurts of red blood dripping down. He has apparently slain the bearded warrior with what looks like an uprooted tree. This scene is traditionally identified as Eteocles and Polyneices, the twin sons of Oedipus and Iocasta, after they have killed each other simultaneously in a duel.

To understand why this interpretation has been proposed, let's now turn to the terra cotta pediment from Talamone (293). The artist has managed to squeeze a large number of figures and horses into a triangular space to tell the complex tale of the Seven against Thebes. After Oedipus learns that he has married his mother and had children by her, he blinds himself and passes the rule of Thebes to his twin sons. They agree to share the responsibility by each ruling in alternating years. Of course, as Mel Brooks said, "It's good to be king!" The result was that Eteocles did not relinquish the throne after his year was

227
VOLTERRAN URN. Florence, NMA,
Inv. 5774-5775. 2nd century B.C.E.



up and Polyneices rounded up a force, the Seven against Thebes, to get his turn. The pediment shows the final encounters. On either end is a chariot. Adrastus escapes in the one on the left, while Amphiaros, a seer, will not be killed and so you can see him and his horses, on the right, disappearing into the earth. Above in the center the battle continues to rage on, while below in the most important position is the blind Oedipus—note his closed eyes—supported by a man on our right. On either side of Oedipus are his two dying sons, each with his own assisting figure, either Iocasta or Antigone on the left for Eteokles and a male companion for Polyneices.

This central group is believed to be depicted on the Siena urn (234). One glaring discrepancy between the Talamone pediment and that urn, I believe, indicates that the urn depicts a different subject. The absence of Oedipus is not truly the problem, since the artist could have decided to just depict the central actors of the duel with assisting figures, who themselves could be varied at will. The real problem is the object sticking out of the gut of the right warrior on the urn. Most scholars interpret it as a thunderbolt, even though it resembles no other Etruscan, Greek or Roman thunderbolt. Moreover, each of the other urns in this group portray the “thunderbolt” differently, but as, what looks to me like different kinds of trees.³³ The problem then becomes what story the scene actually represents. And, sadly, I have no explanation, although it must have involved two warriors in a duel, one of whom lost his weapon and/or normally fought with an uprooted tree. While a number of duels have been recorded in the extant literary texts, none quite fits the representations on these urns.

I do believe that it must depict an Etruscan story about two Etruscans, because we know that Etruscans did depict stories about themselves, as is only to be expected. In fact the Dallas show has two urns with Etrusco-Roman legends on their casks. 232, one of the two urns from the Purni family, portrays the ambush of Cacu, an Etruscan seer, and his assistant Artile, seated on our left, by the Vibennae brothers, one on either side of the central group. We know the names for these figures, because they are inscribed on an Etruscan mirror in the British Museum with the four central figures of the urn.³⁴ (Figure 6) The Vibennae brothers were either local heroes or mercenaries varying according to the locale depicting their exploits. On the urn and the mirror one's sympathy is with Cacu because of his central position, seeming unawareness of the attack, and the contrast of his nude body compared to the overly armed and cuirassed Vibennae. Cacu resembles Apollo in his form and pose, but is Etruscized not only by the context, but also in the elaborate necklace with its pendant bullae, not worn by the Greek Apollo. The figures on the urn are in extremely high relief, often with their limbs entirely in the round. The other Purni urn (231) depicts a battle, possibly between Etruscans and Gauls, on its front, but a more interesting subject on its left end. There 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. Livy (7.26.3-5) relates that Valerius Roman, was about to lose the duel, when a raven suddenly appeared and pecked at his Gallic opponent until Valerius won. And henceforth Valerius took the nickname of “Corvus,” “raven” in Latin.³⁵

At this point some background on the relation between the Etruscans and the Romans is necessary.

FIGURE 6 – CACU AMUSED BY THE VIBENNAE. Bronze Mirror. Circa Late 4th/3rd century B.C.E. London, British Museum, 633. Drawing after: *ES* 5: pl. 127.





At the beginning of the previous paragraph I used the term “Etrusco-Roman” to indicate legends shared by both the Etruscans and the Romans, because their history—and even their cultures—are forever intertwined by their physical proximity to each other that led not just to trade but a number of wars. In the sixth century B.C.E.—the height of Etruscan power—the Etruscans ruled Rome. The first temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome was an Etruscan, not a Greek temple. Even later Roman temples depend more on Etruscan than Greek design with their high *podia*, emphasis on the front, and absence of a colonnade surrounding the entire building. As the Romans slowly conquer Italy and extend their reach into Etruria, encounters between the Etruscans and Romans are likely to be subjects for Etruscan art. At the same time some Etruscans are themselves becoming Romanized. Hence Etruscan urns from the Hellenistic period can have scenes depicting encounters with Romans or even, depending on the sympathies of individual Etruscans, Roman stories. This phenomenon does not differ in essence from its counterpart, the depiction of Greek myths on the urns, such as the Seven against Thebes, which I discuss next. All three cultures—Etruscan, Greek and Roman—interacted with each other throughout their joint existence.

Three major centers produced urns in Etruria—Volterra, Chiusi and Perugia—and each of them varied the basic form of the urn. Volterranean urns (227 and 228) have figures with large heads, somewhat truncated bodies with their left thighs flat against the bottom of the lid. These casks tend to have crowning and base moldings with choices of elements that sometimes define different workshops. Chiusine urns, such as the two Purni urns (231 and 232) have more proportionate figures reclining on the lids with their legs more extended and often forming a triangular mass at the left end. The casks have base

244
URN. Florence, NMA, Inv. 86728/86707.
2nd century B.C.E.

13
HUT URN. Florence, NMA, Inv. 6609.
9th century B.C.E.

moldings, but often lack the elaborate crowning moldings of the Volterranean urns. Urns from Perugia are not well represented in this exhibition. 244 belongs to a separate group that roughly takes the shape of a building, perhaps a long-lived survival from Villanovan hut urns (for example, 2 and 13). Those with figures reclining on the lids were oriented more vertically than either Volterranean or Chiusine urns. They tend to have a simple base molding and no crowning molding.³⁶

Let us return to the pediment from Talamone (293), because it provides us with an idea of how models and offshoots worked in Etruria. It was the source for depictions of the Seven against Thebes at all three major urn centers. Most interestingly each center chose a different set of elements for its urns and consistently produced only those variations and not the ones selected by the other centers. Perugia chose the center group of Oedipus with his sons fallen on either side of him and the attack on the city of Thebes itself. Just above Oedipus one can see Capaneus on the ladder holding his shield over his head to protect himself from objects thrown down from the battlements by the defenders. Chiusi does not depict Oedipus at all, but instead manages to cram in both Adrastos and Amphiaraios with their chariots on the ends and the storming of the city in the center with Capaneus on the ladder with a fallen comrade over his shoulder.³⁷ (Figure 7) Volterra uses two types. The first portrays just the two chariots with that of Adrastos, on the left, racing over the sinking one of Amphiaraios.³⁸ The other focuses on the central scene with Oedipus and his two sons, but in this case Kreon, their uncle, is added just left of center with either Iocasta, their mother, or Antigone, their sister, rushing in from the right.³⁹ (Figure 8)

ETRUSCAN AND GREEK ART. ONCE AGAIN

I have tried to present an idea of what Etruscan art was really like as exemplified by objects in the Dallas exhibition. As a result, certain characteristics of Etruscan art have not been discussed, especially those in their splendid tomb paintings. Although the later material—such as the Talamone pediment and the late Etruscan funerary urns—is significant and typical of the period, it does not demonstrate traits like the *joie de vivre* in the tomb paintings or the emphasis on the immediate moment, especially in the eternal conversations of those depicted in the tombs in the pre-Hellenistic funerary monuments, such as the archaic Villa Giulia sarcophagus or the pair of sarcophagi from Vulci now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.⁴⁰ Allied to the spirited representations are other examples of stark emotion, such as the she-demon from the Tomb of the Infernal Quadriga in Sarteano, which I have not discussed here.⁴¹ Nor have I considered here how the Etruscans adapt Greek models of Greek scenes for their own depictions of the same story.⁴² In short, the Etruscans never intended to slavishly copy Greek art, but rather to use it as an aid in portraying their own culture. In particular the Greeks, as I mentioned above, believed that the aim of art was to imitate nature, and they worked extremely hard at doing so from the Archaic period on. While we have no statements by Etruscans about what they thought art was and how it



FIGURE 7 – SEVEN AGAINST THEBES. Alabaster urn. Late 2nd/1st century B.C.E. Chiusi, 215. Drawing after: H. Brunn and G. Körte, *I rilievi delle urne etrusche*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1870-1916) pl. 24 No. 8.

functioned, the art that they have left us does allow us to conclude that “imitation of nature” was not its primary aim or they would not have produced, for example, the “Canopic” urns or the bronze statuette of the woman now in the Louvre. Hence Etruscan art cannot be judged by Greek standards.

I hope that I have demonstrated that the Etruscans produced art that is distinctive to them and even Art with a capital “A.” One of the problems I think is that scholars, trained in Greek art, do not value what they deem lesser pieces and, even when they do, only see them through Greek lenses. The best of Etruscan art is not Greek through and through, but often a meld of the two traditions. The Greek surface is combined with the Etruscan abstract and sense of design, which pre-existed their contacts with the Greeks. The result is new forms. Furthermore, I believe that many scholars exhibit a poverty of imagination in being unable to conceive of a good Etruscan artist. When these scholars come across something that is Etruscan and of high quality, then the piece must have been made by a Greek artist working in Etruria. Even Etruscologists are not immune from this malady. Stephan Steingräber, for example, represents a recent case, when he attributes virtually every high quality Etruscan tomb painting, including those from the Tomb of the Bulls and the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, to Greek artists.⁴³

This approach has three problems. First, we have no evidence for monumental painting from mainland Greece in the Archaic period. We assume it must have existed, even though, when we examine the literary sources, no mention of large-scale paintings occurs before the fifth century B.C.E.⁴⁴ Even more important, the earliest evidence for painted tombs in Ionia (eastern Turkey) date to circa 530 B.C.E. and they are technically well-developed.⁴⁵ In contrast, the Etruscan series begins in the early seventh century B.C.E. with very simple decoration. The Tomb of the Roaring Lions discovered at Veii a few years ago is an example.⁴⁶ In other words, as the evidence now stands, the idea must be faced that not only were the Etruscans in the forefront of the development of monumental painting, but also that the influence may very well have gone from West to East, since the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. mark the height of Etruscan wealth and power. It is merely a scholarly assumption that the Greeks, and the Athenians in particular, were always the dominant culture.

Even worse is the second issue. I simply do not understand why artists who emigrate to Athens, such as Lydos the Lydian and Skythes the Scythian, are considered pure Attic vase-painters with absolutely no traces of their origins in Asia Minor, but any artist who might have emigrated to Etruria from Ionia remains thoroughly Greek. And these artists remain Greek even when they portray Etruscan forms, such as the beak moldings on the fountain and the stand for the catch-basin in the Tomb of the Bulls.⁴⁷ Thirdly, as no scholar mines Greek or Roman art for “true” Etruscan art, so also scholars should cease extracting elements from Etruscan art that they deem high quality and calling them Greek. I find the idea that no Etruscan could achieve Art over a period of 800 years staggering. To some extent our nationalities explain why the Grecophiliacs tend to be Europeans and not Americans. Americans are accustomed not only to the “melting pot” of their population, but also to the recognition that assimilation can be incredibly rapid. Children of immigrants act like Americans not foreigners.



FIGURE 8 – OEDIPUS. Alabaster urn. Late 2nd/1st century B.C.E. Volterra, 374. Drawing after: H. Brunn and G. Körte, *I rilievi delle urne etrusche*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1870-1916) pl. 18 No. 3.

And so we come to the nub of the problem. Why do the Etruscans get such a bad scholarly press? I think that an incident that occurred early in my career in 1974 is instructive. I presented a paper on the appearance of the death of Lucretia on late Etruscan funerary urns as part of a colloquium at Brown University.⁶⁸ Peter von Blanckenhagen, who had been unable to come the day of my talk, nonetheless, jumped into the discussion two days later. While I could accept that he believed that my interpretation of this set of urns was wrong, what I found remarkable was that he could not even contemplate the idea that the Etruscans might have depicted stories about their own past. Our argument went back and forth for about an hour, when finally Blanckenhagen asked me whether I thought that 90 percent of the urns carried Greek scenes. While I privately disagreed with the percentage—I think it's higher—nonetheless, I said at the time that meant 10 percent of the scenes were Etruscan. At this point Blanckenhagen offered his last argument: "Wouldn't it be *nicer* if it were a Greek scene and not an Etruscan one?" And I replied: "No! It would be *nicer* if it were Etruscan and not Greek!" I believe that this anecdote accounts for the dominant view of the Etruscans as lesser artists than the Greeks.

Several generations of scholars, including those active today, are so enthralled by the Greeks—who are often worthy of such admiration—that anything that is not totally Greek is, well, not nice. Combining a classical head on an abstract body is not nice. Showing emotion in a period of restraint is not nice. Exploiting Greek stories for their comic aspects is not nice. In short, Blanckenhagen was right. Etruscan art is not nice. It is unsettling. Because it is eclectic, it is often difficult to categorize.⁶⁹ It does not proceed in an orderly fashion like Greek art by mastering first one element then another in the depiction of the human form. Instead, right from the start and before any Greek influence took hold their art is three-dimensional, abstract and yet so concrete that the face on the "Canopic" urn anticipates Hitchcock. Nor can Etruscan art be mined for remnants of Greek art, because what it borrows, it transmutes. Let us once and for all stop worrying about the red herring of whether the Etruscans produced art with a capital "A" or had an "Etruscan gaze." Let us finally accept reality. The Etruscans not only produced Art, but the Art that they produced is, has been, and always will be Etruscan and not Greek and therefore must be judged only on its own Etruscan terms.

NOTES

1. I have tried to keep my references spare and to emphasize works in English. Parts of this essay were presented as the Archaeological Institute of America's Cinelli lecture in Dallas in February 2008 ("The Art of Etruscan Art") and as a paper ("Giving the Etruscans Their Due") at the annual meetings of the College Art Association, again in February 2008, in a panel organized by Gregory Warden. And speaking of Greg, he is due special thanks for inviting me to write this essay on Etruscan art despite his scholarly *timor gratiae academiciae* (Warden 2008a, 131 n. 1). It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the helpfulness of Bridget Marx both on and offline.
2. Boardman 1967, 155.
3. Boardman 1994, 225.
4. Warden 2008b, 160.
5. See especially Small 1987, 1991/92, 1994a and 1994b.
6. Gombrich 2006, 21.
7. Dating from the early 19th century is the related "Art for art's sake" which was converted to Latin as *Ars gratia artis* around 1916 for the motto for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. (Shapiro 2006, 204 s.n. Howard Dietz No. 2 (with commentary), as well as *Cousin 1* and *Constant de Rebeque 1*.) And as an aside on the aside: Burgess is also the person who in 1906 memorialized "I don't know much about Art, but I know what I like." According to the wonderful *Yale Book of Quotations* that idea goes back at least to 1877. (Shapiro 2006, 114 s.n. Burgess No. 6, with full explanation.)

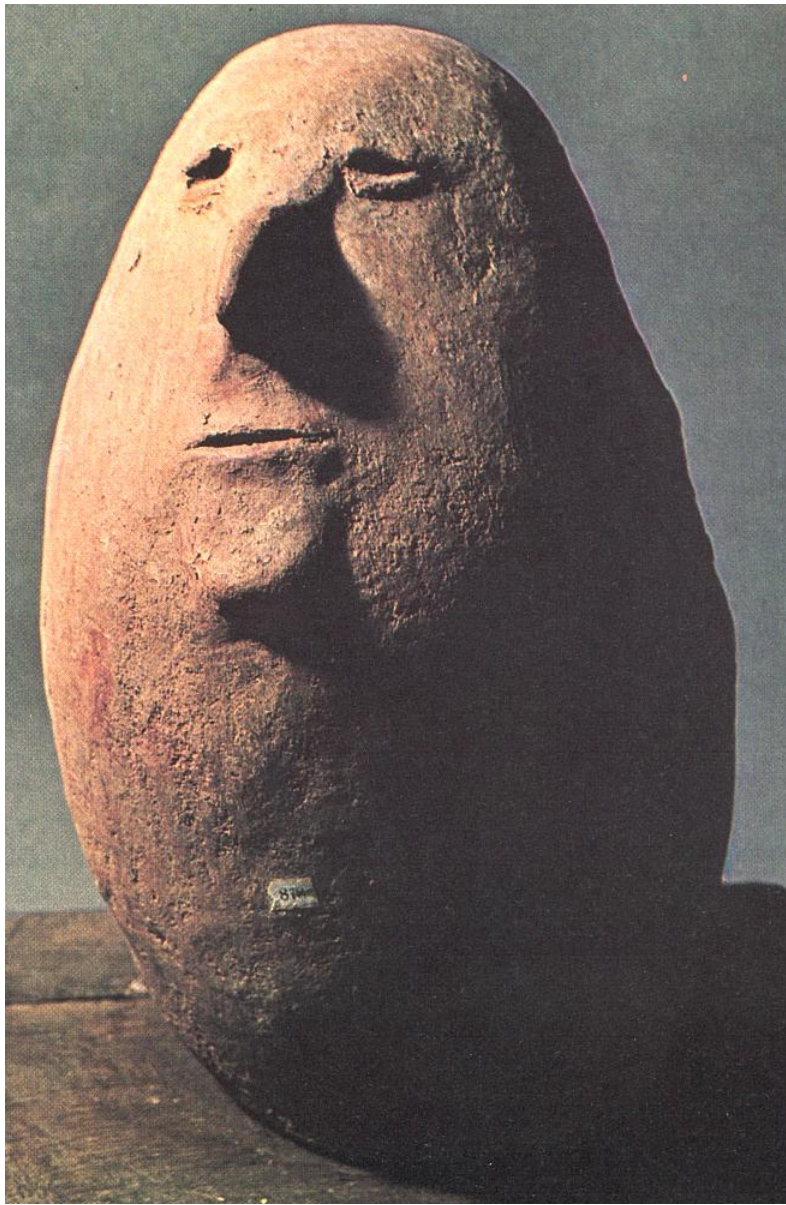
8. Small 1994, 40.
9. Rystedt (2006) discusses Panathenaic amphoras in Etruria.
10. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles 1066; kylix; early fourth century B.C.E.; Sertecamini Painter; *EVP* 6, 54-55 No. 4.
11. Martelli 1987, 149 and 300 No. 2 (with earlier bibliography). "Pontic" amphora by the Paris Painter. From Vulci, now Munich, Antikensammlungen inv. 837. The premise for the statement that the Etruscans flip the direction of Greek models comes from the simple idea that the direction writing runs in will be reflected in its visual scenes. Since Etruscan runs from right to left, its scenes should unfold from right to left in contrast to Greek, which like English, is read from left to right. Naturally like all such basic rules, there are complications and exceptions. The two prime factors are (1) whether the frame tells a story or is decorative and (2) the placement of the scene on the object. For a full and nuanced consideration of the problem, see Small 1987. For the example I discuss in the text, some Greek examples do run from right to left, but not combined with the other qualities I discuss.
12. Simon, 1981:78 with pl. 59 bottom. For example, on one of the legs of the Attic black-figure exaleiptron by the C-Painter. Paris, Louvre CA 616. *ABV* 58 No. 122. *BAD* No. 300499.
13. Martelli 1987, 198 and 316-17 No. 146 (with bibliography). From Civitella Castellana. Now Rome, Villa Giulia 1197. Circa 350 B.C.E.
14. For a Greek example: Heimarmene Painter. Attic red-figure oinochoe. Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16535 (H 525). *ARI*² 1173. *LIMC* 4 Helene 272ⁿ, p. 543 and pl. 340. *BAD* No. 215554.
15. Detroit, Institute of Arts 46.260. Allegedy from Spina. Teitz, 76 No. 65 and 162. Mitten and Doeringer 1967, 176 no. 179 (side view).
16. Brendel 1978, 317-18 with fig. 238 (front).
17. <http://www.samueljohnson.com/dogwalk.html>.
18. An example I am particularly fond of is an Attic red-figure lekythos with Aphrodite kneeling on the bivalve with two Erotes in attendance. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 00.629. Mid-fourth c. B.C.E. Not in *ARI*². For a color photograph: http://www.mfa.org/collections/search_art.asp and search under the inventory number. *BAD* No. 6153.
19. For a three-quarter's frontal view of Hitchcock: <http://z.about.com/d/stamps/1/0/P/3/-/3226.jpg>. For a profile: www.thewrittenwordautographs.com/images/565_1.jpg.
20. Sprenger and Bartoloni pl. 18. 675-650 B.C.E.
21. Brendel 1978, 59.
22. Steingraber 2006, 96-97.
23. Steingraber 2006, 150-51.
24. For the Tomb of the Chariots: Blanck and Weber-Lehmann 1987, 106-109. For the archaic Villa Giulia sarcophagus, from Cerveteri: Sprenger and Bartoloni 1983, pls. 114-115. For the late fourth century B.C.E. pair of sarcophagi from Vulci and now in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 86.145-b and 1975.799; Comstock and Vermeule 1976, 244-49 Nos. 383 and 384.
25. Brendel 1978, 331 fig. 253. Mitten and Doeringer 1967, 182 No. 186. Cristofani 1985, 173 (color photographs), 273-274 No. 67. Paris, Louvre Br. 321; from the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis, Nemi; circa 350 B.C.E.
26. Brendel 1978, 330.
27. Catani and Fiaschi 1984, pl. VI. Volterra 291. Alabaster.
28. Filer 1998. London, British Museum EA 21810. C.E. 100-120.
29. Prag and Neave 1997, 172-200; Swaddling and Prag 2002. London, British Museum GRA 1887.4-2.1
30. The inscriptions most commonly run along the bottom of the lids, but occasionally appear, as in the case of No. 230, on the cask. No. 229 reads: LARTH : PURNI : CURCE; No. 230 reads: ARNTH : PURNI : CURCESA. Note that "colons", not spaces, were used to separate words.
31. Moretti and Maerzke 1970:164-65. *CUE* 1:84-119.
32. Tiverios and Tsifakis 2002; Brinkmann and Wünsche 2004; Pazzanelli *et al.* 2008
33. Small 1981, 57-61, 121-23, and pls. 31-33.
34. Small 1982, 37-56, 113 No. 1, and figs. 1-2. London, British Museum 633. From Bolsena.
35. Small 2001, 137-38.
36. Small 1981, 17 No. 9 and pl. 6a. Travertine. From Perugia. Now Rome, Villa Giulia 50314. The Seven against Thebes.
37. Small 1981, 22 No. 15 and pl. 9a. Chiusi 215. Alabaster.
38. Small 1981, 19-20 No. 12 and pl. 7b. Alabaster. Volterra 186. Late second/first century B.C.E.
39. Small 1981, 15-17 No. 8 and pl. 5. Alabaster. Volterra 374.
40. *Supra*, note 24.
41. Steingraber 2006, 216-17, 230.
42. Small 1982, 120-21 No. 7. I discuss the process in detail and in particular, with respect to the Purni urn (Nos. 230) and 231.
43. Steingraber 2006, 281: "All of them were either produced by Ionian painters themselves or reflect the powerful influence of Ionian art." Compare also Bruno D'Agostino, quoted by Warden (2006): "He [Bruno D'Agostino] begins with a methodological leap of faith by assuming, a priori, that all good things must come from Greece."
44. Pemberton 1989, especially 182-83.
45. I thank Brian Rose for confirming this information. Conversation January 2008.
46. Merola 2006.
47. Steingraber 2006, 78-79.
48. The paper was later published in Small 1976.
49. Compare Brendel 1978, 57: "Obviously the Etruscan practice of free adaptation from models picked at random leads to this apparent lack of rules... the choice of decorative details depended on chance."

Supplementary Material

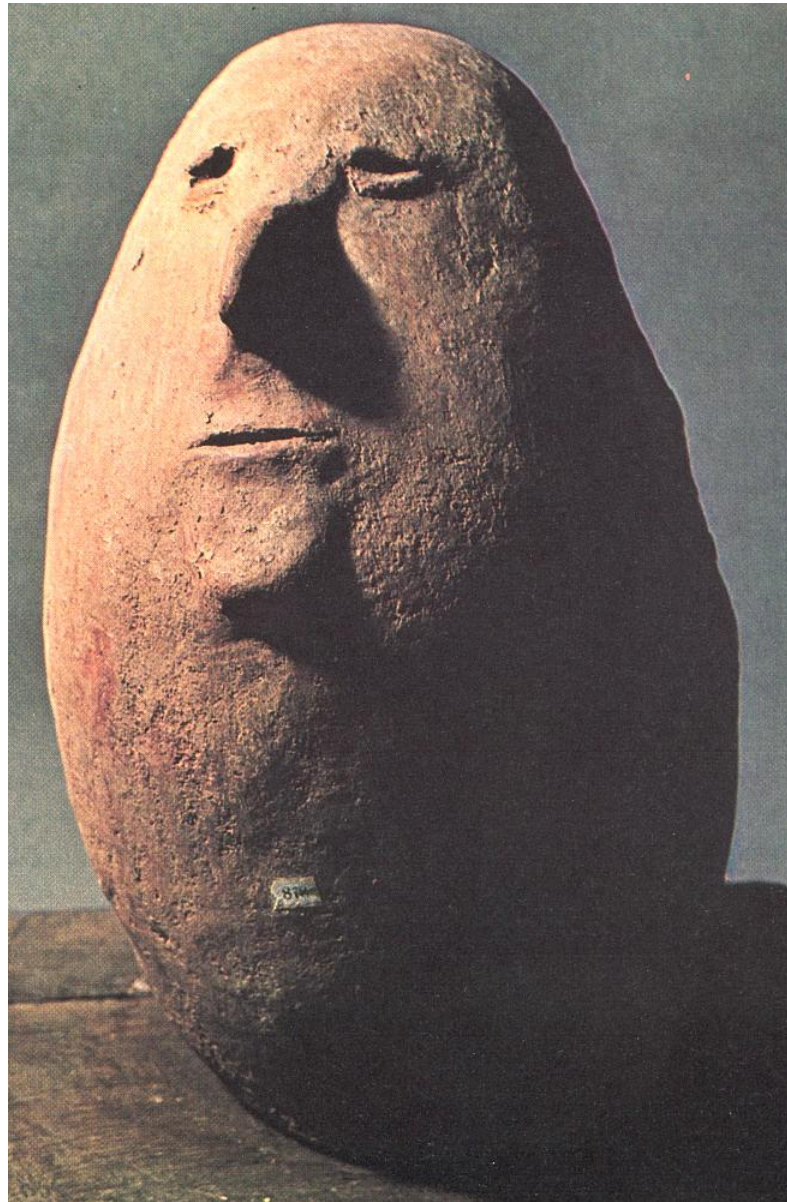
Siena Canopic Head

&

Bibliography







Bibliography

BAD *Beazley Archive Database: www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/databases/pottery.htm*

Blanck, Horst and Cornelia Weber-Lehmann. 1987. *Malerei der Etrusker in Zeichnungen des 19. Jahrhunderts. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.*

Boardman, John. 1967. *Pre-Classical. From Crete to Archaic Greece. Middlesex: Penguin Books.*

Boardman, John. 1994. *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity. Princeton: Princeton University Press.*

Brendel, Otto J. 1978. *Etruscan Art. Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books.*

Brinkmann, Vinzenz and Raimund Wünsch, eds. 2004. *Bunte Götter: Die Farbigkeit antiker Skulptur. 2nd ed. Munich: Mediahaus Biering.*

Cateni, Gabriele and Fabio Fiachi. 1984. *Le urne di Volterra e l'artigianato artistico degli Etruschi. Florence: Sansoni.*

Comstock, Mary B. and Cornelius C. Vermeule. 1976. *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.*

Cristofani, Mauro. 1985. *I bronzi degli etruschi. Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini.*

De Puma, Richard and Jocelyn Penny Small, editors. 1994. *Murlo and Etruscan Studies. Essays in Memory of Kyle Meredith Phillips, Jr. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.*

Filer, Joyce M. 1998. "Revealing the Face of Artemidorus." *Minerva* 9 No. 4: 21-24.

Gombrich, E. H. 2006. *The Story of Art. Pocket Edition. London and New York: Phaidon Press Limited.*

- Gombrich, E. H. 2006. *The Story of Art. Pocket Edition. London and New York: Phaidon Press Limited.*
- Herring, Edward and Irene Lemos, *et al.*, editors. 2006. *Across Frontiers. Etruscans, Greeks, Phoenicians and Cypriots. Studies in Honor of David Ridgway and Francesca Romana Serra Ridgway. London: Accordia Research Institute.*
- Martelli, Marina. 1987. *La ceramica degli etruschi. La pittura vascolare. Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini.*
- Merola, Marco. 2006. "Flights of Fancy." *Archaeology 59 No. 5 (September/October):36-37.*
- Mitten, David and Suzannah F. Doeringer. 1967. *Mater Bronzes from the Classical World. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society.*
- Moretti, Mario and Guglielmo Maetzke. 1970. *The Art of the Etruscans. New York: Harry N. Abrams.*
- Pazanelli, Roberta *et al.* 2008. *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present. Los Angeles: Getty Publications.*
- Pemberton, E. G. 1989. "The Beginning of Monumental Painting in Mainland Greece" in *Studia Pompeiana and Classica edited by Robert Curtis. New Rochelle, NY: A. D. Caratzas:181-197.*
- Prag, John and Richard Neave. 1997. *Making Faces: Using Forensic and Archaeological Evidence. College Station, TX: Texas A and M University Press.*
- Rystedt, Eva. 2006. "Athens in Etruria: A Note on Panathenaic Amphorae and Attic Cermaic Imagery in Etruria" in Herring, Lemos *et al.*:497-506.
- Shapiro, Fred. R. 2006. *The Yale Book of Quotations. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.*

Simon, Erika. 1981. *Die griechischen Vasen. 2nd ed. Munich: Hirmer Verlag.*

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1976. "The Death of Lucretia." *AJA* 80:349-60.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1981. *Studies Related to the Theban Cycle on Late Etruscan Funerary Urns. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider.*

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1982. *Cacus and Marsyas in Etrusco-Roman Legend. Princeton: Princeton University Press.*

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1987. "Left, Right, and Center: Direction in Etruscan Art." *OpRom* 16:7:125-135.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1991/92 [1994]. "The Etruscan View of Greek Art." *Boreas* 14/15:51-65.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1994a. "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: Thoughts on Etruscan Banquets." in De Puma and Small, 1994:85-94.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 1994b. "Scholars, Etruscans, and Attic Painted Vases." *JRA* 7: 34-58.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. 2001. "Hats Off: The Entry of Tarquinius Priscus into Rome?" *EtrStud* 8:131-51.

Sprenger, Maja and Gilda Bartoloni. 1983. *The Etruscans - Their History, Art, and Architecture. New York: Harry N. Abrams.*

Sprenger, Maja and Gilda Bartoloni. 1983. *The Etruscans - Their History, Art, and Architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Steingräber, Stephan. 2006. *Abundance of Life. Etruscan Wall Painting*. Translated by Russell Stockman. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum.

Swaddling, Judith and John Prag, eds. 2002. *Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa: The Story of an Etruscan Noblewoman*. BMOP 100: The British Museum.

Tiverios, M. A. And D. S. Tsiafakis. 2002. *Color in Ancient Greece. The Role of Color in Ancient Greek Art and Architecture 700-31 B.C.* Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Lambrakis Research Foundation.

Warden, P. Gregory. 2006. Review of *The Etruscans Outside Etruria* by Giovannangelo Camporeale. 110.4, <http://www.ajaonline.org/index.php?ptype=breview&riss=28>.

Warden, P. Gregory. 2008a. "Ritual and Representation on a Campana Dinos in Boston." *EtrStud* 11:121-33.

Warden, P. Gregory. 2008b. "Cultural Identity and Etruscan Art." *Abstracts 2008*. College Art Association, 96th Annual Conference. New York: College Art Association.