Introduction

Etruscans Now and Etruscan Studies

Judith Swaddling and Phil Perkins

The Etruscans Now conference for which the papers in this and the next volume of Etruscan Studies were originally written was held 9-11 December 2002. The aim of the conference was to provide a snapshot of current research, excavations and projects related to the Etruscans. Though three years have lapsed since the time of the conference, a résumé of the news items appeared promptly as the Etruscan section of Archaeological Reports of the Journal of Hellenic Studies for 2003. We are grateful to Margarita Gleba, then a PhD student at Bryn Mawr College, for undertaking this and for augmenting the reports with additional information about activity in Etruria. Also in 2003 a brief account of the conference appeared in the magazine Minerva. Authors of the papers presented in Etruscan Studies have had the opportunity to update their papers and we hope that their content retains a topical and lasting value.

The conference constituted a grand gathering of some 150 participants from across the world, from the USA to New Zealand. The innovative feature of the conference was the online pre-publication of the conference papers. This enabled participants to consider the contributions in advance, so that the conference days could be devoted to informed discussion of the 50 papers. The British Museum had already experimented with this idea as far back as 1980 with Italian Iron Age Artefacts in the British Museum, though of course photocopying and postage were then the only means of pre-circulating papers. This time around a happy collaboration with the Open University enabled the papers to be readily accessible with quality illustrations. The website remains online at http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/classtud/etruscans-now/index.htm. We must thank Trish Cashen of the Faculty of Arts of the Open University for technical support with the online pre-publication. The participation of Phil Perkins was enabled by an AHRB exchange grant which also allowed him to study the Etruscan bucchero pottery at the British Museum for a future catalogue (see below). We thank both Dyfri Williams, Keeper of the Greek and Roman Department at the British Museum, and Janet Huskinson, Department of Classical Studies, Open University, for their encouragement and support for the conference and projects arising from it.
The conference was attended by a healthy mix of Etruscologists and others, ranging from world class academics to students just setting out on their studies. The British Academy generously funded participation by three leading representatives of the archaeological authorities of the Italian Culture Ministry: Laura Bonomi (Soprintendenza Archeologica d’Umbria), Anna Rastrelli (Soprintendenza Archeologica di Toscana) and Francesca Boitani (Soprintendenza Archeologica d’Etruria Meridionale), and the distinguished Etruscologist Giovanni Colonna (Università di Roma La Sapienza). The British Museum Friends, led in this endeavour by Nicolas Barber and Margaret Fenn, warmly supported the conference and jointly staged it with us, drawing on the funds of the Lorant Bequest. Miss Eva Lorant was a lover of Etruscan and Umbrian culture and bequeathed her estate to the Friends requesting this interest be borne in mind. This funding enabled the attendance of two postgraduate students and the provision of the annual Lorant lecture and reception to close the conference. On this occasion the lecture was delivered by Dr. Annette Rathje on “Studying the Etruscans: from Antiquarians to Post-Humanism.” The Eva Lorant Memorial Lecture, now in its seventh year, forms a vital part of the Etruscan program at the British Museum. We hope that Miss Lorant would be pleased with the results of her bequest, not least the provision of a £250 prize for the best student contribution to the poster session held at the conference. This was won by Carrie Roth-Murray, then a graduate student at University College London, on “Etruscan Ritual Space: Insights into the Social and Political Developments during the Orientalising and Archaic Periods.” Finally the Friends funded one of the most entertaining aspects of the conference, the musical introduction, for which Peter Holmes and his colleagues played a variety of renditions on their reproductions of Etruscan musical instruments. Fans will be interested to know that Peter’s musical research will be incorporated into his book on Greek and Etruscan music, now well advanced.

We should also like to thank the Caryatids, the supporters of the Greek and Roman Department at the British Museum, and in particular Stephanie McCallum, whose generous assistance provided bursaries for six students, funded both catering and administrative support for the conference, and enabled the employment of Kate Cooper, then of King’s College London, whose hard work was hugely appreciated, as was that of Marian Vian, an ever helpful and courteous colleague now retired from the Greek and Roman Department. Margaret Watmough, another very efficient team member (Imagines Italicae project, Institute of Classical Studies), created and maintained the database for the conference, also under the auspices of the British Museum Friends. We are grateful to students Jessica Hughes and Anoshka Rawden (Courtauld Institute), and Owain Morris (Birkbeck), and also to our regular volunteer Joan Edwards, all of whom cheerfully and enthusiastically gave their time. Cindy Forrest of the University of Richmond, Virginia, a volunteer at the British Museum over the summer of 2005, was extremely helpful in ordering and copy-editing the final versions of the papers.

Our gratitude goes to Kate Morton, illustrator in the Greek and Roman Department at the British Museum, for providing the eye-catching conference logo, the drawing of the little Etruscan bronze actor, and for masterfully dealing with various design and graphics elements of the conference, including some of the illustrations for the papers, advertising, and entries for the poster session.
We thank Professor Larissa Bonfante for the splendid introductory lecture on ‘Etruscan Sex and Magic,’ funded by the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London. Together with the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the ICS funded Margarita Gleba’s work on the Etruscan section of the Archaeological Reports mentioned above, and we are grateful to Lyn Rodley, the editor of AR, for her support and collaboration. Professor Geoffrey Waywell, then Director of the ICS, was, as ever, helpful and encouraging of our pursuits.

For their assistance with publicity, we are grateful to John Wilkins of the Accordia Research Institute and Peter Clayton of Minerva magazine.

Both we and our institutions remain intent on promulgating the study of the Etruscans and establishing the important role which they played in the history and development of the classical world and their legacy to the present day. Not all the papers offered for the conference appear in Etruscan Studies: some were destined for other articles, Festschriften or books. The paper by Judith Swaddling and John Prag on the British Museum’s famous Etruscan terracotta sarcophagus and its skeleton was assimilated into Seianti Hanuma Tlesnasa: The Story of an Etruscan Noblewoman. The paper on bucchero by Phil Perkins, to be part of ES 10, relates to his catalogue of Etruscan bucchero pottery in the British Museum which will appear in 2006/7 as a British Museum Research Paper.

Finally our tremendous thanks go to Professor Greg Warden, Bridget Marx and the Board of Etruscan Studies for taking on publication of the Etruscans Now conference papers, and for their enduring patience and good will. We hope that aspects of the papers and the offshoots of the conference will continue to be of interest and significance to Etruscophiles and others who might eventually join their ranks.

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NOTES

1. Now at the Centre for Textile Research, The Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen.
4. Now Research Associate, Greek Colonization Research Group, Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge.