2002


Jean MacIntosh Turfa
Ann Blair Brownlee

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/etruscan_studies

Recommended Citation

This Report from the Field is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Etruscan Studies by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.
While the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia cannot claim the venerable age of the British Museum, it may, at least, claim a link to the enlightened philosophy of the University’s 18th-century founding light, Benjamin Franklin. When the Museum, originally known as the Free Museum of Science and Art, opened its doors in 1899, it was the embodiment of the ideals of a group of prominent Philadelphians who wanted to establish a collection of historical and educational value for the students and citizens of this area. While not so well known as London’s Lords Hamilton and Townley, the sponsors who began the Etruscan collection, funding it with their own money, included John Wanamaker, the founder of the first American department store, Phoebe A. Hearst, future matriarch of the famous dynasty, and notables of Philadelphia society such as Sara Yorke Stevenson, secretary of the Museum’s Board and curator of both the Mediterranean and Egyptian Sections.1

From the beginning, their intention was to obtain materials with historical or excavated contexts that would be more than isolated objets d’art lacking any association with their original find-spots, and to this end the Museum commissioned Arthur Lincoln Frothingham, Jr., an academic from a wealthy Boston family who was the founding editor of the American Journal of Archaeology and had also been involved in the establishment of the American Academy in Rome. From 1895-1897, while he acted as an agent in Italy for the Museum, Frothingham purchased objects from Italian antiquities dealers, but more important, he sponsored the work of Italian excavators such as Francesco Mancinelli and the Benedetti family and obtained several collections of archaeological material from these authorised excavations. These collections were usually accompanied by documentation of the tombs whence they had been excavated. Relatively complete sets of the grave goods from the necropoleis of Narce, Vulci, Chiusi, Tuscania, and elsewhere thus reached the museum and public view by the turn of the century.
While Frothingham was serving as the Museum’s agent, he was also working for other museums, particularly the Field Museum in Chicago and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He was careful to keep tomb groups together, but in at least three instances we now know that material from a single tomb turned up in both Chicago and Philadelphia. Objects from Tombs B and C at Vulci and from a tomb at Poggio Buco have been recently re-discovered in both museums, and at the Louvre, Françoise Gaultier has identified other finds dispersed from early excavations at Vulci and Narce. An ongoing project is to compare information with Paola Baglione et al., who are researching the materials and archives on the Narce necropoleis that formed the original collection of the Villa Giulia; the human remains retained in some of the Iron Age urns offer the possibility of confirming theories on gender associations in certain classes of artefacts, etc.

Over the years, the collection has been supplemented with material from the Scavi della Hercle in the Ostia necropolis of Vulci and from collections such as the Hilprecht Collection and the Maxwell Sommerville gem collection, formed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A long-term loan of Greek, Etruscan and Roman material from the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the late 1920s and 1930s added a number of Etruscan objects, particularly pottery. The University of Pennsylvania Museum has been outspoken on the issue of the illicit antiquities trade and remains an energetic supporter of the AIA and UNESCO initiatives against illegal trafficking in antiquities.

The University of Pennsylvania Museum has a dual calling not only to provide for the display of ancient art and ethnographic materials, but also to maintain resources for the education of university students as well as the area schools; it offers an active program of tours and school visits, into which the reinstalled Etruscan and Roman galleries must fit. The constellation of Greek, Roman and Etruscan Galleries is presented under the title ‘Worlds Intertwined’ and an introductory gallery features a map of the ancient Mediterranean world and its Roman periphery, emphasizing the interplay between the cultures of the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Mediterranean shores, as well as the modern heritage of these civilizations.

The study collection provides a resource for college and graduate students as well as Etruscan scholars, and some of its materials have formed the bases of M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations. The concerted program of publication continues; a landmark was Edith Hall Dohan’s *Italic Tomb Groups in the University Museum* (1942). A CVA fascicle begun by the late Mary E. Moser will publish the Etrusco-Corinthian vases. Nancy Winter includes the architectural terracottas in her survey volume in progress, and Richard D. De Puma is completing a *CSE* fascicle on the mirrors. Greg Warden has published Italic ambers and assorted bronzes from the collection; a catalogue of the Sommerville gems recently published by Dietrich Berges includes some of the Etruscan scarabs. A.B. Brownlee is studying the Attic vases from the Orvieto necropolis. A *Catalogue of the Etruscan Gallery* by Jean MacIntosh Turfa covers those objects and tomb groups presented in the new display. A study in progress by Marshall J. Becker, with J.M. Turfa, will provide analyses of the skeletal remains that were retained in several urns from Orientalizing Narce and Vulci, Archaic and Hellenistic Chiusi, and 3rd-cen-
Displaying objects of artistic importance along with archaeological materials of a more historical and educational value, the Kyle M. Phillips Jr. Etruscan Gallery (fig. 2) must also complement the other, adjacent ancient galleries of the Museum, spanning Greek and Roman culture as well as the Near East and Egypt. Future plans call for the display of part of the large collection of artefacts from Cyprus and the Bronze Age Aegean. One more commitment for the reinstallations was to restore the original noteworthy architecture of the museum building itself. Alterations of the 1950s have been removed to reveal marble trim and original arched windows which emphasize anew the vaulted ceiling. Historic lighting fixtures have been refurbished and re-hung in the new gallery.

Since the museum is used for school tours and is considered a Philadelphia resource, departments are asked, wherever possible, to display or publish materials relevant to the study of women, children, or other minorities. This presents some challenges for classical collections, but within the thematic units of the gallery are artefacts and text panels treating the lives of women, children and slaves/freed-persons in addition to the expected offerings on warriors, craftsmen and traders. Special family sessions will provide replicas for students to learn more about writing and literacy (wax tablets, the Etruscan source of our alphabet, Etruscan names), costume, Etruscan art and divination, among other topics.

The Etruscan Gallery is organized in thematic units which lend themselves to a low-key chronological order. Visitors entering from the Introductory gallery begin with displays of ‘Early Etruscans,’ introducing the Villanovan and Orientalizing periods, and ‘Warriors and Weavers,’ a presentation of three important tomb groups from 8th-7th century Narce. A small unit on Etruscan language and inscriptions is dominated by Archaic inscriptions, a lintel from a 6th-century tomb at Orvieto and a bucchero sherd with the inscription of Tanaquil Sucisnaia. A plain, large urn inscribed caes v v telmu (ET AT
1.63) may illustrate a family’s Greek and probably servile origin with a freedman ancestor in the second-first century BC. The far end of the gallery gives onto the Roman gallery, and has a unit on the ‘Final Days’ of Etruscan culture and its legacy to Rome, featuring objects of the 4th-2nd centuries BC.

Opposite is the display of architecture and religion, including Archaic through Hellenistic architectural terracottas and objects illustrating cultic activities and Etruscan mythology. In the central section of the gallery, a unit on technology and commerce offers a map indicating Etruscan commercial contacts and materials illustrating the cross-fertilization of the Etruscan and Greek ceramics industries, with a display of vases entitled ‘Greek Potters and Etruscan Consumers’ leading to the entrance of the Greek Gallery. Another display relating to the daily life of men, women, or children includes objects mostly of the 6th-4th centuries BC, with household articles in ceramic and metal, equestrian harness and armour, and gold jewellery.

Among the highlights of the new gallery are several fine bronze vases, an Iron Age hut urn, biconical urns and impasto cups of the Villanovan period, from Bisenzi and elsewhere. Razors, fibulae, and a bronze spindle illustrate typology and gender-issues, while Faliscan red-on-white painted vases, including the famous conical stand with acrobats featured in Brendel’s *Etruscan Art* 6 and grave goods from Vulci lead the visitor into the art of the Orientalizing period. A biconical urn with spherical lid from Vulci Tomb 25 is a rare example of the abstract portraiture of the 7th century; an urn almost certainly of this man’s wife still held the bones of a small teenager when acquired in 1896, and is displayed in the adjacent introductory gallery.

A set of Latest Villanovan/Orientalizing Faliscan tomb groups excavated at Narce and sent to the museum in 1896-97 include the Narce ‘Warrior’ (Tomb 43) whose helmets, cuirass and horse bits are displayed with other goods from his tomb, in addition
to a sheet bronze shield from a slightly later burial. The tomb of a lady (Narce 19M) with bronze fan handle, jewelry and vases is possibly that of his wife, and includes a footed bowl with master of horses made to match the warrior’s bowl showing a skirted ‘mistress of horses’ on its rim. The tomb group (102F) of a small child, close in date, but not necessarily related to the couple, is displayed with its miniature replicas of vases and women’s jewellery.

Under the topic of daily life, men’s goods are used to illustrate a shift in Etruscan society as “warriors become citizens,” with the famous Etrusco-Corinthian warrior olpe from Vulci (fig. 3) as backdrop for bronze helmets of the sixth through fourth centuries (Picene, Negau, fig. 4] and Celtic types), weapons and horse bits (one set from a Tarquinian necropolis with the horse’s teeth adhering).

Personal seals and metal parts of a sella curulis complete the picture of a man’s civic duties. Other fine seals (most from the Sommerville Collection) offer images from the animal world of Etruria, while the instrumentum domesticum provides a glimpse of the banquet. Women are treated in a display of weaving implements, including one of the enigmatic bronze objects from women’s tombs at Narce, Veii and elsewhere not yet satisfactorily identified as to function. A series of fine gold jewellery, especially earrings, illustrate the chronological progression of Etruscan fashions, as does a fragmentary pair of the famous Etruscan hinged sandals from Vulci tomb C (6th-century BC). A section dealing with technology and commerce displays the craft of bucchero, Etrusco-Corinthian and Black Figure pottery with examples from Vulci, Chiusi and Orvieto, and the fabled Etruscan bronze utensils (torch holders, cistae, strainers and vessels). Stone sculpture is illustrated by a fragmentary winged lion in the style of Vulci, to be included in the corpus of Iefke van Kampen, part of the head of a sphinx from the necropolis of Narce, and a fragmentary Chiusine cippus featuring one of the less common types of prothesis scene. A miniature seventh-century bird finial from Cerveteri and probably belonging to a brooch, a bauiletto earrings and other pieces illustrate the techniques of goldsmithing and, of course, granulation. Picene and related ambers, glass and faience beads and amulets, a Negau helmet (fig. 4) and bucchero kantharos recall the varied trade routes of Etruscan merchants.

Red Figure vases, gems and mirrors provide examples of mythological iconography as background for the subject of Etruscan religion, with images of divination, Dionysiac cult, Herce, the Dioscuri and Lasa. Votives
include bronze figurines and anatomical models. Etruscan temples are represented by an archaic series of female antefixes from Cerveteri and revetment plaques and antefixes from Orvieto that include a possible maenad narrative composition. The Orvietan terracottas have been linked by Simonetta Stopponi to fabrics and mold types recently identified at the site of Campo della Fiera, and will be fully discussed in her study of the pieces found there in the 19th century and dispersed to several museums. A set of large, 4th-century shell antefixes from Cerveteri features satyrs alternating with maenads whose skin is either white or black. (Most of the architectural terracottas were included in Andrén’s corpus, and all will be treated by Winter in her complete catalogue, forthcoming.) The fragmentary mold for the head of a large ketos from a sanctuary workshop at Praeneste is displayed with a cast.

The Late period in Etruria is signalled by a man’s sarcophagus in nenfro from Musarna, and by the fine, limestone urn of Arnth Remzna from Colle with his reclining effigy on the lid wearing a priest’s pointed hat (fig. 7). The inscription names him zilath šcupitnueś (CIE 1192). Terracotta urns from the territory of Chiusi include reliefs of the hero with the plough and Eteokles and Polyneikes; one lid and one chest bear inscribed names that show the gradual transition of Etruria into the Roman sphere. A ‘collared urn’ from Montebello is one of four urns that entered the museum still containing the cremated remains of a 3rd-century family. A tomb excavated at Tuscania is represented by a part of the offerings that accompanied six burials: a nenfro female bust (fig. 8), early glass bowl, bronze mirrors, black gloss vases and a large fusiform unguentarium with extensive pseudomorph of its original raffia wrapping. Assorted painted vases illustrate the escapist repertoire of Late Etruscan art.

The permanent gallery, along with the Roman gallery and introductory display of ‘Worlds Intertwined’ officially opened March 16, 2003. A symposium on Etruscan culture, “Etruscans Revealed,” was held March 28-29, 2003, featuring two days of specialist
papers and a special session on artifacts. Objects too fragile or otherwise unsuitable for the gallery’s displays were displayed on tables in a workshop session in which graduates, scholars and laymen mingled, examining the materials and discussing their specialties in an informal setting. The speakers included: Maria Paola Baglione, Gilda Bartoloni, Claudio Bizzarri, Dominique Briquel, Giovannangelo Camporeale, Nancy T. de Grummond (keynote), Jean Gran-Aymerich, Sybille Haynes, Tom Rasmussen, Stephan Steingräber, Simonetta Stopponi, L. Bouke van der Meer, and Bruce Velde, with chairs Larissa Bonfante, Richard D. De Puma and P. Gregory Warden.

A brief guide to both galle ries provides background, maps, and color illustrations of selected pieces; the full catalogue appeared in 2005 and will be followed by specialist studies on objects displayed and stored, including textiles and pseudomorphs (Margarita Gleba and Jean MacIntosh Turfa). There remains a large study collection of vases, bronzes and other Etruscan finds yet to be fully studied and published.

All photos University of Pennsylvania Museum, except for fig. 2: Ann Blair Brownlee

NOTES

5. Bonfante forthcoming restores the correct reading of Fiesel 1936, which should supersede TLE Cr 2.42.

BIBLIOGRAPHY