

THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

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Editors

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book nonetheless also points to the problems that can arise in cross-cultural study. "I am only too well aware of the reasons for the uneasiness I felt on coming into contact with Islam: I rediscovered in Islam the world I myself had come from: Islam is the West of the East . . . I cannot easily forgive Islam for showing me our own image." For all his insight into the workings of colonialism, the uneasiness with Islam evinced by Lévi-Strauss spills over into an approach that seems dangerously reductionist, and his book refers to Muslims as "incapable of tolerating the existence of others as others." *Tristes tropiques* signals to the reader the brilliance of the ethnographer's insight and the limits of his encounter with alterity. But it would be wrong to hold up *Tristes tropiques* as an example of current thinking. In fact, the field of ethnography has subjected itself to several critiques over the past generation and has extensively interrogated its involvement with colonialism, ethnocentrism, and racism. No small part of that process has meant the rethinking of ethnography's relationship to the Greek and Roman sources that helped shape the modern field. A beneficiary of such self-scrutiny has been not only ethnography and its related disciplines but also the study of those traditions that have been handed down from antiquity to the present day.

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Etruscans

Despite the nearly complete loss of all ancient literary sources on the Etruscan world, and especially of the treatises dedicated specifically to it—Aristotle's *Nomina Tyrrhenon*, Theophrastus' *Peri Tyrrhenon*, Sostratus of Nisa's *Tyrrhenika*, the work of Aulus Caecina, Verrius Flaccus's *Rerum Etruscarum libri*, the *Tyrrhenika* of the emperor Claudius—it nevertheless seems certain that Etruria constituted a solid benchmark in the ancient tradition. This was the case for its political and institutional, artistic and cultural, and especially its religious aspects, particularly because of the echo it had in Roman culture beginning in antiquity. The importance of this tradition before the late republican and imperial periods is not easily discernable; nevertheless, the little data available indicate that it was quite ample and varied.

Beyond the primacy that the ancient tradition granted to Etruria in various spheres, or to Etruscan culture's influence on political ideology and its related rituals in the Roman world, it is above all the magical-religious system of the Etruscans that left the greatest mark on the tradition of the ancients, who saw in the Etruscans "the most

religious people" inasmuch as they "excelled everyone in religious observance" (Livy 5.1.6). Other *topoi* reappear several times in the tradition, such as the emblematic image of Etruscan piracy found in Syracusan and Athenian propaganda in the late classical period, or that of *tryphē*, dear to a certain moralistic and philosophical tradition from Theopompus to Poseidonius. In the realm of art history there is the recovery of "Etruscan" motifs, which, however, is limited to specialized treatises (e.g., Vitruvius' *Tuscanicae dispositiones*) or to the episodic revival of themes and motifs for the purpose of commemorating certain purchasers (e.g., the so-called Corsini throne from the villa of Plautius Lateranus). Nevertheless, it is this theme of religion that predominates.

If on the one hand imperial culture quite clearly emphasized the substantial otherness of the Etruscan world compared to the Graeco-Roman one (Seneca, *Naturales quaestiones* 2.32.2), on the other hand an uninterrupted tradition, running from Tarquinius Priscus to Justinian's Constantinople, is interested precisely in the *Etrusca disciplina*, or divination guide, thanks in part to the Roman custom of turning to Etruscan haruspices (diviners) in the case of *prodigia*, *ostenta*, and *portenta*. In the second half of the 3rd century, Cornelius Labeo turned his attention to clarifying certain aspects of it that at the time were still perfectly integrated into the religious practice of the Roman world. One century later, Macrobius in his *Saturnalia* explained not only the practical side of rites and divination, but also their doctrinal content. In the 5th century Proclus, the Neoplatonist product of Hellenistic culture, submitted the normative Etruscan myth of Tages, whom he compared to chthonic Hermes, to an allegorical interpretation. In the 6th century John the Lydian, in his treatise on prodigies, identified the *Etrusca disciplina* as the most perfect expression of the Roman *mos maiorum* (traditionalism). This line, however, was broken by the decisive establishment of Christianity and by the repeated condemnations, pronounced until the turn of the 7th century by the Church and by various political authorities, of the survival of the "haruspical superstitions of the Etruscans," which had been preserved through the years of the Empire and were in part continued in the barbarian kingdoms such as Visigothic Spain.

Not until the 14th century did the Etruscan world reappear in the tradition, especially in the culture of those regions that traced their own origins to the Etruscan past, Florence and Tuscany but also Rome, the area around Viterbo, and Umbria east of the Tiber. There are a few cases of the reuse of Etruscan monuments in the High Middle Ages, such as the late-classical urn used in the 12th century in Volterra as a reliquary for the remains of Saint Clement, as well as the possible (but not sufficiently substantiated) reappearance of iconographic motifs in the repertory of artists such as Nicola and Giovanni Pisano (13th and 14th cent.). For the most part, though, the Etruscan world (as opposed to that of imperial Rome, which had been dear to the entire medieval tradition) reappeared in an intellectual paradigm whose object was to

identify the lines of an autochthonous and independent tradition. Thus, Giovanni Villani, taking a regional perspective rather than a specifically urban one, referred significantly to Etruria, not to Tuscia. This gradually seeped into the consciousness of important Humanists such as Coluccio Salutati and then Leonardo Bruni, who in his *Historiarum florentini populi libri XII* put the Etruscan myth of urban civilization to a cogent and significant use for the politics and ideology of his day.

With Humanism, then, literature, art, and culture embraced the "glorious people of Tages" (*glorioso popolo tageto*)—as Giovanni Gherardi da Prato referred to the Etruscans in his 1425 work, *Paradiso degli Alberti*—knowledge of whom was only then starting to be accumulated as artifacts were discovered. The influence of Etruscan and Roman remains can now be seen in the work of artists who turned ancient expressive forms to new creative ends, even inserting archaic elements into their work, as in the case of a clay bust of John the Baptist, preserved in San Matteo in Pisa, in which the lid of a Hellenistic chest is used as a halo. What is more, through the learned speculations of Alberti and Filarete, the period witnessed the recovery of ancient monuments, such as the tomb of Porsenna in Chiusi. It became an object of repeated exercises for architects, especially Antonio da Sangallo, and an undisputed landmark on the ideological panorama of the area, as can be seen in Vincenzo Fedeli's 1561 speech to the Venetian Senate. In early art history, the 1550 edition of Vasari's *Vite* emphasized Donatello's debt to the Etruscan past, or what was believed to be such. And an indication of the weighty significance which that past had for Humanistic culture is offered by the epitaph composed (perhaps) by Lorenzo Valla for the tomb of Beato Angelico in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome, where the painter is called *flos Etruriae* (flower of Etruria).

In Cosimo de' Medici's Florence, Ugolino Verino remarked on the city's roots in Sulla and the Etruscans. In Lorenzo the Magnificent's time, although Poliziano exalted the role of Octavianus in Florence's origins and identified the city as the successor to imperial Rome—much like what Sixtus IV was doing in Rome—Naldo Naldi celebrated *il Magnifico* as "Tyrrhenus Apollus," making recourse to a fanciful etymology for the name Lorenzo: *lauri dictus de nomine Daphnis/pastor ab Etruscis* (*Eclogues* 1). The view of the Etruscans as embodying a rural serenity and far-off wisdom was reinforced by several artifacts sent to Lorenzo, like the Venus with an Etruscan inscription found in Pistoia, or the supposed funerary urn of Porsenna offered by the Siense.

It was nevertheless in the Rome of Alexander VI that the Etruscan world became an object of devoted interest, in the work of the Dominican Giovanni Nanni, better known as Annio of Viterbo (ca. 1432–1502). Drawing whimsically on a combination of classical, Old Testament, cabalistic, and astrological sources, he reconstructed a vision of Etruscan primacy in the history of the world, tracing the Etruscans' origin to Noah, and before him to

Osiris, who came to Italy with the name of Janus (for the Latins) or Vertumnus (for the Etruscans). This figure supposedly acted as a bearer of civilization and founded, among others, the city of Viterbo, which thus took on the status of the ideal center of the entire region. Unlike previous attempts to exalt a city's most ancient past, such as Lorenzo Vitelli's (1454) in Corneto (Tarquinia), Annio's work, supported by documents and inscriptions often artfully invented by the author himself, found ultimate form in the publication of the *Antiquitates* (1498). Its popularity is attested not only by the subsequent Parisian editions of 1512 and 1515 and by Teodoro Siciliano's mid-16th-century use of it for his images in the Sala del Consiglio in Viterbo's Palazzo Comunale, but also by the extraordinary staying power that Annio's theory had, especially in Tuscan culture during the 16th century and beyond.

The increase of discoveries claimed the attention of scholars and artists, who then took up Etruscan themes. For example, in the 1510s Sansovino fashioned for Montepulciano a statue of Porsenna, the mythical founder of the city. Nevertheless, the Etruscan world's influence on art seems rather weak. If Leonardo sketched the tumulus in Castellina in Chianti, no such interest is found, contrary to what has been claimed several times, in Michelangelo, one of whose famous drawings seems to be based not on motifs of Etruscan demonology but rather on the *signiferi* of the Column of Trajan. Only in architecture would the recovery of an Etruscan style, revived through the reappropriation of Vitruvius, enjoy extraordinary popularity from the beginning of the Renaissance.

In smaller centers the Etruscan myth, through the filter of Annio's ideas, nourished the exaltation of the most ancient past, as can be seen, for example, in Raffaele Maffei in Volterra, Sigismondo Tizio in Siena, and Marco Attilio Alessi in Arezzo. It was above all Cosimo I's Florence, however, that used the Etruscan world to give a historical veneer to a ruling ideology. The Accademia Fiorentina, founded by the Duke in 1541, was where this political and cultural paradigm was forged. Giambattista Gelli in his *Dell'origine di Firenze* (ca. 1544) and Pier Francesco Giambullari with his *Gello* (1546) reconfirmed Annio's Noah myth with new information, and the Dominican Santi Marmocchini, in 1544, attempted to trace the Tuscan vernacular by way of Etruscan back to Hebrew. On the one hand, Marmocchini corroborated Annio's theory; on the other, he held up Tuscan as the language best suited to preserving the flavor of truth of the divine word passed down by the Bible. In this framework fits the Frenchman Guillaume Postel's *De Etruriae regionis originibus* (1551), with good reason printed in Florence and dedicated *Cosmo Medici illustrissimo Etruriae Occiduae Duci*. It supported the Medici family's dynastic exigencies with a mythical history that, through the Noah legend, firmly united Rome, Etruria, and France, projecting the roots of their identity into the pre-classical past, that is, into a time before the creation of the Holy Roman Empire. From there, however, Cosimo's orientation had to change only slightly to move in the direction of Roman

classicism, as can be seen in the tastes of the prince's collections. For if, with Vasari, he put the Chimera of Arezzo in the Palazzo Vecchio, he kept the bronze statue of the Arringatore, discovered in 1566 and thought to be Scipio the Younger (although it was obviously Etruscan, as could be seen from its inscription), in his own apartment in the new ducal residence in Palazzo Pitti.

The refined and eclectic atmosphere of his successor, Francesco, continued the resuscitation of the Etruscan world through rhetoric and learning. Accordingly, when in 1578 Alessandro Allori finished his celebration of the Medici at the villa of Poggio a Caiano with the *Giardino delle Esperidi*, he paired Cosimo-as-Hercules with the image of Fortune-Providence. As a new goddess, Nortia, she drives in the tenth nail to mark the beginning of the tenth year since the Medici had gained possession of the grand-ducal crown, which she raises with a gesture of triumph. Similar erudition marked output in the minor arts, as seen in a small bronze by an unknown Florentine craftsman that depicts an Etruscan priest, once in Alfonso II's Antichario in Ferrara and today in the Museo Civico there (inv. 8462).

It is the years of Francesco's rule and then of Ferdinand I and of his successor (1574–1621) that witnessed the progressive assertion of a lay historiography, unfettered by the sacred Scriptures, beginning with the works of Vincenzo Borghini and Scipione Ammirato. This period also saw, regarding the Etruscan world, an abrupt shift in viewpoint to one that took its bearings from an Etruria of kings, of whom Porsenna was the most famous and the Grand Duke was the heir. Part of this effort was *De Etruria regali*, written between 1616 and 1618 by the Scot Thomas Dempster, a teacher at the Pisan Studio. Commissioned by Cosimo II himself, this work of ambitious but muddled scholarship uses a combination of classical sources and apocryphal literature of the 16th century to describe the cities of Tuscany and to reconstruct a legendary genealogy of kings; its obvious intention is to demonstrate an undisputed historical continuity between the Etruscans and the ruling family. This work was not printed at the time, however, in part because of a shift in the Grand Duke's viewpoint. It is no coincidence that in 1619 he had Zenobi Pignoni print the court poet Giovanni Domenico Peri's *Fiesole distrutta*, a work that took up the theme of the Caesarian origin of Florence, which had been dear to Giovanni Villani's medieval historiography, and exalted the Grand Duke as a new Caesar.

But it is not only the Florentine and Tuscan sphere that is interested in the Etruscans. The appearance and extraordinary success of Leandro Alberti's *Descrittione di tutta Italia*, first published in Bologna in 1550 and reprinted many times, spread knowledge of the Etruscan remains then known to a wider audience, attracting the attention of literati, scholars, and collectors to that world. Thus, in Bologna Ulisse Aldrovandi speculated on the Etruscan language and argued that it was derived from Aramaic in his *De linguis*, composed between 1579 and 1582 but never printed. And in Ferrara, among the *mira-*

bilia to be seen and admired in Alfonso II's collection, curated by Pirro Ligorio, was the famous Apollo of Ferrara, the *iuvenis laurea coronati signum aeneum pulcherrimum et vetustissimum* with an Etruscan inscription that the Dutchman Etienne Wijnants, better known as Pighius, noted in his diary during his tour of Italy in 1574.

The 17th century apparently took no interest in the Etruscans, apart from the attention of collectors or from a few lone and locally oriented writings, such as Felice Ciatti's work on Perugia (1638) and the reveries of Curzio Inghirami of Volterra (1637), which ignited a lively polemic even in the Roman sphere.

It was not until the beginning of the 18th century that the Etruscan world received a renewed interest. After Giusto Fontanini's parochial *De antiquitatibus Hortae* (1708) and the fleeting mentions in Montfaucon's *Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figure* (1719–1724), it was the publication of Dempster's work, promoted in Florence in the fall of 1719 by Filippo Buonarroti and financed by the Duke of Holkham, that directed and advanced the rediscovery of the Etruscans. This project thus came to be intertwined in the complex political picture of the end of the Medici dynasty and of the fate of the Granducato. These two volumes were introduced into circulation in 1726 by the grand-ducal printing office, and they were supplemented with a text by Buonarroti himself, which treated the principal issues of the Etruscan world with illustrations of well-known Etruscan artifacts (or those believed to be such at the time). Regarding politics and institutions, the publication contributed powerfully, on the ideological and cultural level, to the cohesiveness of a new identity being constructed for the region, where the primacy of Florence was dissolving into the more general dimension of Tuscany. On the other hand, it constituted a profound renewal of the tradition of archaeological studies, opening the way to the modern understanding of the Etruscan world, and the work enjoyed noteworthy success not only in Italy but also throughout Europe. In Rome Clement XII's elevation to the papal see was celebrated with Domenico Rolli's *Porsenna* (1731), and the anticipated revival of the papal state's centrality was exalted with the commemoration of the Roman-Etruscan alliance. At the same time academies were founded, such as the Etrusca in Cortona (1726) and the Colombaria in Florence (1735), and others, such as the Quirini in Rome, were renewed.

With the development of archaeological studies and the increase in discoveries, the first half of the 18th century witnessed a widespread Etruscomania that gripped the entire European intellectual world. Beside the work of Scipione Maffei, it is above all the Florentine Anton Francesco Gori and his *Museum Etruscum* (1737–1743) that dominated the cultural horizon—and not only in Italy, as can be seen by the echo his writings had in France, England, and German-speaking countries, where in 1770 a kind of *großer Querschnitt* of his *Museum Etruscum* was published for the use of students and collectors. As in the 16th century, issues of language and script were the privi-

leged area in archaeological studies, in which a long-lasting reciprocal exchange of copies of inscriptions facilitated attempts at deciphering.

On the epigraphical side of things, a partial resolution of the difficulties in reading inscriptions came at the hands of the Swiss Louis Bourguet and the three essays he published in Geneva's *Bibliothèque Italique*. Regarding linguistic and lexical issues, however, it was not possible to go beyond a very elementary stage, and efforts at translation were limited to free and imaginative divinations that today seem embarrassing. Such were the conjectures of Giovan Battista Passeri of Pesaro in his *Lettere Roncagliesi* (1741), and of Giovanni Lami in his *Lettere Gualfondiane*, published under the name of Clemente Bini in the pages of *Novelle letterarie* in 1744.

With the passing of Gori and the intellectuals of his generation in the 1750s, a phase of rearguard positions of a purely parochial type neared its end, although it would continue on listlessly, with archaeologists all over Italy, until the turn of the next century. These were the years in which interest in the Etruscan world intensified on the part of non-Italian artists and archaeologists, such as the Englishman Thomas Jenkins, who in 1761 excavated the Monterozzi necropolis of Tarquinia, and the Scot James Byres, who a few years later began writing his *History of the Etrurians* (never finished), in which he reasserted the Etruscans' primacy over Rome in the fields of art, science, and literature. The observations and new aesthetic approach, first of Winckelmann and then of Ennio Quirino Visconti and Luigi Lanzi, soon had an effect on how the Etruscan world was viewed both in Italy and in the broader European sphere. The particular interest of the Pole Stanislaw Kostka Potocki in the Etruscans in Campania testified to this development.

In the language of melodrama we find an indication of the popular understanding of the Etruscan world: the term *Etruscan* is used as a synonym for excellence and originality, but also for "strange." And the activity of many craftsmen and artisans in various media, particularly ceramics, contributed in the decades around the turn of the 19th century to the diffusion throughout Europe of a very common "Etruscan style" of furniture and decoration. A more informed interpretation of painted ceramics evolved at this point. They had been considered Etruscan simply because of their discovery in Etruria, an idea confirmed in no uncertain terms in Giovan Battista Passeri's monumental work, the three-volume *Picturae Etruscorum in vasculis* (1767-1775), but they were actually Greek, as Winckelmann and Lanzi had already clarified. This fact gradually became widely accepted, thanks to Eduard Gerhard's 1831 essay on the Vulcian discoveries of Luciano Bonaparte, the Candelori brothers, and the Feoli.

In Italy the appearance of Giuseppe Micali's (1810) successful and oft-reprinted work, *Italia avanti il dominio dei romani* (1810), despite being steeped in the Enlightenment, provided nourishment for the neo-Guelph current of historiography throughout the entire 19th century,

above all with Gino Capponi and Atto Vannucci. In Germany, philological *Altertumswissenschaft* (science of antiquity) took up the Etruscans with the first edition of Karl Otfried Müller's *Die Etrusker* (1828). In England the way was definitively opened for a more enduring interest in ancient Etruria and its culture by the exhibition organized in London in 1836 by the Campanari family, excavators and merchants of Tuscan art, as well as by Elizabeth Caroline Hamilton Gray's *History of Etruria* (1840) and George Dennis's *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* (1848), both reprinted many times. In France the *fascination des Etrusques* was echoed in the writings of Stendhal and Mérimée.

Starting in the second half of the 19th century, further discoveries, the parallel formation of the great European collections, and the development of philological studies and of research heedful of the historical evolution of Etruscan culture combined to lay the foundation for a more informed understanding of the Etruscan people and their world. Nevertheless, there remained irrational impulses toward a supposed "Etruscan mystery," which are still present today, especially at the level of popular culture. Be that as it may, interest in the Etruscans did not become a coherent and defined subject of historical knowledge until the 20th century. This civilization has continued to fascinate, a fact reflected in the art and literature of the Western world.

Regarding the figurative arts, even though it has been definitively shown that there was no Etruscan influence on the 20th-century sculptor Alberto Giacometti of Ticino, it is above all the Italian sphere that is most under the sway of the Etruscan heritage. On the one hand there are the more or less influence-free reinterpretations of certain sculptors, such as Marino Marini or Arturo Martini. On the other there is the proud insertion of Etruscan artifacts with symbolic meaning into pictures, such as Oscar Ghiglia's *Self-Portrait* (1919) in the Uffizi, where a famous boundary stone from Orvieto (held in the Museo Archeologico in Florence) depicted behind the painter emphasizes the Etruscan roots of his art. The fascination for the Etruscans can be discerned even more in literature. In Italy, Etruria is the land of tombs and underworld deities, as seen in D'Annunzio or Malaparte or Alberto Savinio. In France the same motif is tinged with further psychological and mediumistic elements, which characterize, for example, Daniel Rops's novella *Le Dieu de l'ombre du soir* (1935). The Anglo-Saxon world, however, has crafted a reinterpretation, as D. H. Lawrence (*Etruscan Places*, 1932) and Aldous Huxley (*Those Barren Leaves*, 1925, *Point Counter Point*, 1928) freely forged their own Etruria, lavishly and impulsively vital and happy, as part of their yearning for a lost world. Only the large traveling Etruscan exhibition of 1955-1956, which circulated to Zurich, Milan, Paris, the Hague, Oslo, and Cologne, made the Etruscan world properly known to the public and critics alike.

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Translated by Patrick Baker

Etymology

In the first decades of the 7th century CE, Isidore, bishop of Seville, compiled a 20-book work in Latin called *Etymologiae sive origines* (*Etymologies or Origins*). Our knowledge of ancient and early medieval thought owes an enormous amount to this encyclopedia, a reflective catalogue of received wisdom, which the authors of the only complete translation into English introduce as "arguably the most influential book, after the Bible, in the learned world of the Latin West for nearly a thousand years" (Barney et al. 2006, 3). These days, of course, Isidore and his *Etymologies* are anything but household names—the translation dates only from 2006 and the heading of the Wikipedia entry "Etymology" warns, "Not to be confused with *Entomology*, the scientific study of insects"—but the Vatican is reportedly considering naming Isidore the patron saint of the Internet, which should make him and his greatest scholarly achievement known, if but dimly, to pretty much everyone.

People today are liable to confuse *etymology* with *entomology* because the words look and sound similar and, furthermore, because neither is so common, or describes so widespread a pursuit, as to be part of semantically transparent everyday discourse. Isidore himself would not have mixed them up: he knew Greek and understood that his subject was not "the study (-logy) of insects (*entomo-*)" but instead "the study of truth (*etymo-*)"—or, as he put it, "the origin of words, when the force of a verb or a noun is inferred through interpretation" (1.29.1, trans. Barney et al. 2006, 54). But it is not out of the question that he would nevertheless have believed them to be connected: perhaps there are *bees* in the ABCs? If it is of questionable judgment in a serious handbook to ascribe to Isidore, even in jest, an English-language-based case of wordplay (though I take comfort in knowing that the ardent wordsmith and lepidopterist Vladimir Nabokov shows himself scient in his 1969 novel *Ada* of the power potential in the anagrams *insect*, *incest*, and *nicest*, and also that the most Isidorean of contemporary Latinists, John Henderson, has recently written a pun-filled book on the *Etymologies*), it is nonetheless appropriately illustrative of the leading principle of ancient etymological practice, namely that things that sound even vaguely similar are the same in origin. For example, Isidore writes, "Fire [*ignis*] is so named because nothing can be born [*gignere*] from it, for it is an inviolable element, consuming everything that it seizes" (19.6.5, 376-377)—or, in Henderson's rendering, "'Fire' is so-called because *no way to sire* from it" (2007, 201). This is a case of an etymology *e contrario*, "from the opposite," a negative method that may well strike