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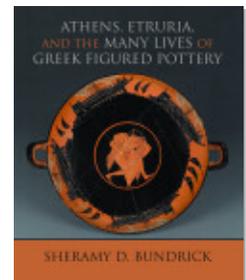
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Context, Consumption, and Attic Vases in Etruria

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCED THE DUAL MEANINGS OF “CONSUMPTION”: both the purchase or other acquisition of objects as economic commodities and the use and integration of objects into local material culture by individuals or communities. In much past scholarship, the Etruscans were characterized as eager yet passive recipients of Greek goods, customs, and ideas in a unidirectional acculturation paradigm that amounted to artistic hellenization; thus, John Boardman describes a “rich but artistically immature and impoverished people” who were “ready and receptive for anything exotic” and “accepted all they were offered, without discrimination.”¹ To embrace more recent models of cross-cultural consumption is to recognize an agency and intentionality among Etruscan buyers of Attic figured pottery and other imports that complemented those of workshops and traders and, indeed, impacted these groups through acts of choice and rejection.² A consumption-centered approach to Athenian vases in Etruria further requires moving beyond the statistics offered by distribution data, which alert us to meaningful patterns, to ask *why* Etruscans of various communities wanted these vases and what they may have signified in local settings.³ For scholars steeped in Hellenism, the Greekness of imported pottery and the supposed status that came with it provide the best explanation. However, examination of documented archaeological contexts (when available) and other sources of evidence suggests a more complex process of “creative appropriation, transformation, and manipulation” (as Michael Dietler describes cross-cultural consumption) that may or may not have involved Greekness at all.⁴

The “other sources of evidence” unfortunately do not include texts by the Etruscans themselves about foreign goods or most other subjects. Historiographically, this has rendered them vulnerable not only to the biases of survival but to the prejudices of their ancient neighbors, the

Greeks and Romans, whose writings include assertions that—consciously or otherwise—have influenced modern views of Etruscan taste. Boardman’s characterization of Etruscans as “rich” and “ready and receptive for anything exotic,” for instance, echoes ancient descriptions of Etruscan wealth and love of luxury (*tryphe* in Greek, *luxuria* in Latin), as does Robin Osborne’s consistent usage of “voracious” and “omnivorous” to describe their “appetite for attractive pottery, whether or not the scene meant anything to them.”⁵ A first-century BCE passage by Diodorus Siculus (itself preserving a description by Posidonios) serves as an oft-quoted example: “Twice each day, they [Etruscans] spread costly tables and upon them everything that is appropriate to excessive luxury, providing brightly colored couches and having ready at hand a multitude of silver drinking cups of every description and servants in waiting in no small number . . . they have now renounced the spirit which was emulated by their forebears from ancient times, and passing their lives as they do in drinking bouts and manly amusement, it is easily understood how they have lost the glory in warfare which their fathers possessed.”⁶ Interestingly, this particular stereotype has been deployed for opposing purposes. Advocates for the costliness of Attic vases (like Boardman) have used it to argue for the expense of Athenian figured pottery—that is, vases must have been considered valuable for the Etruscans to covet them. David Gill and Michael Vickers, in contrast, have argued that because the Etruscans had expensive metal vessels for their banquets (according to sources like Diodorus Siculus), and because they would not have wanted to abandon such items to the tomb, pottery must have provided a convenient and cheap replacement.⁷

Using passages like the one from Diodorus Siculus in such noncritical ways neglects the ancient authors’ agendas. A literary *topos* among both Greek and Roman writers was to contrast what they perceived as their own upstanding, moral society with the decadence of the Etruscan Other.⁸ Another well-known example appears in Athenaios’ early third-century CE *Deipnosophistae* as a preserved fragment of fourth-century BCE writings by Theopompus of Chios.⁹ The rumored licentiousness of the Tyrrhenians (the Greek name for the Etruscans) is on full and scandalous display as a typical banquet is portrayed as an orgy in which participants indulged in prostitutes, beautiful boys, married women, and young men in their prime, all in view of one another and without shame. The passage also remarks upon Etruscan women, Theopompus attributing to them incredible beauty but also a masculine love of exercise and unbridled lust. “They do not dine next to their own husbands,” he claims, “but they take their seats at random and they drink to the health of whomever they wish.”¹⁰

Did Athenian vase painters of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE share these views of their customers across the sea, and did those stereotypes influence the imagery of the pots they made? When Phintias decorated his hydria with bare-breasted female symposiasts dedicating a *kottabos*-toast to Euthymides (fig. 2.3)—a hydria whose trademark under the foot suggests that it was made for export—did he assume that an Etruscan buyer would welcome such a scene as illustrative of his (or her) own experiences? While we cannot be sure of painters’ motivations or how far back the stereotypes go, the fact remains that despite being frequently discussed in light of the Athenian symposium, the majority of Attic vases with erotic images come from Etruscan contexts, especially

tombs.¹¹ Many derive from *kerameia* whose products were largely exported, like those of Phintias or the Briseis Painter (fig. 3.1, mentioned in chapter 2 as belonging to the Brygan workshop), suggesting a level of knowledge about Etruscan demand for these subjects.¹² This kylix, with its scene of heterosexual intercourse, was found in a tomb at Tarquinia, while a similar example by the same painter came from Caere.¹³ Two cups with lovemaking scenes by the Triptolemos Painter, who also belonged to the Brygan workshop, were likewise discovered at Tarquinia.¹⁴ Some of the earliest erotic images on Attic vases can be found on over a dozen amphorae of the Tyrrhenian Group, discussed in chapter 2 as the most persuasive example of a workshop targeting the Etruscan export market. These include hetero- and homosexual courtings and couplings (in one instance, Athenian norms are reversed and a youth penetrates an older man), as well as the occasional masturbating satyr.¹⁵



Fig. 3.1 Attic kylix attributed to the Briseis Painter, from Tarquinia. Ca. 480–460. Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Tarquiniense. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY)

How Etruscan consumers interpreted this imagery and incorporated these vases into their material culture is a separate question, one that acknowledges the possibility of localized meanings different from those intended by Athenian painters or understood by Athenian audiences. Unfortunately, nearly all imported vases with explicit sexual or other erotic content lack a documented findspot. One of the Tyrrhenian Group amphorae with masturbating satyr, attributed to the Prometheus Painter, was found with a second amphora by the same artist in Tomb 207 of the Monte Abatone necropolis at Caere.¹⁶ A red-figure cup by the Foundry Painter (yet another associate of the Brygos Painter), on which a young man brandishes a sandal and pulls the hair of a pleading nude woman, was found in Tomb 244c of the same necropolis where it formed part of a typically Caeretan assemblage, including an Attic black-figure amphora inscribed with the feminine form of an Etruscan family name.¹⁷ In both these instances, the erotic scenes join images of warriors, Dionysos and his *thiasos*, Herakles, and others, on the same vase or elsewhere in each assemblage.

We can compare erotic images of Etruscan production that appear in funerary environments, as for instance the Tomb of the Bulls (Tombea dei Tori) at Tarquinia (ca. 530 BCE, figs. 3.2–3), where a pair of sexual couplings high on the back wall (a heterosexual one with a threesome on the left, a homosexual one on the right) recall scenes on imported pottery but pre-date many of them.¹⁸ A scene of erotic violence comparable in mood to the Foundry Painter's Caere cup appears on the right wall of the Tomb of the Whipping (Tombea della Fustigazione) at Tarquinia, where two men, nude save for a wreath on one's head and tutulus on the other's, whip a woman beside a painted false door; on the door's opposite side appears an erotic group with another pair of nude men.¹⁹ Such images have been proposed as *apotropaia* or as affirmations of life in the face of death, with the placement of scenes around the liminal spaces of actual or pictorial doorways being particularly suggestive.²⁰ The eponymous scene in the Tomb of the Whipping has been suggested as connected to Dionysian themes or even fertility, given the resemblance to later Roman fertility rituals.²¹ Other depictions are more evocative of married love and subtexts of family and fertility therein, such as the stone sarcophagus of Larth Tetnies and Thanchvil Tarnai from Vulci (ca. 300), where a couple, nude save for their jewelry, embrace under a blanket on its lid.²² This interpretation may explain the pair of heterosexual matings on an Etrusco-Corinthian oinochoe found at Tragliatella outside Caere (ca. 700), juxtaposed with horsemen and a female figure.²³ Perhaps the couples on the Briseis Painter's (fig. 3.1) and Triptolemos Painter's cups would have been understood as married and akin to that Etruscan visual tradition.

Scenes of violence in Attic imported pottery and Etruscan art represent another instance where ancient and modern biases must be confronted in discussions of consumption.²⁴ On a Tyrrhenian amphora attributed to the Timiades Painter, the Trojan princess Polyxena meets her death at the hands of Achilles' son, Neoptolemos (fig. 3.4).²⁵ Spotty ancient sources say Achilles' own ghost demanded the sacrifice and that it took place at his tomb. Here, three soldiers (including Ajax the Lesser) hold Polyxena aloft as Neoptolemos plunges a sword into her neck and her blood cascades onto what is likely meant to be Achilles' tumulus, topped with an altar whose flames leap in response.²⁶ The composition recalls animal sacrifices made before battle but is unusual, within



Fig. 3.2 Left half of the back wall of the Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinia. Ca. 530. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos.Corneto.T.Tori 24119)



Fig. 3.3 Right half of the back wall of the Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinia. Ca. 530. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos.Corneto.T.Tori 24118)

both sacrifice and Trojan War iconography, for its graphic portrayal. When Attic painters allude to Polyxena's death elsewhere, they do so obliquely, with dropped hydriae in representations of Achilles' pursuit of the princess and her brother Troilos serving, for instance, as prefigurations of her fate.²⁷ Even in sacrifice scenes, the moment of killing an animal is typically eschewed in favor of the moments before and after.²⁸ In this scene, as if to acknowledge the simultaneous piety and horror of the act, the spectators (named by inscription) have opposing reactions: Nestor at left watches intently, but Phoinix at right turns away.²⁹

Because of their apparently targeted production and export, this amphora and other allegedly violent images attributed to the Tyrrhenian Group have often been viewed as indices of Etruscan taste. Nigel Spivey, who describes Tyrrhenian amphorae as a "cynically commercial exercise," uses the Polyxena amphora—unprovenanced but almost certainly from southern Etruria—as a "sedulously sensational" instance of the Group's "specialising in gaudy violence and sexual excess," adding that the Etruscan viewer "is supposed to be impressed by the explicitness of the scene, and presumably also by the names labelling the protagonists."³⁰ Osborne likewise notes that Tyrrhenian



Fig. 3.4 Attic so-called Tyrrhenian amphora, attributed to the Timiades Painter. Ca. 560. London, British Museum 1897.7-27.2. (Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum/ Art Resource, NY)

amphorae “specifically aimed at the Etruscan market . . . are distinct not just in shape but in imagery, being given to scenes of explicit sex and violence.”³¹ In her study of the Trojan cycle, Margit von Mehren concludes that “Tyrrhenian amphorae only show a select choice of these events with their emphasis on blood, murder, human sacrifice and the *causa bellis*. . . the Tyrrhenian iconography of the Trojan cycle conveys almost nothing but feelings of horror and fear.”³²

The assumption that Etruscan viewers preferred violent iconography, and that this is why Tyrrhenian Group painters depicted scenes like Polyxena’s sacrifice, is problematic in two respects. First, despite the claims above, the Polyxena scene and other graphically bloody subjects are anomalies within the Tyrrhenian Group’s repertoire. In his 2003 monograph, Jeroen Kluiver argues that “the contention that, generally, ‘Tyrrhenian’ subject matter is exceptionally harsh and cruel is not supported by the facts,” observing that the Polyxena scene, two scenes of Achilles fighting Hektor over Troilos’ beheaded corpse, and one of the murder of Eriphyle represent four instances of such violence out of 488 vases.³³ Other scenes of combat, he notes—including Amazonomachies like

that by the Timiades Painter (fig. 2.5)—are no different from examples by other Attic painters.³⁴ It seems likely that Tyrrhenian Group painters highlighted the violence in certain stories to emphasize horrific deeds; thus the murder of Polyxena becomes a visual perversion of animal sacrifice.³⁵ The fact that other painters opted not to show this moment, even within the Tyrrhenian Group, suggests that it may have been felt to be a step too far by traders, consumers purchasing the vases, the artists themselves, or some combination of the above.

Second, to assume that Etruscan taste inclined toward violence based on the iconography of imported vases or Etruscan art itself echoes (consciously or otherwise) the biases of Greek and Roman authors who, as part of an overall tendency to portray Etruscans as Other, characterized them as a bloodthirsty people.³⁶ “Violent” imagery in Etruscan art—violence, like eroticism, ultimately lying in the eye of the beholder—promoted messages in domestic, sanctuary, and funerary settings that were consonant with local belief and hardly gratuitous.³⁷ When mythological in content, as is frequently the case, these scenes further showcase the creative appropriation of Greek myth, a knowledge of the stories deep enough to foster selectivity and transformation.³⁸ The terracotta pedimental decoration of Temple A at Pyrgi (ca. 470–460) serves as an ideal example, where the story of the Seven Against Thebes, rare in Greek art, is displayed in a powerful yet graphic way.³⁹ Tinia (Zeus) prepares to hurl lightning at the arrogant Kapanews, and Menerva (Athena) stares as Tydeus prepares to feast on the brain of his still-living enemy, Melanippos. In a recent article, Alexandra Carpino asserts that one must consider such imagery in context; high on a temple for passersby to ponder, the myth becomes a cautionary tale of hubris, impiety, and divine punishment.⁴⁰

The depiction of Achle (Achilles) and the ambush of Truile (Troilos) in sixth-century Etruria likewise epitomizes the purposeful appropriation of Greek myth. So-called Pontic and other black-figure vases and, most famously, the Tomb of the Bulls (figs. 3.2–3, 3.5) present iconographic elements and emphases often different from contemporary Greek art, including Corinthian, Lakonian, and Athenian vases imported into the region.⁴¹ In the center of the tomb’s back wall, Achle waits behind the fountainhouse for the oblivious Truile on horseback. Truile’s vulnerable nudity, the way he dominates the composition, and the fact that he approaches from the right (the direction of Etruscan writing) may have been intended to arouse the viewer’s sympathies while highlighting the theme of premature death.⁴² Achle grasps a *machaira* (curved ritual knife) instead of a sword, lending the scene a sacrificial dimension absent from the majority of Greek depictions but present in most Etruscan examples. To the same end, the paintings in the Tomb of the Bulls and other Etruscan images commonly meld the fountainhouse space with the sanctuary of Aplu (Apollo), where the killing takes place. Here, the fountain with its uniquely Etruscan mouldings resembles an altar, while the stylized palm tree and what appear to be laurel trees evoke the god. These details make it clear that Etruscan artists and consumers understood Achle’s act to be one of willful impiety that held tremendous ramifications for the Trojan War and instigated his own demise.⁴³ The chthonic associations of Aplu in Etruria, especially his apparent identification with the god Śuri (see below), may have a bearing on this understanding of the myth and its inclusion in funerary art.⁴⁴

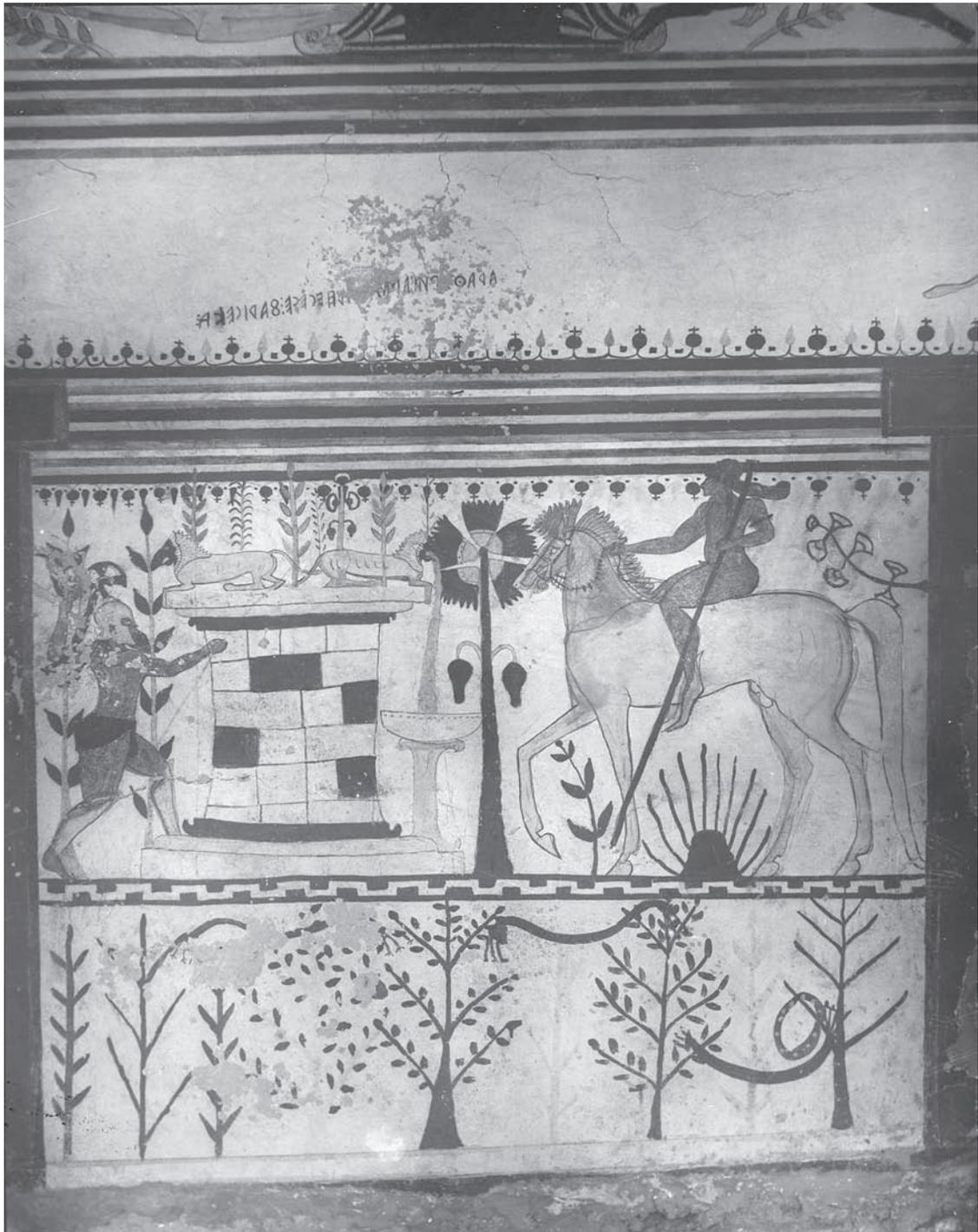


Fig. 3.5 Detail of Achle and Truile scene, Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinia. Ca. 530. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos. Corneto. T. Tori 24122)

Other aspects of Etruscan funerary belief may lie behind allusions to human sacrifice in Etruscan art. Later Roman sources describe a practice in which the Etruscans offered “certain animals to certain divinities” in the hope that through the blood offering, souls of the deceased could be transformed and achieve immortality.⁴⁵ These texts may not be wholly reliable because of their late date and Roman authorship, but archaeological evidence attests to the importance of funerary sacrifice and ancestor cult in earlier periods, and even belief in the heroized dead.⁴⁶ The tomb itself could serve as an altar, as suggested by ramps and stairways attached to tumuli at Caere, Cortona, Tarquinia, and Pisa as early as the seventh century.⁴⁷ Atop a tumulus at Pisa were found a (perhaps deliberately) broken stone slab, four iron spits, and a large bronze knife. An early sixth-century monumental altar abutting Sodo Tumulus II near Cortona features stone reliefs of combat between warriors and lions (or lionesses), the warrior driving a knife into the beast even as s/he begins to devour him. These and other images related to combat, death, and bloody sport in Etruscan funerary art have been read as symbolically recalling sacrifice and even serving as substitute sacrifices, whose fictive blood can reanimate the deceased and aid their passage to the afterworld.⁴⁸ Whether the Etruscans actually engaged in human sacrifice, or whether reports of these rituals by Greek and Roman writers are another instance of bias, has been a matter of debate.⁴⁹ Archaeological evidence suggests that human sacrifice happened at times, at least at an early period. A cavity in the earth at the Pian di Civita of Tarquinia, part of the ancient city, contained the remains of adults and children, some of whom seem to have been purposely killed, perhaps to propitiate a deity.⁵⁰ The cultural memory of these practices may have lingered in some funerary imagery: for example, in the fourth-century François Tomb at Vulci, where Achle slaughters Trojan prisoners at the tomb of Patrukles (Patroklos) in the presence of the latter’s *hinthial* (soul or spirit) and the Etruscan “demons” Charu(n) and Vanth.⁵¹ The inclusion of Charu and Vanth, who presumably will escort Patrukles’ *hinthial* to the afterworld after the ritual, casts the scene in a local light. The subject itself, although mentioned in the *Iliad*, is rare in Greek art and demonstrates once more the creative responses of Etruscan artists to Greek myth.

The centrality of the Achle and Truile myth within the Tomb of the Bulls (figs. 3.2–3, 3.5) needs to be viewed within the broader context of the tomb as a liminal space—a site of passage where the *hinthial* of the deceased transitioned from this world to the next—and in concert with the tomb’s other imagery.⁵² In some Tarquinian chamber tombs, the belief in passage was literalized in the form of a false door on the back and/or side walls through which the *hinthial* could travel, as noted above for the Tomb of the Whipping.⁵³ In the Tomb of the Bulls, the *hinthial* of the tomb’s primary occupant, Arath Spurianus (whose name appears above the Achle/Truile scene), and those of his family were given not only this image but an array of others that carried powerful significance, including heraldic and hybrid animals (a sphinx and a charging human-headed bull, possibly the river god Achlae/Acheloös), Bellerophon fighting the Chimaera, and the pair of erotic couplings discussed earlier. Like these latter, the battle with the Chimaera and the depiction of other hybrid creatures may be apotropaic in intent—meant to protect the tomb, the *hinthial*, and the living, whose arrival at the necropolis brought them to the perilous edge of the afterworld—but they

may also be evocative of sacrifice.⁵⁴ The hippocamp rider in the pediment of the entrance wall and the hippocamps in the side chambers suggest both liminality and the voyage to the afterworld.⁵⁵

An *interpretatio etrusca* of imported Athenian and other Greek pottery deposited in Etruscan tombs and sanctuaries encourages localized readings pertinent to local belief. With its “violent” scene of Odysseus’ massacre of the suitors, the Attic phiale displayed in the Southern Sanctuary at Pyrgi (fig. 1.5) broadcast messages of hubris and punishment as potent as those of the pediment of nearby Temple A. The Etruscans’ familiarity with Greek myth and their predilection for complex narrative, as already seen in seventh-century objects like the ivory pyxis from the Pania necropolis of Chiusi and the San Paolo bucchero olpe from Caere, ensured that imported vessels like the so-called François Vase (fig. 3.6)—where the ambush of Troilos is but one scene in a web of images and associations—were not only well received but seen as functioning actively within their new environment.⁵⁶ So too the rarer and more graphic scenes of Achilles and Troilos in Attic vase painting, including the two Tyrrhenian amphorae noted above (exported to Vulci and Pescia Romana) and a red-figure kylix signed *Euphronios epoiesen* and found at Vulci, whose exterior shows Achilles dragging Troilos toward Apollo’s altar and whose interior reveals the murder itself.⁵⁷ Like the paintings of the Tomb of the Bulls and other Etruscan depictions, these three vases highlight Achilles’ conscious act of impiety; one of the Tyrrhenian amphorae even includes the inscription *bomos* (“altar”) beside the structure where Troilos’ body lies. All three lack a known findspot, but within their original tomb contexts, their message relative to the deceased would have been clearer.



Fig. 3.6 Attic volute krater signed by Kleitias as painter and Ergotimos as potter (“François Vase”), Fonte Rotella necropolis, Chiusi. Ca. 570–560. Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 4209. (Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY)

As will be seen in case studies later in this volume, when multiple figured vases were juxtaposed in an assemblage, their imagery could work together.

The possible intonations of the Polyxena amphora (fig. 3.4) for its (likely) Etruscan owner or owners are difficult to discern, given not only its own lack of archaeological context but the rarity of Polyxena's death in Etruscan iconography. Etruscan awareness of her story, even at this early date, is suggested by an Etrusco-Corinthian column krater from Caere (ca. 590–570), on whose main frieze a man carries a partly missing but clearly resisting female figure up a stepped altar resembling a tomb.⁵⁸ A second female figure and a youth on horseback, whose identities cannot be confirmed, follow behind. The idea that the scene not only shows Polyxena but is intended as a visual perversion of animal sacrifice is supported by the correctly performed sacrifice on the vase's shoulder, where a priest leads a bull to a stepped altar. Another curious image that may represent Polyxena and is contemporary with the Timiades Painter's amphora appears on a ceremonial parade chariot from Monteleone di Spoleto (ca. 560–550), whose three bronze panels have been interpreted as showing scenes of Achle: his reception of arms from Thetis (Thetis), his combat with, probably, Memnun (Memnon), and his apotheosis by winged chariot.⁵⁹ In this last panel, the chariot prepares to soar over a fallen female figure identified by some scholars as Polyxena, the scene implying that her death enabled Achle's ascent.⁶⁰ Ancient repairs suggest that the chariot was used in life before being placed in the tomb, perhaps to celebrate the male owner's return from war; in both settings, the chariot's iconography celebrated Achle in a way that flattered its owner while providing aspirational imagery.⁶¹ If the Attic Polyxena amphora was placed inside the tomb of a male deceased rather than a female one, then perhaps its imagery too was linked to the apotheosis of Achilles/Achle and, by extension, that of the dead.⁶² Or was Polyxena perceived as a heroine for her resistance and loyalty to her family, and the Greeks as the villains?⁶³ Either way, perhaps the problematic nature of the Polyxena myth, with the death of an innocent young girl, guaranteed its rarity in Etruscan art as much as in Greek. In contrast, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia appears on late Etruscan cinerary urns for both males and females because the Etruscans favored the version of the story in which Iphigeneia was rescued by Artemis and swapped for a deer.⁶⁴ Polyxena received no such salvation.

The mobility of Attic figured vases and the malleability of their subject matter positioned them well for relocation into Etruscan funerary settings, where—often combined with other meaningful objects—they continued to participate in networks of consumption among the *hinthials* of the deceased, the ancestors, and an extensive contingent of eschatological deities and spirits. One could argue that while the deceased and the living who mourned them underwent rites of passage, so did all the grave goods that likewise joined the process. Whether or not Attic vases and other objects experienced any physical alteration (such as inscriptions, discussed in the next section), their change in location precipitated invisible shifts or augmentation of meaning.⁶⁵ The remainder of this chapter considers the role(s) and meaning(s) of Athenian figured pottery within the liminal space of tombs, which were not the sole sites of consumption for this ware in Etruria but remain the most prevalent and best documented.

LIMINALITY, PERFORMATIVITY, AND ATTIC VASES IN ETRUSCAN TOMBS

An Attic bilingual eye cup attributed to Oltos (fig. 3.7), 31.5 centimeters in diameter, features decoration consistent with kylikes of that type and by Oltos in particular: an acontist and discus thrower on each side of the red-figure exterior between the eyes, a black-figure Scythian archer running in the tondo.⁶⁶ Under the cup's foot appears an Etruscan proprietary inscription in large letters and genitive case—"of Charu"—referring not to the deceased in whose tomb it was found but to one of many so-called demons who guided the dead to the afterworld. Related to the Greek Charon but an example of Etruscan appropriation and syncretism with their own deities, Charu (or Charun) appears in later tomb paintings and sarcophagi (including the François Tomb noted above) as a ferocious creature of terrifying visage who wields keys and often brandishes a hammer.⁶⁷ Winning his favor assured protection for the deceased's passage and for the tomb itself, and the eye cup appears to be an offering for that purpose. The inscription renders the cup Charu's own possession; its watchful eyes may have been felt appropriate for a guardian figure, while the archer and athletes recalled the deceased's status and perhaps funerary games. Although it is possibly from Caere (because of its history in the Campana collection), the letterforms may indicate that the kylix came from Vulci, where, as will be seen in the next chapter, eye cups were especially popular.⁶⁸ As with the Ilioupersis cup offered to Heracle and discussed in chapter 1 (figs. 1.3–4), this cup was etruscanized with the addition of text. Like the space of the sanctuary, the space of the tomb was both sacred and liminal, a transitional and permeable boundary that deities as well as the dead might cross.



Fig. 3.7 Attic bilingual eye cup with Etruscan inscription, attributed to Oltos as painter. Ca. 520. Paris, Musée du Louvre F126. (Photo by Stéphane Maréchalle, © RMN-Grand Palais/ Art Resource, NY)

Within the tomb setting and as part of a mortuary assemblage, vessels of all kinds—local or imported, metal or ceramic—could carry many associations. The most common was in relation to the banquet, in which the *hinthials* of any and all deceased in the tomb, their ancestors, and even the gods themselves were thought to take part. In the fourth-century Golini Tomb I of Orvieto, the deceased Vel Latithes holds a kylix as he reclines with another family member, Arnth Leinies, and feasts not only with deceased ancestors but with Aita (Hades) and Phersipnei (Persephone).⁶⁹ The paintings of the Tomb of the Blue Demons (Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri) at Tarquinia (ca. 440–430), discovered in 1985, portray the parallel journeys of a deceased couple to a similar occasion.⁷⁰ On the right-hand wall, the wife approaches the waiting boat of the ferryman of death—a figure like the Greek Charon who may be another manifestation of Charu—having already been guided past fearsome demons with the help of demons of a friendlier sort. Another woman and a child wait in front of the boat, already deceased family members perhaps, planning to join her or see her safely along. On the left-hand wall, her husband mounts a parade chariot, his triumphal progress accompanied by musicians and dancers. A sideboard filled with vases, known in modern scholarship as a *kylikeion*, marks the man’s destination and the spatial beginning of the final scene, which stretches across the rear of the chamber: a banquet in a grove of trees, with the couple’s family on dining couches.⁷¹ Although damaged like the rest of the frescoes, the *kylikeion* appears to contain amphorae, a calyx krater (perhaps with figural decoration), and what may be a dinos on a stand.

Banqueting men and women appeared in Etruscan funerary iconography in various communities and media over time, reflecting the status and commensality of such occasions in life as well as the practice of the funerary feast and the belief that such revels continued in the afterworld. Early in Etruscan history and art, banqueting was a seated affair; although the Etruscans later adopted elements of Near Eastern feasting and Greek symposia, they copied neither group but followed a process of selective appropriation.⁷² Scholars long assumed that reclining was not introduced until the early sixth century via Ionian Greek immigrants, with the terracotta plaques of Murlo (Poggio Civitate, ca. 570) heralded as one of the first Etruscan representations of this practice.⁷³ However, the 1996 discovery of Tomb 23 at Tolle near Chiusi (ca. 630–620) has changed the picture. An impasto urn employed for a cremation burial inside the tomb carries the fragmentary figure of a reclining male on its lid; although as preserved he holds no drinking vessel, he reclines on his left side in the customary position.⁷⁴ Based on this find and the redating of Cypro-Phoenician metal bowls that show reclining banqueters, it is now thought that Phoenicians introduced reclining into Etruria, perhaps around the mid-seventh century.⁷⁵ Phoenicians may have also brought the practice into mainland Greece: one of the earliest known Greek images of reclining banqueters appears on the Corinthian “Eurytos krater,” dated ca. 600 and exported to Caere.⁷⁶ Images produced in Etruria—like the banquet on the Murlo plaques and any number of tomb paintings, sarcophagi, and ash urns from around the region—often diverge from Near Eastern and Greek artistic precedents by showing women reclining together with men.⁷⁷ Etruscan banqueting images also often include food, which seems to have been the custom in earlier Etruscan feasts and which departs from the strict definition of a Greek symposion, which followed a meal. Differences between

Etruscan banquets and Greek symposia render the terms “symposion” and “symptic” problematic in Etruscan contexts, so they will be avoided here.⁷⁸

Painted *kylikeia* in banqueting scenes like those in the Tomb of the Blue Demons, Tomb of the Painted Vases (Tomba dei Vasi Dipinti, ca. 500, fig. 3.8), and Tomb of the Ship (Tomba della Nave, ca. 450, fig. 3.9) have often been interpreted as pictorial celebrations of conspicuous consumption, echoing the narrative *topos* of Etruscan luxury offered by some Greek and Roman authors and discussed earlier in this chapter.⁷⁹ Painted *kylikeia* may indeed allude to the tomb owner’s wealth and status and/or aspirations of abundance in the afterworld, but they also affirm the performative role of vases within a mortuary context. When the tombs were originally filled with objects, paintings demonstrated how vessels were used by the *hinhials* of the deceased and their ancestors. Some *kylikeia*, including that in the Tomb of the Painted Vases (fig. 3.8), contain both metal and ceramic vessels, which recalls actual assemblages that survive today and suggests that their perceived functionality was not determined by materials or origin.⁸⁰ The top shelf of the *kylikeion* in the Tomb



Fig. 3.8 Detail of fresco with *kylikeion*, Tomb of the Painted Vases, Tarquinia. Ca. 500. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos. Corneto.TVD 24108)



Fig. 3.9 Detail of fresco with *klykeion*, Tomb of the Ship, Tarquinia. Ca. 450–425. (Photo by H. Schwanke, © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 82.2784)

of the Painted Vases holds a large volute krater, painted in a light color and with rivets to suggest its metal construction. Flanking it are two black-figure ceramic amphorae, the one to left showing a male figure between two horses, the one to right a group of dancing satyrs. It has been proposed that these represent Etruscan figured vessels, similar to those made by the Micali Painter's workshop at Vulci; whether Etruscan or Greek, they must have been understood as imported, since Tarquinia lacked workshops in figured pottery.⁸¹ Two oversized kylikes rest on the lower shelf, their feet upturned. These can almost certainly be considered Greek; the left-hand kylix seems to be an eye cup.

The Tomb of the Ship (fig. 3.9) presents a still more elaborate *kylikeion*, with amphorae, a stamnos, assorted oinochoai, a so-called *Schnabelkanne* (an Etruscan pouring vessel of distinctive shape), a large and likely bronze basin with lion's feet, and two suspended kylikes with geometric decoration.⁸² One of the amphorae (whose handles may instead indicate a misshapen column krater) features a Centauromachy and so must be ceramic; identifying whether other vessels are ceramic or metal is more difficult, given the painting's degraded condition. The Tomb of the Ship's *kylikeion* has attracted attention not only because of the vases depicted and because it too forms part of a banqueting scene, but also because to its left appears a group of ships coming into harbor, a man greeting them with upraised hand. Recent analysis has confirmed them as trading ships, and the double masts of the best-preserved one suggest that it could carry significant cargo; Mario Moretti had earlier proposed that the deceased was a merchant and/or shipowner.⁸³ The vessels in the *kylikeion* are possibly meant to be understood as having been brought by ship, a unique reference to trade in the Tarquinian tombs, if so. The ships themselves could be read symbolically as well as literally: as metaphors for the deceased's passage into the afterworld.⁸⁴

The performativity and multivalence of vases extend elsewhere in mortuary art and ritual. Vessels and containers of all shapes, materials, functions, and origins were omnipresent in the Etruscan funeral, beginning with the preparation of the body, where alabastra held oils for anointing and hydriai or other jars held water for washing and purification.⁸⁵ Family members, likely female relatives charged with looking after the deceased, gathered objects to accompany him or her in the tomb: newly purchased goods or things that the deceased had owned and that served as loci of memory. When it was time to take the deceased to his or her resting place, the adorned body—or, in the case of a cremation burial, the urn holding the remains—and the grave goods were transported through the community and necropolis. Cemeteries occupied transitional zones on the edges of towns: the Monterozzi necropolis of Tarquinia, for example, lay between the sea and the spaces of the living on a hill opposite the ancient city, while the cemeteries of Vulci completely ringed that community, punctuated by roads, shrines, and a plunging gorge.⁸⁶ The funeral procession marked a meaningful stage as the literal transition from house to tomb and a public opportunity for mourners to join the family in their grief. Grave goods formed a key component of the spectacle, with metal vessels and other objects reflecting the sunlight and objects with narrative imagery (including figured pottery) serving as pictorial commentary on the deceased and the event.⁸⁷ In at least some communities, the funeral culminated with a feast at the tomb.⁸⁸ Rites of

sacrifice and libation believed to revitalize the deceased also took place at the time of burial and were continued by family and community members in perpetual commemoration.

The paintings of the Tomb of the Baron at Tarquinia (Tomba del Barone, ca. 510–500, fig. 3.10) may allude to this latter rite.⁸⁹ On the back wall, a bearded man, joined by a youth playing an aulos, presents a large kylix to an elaborately dressed and veiled woman. Although a minority of scholars have identified her as a goddess, most see her as the deceased, lifting her hands in acceptance of the offering of wine and music.⁹⁰ This central group, placed on axis with the entrance, is framed by a pair of horsemen, with pairs of dismounted horsemen repeating on both side walls. On the left, they converse with a female figure resembling the one on the back wall; on the right, they hold wreaths and converse on their own. Gisela Walberg associates all three pairs of horsemen with the Dioskouroi, known in Etruria as the Tinas Cliniar (“sons of Tinia”), who functioned there as guides for the deceased.⁹¹ She suggests that the left-hand scene shows Castur (Castor) and Pultuce (Pollux) bidding the dead woman to come with them, while the right-hand wall repeats the brothers. Although Walberg does not discuss the pediment on the back wall, the dolphins and hippocamps



Fig. 3.10 Back wall of the Tomb of the Baron, Tarquinia. Ca. 510–500. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos. Corneto. T.Bar. 24131)

evoke voyaging through their connection with the sea (see chapter 5), while the altar situated above the kylix reinforces the theme of offering.

Because the kylix was a quintessentially Greek shape, rarely produced by Etruscan workshops in the period under discussion, the cup in the Tomb of the Baron and kylikes elsewhere in Etruscan funerary art are best understood as imported vessels.⁹² Evidence exists for the use of Greek kylikes in Etruscan funerary and other ritual practice. Excavators of the Martini Maescotti Tomb at Caere found an Athenian red-figure kylix attributed to Oltos in fragments at the door, where despite its large size (diam. 42.3 cm), it had perhaps been used for a final ritual in the manner of the Tarquinian fresco (fig. 3.11).⁹³ One exterior side depicts Herakles wrestling Nereus, both named by inscription and surrounded by Nereids (also named); the other shows a sacrificial procession with a pair of bulls escorted by youths and musicians playing auloi. The appeal of a sacrificial scene is obvious. So too Heracle/Herakles, who, as noted in chapter 1, received cult in many communities, including Caere and its Sant'Antonio sanctuary.⁹⁴ His successful journey to the Underworld, victories against monsters and other obstacles (like Nereus), and apotheosis to Mount Olympus granted him an eschatological dimension in Etruria.⁹⁵

Two oversized red-figure kylikes from Vulci—one attributed to Oltos (diam. 32 cm) and the second to the Euergides Painter (diam. 36 cm)—were likewise used in tomb ritual.⁹⁶ They lack documented findspots but are associated in archival records with the area of the Cuccumella tumulus;



Fig. 3.11 Attic kylix attributed to Oltos, Martini Maescotti Tomb, Monte Abatone necropolis, Caere. Ca. 520. Rome, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia 106462. (© MiBAC—Archivio Fotografico, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome, neg. 231498)

both are heavily fragmented and bear unmistakable signs of burning. Despite the damage, the scene on one side of the *Oltos* cup can be identified as Achilles pursuing Troilos, a subject that (as discussed earlier) was favored in Etruria for its sacrificial subtext and implications of untimely demise. The opposite side shows combat in progress, presumably at Troy, while the tondo shows a nude youth. A nude youth standing inside a large krater appears in the tondo of the *Euergides* Painter's kylix. One exterior side of this second cup shows two soldiers and a horse, and the partially preserved reverse includes a youth and two horses. The focus on military themes in both instances does not seem accidental, particularly since—as will be seen in chapter 4—the masculine ideal at Vulci, as expressed through mortuary assemblages, was rooted in warrior ideology. The shape of the kylikes and their large size helped dictate their selection for ritual usage, but their iconography was by no means incidental.

As for the *Tinas Cliniar* likely evoked in the Tomb of the Baron (fig. 3.10), *Castur* and *Pultuce*, like *Charu* (fig. 3.7), received as an offering an oversized kylix, which was found in fragments in a ruined Tarquinian tomb (figs. 3.12–13).⁹⁷ Signed *Oltos egraphsen* and *Euxitheos epoiesen* and measuring 52 centimeters in diameter, the cup is the earliest secure attestation of their worship in Etruria and carries a lengthy dedicatory inscription: “Venel Atelinas gave this to the sons of *Tinia*” (*itun turuce venel atelinas tinas cliniaras*).⁹⁸ Their eschatological role as guides and their association with immortality surely inspired the dedication, just as bronze mirrors depicting the twins would later be popular in certain communities and for deposition in tombs.⁹⁹ The *Dioskouroi* do not appear on the Athenian cup themselves, but their father, Zeus, presides over an assembly of gods. More meaningfully perhaps for the deceased, both exterior scenes reference apotheosis.¹⁰⁰ The central standing figure among the six seated deities is the formerly mortal Trojan prince *Ganymede* in one of his first appearances on an Attic vase, preparing to pour wine from an oinochoe into a phiale held by Zeus. Perhaps he has recently arrived on Mount Olympos following his abduction.¹⁰¹ The reverse shows *Dionysos* grasping a *kantharos* and mounting a chariot, accompanied by *maenads* and *satyrs*. The similarity in composition to scenes of the apotheosis of *Herakles* suggests that *Dionysos* is en route to join the gods, not as part of the myth of *Hephaistos*' return, frequently depicted by Attic painters (for *Hephaistos* is not here), but claiming his birthright as son of Zeus.¹⁰² The cup's tondo shows a running soldier with a helmet, a sword, and a shield with heraldic lion device; we are left to ponder the relationship between the inner and outer scenes and the implications for the warrior (and the deceased). This kylix was found with the fragments of a second and much smaller red-figure cup (diam. 23.2 cm), which may have similarly evoked the *Tinas Cliniar* through the depictions of horsemen on exterior and interior.¹⁰³ The smaller cup may have been meant for the deceased in the banquet of the afterworld, even as the monumental one was meant for gods.

The appearance of dedicatory inscriptions to *Fufluns Pachies* on two Attic red-figure kylikes from Vulci evokes the banquet and commerce in wine but also recalls the strong eschatological dimension granted to *Fufluns* (*Dionysos*) in Etruria.¹⁰⁴ On the bronze *Piacenza liver*, with its inscribed compendium of gods and goddesses, *Fufluns* appears in the sector commonly thought to include chthonic deities.¹⁰⁵ A fragmentary cup attributed to the *Marlay Group* has iconography



Fig. 3.12 Attic kylix signed by Oltos as painter and Euxitheos as potter, from Tarquinia. Ca. 510–500. Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Tarquiniense RC6848. (© MiBAC–Archivio Fotografico, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome, neg. 231220)



Fig. 3.13 Attic kylix signed by Oltos as painter and Euxitheos as potter, from Tarquinia. Ca. 510–500. Detail of fig. 3.12 with Etruscan inscription. Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Tarquiniense RC6848. (Photo © American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive, Neg. Mos.Cer. 8658)

evocative of Dionysos in its tondo: a satyr on a mule.¹⁰⁶ The second cup, however, attributed to the Penthesilea Painter and with a diameter of 40 centimeters, has scenes of youths on its exterior and Apollo attacking Tityos before Leto in its tondo.¹⁰⁷ Although unconnected to Dionysos from a Greek perspective, there may have been a particularly Etruscan reason for this cup to be linked to Fufluns. In deposit K of the Southern Sanctuary of Pyrgi was found an Attic red-figure column krater attributed to the Tyskiewicz Painter and inscribed *mi Fuflunusra* under the foot; other epigraphic material from this sanctuary refers to Cavatha, an Etruscan goddess who seems related to the Greek Persephone/Kore, and Suri, a male deity with chthonic and oracular aspects believed by many scholars to be linked with Aplu.¹⁰⁸ The appearance of a dedication to Fufluns in the Southern Sanctuary implies a connection between all three deities. The krater's primary scene shows Herakles reclining at banquet, perhaps after his apotheosis, and other material from the deposit suggests ritual drinking and dining.¹⁰⁹

A small number of Attic vases, around twenty examples currently known and published, received a different type of inscription: versions of the Etruscan word *śuthina*, usually translated as “for the tomb” or “belonging to the tomb.”¹¹⁰ Only one has a known findspot, in the Banditaccia necropolis of Caere, but the letterforms and collecting histories of the rest also hint at a Caeretan provenience.¹¹¹ Without documented contexts, the function of *śuthina* inscriptions remains unclear. During the later fourth and third centuries, similar inscriptions appear on bronze mirrors and vessels, mostly from the area around Orvieto and Bolsena.¹¹² Paul Fontaine proposes that *śuthina* inscriptions on vases were meant to diminish their aesthetic appeal and by extension their value, especially when placed near or over an image.¹¹³ He notes that this was less drastic than ritual breakage, which was also practiced by the Etruscans. Nancy de Grummond proposes that in the case of mirrors, *śuthina* inscriptions—always written across the mirror's reflective side rather than the engraved image—not only made them impossible to use but removed their power, mirrors being a way that the *hinthial* could travel between worlds.¹¹⁴ While *śuthina* inscriptions on Attic vases did not render them nonfunctional in the same way (except through discouraging use by the living), it is possible that the words and images were believed to hold a power that to us remains unknown.

There is no pattern in the shapes chosen for *śuthina* inscriptions. Among published vases are a Panathenaic prize amphora (and a fragment of a second), two stamnoi, three pelikai, two kraters, and an oversized phiale.¹¹⁵ Nor is there a pattern in the iconography, workshops represented, or the placement of text, except that the inscriptions tend to be prominent. On the Panathenaic prize amphora (fig. 3.14), *śuthina* appears across the heads of the runners shown on the reverse, participants in the sprint foot race (*stadion*). On a pelike by the Painter of the Birth of Athena, the inscription fully covers the heads of three figures on the obverse, where the scene may depict Theseus arriving at Athens and greeting King Aegeus.¹¹⁶ Similar treatment has been given to the reverse, where Boreas pursues Oreithyia.¹¹⁷ Writing about the Panathenaic amphora, Eva Rystedt claims that “the Etruscan who made the [*śuthina*] inscription did not care too much about the painting,” but perhaps in that instance and with the Hamburg pelike, the person inscribing the vase was fully

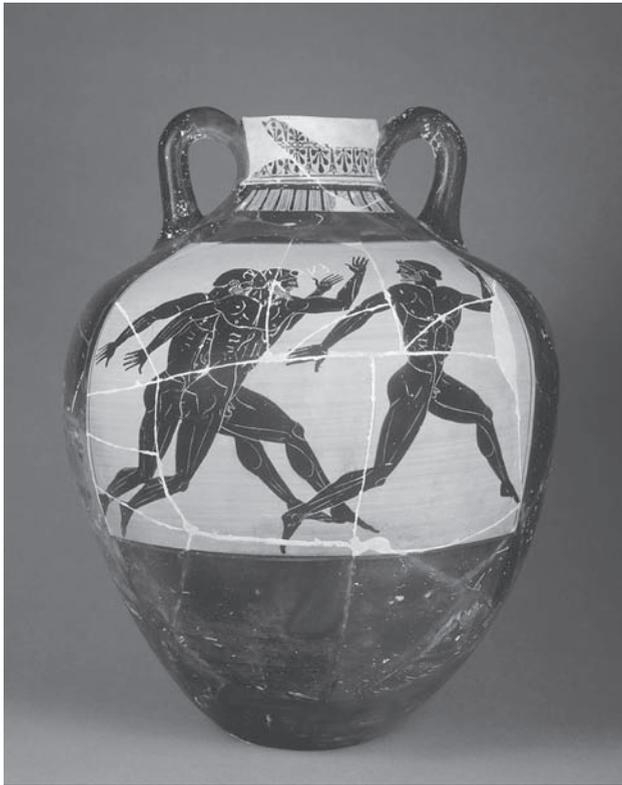


Fig. 3.14 Panathenaic prize amphora attributed to the Kleophrades Painter with *śuthina* inscription. Ca. 500. Paris, Musée du Louvre F277. (Photo by Hervé Lewandowski, © RMN-Grand Palais/ Art Resource, NY)

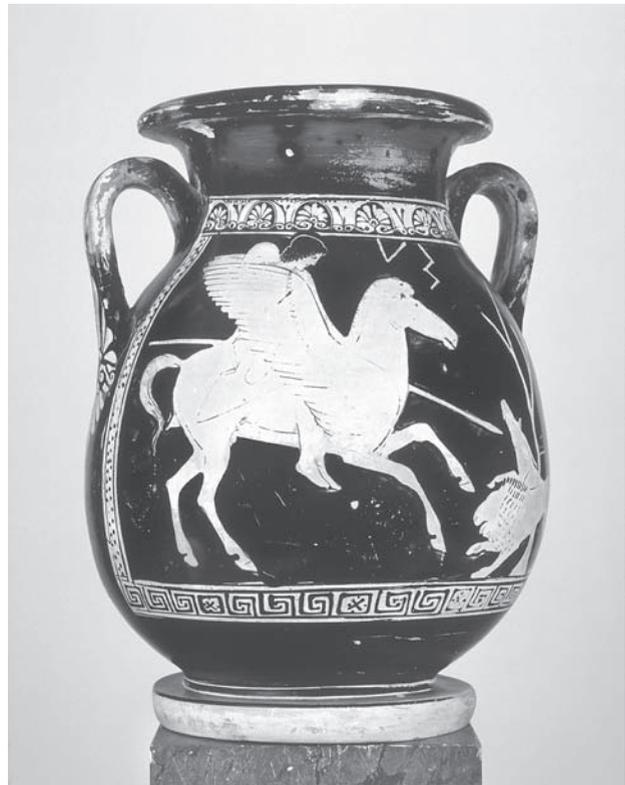


Fig. 3.15 Attic pelike attributed to the Barclay Painter with abbreviated *śuthina* inscription. Ca. 440. Paris, Musée du Louvre G535. (Photo by Hervé Lewandowski, © RMN-Grand Palais/ Art Resource, NY)

aware of the appeal and meaning the images held, and believed that placing the inscription there would best accomplish his or her purposes.¹¹⁸ More care was taken to avoid the image on a pelike by the Barclay Painter, where the abbreviation *SU* was placed in a blank area above Pegasos' head in a scene of Bellerophon and the Chimaera (fig. 3.15). Often the inscriptions are on or just inside each vessel's rim, avoiding the imagery but with letters large enough to be seen.¹¹⁹ On the Caeretan krater, whose main scene depicts Herakles and Busiris, the *śuthina* inscription lines the mouth (*mi śuthina*) and is accompanied by *zicus*, "of Zicu," presumably the tomb's owner.¹²⁰ As for the oversized phiale by Douris (reconstructed at 42 cm), its fragmentary condition precludes information about the inscription's precise placement, but the exterior was chosen over the more visible interior. Its shape left no option but to intrude upon the decoration, which includes an assembly of gods, unidentified combat, and what might be Herakles fighting the sons of Eurytos. Whatever the motivation, the act of inscribing a foreign vase "for the tomb," like inscriptions to deities, literally and symbolically transformed each piece and situated it within local material culture and belief.

A TALE OF TWO ASSEMBLAGES

Most of the vases discussed thus far in this chapter—and indeed, most Greek vases found in Etruria—lack known findspots. Many documented tomb assemblages do survive, however, and the remainder of this volume privileges these whenever possible as a means of exploring the appropriation and integration of Attic vases in Etruria.¹²¹ Contemporary mortuary theory stresses how a funerary assemblage reflects not only the final act of deposition but the sequence of choices and performative acts leading to that point.¹²² Even after deposition, objects worked not in individual isolation but together, as a singular entity that emblemized concerns of and for the dead within the liminal space of the grave.¹²³ Historically, the tendency in scholarship has been to separate Etruscan from foreign objects in the discussion of grave goods and even to compartmentalize a particular category of object (e.g., mirrors, vases) to the exclusion of others, but the lines between foreign and Etruscan were continually blurred within the tomb context. The *hinthial* of the dead had not yet crossed to the afterworld at the time his or her remains were placed in the tomb; all the objects that accompanied the deceased, along with the design and any decoration of the tomb itself, were intended to assist in the journey. They also enabled the simultaneous construction and commemoration of the deceased's identity, although it must be emphasized that "no matter how realistic or 'quotidian' the images and objects in Etruscan tombs may appear . . . they are not representations of life as it was lived, but rather as it was chosen to be represented."¹²⁴ When graves remain undisturbed at the time of discovery and are fully documented as such, intentionality can be witnessed not only in the selection of objects but in where and how they were physically situated within each space.¹²⁵

One of the greatest challenges in evaluating Etruscan tomb assemblages comes with attempts to determine the deceased's gender. Osteological evidence is unavailable for most documented

tombs with Attic vases because of a failure either to keep (especially in early explorations) or to properly analyze (and publish) the remains.¹²⁶ Banqueting and other vessels appear in the graves of both males and females, so vases alone are no guarantee either way. Among intact Early Iron Age tombs at sites like Tarquinia and Veii, armor and many weapons (spears, swords) can be most reliably associated with males, and textile implements (distaffs, loomweights, spindle whorls) with females, a pattern that seems to extend to later times.¹²⁷ Objects with warrior imagery, however, can appear in tombs of either sex, as, for example, a bronze amphora from a female burial at Bisenzio, whose lid is covered with warrior statuettes.¹²⁸ Knives and meat spits can be found in the graves of both sexes as implements for food preparation, and so can some items of adornment, like razors (although these are preferentially male) and, in Classical and Hellenistic times, strigils.¹²⁹ Mirrors, found in Etruscan communities from the late sixth century onward, were once assumed to be exclusively for women but have since been attested in some later graves where forensic analysis confirms a male deceased; a few mirrors likewise carry inscriptions with male names, presumably the owners'.¹³⁰ The lack of context for the overwhelming majority of Etruscan mirrors—a situation paralleling that of Attic vases—means a lost opportunity to evaluate possible connections between imagery and gender.¹³¹ A tantalizing albeit inconclusive glimpse comes from a group of fourth-century and Hellenistic tombs at Tarquinia, where several female burials feature mirrors with female figures (mostly nude winged *lasas*, attendants of Turan/Aphrodite, except for one mirror with Uni [Hera] suckling Heracle), and a male grave contained a mirror with the Tinas Cliniar.¹³² In this study, I speculate on the gender of deceased individuals based on the evidence available, with the acknowledgment that my and other claims could easily be wrong.

To demonstrate how consideration of a tomb assemblage contributes to our understanding of Athenian figured pottery within Etruscan material culture—even with the usual caveats—this section focuses on two examples. Both were found in the nineteenth century: a previously undisturbed chamber tomb at Caere and a cist tomb at Capua that had been robbed but at the time of discovery still possessed a remarkable group of Athenian vases. The former has been little discussed in modern scholarship, while the latter, the so-called Brygos Tomb, has attracted much attention and even debate precisely because of its Attic pottery. Together they exemplify not only the role figured pottery could play in funerary assemblages but the historiography behind Greek vases in Etruscan tombs.

In 1881 an undisturbed chamber tomb (“una tomba vergine”) was discovered in the Banditaccia necropolis of Caere and described by Wolfgang Helbig in the *Bullettino dell’Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica*.¹³³ A small space (ca. 2.70 × 3.00 m), the tomb was intended to mimic a house, with a ceiling that Helbig noted was “una volta poco arcuata.”¹³⁴ As is typical of many Caeretan tombs, three benches were carved from the tufa: one on each side wall, the third at the back. Two skeletons lay on the side benches, their feet facing the door. Each bench had a raised rectangular section for the deceased’s head, further articulated with a semicircular recess. The right-hand skeleton was bedecked with jewelry (gold earrings, gold and amber necklace, gold ring, bronze necklace) and outfitted with bronze sandals, identifying her as female; an alabastron lay beside her,

and two bone spoons and a bronze incense burner lay near her head. The left-hand skeleton had no ornament or objects, but, given the local propensity for couples to be buried together, he was likely male.¹³⁵ Two objects lay near the doorway, both broken at the excavators' entry: a glass container or vase, which was neither identifiable nor recoverable, and a black-figure Caeretan hydria attributed to the Eagle Painter, sold by Helbig to the British Museum (fig. 3.16).¹³⁶ The hydria was originally on the floor against the right-hand bench.

In keeping with a long-established tradition of banqueting equipment being placed in Caeretan tombs, a series of bronze and ceramic vessels, both local and imported, stood on the back bench or were originally suspended above it.¹³⁷ The pairing of men and women at banquet can be seen, for instance, in a side room of the Tomb of the Five Chairs (Tomba delle Cinque Sedie, ca. 650–630), where two female and three male terracotta statues, probably representing family ancestors, sat on stone chairs accompanied by tables and a small altar.¹³⁸ Two empty seats were likely meant for the couple interred in the main chamber. In Caeretan tombs dating after reclining had become the preferred custom, the deceased's tufa benches are perhaps best identified as dining couches;

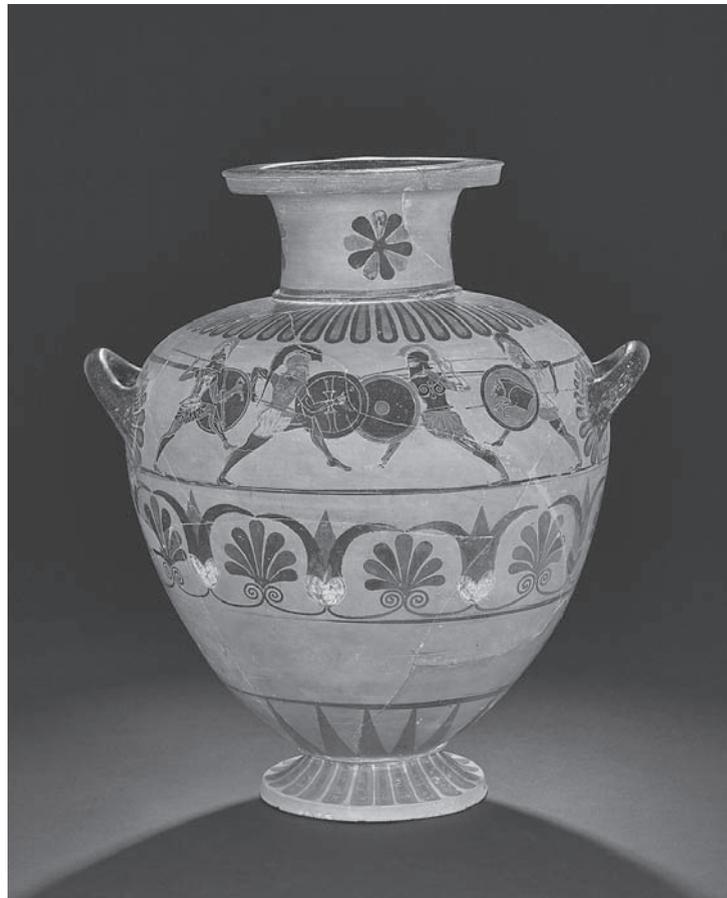


Fig. 3.16 Caeretan hydria attributed to the Eagle Painter, from Caere. Ca. 540–530. London, British Museum B59. (Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum/ Art Resource, NY)

one can compare late sixth-century terracotta sarcophagi where couples recline together.¹³⁹ The alabastron lying next to the deceased woman's body in the "tomba vergine" recalls an ash urn from Caere in the Louvre, where the wife holds an alabastron and anoints her husband's hand.¹⁴⁰

As was conventional in the nineteenth century, the tomb objects were sold onto the art market, at least some (like the Caeretan hydria) by Helbig himself. Many have since been reidentified, including some of the bronze vessels, which date primarily from the early sixth century and remain in Florence's Museo Archeologico Nazionale.¹⁴¹ The bronzes included two oversized chalices; two covered containers, one that Helbig said held olive pits and another that contained "una grassa materia legnosa" (a substance that cannot be identified); two oinochoai; and two amphorae. Also featured were a bronze situla, a bronze object identified by Helbig as a cheese grater (since lost), a bronze olpe, a silver jug (unidentified), a bucchero amphora datable to the second quarter of the sixth century, and an unidentified black-glazed ceramic krater, whose description recalled Lakonian examples to Mauro Cristofani, in his 1980 discussion of the tomb. The krater was placed to the far left on the bench, near the head of the presumably male deceased, along with the bucchero amphora, bronze olpe, silver pitcher, and cheese grater. Although Helbig mentions no liquids or residues, the amphora and pitcher were perhaps for wine and water, while the olpe would be used for dipping and pouring. The cheese grater, one of a group found in Etruscan tombs, has been plausibly associated with the drink known as the *kykeon*, where grated goat's cheese and barley were mixed with wine.¹⁴² Mentioned in the *Iliad* (11.628–43) and also linked with rituals at Eleusis, the *kykeon* seems to have had soothing and even medicinal properties for the Greeks and was not simply a celebratory beverage.¹⁴³ Whether the Etruscans regarded the drink as Homeric is unknown, but they may have learned the custom from Euboean traders and immigrants, graters also being found at Lefkandi.¹⁴⁴ There is no reason, however, to interpret the banquet implied by the Caeretan assemblage as a Greek-style symposion. As noted above, such occasions included neither food nor the women of the family.

Three Athenian figured vases stood on the back bench, their iconography working well together and within a broader Caeretan worldview. "Due anfore a figure nero-brunastre," nearly identical in height (42 cm) and regarded by Helbig as a deliberate pair, were identified by Andreas Rumpf as Tyrrenian amphorae in Karlsruhe (fig. 3.17) and Leipzig (fig. 3.18).¹⁴⁵ Kluiver attributes both vases to the Castellani Painter's middle period (ca. 550), which supports the possibility that they were made, transported, and purchased together.¹⁴⁶ The Karlsruhe amphora was acquired in 1887, and although its provenience is given as Tarquinia in the *CVA* and Kluiver's catalogue, Rumpf's connection with the Caeretan tomb is more persuasive because of its fidelity to Helbig's description. Both amphorae include a mythical *agon* on one side. The Karlsruhe amphora (fig. 3.17) features a duel over a fallen corpse in which combatants attack each other with spears and two other warriors tug at the body. One woman and two bearded men stand to either side, for a total of six spectator figures.¹⁴⁷ Inscriptions beside the corpse are nonsensical, as with other amphorae by this painter, but two possibilities emerge for the represented event: Ajax and Hektor fighting over the body of Patroklos or, more likely, Achilles and Memnon with the body of Antilochos.¹⁴⁸ If the latter,

Fig. 3.17 Attic so-called Tyrrhenian amphora attributed to the Castellani Painter, from Caere. Ca. 550. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum B2423. (Photo by Thomas Goldschmidt, © Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe)

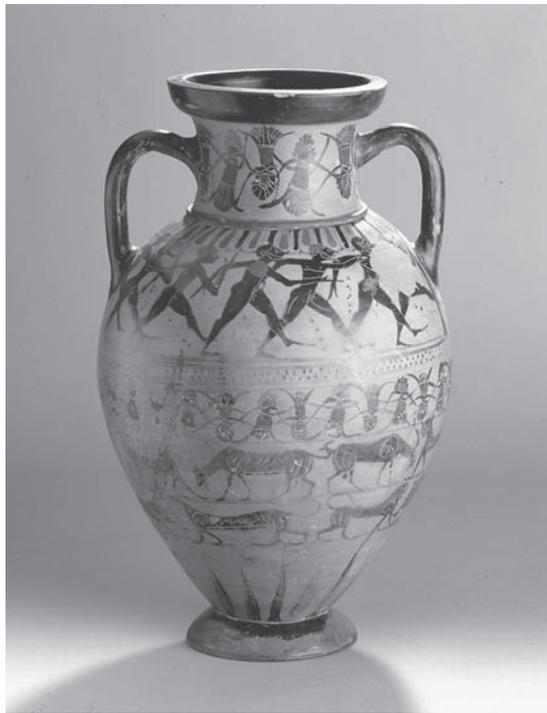


Fig. 3.18 Attic so-called Tyrrhenian amphora attributed to the Castellani Painter, from Caere. Ca. 550. Leipzig, Antikenmuseum der Universität T3324. (Photo: PUNCTUM/ Peter Franke, © Antikenmuseum der Universität Leipzig)

then the two female figures—who not only stand closest to the fight but carry wreaths—are the warriors’ mothers, Thetis and Eos.¹⁴⁹ The motif of duelling warriors is common in Etruscan iconography: on the Monteleone di Spoleto chariot, discussed earlier, where one panel probably depicts Achle and Memnun; on fifth- and fourth-century bronze mirrors, which could be used in life by men and women and were often placed in tombs; and on the Caeretan hydria placed in this same tomb (fig. 3.16).¹⁵⁰ Carpino suggests that in the case of mirrors, duels between characters like Achle and Memnun (named by inscription in some instances) provided exempla of heroism but also intimations of fate and destiny.¹⁵¹ When Thesan (Eos) was shown in mirror scenes observing the battle or carrying the body of her son, Carpino further argues that “viewers would have gained comfort from the fact that . . . Memnon triumphed over death, having been granted immortality by his mother.”¹⁵² An Etruscan viewer may have read not only the fight scene on the Karlsruhe amphora but the iconography of the Leipzig amphora from this perspective. Here appears the combat between Herakles and the centaur Nessos, which instigated Herakles’ death and apotheosis: Nessos attempts to flee with Deianeira as Herakles points a sword at his head. Hermes, four unidentified female spectators, and two more centaurs watch the fray. An old subject on Athenian vases, this story survives on twelve known Tyrrhenian amphorae; most if not all went to Etruria, although only the Leipzig amphora has a documented findspot.¹⁵³

In addition to sharing themes of heroic combat, both Tyrrhenian amphorae feature scenes of sport that would have recalled funerary games in an Etruscan tomb setting. The Karlsruhe amphora depicts three horsemen (two youthful and one bearded) and their mounts racing toward a turning-post, beyond which stand a bearded figure and prize tripod.¹⁵⁴ Another bearded figure stands to far left. Images of competing horsemen later appear in Etruscan funerary art—for example, in the Tarquinian Tomb of the Inscriptions (Tomba delle Iscrizioni, ca. 520) and Tomb of the Master of the Olympic Games (Tomba del Maestro delle Olimpiadi, ca. 500).¹⁵⁵ The Leipzig amphora shows a foot race, with the pumping arms and overlapping positions of the six nude figures implying a sprint (*stadion*) instead of a long-distance *dolichos* (fig. 3.18). The *stadion* was common on early prize and pseudo-Panathenaic amphorae, and its appearance here may mirror its popularity in the early Panathenaic games. Foot racing is less common than horse races and other sporting events in Etruscan funerary art, although two noteworthy representations can be found in the Tomb of the Master of the Olympic Games and Tomb of the Olympic Games (Tomba delle Olimpiadi, ca. 510) at Tarquinia.¹⁵⁶

The third amphora described by Helbig features a warrior’s departure on both sides:

Grande anfora attica a figure nere, alta 0.50, con tracce di antichi restauri attorno il collo. Una quadriga montata da un oplita ed un auriga sta ferma verso d. L’auriga con barba rossa ha un berretto ed un lungo chitone dipinti col medesimo colore. Dietro i cavalli sporge la figura di un vecchio con barba e capelli bianchi, munito di tenia rossa, lungo chitone nero e mantello rosso (verso s.) e più a d. un oplita (verso s.) con scudo, asta e cnemidi (rosse). Altro oplita è in piedi davanti ai cavalli, il quale ha cnemidi rosse e sopra lo scudo come insegna cinque delfini bianchi.

Accanto a lui sta un cane (verso s.). R: La rappresentanza è quasi interamente coperta di salnitro. Ma si riconosce, che anche su questo lato era dipinta una quadriga ferma verso d. e attorno varie figure.¹⁵⁷

A contemporary and briefer notation in the *Notizie degli Scavi* likewise names the vase an “anfora attica a figure nere,” as opposed to the “due anfore di stile corinzio” (Tyrrhenian amphorae), and describes it only as “coperta dalle incrostazioni, su cui vedesi una quadriga.”¹⁵⁸

Without venturing an exact identification, Cristofani speculates in his 1980 article that this vase was a third Tyrrhenian amphora, perhaps showing the departure of Amphiaraios; however, the distinction in description found in both the *Bullettino* and *Notizie degli Scavi* suggests otherwise.¹⁵⁹ Instead, Helbig’s description almost precisely matches an amphora attributed to the Swing Painter in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 3.19, height given in *CVA* as 51.5 cm), except for the charioteer on its obverse, who wears no “berretto” and whose chiton is not red but white with a red nebris.¹⁶⁰ Since everything else does match—down to the red greaves, five-dolphin shield device, and ancient repairs to the neck—Helbig may have noted details incorrectly, or, given that the vase was partly encrusted with soil, this figure may have been somewhat obscured. An additional piece of evidence concerns the amphora’s collecting history. Acquired by the Metropolitan in 1917, it previously belonged to the American collector Edward Perry Warren, as had the Tyrrhenian amphora in Leipzig (fig. 3.18, donated to the museum in 1911).¹⁶¹

In her monograph on the Swing Painter, Elke Böhr places the Metropolitan amphora in the earliest phase of his output, ca. 540–530.¹⁶² If one accepts both the attribution of this amphora to the Caeretan tomb and Kluiver’s chronology of Tyrrhenian amphorae, the latter two are slightly older and perhaps more contemporary with the bronzes. This becomes less problematic when one considers the Caeretan hydria at the doorway (fig. 3.16), which is close in date to the Swing Painter’s vase.¹⁶³ Perhaps these were deposited at a later time; they may have been interred with the female deceased and the other objects with the male, or vice versa. It is also possible that everything was deposited simultaneously and that the older objects had been long possessed by the family, while the newer vases were acquired for the grave.¹⁶⁴ The ancient repairs to the Metropolitan amphora are described in the *CVA* as lead dowels; if correct, this suggests that the work was done in Athens, not Etruria. The intent of placing the amphora in a tomb perhaps outweighed the aesthetics of the visible mend.

The iconography of the Swing Painter’s amphora proves appropriate for a tomb context and for this assemblage specifically. The chariot had long been abandoned in Greek warfare, so its appearance alongside hoplite warriors lent an archaizing and even heroic note; in some early examples, including some Tyrrhenian amphorae, the warrior in the chariot is identified as the ill-fated Amphiaraios, but in most uninscribed instances the viewer was left to see whomever he or she wished.¹⁶⁵ For Etruscan viewers, the impact of these scenes was amplified by the local significance of chariots, denoting social status, military prowess, and political authority. Actual chariots and carts were included in many seventh- and sixth-century elite burials, including some at Caere, and

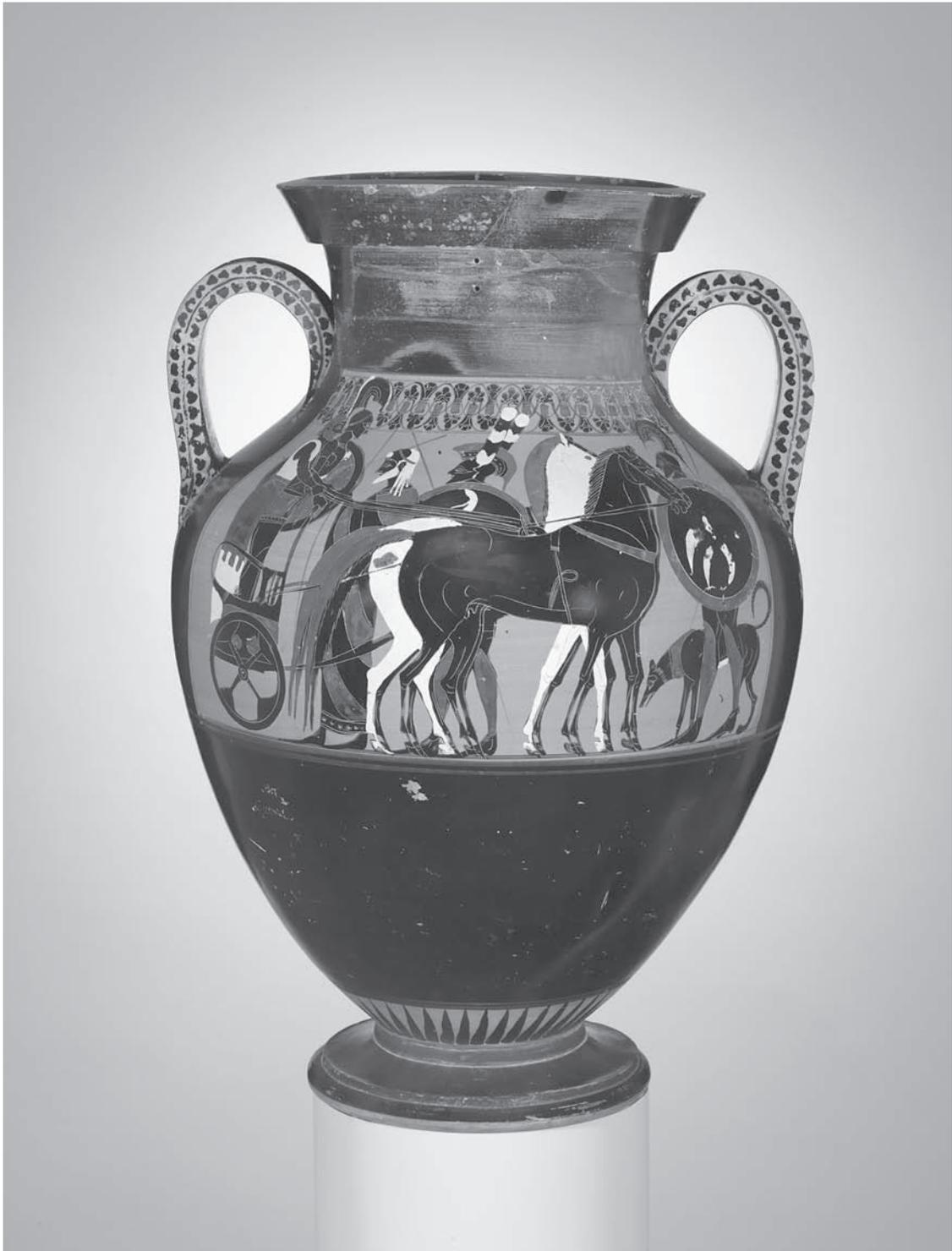


Fig. 3.19 Attic amphora attributed to the Swing Painter, from Caere. Ca. 540–530. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917, 17.230.8. (Photo courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org)

in both male and female single burials as well as multidepositional tombs.¹⁶⁶ In addition to serving as prestige objects, they symbolized the passage and perhaps the heroization of the deceased. As discussed earlier, a side panel of the Monteleone di Spoleto chariot self-referentially portrays the apotheosis of Achle by chariot.¹⁶⁷ Travel by chariot is found in later Etruscan funerary art, such as the fifth-century paintings of the Tomb of the Blue Demons at Tarquinia, also discussed earlier in this chapter. Indeed, the Tomb of the Blue Demons seems to have originally contained a chariot and the remains of horses, a throwback to earlier funerary customs.¹⁶⁸

It is easy to see why imported Attic pottery with warriors' departures by chariot, nuptial processions with couples in chariots, and the apotheosis of Herakles by chariot attained such popularity in Etruria during the sixth century.¹⁶⁹ Athenian workshops learned of these preferences and increased production of these vases. For a prime example, we can point to the Priam Painter and his scenes of Herakles' apotheosis by chariot; most of his black-figure hydriai with this subject (and other Heraklean scenes) went to Vulci, where the shape was especially favored, while a single trademark on three different pots (Johnston's type 13E) suggests that he worked with certain traders.¹⁷⁰ Among vases attributed to the Swing Painter, seven other amphorae with known provenience and dating from Böhr's first phase feature scenes of departure by chariot, in addition to the Caere example (fig. 3.19).¹⁷¹ Two have a generalized provenience of Sicily and one of Etruria, but others are known more specifically: one from Orvieto, one from Vulci, two from Tarquinia. Three hydriai attributed to the Swing Painter or said to be in his manner feature scenes of departure by chariot and have a known Caeretan provenience, although none have a documented findspot.¹⁷²

Viewed together with other figured vases in the tomb, the images on the "grande anfora attica"—not only the largest piece but, if Cristofani's reconstruction is accurate, centrally placed on the back bench—represent a heroic ideal, achievable through glorious feats like those portrayed on the remaining pots. Similar combinations of images can be found on contemporary terracotta plaques and akroteria from temples and civic buildings, not only at Caere but elsewhere in Etruria and Latium: horse races, chariot processions, and deeds of Heracle as the ultimate hero.¹⁷³ Banqueting, as expressed through the assemblage, likewise meshes well with the theme of heroization: the implication is that following their passage to the afterworld, the deceased couple will join their ancestors in feasting. Such ideals can be found in earlier mortuary assemblages at Caere; along with banqueting equipment, real, ceremonial, or model weapons were frequently included as expressions of warrior ideology.¹⁷⁴ Whether imported or locally made, figured pottery seems to have served as an iconographic replacement for weapons, chariots, and so on, which were no longer placed in Caeretan tombs by the mid- and late sixth century.

A more challenging case than the Caeretan "tomba vergine" is the Brygos Tomb in Capua, more formally known as Tomb II of the *località* Quattro Santi. Although it contained seven Athenian red-figure vases at the time of its excavation by Simmaco Doria, this cist tomb had been partly robbed; it is therefore not possible to consider the entire assemblage, which may have included metal vessels and other objects. Nor is it possible even to consider the seven vases in full context, for when Helbig published a report in 1872, the vases already belonged to the Roman collector Alessandro

Castellani, and their placement in the tomb was mostly undocumented. Castellani sold five of the pieces to the British Museum in 1873 (likely aided in this effort by Helbig's report), while the remaining two stamnoi were sold at auction after his death in 1884.¹⁷⁵ Beazley reidentified most of the vases in 1945, while the identity of the last one, a ram's-head vessel that solicited little comment from Helbig, was confirmed by Dyfri Williams in a 1992 article.¹⁷⁶

As with the Caeretan tomb's figured pottery, the Brygos Tomb vases complement one another in shape and image.¹⁷⁷ However, they are not contemporaneous according to currently accepted chronologies, even though the tomb held only one deceased individual. The two oldest (ca. 490–480) are a kylix signed by Brygos as potter and attributed to the Brygos Painter (fig. 3.20), representing on the exterior an unusual subject likely inspired by a satyr play, and a large skyphos signed by Hieron as potter and attributed to Makron as painter (fig. 3.21).¹⁷⁸ The kylix's interior depicts the warrior Chrysippos (identified by inscription), performing a libation with a woman named Zeuxo. The skyphos, meanwhile, features Triptolemos in his winged cart, facing Persephone and joined on both sides of the vase by Demeter, the nymph Eleusis, Poseidon, Eumolpos, Zeus, Dionysos, and Amphitrite (all named by inscription). Dating slightly later (ca. 470–460) are two stamnoi of nearly identical size attributed to the Deepdene Painter (figs. 3.22–23); two sphinx-shaped vases, one attributed to Sotades as potter (fig. 3.24), the second to the Tarquinia Painter; and the aforementioned ram's-head vase.¹⁷⁹ Beazley believed, and Williams agrees, that the cup and skyphos had been previous possessions of the deceased or his/her family.¹⁸⁰ Williams then proposes that the five later vases were purchased for the grave. He notes a particular emphasis on erotic pursuit in their iconography, with Eos chasing Kephalos on both stamnoi (fig. 3.22) and a youth with lyre, likely to be Tithonos, on the Tarquinia Painter's rhyton. The opposite side of one of the stamnoi (fig. 3.23) shows the winged Boreas chasing Oreithyia in a purposeful reversal of the Eos/Kephalos pair.¹⁸¹ Williams observes that images of deities chasing mortals could serve as a paradigm for death as much as marriage and further suggests that this interpretation explains the deposition of these particular vessels.¹⁸² Although he does not use the vases to speculate upon the deceased's gender—Williams characterizes the dead with “he” and “his,” without explanation—it is possible that the deceased was male and maybe even died before marriage, given that three of the four scenes have a young man under pursuit.¹⁸³ Male or female, the death of a young person might explain the richness of the original assemblage.

Although the carefully composed nature of the Brygos Tomb assemblage is not in doubt, Williams and subsequent scholars disagree on the deceased's ethnicity. Was he (or she) Greek, Etruscan, or an indigenous Campanian? Capua had long been an Etruscan settlement—according to some literary sources, an Etruscan foundation—but by the time of the Brygos Tomb, the Etruscans were losing their grip on the region, the result of their defeat by the Greeks at the Battle of Cumae (474). Based on the Athenian vases, Williams first suggests that if the deceased was Etruscan, the family was rich and hellenized.¹⁸⁴ He then explores the possibility that the deceased was a Greek immigrant and perhaps even Athenian because of the Attic myths on some of the vases.¹⁸⁵ Not only do Triptolemos and the nymph Eleusis herself appear on the skyphos and Boreas and Oreithyia on



Fig. 3.20 Attic kylix attributed to the Brygos Painter, Brygos Tomb, Capua. Ca. 490–480. London, British Museum E65. (Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY)



Fig. 3.21 Attic skyphos signed by Hieron as potter and attributed to Makron as painter, Brygos Tomb, Capua. Ca. 490–480. London, British Museum E140. (Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY)



Fig. 3.22 Attic stamnos attributed to the Deepdene Painter, Brygos Tomb, Capua. Ca. 470–460. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1918, 18.74.1, on long-term loan to the British Museum. (Photo courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org)



Fig. 3.23 Attic stamnos attributed to the Deepdene Painter, Brygos Tomb, Capua. Ca. 470–460. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum 211/B1904, on long-term loan to the British Museum. (Photo courtesy Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe)



Fig. 3.24 Attic sphinx rhyton attributed to Sotades as potter and the Sotades Painter, Brygos Tomb, Capua. Ca. 470–460. London, British Museum E788. (Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

one of the stamnoi, but the Sotades rhyton features a bearded man with snaky lower body, almost certainly the autochthonous Athenian king Kekrops. This scene also includes three young women and a seated young man, whom Williams identifies as the king's children.¹⁸⁶ The rhyton has since been proposed by Alan Shapiro to celebrate the birth of Erichthonios, with Kekrops, Pandrosos, and Erysichthon sharing a libation as the “two disobedient girls, Aglauros and Herse, flee the unseen snake in an agitated state.”¹⁸⁷ Williams argues that “the exclusive concentration on Athenian myth and religion on the vases from the Brygos Tomb is surely above and beyond any norm that one

might imagine,” and asks, “how else could one hope to recognize the last resting place of a rich Greek, except by a tomb full of wonderful Greek vases with absolutely no piece of local Italian pottery at all, unlike the multiple burials of Tombs I and III?”¹⁸⁸

While taking into account the totality of the surviving vases in the tomb, this theory rests upon the tacit—and unfounded—assumption that specifically Attic subjects were more likely to be understood by a Greek, and better yet, Athenian, audience. Moreover, it neglects objects stolen from the Brygos Tomb, which, if they were metal vessels, were likely to have been Campanian or even southern Etruscan in manufacture. References to Tombs I and III are likewise misleading. Tomb I dates from the later fourth century, after Campanians had seized control of the area, and Tomb III, with twenty skeletons according to Helbig, seems to have been used from the fifth century into the fourth as well. The local pottery recorded in Tomb III is likely fourth century in date. Returning to the Brygos Tomb’s specific vases, Juliette de la Genière and Martine Denoyelle find the ceramic shapes represented in the assemblage—namely, stamnoi and figured rhyta—more consistent with Etruscan customs; de la Genière observes that a Greek burial would almost certainly contain lekythoi.¹⁸⁹ The pairing of the shapes, two stamnoi and two rhyta, also seems consistent with Etruscan practice at many sites—not only multidepositional tombs like the Caeretan tomb discussed above, with its Tyrrhenian amphorae, but some with a single deceased (e.g., the Vulcian tomb discussed below in the Conclusions). Although the Battle of Cumae did spark a decline of Etruscan influence in Campania, recent analysis suggests a form of refoundation at Capua about the time of the Brygos Tomb, an attempt by Etruscan aristocrats to shore up their remaining power by building new fortifications and altering the urban plan.¹⁹⁰ It seems unlikely that Etruscan families long-seated there would have simply left, although the city’s population did dwindle. Some scholars, including Luca Cerchiai, link the Brygos Tomb’s occupant and objects to this period of Etruscan “ristrutturazione.”¹⁹¹

An *interpretatio etrusca* works just as effectively for the Brygos Tomb vases as a reading from an Athenian perspective. Distribution data show the popularity of erotic pursuit imagery in Etruria proper as much as in Etruscan sites in Campania, the latter including not only Capua but also Nola and Suessula. A hydria attributed to the Niobid Painter with Boreas pursuing Oreithyia, for example, was found in the multidepositional and apparently multigenerational Tomb III nearby at Capua; a Boreas/Oreithyia pelike with Etruscan *śuthina* inscription, unprovenienced but possibly from Caere, is noted in the previous section.¹⁹² Given the ubiquity of winged deities in Etruscan art, the specific popularity of erotic pursuit scenes with winged figures seems significant. Winged males acting as so-called demons guiding the deceased to the afterworld appear on Etruscan black-figure pottery in the late sixth and early fifth centuries, early enough for Boreas on the Karlsruhe stamnos (fig. 3.23) to be interpreted as such (if not as Boreas himself) by the family of the Capuan deceased.¹⁹³ Thesan, who to an Etruscan viewer is featured on both Brygos Tomb stamnoi (fig. 3.22) and on one of the sphinx rhyta, received active cult in a way her Greek counterpart, Eos, did not.¹⁹⁴ Although in Etruscan art she appears more frequently as mother of Memnun (as discussed earlier in this chapter), Thesan whisks away Tithun (Tithonos) on a Late Archaic terracotta temple akroterion

from Caere, and she abducts Tithon or Kephalos on multiple early fifth-century bronze mirrors from Vulci.¹⁹⁵ In a composition unknown among Attic vases, an unprovenienced mirror of ca. 460 depicts Thesan swooping from the sky to snatch Tithun (named by inscription); perhaps significant for the gender of the Brygos Tomb's deceased, a masculine genitive inscription also found in the scene ("of Ustele") likely designates the mirror's owner (fig. 3.25).¹⁹⁶ The high proportion of Attic vases showing Eos chasing (or, more rarely, carrying) Tithonos/Kephalos sent to Italy has been observed by numerous scholars.¹⁹⁷ Given that many were stamnoi like those in the Brygos Tomb—a shape favored in Etruria and Campania, as noted in chapter 2—one can speculate that Athenian workshops learned of an Etruscan preference for this subject via traders and acted upon that knowledge.¹⁹⁸

More distinctively Athenian scenes on the Brygos Tomb vases can likewise be shown to have appealed to Etruscan viewers. The Mission of Triptolemos (fig. 3.21) obviously has strong Eleusinian overtones, and most scholarship has privileged the motif's Athenian context: for example, the Peisistratid promotion of Eleusinian cult may have initially inspired black-figure vase painters, and Athenian ambitions may have occasioned a reinvention of the story in red figure.¹⁹⁹ And yet many black- and red-figure vases with known provenience come from Greek and non-Greek sites in Italy, whether in Etruria, Campania, or Sicily.²⁰⁰ Even if the subject's genesis was grounded in Eleusinian cult and particularly Athenian concerns, its appeal for viewers outside Athens grew beyond those; Demeter and Persephone had broader meaning even without that cult's specificity. The theme of



Fig. 3.25 Etruscan bronze mirror with Thesan abducting Tithun. Ca. 460. Newcastle upon Tyne, Shefton Collection 311. (Drawing by Mary Hurrell, courtesy Shefton Collection)

the abundance and richness of grain and its accompanying economic importance was a positive one for any audience. Little is known of Vei, Demeter's Etruscan counterpart, but she seems to have been an earth deity associated with fertility.²⁰¹ She was also chthonic in function; inscriptions attest her worship within the Cannicella sanctuary of Orvieto, part of a necropolis.²⁰² Phersipnei was similarly a chthonic deity, along with her husband, Aita, as ruler of the underworld; the presence of both on the walls of the Orvietan Golini Tomb I is noted earlier in this chapter. The Greek Persephone/Kore may have also been equated to the Etruscan chthonic goddess Cavatha (or Catha), who was worshiped at the Southern Sanctuary of Pyrgi and also at Orvieto.²⁰³ It may not be coincidental, given the connections of Cavatha, Phersipnei, and Vei with Orvieto, that three Attic red-figure vases with the Mission of Triptolemos were found there.²⁰⁴ Evidence for Triptolemos in Etruscan art or worship is lacking, but he too may have had a chthonic dimension for the Etruscan viewer, his journey in the winged cart being equated with the passage of the dead. That is, unless Etruscan viewers associated this figure with someone else in their pantheon: for example, Fufluns, who was worshiped with Cavatha and Vei at the sanctuaries of Pyrgi and Campo della Fiera outside Orvieto.²⁰⁵

Sotades' sphinx rhyton, with its scene of Kekrops (fig. 3.24), may have had its own *interpretatio etrusca*. The appeal of the sphinx form itself is easy to discern; sphinxes were considered guardians of the dead in Greek funerary art, and this function is seen in Etruria as well.²⁰⁶ One thinks, for instance, of the tufa sphinx statues that guarded many sixth-century tombs at Vulci, placed at the transitional space of the threshold where spirits might roam.²⁰⁷ Although uncommon in painted tombs, sphinxes appear in late seventh-century frescoes in tombs at Veii (Campana Tomb) and Chiusi (Tomb in the Orientalizing Style [Tomba di Stile Orientalizzante], Poggio Renzo necropolis), as well as the late sixth-century Tomb of the Bulls at Tarquinia (fig. 3.2).²⁰⁸ The acquisition of two sphinx rhyta of similar size for the Brygos Tomb guarantees that the deceased's family chose them with intent. The Kekrops vase has a hole in the bottom, making it a true rhyton and possibly indicating that it was used for libations; however, both sphinxes were too fragile in form for extensive use, especially with their added paint and gilt.²⁰⁹ The majority of Attic statuette-vases have been found in sanctuary deposits or in tombs, where they would have received little wear. Most come from outside Greece, either at sites in Italy or in the east, where Persian tastes may have influenced Athenian production and export.²¹⁰ Possibly because of their intricacy, sphinx rhyta specifically are rare. Williams provides three fragmentary comparanda to the Brygos Tomb example, one from a sanctuary at Vulci, signed *Sotades epoiesen* (for which see chapter 5); one from Locri, attributed to the Sotadean workshop, with an Amazon on horseback on its bowl; and a third from the sanctuary at Brauron, signed by Sotades as potter and also featuring a votive inscription.²¹¹

As for the scene on the Brygos Tomb rhyton, the question is: if the deceased's family was Etruscan, how knowledgeable would they have been about the legend of Kekrops? Or would their reading have been different from that of Sotades and his colleagues in Athens? Images of Kekrops, as well as scenes of the birth of Erichthonios in which the baby is handed to Athena by Gaia, have

rightly been tied to notions of Athenian identity and, more specifically, belief in the autochthony of Athenian citizens.²¹² Many vessels with this theme remained in Attica; Amalia Avramidou has recently discussed a pyxis attributed to the Meidias Painter with Kekrops and Erichthonios and its find context in an Athenian tomb, suggesting that “salvation was reached through the birth of Erichthonios, with the implication that the very soil that produced Erichthonios now receives one of his autochthonous descendants.”²¹³ Other vases, however, were found in Italy. Two red-figure vases with the birth, a stamnos and a hydria, were found in tombs on Luciano Bonaparte’s land at Vulci; a red-figure calyx krater comes from nineteenth-century excavations at Chiusi; and an oversized cup attributed to the Codrus Painter, in which Kekrops watches the birth, was found among collapsed tombs in 1876 excavations at Tarquinia.²¹⁴ Given that many of the Codrus Painter’s vases went to Etruria, this cup’s shipment to Tarquinia would hardly have been a surprise to the workshop; ditto for the stamnos attributed to the Painter of Munich 2413, related stylistically in some way to Hermonax, most of whose own stamnoi went to Etruscan communities (including Vulci). Athenian workshops may have thought that Erichthonios imagery was a “recognizable trademark for the city” and was therefore acceptable for vases likely to be exported.²¹⁵ As for the Etruscan consumer, it is possible that the viewer/buyer was familiar with Attic mythology. In her discussion of the Codrus Painter cup (whose tondo features a scene of Eos carrying Kephalos), Avramidou suggests that in Etruria such vases were “valued primarily for their funerary connotations, but also for their potential to demonstrate the social status of a learned owner.”²¹⁶ She concedes, however, that scenes of the birth of Erichthonios may have been read from a purely Etruscan perspective—for example, as images of the divine child Tages—in which case any subtext of Athenian identity would not have mattered.²¹⁷ Françoise-Hélène Massa-Pairault seeks an Etruscan reading, relating these images to “un rituel d’héroïsation de la *gens*.”²¹⁸

The Brygos Tomb rhyton does not show the actual birth and so is open to other interpretive possibilities. A clue may come from Helbig’s own account, in which he described the snake-bodied main figure not as Kekrops but as Triton.²¹⁹ It seems unlikely that an Etruscan viewer would have confused this anguiped figure with a sea creature, but Helbig’s misidentification brings to mind the many snake-legged characters in Etruscan art, who often serve as afterworld demons.²²⁰ Most examples come from fourth-century and Hellenistic art, such as the snake-legged creature holding an oar in the Tomb of the Reliefs (Tombe dei Rilievi) at Caere, possibly a variant form of Charu(n), and similar figures on Volterranean ash urns and in Tarquinian painted tombs.²²¹ Snakes serve as heraldic and presumably apotropaic figures in painted tombs as well, an early instance being Tomb 1999 at Tarquinia (ca. 510–500).²²² Sometimes these snakes are bearded.²²³ Charu(n) can wield snakes as well as a hammer in later Etruscan art, as for instance in the Tomb of Orcus I at Tarquinia (ca. 350) and Golini Tomb II at Orvieto (ca. 350–325); in the contemporary Golini Tomb I, Aita holds a spear entwined with a serpent.²²⁴ An anguiped figure performing a libation has no known parallel in Etruscan art, but there is sufficient evidence for the chthonic associations of serpents in Etruria to suggest that the Kekrops figure on the rhyton—if not recognized as Kekrops himself—may have

been viewed as an underworld creature, and certainly a liminal one. The performance of libation and his pairing with a winged female (who may have been read as Thesan or Vanth) grant him a positive instead of fearful aspect.

Liminality seems to be a theme of the Brygos Tomb assemblage as a whole, in keeping with the conception of the Etruscan tomb as a liminal space. Every vase depicts a liminal creature and sometimes passage across worlds: satyrs, sphinxes, gorgoneia, anguipeds, winged deities pursuing mortals in order to snatch them away, Triptolemos and his winged cart capable of flying over the earth. Even libation, also prevalent iconographically in the assemblage, can be thought of as a ritual that attempts to transcend boundaries between god and mortal, living and dead. For all the Greekness and, more precisely, the Athenian-ness of the Brygos Tomb vases, their visual language—when viewed as a group and considered within a funerary context—is emphatically Etruscan and consistent with mortuary art and belief farther north.

CONCLUSIONS

Although separated by many miles and at least fifty years, the contents of the *tomba vergine* at Caere and the Brygos Tomb at Capua reveal the similar concerns for their deceased occupants held by their respective families. Banqueting dominates both assemblages, with vases for mixing/aerating wine, drinking, and storage; this emphasis is consistent with longstanding Etruscan beliefs regarding the roles of feasting in life, at the funeral, and in the afterworld. The Brygos Tomb seems to have been robbed of its (likely) metal goods, but presumably it, like the Caeretan tomb, included an assortment of bronze and ceramic vessels and equipment. If it did include metalware, these objects may have been brought from southern Etruria and so may also be seen as imported, just as much as the array of Athenian figured pottery. In both tombs the gathered vessels—like those displayed in the fictive, frescoed *kylikeia* of the Tarquinian tombs (figs. 3, 8–9)—signaled the status of the dead and their families and simultaneously equipped the deceased for what lay ahead.

The contents of both tombs further suggest thoughtful and deliberate choices by the families of the deceased, choices that reinforce the liminality of the tomb space; the mortuary assemblage as process; and the agency of the Etruscan consumer. These were not readymade banqueting sets, and if current stylistic chronologies are an indication, the figured vessels were not simultaneously acquired. The narratives of Athenian vases seem to have driven their selection for the grave as much as their shapes: their iconography was meaningful not just in terms of individual pieces but as a cohesive assemblage. Consistent themes include propitious gods and heroes, sometimes hybrid beings of their own liminal sort; scenes promoting the passage and even heroization of the deceased; and themes of ritual, including scenes likely to have been read by Etruscan viewers as related to the funeral (e.g., funeral games). Subjects prevalent in Athenian painting at the time of each tomb—chariot scenes being very popular in the latter third of the sixth century, erotic pursuit in the second quarter of the fifth—acquired new meaning in a funerary context. Even more distinctively

Athenian subjects like the Mission of Triptolemos (fig. 3.21) or Kekrops and his children (fig. 3.24) translated into a mortuary setting abroad.

I close this chapter with a third tomb exhibiting similar tendencies at Vulci, a site that plays a strong role in the remainder of this volume. Judging from known finds, Vulci received even more imported vases than Caere and Capua. Discovered in the late nineteenth century near the Cuccumella tumulus of the eastern necropoleis, this *tomba a cassone*, a type of chamber tomb unique to Vulci, included a single inhumation burial upon a low stone bench. Fragments of a bronze strigil were in the deceased's hand, and a carnelian scarab with the figure of a satyr lay nearby.²²⁵ The strigil and scarab cannot confidently be used to discern the deceased's gender: strigils appear in both male and female tombs, and while most of the thousands of surviving Etruscan scarabs lack provenience, they are thought to have been used by both men and women for adornment, sealing, and/or as apotropaic amulets. Fragmentary bucchero vessels and three Athenian vases lay on the floor. The iconography of the latter echoes the scarab's subject matter: a red-figure stamnos with scenes of Dionysian women and two nearly identical, red-figure phialai (diam. 25 cm) with Dionysian scenes ringing their interiors and Eros on the *mesomphaloi*.²²⁶ Both men and women hold phialai in ritual imagery (e.g., bronze statuettes of worshipers making offerings or depictions of the goddess Vanth with a phiale), but in banqueting scenes phialai are associated with men, so their presence may suggest a male burial.²²⁷ The emphasis on Dionysos and his *thiasos* in the assemblage recalls the local importance of Fufluns, with the stamnos and phialai (and any lost metal vessels) equipping the deceased for an afterworld banquet.²²⁸

The phialai were attributed by Beazley to the Painter of Bologna 417, a member of the Penthesilean workshop, and seem to have been made and acquired as a pair, like the Castellani Painter's Tyrrenian amphorae in the Caeretan tomb (figs. 3.17–18) and the Deepdene Painter's stamnoi in the Brygos Tomb (figs. 3.22–23).²²⁹ Their exteriors carry identical scenes of erotic pursuit: a bearded man with scepter (perhaps Zeus) chases a young woman (perhaps Aegina), who runs with two other young women toward an old man with scepter. In addition, a winged woman pursues a youth wearing a chlamys on both phialai. Helbig identifies her as Nike, but because the youth runs away, she is more likely Eos, as identified by Beazley and also seen on the Brygos Tomb stamnoi. The family likely selected the phialai in part for this imagery, while the Dionysian iconography on both interiors contributes to a positive message. Holding a kantharos and a sprig of ivy, the god is surrounded by four satyrs and four maenads, music, dancing, and drinking being the order of the day.

The stamnos, attributed by Beazley to the Methyse Painter, likewise features Dionysian imagery, here joyous yet restrained. According to Helbig's description, three Dionysian women in chitons move in apparent processions on each side of the vase: on the first side, one of the women holds a laurel branch and another a kantharos; on the opposite side, the central woman plays the double aulos and another holds a kantharos and a thyrsos. The remaining women do not hold objects but stretch out their hands and gaze toward their companions. This vase forms part of a series of Early Classical red-figure stamnoi centered on the Villa Giulia, Chicago, and Methyse

Painters and depicting Dionysian worship.²³⁰ The best-known and most controversial scenes in the group feature women celebrating around a mask-idol of the god (so-called Lenaia scenes), but vases that show only processing women, like this stamnos, raise questions too. One hesitates to call the women maenads, given the absence of live animals, animal skins, or frenzied behavior, so are they immortal nymphs or mortal Athenians participating in real cult practices, past or present?²³¹ Complicating matters is the apparent targeting of these stamnoi at consumers in Etruria and Campania, the source of nearly all the examples with known provenience, though hardly any have a documented findspot.²³² One of the “Lenaia” stamnoi was used as a cinerary urn in Tomb 298 at Capua, where it was joined by an Attic kantharos in the form of Herakles’ head and an amphora with Nike approaching a young woman.²³³ The age and gender of the deceased in the Capua and Vulci tombs remain unknown, but whether male or female, through the deposition of these vases the dead were characterized as followers of *Fufluns*. In the Vulci tomb, this suggestion is supported by the juxtaposition of the stamnos with the phialai, where the god himself is depicted, and the scarab depicting a satyr. Once again the liminality of the tomb space is affirmed, and once again both the shapes and the imagery of imported vases went far in satisfying the needs and securing the future of the deceased.