Etruscan Identity and Self-Representation in the Late Republic and Early Principate

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Abstract

The thesis addresses the matter of Etruscan self-representation in the Late Roman Republic, down to and including the early years of Augustus' Principate, and the effect different dynamics of self-representation had on the development of Roman perceptions of Etruscans in that period. Its main focus is to investigate the degree of agency that can be attributed to individuals of Etruscan origins in actively influencing and shaping contemporary perceptions of Etruscans as a group.

Individuals of Etruscan origins are identified either by continuing ties to a centre in Etruria, or by active claims to Etruscan heritage. Supporting evidence can be gleaned, with some degree of caution, from epigraphy and onomastics. Self-representation of individuals both in the city of Rome and in Etruria is considered, concentrating in particular on centres in Northern Etruria because of their higher degree of cultural conservativeness. A reflection on theoretical approaches considers different models for ethnic integration and assimilation, as well as the definition of 'ethnicity' as a concept in antiquity, that could be applied to the present period and topic.

The main avenues for self-representation of individual of Etruscan origins are then identified as: active intervention in Roman politics, including the Civil Wars; contribution to religious tradition, with particular emphasis on divinatory practices; elite dynamics in Etruscan *municipia*; contributions by poets of known Etruscan origins to Late Republican and Augustan-period literature. Each of these is explored separately, addressing evidence from ancient sources, archeology and material culture, and epigraphy. The conclusions highlight a much higher degree of agency of individuals of Etruscan origins in shaping perceptions of Etruscan than posited in previous literature, as well as a much greater complexity in the building of multiple identities (nested or parallel), mutual acculturation between Etruria and Rome, and common stereotypes of

Etruscans in Rome in the Late Republican period.

Reactions to the cultural environment, as well as patterns of allegiance to Roman political factions, appear to have a high degree of variation between different communities, families, and even individuals. At the same time, evidence is present for an active contribution of individuals of Etruscan origins to commonplace ideas about Etruscans in the field of religion and cultural traditions. An active choice appears to be made by individuals to highlight or downplay their Etruscan origins, real or purported, depending on context and their current political needs. Augustan cultural policies aiming to equate Rome with Italy as a 'Roman-culture' block opposed to a generally Oriental one perceived as hostile facilitate this process, allowing for legitimisation of traditions attributed to the Etruscans that can now be perceived as part of a communal 'old-Roman' Italy-wide cultural heritage.

Abbreviations and translations

Abbreviations of ancient authors and work titles follow the use according to Hornblower S., Spawforth N., Eidnow E. (edd.), 2012, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4*ʰ ed.

All translations of classical texts and inscriptions offered are the author's own.

The main abbreviations found in this work are as follows:

CIE = *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

ILS = Dessau H. (ed.), 1892-1916, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 3 voll., Berlin.

MRR = Broughton T.S., 1952, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, 2 voll. + supplement, New York.

PIR = *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, online database.

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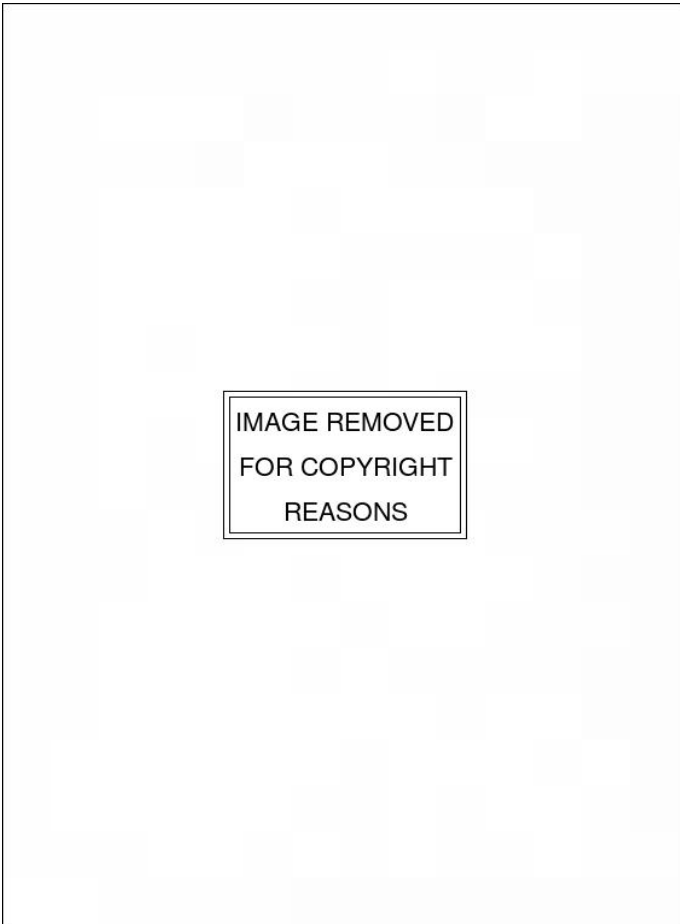
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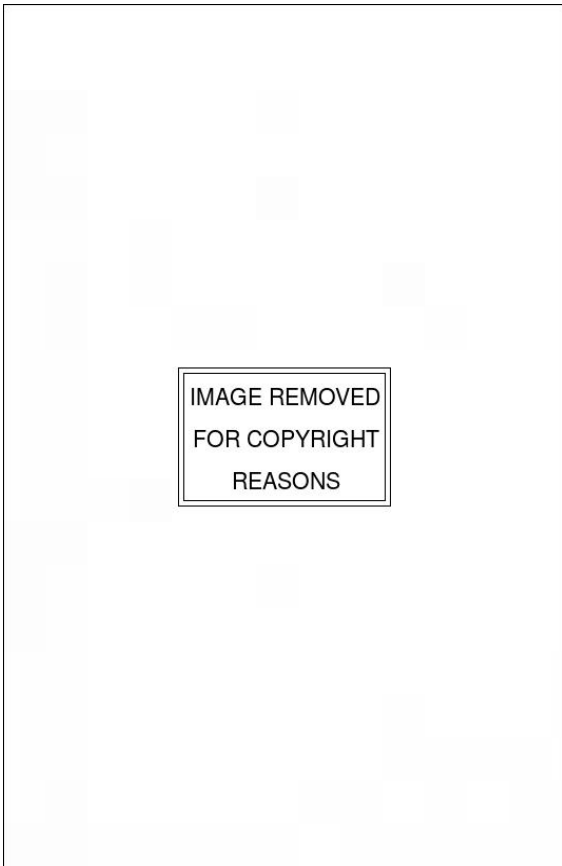
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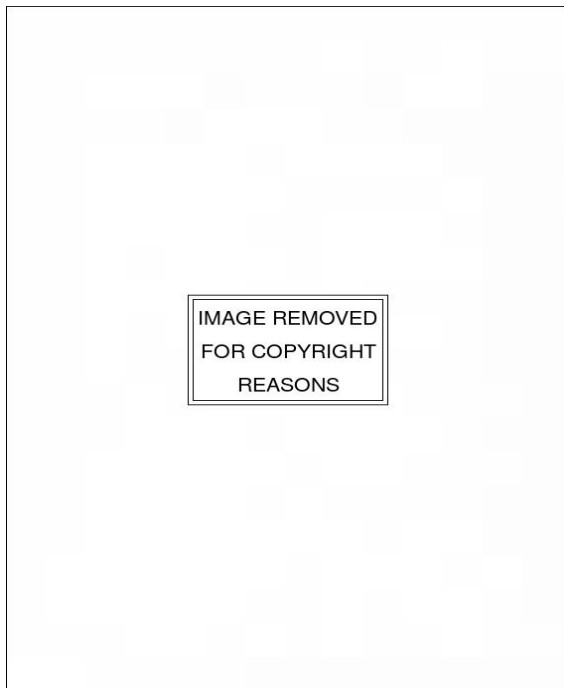
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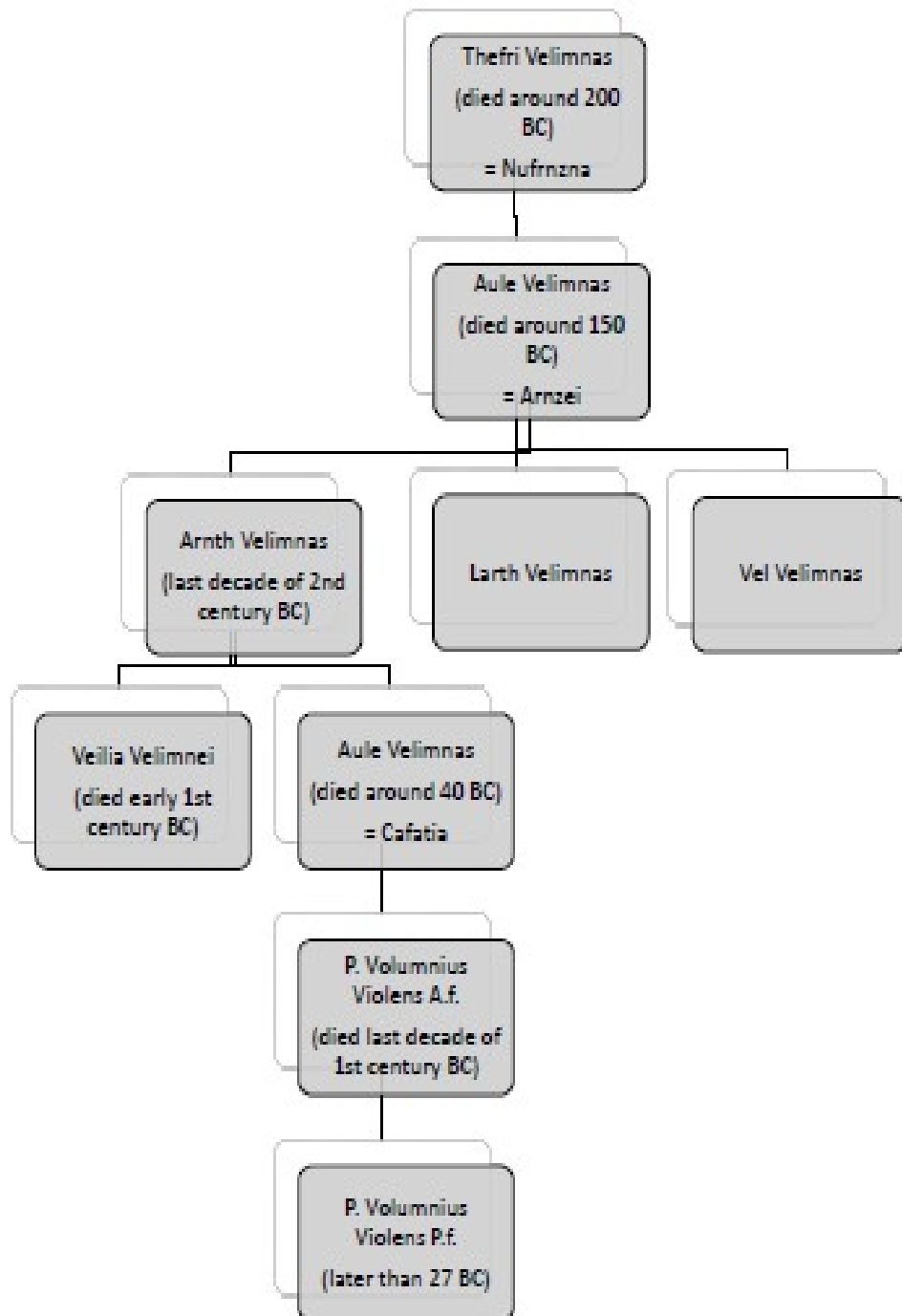
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Introduction

The case of Etruscan identity, whose manifestations collective and individual this work aims to address, holds particular interest in that it is in many ways different from that of any other Italian people who acquired Roman citizenship after the Social War.[1] The Etruscans had a culture that was widely perceived in Rome as being other than the rest of the Italian ones, older than Roman culture, and in some fields holding an expertise as respectable as any 'genuinely Roman' tradition. Although other populations in Italy may have been invested with the same feeling of 'otherness', in the case of Etruscans this perception persisted into the Late Republican period, and may even have intensified with time. Etruria never enjoyed political unity, and the debate around the existence of the Etruscan League is yet to come to definitive conclusions. Yet they did have shared traits that contributed to the perception of their otherness - most significantly, a shared language that was strongly differentiated from other Italian languages, and a common religious tradition.

There is a significant element of ambiguity in the ancient sources concerning the perception of Etruscans as at the same time inherently 'other' and closely tied to the Roman cultural milieu. The differing mythological narrations surrounding the origins of the Etruscans point themselves to the coexistence of a variety of different traditions that could in turn be adopted or rejected to underline their kinship to Rome or, on the contrary, their alien (and at times specifically Eastern) nature. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[2] the Etruscans were autochtonous to Central Italy; this tradition may then have supported the idea that

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[1] For a starting point see Torelli 1995 pp. 17-42. See also Beloch 1964; Volponi 1975; Mouritsen 2006; Bourdin 2012, among others.

[2] Dion. Hal. 1.27.

they were close kin to Romans, highlighting similarities over differences. On the other hand, many of the older sources argue for an Eastern origin for the Etruscans. Herodotus, most famously, makes them originate in Lydia,[3] a take that is widely accepted in Roman poetry, where the Lydian ancestry of Etruscans is indeed frequently stressed. The possibility of a Greek connection for the Etruscans also appears in ancient sources. Thucydides presents one such narration,[4] and perhaps the most intriguing mythological strand connecting Etruria to Greece is the tradition claiming for Odysseus to be the founder of Etruscan Cortona (as Gortynaia), and being an object of worship there.[5] The proliferation of conflicting versions surrounding the origins of the Etruscans speaks to the flexibility of their perception within wider Roman society, where the idea of their marked otherness existed together with an awareness of their closeness to Rome from the very earliest phases of its history. The many myths surrounding Etruscan origins and placing them in geographic locales that are in turn extremely close and both physically and culturally distant from Rome are an expression of the co-existence of these two conflicting sets of attributes. The present work will be interested not so much in determining thedegree of truthfulness of any of these narrations, as in seeing how they might have been employed within the framework of strategies, individual or collective, hinging on Etruscan identity.

Furthermore, individual Etruscan cities had had close contacts with Rome from an early date. An Etruscan element had in all likelihood been present in Rome at least since the late monarchic period, if not since its very foundation. The Etruscans were even credited with

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3   Herodotus 1.94.

4   Thucydides 4.109, in connection with Athens and Lemnos.

5   Theopompus of Chios FrGH 115, F354; see a discussion of this in Occhipinti 2010.

the introduction of important knowledge to Rome, ranging from architecture to religious practice. Their position is therefore unique, as it appears to include an inherent contradiction. Etruscans were regarded as being somewhat more alien to Roman culture than other Italians, an alienness that appears to have been perceived as active when the sense of 'otherness' of Italians populations had generally lessened. At the same time, there was a shared belief that Etruscans were also important contributors to that very same Roman culture that seemed so different from theirs. Not only so, but their contribution was thought to have been active and important ever since Rome's remote past, and perhaps its very inception. It is remarkable that these two elements could coexist in spite of their evident conflict.

Individual Etruscans may have regarded their own origins as belonging to the smaller group of the population of their own city-state, but from a Roman standpoint they could be also conceived of as a wider group bound by generically 'Etruscan' culture. It is extremely likely that the people of the individual Etruscan city-states would have been aware of this, especially since the later part of the Middle Republic, when their contacts with Rome became more intense and their ties to the Romans grew stronger throughout Etruria. It is also true that some elements appear to point in the direction of some level of awareness of a shared cultural *milieu* by the populations of at least several of the Etruscan cities. One such is whatever form of cult took place at the *Fanum Voltumnae* - something that recent developments in archaeology may help clarify.[6] It is a complex situation, and one that holds special interest because of its complexity and of its many implications.

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6   Cfr. Della Fina 2012; Stopponi 2013; 2016. See *infra*, Chapter 1, for further discussion of the findings at this site and what they might represent.

Representation and self-representation: giving agency back to non-Romans

Perceptions of Etruscan identities in Republican Rome have already been the object of a number of studies, either focusing on perceptions of Etruscans specifically or on elites of non-Roman Italian origins.[7] These studies have usually privileged the Roman point of view, focusing on the way in which depictions of Etruscans evolved in Roman society, the arts, literature, and so on. They have therefore constructed a rather detailed picture of the Etruscans as seen by the Romans. However, while these studies have come to convincing conclusions that have helped us reach a better understanding of the way in which Romans perceived other Italian populations after the Social War, they also tend to present evolving representations of Etruscans as being entirely Roman-driven. In this context, the discourse around agency holds particular importance. Presenting the development of representations of Etruscans as entirely driven by Roman agents and informed by Roman concerns has the result of entirely denying the agency of individuals that came from Etruscan cities or claimed Etruscan origins in shaping the way in which they were perceived in society.

It must also be considered that by the Late Republic all of these individuals were Roman citizens in their own right. Some of them enjoyed considerable prestige not only in centres in Etruria, but in Rome itself. Individuals of widely acknowledged Etruscan origins could be influential members of the upper classes in Rome, including the senatorial class. Some of them held important military commands. Others were prominent figures in political factions

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7   Cfr. among others Farney 2007; Bittarello 2009.

or exercised noteworthy influences in discourses surrounding philosophy and religion. This is without counting the members of Etruscan elite families that held magistracies in their own *municipia*, and most certainly conversed and interacted with the central Roman power. Among other institutions, the diviners known as *haruspices* were consulted directly by the Roman Senate, which more often than not scrupulously heeded their responses. Prominent Etruscan figures could also be found within Roman trade networks, including for instance the producers of the highly popular Arretine ware.[8] While it is true that Arretine ware was produced in a variety of locales, some of them located outside Etruria, a general awareness of its connection with Etruria remained, and its link with the territory of Arretium was never fully severed. That a completely Roman-shaped perception of Etruscans could be pushed onto figures of this standing without them being at all able to help shape it seems highly implausible. As highlighted in the work of G. Farney,[9] members of aristocratic families with Italian origins often made conscious choices regarding the way in which they presented their ancestry. They could actively use different aspects of it as tools for political campaigning, or hide aspects that could be perceived as undesirable. Within these higher echelons of society, especially for politically involved individuals, attitudes towards their own Etruscan heritage could be expected to change at times very quickly depending on contingent situations. Yet, the role played by these individuals in influencing contemporary perceptions of Etruscans in Roman society has not yet been the subject of a systematic review.

It is therefore necessary, in a sense, to give agency back to non-Roman Italians, and in our case to Etruscans specifically.

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8   Cfr. Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology s.v. Arretine ware; Samian ware.
9   Farney 2007.

There are a number of issues that first need to be confronted when embarking on the

research of Etruscan self-representation in Republican Rome. First and foremost, there is the

issue of determining who exactly can be regarded as Etruscan in a historical period where

Roman citizenship has been extended across Italy. One may assume that the inhabitants of

cities in Etruria can fit in this group, especially if they belong to families that are known to

appear in local epigraphy pre-dating Roman expansion. With individuals that are active in

Rome, however, classifications may not be so clear-cut. Onomastics can be of help, but only

to a certain extent. Individuals of Etruscan origins, who would therefore bear Etruscan

nomina, were present in Rome from a very early date. Such individuals, whose families had

held Roman citizenship and at times been active in the Senate for centuries by the time of

the Late Republic, may have been regarded as nothing other than Roman. The bearing of an

Etruscan *nomen* is not, in itself, a guarantee that an individual may regard him or herself, or

be regarded by others, as Etruscan. There have been claims of potential Etruscan origins

based on onomastics alone that are in the best of cases inconclusive, and in the worst

directly at odds with historical evidence. This is likely the case, for instance, with the *gens*

Claudia, whose actual origins are likely Sabine. Yet on the basis of onomastics alone it might

be tempting to posit a link with the Clavtie of Caere, known from epigraphy from a fourth-

century hypogeum tomb.[10] Here such a link would prove misleading, and indeed it is

certainly possible that the Clavtie form is itself an import from Latin, generated through

horizontal mobility in the upper classes of society. Cases like this are not isolated, and in the

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10   See Morandi Tarabella 2004 pp. 133-135, suggesting that these might be *clientes* of the patrician
Claudii; also Naso 2017 pp. 689-690 correctly identifying the *nomen* as having Roman origins, and pointing out
that the wife of one family members bears herself an Etruscanised version of a Roman *nomen*, Luvcili.

very same tomb one woman is found wearing the name Luvcili, clearly an Etruscanised version of the Latin Lucilii.

Other factors may clarify the picture. In some cases, individuals active in Rome openly claim Etruscan origins for themselves, or publicly embrace aspects of Etruscan culture that they perceive to be their heritage. We can also regard as likely deserving the 'Etruscan' label individuals whose origins could be conclusively traced to an Etruscan centre outside of Rome, and whose family had an active presence in that centre in the previous two generations. Even so, there are bound to be grey areas, and each case may require an individual assessment. It is however important to note that cases of individuals claiming Etruscan origins for themselves are always relevant to an examination of self-representation of Etruscans, since these individuals clearly chose to present themselves as such. Alongside this, it must also be noted that the strategies adopted by these individuals can be different from each other, and any study of them must account for the differences as well as the similarities. For this reason, the matter of Etruscan self-representation is better described as a picture made up of a number of individual takes and strategies on ethnic identity, rather than an uniform, monolithic shared ethnicity.

Putting together the picture of Etruscan self-representation

The issue of understanding patterns of Etruscan self-representation is compounded not only by such external factors as have already been examined, but also by its own complexity. It would not be possible to approach the matter of Etruscan self-representation by limiting the

investigation to one locale, or to one individual aspect of Roman Republican society. It is only by understanding the interaction of the many different aspects and environments in which they were developed that one can put together a picture of evolving trends in Etruscan self-representation. For this reason, in the present study the exploration of this topic will be articulated through a number of case studies, concerning different fields. These will provide examples of the different capacities in which Etruscan individuals might have influenced Roman perceptions of Etruscans, by focusing in turn on their activity within Roman politics, their role as recognised authorities in divination, the use of double identities within the archaeological context of a family tomb in Northern Etruria, and their presentation in Augustan works of literature written by authors who themselves claimed Etruscan origins.

Tools employed for studying matters related to identities, and ethnic identities particularly, are often founded on theoretical and methodological approaches developed in social sciences, and at times based on patterns observed in modern and contemporary societies. There is some controversy attached to the adoption of such approaches, and it is true that they can hold some problematic aspects. Most importantly, because of significant differences in underlying ideology, general structure and interpersonal dynamics between modern and ancient societies, no model developed for the former can be applied to the latter uncritically and without major rethinking. Even so, some of these approaches may still prove valuable, and deserve further evaluation in order to isolate useful aspects. For this reason, before approaching the Roman and Etruscan matters themselves, the first chapter

will be devoted to the evaluation of different theoretical and methodological approaches that can be of use.[11]

Manifestations of Etruscan identities may have varied, at times greatly, between the city of Rome proper and individual *municipia* in Etruria. As the scope of the present research is too limited to account for each single channel of self-representation open to Etruscans in these contexts, this study will focus on some cases that either allowed for a particularly high degree of influence on contemporary Roman understanding or are more easily approached by the researcher thanks to the presence of a greater wealth of evidence. In Rome, channels for influence on public perceptions of Etruscans may have come through direct participation in the workings of the Senate or through the presence of individuals of Etruscan origins who were otherwise influential, through wealth, connections, or particular prestige. The former case will be approached through an analysis of the presence of senators of known Etruscan origins and their known political allegiances.[12] It will also investigate the possibility that senators of Etruscan origins may have had some sort of faction-like connection with each other, working together with common intent. Evidence for the latter case is harder to gather, in the absence of systematic records such as are available for the Roman Senate. Nonetheless, an excellent example of non-senatorial Etruscans who enjoyed considerable standing in Rome is represented by the elite family of the Caecinae of Volaterrae. This family, for which documentation is particularly good, has been the topic of detailed studies already. It will be therefore considered in this chapter together with the senatorial examples, in order to highlight similarities and differences.

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11   See *infra*, Chapter 1.
12   See *infra*, Chapter 2.

The understanding of Etruscan self-presentation in the *municipia* of Etruria is an even more nuanced, and therefore more complex, matter, compounded by local traditions and different patterns of relationship to Rome that are unique to each city. Northern Etruria, comprising cities such as Perusia, Clusium, and Volaterrae, has often been regarded in previous studies to retain Etruscan cultural traits for a longer period of time due to its distance both geographically and culturally from the city of Rome. It offers therefore better grounds for investigation than Southern centres such as Caere and Tarquinii, whose direct interactions with Rome date much further back and were active to a much greater extent. Some centres in Northern Etruria, like Clusium and Perusia, also hold a great wealth of epigraphic and archaeological evidence, creating a corpus large enough for systematic investigation. In Chapter 4 one facet of this corpus will be explored in order to shed some light on the way in which self-representation needs drove one well-documented cultural aspect in this area, specifically that of burial customs. Local elites in the area were buried in large chamber tombs that housed a number of generations, and that are therefore an excellent testing ground to observe evolving trends in a prolonged period of time. Furthermore, burial custom has long been recognised as a particularly promising field for the observation of cultural change,[13] since it holds great cultural significance and tends to be conservative unless a deliberate push for change is made. Family chamber tombs in Northern Etruria also allow for investigation on multiple levels, since observations can be made both on iconography and on epigraphy, leading to a multi-layered analysis. Observations can also be both synchronic, investigating differences between different tombs of the same period in the

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13   Cfr. Struck 1995; Parker Pearson 2003. More specifically on Etruscans, see Steingräber 2016.

same centre, and diachronic, investigating difference between individuals buried in the same tomb in subsequent phases. The understanding of the identity and social standing of these individuals can also be improved through comparisons with non-funerary epigraphic material, where the same names of local elite families tend to recur.

The city of Perusia provides a number of good case studies through the convergence of all these elements and also because of its position at the centre of events that, as seen above, can be perceived in a sense as the very last aftershocks of the Social War. Chapter 4 will therefore present an example of a potential analysis of Etruscan self-representation through the archaeological record of one individual family tomb in Perusia.[14] This is perhaps the most remarkable case when both interaction with Rome and self-representation are concerned, the Tomb of the Volumnii. The analysis of the material from this family burial will be contextualised in the wider scope of local epigraphy and historical knowledge.

One well-known context in which Etruscans are generally for their extensive contribution to Roman traditions is that of religion, particularly of divinatory practice. Chapter 3 will deal with some of the most structured systems through which this trend could have been purposefully driven with self-representation in mind.[15] It will focus on the diviners known as *haruspices*, considering in turn their origins and degree of internal organisation, their standing with regards to the Roman Senate, the extent of their influence and their true or perceived field of practice. It will also consider the work of educated Etruscans, at times held in great respect in Rome or even members of the senatorial class, in selecting Etruscan

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14   See *infra*, Chapter 4.
15   See *infra*, Chapter 3.

writings on religious topics and translating them from the original Etruscan into Latin. The analysis of the combined influence of *haruspices*' and translators' activity will lead to a deeper understanding of the role played by conceptions of Etruscan religion in shaping the perception of Etruscans at large in Rome at this time.

Lastly, Latin literature presents a number of cases in which themes tied to Etruscan representation where touched upon by poets who had themselves Etruscan origins. This is also a subject taking our research into the early years of the Augustan Principate, where new trends in the representation of Etruscans appear to reach the peak of their momentum. In Chapter 5, the work of authors such as Vergil and Propertius, both of whom had Etruscan origins and ties to individual Etruscan centres, will be addressed with special attention to the way in which Etruscan characters and figures, as well as their own identities, are depicted in their poetry. A further Etruscan influence can be identified in the person of Gaius Maecenas, often regarded as a 'minister of culture' of sorts in the early years of Augustus' reign and already an influential figure in the last years of the Republic. Maecenas will be taken as a case study in the second half of Chapter 5 to address the full context in which these literary depictions of Etruscans were created.[16]

The present investigation of Etruscan self-representation will showcase materials and observations from a variety of different aspects of the interactions between individuals of Etruscan origins and Roman society. In doing so, it aims to set the groundwork for future investigation that can widen the scope of research in this field in more than one way. Further

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16   See *infra*, Chapter 5.

exploration will be possible, starting from the avenues that this work is aiming to open, by adding other cases in which similar patterns as those observed here may appear to repeat themselves. It will also be possible to address the further developments in the way in which individuals claiming Etruscan origins used that facet of their identity in later periods, since the phenomenon appears to be active and producing new outcomes at least until the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and possibly later.

It will be shown, in any case, that this analysis is a stepping stone in the process of reconstructing a picture of Etruscan presentation in Roman Republican society in which Etruscans are active participants, rather than simply the object of changing Roman attitudes. The opportunism and complexity of transformation that often presented itself as a resurgence of identity will also further be brought to light.

Chapter 1

Theoretical models and identity amongst Etruscans

The present work aims to address strategies adopted in the Late Republican period, and down to the early years of the Empire, by individuals who can be described as having Etruscan ancestry, in utilising, adopting, manipulating, highlighting or possibly even renouncing the concept of 'Etruscan', and at the same time helping to shape a collective perception of this concept within a Roman framework. It is important to note that individual strategies are going to be of foremost importance in this analysis, partly because of the nature of the existing evidence, and partly because the evidence addressed has brought to light a variety of different approaches on the part of different groups or individuals involved, albeit with some important shared elements. Nonetheless, it is only possible to analyse individual strategies against the shared cultural background within which they develop, and in order to do so it is therefore necessary to address the wider context of what was perceived as 'Etruscan' collectively in the relevant period. This will both provide the necessary context for a full understanding of the instances of individual agency addressed in the single case studies, and inform an understanding of the ways in which these strategies had an impact in sharing a collective image of Etruscans that appears consolidated by the Early Empire.

As the main focus of this work is the use of Etruscan identities on the part of individuals that would have been identified as Etruscan via signifiers and remains, whether in text or material evidence, that point to such an association, the starting point for an understanding

of this wider background is founded on a discussion of ethnicity as a general concept, as well as the way in which it interacts with collective identities and the building of communities. This chapter will therefore address some of these theoretical issues, in order to provide a framework within which the individual strategies highlighted in the case studies can be contextualised and better understood. A brief discussion will be made of what ethnicity may mean as a category when applied to Etruscans, both generally and particularly in the Late Republic, i.e. after the Social War and the grant of Roman citizenship. An evaluation of different proposed categories for collective identities, stemming from different scholarly debates, will provide us with a more precise and appropriate terminology that can be used to categorise individual phenomena. It will also address to which group the collective idea of 'Etruscan' could have been applied in the relevant period, and the different elements and strategies contributing to the shaping and development of such a collective idea.

One major issue referring to the Etruscans, from any point of view has always been identified as the fact that we never truly get to see Etruscans through their own eyes. This is particularly true in the years after political independence of all Etruscan city-states had been dissolved by Roman conquest and the acquisition of citizenship after the Social War. The historical sources referring to the Etruscans always present them from the point of view of an external observer, overwhelmingly a Roman one.[17] To discuss an idea of Etruscan self-representation in this context, and under these conditions, may appear to be a risky choice.

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17   Musti 1989 has compiled a good catalogue of ancient historiographical sources concerning Etruscans, though the most complete catalogue remains to these days Buonamici 1939. A typical examples of Etruscan presented through a Roman eye is e.g. in Strabo, 5.2.2-9. More ancient texts on Etruscans are now lost, including emperor Claudius' lengthy monograph, cfr. Suetonius *Claudius* 42.

Even with the great difficulty in conclusively identifying which individuals may still be deemed 'Etruscan' in the Late Republic, and down to the early years of the Empire, one cannot escape the fact that these 'Etruscans' are nonetheless at the same time Roman citizens, some of them active and even prominent in the social, cultural, and political life of their time. Yet the discourse around Etruscan self-representation is far from pointless. An analysis of the sources, even a cursory one, will quickly reveal that a discourse surrounding the nature of the Etruscans, their culture, and their heritage, is still alive and indeed picking up in pace and intensity in this period;[18] and that individuals that have a direct connection to the Etruscan milieu can often be found taking active part in it.[19] As the topic of Etruscan heritage becomes more prominent and inextricably tied to the idea of an Etruscan contribution to Roman culture and custom,[20] a contribution that is often identified as particularly ancient and worthy of respect, there is a growing sense that Etruscan history becomes to some extent also Roman history. A number of questions inevitably arise: who are the individuals presenting themselves as Etruscan? Would they have been perceived as 'Etruscan' by others, too, and how did they exploit or address their belonging to this perceived group? Did they, themselves, perceive this group as uniform, and did they, at any time, display a sense of belonging or allegiance to it? Did they have an active input or influence in the way the collective image of this perceived group developed, and if so, did they have a coherent agenda in its shaping? Was there a consistently 'Etruscan' behaviour, that recurs among members of this perceived group, and that might have been identified as

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18   See e.g. Varro, *Ling*. 5.8; 5.32, among others; Propertius 4.2 and other places for which see *infra*, Chapter 5; Scholia Veronensia on *Aen*. 10.183 testify to a lost *Rerum Etruscarum libri* by Verrius Flaccus; a similarly lost monograph by Sostratus of Nysa survives only in one fragment, *FGrH* 23 F3.
19   For a discussion of some of those authors see *infra*, specifically Chapters 3 and 5.
20   See e.g. Vitruvius *De Arch*. 1.71-72; 4.6-7 for Etruscan influence on Roman houses and cities.

such by onlookers who saw themselves as external to it? In sum: at this point in time, what does 'Etruscan' truly mean?

Even in the earlier periods of Etruscan history, the use of a collective term to describe the various populations of the independent city-states flourishing in Central Italy is far from problem-free. There appears to always have been a degree of uncertainty in determining who exactly was included or excluded by any given collective term. The Greek *Tyrsenoi* (also known in the Doric *Tyrsanoi*, and later, most commonly, in the Attic *Tyrrhenoi*) does not necessarily define the population of the region known as Etruria, at least in the beginning. One of the earliest occurrences, found in the *Theogony*,[21] appears for instance to regard the term as pertaining to a generic Italian population. The Roman *Tuscus/Etruscus* more accurately matches our concept of 'Etruscan', but the common origins of these terms appears to not be in the Etruscan language itself, thus leaving its accuracy to some extent vague.[22]

When looking for a collective name in the Etruscan language, that Etruscans as a whole might have used to describe themselves, the situation becomes more, rather than less, complicated. While it is generally accepted that the Etruscan term *ras(en)na* serves as such as a collective name,[23] there appears to be an element of flexibility in its use, and looking at individual instances further blurs the demarcation line around the group it describes. Inscriptions giving us the title of local magistrates might mention, for instance, a *zilath mech*

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21   Hes. *Theog*. 1010-1016. Sophocles *TGrF* 4.270 calls them 'Pelasgians', in a similarly vague fashion. Musti 1989 pp. 34-35 concurs that the geographical connotation was originally vague.
22   For a discussion of potential etymologies see Korenjak 2017 pp. 36-37.
23   Other than the epigraphic evidence, Dion. Hal. 1.30.2 also supports this.

rasnal,[24] which has been identified as a magistrate in charge of the population of one

independent city-state and its territory[25] - with *rasna* here loosely matching Latin *populus* as

the citizen body of one political unit, and not the entirety of populations from different city-

states sharing a larger linguistic, cultural, or religious unity. In the Greek-Etruscan 'cippus of

the Tyrrhenians' from Delphi,[26] dating to the early 5th century BC, the term is rendered in its

Greek translation with *Tyrrhenoi*, and might refer to a larger group, but the context makes

this identification far from conclusive. The text is a dedication made upon the occasion of an

Etruscan victory over the Cumaeans, but the dedication itself is vague enough that it cannot

be conclusively stated that these *rasna/Tyrrhenoi* are a collective group of Etruscans rather

than the inhabitants of a single polity, and the longer of the two inscriptions the dedication

is comprised of makes it clear that the dedication itself is the initiative of a private

individual, whose family name is given as Velthane, tentatively identified as possibly

originating in the region of Perusia and Volsinii.[27] It is somewhat difficult to pinpoint what

kind of military encounter with the Cumaeans the dedication refers to; an attempt to relate

it to a campaign of Lars Porsenna, as related by Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[28] might be

frustrated by the fact that Porsenna was in that case defeated. It cannot be entirely ruled

out that the dedication pertains not to a full-blown naval battle, but to a smaller and more

private scuffle, in which case *rasna/Tyrrhenoi* might describe the people from a single

centre, if not a portion of them. Even if the inscription could be conclusively connected to

Porsenna's campaign, this appears to not have involved the entirety of all populations of

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24   See e.g. TLE 87; 137.
25   Cfr. Tagliamonte 2017 p. 133, "for example Tarquinii and its *ager*". This interpretation is preferable to
the unsupported idea that this magistracy relates to a federal Etruscan League, found e.g. in Becker 2014 p.
354. For a discussion of the sources around the Etruscan League see *infra*.
26   For which see Woudhuizen 2014.
27   Woudhuizen 2014 p. 139.
28   Dion. Hal. 8.3-5.

Etruscan city-states. The use of the Greek *Tyrrhenoi* here is not a significant pointer to the fact that the term encompasses the inhabitants of the whole region, as it has been convincingly argued that the Etruscan text precedes the Greek, on the basis of linguistic analysis.[29]

It would appear on the basis of these examples, then, that *ras(en)na* is at the very least a flexible term, that can be used to define population units of varying sizes - quite possibly leaving out, at least on occasion, groups that a Roman historian would have described as *Etrusci/Tusci*.

The evidence for the existence of a collective term describing in a clear manner the entirety of the group sharing language, culture and religion, and occupying the zone in Central Italy known as Etruria, that would be identified in later Roman text as *Etrusci/Tusci* is therefore problematic at best, and certainly not conclusive. Looking at the political structure of the region is likewise of little help. In his recent assessment of Etruscan political organisation, G. Tagliamonte argued that the league of the twelve *populi* of Etruria was "a stable but fluid political and religious structure",[30] but a close assessment of the existing evidence and sources points to a conclusion far less unequivocal.

It is important first of all to note that all sources possibly describing the meetings of such a League are much later than the events they purport to describe.[31] Generally what emerges

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29   Woudhuizen 2014 p. 138.
30   Tagliamonte 2017 p. 134.
31   The greatest number of relevant passages is in Livy: 1.8.3; 2.44.8; 4.23.5; 4.25.7; 4.61.2; 5.1.5; 5.17.6; 6.2.2; 7.21.9. But see also Varro *Ling*. 5.8.46; Strabo 5.2.2; Diodorus Siculus 5.40.1; and Dion. Hal. 3.52.4; 3.57.1; 3.59.1-5; 3.61.2; 4.27.1-5. Cfr. also Maggiani 2001.

from the sources is a recurring meeting of delegation from different Etruscan city-states at

the sanctuary of Voltumna/Vertumnus, regarded as one of the major deities of Etruria.[32]

Recent archaeological investigation may have identified this site, which is presented in the

sources as being located in the proximity of Volsinii, with the sanctuary uncovered at Campo

della Fiera possibly providing a good archaeological match.[33] The idea of a pan-Etruscan

sanctuary appears to be better supported than that of a structured collective political group

of a federal nature, and there is evidence for sanctuaries operating as a link between

communities on a territory elsewhere in Italy, as has been shown for instance at

Pietrabbondante.[34] Yet while a pan-Etruscan sanctuary would have promoted connections

and cooperation, and possibly served as a tool to resolve political tensions or even

coordinate action in times of need, the existence of a recurring pan-Etruscan festival does

not directly prove the existence of a federal structure of some kind. While the activity at the

Fanum Voltumnae, if proved to be indeed recurringly that of a pan-Etruscan sanctuary,

would shed some light on a perceived sense of kinship that went beyond the borders of the

individual polity and was perceived as such by those who took part in the festivals, it does

not prove the existence of a League of Twelve Peoples as a structured political organism.

Further doubt arises from the fact that Livy is by far the most prolific source in this regard,[35]

and the one pointing to the nature of this organisation being more than just religious.The

suggestive idea that the League was an expression of *nomen omne Etruscum* is likewise

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32   Cfr. also Propertius 4.2., and *infra* Chapter 5, for further discussion of the role of this deity.
33   Stopponi 2007; 2009 particularly pp. 460-465; Torelli 2017 pp. 698-703.
34   Scopacasa 2014.
35   See above n.15.

found in Livy alone.[36] By the time Livy wrote, the idea of a *nomen Etruscum* had become

much more clearly defined as the population of all the cities of Etruria, sharing a language,

religious tradition, and cultural traits, and it would have been easy for the historian to

project his concept of 'Etruscan' on the group meeting at the sanctuary of Voltumna. Even

assuming that the information provided by Livy is entirely reliable, it is worth observing

then that the resolutions of the League appear to have been far from binding, if it

addressed the conflict at Veii and resolved to provide military support - a support that

seems to have failed to materialise. It is not inconceivable that a large-scale religious

meeting at a pan-Etruscan sanctuary would have been exploited as an opportunity to

discuss regional trends and events of great impact such as the war at Veii,[37] but if collective

conclusions were reached they seem to have been at most general guidelines, that

individual polities felt free to disregard at their convenience. Perhaps frustratingly, while

there is good evidence for the independence of individual Etruscan city-states and their

connection, sometimes very deep, to their local territories,[38] evidence of a larger formal

bond between different city-states in the region remains elusive. In light of this, it can also

not be assumed that the idea of a shared collective 'Etruscan' identity after the acquisition

of Roman citizenship might be a carry-over from a previous political bond on a regional

scale, although the evidence for collective religious practice remains relevant.

In the absence, furthermore, by the Late Republic, of any political independent Etruscan

unit - be it a city or a league of cities - one must find a different kind of tool to define the

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36   Livy 9.41.6.
37   See e.g. Livy 4.23-25.
38   See e.g. Torelli 1975; Macintosh Turfa 2006; Cerchiai 2017, among others.

group that would have been perceived by its members and by their contemporaries as 'Etruscan'. Post-colonial studies, as well as work addressing the concepts of ethno-nationalism and ethno-symbolism, can provide some useful tools in this sense,[39] even though they require some discussion and adaptation in order to become applicable to the Etruscan case. The advantage of this approach is that it allows to acknowledge the development of a collective group identity that does not require independence as a political unit, and that it allows further investigation of the ways in which the group's past, historical or mythological, informs its perception of itself and the perception of it by others. All these elements are crucial to the understanding of the concept of 'Etruscan' in the Late Republic and Early Empire, as well as to the idea of an Etruscan self-representation.

In his work on *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, A.D. Smith provides a definition of 'nation' as "a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all its members".[40] The definition, mostly derived from the observation of modern nation-states, is not of easy application to any ancient society, and particularly difficult in a sense for the Etruscans. As considered above, there are great difficulties found in identifying a collective name used by the Etruscans to describe themselves; strong ties to territories appear rather to be the fiefdom of individual city-states; there is no clearly distinguished political unity, and it is hard to assess to what extent religion and culture were truly shared beyond the boundaries of each city-state's territory, and to what extent regional variation was perceived as crucial.

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39   Useful among others: Bhabha 1990; Anderson 1991; Smith 1986; 1999; 2009; Cannadine 2001; Bassnett 2013.
40   Smith 1999 p. 11.

Smith himself identifies a possible situation in which a group might have local, regional, or religious identities, rather than national ones,[41] a description that appears far more fitting for the evidence available for the Etruscans. Yet while the idea of an Etruscan nation must be abandoned, post-colonial and ethno-symbolist studies may provide a more fitting category in terms of their definition of an *ethnos* (or *ethnie*). This is identified by Smith as "human populations distinguished by both members and outsiders as possessing […] an identifying name or emblem, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories and traditions, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a historical territory or homeland, a measure of solidarity at least among the elites".[42] While still in need of some adaptation in order to fit the Etruscan case, this definition appears to be more flexible, and can provide a useful tool to consider the ways in which Etruscans might have been thought of (and presented themselves as belonging to) a collective unit defined in ethnic terms, at least by the time of the Late Republic. By that point, the ethnic name *Etruscus/Tuscus* is certainly prevalent, generally applied to the whole population of Etruria (though it is important to note that individual names derived from single cities persist and are important well into the Late Republic and even the Empire);[43] while there is no single myth of common ancestry that appears to have been both universally applied to and universally recognised by populations of Etruria, there are active attempts at using myth as a way of legitimising their cultural authority;[44] there certainly is a link to a historical territory, that of Etruria, that

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41   Smith 1999 p. 5.
42   Smith 1999 p.13.
43   See e.g. Propertius 4.2.4 *Volsinios focos*, and 1.22.3 *Perusina patria*; weighty references to the *ager* and *municipium Tarquinienses* in Cicero *Pro Caecina* 10.6; 11.2; *ager Caeretanus* in Martial *Epigrammata* 73.3; and so on.
44   See *infra* this chapter, and Chapter 3.

is indeed reinforced by repeated resistance to Roman attempts at land reassignment or

redistribution;[45] and particularly in the religious field, there is good evidence for shared

rituals and traditions that might have worked as an identifying feature for populations

across Etruria.[46] Linguistic unity was certainly also an important factor, and elite solidarity is

a well-known phenomenon within Etruria and in Central Italy outside of it. It might indeed

be observed that in a sense the loss of political autonomy may well have reinforced, rather

than undermined, the idea of a recognisable perception of Etruscan identities as an *ethnie*

type of grouping, as it removed to a certain extent any conflict or rivalries between

individual city-states that might have represented an obstacle to such a perception.

On the other hand, one cannot disregard that all this information is filtered by a Roman

external observer, which is as noted the pre-eminent voice in all narrations of Etruscanness

that have reached us. Indeed, as with the gain of citizenship all Etruscans are automatically

also Roman, the adoption of the generalised identification of all the peoples of Etruria as

one distinct *ethnie* on the part of the Roman observer would more easily have seeped into

the perception of those individuals and communities who would be identified as Etruscan

themselves.

On this basis, whenever in this work the expression 'Etruscan identity' or 'Etruscan

ethnicity' is used, it will be referring to a perception of the Etruscans, throughout Etruria, as

an *ethnie* type of group rather than a national one, accounting therefore for a looser kind of

unity and the possibility of splits and differences, sometimes severe, between different

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45   See *infra*, Chapter 2.
46   See Becker and Gleba 2008; MacIntosh Turfa 2014; Maras 2017, among others.

communities within the group. An important differentiation will also be made wherever relevant between evidence for perception of the Etruscan *ethnie* on the part of individuals who were perceived as Etruscan themselves, and the generalised perception of it on the part of the generalised Roman collectivity. This difference is important as one of the questions the present study is going to engage is to what extent individuals who were perceived or categorised themselves as Etruscans (or employed certain signifiers in order to appear connected to an Etruscan collective) informed this latter collective perception of the whole group. The adoption of this looser categorisation as opposed to a proto-national one is key seeing the previously detailed lack of a documented political bond of autonomous Etruria as a whole, allowing for the possibility of divergence in strategies and reactions. Evidence for more individualistic strategies being adopted on this basis in specific contexts will be addressed, as well as the way in which these strategies interact with the wider perception of an Etruscan *ethnie* as a whole. Such strategies are not necessarily in complete conflict with the perception of a collective grouping with some degree of uniformity; while incompatible with the idea of a proto-national group, they can be more easily accommodated within the *ethnie* framework. As this work primarily deals with realisations of perceptions of Etruscans in the Late Republic and the early years of the Empire, reference will primarily be made to the concept of this Etruscan *ethnie* as it had been developed by this point in time, though it must be kept in mind that this is the result of a process of cultural constructions whose roots extend throughout the history of Etruria. The historical background of individual aspects of this constructions will be addressed separately wherever relevant.

Before delving into the specific realisations of this concept in the Late Republic, and the way in which it was influenced and informed to different extents in its various aspects by individuals that self-described or were otherwise identified as Etruscan, it is however worth providing some further background, as well as a brief discussion, of some elements of the definition of Etruscan as an *ethnie* we have provided, according to an adjusted interpretation of the definition offered by Smith. Firstly, some brief words need to be spent regarding the nature of the tie of the Etruscans (and of individual Etruscan populations specifically) with their territory, both in the sense of their individual city-states and a wider regional sense of community. Under this heading, it might be helpful to also consider theoretical tools developed in previous scholarship concerning the study of populations who lack political autonomy as *ethnie*-type units, as well as the study of the impact of citizenship rights in their development. While most studies addressing this type of issues have focussed on contemporary national states, and are therefore of limited utility, some tools and conclusions can still be considered as providing general suggestions that might be of use. Furthermore, important considerations concerning the effects of the grant of Roman citizenship on the populations of Italy, and of Etruria specifically, have been offered by authors such as H. Mouritsen and E. Gruen[47], and while not necessarily directly of import in the construction of Etruscan identity, they are important background factors that deserve some preliminary consideration.

Secondly, the role played by myth in the definition of Etruscan as a group must also be addressed. This should include, but not be limited to, any idea of an origin myth or ancestry

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[47]   Gruen 1993; Mouritsen 1998.

myth that could be found surrounding Etruscans, but the definition should also be broadened to include concepts such as that of 'imagined community' as proposed by B. Anderson,[48] which might more easily apply to the Etruscan case. Anderson's definition is particularly useful as the emergence of this understanding of identity is linked to historical context, tying back to what was previously observed concerning the way in which the Social War and acquisition of citizenship impacted perceptions of Etruscan collective identity (and, at least in principle, presumably also other Italian collective identities, such as Sabines, Latins, etc.)

Thirdly, and lastly, a discussion must be provided of the idea of invented and re-invented traditions, as the interplay between invention, rediscovery, and reconstruction of traditional cultural elements constitutes a large part of the processes regarding the development of perceptions of Etruscans in the Late Republic, leading to the consolidation of that prevalent idea of Etruscan that then persisted throughout the Empire, into the Late Antique, and in many ways all the way down into the modern era.

Ties to the territory

The perceived connection with the territory is not only one of the identifying elements used to describe an *ethnie*-like group, but can also be of particular interest in our given case, as at the level of the individual city-state it can be an important factor in influencing the development of individual strategies and reactions. In this case, an intermediate level of

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48   Anderson 1983 p. 6; 36.

individual agency could be developed between the whole of the perceived community and

the single family/person, represented by the community of the single city-state and its

territory. As seen above, the evidence surrounding the existence of a League of Etruscan

cities as an active political agent is at best uncertain; whereas there is abundant evidence

that the identification of the territory belonging to each city-state, and particularly of its

boundary, was of great importance to the communities occupying that territory.[49] The

persistence of these regional territorial ties into the Late Roman Republic may represent a

fundamental element for the understanding of strategies adopted by individuals identified

as Etruscan in this period, particularly on the political level.[50] It may also account for

divergences in strategy observed between different centres or groups.

There is some direct evidence in the Etruscan language that testifies to the existence of a

commonly perceived link between the community and its territory, at least at the level of

the individual city-state. While by its own nature sparse and fragmentary, this evidence is

important in understanding the nature of this connection. The Zagreb *liber linteus*,

originating from the Perusine territory and dated most likely around 200 BC, contains

perhaps the most articulate prescriptive religious text we possess in the Etruscan

language.[51] While debate persists around the specifics of its exact translation, it is

noteworthy that this ritual prescription abounds in references to the city and its territory,

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49   For further discussion of the evidence for the Etruscan League and the degree of independence of the individual cities see among others: Briquel 2001; Camporeale 2001; Maggiani 2001; Migliorati 2003; Sordi 2003; 2004; Becker 2013; see also Colonna 2012 for the role played by community sanctuaries.
50   Some instances are found in Harris 1971; Banti 1973; Torelli 1986; Aigner-Foresti 1997 (cases for Eastern Etruria); Terrenato 1998 (specifically concerning Volaterrae); Ando 2000; Pasquinucci 2002; Letta 2012 (persistence of Etruscan magistracies in Perusia); Tweedie 2013 (also on Volaterrae).
51   For the *Liber Linteus* see also: Rix 1991; 1997; Roncalli 1980; van der Meer 2007; 2008; Belfiore 2010; Neil 2012 (also Perusia, with specific attention to boundaries).

referencing the "priesthood of the citadel and the community" and "the cities and districts and hearths", these latter as individual recipients of blessing. The *Liber Linteus* also appears to differentiate *cilth*, above translated as citadel, from *spura*, the city-state in its wider sense, compounded of both the material settlement, its population, and its independent magistrates.[52] This articulation of the materiality of city and territory is of particular interest, both because its importance is enshrined in religious practice and because it outlines the individual components presented as making up the local community. The city itself, as contained by its fortification, is separated by a community that would have been at least in part be also spread in the surrounding rural territory; but this separation is to some extent permeable. The recipients of the blessing appear to include, at least potentially, a multitude of villages or small centres on this territory, but also reference "hearths", acknowledging the individuality of single family groups as a core component of the local community. There is in any case a clear preoccupation with a local dimension of religious ritual, limited to the boundaries of the group that is meant to be its recipient; this appears to be a much more precisely defined and localised group than a totality of generic "Etruscans", and can be more clearly defined as the population of the fortified city and its surrounding territory. We may perhaps regard the religious prescription of the *Liber Linteus* as founded on an idea of collective identity that uses the connection to the territory to legitimise itself on the scale of the individual city-state. This is of some importance, as it highlights the existence of a degree of collective consciousness on a local level. Ties to the territory are likely to have been felt more strongly at the level of the single city-state, reinforced by potential struggle between different communities to define the boundaries of their respective territories.

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52   TLE 1; cfr. also Maggiani 2001 pp. 231-232; Becker 2013 pp. 362-363.

A preoccupation with the definition of boundaries is also demonstrated by other pieces of

Etruscan-language evidence.[53] Boundary markers are a recurring find in Etruria, and even in

the areas of North Africa, in the proximity of Carthage, that had been settled by Etruscans

under Sulla.[54] These most often bear the inscription *tular*, identifying them as boundary

stones. It is noteworthy that all *tular* stones known from Etruria pre-date the Social War,

and therefore belong to a period previous to the blanket grant of Roman citizenship, where

Etruscan city-states still had political autonomy and the definition of boundaries was

therefore a practical as well as symbolical matter. Of the greatest interest in this evidence

group is a third-century BC *tular* stone found in the territory of Cortona, and bearing the

extended inscription *tular rasnal*.[55] The translation of this inscription poses some interesting

issues, related to the discussion above about the exact meaning of *ras(en)na*. It has

originally been suggested that the Cortona *cippus* should be translated as "boundary of the

Etruscan people", therefore representing a boundary between Etruria and Umbria, carrying

the idea of separation between the Etruscan and Umbrian *ethnie*-like groups.[56] Other

interpretations have however been suggested based on the idea that *rasna* may have a

more generic meaning as "the people",[57] entailing the interpretation of the *cippus* as a

boundary of a more local nature.[58] This poses the further problem of the definition of this

boundary, which is of great import for our purposes, since it is directly tied to the definition

of the size of the group that might have perceived itself as sharing a community-based

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53   For further discussion of the importance of boundaries in Etruria see Edlund-Berry 2006; Becker 2013.
54   See Rendeli 1993; Steingräber 2000; Bonfante and Bonfante 2002; Edlund-Berry 2006.
55   TLE 632.
56   See Cristofani 1984 p. 122; Rix 1984 p. 467.
57   See *supra* for discussion of the flexible meaning of *ras(en)na*.
58   See Colonna 1988, pp. 25-28; Becker 2013 p.362 suggests the stone may have marked the road
leading to Perusia instead.

identity. The argument offered by G. Colonna that this might be the boundary of Cortona

and its surrounding territory, in a way similar to that entailed by the Roman concept of *ager*,

appears for the most part convincing.[59] This would entail a loose correspondence of *rasna*,

at least as used in this context, with *populus*, i.e. the population of the city-state and its

surrounding territory.[60] Aside from providing further evidence to the flexibility in meaning of

this term, and its ability to be applied to self-perceived community groups of varying sizes,

the Cortona *cippus* is therefore an important piece of evidence for the existence of a

collective identity at the local level, founded on or at least reinforced by a strong perceived

tie to the territory. This is further reinforced by the find of *tular* stones with the inscription

tular spural;[61] following the interpretation of *spura*, as in the *Liber Linteus*, as the city-state

made up of the sum of the physical settlement, its organs of government and its population,

these further reinforce the idea of a perception of community as a group strongly tied to a

well-defined territory.

Tular stones also provide important evidence for a concern with boundaries on an even

more personal level. There are some known instances of *tular* stones marking the

boundaries of a plot of land belonging to an individual family rather than the official

boundaries of a city-state. There are at least two cases of *tular* stones defining boundaries

of land at a family level, and a third which is a likely; all these date to the third century BC.

The Cippus of Perugia[62] names Aule Velthina and Larth Afuna as the signatories of an

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59 Colonna 1988 pp. 25-28; cfr. also Gargola 1995 p. 84.
60 MacIntoshTurfa 2014 p. 145 suggests that this stone demonstrates a link with "the state and ethnic identity", but the claim would need to be explored in further depth, particularly concerning the interpretation of *rasna*.
61 E.g. TLE 675 from Faesulae; see also Bonfante and Bonfante 2002 p. 23; Neil 2016 p. 24.
62 TLE 570. See also Facchetti 2000, pp. 19-21; Becker 2010; Neil 2016 p. 24 f. 2-3.

agreement regarding the apportioning of land within a necropolis which appears to belong

to Aule, as well as allowing Larth to draw water from within Aule's private land. Two more

stones from Bettona[63] also define the boundary of the plot of land belonging to an

individual family, the Larna, within a necropolis. Lastly, a stone is known from Castiglione del

Lago, most likely within the territory of Clusium,[64] bearing the inscription *tular alfil*, which

could possibly be connected with a *gentilicium* Alfial known from Clusine Etruscan

inscriptions. If that is the case, the stone might mark the boundaries to a plot of land

belonging to the Alfial family. Even with the uncertainty of the interpretation surrounding

this latter instance, it is noteworthy that a concern seems to emerge with defining land

boundaries even at a family level. It is less clear to what extent this can be projected onto

the wider level of the whole community, though the idea of a *tular rasnal* may point exactly

in that direction.

Later Roman sources acknowledge the importance the establishment of boundaries held for

the Etruscans in a ritual perspective, even crediting them as the initiators of the appropriate

ritual for the foundation of cities as still followed in Roman tradition, particularly with

regards to the ritual demarcation of the *pomerium* with a plough.[65] Aside from the

acceptance of the Etruscan origin of such an important part of Roman ritual, which will tie

in with the discourse concerning the adoption, invention or re-invention of traditions, this

further reinforces the idea of boundaries being important at city-state level, perhaps more

strongly than a collective Etruria-wide perceived boundary the evidence for which remains

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63   TLE 692. Cfr. Stopponi 2016 p. 315 nn. 263 and 264.
64   TLE 530, now lost, but for which cfr. Lambrechts 1970, p. 22 n. 2.
65   Varro *De Lingua Latina* 5.143; Plutarch *Romulus* 1.11; but note also that Cicero *De divinatione* 2.75
denies Etruscan involvement. Cfr. also Riva 2016 pp. 95-97; Carlà-Uhink 2017 pp. 158-160.

scarce. The strength of this connection to the territory may also be a factor informing the resistance to Roman attempts at land redistribution in Etruria, which appears to have been particularly strong compared with other parts of Italy, and which we will discuss in further detail in Chapter 2.[66]

We can then attempt a reflection on the shape taken within the extant evidence for the Etruscans by the element defined by Smith, within his description of an *ethnie*, as a "link with a historical territory or homeland".[67] It is important to note that, even if the ties to territory investigated above should prove to be of a more religious or mythical nature, this description is not undermined, as the meaning of 'homeland' is indeed wide enough to accommodate such variation. The historical element appears clearly relevant if we accept the Roman evidence on the concern for the moment of foundation of the city-state, and for the ritual of foundation to be correctly executed. The widespread preoccupation with boundaries, as expressed through the *tular* stones and other evidence, testifies to the importance of the connection between the population and its territory, which takes on a religious relevance as well.

What is most remarkable here is that this connection appears well defined at the level of the individual city-state, which is characterised both in terms of its physical citadel, its population, and its wider territory with its own population; but there is also some evidence that the connection was felt at an even lower level, with individual families feeling a need to demarcate the plot of land to which they personally had a connection. The fact that this

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66   See *infra*.
67   Cfr. Smith 1999 p. 127.

latter phenomenon seems to be particularly related to a funerary context may link it to a concept of ancestral territory, somewhat like a family-scale version of Smith's historic territory.[68]

Conversely, there is very little evidence pointing to a widespread consciousness of a collective boundary encompassing the whole of Etruria. The only element possibly pointing in this direction is the Cortona *tular rasnal* stone, and as we have seen Colonna's interpretation of this inscription as concerning the wider territory of the city-state appears more compelling.[69]

Overall, as far as connection with the territory is concerned we appear to be faced with smaller perceived communities tied to the territory of individual centres, as well as with the presence of individual families connected to a particular plot of land. This might have direct repercussions on the way that individuals of Etruscan descent imagined themselves as belonging to a particular community, as ties to their local city or even their family line may compound and at times contrast with a general sense of belonging to a wider "Etruscan" *ethnie*-type group. In our further analysis, we must therefore account for the co-existence of all these layers, which will justify the existence of a certain level of individual agency for the population of single centres or even members of single families. At the same time, it will be important to analyse the way in which these individual strategies interact with and possibly manipulate the more general perception of "Etruscan" as an ethnic community.

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68   Smith 1999 p. 11.
69   Colonna 1988 pp.26-28.

The use of myth

As we have seen, Smith identifies "a myth of common ancestry" as one of the defining traits

of a population group identifiable as an *ethnie*. In his work on imagined communities,

Anderson pushes this concept even further, suggesting that what he describes as "a

narrative of identity" must necessarily be built on the filling of gaps in collective memory -

particularly concerning the origins of the group, which are rarely easily defined - with

constructed narratives that can be shared and create a sense of cohesion.[70]

The idea that the identification of a mythological ancestor, often in the person of an

eponymous individual, was fundamental to the definition of a group in antiquity as what we

may term an *ethnie* is far from new to scholarship. The phenomenon is well described for a

number of groups and communities, particularly but not exclusively in Greece;[71] one may

easily include in this number Romulus for Rome,[72] and potentially, in an Etruscan context,

Tarchon for Tarquinii (but the connection here is looser, not as direct, and in many ways

harder to assess).[73] Tarchon may well have been, more than a shared ancestor, an

eponymous founder of the cultural hero type; the evidence we have from Roman sources is

primarily concerned with his role in the establishment of religious tradition.[74] Given the

particular interest for Etruscan divinatory practices in Rome, however, this may be the result

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70   Anderson 1983 p. 204.
71   See e.g. among others Malkin 2003 p. 127; Patterson 2010 pp. 75-80; Calame 2003.
72   See also, interestingly, Wiseman 1995 on the invention/fabrication of the myth of Remus, which
compounds the more traditional Romulus ancestor myth.
73   Thomson de Grummond 2006 p. 203; see also Pallottino 1930 and Colonna 1987. Deroux 2008 p. 49
and particularly p. 66 tentatively suggests a reading of Tarchon as an ancestor figure for a Tarchna family.
74   Cfr. Cicero *De Divinatione* 2.50-51; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.552-560.

of a selectiveness of the sources, and elements more specifically tied to an ancestor myth may have not survived.

For the Etruscan case specifically, when we address a body of mythology that might have been employed as a tool for shaping collective identity, it is also important to not regard this mythology as if in a cultural vacuum. Possibly as early as the eighth century BC, a process of dialogue and conflation had already begun through which the mythology circulating in Etruria would take on a distinctly Greco-Etruscan nature, as exemplified by V. Izzet.[75] Greek myths not only enjoyed abundant circulation in the Etruscan *milieu* from a very early date, but were adapted and re-contextualised in Etruscan artwork and objects.[76] This may represent an avenue through which the phenomenon of the adoption of descent from a mythological ancestor as a signifier of collective identity could have carried over from Greece to Etruria. At the same time, it also signals the importance that myths of Greek origin might have had in the shaping of Etruscan collective identities, something that is best exemplified by the group of myths surrounding Troy and Aeneas. As Izzet notes, these myths were also often re-contextualised, taking on different degrees of importance from their Greek originals and assuming connotations that could have been at times rather distant from their Greek incarnations. This is another factor that must be kept in mind when addressing the use of myth in the building of Etruscan identities in the Late Roman Republic, as some of these myths would have changed context at least twice (from Greek to early Etruscan and then from Etruscan to Roman, and often independently from Greek to Roman

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75   Izzet 2005. In the same work, Izzet also correctly notes that myth can be used in the building of individual identities or personas, something that plays into the trends of individual agency identified in this work alongside the building of collective identities.
76   Cfr. e.g. Osborne 2007.

at the same time)[77] and elements from all these contexts would likely co-exist and interact with each other. Further discussion of the use of myth will be made through specific case studies, particularly in Chapter 3 concerning the myth of Tarchon and Tages and its role in the establishment of the haruspical tradition, and in Chapter 5, most notably, with a detailed discussion of the use of the Trojan myth with regards to the Etruscans and specifically in the Aeneid.[78]

It is noteworthy that the identification of the mythological ancestor as the ideological glue holding together a group and investing it with authority is not necessarily limited to a larger political entity such as a city and its territory, but is used with equal effectiveness also at the level of the family/*gens*: see for instance the connection of the *gens Iulia* with the goddess Venus, cultivated both by Julius Caesar and then by Augustus,[79] which intersects with their establishment of the Trojan myth as a Roman ancestral myth, or the appropriation of Heracles as an ancestor model by the Argead dynasty in Macedonia.[80] Varro particularly defines any Roman *gens* as descended from one male ancestor, from whom it derives its name.[81] This is of particular interest in a system such as the Roman *gentes*, in which adoption, accompanied by change of *nomen*, was a common phenomenon; on this basis one might possibly regard a *gens* as a mini-imagined community.[82] More widely, a perception of shared identity based on purported blood ties with their roots in mythological

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77   This is certainly the case with the Trojan myth, for which see Battistoni 2010.
78   See *infra*, Chapter 3 and 5.
79   Cfr. Lucretius 1.1-2 with explicit connection to the Trojan/Aeneas myth; Suetonius *Julius* 5.1.5. See also Cornell 1975.
80   See Moloney 2015.
81   Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 8.4.2.
82   See Smith 2006 for more explorations of the layers of meaning attached to the *gens*.

antiquity was prominent in Roman culture by the Late Republic.[83] In any case, this certainly

testifies to the fact that the validation of a group through a belief in shared descent from a

common ancestor, mythological or partly so, was a common phenomenon both in a Greek

and in a Roman context, and can therefore be an useful tool to understand the sense of

collective identity in ancient populations. It must be noted that the evidence available for

this model being applicable to Etruscan identity is, as shown above, often lacking;

nonetheless, just as the myths 'imported' from Greece enjoyed a wider Mediterranean

circulation, so too it is possible that this model, circulating in the Mediterranean *continuum*,

impacted perceptions of Etruscan identity.

This concept has been explored in previous scholarship as a way to define the building of an

ethnie-like collective identity, particularly in Greek polities with their attached territories. J.

Hall, in particular, has posited that the existence of a shared myth of ancestry is the

fundamental basis of any construction of ethnic identity in archaic Greek communities.[84]

Hall's discussion of Greek collective identities highlighted the presence of a shared

mythological antecedent or a myth of foundation representing the initial kernel of a concept

of shared identity, rather close to what Anderson might have termed an imagined

community. He argued that the knowledge of shared descent from a mythological ancestor

was the essential element holding these communities' concept of their shared identity

together, this identity being therefore, for these groups, essentially a by-product of a literary

construction.[85]

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83   As independently concluded by both Dench 2005 and Farney 2007.
84   Hall 1997; see also comments in Malkin 2001, especially pp. 29 ff.
85   Hall 1997 especially pp. 47-48. See also Hall 2002; Demetriou 2012 for further discussion.

It must be noted, however, that in order to accept Hall's model fully, one should accept that the ancestral myth predates the actual community, as it represents the primary motor for its aggregation; that is not necessarily the case. One might more correctly say that, while the mythological narration may well serve to validate an idea of shared identity, such an idea needs to be pre-existent, even in a seminal form, in order for the mythological tradition to emerge at all and be adopted by that group.[86] This is perhaps a more apt perspective to be applied to the Roman/Etruscan scenario, as it allows to explore the way in which a mythological narrative can be modified, adapted, or willingly employed to foster a certain collective perception of a group or community, or to support such a perception as it emerges. At the same time, the adoption of this perspective still allows for the recognition of the importance of myth as a tool for the shaping and sustaining of ideas of collective identity. Lastly, since as we will see the Roman/Etruscan scenario necessarily relies, especially in the Late Republican period we are addressing, on a system of double identities[87] (as we should most correctly speak of Romans of Etruscan ancestry for most of the authors involved in this rethinking of mythical past), the discourse needs to be expanded to include not only the way in which narratives of mythological ancestry can shape perceptions of one's own shared identity, but also of the shared identity of an external group.

A group may be defined by an external observer as the set of individuals sharing descent from the same mythological ancestor; this is a strategy often adopted by Greek historians, as seen above. In the case of the Etruscans, an array of mythological narratives can be explored

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86   Some notes on this phenomenon can be found in Jones 1997; Hu 2013 pp. 374-375.
87   Cfr. Farney 2007.

that tie in to their possible perception as what we might term an imagined community.[88]

Most notable, particularly because its manipulation and the great importance it assumes in Rome's own set of ancestral myths make it especially relevant to the Late Republican/Early Imperial period, is the connection of central Italy in general and Etruria in particular with the Trojan myth.[89] This connection is twofold: on one hand, there is the participation of Etruria and Etruscans in the myth of the coming of Aeneas to Italy after the destruction of Troy; on another hand, a previous Trojan connection might be represented by a possible perceived kinship between the Etruscans and Dardanus, the mythological founder of Troy. A less popular but nonetheless relevant tradition, arguing that Dardanus originated from Etruria, is accepted by Virgil in the Aeneid, and will be further discussed as we address the representation of Etruscans in that work.[90] Here it will suffice to note that this tradition may well be precedent to Virgil rather than fabricated by him; there is at least one known Etruscan inscription in which a group of Etruscan heritage identifies itself as 'Dardanii'.[91]

The implications of this particular ancestry myth are certainly remarkable, as with the establishment of the Aeneas tradition as the main ancestry myth for Rome, it would posit Dardanus as the origin of a shared ancestral link between Rome and Etruria. This use of mythology would then support the development of a system of multiple identities as posited above, while also highlighting the flexibility of myth as a tool to support the development of

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88   See for instance the ideas concerning a possible role of Odysseus in the foundation of Etruscan Cortona, or of a son of Odysseus as mythological ancestor to the Tyrrhenoi, cfr. Malkin 1998 and Occhipinti 2010.

89   See DeRose Evans 1992 pp. 35-36 and particularly nn. 3-4 for an extensive review of the archaeological evidence for occurrences of Aeneas, Anchises, and the scene of their escape from Troy in Etruscan art.

90   See *infra*, chapter 5.

91   Heurgon 1986, pp. 433-447.

shared identities and its ability to adapt to different historical contexts with the passing of time. As different mythological traditions often coexist, it is possible that different potential ancestral myths might also have coexisted for the same community, and that the primary adoption of one of them may have been dictated at different points in time by collective political necessity.

The Trojan connection might also have interacted with the other commonplace origin myth for the Etruscans, describing them as originating in Lydia.[92] In this case, the Trojan connection might validate the perception of an Eastern origin for the Etruscan, while the adoption of the 'Etruscan Dardanus' tradition would have removed the Eastern element at the root, reconciling the two strands of tradition and making the Etruscans, in a sense, both Eastern and fundamentally autochthonous. This is an excellent example of the manipulation of different mythological traditions in order to reflect a perceived collective identity and adapt it to the requirements of the historical period in which the myth is revisited and reassessed.

Fabricating and re-inventing traditions

The topic of a manipulation of traditions, mythological or otherwise, in reference to a remote past to which the origin of these traditions is connected, is pivotal for the development of Roman ideologies in the Later Republic and Early Empire, and represents therefore a framework within which any representation, collective or individual, of the

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92   Cfr. Herodotus 1.94; Horace *Sermones* 1.6.1.

Etruscan *ethnie*-group must be considered. As the growing popularity of antiquarian literature in the later years of the Republic testifies, there is an increasing interest in this period in defining the origins of practices and traditions, particularly driven by a desire to define a concept of the 'authentically Roman',[93] often in contrast with the East; the rhetoric surrounding Actium[94] is only the most explicit culmination of a trend that had already been active for some time. In this context, antiquity becomes often synonymous with authenticity, resulting in the idea that the remoteness of a tradition will make it more respectable by investing it with the authority of the authentic Roman forefathers. As a result, there is a concern on the part of many elite families or groups, both in Roman and in the *municipia*, with rediscovering their own origins, and having them tied to the remote past that can invest them with the same kind of authority.[95] Works such as those of G. Farney and E. Dench[96] have investigated in some depth how this process can affect the claimed descendants of entire Italic populations, that can be themselves defined as *ethnie*-type groups along the guidelines we have offered for the Etruscans, such as for instance the Sabines. The process is enacted by highlighting the antiquity of the ties these populations had with Rome, their presence in Rome ever since its foundation, their active role in Roman politics in that period, and their active contribution in enshrining Roman laws and traditions.

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93   See e.g. Nuffelen 2010 (with regards to Varro), Crawford 1993 particularly pp. 12-14; Newlands 2002 particularly pp. 200-202 (use of the *fasti* and antiquarian material to this purpose by Ovid).
94   See among others Cairns 1984 (rhetoric of Actium in Propertius), Nappa 2005 (Virgil), Osgood 2015 (Actium as end-event to the Civil Wars). Torelli 1999 ties the situation surrounding Actium and the rhetoric that ensued as the ideological glue behind the establishment of a concept of *tota Italia*. For polarised rhetoric surrounding Actium and opposing West and East see e.g. Virgil *Aeneid* 8.704-706; *Res Gestae* 5.4 (The *tota Italia* passage); Suetonius *Augustus* 16.5; Horace *Carmina* 1.37.
95   See Cornell 2008; Bradley 1991; Rawson and Weaver 1999; Smith 2006 among others.
96   Farney 2007; Dench 2005; 2013.

In this perspective, the Etruscans occupy somewhat of a liminal space. Considering the

increasing emergence of a polarisation that opposes Roman tradition to the East,[97]

characterised by τρυφή and a consequent lack of courage and valour, the common tradition

of a Lydian origin of the Etruscans placed them in a position in which the negative

stereotypes attached to the East could easily be attached to them. The literary sources we

possess testify that this was indeed a known phenomenon.[98] Furthermore, negative

elements were also attached to the Etruscans by their being cast as tyrannical figures

overtly opposed to the Early Republican Rome; the Etruscan Tarquinius Superbus becomes

the perfect figure of the toppled unjust ruler,[99] and the Clusine Lars Porsenna is presented

as the external threat against whom the heroes embodying the old values of Rome are

pitched.

At the same time, however, there are numerous elements that openly suggest that the

treatment of Etruscans was not simply one of complete othering. Credit is given to the

Etruscans for the invention of a number of Roman practices and traditions, including some

of great importance, such as the correct ritual for outlining the *pomerium* of a city,[100] and

possibly even the establishment of the Roman triumph.[101] Their pre-eminence in some

religious practices, particularly in the field of divination, is openly recognised and even

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97   See the bibliography above concerning Actium; further discussion can also be found in Badian 1968;
Bonjour 1974; Giardina 1994.
98   For this characterisation being applied to the Etruscans see e.g. Bittarello 2009. See also Diodorus
Siculus 5.40 (from Posidonius); Livy 2.12.
99   Notably, the dynasty could be framed as Corinthian as much as Etruscan, see Zevi 1995. Note however
that Superbus is shown to appeal to his Etruscan ancestry in order to persuade Etruscan cities to help reinstate
him, in the name of Etruscan kinship: cfr. Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.6.1-5.
100   See *supra*, and Varro *De Lingua Latina* 5.143.
101   For further discussion of this see Bonfante Warren 1970; Versnel 2006.

protected.[102] Their presence in Rome from the date of its foundation itself, and their

contribution in shaping it ever since those early years, is equally acknowledged.[103] To the

feeling of alienness connected with the idea that the Etruscans might have originated

outside of Italy one may oppose an authority with which they are invested by virtue of a

shared perception of their extreme antiquity. In the system outlined above, where antiquity

increasingly appears to entail prestige, a push to identify the origins of a practice as

reaching back even beyond the foundation of Rome itself is not entirely surprising, and the

Etruscans represented the most obvious option for that kind of remote past. It is within this

tension that one can make sense of the process of presentation, and in some case

rediscovery, of Etruscan roots on the part of individuals as well as within the larger ideology

that would become well-defined by the early years of Augustus' Principate.

Because of the terms themselves in which this tension is defined, the matter of the

authenticity of Etruscans origins and connections as they are presented, whether for a

family or for a practice, becomes of fundamental importance. Studies of the construction of

ethnic models, their perception and their representation, whether in ancient or in modern

and contemporary settings, have often been preoccupied with a perceived need to

determine whether or not said constructed models were based on a foundation of historical

fact.[104] As we do know that many of these models, both ancient and modern, openly

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102   See *infra*, chapter 3, for full discussion of the sources; cfr. also e.g. Cicero *De haruspicum responso*
18.2-3; 20.1-5; *De Legibus* 2.21.12; *Nat. Deor.* 2.7.1; *De divinatione* 1.3.14; 1.33.13; Livy 27.37.6-8; among
others.
103   Cfr. e.g. Varro *De Lingua Latina* 5.46.6.
104   See for some discussion among others Hall 1995; 2002 (on Greek ethnicity); Cornell 1997 (in early
Roman history); Jones 1997; Malkin 2001 (specifically on Greek ethnicity); Roymans and Derks 2009 (ethnic
constructions in antiquity); Hu 2013; Gardner et al. 2013 (Roman antiquity).

reference some sort of tradition they claim to be retrieving from a distant past[105], scholars

have tried to determine whether or not these sets of 'traditions' actually matched factual

elements. An extremely varied set of conclusions has been reached concerning this issue,

ranging from suggestions that specific decorative patterns can be directly linked to

individual ethnic groups from very early dates to the claim that, on the contrary, all

constructed early models are a product of later invention and no factual basis can be traced

for their existence beforehand[106]. To some extent, what we have noted above concerning

mythological traditions also plays an important part in this process, as the choice of a

mythological tradition over another may contribute in supporting a claim of authenticity or

antiquity.

A model that can prove helpful in understanding the dynamics surrounding the rediscovery

of purported Etruscan traditions starting in the Late Republic has been proposed for the

interpretation of a very different modern case scenario, that is the integration of non-

English groups in the modern and contemporary United Kingdom and the constructions of

shared ethnic traditions in these groups precisely as a reaction to their lack of political

independence. This is the model proposed in the work of E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger,[107]

particularly with regards with the Scottish case, though some remarks on the situation in

Wales are also relevant to the topic. Hobsbawm and Ranger work on the assumption that

very little 'authentic' material, if any at all, was present in Scottish perceptions of their own

ethnic identity, that would therefore have to be regarded as an artificial construction

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105   See e.g. for a Roman case all examples presented in Dench 2005, especially chapter 3; for a modern
example the comments on invented traditions in music in Gelbart 2007.
106   Hu 2013 pp. 371-372.
107   Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992.

generated by opposition to the 'mainstream' English culture.[108]Though in many ways radically different in historical context, this may represent an interesting point of comparison with the Roman/Etruscan scenario. Here, too, we are dealing with a group that had once enjoyed political independence with a more fragmented political structure, to later undergo conquest by another group and have to re-build a presentation of its identity,[109] both for the benefit of members of the group itself and for that of the larger framework within which they are now integrated, from a radically different political position. While the process following the Social War is achieved not by means of conquest, but through a grant of citizenship, the result of it undoubtedly presents some evident similarities.

This may also represent a viable comparison in that it rightly addresses the issue from an emic perspective, something that has not often been done with regards with Etruscans: that is, it doesn't address perception of the ethnicity of others from the viewpoint of the conquering group, but the active manipulation of perceptions of their own ethnicity by the conquered group. Lastly, another interesting comparable feature is that Scottish and Welsh citizens are indeed also British citizens in full right, and actively contribute to the administration both of their local communities and of the central political system. In the same way, we have to consider that citizens of Etruscan descent were not powerless subjects to Roman rule, but indeed possessed full citizenship and actively contributed to governance at all levels. Indeed, when we look at the strategies adopted by individuals and families in order to use their Etruscan ancestry to solidify claims of antiquity and

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108   Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992, pp. 15-42.
109   Cfr. e.g. Bradley 1997; Jehne and Pfeilschifter 2006.

respectability, the evidence we possess often concerns exclusively elite families, that are

active within the systems of both central and local governance, some of which had even

received grants of Roman citizenship previous to the Social War. All of these factors make

Hobsbawm and Ranger's assessment of the circumstantial situation an excellent starting

point for reflection concerning the Roman/Etruscan scenario in the period we are

considering.

The outline presented by Hobsbawm and Ranger with regards to the Scottish case is one of

'constructed' traditions. The implication is that the traditions chosen to build the

connotation of the conquered group within the larger system of which it is now active part,

and solidified by being placed in a remote and to some extent mythological past, are

deliberately 'constructed', must necessarily be completely fictional, and have no roots

whatsoever in actual historical fact.[110] To some extent, and particularly within the realm of

mythology, this process can indeed be recognised in the Etruscan case. The choice of the

Etruscan Dardanus tradition, for instance, appears to be a deliberate attempt to funnel an

Etruscan element into the established connection of the Trojan myth to that of the founding

of Rome, establishing *a posteriori* a connection between Romans and Etruscans well rooted

in the mythological past and pre-dating the foundation of the city itself.[111] In the same way,

studies addressing some of the traditions whose purported Etruscan origins are highlighted

by Roman antiquarian have at times been hard pressed to find conclusive evidence that

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110   Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992, pp. 3-6.
111   Cfr. Battistoni 2011.

they indeed originated in Etruria; this is for instance the case concerning the Roman triumph.[112]

There is therefore certainly an element of fabrication that ought to be considered when looking at elements that are presented as the building blocks of the connotation of Etruscans as an *ethnie*-group starting in the Late Republic. This element is particularly marked in the choice of specific mythological tradition, but can certainly also be present in some antiquarian and aetiological narrations. Nonetheless, Hobsbawm and Ranger's attitude can appear in some case excessively dismissive, in that the model they propose, while it can describe some aspects of this phenomenon successfully, may not be applicable in such a clear-cut way to all aspects of it. This model of fabricated tradition may therefore be considered more convincingly, in the Roman/Etruscan scenario, as one facet of a more complex phenomenon.

In other instances, indeed, the shared knowledge and understanding of some cultural elements may have become incomplete, even partially lost, through time, and when these elements were recovered in order to reinforce a feeling of belonging to the *ethnie* and hold the group together in the light of the loss of political independence, some level of invention was required in order to restore what was lost or not fully understood anymore. This might be the case, for instance, concerning divinatory traditions, where comparisons with Etruscan text demonstrate that a good number of elements that appear genuine were indeed carried over; nonetheless, the appearance of hybrid texts is witnessed, such as the

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112   Bonfante Warren 1970; Versnel 2006.

Prophecy of Vegoia,[113] that seem to present a mixture of elements with genuine Etruscan roots and other clearly informed by contemporary Republican Roman concerns. Invention and recovery appear to be paired also in non-religious texts, such as for instance the *Elogia Tarquiniensia*.[114] Some elements, and at times major ones, appear to be subject to radical change through time and can indeed be fabricated in order to serve a practical purpose by the very same group expressing them, and this is particularly easy within the framework of mythological tradition, something that the Etruscans had a long tradition of adapting and investing with new layers of meaning.[115] Other elements would nonetheless be drawn from various forms of pre-existent shared tradition, even though this may have been partially lost or misunderstood. Rather than talking of 'invention' of traditions rooted in antiquity,[116] therefore, a more thorough definition integrating Hobsbawm and Ranger's model with those further consideration would be that of 're-invention', that is a construction based on a mixture of manipulated mythological elements, actual invention, and recovered genuine tradition. This appears to be the most viable framework for defining and interpreting the manipulation of Etruscan identity and traditions emerging from the literary and antiquarian texts available for the Late Republic and Early Empire.

The lack of recognition for a group as an independent political entity does also not necessarily constitute an obstacle to the presence of a shared ethnic model for that group. Another important element emerging from Hobsbawm and Ranger's analysis concerns the

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113   For which see *infra*, Chapter 3; cfr. also Heurgon 1959; Valvo 1988; Briquel 1991; MacIntosh Turfa 2012; Santangelo 2013.
114   See Torelli 1975.
115   Izzet 2005.
116   As might more easily done in some Greek contexts, see e.g. Skinner 2012.

creation (or in this case partial rediscovery) of ethnically connotated traditions as a reaction

to a loss of political independence and the assumption of the group as an active participant

in the wider politics of a larger system. This is an important factor for the Roman/Etruscan

case, and also a further reason why the national model does not fit it, whereas the *ethnie*

model is far more functional as a tool for describing it. Indeed, the Scottish case study

demonstrates that a group may be fragmented in a number of smaller politically

independent communities or be entirely deprived of political independence and be part of a

bigger, not uniform political entity, and yet still preserve some degree of awareness of its

cohesion within an *ethnie*-like model. A similar consideration can also be made for the

Etruscan case. In the latter case, furthermore, the lack of political independence may in a

sense be seen to have fueled this process of re-invention and rediscovery. As seen above,

the fragmentation in numerous independent city states with their territories would have led

to conflict between different Etruscan community; the integration of all those communities

within the Roman *milieu* would have removed to a large extent that conflict, something that

might have facilitated the recognition of common elements of cohesion, helping shape the

idea of a collective Etruscan *ethnie*.

Also of interest to the analysis of constructions of collective awareness in a group within a

larger political entity are N. Luraghi's studies on the construction of ethnic awareness in the

ancient populations of Messenia,[117] which include elements other than literary sources in

their evaluation, such as archaeological evidence and the use of language.[118] Luraghi

highlights the presence of a perception of ethnicity based on purported shared blood ties

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117   Luraghi 2002; 2008.
118   E.g. Luraghi 2002, pp. 46-47; 50-53.

with their roots in mythological antiquity, which as we have seen is also an important factor

in the definition and representation of Etruscans, particularly with regards to the use and

manipulation of ancestral myths. Luraghi's analysis of Messenian identity addresses the

ways in which constructions of ethnicity may be influenced by the power imbalance

generated by the group whose ethnicity is considered being placed under the rule of

another, external group (in this case the Spartans).[119] The comparison requires, naturally, a

degree of caution, since the Etruscans were never formally placed under Roman rule and

the power dynamics between Etruscans and Romans are significantly different both in the

period previous to and the period following the Social War. Nevertheless a power imbalance

clearly oriented in favour of the Roman element was certainly present preceding the Social

War, and not removed until well after its conclusion.[120]

While Luraghi is addressing ethnogenesis specifically rather than a recovery or re-invention

of previous tradition, some of his conclusions may nonetheless apply to the way in which

elements of tradition may be invented or re-discovered, particularly again with regards to

myth (and its presentation through material culture). There is, however, one dubious

element in Luraghi's model that needs to be addressed; that is, the idea that the

'authenticity' of a concept of ethnic unity necessitates political independence in order to be

proved. The idea that a working shared concept of Messenian ethnicity could not exist until

Messenians as a group broke free of Spartan rule, and had therefore to be invented from its

very basis after such an independence was gained, is indeed highly problematic. As noted

above, a concept of cohesion within the group may actually have been reinforced by being

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119   E.g. Luraghi 2002 pp. 58-61.
120   For further discussion of this see Bispham 2007.

subject to the rule of a group that was perceived as external or 'other'. While the political

status of Roman citizens of Etruscan descent was markedly different from that of

Messenians subject to Spartan rule, there is still a case to be made for lack of political

independence as a group actually working as a catalyst for the redevelopment of ideas of

ethnicity, or their use within an individual strategy to re-assert a level of authority lost

through the loss of political independence.

All the facets of the matter addressed so far nonetheless lead to the conclusion that the

conscious manipulation of concepts of ethnicity appears to be constantly intertwined with

the political context and indeed can serve different political agendas. These can express

themselves on a collective level, but can also be expressed on various levels of local or

personal strategy, such as on the part of a single city, or family, or even individual.

Conclusions

In order to address any manipulation or manifestation of Etruscan ethnicity in the Late

Republic and Early Empire, it has become clear that some definitions need to be first and

foremost put into place. Firstly, we have discussed the meaning of 'Etruscan' for those who

used the varied terminology describing this group in antiquity, and for those who claimed

Etruscan heritage for themselves. Secondly, once a definition however loose of this group

has been achieved, we have tried to pinpoint what kind of collective group identity can be

expected to have been experienced by its members. It has emerged that any phenomena

observed within the range of the manifestations of Etruscan self-representation in this

period are likely to be operating at the same time at multiple levels. In all the different facets of the issue, be it in the development of religious tradition or the presentation of family identity, the construction of *topoi* of Etruscan identity through literature or the rediscovery of a role in remote Roman history, different strategies can be developed at the level of a single city-state with its territory, or a single family, or even a single individual. Yet all these strategies, while driven by individual agency, operate within a larger framework of a shared group identity, which they can be seen to manipulate to their advantage. It is this collective group identity that provides all of the smaller-scale entities we have listed with the necessary tools to implement their strategies. Hence, it is necessary to keep this collective group identity in mind in order to best understand their individual reactions, and it is for this reason that ethnicity remains an important concept to be explore when considering Etruscans within the Late Republican and Early Imperial Roman *milieu*.

Previous to the Social War and the blanket grant of Roman citizenship specific city-states could have been in conflict or competition with each other. The evidence concerning the existence of an Etruscan League is not strong enough to suggest that this would have been a fixed political entity of a federal nature, though it would appear that an important bond throughout Etruria existed at the very least of a religious nature. Furthermore, an element of horizontal mobility, well attested for Italian elites and including Etruscans, together with individual grants of Roman citizenship previous to the Social War, would have led to a family-wide sense of clan-like identity, which might have prompted the development of separate adaptive strategies at the family level. A number of elements can however still be identified that represent the building blocks of a collective identity encompassing all of

Etruria, including language, myths of ancestry, religious tradition, and various degrees of ties with the territory. In the absence of a political unity for the region, as well as of an idea of collective identity closely tied to an independent group tied to a bounded territory, the concept of nationhood appears ill suited for the Etruscans both previous to and after the grant of Roman citizenship. Conversely, the concept of *ethnie* as outlined by Smith provides a viable framework within which Etruscan group identity can be understood, and it is in this sense that we propose to make use of the term 'ethnicity' in this work. An *ethnie* type of group shares a collective bond to a territory, exemplified by the widespread Etruscan preoccupation with boundaries; a myth of ancestry connecting them to the land, which takes various forms in the Etruscan context, often through the re-semanticisation of Greek myths; a shared language and a shared religious tradition, both well documented in Etruria. Following the grant of Roman citizenship, the concept of imaginary community as defined by Anderson also becomes useful to the understanding of the building of a collective image of Etruscan, once again strongly tied to the territory and making ample use of mythological narrations placed in a remote past to validate and consolidate its construction.

At the same time we must be aware that any construction of Etruscan identity in this period is to some extent also a construction of Roman identity. By the Late Republic the only framework within which any manipulation of Etruscan identity can be understood is one of multiple identities. In a situation where any individual claiming Etruscan heritage was also necessarily a Roman citizen, and most of the best documented cases for a deliberate presentation of Etruscan identity are elite individuals who were active in political governance at the municipal or central level, it must be noted that any person presenting an

Etruscan identity could not have done so completely separately with a Roman identity. Systems of parallel or nested identities have been explored for this period in previous scholarship with regards to other groups, including the Sabines, and postulated for the Etruscans as well; they would have rested on various elements including bilingualism, religious observance and practice, and continuing ties with individual *municipia* in Etruria. On a wider, more general scale, in this same period a drive towards a tighter cohesion of Italy as a whole can be witnessed, and therefore an attempt at constructing, more or less consciously, a view of a remote past, authoritative by virtue of its antiquity, where different Italian components contribute to the establishment of Roman tradition. This process, as we have seen, entailed a degree of invention, but is more accurately described as a process of recovery and re-invention of elements that might have been partially preserved or partially understood. Some tools employed to this end include the choice to push to prominence mythological narration that might to that point have been secondary or less known, but that better serve the chosen narration; and the adaptation or simplification of genuine, pre-existing religious traditions. A number of Etruscan elements make their way into this construction, and as a consequence a rediscovery of Etruscan past becomes to some extent also a rediscovery of remote Roman past.

In the case studies that constitute the body of this work we are going to address different fields in which this type of processes can be seen at play, with an attention both to the general trends and the general development of a concept of Etruscan collective identity, and the individual outcomes and strategies that can be observed at a smaller scale. It will become clear that in all of the fields analysed both elements are fundamental to a complete

understanding of the phenomenon, and that while a certain variety of individual responses

can be observed, they only fully make sense when placed within the wider framework of

the development of a collective sense of Etruscan-ness consolidated by the Early Empire in a

form that would remain almost unchanged for centuries to follow. As we will see in

individual chapters, among the main fields in which this process is observed are that of

religious practice, with particular regards to divination; that of elite political involvement

and local governance; that of literary production, with particular regards to the

manipulation of mythologies; and that of the building of family identities, tied to

connections with the territory, ancestry myths, and a system of multiple identities. In all

these aspects we aim to highlight the constant interplay between individual agency and the

awareness of a belonging to an *ethnie*-type of collective group that is heightened, rather

than lessened, by the political context of the Late Republic.

Chapter 2

The Etruscans in Rome: Senatorial families and political allegiances

In considering the matter of Etruscan self-representation in the Republic, one crucial element lies in the identification of those individuals or groups that had the greatest ability to exercise a direct influence on the way the concept of 'Etruscan' was shaped and perceived in contemporary Roman society. It is a necessity to focus on elite groups, since there is little evidence for common people in most of the municipal cities.

On the other hand, there are groups of people claiming Etruscan heritage that were placed in influential roles and due to these positions could affect the way in which Etruscans were perceived. A discourse has long been open on an 'Etruscan presence' in the Roman Senate - that is, the presence of senators that belonged to Etruscan families, sometimes retaining active direct links with their original *municipia*.[121] These senators must have been able to drive the political discourse concerning Etruria in a direct fashion; not only that, but by giving their allegiance to one or the other political side, they may have aligned Etruria, or at the very least some regions or cities in Etruria, with the ideology and political goals of their chosen leaders. They might have done this involuntarily, while pursuing individual interests. In that case, what may have been read by others as 'typically Etruscan' behaviour would have been in truth informed by personal convenience.

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[121] For some academic background cfr. particularly Torelli 1969 and 1995; Rawson 1978; Farney 2007; Flower 2010.

There is no agreement on what criteria identify senators that can be called 'Etruscan[122]'. In fact, identifying them with any degree of certainty may be not entirely feasible. An Etruscan element was present in Rome from a very early date, most likely ever since the Monarchy.[123] As a consequence of this, as well as horizontal mobility between Italian elite groups in that same period, a component of Etruscan heritage could have been present even in some of the oldest Patrician senatorial families.[124] The concern regarding such cases is whether or not such a component was by the Late Republic still 'active': that is, whether such families still laid claim to their Etruscan origins, whether they still perceived themselves as in some measure 'Etruscan' and, most importantly, publicly presented themselves as such. Such a distant heritage may well be no longer productive by the Late Republic.

The case of families entering the Senate at a later date, and verifiably hailing from Etruscan municipal centres, may appear to be simpler. It is in some cases easier to prove continuing ties between these families and their original Etruscan *municipia*, or even the persistence of a branch of the family in the *municipium*. If their connection with the original *municipium* was also known in Rome, their 'Etruscan' identity would also be to some degree public. This means that they would have had to engage with such a categorisation, if not actively embrace it - that is, that they would have played a role in the shaping of the perception of 'Etruscans' as a category regardless of their level of willingness to actively present themselves as such. However, in some cases circumstantial evidence is so minimal that there

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122   The most thorough attempt to do this is probably in Torelli 1995; although not without some uncertainties and problems.
123   Cfr. Dench 1998.
124   See e.g. the Roman Volumnii, whose *nomen* has been associated to Etr. *velimna*, and who had their first consul, P. Volumnius Gallus Amintinus, in 461 BC (cfr. Livy 3.10); or even earlier, T. Lartius, consul in 501 and 498 BC (cfr. Livy 2.10).

is nothing to work with beyond an Etruscan-sounding name, without even a precise connection to a specific *municipium* or area within Etruria.[125] Some of the more common 'Etruscan-like' *nomina* are known to be found in Italy outside of Etruria, from significantly early dates.[126] Over-identification of possible Etruscans is a concrete risk, and a known issue within some of the most traditional tools for the study of families within the Roman Republic, such as Schulze's seminal work on Roman *nomina*.[127] While works such as this are still a fundamental point of departure, one must be wary of their tendency to over-identify Etruscans on an onomastic basis only, sometimes with little or no supporting evidence. An approach aimed at compiling a list, partial or complete, would lead to results only capable of highlighting numbers of certain or potential senators of Etruscan heritage, with no particular insight on their active role (or lack thereof) in the self-representation of Etruscans.

One further temptation in addressing this matter would be to look for consistent patterns of political activity within the group of 'possible Etruscan' senators. The nature of the surviving evidence makes the potential identification of such patterns difficult for two separate reasons. Firstly, the evidence for voting patterns is fragmentary.[128] Nowhere is available a complete record of how a consistent number of senators of Etruscan origins (and their non-Etruscan counterparts) voted on a sufficient number of issues to make a sample statistically significant.

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125   Attempts to establish connections have been made among others by Harris 1971; Rawson 1978; Torelli 1995, not always on particularly solid grounds.

126   For which cfr. Dench 1998; Isayev 2017 especially pp. 103 ff., 340 ff.

127   Schulze 1904; some information on *cognomina*, but at times with similar issues, are in Kajanto 1982.

128   The situation is of course better as far as magistracies held are concerned, thanks to tools such as Broughton's MRR; it might also be better for the Early Empire, with the ongoing development of tools such as PIR.

Secondly, the aforementioned issues concerning the identification of senators of Etruscan origins contribute to invalidate any possible result in this field as well. Even where a wide-range analysis of voting should be possible, the sample on which such analysis would be based would contain a consistent number of individuals that might not be of Etruscan origins at all, compromising the reliability of any conclusions drawn.

An approach with a wide scope, then, appears not to be the most productive for our current purposes. Some insight into the role played by 'Etruscan senators' in the matter of self-representation might be gleaned instead by concentrating specifically on those for whom abundant circumstantial evidence exists pertaining to the relationship with their original Etruscan *municipia* and their involvement with specifically Etruscan matters. The better candidates for inclusion in such a sample would ideally be families that not only have a proved, continued tie to their original *municipium* or region in Etruria, but whose activity can be monitored over a number of generations - two at the very least. These criteria would inevitably restrict our scope to a very small number of senatorial families, which, nonetheless, are the ones most likely to provide us with useful insights on the matter at hand.

It is worth noting that such focused studies of individual families and their continued relationships with Etruscan centres have been successfully attempted in the past, albeit not with a specific focus on the issue of self-representation.[129] They have nonetheless demonstrated that in the absence of a wide-scope body of evidence for the whole group of elite families of Etruscan heritage in Rome, a selective approach considering some

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129   See among others: Terrenato 1998, Tweedie 2013 for the Caecinae; Evans 1987 for the Norbani Flacci.

particularly well-documented examples can lead to valid and enlightening conclusions. This approach will allow us to reason on the effectiveness and consequences of any patterns and strategies that can be successfully identified and reconstructed, while also accounting for personal agency and initiative.

Based on these criteria, two senatorial families of Etruscan origins has been identified that will be the focus of analysis: the Perpernae (whose possible Etruscan origins are located by M. Torelli in Perusia or Veii[30]), and the Volcacii Tulli of Perusia. Similarly, some attention will be given in this chapter to the Caecinae of Volaterrae, who did not achieve senatorial status until the early years of the Empire. These cases have been chosen on the basis of the fact that there is abundant evidence for their involvement in Roman politics, that they are observable throughout more than one generation, and that they each hold significant peculiarities allowing for detailed reflection on individual and different outcomes.

Rome and Etruria: a brief historical background

Before addressing these case studies, it is important to have a brief overview of the political development of the relationship between Rome and Etruria, as well as specifically Etruscan historical background, in the period leading up to and including the Late Republic, with particular attention to any periods in which Etruscan patterns of allegiance or political behaviour with regards to Rome might have been observed. Particular attention will be devoted to the period of the Civil Wars, which are directly connected with the introduction

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[30]   Torelli 1969.

of individuals of Etruscan origins in the Roman Senate and provide most of the historical

backdrop to our case studies.

Up to the Social War

At least from the beginning of the Iron Age, it is possible to argue that a coherent uniformity

in material culture is observable in Etruria, North of the river Tiber. Setting aside the lengthy

debate surrounding the development linking the Villanovan culture to Etruscans proper,[131] it

is in this period that the first incarnations of the Etruscan city-states begin to take shape.

Already in this period, one can observe a system where a central, independent city is

surrounded by a wider, less densely populated, largely agricultural territory under its remit.

These centres are active in commerce with larger trade networks, engaging in intense trade

exchanges with Carthage[132] and various locales in Greece,[133] which in turn would develop

with unique patterns of allegiances and links with foreign entities for each of these centres.

The material culture of the Orientalising period is good evidence for the intensity of this

trade and the degree of influence it exercised on developing Etruscan culture,[134] as is the

overwhelming adoption of Greek mythological narratives and decorative motifs in Etruscan

art.[135] It is reasonable to assume that the local elites were the most impacted by this

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131   For which see among others: Delpino 1977; Di Gennaro 1982; Bartoloni 1989; Pacciarelli 2001;
Liverani 2002.

132   See e.g. Rizzo 1991 (Caere); Gras 2000.

133   See e.g. Bartoloni 1987 (contact with Greek colonies in Campania); Colonna 1981; De Simone 1996
(connection with Lemnos); Delpino 1997 (overview of Greek contacts in Etruria); De Angelis 2015.

134   For this aspect of the Orientalising period see among others: Martelli 1995; Colonna 2000; Mandolesi
2011 (a specific instance from Tarquinii).

135   See e.g. Maggiani 1985; Weber-Lehmann 2006 (with specific reference to the Trojan myth);Torelli
2007; Gaultier 2008.

acculturation process, which was not limited to Etruria alone, but widespread among Italian and Mediterranean elites more at large. It can then be posited that in their early contacts, elite Etruscans shared with their Roman peers a cultural language, that of the Hellenised Mediterranean continuum. This undoubtedly facilitated horizontal mobility, especially at an elite level. In spite of its status of semi-mythological narration, the tale of Demaratus of Corinth[136] and Tarquinius Priscus[137] is an excellent blueprint for the way in which horizontal mobility could operate between Greek polities, Etruria, and Rome, and significant in that it appears to posit no upper limit to the social reach of the mobile individuals – potentially all the way to kinghood. Grounded in Etruscan evidence[138] as well as Roman historiography,[139] the narratives around the expedition led by the Vibenna/Vipina brothers out of Vulci all the way to Rome, potentially culminating in the installation of Servius Tullius/Mastarna as king, is also proof of this kind of mobility.[140] It is important to note that this latter episode may be connected to the initial phases of a stable Etruscan presence in Rome itself. At the very least, the narrations surrounding the last years of the Roman Monarchy testify to a strong Etruscan influence on the city, which would have most likely been accompanied by the movement of Etruscan individuals to Rome itself, both in a transient and in a permanent fashion.[141] The phenomenon would have also been aided by the shortlived occupation of Rome by the Clusine king Porsenna, which lasted until his defeat in 504 BC.[142]

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136   Livy 1.34.1; Cicero *De Republica* 2.34.5; Pliny *Historia Naturalis* 35.152. Cfr. Ampolo 1977.
137   Livy 1.34.1-11; 4.3.11; *Per.* 1.1.
138   Cfr. Pallottino 1987; Musti 2005.
139   Tacitus *Hist.* 3.12.14; *Ann.* 4.65.4; cfr. Varro *De Lingua Latina* 5.46.2; Festus *De Verborum Significatione* 355.49.
140   See among others Pallottino 1987; Marcattili 2008; Di Fazio 2018.
141   Cfr. Ampolo 2009.
142   See Becker 2007 for background on Porsenna; cfr. also Gjerstad 1969; Ridley 2017.

The situation turned to one of military tension in the late Fifth Century, and the last decade of the Fourth. A trade rivalry in the context of the Tiber Valley had by this point existed for a long time between Rome and the powerful Southern Etruscan centre of Veii,[143] and it came to a head with the war of aggression waged by Rome on the Etruscan city, culminating in its conquest in 396 BC.[144] This marks in many ways the beginning of a different phase, in which power balances between Rome and Etruria appear to be reversed and which would kickstart the process of the Roman conquest of the Etruscan cities. This process was neither linear nor uniform, and it followed different patterns and different timelines with regards to individual city-states. There may have been earlier episodes of conflict between Rome and Tarquinii,[145] but the sources are better for the seven-year conflict spanning from 358 to 351 BC, covered by both Diodorus Siculus[146] and Livy.[147]

The great degree of variation present in the relationship between Rome and the individual Etruscan polities in this period is exemplified by the contrast between this conflict and the preferential relationship Rome was developing at the same time with Caere, whose citizens received the *civitas sine suffragio* in a grant that preceded by a significant time margin the generalised citizenship grants following the Social Wars, giving the Caeretani a special standing *vis-à-vis* Rome.[148] Regardless, these connections between Etruscan centres and Rome remained volatile. When an Etruscan aggression at Sutrium sparked new conflict in 311 BC, it is the Arretines, not the Caeretani, that are singled out among all the Etruscan

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143   Various previous conflicts with Veii are recorded by Livy: 1.14-15; 2.6-7; 2.45-47; also a rebellion at Fidenae instigated by Veii, 4.17.

144 Livy 4.58-61; 5.1-123. See also Torelli 1999 pp. 20-31 on the aftermath.

145   See e.g. Livy 2.6-7.

146   Diodorus Siculus 16.31-32.

147   Livy 7.12.5-7.

148   Livy 5.30.3. Further insights on the special relationship between Rome and Caere is in Sordi 1960. For an opposing opinion highlighting how this might have been negative for Caere see also Humbert 1972.

populations as not taking part in the offensive. The expedition led by Fabius Maximus Rullianus in the Ciminian Forest made considerable inroads for the Romans;[149] notably, among the strategies used by Rullianus' force, there is the employment of Romans who had been instructed in the Etruscan language,[150] testifying to the prestige that the Etruscan language and culture held with the Roman elites still at this time. A separate peace with Tarquinii was made in 307 BC following this conflict, but the ultimate outcome was a severe defeat for the Etruscan cities. Further Roman expeditions against Etruria took place in the early 290s; in 295 BC, Etruscan forces joined Samnite and Gaulish ones at the battle of Sentinum, which once again was resolved in a clear-cut Roman victory.[151] Vulci was defeated and conquered in 280 BC,[152] and event that significantly altered the power balance of the region. Caere itself, in spite of its old preferential relationship with Rome, was conquered in 273 BC.[153] Both cities were stripped of half of their respective territories as a further punitive measure. By 264, when a revolt at Volsinii against the Roman conquering forces was subdued and resulted in the destruction of the city,[154] the conquest of the city-states of Etruria by Rome could be deemed for the most part complete. The Etruscan cities almost certainly received *foedera* as a result, although the sources are silent on the subject. The only *foedus* certainly known for the region concerns Falerii, which is not an Etruscan city-state.[155]

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149   Livy 9.36-37.

150   Indeed this elite Roman, whose identity is unclear (Livy offers various possibilities) had been 'raised in Caere': Livy 9.36.1-3.

151   Livy 10.18; 10.27-29.

152   Reported in the *Fasti Capitolini* for that year, which attribute a triumph *de Vulsiniensibut et Vulcientibus* to consul Ti. Coruncanius.

153   Zonaras 8.6.10; cfr. Sordi 1960 pp. 123-134; Torelli 2000 pp. 154-155.

154   Zonaras 8.7; Valerius Maximus 8.1; Orosius 4.52.

155   Livy 7.38.1. Cfr. Harris 1971.

Roman colonisation in Etruria is also of significant interest, as it appears to have been an important means of solidifying Roman presence on the territory and stabilising the region, as well as potentially being an additional conduit for mutual acculturation.[156] Most important among the colonial foundations is Cosa, which was established in 273 BC following the defeat of Vulci, from whom territory abutting the coast had been taken.[157] Cosa was a Latin colony, serving as an important military outpost with the potential for control over the crucially important coastal region. Colonies were also established in the subsequent years in the territory taken from Caere, starting with Castrum Novum in 264 BC. The same pattern emerges, then, of a stripping of territory from a newly conquered Etruscan centre followed b by the establishment of one or more colonies in order to achieve a greater control of the territory.

During the Hannibalic wars, the Etruscan cities appear to behave for the most part like loyal allies to Rome, with a *Perusina cohors* fighting alongside the Romans at Casilinum,[158] even though the presence of Roman legions stationed in Etruria might be read as a sign of Etruscan disaffection. At Tarquinii, a Laris Felsnas is attested in the epigraphic record who likewise was present at Casilinum on this occasion.[159] An Etruscan contingent also appears to have accompanied C. Claudius Marcellus in his war effort in Apulia.[160] Before the start of the Social War, then, it appears that Etruscan loyalty to Rome was to some extent solidified,

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156   For colonisation and its implications for local identities see Bradley 2006.
157   See Brown 1980; Fentress 2000.
158   Livy 23.27.11.
159   Et Ta. 1.107. It is worth noting that from the text of the inscription it is ambiguous which side he fought on.
160   Livy 27.26.

especially in Southern Etruria, although this was not an uniform situation and perhaps not an entirely stable one.

It is important to note that already in this period, however, some patterns had emerged that appear to point to some Etruscan centres having a particularly privileged relationship with Rome, even when such a relationship was disrupted by occasional episodes of unrest or even straight-out military conflict. The case of the close relationship with Caere and the early grant of *civitas sine suffragio* to its inhabitants has already been addressed. In Northern Etruria, a somewhat similar situation appears to tie Rome more closely to the city of Arretium. As noted above, the Arretines are singled out as not taking part in the attack on Sutrium in 311 BC. In light of later interactions mentioned by Livii where the prominent Arretine *gens* of the Cilnii requested Roman help to repress a rebellion of the lower classes, only three years later in 308 BC,[161] that this privileged relationship was limited to the city elites only, if not even to specific elite *gentes* who had cultivated a personal connection with Rome.[162] This connection was certainly perceived as valuable from the Roman standpoint, as the resolution of this incident was achieved through the direct intervention of a Roman consul.

Already in this early period, then, the process of development of connections between Rome and Etruria culminating in the Roman conquest gave rise to a complex system of different relationships and allegiances. The variation can be observed at a regional level, where Southern Etruria appears to have a more long-standing and closer connection with

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161   Livy 10.3.2. More generally on ancient Arretium see Camporeale and Firpo 2009.
162   See also Harris 1971.

Rome, and to be more directly impacted by its influence; at a city level, where individual polities appear to cultivate privileged relationships with Rome resulting in trade routes, probable elite horizontal mobility and/or acculturation, and a grant of citizenship *sine suffragio*; and potentially already at an individual family level, where single powerful Etruscan *gentes* seem to have had in some cases a direct channel of communication with Rome. This might naturally result in a variety of different patterns of allegiance and behaviour at a later date, to be observed at all these different levels, and is therefore the natural background for the observation of Etruscan behaviour in the Social War and the Civil Wars.

The Social War

The attitude taken by the Etruscan cities during the Social War holds particular interest. Whereas other Italian populations, like the Marsi and the Samnites, had been at the forefront of the conflict throughout its course,[163] Etruscan attitudes towards it were significantly more ambiguous. *Socii* in Etruria and neighbouring Umbria appear, as far as the ancient sources testify, to have originally not taken part in the uprising of the Italian allies – at least not until the year 90 BC.[164] They were involved in social unrest surrounding the reforms of M. Livius Drusus and the threat of land redistribution that might have hurt landowners in Etruria. However, there is no direct connection between the death of Drusus and the outbreak of the Social War, and Appian's claims that the protesting Etruscans were

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163   For lists of populations taking active part in the Social War the most thorough source is Appian 1.39. Cfr. also Diodorus Siculus 37.2; Orosius 5.18.8; Florus 2.6.5.

164   Cfr. Bradley 2000 p. 220; Bispham 2007 pp. 184-185. See also Cappelletti 2004; Bradley 2019 for further discussion of the role of the Etruscans and the reasons that might have led to their late involvement.

involved in Drusus' death are not fully reliable.[165] Even if some Etruscan landowners were

unhappy with the prospect for potential land reassignments, none of the Etruscan cities

appears to have espoused the budding war effort of other *socii*. Etruscan opposition to the

idea of land reassignment does not necessarily entail Etruscan opposition to the acquisition

of Roman citizenship. The idea that the reluctance of Etruscan cities to enter the conflict was

due to an ethnically motivated alienation from the primarily Oscan (and Samnite) 'motor' of

the rebellion, while suggestive, is equally unconvincing. Populations such as the Marsi were

intensely active within the conflict, and those cannot be framed within a purported Oscan

ethnic continuum.[166] The 'motor' of the rebellion – if there was one – appears to have been

more than simply Oscan.

It is nevertheless likely that some Etruscan communities were to a degree involved in the

fighting. The strongest case to be made in this sense probably concerns Faesulae, which

underwent a Roman sack, according to Florus, within the context of the war.[167] It is worth

noting, however, that there is no more reliable historical source recording this event, and

Appian is silent concerning it – although he does present the *lex Iulia* as a consequence of

the Etruscans threatening to revolt. Even so, this does not automatically signal an extended

revolt in Etruria as a whole.[168] In the restless Italian context of the time, it is possible that

such a revolt was feared. All in all, it is perhaps more accurate to speak, as E. Bispham does,

of 'outbreaks of unrest'[169] as far as Etruria is concerned. That the fear of such a widespread

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165   Appian 1.36 ; cfr. Scullard 2013 p. 403; Dart 2016 p. 93.
166   Cfr. Dart 2009; Velleius Paterculus 2.15.1.
167   Florus 2.6.11; 2.18.11; and cfr. Livy *Per.* 75.
168   Heurgon 1964 suggests a regionally localised revolt rather than individual cities uprising, though this appears better supported for Umbria than for Etruria.
169   Bispham 2007 p. 184. Cfr. Livy *Per.* 74; Florus 2.6.; Orosius 5.18.7. Some fragments from Sisenna (FrRHist 62; 78) also mention localised revolts. Harris 1971 is also in agreement on the localised nature of the

Etruscan revolt actually taking place was, as C. Dart suggests,[170] the primary concern behind the passing of the *Lex Iulia*, is also debatable, although Appian's narration can certainly interpreted as evidence. Certainly the granting of citizenship to those communities that did not revolt, or laid down arms in a timely fashion, was meant as a tool to stabilise a situation of wide and dangerous unrest that interested the whole system of *socii*, and not just one particular region. Still, it can be argued that their lack of major active involvement in the conflict put Etruscan communities in a privileged position when it came to creating systems for closer interaction with Roman structures.

While the grants of citizenship resolved the greatest part of the conflict, they did not however resolve all of its wider, more long-term implications. Repercussions of those implications are visible well into the Late Republic. Some of them might have informed to some extent the Roman-Etruscan interactions that are at the basis of the present research topic. It may well be that the attitude taken during the conflict by individual communities was one factor in determining how easily they were accepted into the fold of Roman citizenship. Those groups who had joined the revolt, albeit briefly, or threatened to join it, or even proved lukewarm in fighting it, might have been regarded as less trustworthy and incurred such problems more frequently. The pattern of cities that had shown higher or lower signs of unrest likely informed their later treatment and may well have shaped the pattern of their later allegiance to one or the other Roman political leaders.

The Civil Wars: Marius, Sulla, and Sertorius

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outbreaks.
170   Dart 2014.

An analysis of Etruscan patterns of allegiance or resistance to Rome, within the framework

of an attempted understanding of the wider dynamics of the Civil Wars within Italy, has been

addressed several times in the past.[171] The consensus mostly appears to be that Etruscan

communities and leaders prevalently sided with the *populares* faction.[172] Etruria as a region

has been often depicted as a pro-Marian, anti-Sullan stronghold, a conclusion supported by

Sulla's harsh treatment of some Etruscan centres, particularly Volaterrae.[173] Likewise, it has

been posited that Caesar would have found in Etruria a resource to easily draw support

from, in the same way in which other regions of Italy, particularly Picenum, would have been

the natural supporters of Pompey.[174] In the last years of the Republic, events such as the

Bellum Perusinum might appear to suggest an initial resistance to Octavian - and therefore a

possible siding with Antony - on the part, if not of the whole of Etruria, some regions within

it, especially in the North. A closer look at the situation, however, will reveal a picture not as

uniform as it has often been depicted, but much more nuanced and variegated.

The civil war between the Marian and Sullan faction of 87-86 BC is the one that appears to

present the most clear-cut case, in part because of the amount of straight-out fighting taking

place in some areas of Etruria itself. That the involvement of some Etruscan communities in

this fighting was not simply a reaction against Sulla but displayed signs of patent support to

the Marian faction is proved by the fact that the Etruscan cities involved placed their

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171   See among others: Syme 1939; Taylor 1961; Gabba 1973; Rawson 1978; Hall 1984; Kearsley 2013; and, in passing, many others, including Torelli 1995 and Farney 2014.
172   Gabba 1973 speaks of a 'pro-Marian tendency' of Etruscan lower classes, p. 308. Sordi 1972 held both the Etruscan 'aristocracy' and 'masses' to be pro-Caesar.
173   Cfr. Tweedie 2013 p. 94.
174   Cfr. Leach 2014 p. 15 ff.

support with Cnaeus Papirius Carbo,[175] who was at the time holding his third consulship

together with Gaius Marius Minor, the son of Marius himself, and had a prominent role

within the Marian establishment.

The centres that had an active involvement in the fighting were Arretium, Clusium,

Populonia and Volaterrae.[176] It is important to note that all these centres were located in

Northern Etruria, with Populonia being the southernmost. The major centres of Southern

Etruria do not appear to have taken any important military action against Sulla, nor did they

suffer from the extensive repercussions he imposed on the Etruscan cities that had fought

him. Among the cities most affected, Clusium was the stage for two consecutive defeats

suffered by Carbo, followed by a third at Arretium; both Populonia and Volaterrae suffered

sieges, the latter particularly harsh and drawn-out, followed by perhaps the heaviest

punishment suffered by any Etruscan centre at the hands of Sulla.[177] There is evidence in

texts such as Cicero's *Pro Caecina* that the restrictions on Roman citizenship imposed by

Sulla on the inhabitants of Volaterrae might have been interpreted as a full exclusion from

Roman citizenship, or at least would have been enough to question the right to citizenship of

people hailing from that particular city.[178] This was a particularly heavy measure to be taken

at a date not yet far removed from the Social War - the siege at Volaterrae was resolved in

79 BC, a mere nine years from the end of the conflict - when the right to full citizenship of

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175   See Appian 92.
176   Cfr. Fell 2013 p. 164; Sampson 2013 p. 90.
177   For further details cfr. Thein 2016. Ancient sources describing the matter are abundant. For the siege
and surrender see Livy *Epit.* 89; Cicero *Pro Rosc. Amer.* 7. For the following punishment see also Cicero *Pro Dom.* 30; *Ad Fam.* 13.4-5.
178   See *infra.*

the Etruscan centres might still have been perceived as standing on a somewhat unstable footing.

This had undoubtedly some consequences in the different attitudes adopted as an average by Northern and Southern Etruscan centres in the political developments of the following decades. It must also be noted that Sulla settled a number of his veterans on confiscated land in the territories of Arretium, Clusium, Faesulae and Volaterrae, something that would have changed the makeup of the population in these centres and influenced to some extent their later behaviour. Not all these centres acquiesced easily to punishment - further revolts are known to have happened for instance at Faesulae, with the local population rising against the veteran colonists in 78-77 BC.[179]

A number of Etruscans originating in these centres are later found to have followed Sertorius to Spain. This could possibly be taken as evidence of their continued allegiance to the Marian faction, although it is possible that such a decision was simply informed by a decision to side with whomever was opposing Sulla, as a reaction to the punishing measures. There are certainly within this group cases that demonstrate that this allegiance to the Marian cause - and to Sertorius - was neither a given fact nor an unchanging one. One instance of the fleetingness of these allegiances is well represented by M. Perperna Veiento,[180] which

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179   Some interesting comments on the Sullan settlers are in Santangelo 2007 pp. 147 ff. Cfr. the Senate's reaction to this rebellion: Sallust *Bell. Cat.* 30.3, the Senate sends Q. Marcius Rex to Faesulae to thwart the rebellion; 32.3-34, Manlius' diplomatic effort.

180   Elsewhere Vento, but Veiento is preferable as it is *lectio difficilior*. Cfr. Torelli 1995 p. 72; Plutarch *Sert.* 15.1 holds some uncertainty due to the Greek transcription, and also has the incorrect *nomen* Perpenna. See also CIL VI 38700.

will be addressed later in further detail, and who appears to have been the main architect of the plot to assassinate Sertorius after having been one of his most trusted lieutenants.

However, Sulla brought into the Senate some 300 new senators, a comprehensive list of which has not survived.[181] Sulla's attitude towards the treatment of Italian elites in their own *municipia* could vary greatly; while those who had opposed him, as seen above, did endure harsh consequences, those who supported him were rewarded, with a noticeable increase to their wealth and their political power.[182] Sulla's new senators can be expected to have been at least in a significant percentage originally of Equestrian status - even if one allows for Sallust's position that some of the new members were originally mere *gregarii milites*,[183] it is hardly likely that this would have been the majority of them; and furthermore, it is certainly possible that this would have been only a spiteful turn of phrase on Sallust's part, echoing an use of charged terminology by Sulla's opponents. Appian's claim that the new senators were drawn from the ranks of the Equestrian order appears altogether more convincing, and given the aforementioned disparity of treatment of Italian families based on their support or lack thereof, some of the former Equestrians now inducted into the Senate could have been of Italian origins themselves.

Sulla's history of clashes with Northern Etruscan communities would have made it unlikely for families originating in those areas to make this transition, but the conflict does not appear to have extended to Etruria as a whole. While Equestrians maintaining ties with their original families in Volaterrae or Arretium can hardly have figured in the list of new

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181   Hill 1932; Santangelo 2007; Steel 2014. The main source for this is Appian *Bell. Civ.* 1.101.
182   Cfr. Gruen 1974 p. 382.
183   Sallust *Hist*. 1.55.

senatorial families, the same might not be the case with families originating from some of

the larger centres in the South, like Tarquinii or Caere, that had by this point a long history of

continued interactions with the Roman elites. If that was the case, it can be expected that

families so regaled by Sulla would have followed his line, rather than espouse the Marian

cause on the mere basis of their belonging to a purported Etruscan continuum they may not

have perceived as existing as a political entity. In the absence of a list of names for Sulla's

new senators, most of these conclusions have to remain mere speculations - yet they are

perhaps sufficient to put a chink in the monolithic narrative of Etruria as a whole being

Sulla's natural opponent. E. Isayev has highlighted in her work how communities could be

divided in their response to Roman political intervention that they are portrayed as

uniformly opposing. The same lack of uniform response identified in her work to the

Gracchan reforms may be reflected also in a lack of uniform response to Sulla's

intervention.[184]

The Caesarian Etruscans

Turning to the conflict between Caesar and Pompey, there is a common assumption that the

communities of Etruria, and as a consequence those senatorial families who might have

maintained a link with the *municipia* they had originated from, sided overwhelmingly with

the Caesarian side, mostly as a consequence of an 'Etruscan political line' aligned with that

of the *populares.* It has been pointed out in the past that Caesar drew support from what

would have been Marius' old recruiting ground.[185] Yet already W. Harris exercised a well-

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184   Isayev 2013.
185   E.g. by Syme 1938; Badian 1964; Sordi 1972 p. 3.

justified level of caution with regards to this matter, pointing out that there is little evidence that Caesar received a particularly warm welcome from the Etruscan communities.[186] On the other hand, M. Torelli argued that, in the name of a specific political *forma mentis* deriving from the structure of Etruscan society, Etruscan support would have necessarily gone to the more aristocratic side, and that, as a consequence, the only elite Etruscan that might have been counted as a Caesarian would have been L. Caesennius Lento, who was Caesar's *legatus* in 45 BC.[187] As an aside, it is interesting to note that the *gens Caesennia* can have its origins traced back to Tarquinii, a powerful centre of South Etruria whose connection with Rome was among the earliest and tightest in the whole region, and most certainly not part of the group of Northern Etruscan cities that are most traditionally believed to have sided with the Caesarians.[188]

Both positions appear to be somewhat reductive. It is hard to verify the existence of an Etruria-wide *forma mentis* leading to a common political line, and even harder to imagine it persisting into the Late Republic. Individual centres had developed different degrees of interaction and acculturation with Rome, appeared to have different political and economical situations, and the very make-up of their populations had likely been altered by events such as Sulla's colonial efforts.

While no conclusive evidence exists for the enthusiastic support of entire Etruscan communities to the Caesarian cause, there are a certain number of senators of verifiable Etruscan origins that placed their support behind Caesar, and obtained magistracies under

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186   Harris 1971 p. 252.
187   Torelli 1969 p. 285.
188   Cfr. Cornell 1978.

his rule. Among those it is worth citing G. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus, Caesar's designated consul for 43 BC, who had served with him in Gaul and had been named at his behest tribune of the plebs in 51 BC, then governor of Bythinia and Cisalpine Gaul between 47 and 45, and whose family hailed from the Northern Etruscan centre of Perusia;[189] and a C. Volcacius Tullus, of the Volcacii Tulli also of Perusia, that Caesar names as serving under him in 53 BC.[190] The C. Carrinas who was *consul suffectus* for 43 BC might also be part of this group,[191] although the origins of the family are uncertain and somewhat disputed, and their classification as possible Etruscans mostly based on onomastics. It is worth noting, with regards to the latter, that he is likely to be the son of the C. Carrinas who had been Carbo's associate in fighting - and losing to - Sulla, notably around Praeneste. This latter Carrinas might have been praetor in 83 BC.[192] All three families held senatorial rank previous to Caesar, and at least the Vibii Pansae and the Volcacii Tulli have connections with Etruria that can be verified.

Furthermore, in spite of his stance concerning Etruscan political attitudes, M. Torelli proposed a list of possible Etruscan families inducted by Caesar into the Senate that might be somewhat too generous. Of the families named by Torelli,[193] the Caecinae of Volaterrae

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189   Cfr. Bonamente 2002 pp. 24-25. The family is present in Etruria from an early date, cfr. CIE 3619. For Perusine origins see also CIL XI 1994 naming a Vel Vibius Ar. Pansa of the Tromentina tribe. Tribune of the plebs: cfr. Broughton 1952 p. 240. Aedile: *ibid*. p. 257. Hinard 2011 p. 159 raises some issues that the tribune of 51 and the consul of 43 may not be the same person, but his objections appear weak.

190   Caesar *Bell. Gall.* 6.29. See *infra* for his relationship to the other known Volcacii Tulli as well as further references concerning him.

191   For his Caesarian involvement see Appian 4.83 (heading troops against Sextus Pompey); for later developments *ibid*. 5.112 (leading three legions under Octavian). Cassius Dio 51.6 notes, interestingly, that this Carrinas' father had been put to death by Sulla.

192   Cfr. Lovano 2002 p. 131.

193   Torelli 1995 p. 49.

and the Iunii Blaesii[194] achieved senatorial rank under Augustus rather than Caesar, and the

position of the Caesennii of Tarquinii is somewhat dubious. The Pupii had held senatorial

rank previous to Caesar, and their possible connection with Clusium is tenuous.[195] The more

verifiable cases previously quoted sufficiently testify to the existence of a component of

senators of Etruscan origins who did indeed support Caesar's side, notably also from families

that did not owe entry into the Senate to Caesar himself.

Evidence for influential Etruscans choosing to support Pompey is however equally strong.

Although not a senator, Aulus Caecina, Cicero's correspondent and a valued expert on the

divinatory *etrusca disciplina*, placed his support with Pompey and was exiled as a

consequence; the father of this Caecina, hailing from Volaterrae, had had his right to

citizenship questioned as a result of the Sullan measures against that centres, and the family

would therefore have been a prime candidate for the purported trend of support to the

populares side. Caecina's support for Pompey's side was certainly more than casual, as is

shown not only by his exile following Pharsalus, but by the fact that he had written a

pamphlet against Caesar in 49 BC.[196]

A similar situation concerned another scholar of Etruscan divination, the senator P. Nigidius

Figulus, who had been praetor in 58 BC and also held a friendly relationship with Cicero. He

too was exiled as a consequence of his support of Pompey, and died in exile in 45 BC, having

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194   Cfr. PIR$_2$ I.737; 739. 738 is Q. Iunius Blaesus, *consul suffectus* for AD 10.
195   Livy 4.54 already has a P. Pupius who is an early plebeian quaestor in 409 BC. See also Livy 22.33 for a
Cn. Pupius selected in 217 BC to oversee the construction of a temple to *Dea Concordia*. Livy 39.39 has L.
Pupius who was aedile in 185 BC; *ibid*. 39.45, the same L. Pupius, now praetor for 63 BC, in Apulia. All this
considered, there are solid grounds to place the origins of this plebeian *gens* in Rome itself.
196   For a detailed discussion of the Caecinae, see *infra*, as well as Tweedie 2013.

failed to be recalled - differently from Caecina, who had made his peace with Caesar in 46 BC. Given their prominence when matters relative to haruspicy are concerned, the cases of both Caecina and Figulus will be addressed in further detail in relation to their role in the diffusion of Etruscan religious traditions in Rome; nevertheless, they are a significant example of the presence, within the Roman Senate and outside of it, of influential Etruscans who chose not to side with the Caesarians.[197]

The evidence available highlights a previously undetected degree of individuality in the building of allegiances with Roman leaders on the part of Etruscan communities and individuals. It appears to also confute the idea of the presence of an 'Etruscan political mentality' shared across the board throughout Etruria. No uniform trend of that kind can be detected for the period considered. Indeed, it appears instead that patterns of political allegiance are rather fractured. Individual centres may choose to oppose a Roman political leader - and suffer the consequences in case of defeat - or to keep their peace with him, and be spared any repercussions. The reaction of individual *municipia*, informed by local concerns, will then be the main agent at play, replacing the idea of overarching political factions.

While a general loose pattern of behaviour can be observed that appears to differentiate, as a norm, centres in Northern Etruria from those in Southern Etruria, even within these sub-groupings the picture is not perfectly uniform. In the opposition raised by Northern Etruscan centres against Sulla, there is no evidence that any particular role was played by Perusia, one

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197   See *infra.*

of the most powerful centres in the area, and one of the most conservative when the survival of Etruscan traits in material culture is concerned. There is instead evidence for a particularly strong opposition not only at Volaterrae - which is generally perceived as having been more conservative than Perusia itself - but also at Arretium, which had a long history of friendly interactions with Rome.

The choice to side with one or the other political part, furthermore, is far from immutable. If Perusia appears to have been mostly quiescent at the time of the unrest against Sulla, it was prominent later on in opposing Octavian, siding with Lucius Antonius and therefore with what could be perceived as being the more '*populares*-like' faction at the time. A similar discourse can be presented for individual families. It appears that individual families chose their own side, and that Etruscans were found fighting for opposing parts more than once. It would seem, then, that as a norm a concern for individual advantages prevailed over whatever perception of their shared Etruscan heritage these communities might have possessed. At an even lower level, the interests of individual elite families may also at times have deviated from those of the community they originated from.

The issue of land reassignments

There appears to be one issue in which Etruscan centres, at the very least in Northern Etruria, seem to have however adopted a common political line, in opposition to the trends just discussed. Since this appears to be the only outstanding exception, it is worth spending some time specifically addressing the matter of Etruscan reactions to the prospect of land

reassignments. The issue has been much debated in previous literature,[198] and its roots go

back well into the Middle Republic. Some have identified the starting point of the ongoing

political concern with the distribution of land in Etruria back to the Gracchi, notably to the

famous observations Ti. Gracchus made of the state of the Etruscan lands during his travels

on the way to Numantia in 137 BC. These, according to Plutarch, prompted Gracchan

intervention in the matter of land assignment within Etruria.[199]

Intervention through agrarian reform, beginning with Ti. Gracchus and continuing most

notably with the highly disputed proposed reform of Livius Drusus on the eve of the Social

War, had originally as its aim the fragmentation of *latifundia* into smaller properties, and

appears to have been intensely opposed by the Etruscan landowners. A group of disgruntled

'Etruscans and Umbrians' is generally acknowledged by ancient sources as having made the

trip to Rome to personally protest these measures with Drusus. The best account is in

Appian, who claims that they were opposing Drusus' law on colonies rather than the

agrarian reform; in either case, it is most likely that the matter had to do with land

redistribution.[200] Appian claims that it was indeed one of these Etruscans who was

responsible for the murder of Drusus, although the other sources available on the topic fail

to validate this statement.[201] It is possible that, if a group of riotous Etruscans had made an

appearance at Drusus' door shortly before his assassination, it would have been convenient

to lay the murder at their feet.

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198   Among others by Bispham 2007; Dart 2014; and again Torelli, 1986 pp. 61 f.
199   Plutarch *Ti. Gracch*. 8.
200   Appian 1.36.
201   *Contra* Appian see Cicero *Nat. Deor*. 3.81; Suetonius *Tib*. 3.2. Cfr. also Dart 2014 pp. 94-95 and *supra*,
introduction.

The matter of land reassignments and colonial settlement remained painfully active especially in Northern Etruria until the very end of the Republic. It may well have been one of the principal reasons behind the opposition to Sulla, and the Sullan veteran colonisation in those same centres was, as seen above, at times violently resisted. Well into the later decades of the Republic, the uprising of Lucius Antonius leading to the *Bellum Perusinum* capitalised on the malcontent derived from Octavian's planned land reassignments and veteran colonisation in order to get the support of communities in Norther Etruria. It is important to note that nowhere in the primary sources allegiance to one particular leader is attributed specifically to the fact that a person or community was Etruscan. Even the episode most often called upon to support this, that of Marius gathering forces after his landing at Telamon, states in the words of Plutarch that Marius had to persuade – ἀναπείθων – the locals to join him.[202] This appears rather far from the conclusion that Marius could take their loyalty to his cause for granted.

There have been some attempts to connect this ongoing unrest concerning land redistributions with a supposed peculiarly Etruscan concern with the importance of maintaining borders unchanged. Etruscan epigraphy, particularly known border markers, to some extent appears to confirm a preoccupation with the definition of borders between properties.[203] It is however somewhat farfetched to assume that resistance to various instances of proposed land redistribution was a consequence of such a trait. More

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202   Plutarch, *Marius* 41.2. On the contrary, the only source openly identifying Etruria as Marian is late: Exuperantius 7, '*erat autem Etruria fidissima partibus Marianis*'.

203   Most famously, and most debated, the *tular rasnal* border marker out of Cortona, TLE 632. Cfr.Bonfante and Bonfante 2002 pp. 183-185; and Macintosh Turfa in Schultz and Harvey 2006, p. 70. See fig. 1.

practically, the resistance may have been born of the concern of the local landowners, who wanted to reassert their claim to the land they were using, which in some cases, especially as far as Drusus' colonial measures were concerned, would have officially belonged to the *ager publicus*.

This concern would have been only natural for landowners who desired not only to retain the land they were using it, but to see their right to it confirmed in an official and permanent capacity, and who reacted adversely when they saw it threatened. It would have also not have been limited to Etruria, but equally present in other communities who were concurrently under the same threat. The fact itself that Appian specifies that the group of unhappy protesters who came to Rome to oppose Drusus' reforms was comprised of Etruscans and Umbrians both is evidence to the fact that this was a matter of territorial concerns rather than of 'Etruscan mentality'. This apparent exception to the norm of a diversity of political positions throughout the Etruscan territory, then, is only due to a similar concern of each centre for the retention of the integrity of their territory.

Senatorial families of Etruscan origins: some case studies

Let us now turn to consider the senatorial families listed above who are particularly promising for the abundance of existing evidence regarding them.

The Perpernae: a senatorial family opposed to Sulla

The case of the *gens Perperna*, sometimes stated to have been the first *gens* with a

municipal *nomen* to have achieved a consulship, is of particular interest because of their

initial success on the political scene in Rome, of the circumstances of their decline, and of

the citizenship-related debate that interested the early phases of their political trajectory.

The earliest Roman Perperna on whom clear information survives is M. Perperna, who

together with L. Petilius went as a legate to Illyrian king Genthius in 168 BC, was arrested by

the latter and later freed by L. Anicius. The most interesting piece of information concerning

this Perperna, however, comes from an account in Valerius Maximus.[204] According to this,

Perperna would have been found to have usurped Roman citizenship without having a right

to it, and therefore had it stripped from him. Valerius Maximus believed Perperna - here

named with the concurrent spelling Perpenna - to have been of Sabellian origins,[205] whereas

it is generally accepted that the family had Etruscan origins, a conclusion supported by the

onomastic data. The Etruscan origins of the Perpernae are equally demonstrated by their

presence in the epigraphic record for a number of Etruscan centres, including Veii, Clusium,

Saena and Volsinii;[206] a *perpna*, likely the same name, is also found in an Etruscan-language

inscription of Volaterrae.[207] Even though this latter piece of evidence is not sufficient to

argue, with M. Cristofani, that the first M. Perperna must have been 'certainly Volaterran',[208]

the epigraphic evidence still puts the family roots in Etruria beyond reasonable doubt. In this

light, the mistake is even more remarkable, and may point to a lack of interest for the exact

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204   Cfr. Reinhold 1971 p 278.
205   Valerius Maximus 3.4.5.
206   Cfr. CIL XI 2378 (Clusium), 1812 (Saena), 2731 (Volsinii).
207   CIE 89.
208   Cristofani 1973 p. 590.

non-Roman provenance of Perperna. It would seem that the only truly important point was his being other than Roman.

In any case, given the early date, Perperna as the citizen of a *municipium* would have only held a right to Roman citizenship in the case of a special concession, either to a whole community or to his family specifically. The story of Perperna usurping citizenship carries therefore some credibility, and it is of particular interest as far as attitudes towards Roman identity are concerned. The episode appears to have had negative repercussions also on the career and reputation of Perperna's son, himself M. Perperna, who was consul in 130 BC and is described by Valerius Maximus as *consul ante quam civis*.[209] That the right to citizenship of a Roman consul could have been questioned or even outright denied would undoubtedly have constituted somewhat of a scandal. The text further underlines the illegitimacy and, most importantly, the foreignness of this consul by referring to his passage through Rome *aliena in urbe*, in a foreign city.

The legitimacy of this Perperna appears to have been denied posthumously, as a consequence of the *lex Papia de peregrinis* of 65 BC, a significant amount of time after his consulship. It is unclear what material consequences this would have had; since after the Social War the place of origin of the Perpernae would have acquired citizenship in any case, it is possible that the whole affair was nothing more than a formality. The date of the law to which Valerius Maximus refers cannot be clearly divined from the text, which as a whole often appears confused. E. Gruen suggests that Valerius Maximus would have simply

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209   Valerius Maximus *loc. cit*.

mistaken the *lex Papia* for an earlier piece of legislation,[210] it is not however possible to

entirely deny the possibility of its retroactive application, even as a mere formality,

especially in a case as striking as that of a potentially illegitimate consul. Doubts on the

legitimacy of the citizenship of at least some Etruscans still existed in Cicero's lifetime;[211]

such an event connected to the *lex Papia*, if true, would possibly fall within the same scope.

In any case, this Perperna seems to have enjoyed some military success. According to Florus

he was awarded an ovation for having defeated rebel slaves near Henna, likely as a

praetor.[212] He enjoyed another victory over Aristonicus, leader of the insurrection of 133-129

BC in Asia, but was killed in 129 BC.[213]

The presumed illegitimacy of these early Perpernae as Roman citizens does not seem to

have hindered the family's political career, which might be further evidence to the fact that

it was brought to light and officially sanctioned late. M. Perperna, son of the consul of 130,

was himself consul in 92 BC, which despite the lack of any significant political achievement

testifies to the continued good standing of the family. It is also perhaps somewhat

significant, given the family's past record, that in 86 BC, as a censor, under Cinna and

together with his colleague L. Marcius Philippus, he happened to oversee the recording in

the census of the first Italians.[214]

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210   Gruen 1974 p. 411. Farney 2007 p. 165 appropriately points out that the passage in Valerius Maximus is rather garbled and may contain various misunderstandings. The citizenship status of the Volaterrans might have been questioned or limited rather than fully revoked.

211   See *infra* for Aulus Caecina.

212   Florus, *Epit.* 3.19.8.

213   Livy *Per.* 59. Cfr. Velleius Paterculus *Hist.* 2.4.

214   Cfr. Bispham 2007 p. 195, although he doubts that Perperna would have been 'seriously pro-Italian'. See also Cassius Dio 41.14; Valerius Maximus 8.13.4.

C. Perperna, likely the brother of this consul of 92, was himself politically active and achieved the rank of praetor no later than 91 BC. According to Appian, he acted as a legate to consul P. Rutilius Lupus in fighting the uprising of the Oscan populations. He was defeated by P. Presentaeus and stripped of his command (reassigned to C. Marius himself),[215] yet his active role in the attempted suppression of the uprising is significant, again considering the previous history of the family.

Lastly, and most importantly, among the active supporters of Marius one can find P. Perperna Veiento, likely the son of the consul of 92, whose unusual *cognomen* might hold some reference to the family's origins.[216] This Perperna has been called upon, as already noted, as proof of the idea of Etruscan support for the Marian side. Yet his story is far from linear. An associate of Marius' lieutenant Carbo, he was assigned as governor of the province of Sicily, perhaps bearing in mind the success of his grandfather during the Slave Wars in that region. The date of this assignment is unclear, but it could have been around 84 or 83 BC. In 82 Sulla apparently tried to convince him to come over to his side, which implies that Perperna must have been a man of some influence; he however responded by threatening to come to the aid of Gaius Marius Minor at Praeneste, which implies that he must have kept well connected with the ongoing war efforts of Carbo, centred, as seen above, for a good part in Northern Etruria.[217] Diodorus Siculus takes these events as proof of Perperna's outstanding loyalty to Marius, which according to his account surpassed that of all other associates.[218]

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215   Cfr. Corey Brennan 2000 p. 375; Appian *Bell. Civ.* 1.179 and 1.183.
216   A detailed and accurate discussion of this is found in Farney 2007 p. 147.
217   See Corey Brennan 2000 p. 481.
218   Diodorus Siculus 38.14.

When Carbo encountered his final defeat and fled Italy, Perperna initially provided safe harbour for him and his fleet in Sicily. Yet his devotion to the Marian cause was not so stalwart for him to be prepared to face the extreme consequences, including proscription. According to Plutarch, he abandoned Sicily to Pompey with little to no resistance.[219] After that he was possibly in Liguria;[220] it is likely that he was still accompanied by a Marian force of some kind, though it is not possible to determine the size of it. He appears to have taken active part in the later phases of the rebellion of M. Aemilius Lepidus in 77 BC, then after the death of the latter he moved with some forces to Spain, ultimately meeting up there with Sertorius.[221]

The nature of his relationship with Sertorius is less clear-cut than it is usually presented to be. Firstly, it has been suggested that Perperna's purpose in Spain may not have been to join forces with Sertorius, but rather to engage Metellus Pius in the hopes of taking the province for himself.[222] In that case, it would have been only when faced with the much greater support corralled by Sertorius that Perperna conceded to adopting a subaltern position under his command. Secondly, and most prominently, there is the matter of Perperna's 'betrayal' of Sertorius. In 73 BC, having served for some time as Sertorius' second-in-command of sorts, Perperna successfully conspired to have him assassinated and take his place. He suffered a defeat from Pompey already in 72, and ultimately surrendered, trying to strike a bargain where he would deliver Sertorius' correspondence, implicating a number of

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219   Plutarch, *Pompey* 10.2.
220   Though sources for this are uncertain, being limited to a passage in Orosius, and rather cryptic, Orosius 5.24.
221   Appian 1.527.
222   Cfr. Corey Brennan 2000 p. 507.

powerful Romans as his supporters, in exchange for his life. Pompey, however, put Perperna to death.[223]

Even considering the possible bias of the ancient sources, the figure cut by P. Perperna Veiento is less that of the diehard Marian supporter and more that of the ambitious politician trying to serve his own fortune, taking advantage of the shifting power balance - albeit with scarce results. Even within the life of this one individual the narrative appears to be less than linear. The member of the *gens Perperna* who specifically adopted a *cognomen* possibly signalling his connection with Etruria did not display particularly striking signs of adherence to regional policies, let alone to a line dictated by belonging to an ethnic group.

Even with the lack of evidence for their espousing a purported 'Etruscan line' the events concerning the Perpernae are remarkable, and their interpretation is particularly interesting from the standpoint of the interaction of senatorial families of Etruscan origins with the Roman establishment. In fact, this family is in some ways the perfect example of the complexity of the dynamics generated by that interaction. The earliest generations of the family in Rome display horizontal mobility facilitated by their municipal elite status, yet compounded by the issues surrounding rights to citizenship that certainly represented a significant obstacle for prominent municipal families aiming to take an active role in Roman politics before the Social War - and to some extent after it, since doubts surrounding the legitimacy of citizenship appear to have lingered in more than one case. The family also appears to show shifts in its political allegiances that privilege the furthering of its own

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223   Plutarch *Sertorius* 27.3.

status and position, rather than a coherent attachment to one side dictated by regional or ethnic concerns.

In the absence of a verifiable connection with one specific *municipium,* it is not possible to compare these evolving positions with those of a community within Etruria, but it is significant that in spite of all this the link of the family with Etruria does not appear to have been entirely rescinded, as the choice of the *cognomen* Veiento testifies. It is indeed remarkable that such an open manifestation of that connection – as late as 73 BC – should be found in a member of a family that, having had its legitimacy as Roman citizens questioned in not too far a past, could have been expected to present a public image deliberately purged of any element that could be perceived as non-Roman.

Etruscans in the later Civil Wars: the case of the Volcacii Tulli

Differently from the Perpernae, the Volcacii Tulli can be tied by material evidence to a specific centre in Etruria, namely Perusia. In the Etruscan-language epigraphy of this city one can find a *velcha*, likely the original Etruscan version of the *nomen*.[224] Close to the Umbrian border, the city had active interactions with Umbria that led to cultural contamination, and it has been convincingly suggested that the family might be directly related to the Volcasii, present in the epigraphic record in the neighboring areas of Umbria.[225] The presence of an elite family on both sides of such a border is indeed to be expected in a situation like this, but it is also further proof of the capillary presence of the family on the municipal territory.

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224   Cfr. Torelli 1969 p. 303, 1982 p. 178; also for a *velcha* family tomb in Perusia.
225   For detailed information on the epigraphic evidence and ties with the Volcasii see *infra*, chapter 5.

In the last two decades of the first century BC, for instance, two members of the family, C. Volcasius C.f. Pertica and C. Volcasius C.f. Scaeva, likely to be brothers and notably possessed of full Latin nomenclature, were in charge of work done in the Umbrian centre of Asisium.[226]

The Volcacii Tulli are represented in epigraphy in Perusia, testifying to their role in the local elite, even after their achievement of senatorial status in Rome. Rather than a family of municipal origins that fully transferred its activities to Rome and fully integrated in the political fabric of the city itself, as is apparently the case of the Perpernae, one is here faced with a family that maintains a presence both in Rome and in its original *municipium*. There are various ways in which this could have been achieved. The presence of different branches of the same family in Rome and in Perusia, maintaining direct contact with each other, is perhaps the most plausible model. It is also possible that individual members of the family active in politics in Rome may have personally maintained a connection with their original *municipium*, through correspondence and by occasionally travelling in the area. Evidence that this latter phenomenon was possible, and perhaps even not unusual, are found at numerous points in the works of Cicero, testifying to a persistent connection between people active in politics in Rome and their original Italian communities, from whom they could draw active and direct support if so needed;[227] indeed Cicero himself maintained an active connection with his own original community in Arpinum. Thus a similar model might have been active when the Volcacii Tulli of Perusia are concerned, possibly further expanding to an even wider network of connections branching into Umbria. It is also possible that both models could have worked at the same time in order to maintain the

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226   See CIL XI 5931 and 5932; Bonamente 2002 pp. 44-45.
227   Roselaar 2017.

connection; that is, that an active first-person engagement with the original municipal

centre, through correspondence and perhaps personal visits, would have been supported by

members of a branch of the family that did not leave it and remained an active part of its

local elite.

Like the Perpernae, the Volcacii Tulli whose activity in Roman politics can be to some extent

reconstructed present a pattern of allegiances that is not linear or unequivocal. While their

exact date of entry into the Senate is uncertain, a prominent family member, most likely the

first to achieve consular status, must have been already part of the Sullan Senate.[228] This is L.

Volcacius Tullus, who was consul in 66 BC, when he barred Catilina from presenting his

candidacy to the consulship the following year.[229] His career is in itself of some significance.

His quaestorship, for which no exact date is available, must certainly have been held in the

Sullan years. While there is no evidence that the family specifically entered the Senate under

Sulla, this magistracy testifies to the fact that there must not have been any major conflict

between the family and the Sullan side - especially if compared to the harshness of the

treatment received from Sulla by entire communities in the same Northern Etruria in which

the Volcacii Tulli still maintained an active presence.

It is worth noting that Perusia, the centre where epigraphy places the activity of the family,

is significantly absent from the list of the Northern Etruscan cities who were prominent in

siding with Carbo against Sulla and that suffered repercussions as a result. While this does

not make L. Volcacius Tullus - nor certainly Perusia - an active supporter of Sulla, it is safe to

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228   Cfr. Rawson 1978 p. 176.
229   Sallust *Bell. Catil*. 18.2.

assume that his attitude towards the Sullan side must have been considered at the very least

neutral. In the following years he maintained a connection of some kind to what can be

loosely described as the *optimates* side. In 56 BC he had placed his support with Pompey,

supporting the motion to put him in charge of reinstating Ptolemy XII in Egypt,[230] although

from the existing evidence he does not appear to have been one of his closest associates.

Plutarch relates an episode of some significance in which this Volcacius Tullus accuses

Pompey of having deceived his followers on the scale of the army he could raise and

suggests that envoys be sent to Caesar.[231] If true, this episode, while placing him in the

Pompeian field, suggests that he was open to the idea of negotiation. Cicero provides some

more information on his later moves. He chose not to follow Pompey and remain in Italy,

where he was part of Caesar's Senate;[232] and D.R. Shackleton Bailey suggested that he might

be the *emptum pacificatorem* (the "bought peacemaker") Cicero spitefully refers to in a

letter to Atticus.[233] It is clear that he had made his peace with Caesar well before Pompey's

final defeat.

Two more Volcacii are found on the Caesarian side roughly in the same years. One of them,

of senatorial rank, is is another L. Volcacius Tullus, who was praetor in 46 BC as well as

governor of Cilicia. This is almost certainly the son of the consul of 66, and his full passage

into the Caesarian camp is for that reason all the more significant. Perhaps relevant is also

the presence of a C. Volcacius serving as a junior military officer with Caesar in Gaul and

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230   Cfr. Cairns 2006 p. 45.
231   Plutarch *Pompey* 60.4.
232   Cicero *ad Att.* 8.15.2.
233   Cicero *ad Att.* 10.1.2.

then in the Civil Wars,[234] even though this latter was not of senatorial rank, but simply an

eques. One might be tempted to see him as a possible member of a secondary branch of the

family, perhaps even a municipal one; but evidence in that sense is sadly lacking. Under

Octavian, the L. Volcacius Tullus who was consul in 33 BC together with Octavian himself is

certainly one and the same with the praetor of 46. He appears to have remained solidly on

Octavian's side during his conflict with Antony, and in 30-29 BC he was made proconsul of

Asia.[235]

It appears that the passage of this L. Volcacius from the Caesarian camp to that of Octavian

might not have been seamless. In the crucial years of the *bellum Perusinum*, the elites of the

city of Perusia chose to side with Lucius Antonius in his rebellion against Octavian, and a

number of their leaders were executed as a result after Antony's failure to intervene and the

city's capitulation. A branch of the family must almost certainly have been active in Perusia

at this point, and the poems of Propertius mentioning the *bellum* are part of a group

dedicated to another Volcacius Tullus, in all likelihood the nephew of the consul of 33.[236] In

these poems, Propertius also refers to the common losses that he laments together with

Tullus' family, connected to the war.[237] This Tullus, Propertius' sometime patron, must have

had a rather close relationship with his uncle, whom he followed to Asia upon his

assignment as proconsul.

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234   Caesar *Bell. Gall.* 6.29; *Bell. Civ.* 3.52.
235   Cairns 2006 p. 46 also believes that his holding of the consulship together with Octavian, and appointment to Asia, is a sign of his loyalty to Octavian's camp.
236   Cfr. Propertius 1.6.19, *patruus*.
237   Propertius 1.22; see *infra*, chapter 5.

While it has been suggested that the consul of 33, by virtue of that very consulship, must have remained steadily in Octavian's camp on the occasion of the Perusine war, this is not necessarily the case. The Roman citizens that had supported L. Antonius in that occasion obtained a full reprieve from Octavian, and a number of them went on with their political careers virtually unhindered;[238] this is also not the only instance in which Octavian did not oppose, and indeed furthered, the political advancement of those who had passed onto his side from that of Antony. The Caesarian allegiance of the consul of 33 is not in itself sufficient reason to posit that his loyalty would have automatically transferred to Octavian; a number of the staunchest Caesarians chose Antony's camp. Propertius' allusion to the common losses he and Tullus shared appears to imply that the family must have been to some measure involved in the war, although it is not possible to determine with certainty if members of the Volcacii Tulli in Rome were active on L. Antonius' side, or if their involvement was limited to a municipal branch present in Perusia.

Although the Volcacii Tulli are politically active in Rome in later years than the Perpernae, and take somewhat different directions, some commonalities exist between the two cases. Yet again, the pattern does not appear to be linear and shows no definite sign of a clear-cut, continued allegiance to one single political side. Most notably, the case of the Volcacii Tulli appears to shed some doubt on the axiom of the *populares* sympathies of the centres in Northern Etruria, whose Marian allegiance would have then automatically transferred to Caesar. On the contrary, the family appears to show some fluctuation between the

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238   Cfr. Barden Dowling 2006 p. 49; Lucius Antonius himself was pardoned. See also *infra*, chapter 4.

optimates and the *populares* side, most notably with the change of allegiance of the older L. Volcacius Tullus around 49 BC.

Even if it cannot be demonstrated that the family was brought into the Senate by Sulla, and that this consul had moved his allegiance, by somewhat natural succession, from Sulla to Pompey, his rather abrupt change of sides is remarkable. Even more so is the fact that his newfound loyalty to the Caesarians appears to have been adopted by his son, who derived notable benefits from it as far as the progress of his career was concerned. If the equestrian C. Volcacius who had fought for Caesar in Gaul belonged to a different branch of the same family, the issue would then be further compounded by the apparent fact that different members of the same family could put their lots with different leaders practically at the same time. Equally, the ambiguity surrounding the role of the Volcacii Tulli in the *bellum Perusinum* may point at a fluctuation in the family's choice of sides, or at the contemporary presence of different branches - perhaps one Roman and one municipal - on opposite sides. In either case, the matter of the political belonging of the Volcacii Tulli is neither clear-cut nor immutable.

While for the Perpernae their lack of continued adherence to one specific side, which should have been posited if an 'Etruscan political line' or 'Etruscan *forma mentis*' had informed their choices, may be due to the loss of their connection to Etruria, the same cannot be argued with regards to the Volcacii Tulli. The Perpernae appear to have been fully integrated in the fabric of Roman politics, and the paucity of evidence regarding their original municipal connection makes it impossible to support the possibility of its continuation with the later

generations of the family. In the case of the Volcacii Tulli, however, there is evidence that they still held an active interest, and had most likely an active participation, in the matters concerning Perusia well into the last decade of the Republic.

Given this background situation, if a shared political position informed by Etruscan mentality, or awareness of a common Etruscan heritage, had existed, the Volcacii Tulli would be most prominent in the list of senatorial families who would be expected to display it. The fact that it is not so further supports the idea that Etruscan heritage did not inform the political allegiance of individual senatorial families, whose choices appear instead to have been made on the basis of concerns tied to the welfare of their individual centre, or their family, or even purely personal ones. In both of these cases, then, hailing from a certain community that supported a particular side or leader appears to be the determining factor, far more important than identification as Etruscan. Yet this community-shaped allegiance could change as well, on the basis of family or personal convenience.

Outside the Senate: the Caecinae of Volaterrae

A third case of some interest concerns a family that in the later years of the Republic was not of senatorial status, but had nonetheless an influential position in Rome and did not fail to take sides during the Civil Wars. Given their interesting family history as well as their later success in early Imperial Rome, it is worth taking a look at the equestrian family of the Caecinae, originating in the Northern Etruscan centre of Volaterrae. A detailed analysis of the family, as well as their continued links to the community of Volaterrae, is present in the

excellent work done on the subject by N. Terrenato.[239] The prominent role they held in

politics in Rome in spite of their not being by this point members of the Senate is most

important. The connection of the Caecinae with Volaterrae is easily verifiable, with a good

body of evidence supporting the reconstruction of a situation not dissimilar from the one

posited for the Volcacii Tulli. The family is abundantly attested in the epigraphic record at

Volaterrae, including Etruscan-language inscriptions using the family name *caicna*.[240] Their

presence in this municipal centre appears to have been particularly deep-rooted, and

continued beyond the end of the Republic and even past the Early Empire.

The branch of the family present in Rome was comprised of wealthy Equestrians, who held a

notable degree of influence in contemporary politics, to the point that it has been suggested

that their lack of ascent to the senatorial class was not due to external opposition, but to

their own choice. This follows the model adopted by C. Maecenas, Augustus' close associate,

who was known to have turned down offers to join the Senate.[241] Like the Maecenates, the

Caecinae were also a wealthy, influential family originating from Northern Etruria (in the

case of the Maecenates, Arretium), with which they maintained active ongoing ties. They

appear to have had, once again like the Maecenates, commercial concerns even outside of

Italy, that would possibly have been better served by their remaining Equestrians; the best

documented of the Caecinae, one Aulus Caecina who was correspondent - and self-

described client - of Cicero, had some *negotia* in Asia.[242] Yet the historical evidence makes

their high degree of political influence in Rome itself unquestionable, pointing to the fact

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239   Terrenato 1998; see also Tweedie 2013.
240   Although *caicna* is also known at Volsinii, see Kaimio 2017 p. 94 and nn. 795; 811. But the connection
of these Caecinae with Volaterrae is beyond doubt.
241   For a detailed analysis of Maecenas see *infra*, chapter 6.
242   Cicero *ad fam*. 6.7.4.

that wealthy municipal families could find other avenues for gaining political weight than admission to the senatorial class.

Most likely the first Caecina to be active in Rome, and particularly significant for our purposes, is the father of Cicero's correspondent, himself Aulus Caecina, for whom Cicero's oration *Pro Caecina* was written. While the matter of the court case concerns inheritance of land, specifically Caecina's right to inherit a plot of land left to him by a certain Caesennia, one of the matters on which the case hinges is Caecina's questioned right to Roman citizenship. Volaterrae, as seen above, was, with Arretium and Faesulae, among the Northern Etruscan centres harshly hit by Sulla's punitive measures.[243] In the case of the Volaterrans such measures included an exclusion from some of the rights born of Roman citizenship, if not Roman citizenship altogether. It is remarkable that by such a late date there were standing doubts on the right of a municipal Italian to full citizenship, strong enough that a good part of Cicero's argument is devoted to contrasting them. Furthermore, Cicero's argument has to engage with the detail of Sulla's law, whose full text is unfortunately lost to us; and it includes an acknowledgment of Volaterrae's being in the same judiciary position as that imposed by Sulla on Ariminum, which, while protecting inheritance rights, amounted to a somewhat reduced form of citizenship.[244]

One might wonder if the persisting effects of this circumstance might not have influenced the fact that the Caecinae were never part of the Republican Senate (interestingly, the Maecenates were from Arretium, another centre most grievously hit by Sulla's punishment).

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243   See *supra*.
244   Cicero, *Pro Caec.* 100 (right to citizenship), 102 (comparison with Ariminum).

The court appears to have been unable to come to a conclusion after two hearings of the case, and it is possible that the concerns surrounding Caecina's right to full citizenship were part of the concerns leading to this outcome.[245] As far as the political allegiance of this Caecina is concerned, little can be said with certainty. Cicero describes his son as a *cliens* of P. Servilius Isauricus, notably the son of P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus, a prominent supporter of Sulla who had been awarded a triumph in 88 BC.[246] No conclusive evidence exists supporting the idea that the older Caecina actively fought with Vatia Isauricus during his involvement in Northern Etruria, where he was certainly at Clusium and possibly even at the siege of Volaterrae itself. The clientelar relationship must not have been inherited by the younger Caecina, since he ended up siding against P. Servilius Isauricus. At the very least his father must not have been at odds with the Sullan side. This is perhaps how he retained his right to land ownership in the territory of Volaterrae, and is especially remarkable when one consider that the anti-Sullan stance of this centre was one of the strongest in Etruria. Here, then, a member of a local elite family would be taking a political position opposed to the official one of his own city, apparently motivated by personal gain - with the family yet retaining its prestige in the *municipium* apparently intact.

In spite of any doubt on their rights to citizenship the Caecinae remained active in Rome, and there appear to have been no doubts on the full citizenship of Caecina's son, also Aulus Caecina, who was best known for his work as a writer of texts on the *etrusca disciplina*, and possibly as a translator of Etruscan texts on the same topic.[247] This Caecina was also very

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245   For an extended commentary on the case see Roby 2000 pp. 510 ff.
246   Velleius Paterculus 2.28.1; Plutarch *Sulla* 28.8.
247   For which see *infra*, chapter 3.

active in politics, choosing the Pompeian side (and therefore presumably rescinding ties with Servilius Isauricus, who was Caesar's colleague in the consulship in 48 BC). He did indeed leave Rome to join Pompey's force, much in the same way as the senators who chose not to join Caesar's Senate. He fought at Utica, where he figures in a list of those who were spared by Caesar's *clementia* following the defeat. He is one of only two *equites* present in this list; it appears that all others that Caesar chose to spare belonged to the senatorial class, which may suggest that Caecina's political weight was at this point roughly the same as that of a senator.[248] He was exiled, likely because of a pamphlet he had written attacking Caesar, which must have enjoyed some circulation.[249]

Yet it is hard to connect Caecina's behaviour in this situation specifically to his Etruscan origins; as noted before, Etruscans are found both among the supporters of Caesar and his opponents. The family does not seem to have been removed from Roman politics as a consequence of this Caecina siding with Pompey; on the contrary, it rose to senatorial standing in the early Empire, producing a number of successful descendants with notable careers, and who are still referred to as hailing from Volaterrae. Under Augustus, an A. Caecina Severus, of Volaterrae and certainly of the same family (though not necessarily a direct descendant of the A. Caecina who had fought for Pompey and Cato), was *consul suffectus* in 1 BC and then went on to enjoy significant success first as governor of Moesia, in 6 AD, and then of Germania Inferior.[250] Even later, an A. Caecina Alienus was still important

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248   *Bell. Afr.* 89.
249   On the difficulties of his exile see Cicero A*d Fam.* 6.9; 13.66.
250   Tacitus *Ann.* 3.33.

enough by the sixties and seventies AD, when he sided first with Galba and then with

Vespasian.[251] On the whole, the family appears to have been indeed unusually successful.

Even though they did not achieve senatorial status during the Republic, the events

concerning the Caecinae once again show notable similarities to what has been observed

with regards to the Perpernae and the Volcacii Tulli. Like the Perpernae, they had to face

suspicion concerning their actual right to Roman citizenship, and one might wonder if such

an issue might not have been more common than usually thought for families of municipal

origins rising to prominence in Rome. Like both the Perpernae and the Volcacii Tulli, they

show no significant pattern of persisting political allegiance to one side alone. At best, one

may posit a general loyalty to the side of the *optimates*; though this in itself is remarkable as

it is a consistent detachment from the official position taken by their *municipium* of

Volaterrae, within which they remained nonetheless influential. Their opposition to Caesar

may not have been translated into an opposition to Octavian; that a member of the family

was successful under the reign of Augustus might even suggest otherwise. Once again, there

is no evidence that the Caecinae adopted a particularly 'Etruscan' stance - in fact, if support

for Caesar is believed to be typically Etruscan, it might be argued that they behaved against

expectation. Yet this family was undoubtedly deeply in touch with its Etruscan origins; it had

an active presence in a centre known for the continued persistence of the Etruscan

language, and its two prominent Republican members were regarded as somewhat of an

authority of Etruscan religious practices. If any family of known Etruscan heritage could be

expected to conform with a political line born of 'Etruscan mentality', the Caecinae would be

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251   Tacitus *Hist*. 1.53.

the perfect candidate for the observation of such a phenomenon. Yet this does not appear to be the case. It seems instead that once again the choice of a political side is dictated by personal convictions and possibly personal gain, even against pre-existing ties or connections and against the prevalent line in the *municipium* of origin.

Conclusions

It would appear, after considering the individual cases of the families of Etruscan origins whose development can satisfactorily be tracked through a number of generations, that individuals of Etruscan origins belonged to, and were active on, all sides in Roman political conflict in these years. The evidence shows a trend significantly at odds with the idea of a widespread attitude to political matters that may be termed typically Etruscan or informed by the underlying structure of past Etruscan society. Even though it can safely be assumed that the members of these families possessed a level of awareness of the shared heritage of the centres they hailed from - most prominently in aspects like language and religion - the original political fragmentation of the Etruscan cities is reflected in the lack of an uniform 'Etruscan' line.

Individual families were deeply entangled and involved in political conflict, and often pursued their own convenience. While the cities of Etruria still held political independence, the interests of each centre might have been considerably different between themselves, and at times at odds with each other. The independent development of sub-regions with different circumstances, as seen with the apparent split between Northern and Southern

Etruscan cities, and of centres with their own political histories, as in the cases of Perusia or Volaterrae, would have produced different political attitudes in families hailing from different parts of Etruria. Furthermore, it would appear that these attitudes were far from immutable.

Not only there is not one specific political side, be it the *optimates* or the *populares*, the Pompeians or the Caesarians, that is particularly favoured by Etruscans, but an elite family may occasionally act against the general line adopted by its original *municipium*, and the side chosen by one same family may vary from one generation to the next, adapting to the political circumstances. Even in the case in which political attitudes in Etruria appear to be uniform and coherent, that of land reassignments, the explanation lies with the defense of one's right to land ownership. The expression of Etruscan identity, it would seem, came through other vehicles than that of political allegiance; the actions of the Romans of Etruscan origins on the political scene were driven mostly by a concern for their own personal interest.

Chapter 3

The role of Etruscan religion in the self-representation of Etruscan identities

Of all the commonplace ideas about Etruscans circulating within the Roman world in the Republican period, the idea of a deep connection between Etruscans and some religious traditions holds particular interest. The idea of a special degree of skill and knowledge held by the Etruscans in the field of divinatory practice, in particular, appears to have been undisputed from an early date.[252] This primacy of the Etruscans in the field of divination was closely associated both to the antiquity of their tradition and to their reliance on a corpus of written texts,[253] and it represents possibly the only stereotype regarding the Etruscans and widespread among the Romans to possess an entirely positive nature, at least in the Late Republic.[254]

In time, this understanding of the Etruscans as a particularly pious people became more generalised. In the last years of the Republic, as well as throughout the Augustan period, purported Etruscan origins are called upon to legitimise a number of religious rites and habits, from the Roman triumph[255] to the procedure followed in the foundation of a new city[256]. The particular connection between the Etruscans and some forms of divination was however never forgotten, and the consultation of Etruscan soothsayers specialising in traditional forms of divination, or *haruspices*, became a routine procedure for the Roman Senate. Later on, Roman authority would take a direct interest in the way in which

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252   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 20.
253   Cfr. Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 21; Cicero *De div*. 2.50.
254   See *supra*, Introduction, and *infra*, chapter 5.
255   There are no particular grounds to believe that this idea was founded in any level of truth, but it appears to have been used to attribute legitimacy to the practice of the triumph. Cfr. Bonfante Warren 1970; Versnel 2006.
256   Cornell 2012 p. 167 ff.

haruspices were trained and in the identification of the correct individuals who could be authorised to officially claim that title, to the point that an official *collegium* of *haruspices* was established at some point in the early Imperial period.[257] Some aspects of Etruscan religion, such as the theory concerning the system of *saecula*, periods of time dominated by the rule of different peoples, were also abundantly discussed and used for political purposes in the later decades of the Republic.[258] Etruscan religious texts of various authenticity were likewise discussed and circulated.

The importance of this Etruscan religious influence in Rome has long been acknowledged by scholars, and its developments have been abundantly discussed[259]. While the Roman outlook on Etruscan diviners has been investigated at length, however, less attention has been devoted to the Etruscans' own perspective on the way some of their religious traditions were integrated in Roman ritual habit. As some of the examples addressed in this chapter will prove, the knowledge attributed to the Etruscans in religious matters provided them with a form of leverage that could prove extremely useful in times of change like those of the second half of the Republic. A better understanding of the extent to which Etruscans, or individuals of Etruscan heritage, chose to deliberately manipulate or use their reputation as religious authorities to alter the general perception of Etruscans in Rome, or even to exercise some form of influence on Roman politics, would therefore be extremely valuable.

There are two main groups of individuals whose Etruscan descent was widely acknowledged that were active in this respect in Late Republican Rome. The first group is represented, of

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257   For the debate surrounding this date see *infra*.
258   Santangelo 2013 pp. 117 ff; *passim*.
259   See among others Haack 2003, Glinister 2006 pp. 10-33; 62-89: Santangelo 2013 pp. 84-127.

course, by the *haruspices* themselves. The extent of their involvement in Roman affairs has been the subject of lengthy debates, and a number of different aspects remain yet to be fully clarified. These include the extent of the stable presence of *haruspices* in the city of Rome itself, the start date of said presence, the difference between officially recognised, reputable *haruspices* and 'street-corner' diviners who inappropriately claimed the same title, the level of acceptance of *haruspices*' reliability in Roman society at large, and the date in which an official *collegium* of *haruspices* was first established. To all these aspects a further question must be added regarding the identity of these *haruspices*, the possibility of tracing them back to individual Etruscan centres, to particular sections of Etruscan societies, or even, in especially fortunate cases, to individual Etruscan families.

Alongside the *haruspices*, a second group of individuals of generally acknowledged Etruscan descent was known in Rome especially in the Late Republic, and perhaps even more active in shaping Roman perceptions of various aspects of Etruscan religious tradition. A number of highly cultured Roman citizens hailing from elite Etruscan families, who appeared to have a personal interest in such matters without being *haruspices*, took it upon themselves to translate select texts of the Etruscan religious tradition into Latin, purportedly animated by a concern for the survival of those texts in a period in which the Etruscan language was rapidly dwindling.[260] The activity of these translators extended from long, structured treatises to shorter prophetic texts. While several of these translated texts appear to have been accepted and integrated to some degree in Roman tradition, very little of them unfortunately survive for our perusal in the present day. We do however possess lists of

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260 See Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. vii.

titles that can provide us with a clearer understanding of the range of topics chosen for preservation through translation. The lives of some individual translators, like Nigidius Figulus or Aulus Caecina, can also be investigated to some extent, clarifying their position within Roman society and providing insights on the possible agenda leading their choices of material.

In this chapter the role of *haruspices* and that of translators of religious texts in shaping widespread ideas of Etruscan religion in the Roman society of the later Republic will be addressed separately. A greater degree of attention will be devoted to the level of agency individuals who claimed Etruscan descent had in determining the direction in which those ideas developed. Given the prestige and authority attributed to Etruscan tradition in this particular field, an assessment of the role played by individuals of purported Etruscan origin in its establishment is an important element in the matter of the tools for self-representation these individuals were able to access in this historical period.

Haruspices

In 398 BC, as Rome was at war with Veii, an increase in the water level of the Alban Lake was observed that could not be justified with rainfall or through other means. Interpreting this as a prodigy, the Senate sent envoys to the Oracle at Delphi. The explanation, however, would come from a closer source, as Livy narrates.[261] An old *haruspex* from the besieged Veii linked the prodigy to the conflict at hand, claiming that the Romans would never take the city until

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[261]   Livy 5.15.2; 5.51.6. Cfr. also Plutarch *Vita Cam*. 3-4.

the water was drained from the lake. Alerted to this response, the Romans seized the

haruspex with a trick, and brought him before the Senate to repeat his warning. The

meaning of the rise in the lake waters, it was explained, had been passed down with other

knowledge of Etruscan lore - *disciplina etrusca traditum*. The Senate, however, did not

regard the *haruspex* as trustworthy, nor his response worth acting upon, until the envoys

came back from Delphi with the news that the Oracle was in total agreement with what the

haruspex had said.

The episode, recorded by a variety of ancient sources,[262] is the earliest known instance of

consultation of a *haruspex* by the Roman Senate, and it holds great significance in more than

one way.[263] It already contains the seeds of what would later become all the main aspects of

the peculiar relationship between Rome and the Etruscan *haruspices*, and with Etruscan

religious practices more broadly. Already Etruscan proficiency in divination and the

interpretation of prodigies is established as being grounded in an ancient tradition, the work

of the *haruspices* is tightly bound to the notion of *Etrusca disciplina*, the role played by

writings - described by Livy as *libri fatales* - is emphasised, and the Etruscan diviners are

presented as having a deeper understanding of prodigies than is available to the Romans.

Two further aspects of this narrative are also noteworthy. Firstly, it is perhaps significant that

the earliest recorded contact between Rome and the *haruspices* happens during the siege of

Veii. It is during that same conflict that the only ascertained episode of an *evocatio*

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262   Other sources include Cicero *De div*. 1.100 and 2.69; Dion. Hal. 12.10.
263   Although M.-L. Haack's connection of this episode with earlier Etruscan material – specifically the
pava tarχies mirror, which is more likely a mythological or generic scene – is founded on extremely loose
evidence and probably not to be accepted. Cfr. Haack 2003 p. 29. For the *pava tarχies* mirror see Pallottino
1979; DeGrummond 2002 p. 71; Macintosh Turfa 2006 p. 81.

performed by the Romans is also narrated.[264] In relating how Camillus invited the gods of Veii to desert their city for Rome, Livy also notes that the inhabitants of Veii were unaware of having been betrayed not only by foreign oracles, but by their own seers (*a suis vatibus...proditos*[265]). In the same way in which Rome aimed to acquire the power of the Gods of Veii to her advantage, one could argue, she could have been equally keen to also acquire the power of Veii's diviners. In this light, the *evocatio* of the gods of Veii and the kidnapping of the old *haruspex* appear to be matching parts of a same religious project, ready to integrate those aspects of Etruscan religion which could be used to Rome's advantage.

The process was however anything but effortless. Instances of consultations of *haruspices* in Rome in the following years are few and far between, and the early ones are often problematic. Not all sources agree that *haruspices* played a part in interpreting the Lacus Curtius prodigy in 362 BC; Varro, who relates it, also notes that the sources he used disagree on the point.[266] An unspecified Etruscan diviner helping with the interpretation of a prodigy in 296 BC is mentioned by Cassius Dio, but not by Livy.[267] And according to Gellius, who bases himself on the *Annales Maximi* and Verrius Flaccus, sometime around 270 BC - the exact date is uncertain - there was an instance in which *haruspices* deliberately gave a wrong response regarding the expiation of a prodigy, out of hostility towards the Romans.[268] The old *haruspex* from Veii had not been too willing to repeat in front of the Senate what he had told his fellow citizens, either: according to Livy's narration, he initially claimed he could not

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264   Livy 5.21.1-8.
265   Livy 5.21.5.
266   Varro *De lingua latina* 148-151.
267   Cfr. Rasmussen 2003 p. 57; Cassius Dio 8 fr. Zonaras 8,1; Livy 10.23.
268   Gellius *Noct. Att.* 4.5.

remember what the gods had inspired him to say (*quae tum cecinerit divino spiritu instinctus, ea se nec, ut indicta sint, revocare posse*[269]).

It is also important to note that, while this story is telling of Roman attitudes towards *haruspices*, the sources relaying it are all significantly later than the purported episode itself. In this sense, they are telling not as much of attitudes towards *haruspices* as they were during the conflict with Veii, but of later perceptions of how those attitudes had evolved and developed. What emerges from episodes such as this is the idea that the lore of the *haruspices* was ultimately alien in nature, not a constituent part of original Roman tradition. As such, in order to be employed for Rome's benefit, it had to be at some point appropriated, through means that were not necessarily at first peaceful, and that might have sparked some degree of conflict. It is interesting that a need to underline this aspect was clearly still present in a period when consultation of *haruspices* by the Senate had become a widely accepted routine procedure.

Suspicion against the reliability of the *haruspices* on the Roman side also appears to continue through time. Aside from the episode related by Gellius, at least another case is known previous to the Social War in which the response of the *haruspices* required external confirmation before being heeded. In 162 BC, Ti. Gracchus, who was consul for that year, presided over a consular election that was suspected of a flaw in procedure because a *rogator* had died immediately after announcing the victorious candidates. Apparently under pressure from the population, the Senate consulted *haruspices* who claimed that the election was not valid. Gracchus, however, vehemently rejected this response, and only

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269   Livy 5.15.10.

agreed to invalidate the election later on, after separately consulting the Roman augurs, who confirmed the *haruspices'* evaluation, arguing that during the election Gracchus had made a mistake by not taking the appropriate auspices as he crossed the *pomerium*.[270] It is particularly significant that, in rejecting the decision of the *haruspices*, Gracchus stated that they had no right to interfere in Roman affairs, as they were 'Etruscans and barbarians': *An vos Tusci ac barbari auspiciorum populi Romani ius tenetis et interpretes esse comitiorum potestis?*[271] The voice of the Roman augurs appears to hold more weight, at least in Gracchus' opinion, than that of the Etruscan *haruspices*.

In this case, as with the old diviner from Veii, the narration validates the reliability of the *haruspices*, who had indeed come to the correct response; but it also highlights the fact that the Etruscan diviners could be seen with some degree of diffidence, to the point of requiring another supporting opinion for their response to be accepted, be it from the undisputed authority of the Delphic Oracle or from the traditionally Roman college of augurs. At least in this earliest phase of Rome's interaction with *haruspices*, the suspicion can perhaps be easily understood: the Etruscan communities the *haruspices* came from could be at odds or even in open conflict with Rome, and at the very least there was always a lingering consciousness that those priests were foreigners,[272] extraneous to Roman tradition and perhaps bearing ill will against Rome. It had been this hostility that had led the treacherous *haruspices* of 270 to lie, in order to harm Rome; that they could lie again could have appeared to be a legitimate concern.

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270   Cfr. Haack 2003 p. 64; Rasmussen 2003 pp. 154-55.
271   Cicero *Nat. Deor.* 2.11.
272   Cfr. MacBain 1982 p. 239; Santangelo 2013 p. 98.

Yet the Senate did consult the *haruspices*. In the years between the first known case and Gracchus' own controversy with the Etruscan diviners, there are at least five known cases in which *haruspices* were consulted,[273] and at least eleven more in which they could potentially have been involved, though evidence in these latter cases is inconclusive. It is clear that the *haruspices* had some repute with the Senate and the people of Rome, and that their expertise was valued to the point of having them come specifically to Rome from Etruria in order to interpret a prodigy. Nevertheless, it is true that in this earlier period consultation of *haruspices* does not appear to be systematic, and responses about prodigies are more often sought from the *libri Sybillini* and the *Xviri sacris faciundis*, as is highlighted by S. Rasmussen in her excellent survey of instances of public prodigies in Republican Rome.[274]

The fact that in more than one instance narrations exist in which a response from *haruspices* had to be validated from an external source is in itself proof that their reliability was at the very least still a matter to some extent open for discussion. Surely, a response given by the *Xviri* or by the augurs, official priesthoods of the Republic solidly grounded in Roman tradition, would not have been subjected to the same level of scrutiny. Moreover, in some of the aforementioned cases in which the Senate invited opinions from *haruspices*, other priesthoods were consulted at the same time. Both the *pontifices* and the *Xviri* were consulted alongside the *haruspices* concerning a number of prodigies occurring in different places in 207 BC, and if Procilius' version of the events of 362 BC is correct, then the *haruspices* were consulted together with the *libri Sybillini*.[275] It is possible that in cases such

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273   Cfr. the extensive survey of all consultations regarding omens in Rasmussen 2003 pp. 53-116.
274   See *supra*.
275   Rasmussen 2003 p. 180-1 rightly notes that there is no sign of competition between these priesthoods.

as these the opinion of the *haruspices* would have received support and validation from its being in agreement with another source of religious authority more easily acceptable in a Roman milieu. With the passing of time, the cases in which the *haruspices* were consulted alone would increase in number, suggesting that perhaps the need for a validating second opinion was no longer felt.

The circumstances in which *haruspices* are consulted alone in this earlier period are also interesting. Two such episodes close in time to each other, one in 278 BC[276] and the contested one of 270,[277] both concerned statues being struck by lightning. The series of prodigies in 214 BC[278] and 192 BC,[279] while varied in nature, also included lightning strikes, and multiple lightning strikes appear in the list of prodigies from 207 BC, though in this case Livy also mentions the intervention of *haruspices* only in relation to a different prodigy.[280] It is however important to note that he does not openly state which priesthood was consulted by the consuls regarding the other prodigies recorded in the same time period, and it is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the consultation of *haruspices* may have extended to the entire group (*hostiae maiores* were prescribed by way of expiation for the entire group of prodigies, which matches previous responses given by *haruspices* under similar circumstances[281]).

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276   Livy *Per.* 14; lightning striking the statue of Jupiter on the Capitoline temple.
277   See *supra*.
278   Livy 24.10-11.
279   Livy 35.21.
280   Livy 27.37. The *haruspices* are consulted on a hermaphrodite prodigy.
281   Cfr. e.g. Livy 24.10.

Damage dealt by a storm is also concerned in the consultation of *haruspices* in 182 BC.[282] In

two cases (207 and 171 BC[283]) *haruspices* are consulted in relation to prodigies concerning

hermaphrodites. In 207 BC, in particular, the hermaphrodite is only one in the longer list of

prodigies, and Livy records that *haruspices* were called in from Etruria in order to address

this prodigy particularly.[284]

It is possible that at this stage the consultation of *haruspices* was prompted by the

occurrence of specific types of prodigies on which it was felt that the Etruscan diviners had

special expertise. The association between *haruspices* and lightning divination in particular is

widespread and well attested,[285] and it is possible that their greater authority in this field

was to some extent recognised. One must however note that episodes are known from this

same time frame where the interpretation of lightning prodigies relied on the *libri Sybillini* or

the *pontifices*.[286] Livy also relates another hermaphrodite prodigy as part of a larger group in

200 BC, and explicitly connects it to the similar one in 207 BC, stating that the same kind of

expiation was required; in this case, however, there is no mention of the involvement of

haruspices, and only the *libri Sybillini* and the *Xviri* are apparently consulted.[287]

In the following years, the number of interventions of *haruspices* officially called upon by the

Roman Senate increases. We have information about eleven more instances before the end

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282   Livy 40.2; cfr. Obsequens 5.
283   Pliny *Hist. Nat.* 7.36.
284   See *supra*.
285   Cfr. Macintosh Turfa 2012 pp. 48-51.
286   See e.g. Livy 37. 3 (temple of Juno Lucina struck by lightning: both *pontifices* and *Xviri)*; Livy 40.45
(temple of Jupiter in Tarracina struck by lightning: *Xviri*).
287   Livy 32.12.

of the Social War,[288] in one of which, occurring in 117 BC and mentioned both by Cicero and Julius Obsequens, there is once again validation of the *haruspices* and their response by it being identical to the one provided by the *libri Sybillini*.[289] Cicero again reports the same for the interpretation of a series of prodigies in 91 BC, interestingly enough close to the onset of the Social War itself.[290] In a number of other instances no information is provided by the sources on what priesthood was consulted to clarify the prodigies; at least for the ones concerning fields typically associated with *haruspices*, like lightning prodigies or hermaphrodite births, their involvement can be at the very least suggested.[291]

Consultation of *haruspices*, then, appears to have become a commonplace event already before the Social War, and the existence of at least one instance in which *haruspices* came - possibly from outside Rome - to provide a consultation during the Social War itself[292] seems to suggest that the conflict did not shed any suspicion on their reliability, which must have been well established by this point. *Haruspices* remain active in this semi-official capacity throughout the Republican period, and one can assume that the grant of Roman citizenship to Italians after the end of the conflict must have made their relationship with the Senate, if anything, even easier.

A sense of the commonplace acceptance of *haruspices* as an authoritative and reliable voice in the Late Republic can be derived by reading Cicero's *De haruspicum responso*. The entire

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288   Cfr. Rasmussen 2003 pp. 74-105.
289   Cicero *De Div*. 1.97; Obsequens 36.
290   Cicero *De div*. 1.98-99.
291   See e.g. Obsequens 50 (both hermaphrodite and lightning prodigy); 52 (lightning prodigy, also witnessed in Etruscan cities).
292   Diodorus Siculus 32.12.2, with regards to a hermaphrodite prodigy.

framework of the speech is built around the acceptance that the response of the *haruspices* must necessarily be correct, and must be widely recognised as such; it is clear that both parts involved in the legal controversy can act by suggesting alternative interpretation for it in order to use it like a weapon against their adversary.[293] Cicero, however, makes no attempt to lessen the danger of the response to himself by trying to deny its validity; nor there is any sign that Clodius did the same. There is truth in M. Beard's assessment that, clearly, by this point the reliability of the *haruspices* was accepted without question as a tool the Roman political elite could confidently use, and one that they had occasionally to grapple with.[294]

In the light of this growing popularity of the *haruspices*, and of the following controversies surrounding them, two aspects must be examined in order to better assess the nature of their influence on perceptions of Etruscan religious lore. Firstly, one must consider what category (or categories, if there were more than one) was commonly referred to, and understood, as *haruspices*. What defined a diviner as a *haruspex*? Was there a set of more specific requirements for the *haruspices* officially consulted by the Roman Senate, rather than the ones that accompanied individual generals or sold their trade to the wider public? Secondly, the identity of the known *haruspices* must be investigated, considering aspects such as their names, social standing, and place of origin.

The first issue has been the subject of extensive discussion in previous scholarship. There is a general agreement that the term *haruspex*, far from defining one specific category or priestly college, was applied in the Late Republic to a large variety of individuals, whose

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293   As correctly noted by Beard 2012.
294   Beard 2012 pp. 22-23.

degree of training in specific types of divination varied greatly, and whose public recognition

as reliable and respectable practitioners was equally heterogeneous.[295] The contradiction in

the sources regarding the level of repute *haruspices* enjoyed is therefore only apparent.

There is no real need to reconcile it, nor is it problematic that within the works of one single

author the evaluation of the *haruspices'* respectability can appear to be subject to

considerable variation.

Cicero's works are an excellent example of this variation and perhaps the best example of

how the term was routinely applied to different categories of practitioners. Given his

authorship of theoretical works on religion and divination, as well as his personal

frequentation of scholars on haruspicy, Cicero would appear to be a particularly strong

authority when Roman perceptions on *haruspices* are concerned.[296] His personal attitudes to

divination at large have been explored in F. Santangelo's excellent study on divination in the

Late Roman Republic, who provides an extensive examination of the apparent contradictions

they contain.[297] When it comes to the *haruspices* specifically, however, the contradictions in

Cicero's judgement can be even more easily solved. It has been noted that at times (the *De

haruspicum responso* is an obvious example, but there are other instances) Cicero appears

to approach the *haruspices* and their responses with the highest degree of deference, as if

their authority and reliability were beyond doubt. Such is also the case, for instance, in the

third *Catilinaria*, where a response given by *haruspices* and predicting social strife is used as

prove that the plot now unveiled had been foreseen by the most reputable of diviners and

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295   Cfr.Rasmussen 2003 p. 140; 178; Ripat 2006 p. 156.
296   Cfr. Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 31.
297   Santangelo 2013 pp. 10-36.

the danger acknowledged as truthful by the Senate. It is worth noting that, in this particular case, Cicero mention that the *haruspices* had been called *ex tota Etruria.*[298]

In the *De haruspicum responso* the orator makes no attempt to discredit the response of the *haruspices* that is being used against him; instead he chooses to turn its interpretation against his rival Clodius. One can easily agree with M. Beard's detailed analysis of this speech in recognising that Cicero was acknowledging the Senate's, and most likely the people's, unwavering acceptance of the authority of the *haruspices* in producing the response. As Beard notes, the fact itself that the response held such a high degree of political leverage is proof that the reliability of the *haruspices* was not in doubt and that the need to heed their responses was widely perceived.[299] The whole speech appears to be built around the assumption that the *haruspices* hold weighty religious authority and that the truthfulness of their assessment cannot be questioned. Whether Cicero himself genuinely believed this to be the truth or was only playing within the rules of the system he was part of, while of great import to studies on Cicero himself, holds a much lesser relevance when the standing of the *haruspices* themselves is to be assessed. It is clear that, if not by Cicero, the *haruspices* were certainly regarded as most respectable, at this stage, by the Roman Senate. Yet, within Cicero's work, it is also not difficult to find a completely different assessment. In the *De divinatione* a famous comment of Cato is mentioned, and apparently given credit to, stating that it is surprising that two *haruspices* meeting in the street can look at each other without laughing.[300]

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298   Cicero *Cat*. 3.19.8.
299   Beard 2012 pp. 38-39.
300   Cicero *De div*. 2.51.12.

Different categories of haruspices

The apparent contradiction can be solved when considering that the different passages

could be referring, by their use of the term *haruspices*, to different categories of individuals.

It is by now widely recognised that, alongside the individuals officially consulted by the

Senate, the term could be adopted by others whose reputation was by far less generally

acknowledged. Especially in the later years of the Republic, powerful politicians and generals

took to having their own *haruspices*, who often accompanied them on military campaign

with the purpose of providing tailored consultation in order to inform their next moves. Sulla

was said to greatly rely on one such, by the name of C. Postumius. There is evidence that

Pompey also consulted at some point a personal *haruspex*,[301] and the phenomenon is so well

known that Spurinna can be mistakenly referred to by modern scholars as 'Caesar's

haruspex'[302] - even though Caesar's attitude towards *haruspices* was apparently rather

skeptical, and there is no sign that Spurinna was ever in his employ.[303]

The role of these personal *haruspices* is significantly different from the ones called upon by

the Senate. Firstly, while the latter act, at least purportedly, in an impartial way, the

commitment of the former is to an individual leader and/or his faction.[304] Secondly, while

the Senate called upon the *haruspices* to clarify the meaning of prodigies that had been

recorded and reported, the personal *haruspices* following in the train of Roman leaders

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301   For both Sulla and Pompey cfr. MacIntosh Turfa 2012 p. 33. On Postumius see also Haack 2003 p. 54 suggesting he may have been one of Sulla's political partisans.
302   Torelli 1975, p. 54 n. 1.
303   Cfr. MacIntosh Turfa 2012 p. 33. For a discussion of Spurinna's role see *infra*.
304   This may also be the case with the *haruspices* who accompanied Verres according to Cicero, cfr. among others *Verr.* 2.2.27-33.

appear to have conducted consultation of a more straightforward divinatory nature, mainly

by means of extispicy, in order to answer specific questions such as those relative to the

outcome of a battle.[305] The semi-official *haruspices* consulted by the Senate appear then to

have acted primarily as interpreters of divine omens, while the personal ones following

Roman generals seem to have been mostly diviners in the sense proper. It is not easy to

imagine the two categories fully intersecting, even though there is abundant evidence that

they were likely based on the same Etruscan doctrine.

A third group of individuals calling themselves *haruspices* appear to have enjoyed even

lower levels of credibility, and whose features appear to us to be considerably less well

defined - likely because they did not form one coherent or uniform group. These can be

described as 'street-corner *haruspices*', and seem to have been diviners who offered their

service to the general public in exchange for money.[306] They do not appear to have a

separate designation in ancient terminology, where they too are referred to as *haruspices*.

These must have been known for a long time in Republican Rome, since they are referred to,

rather contemptuously, in Plautus.[307] In the *Curculio*, they are depicted selling their trade in

the market, not differently from other kinds of hawkers.[308] Some may have been itinerant,

offering their trade for pay on a door-to-door basis; these latter were perhaps tied to a more

rural kind of setting,[309] and may be the ones Cicero refers to in the *De divinatione* as *vicani*

haruspices.[310] If that is the case, one should also accept M. Flower's suggestion that it is

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305   Cfr. Haack 2003 p. 51.
306   Cfr. e.g. Rasmussen 2003 p. 178; Ripat 2011 p. 156. It is important to note that in ancient sources as early as Plautus they are specifically designated with the word *haruspex*.
307   Cfr. Traill 2004.
308   Dickie 2003 p. 157; Plautus *Curc.* 483.
309   Haack 2003 p. 45.
310   Cicero *De div.* 1.132.5.

against this type of itinerant countryside *haruspices* in particular that Cato pronounced himself in the *De agri cultura*.[311] Whether they also preserved some original elements of Etruscan doctrine, perhaps in a simplified form, is difficult to say, since there is no detailed descriptions of their practices, which were in any case certainly not uniform and might have varied considerably with each individual practitioner. Nor do we have names, which may provide us with pointers in order to assess the possibility that at least some of these individuals might have had genuine Etruscan origins.

The differentiation between these three separate categories of individuals calling themselves *haruspices* is nevertheless of the utmost importance. Once considered that the term could easily have referred to each of them in turn, it becomes clear that the contradiction observed in authors such as Cicero with regards to the authority (or lack thereof) they recognise in the *haruspices* is only apparent. The author can easily acknowledge the reliability of the respectable interpreters of godly omens that are consulted specifically by the Senate, whose abilities have been proved and validated through history and are unequivocally recognised by the entire senatorial elite; and yet denounce and mock the lies of those who peddle cheap divination on the streets of Rome - or, possibly, sell it to ambitious politicians by becoming part of their train of clients.[312]

Both the official *haruspices* consulted by the Senate and the opportunistic diviners in Rome's market are relevant in their activities to the matter of Etruscan self-representation in the Republican period, albeit in very different ways. The former, given their privileged

311   Flower 2008 p. 47.
312   A similar argument suggesting more than one category of *haruspices* has also been proposed by Corbeill 2012, also addressing apparent inconsistencies in Cicero's treatment of *haruspices*.

relationship with the Senate and the credibility they had built through the years, were in a favourable position to introduce a positive perception of Etruscans, or at least of some part of Etruscan lore, within Roman culture. The latter, on the other hand, can act for us as a marker for the success and popularity of *haruspices* within the wider Roman consciousness: surely, if someone felt the need to usurp the title in order to better sell their trade, it must have been because the title itself carried a sense of reliability.

The official haruspices

On the nature of the official *haruspices* that dealt with the Roman Senate there are more doubts than certainties. They were most certainly not regarded as one of Rome's official priesthoods. The exact date of their official organisation in a *collegium* of sixty is unknown, and the only solid evidence concerning it dates from the early Imperial period. We can agree with Santangelo in placing its inception in the Augustan period.[313] The inscriptions relative to this *ordo* collected in ILS, which show a certain degree of uncertainty in the spelling of the word *haruspex*, are also all Imperial in date.[314] Although it has repeatedly been suggested that the *haruspices* could already have been organised in an official *collegium* in the later decades of the Republic, the evidence on which those suggestions rely is tenuous at best. M. Torelli's proposed evidence for the existence of this *collegium* at this earlier date is entirely based on the reconstruction of a severely damaged fragment of the *Elogia Tarquiniensia*, and particularly of one line where the damage to the surviving inscription is so extensive

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313   Santangelo 2013 pp. 95-96.
314   ILS 2291-2302, with the exception of ILS 2301, the bilingual inscription of Lars Cafates, for which see *infra*.

that only four letters are readable.[315] The reconstruction is therefore far from certain, and even so the reconstructed text would not explicitly mention an officially recognised *collegium* of *haruspices*, even less one certainly identifiable with the *collegium LX haruspicum*. Similarly, the mention in Cicero of a *summus haruspex* giving Caesar a response suggesting he should delay his pursuit of Pompey in Africa[316] does not necessarily entail that this individual was the official head of a *collegium* of *haruspices*, let alone the *collegium LX haruspicum* known in the Imperial period. The expression would perhaps be better interpreted as 'the best *haruspex*', or even better 'the most reputable of the *haruspices*'.

When an attempt to determine the identity of an individual *haruspex* within this category is concerned, the closest one can come to the mark is probably with the sparse information available about Spurinna. This is the *haruspex* connected with the omens possibly surrounding the death of Julius Caesar. Numerous reputable sources assign him the role of the *haruspex* who examined the ox sacrificed at the Lupercalia in 44 BC and found that it had no heart, upon which he would have warned Caesar that this sign was a negative omen. This version of the narration, probably the closest to the actual facts, would later be conflated with narrations suggesting that a diviner of some kind had warned Caesar of the Ides of March; some authors attributed this second role, too, to Spurinna.[317] There has been an attempt to also identify the *summus haruspex* mentioned by Cicero with Spurinna, but there is no ground for this other than his providing a response to Caesar, as rightly noted by Haack.[318]

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315   Cfr. Torelli 1975 pp. 105-135.
316   Cicero *De div.* 2.52. Cfr. Haack 2003 p. 56.
317   Cicero *De div.* 1.119; 2.36-37; Pliny *Hist. Nat.* 11.186. For a discussion of this and the differences in the sources see Ripat 2006 pp. 168-171.
318   Haack 2003 p. 56.

Spurinna was most certainly not acting as Caesar's personal *haruspex*, since Caesar was known for his reluctance to believe in omens and diviners, and in any case his response of 44 was not heeded by the dictator.[319] Since there is no evidence that Spurinna was associated with Caesar specifically, and it appears that he is held in high regard by the sources, his name being used to validate the reliability of the prophecy, it is possible that he was a member of the group of *haruspices* used by the Senate to interpret omens. The fact that he is performing extispicy at a public religious ceremony such as the one associated with the Lupercalia also seems to point in this direction. If this is the case, then this is the only instance in which a *haruspex* associated with this highly reputable loose group in Rome is directly named.

The name Spurinna is also known to us from epigraphic evidence from Tarquinii, where the Spurinnae appear to have been a wealthy, and locally powerful, elite family. In Etruscan Tarquinii, the family name is found in the Tomba dell'Orco I grave, probably dating between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century BC, a particularly wealthy and extensive family tomb with important survivals of wall paintings, where a Spurinna is in all likelihood occupying the place of honour as the founder of the tomb.[320] The name has all the necessary markers of being authentically Etruscan, and the Spurinnae carry on in the history of Tarquinii into the Latin period; an important subsection of the *Elogia Tarquiniensia* commemorates the deeds of a Velthur Spurinna who was praetor, and commanded an unit of Etruscan soldiers deployed in Sicily, and of an Aulus Spurinna son of Velthur who was

319   See *supra*.
320   Torelli 1975 pp. 48-55. Inscriptions from this tomb are CIE 5354-5361.

involved in fighting in a slave war in Arretium. A third fragment, badly damaged, has been

tentatively attributed to a second Velthur, possibly son of the first Velthur and father of

Aulus; he too held the title of praetor.[321] This group of Latin inscriptions testify to the success

of the Spurinnae in the Roman milieu as well as the Etruscan; it also demonstrates, however,

the enduring connection with their city of origin. There is no reason to assume that the

Spurinna active in Rome in the Late Republic was not related to these Spurinnae. If he was, it

would be further proof of the reputable *haruspices* being recruited specifically from the

ranks of the Etruscan elites.

That the *haruspices* consulted by the Senate were at this point in history most likely not

structured in a *collegium* fully integrated in the Roman system of priesthoods is of great

importance, since it is a necessary element for the *haruspices* to exist in a liminal position,

where they can be perceived as well integrated in the workings of Roman religion and yet

preserve an identity which is not only not fully Roman, but, most notably, especially

authoritative because its origins are not Roman. There is undoubtedly an emphasis in the

sources for the necessity that the *haruspices* need to be Etruscan, and even an implication

that they might lose their credibility if they are not. In more than one instance the

haruspices consulted by the Senate were called to Rome directly from Etruria. For instance,

Livy states that such is the case in 207 BC, where *haruspices* "*ex Etruria acciti*" were

consulted with regards to a hermaphrodite omen.[322] M.-L. Haack proposes 199 BC as the

turning point after which *haruspices* ceased to be called in from Etruria and became resident

in Rome,[323] but the evidence for this is tenuous and there are later instances that appear to

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321   Torelli 1975 pp. 25-44; for integrations on fr. 2 pp. 38-39.
322   See *supra*.
323   Haack 2003 p. 38.

suggest that this is not the case. Diodorus Siculus speaks of diviners ἀπὸ Τυρρηνίας

consulted on a prodigy during the Social War,[324] Cassius Dio similarly mentions diviners

called from Etruria to clarify prodigies in 43 BC,[325] and therefore at a significantly late date.

It is perhaps possible that even at a moment where *haruspices* were certainly present and

active in Rome, 'better' ones could be called in from Etruria if it was felt that the ones

available were not up to the task. If such is the case, then it would signify that the authority

of *haruspices* from Etruria was still regarded as higher than that of *haruspices*, albeit of

Etruscan origins, who were active in Rome. It is furthermore interesting to note that the

haruspices mentioned in these accounts are always generically 'Etruscan', but do not appear

to be tied to any Etruscan centre in particular. One could perhaps imagine a connection with

Tarquinii, given that it is from this city that we have the only epigraphic evidence likely to be

related to *haruspices* active in Rome; it is also true that the tradition of *etrusca disciplina* as

the legendary teaching of the prophet Tages has itself ties with Tarquinii. But it is more likely

that the survival of *haruspices*-related materials in the *Elogia Tarquiniensia* is simply a lucky

case, and that the *haruspices* employed in Rome were recruited from Etruria more at large.

This also appears to be the case with perhaps the most important piece of information

surviving regarding the Roman interest in preserving the Etruscan nature of the *haruspices*.

In the *De divinatione* Cicero states that the Senate actively intervened to stop the

degeneration of haruspical doctrine through its practice by inappropriate people, by passing

a decree ruling that sons from prestigious Etruscan families would be chosen to study

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324   Diodorus Siculus 32.12.2.
325   Cassius Dio 46.33.

haruspicy and therefore preserve the knowledge.[326] Where these young men would receive

such an education is not specified, but it is safe to assume that it would have been in the

Etruscan cities rather than in Rome. This is extremely important because it proves in the first

place that the elite Etruscan families were cooperating directly with the Roman Senate in

this matter, and in the second place that the Roman Senate, far from attempting to

'Romanise' the doctrine and practice of the *haruspices*, was instead motivated by a desire to

keep them tied to Etruria as closely as possible. It appears then that *haruspices* were

perceived, at least by the Romans, as a conservative elements. Comparison with what

Etruscan sources remain concerning the practice of divination, however, will show that this

is not necessarily the case.

Such a situation provided the *haruspices* with a form of authority in Rome that may be

unique for a priesthood so intensely qualified as non-Roman. It may be that the Etruscan

elites saw this as a way to capitalise on their identity in order to increase their degree of

influence in Rome, and even of direct influence on the Senate and its decisions. The

phenomenon would be to some extent similar to the way in which a number of reputable

Etruscans chose to remain Equestrians rather than pursue a senatorial career, building their

influence in new ways, through wealth or trade - or, in this case, religious authority. The

peculiarity of the case of the *haruspices* resides in the way in which their Etruscan identity

appears to be so closely tied to that authority; appears, in fact, to be the very source that

authority stems from.

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326   Cicero *De div*. 1.92; cfr. Rasmussen 2003 p. 180; Santangelo 2013 p. 97.

The elite *haruspices* cooperating with the Senate, then, would have chosen to use select pieces of Etruscan lore, which were distinctive and perhaps immediately recognisable, in order to separate themselves from other kinds of practitioners, whose Etruscan origins were not equally well certified and whose practice was not so reputable. The analysis of the reconstructed text from the *De haruspicum responso*, as conducted by both Beard and Turfa, proves that this was the case by showing a high degree of similarity between the forms and contents of the response and other texts certainly tied to an authentic Etruscan tradition.[327] By doing so, these *haruspices* brought authentic elements of Etruscan divinatory practice, such as some forms of extispicy and the interpretation of lightning prodigies, into the awareness of Roman society at large.

Tracing the haruspices *in the Etruscan material*

Yet the phenomenon of the *haruspices* and their activity in Rome cannot be simply considered a process that grafted some Etruscan religious practices into Roman society. Looking into Etruscan material, epigraphic and otherwise, it becomes apparent that it is extremely difficult to identify any trace of *haruspices* existing in Etruscan society as a coherent and independent priestly body. Evidence for their activity is scant in Etruscan inscriptions, due in part certainly to a lack of relevant material, but possibly also signifying a more structural situation. The term *netśvis*, generally understood to be an Etruscan equivalent for *haruspex*, appears only rarely in known texts, and never before the fifth century BC. A comprehensive survey of these sparse occurrences is offered once again by

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[327]   Beard 2012 p. 26; Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 11; 36.

Macintosh Turfa,[328] including the bilingual inscription of Lars Cafates,[329] which appears,

interestingly enough, to have a separate Etruscan term to describe a priest involved in the

interpretation of lightning - a task, as previously noted, typically associated by the Romans to

the *haruspices*. Cafates is defined through three separate specialisms – *netśvis*, *trutnut* and

frontac, the first of which is here possibly better translated as 'expert in extispicy'.

Etymological analysis of *trutnut* and *frontac* suggests for both a connection with the

interpretation of lightning, with the latter possibly being a later formation influenced by

Greek. It may be that they define two different types of lightning interpretation: perhaps

one connected with lightning, and one with thunder or celestial noises. In any case, rather

than one *haruspex*-like qualification, Cafates appears to feel the need to use three in the

Etruscan, and two (*haruspex fulguriator*) in the Latin.

Equally interesting is the much longer inscription concerning the *netśvis* Lars Pulena.[330] This

inscription, on a sarcophagus from Tarquinii dating in all likelihood to the late second

century BC, is made up of 59 words on nine lines, etched on the scroll the portrait-figure on

the lid is carrying. It is a religious *cursus honorum* of sorts, that gives us an uniquely detailed

description of an Etruscan practitioner of divination. While Lars Pulena is clearly regarded to

be some sort of authority in this respect, to the point that he is stated to be the author of a

haruspical treaty, there is no sign that his activity as *netśvis* implies his belonging to a

structured priestly order. In fact, when Pulena's belonging to structured priesthoods is

concerned, he seems to rather have been involved in the cult of two separate Etruscan

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328   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 48.
329   ET Um. 1.7, ILS 2301. See Fig. 2.
330   ET Ta. 1.17. See figg. 3-4.

deities, Catha and Pacha, as is mentioned in the scroll.[331] It is possible that his practice of the kind of discipline a Roman author would have described as haruspicy was in a sense a byproduct of his role as a priest of those deities, part of a list of duties that one such priest would have had to perform. If that is the case, it may also be that the practice of the *netśvis* was cross-cult, a feature of Etruscan priests at large rather than the prerogative of a specific religious order. This is also supported by the fact that some elite Etruscan families, such as the Caecinae of Volaterrae, appear to have passed down haruspical knowledge from father to son, privately, rather than as part of the teachings of one specific priestly group.[332] It would seem that the *haruspices* not only were not a structured religious order of Republican Rome, but were also not a structured religious order of Etruria.

The implications of this are crucial. On the basis of these considerations, one could argue that the *haruspices* - as a coherent, semi-structured pan-Etruscan group - are a Roman invention; or rather, that they are an invention of some elite Etruscan families, probably versed in their local traditions of divination and drawing from a corpus of written Etruscan texts, for the benefit of the Romans. A practice that was likely associated to different cults and never structured as a standalone group became partly so by constituting a group of established diviners that could interact with Romans, be called upon by the Roman Senate, and gain in time a largely recognised standing in Roman society. If this is the case, one would be faced with an exceptional instance of a form of integration in Republican Rome, happening at the higher levels of society, driven by individuals presenting themselves as non-Roman, and furthermore relying precisely on their being perceived as non-Roman. The

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331   Cfr. Bonfante 1986 p. 219.
332   Cfr. Haack 2003 p. 42.

strategy of the *haruspices* appears to have been not to deny that they were *Etrusci ac barbari*, but to establish that their peculiar - and precious - abilities were derived specifically from their being Etruscan.[333] By doing so, they also contributed to the consolidation of the growing reputation of Etruscans as a particularly pious people, and particularly well-versed on matters of religious or ritual practice.

Translators

In parallel with an increasing official acceptance of the role of *haruspices*, another mean of diffusion of Etruscan religious elements, mostly related to divination, appeared in the Late Republic that certainly contributed in cementing the commonplace association between Etruscans and a particular skill in some aspects of religious practice. This is the translation of a number of texts concerning religious matters from the original Etruscan into Latin, in order to make these texts accessible in a time period when the use of the Etruscan language was perceived as starting to dwindle. The production of such translations is particularly relevant to the discourse of the self-representation of individuals of Etruscan origins, since the translators belong in most cases to families whose roots can be traced to an Etruscan centre, sometimes maintaining strong personal links to said community. By choosing which texts to translate into Latin, these individuals helped to shape the perception of Etruscan religious proficiency in Roman society. It is reasonable to assume that this choice was made in a deliberate way, privileging not only those texts the translators deemed most important, but also the ones that best matched the image of Etruscan religious tradition they most desired

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333   A similar phenomenon to this has been observed by Isayev 2011 with regards to the priesthood of Ceres.

to convey. Of the translated texts, unfortunately only one has survived in some form to the present day, the *Brontoscopic calendar* originally translated by Nigidius Figulus; and even that in a late Greek translation based on Nigidius' Latin. Extensive scholarly debate has been carried regarding the authenticity of this text,[334] and the level of external influence it may carry from the Greek translator. Convincing evidence in favour of the text's authenticity, and of its origins as a real Etruscan work, has been brought forward by Jean McIntosh Turfa in her monograph on the subject. Comparisons with the language used in the *De haruspicum responso* have highlighted remarkable similarities, and there appear to be thematic similarities with Mesopotamian texts that would have represented a source material for the Etruscan original.[335] This considered, it is safe to assume that the *Brontoscopic calendar* can be used as a reliable point of comparison to ascertain the presence of authentic elements in other text connected to haruspical tradition, including the reconstructed response from the *De haruspicum responso.*[336]

One other text which is possibly a translation from an Etruscan original, the Prophecy of Vegoia, has survived together with a collection of other texts relative to Roman land surveys. On this text's authenticity, too, numerous doubts have been put forward, and the discussion concerning them is yet to come to a shared agreement.[337].Since the identity of the translator in this case is also problematic, it will be addressed separately.

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334   See among others Piganiol 1951; Liuzzi 1983; Ampolo 1990; Domenici and Maderna 2007.
335   A detailed discussion of this matter is in Macintosh Turfa 2012 pp. 11-18.
336   See *supra*.
337   Cfr. Harris 1971; Santangelo 2013; the best discussion of this text is in Macintosh Turfa 2012 pp. 28-29.

Even when the texts themselves do not survive, we do at times possess lists of Latin titles of

works that can be of help. As has been outlined in the first half of this chapter, it appears

that the divinatory concerns typically attributed to the *haruspices* were mainly tied to two

fields, that of extispicy and that of the interpretation of lightning, or more widely celestial

portents. A title pointing towards one of those specialties as the topic of a work may

therefore point towards a possible translation from the Etruscan, or at least a re-elaboration

of Etruscan materials.

Even though the body of surviving translated texts is extremely small and in many ways

problematic, we also possess lists of Latin titles attributed to the activity of these translators,

which can help in making an assessment of the nature of the contents and the range of

topics covered. It would appear that most of these works were concerned with divination,

and particularly with the interpretation of prodigies or with practices directly related to the

activity of the *haruspices.* This trend presents itself in what is known of the work of all three

major figures involved in this translation activity in the Late Republican period, namely P.

Nigidius Figulus, Aulus Caecina and Tarquitius Priscus. The latter is recorded to have

translated an *Ostentarium Tuscus* and an *Ostentarium Arborarium*,[338] the list would have

likely been longer, as still at a much later date there is reference in Ammianus Marcellinus to

a corpus of *libri Tarquitiani*.[339] Aulus Caecina, who has been sometimes regarded as the

initiator of the movement aiming to preserve Etruscan religious lore by translating it into

Latin,[340] also wrote about matters concerning divination and haruspical practice. Although

no exact titles for his works survive, reference made to them by Seneca shows that one of

338   Macrobius *Sat.* 3.7.2; 20.3.
339   Ammianus Marcellinus 25.2.7.
340   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 52.

them at least was concerned with the interpretation of lightning prodigies,[341] in a manner perhaps not entirely dissimilar from what is observed in the *Brontoscopic calendar* (although Caecina's text appears to have been of a more theoretical nature).

The longest list of titles is certainly associated to the activity of P. Nigidius Figulus, though it too carries problems, albeit of a different nature. Since it is well established that Nigidius was a scholar in his own right, aside from his activity as a translator of Etruscan text, and the sources relating the titles of his books do not specify which ones were translations and which were Nigidius' own work, it is not always possible to determine with any certainty that one given title had a precise correspondence in a previous Etruscan tradition - aside from the *Brontoscopic calendar*, whose nature as a translation is openly stated. Even so, the list of titles is telling regarding Nigidius' fields of interest. It will not be a coincidence, then, that alongside books on grammar and natural history the largest category by far is represented by titles concerning the field of religious practice generically, and more specifically of divination and portents (*De diis, De venti, Sphaera Graecanica* and *Sphaera Barbarica, De extis, De augurio privato, De somniis, Diarium tonitruale*).[342]

While some of these works, like the ones on astrology or dreams, appear to relate to a more general concern with divination, others seem to display a closer connections to particular divinatory practices that are generally linked to Etruscan tradition. Both extispicy and the interpretation of lightning portents are common staples of the activity of the *haruspices*, and it is tempting to connect a title like *De augurio privato* to the exercise of haruspicy for

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341   Seneca *Quaest. Nat.* 2.49.2.
342   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 7.

personal rather than official purposes - since activity of *haruspices* working for others than the Senate is largely recorded, even though not always in positive terms. If one were to peruse this list of Nigidian titles for ones that might be suspected of being translations of Etruscan works, at least *De extis* would be a more than likely candidate.

Before turning to explore the role played by these texts - the translations most certainly, but quite possibly also some of the original works - in the building of Etruscan self-representation, it is necessary to better clarify the identity of the translators. This is of course not always possible; although the claim that religious works were been translated from Etruscan into Latin is supported by many reliable sources, the names of the translators can often be lost, or incorrect; and in later phases texts produced by less reputable translators, or even entirely spurious, may have survived by being attached to a corpus under the name of a more authoritative figure.

One can imagine that the *libri Tarquitiani* attributed by Ammianus to Tarquitius Priscus may easily have included later materials, or ones that were not even translations from an Etruscan original but were associated to the others by reason of similar content. While such a process of corpus accretion is most likely to have happened, the loss of the texts themselves makes it impossible for us to gauge to what extent. The prominence of Nigidius, Caecina and Tarquitius as known translators of Etruscan religious material appears however to be solidly supported, and investigating their identity and their role in Roman society can therefore help our understanding of the part they played in shaping the general understanding of Etruscan religion.

While the life of Publius Nigidius Figulus is perhaps the best documented, it is not always easy to distinguish fact from fiction, by virtue of the reputation grafted onto Nigidius' name in the years following his death. Already in the Augustan period an anecdote circulated according to which Figulus would have warned the Senate that the future emperor's father, Octavius, was late because the future ruler of the world had just been born to him. While the anecdote is almost certainly not true, P. Ripat is right in noting that the reason why this prophecy was retroactively attributed to Nigidius lies with his prominence in divination studies as much as in his budding reputation as a magician of sorts.[343] The latter became only stronger in time, with mostly unsupported connections to the Pythagorean movement becoming part of the lore surrounding Nigidius.[344] In Lucan's *Pharsalia*, he makes an appearance to announce the dire consequences of the civil war, and his figure is painted as more of a magician than a *haruspex*.[345] Some centuries later, Nigidius' reputation as an occult practitioner had grown so much that Apuleius could use him as an example in the *De magia*.[346] Even modern scholars have not entirely been immune from this process; Dora Liuzzi's collection of sources regarding Nigidius, to this day the most comprehensive collection of texts concerning him and his works, calls him '*astrologer and magician*' in the title, based off a quote from Jerome's *Chronicon*,[347] and appears to support the claims of his connection to the Pythagoreans.

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343   Ripat 2008 p. 164.
344   See e.g. Liuzzi 1983 p. 11.
345   Lucan *Phars.* 1.639 ff.
346   Apuleius *De magia* 42.
347   Liuzzi 1983 p. 9; Cfr. Jerome *Chron. Ol.* 183.4.

It might be that this reputation attached to Nigidius developed because he practiced

haruspicy privately, in a similar way to what was attributed to Aulus Caecina. While there is

no evidence supporting the idea that Nigidius was a magical practitioner, it is abundantly

clear from ancient sources that he was regarded as an authority on divination and religious

matters. Gellius describes him as '*iuxta M. Varronem doctissimus*[348]', and Servius states that

he was superior even to Varro in the matter of *communes litterae* (as opposed to

theologia).[349] Particular support to his authority in this field comes from Cicero, who appears

to have been on friendly terms with him, and describes him as a man of great integrity as

well as vast religious and scholarly knowledge;[350] the two must have been to some extent

political allies, since Cicero appears to have taken a direct interest in the matter of Nigidius'

exile, which he incurred in 46 BC for political reasons[351] - he'd actively supported Pompey

and fought for him at Pharsalus - rather than in connection with his practice of divination or

astrology. These political allegiances, at least as far as Caecina is concerned, may be the

result of local patterns of allegiances in some Etruscan communities, including Caecina's

Volaterrae, as previously seen in Chapter 2.[352] It is however much harder to posit any

Etruscan connection of the sort to justify the Pompeian siding of Figulus.

Figulus' family, who was of a Plebeian background, can probably be tied to Northern Etruria.

While there is no definite proof connecting the direct family of Figulus to any centre in

particular, it has been correctly noted that the name of the Nigidii is known from a good

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348   Gellius *Noct. Att.* 4.9.1.
349   Servius *Aen.* 10.175.
350   Cicero *ad Fam.* 4.13.3.
351   See *contra* Ripat 2011 p. 127, arguing that Nigidius' interest in divination may have been a
contributing factor.
352   See *supra*,Chapter 2.

number of funerary inscriptions starting at least in the second century BC in Perusia.

Whether or not his branch of the family became prominent in Roman politics during the

Second Punic War, as suggested by Hall and confirmed by Macintosh Turfa, cannot be

conclusively proved, but Figulus himself was a member of the Senate at the very least in 63,

given his involvement in the prosecution of the Catilinarian conspiracy,[353] and most likely

earlier than that. He died in exile in 46 BC.

It is interesting to note that, while a member of a senatorial family and having been praetor

in 58 BC,[354] Figulus does not appear to have ever been a member of any priestly college, and

that his activity concerning haruspicy was not official. While his authority on the theoretical

aspects of the discipline was uncontested, he was most certainly not one of the number of

the *haruspices* consulted by the Senate regarding portents. There is in fact no evidence that

he ever gave haruspical consultations to anyone, and if he practiced the discipline to any

extent, it must have been, as already noted, in a completely private fashion.

There are a number of similarities between Figulus and what is known of the other major

translator of Etruscan religious works into Latin, Aulus Caecina. He too can be linked to a city

in Northern Etruria, with an even higher degree of accuracy than Nigidius, since his family

can be identified without doubt as the Caecinae of Volaterrae (not to be confused with the

Caecinae of Volsinii, which attained senatorial status under Julius Caesar). The family

remained prominent in Volaterrae even after the branch to which Aulus Caecina belonged

had become active in Rome, as has been extensively documented by N. Terrenato in his

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353   Cicero *Pro Sulla* 42. See also Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 6.
354   Cicero *Ad Quint*. 1.2.15.

excellent study on the later developments in Volaterrae.[355] Aulus Caecina's father maintained

a strong personal connection with Volaterrae, and so did in all likelihood Caecina himself.

The process of the integration of both father and son in Roman society happened however

not without difficulty. Caecina's father, who was named Aulus Caecina himself, had his right

to Roman citizenship questioned in a controversy that concerned his inheritance of an

estate, regarding which he was defended in court by Cicero in 69 BC.[356] The speech Cicero

delivered in that occasion, later published as the *Pro Caecina*, contains extensive discussion

of the issue of Caecina's citizenship. The claim against Caecina's right to citizenship was

based on Sulla's exclusion of the Volaterrans from Roman citizenship. While in this case the

court ruled in favour of Caecina - partly, no doubt, because it was persuaded by Cicero's

argument that it was not possible to deprive an individual of citizenship - it is noteworthy

that even at this point, the consequences of the Social War being in full effect, there could

still be doubt on the right of individual Etruscans (and, certainly, other Italians) to be

recognised as Roman citizens.[357]

Regardless of this, Caecina's family managed to establish an apparently solid reputation in

Rome, possibly also due to their continued friendship with Cicero, who appears to have been

especially close to Caecina himself; various excerpts of their continued correspondence

survive in the *Ad familiares*, some of them pertaining to the topic of haruspicy.[358] It is

therefore possible that Cicero derived at least some of his notions on haruspicy from

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355   Terrenato 1998. See also Tweedie 2013.
356   For the details of the Caecinae's troubles with citizenship see also *supra*, Chapter 2.
357   Further discussion on this is found in Santangelo 2007 pp. 173-180.
358   Cfr. Cicero *ad Fam.* 6.6.3.

Caecina; it has been suggested that Caecina may have been one of the underlying inspirations for the *De divinatione.* Adding to this the fact that he was certainly used as a source by Seneca,[359] one could argue that Caecina must certainly have been one of the most influential sources for the Roman understanding of Etruscan divinatory practice. Turfa suggested that he was the initiator of the movement leading to the translation of the Etruscan religious texts into Latin, a claim that is more than compatible with the profile of Caecina that one can build.[360]

A further connection between Caecina and Cicero, and a further similarity between Caecina and Nigidius, rests with their political allegiance. Like Nigidius, the Equestrian Caecina gave his support to Pompey, even producing some writings against Caesar in 49 BC, and like Nigidius, he was exiled as a result, being recalled in 46 BC after giving his allegiance to Caesar. As he too, like Nigidius, enjoyed Cicero's support in this period[361], it is perhaps not unlikely that contact between the three might have been more extensive than the surviving evidence allows us to appreciate.

Like Nigidius, Caecina appears to have received an education in matters concerning haruspicy as part of his formation as a member of an elite Etruscan family; he was educated in it by his father. Nonetheless, he was never officially a *haruspex* nor is there any evidence that he ever practiced haruspicy in a formal capacity. Sources touching upon this rather appear to imply that his extensive knowledge of haruspicy was mostly theoretical, something for which he received vast acknowledgment. His practice of the discipline

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359   See *supra*, cfr. also Capdeville 1989.
360   See *supra*, Chapter 2.
361   Cicero *ad Fam.* 6.9; 13.66.

appears to have been not relevant to the general public, differently from his theoretical

knowledge of it; it was almost certainly limited to a private and personal capacity. The

reputation Caecina acquired seem to have been entirely as a scholar; there is, differently

from Nigidius, no suspicion of magical practice surrounding him.

Significantly less is known of Tarquitius Priscus, the third author to be recurrently mentioned

as an authority in the translation of Etruscan religious texts into Latin. There is not significant

evidence to connect him, as was originally suggested, to a damaged inscription that would

make him a native of Tarquinii.[362] He lived and was active towards the end of the Republic,

though the exact dates cannot be determined, and his work, too, appears to have been

known to Cicero, and may have influenced his knowledge surrounding haruspicy.

Nonetheless, the persistence of his work in time alone demonstrates that he must have

been a recognised authority at least when the subject of *etrusca disciplina* was concerned,

no less than Figulus and Caecina. He is among the sources cited by Pliny the Elder in his

Historia Naturalis,[363] and, as already noted, Ammianus Marcellinus was still aware of the

existence of a corpus of *Libri Tarquitiani*, although how much of it was original text from

Tarquitius' work cannot be determined. Some idea of the topics treated can be derived, as

already noted, from surviving titles, and two brief quotes preserved in Macrobius, one from

the *Ostentarium Tuscum* and one from the *Ostentarium arborarium*.[364] The former,

concerning the implications of some variations of colour in a ram's coat, echoes known cases

in which *haruspices* were consulted on the interpretation of peculiar features displayed by

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362   CIL XI 3370; this fragment is also part of the *Elogia Tarquiniensia* and the integration favouring the
name of Tarquitius has been convincingly refuted by Torelli 1975, pp. 105-107, although Torelli's own
suggestion for an alternative integration is itself problematic.
363   He is quoted as a source for Pliny Hist. Nat. 2 and 11.
364   See *supra*.

cattle. According to Ammianus, Tarquitius also wrote on the interpretation of comets; it is likely that he was more generally concerned with celestial prodigies, including one of the most common features in known manifestations of the *etrusca disciplina*, the interpretation of lightning. There is a possibility that he was involved in the translation of the *libri Vegoici*, an Etruscan prophetic tradition connected to a female figure, that of the nymph Vegoia (Etruscan *Vecu*). It appears that these books were later deposited in the temple of Palatine Apollo, like the Sybilline Books; but the involvement of Tarquitius in their translation is far from certain.[365] Although little more is known on Tarquitius himself, he was most certainly not a senator; he may have come from an Equestrian family. As for Nigidius and Caecina, no evidence exists that he was himself a *haruspex* nor that he ever practiced the discipline in an official fashion.

Even with the lesser amount of information available about Tarquitius, some similarities between the three authors can be identified that may help shed more light on their function as translators and on their goals in taking on that enterprise. All three certainly came from elite families that held important roles in their original Etruscan communities, matching the idea that knowledge related to haruspicy was passed on in elite Etruscan families. They all appear to be well integrated in Roman society, Nigidius even as a senator and magistrate. They are certainly bilingual and they are themselves authors of original theoretical works on the subject of *etrusca disciplina*. Their authority on the subject is acknowledged and recognised by Roman sources. None of them appears to have been directly involved in the direct practices of haruspicy, at least not in a public capacity. It would appear, then, that

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365   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 28.

there is a clean distinction between these translators and the *haruspices* themselves, and that their activity is therefore to be interpreted as a separate phenomenon.

It is even possible that, in the eyes of some Roman readers, their reliability derived in part precisely from the fact that they did not practise the discipline themselves; since they were not involved in haruspicy for personal gain, their voice may have appeared more authoritative. Their high degree of integration in Roman society would also have facilitated the diffusion and acceptance of their work. It is the identity of these authors that makes them particularly well-suited to propagate their choice of texts on Etruscan religious theory. Their role as members of important - and ancient - Etruscan families, and their being the repositories of an ancient tradition passed on from father to son, gives weight to their repute for religious knowledge. At the same time, their undoubted Romanness - certified even, in Caecina's case, by a court of law - makes them more acceptable to a Roman, Latin-speaking audience that someone perceived as fully Etruscan, and therefore to some extent alien to Roman culture, would have been. These translators appear to reconcile the possible hostility surrounding what was still regarded as a rather conservative alien custom with the necessity outlined above for the *haruspices* to be genuinely Etruscan in order to prove effective. They managed to build a bridge between those two apparently conflicting necessities by establishing a system of parallel identities that allowed them to be at the same time authentically Roman and authentically Etruscan.

Yet again, a system of double, parallel identities is adopted by Roman individuals of Etruscan heritage and used to their advantage, in this case to facilitate the acceptance of Etruscan religious notions in Rome.

There is, however, another phenomenon at work, which would come to full fruition in the years of Augustus' principate, but is nonetheless already visible in the work of these translators. It is the growing idea that Italy can be perceived as unified and culturally Roman, and opposed to a generalised 'Oriental' culture block against which the original roots of Roman culture must be defended. In this light, the most important element that identifies 'valuable' cultural elements is not necessarily their having their origins in the city of Rome proper, but their antiquity. Facilitated by the frequent callbacks to the idea of *mos maiorum* that can be found in so much Late Republican rhetoric, this idea led to a re-evaluation of cultural information originally belonging to traditions other than Rome, now re-incorporated in a reconstructed past in which the 'true Roman way' was born from the concerted effort of ethnically varied components. Myths are increasingly rediscovered or even built to support this idea, as pointed out, among others, in E. Dench's excellent work on the rethinking of the origins of Rome.[366]

It is only in this new cultural background that it is possible to conceive the work of the Etruscan/Roman translators, and their success in introducing parts of Etruscan lore into the accepted Roman record. The extent of this success is remarkable. By the end of the process, Roman authors could refer to the Etruscans as the inventors of the correct practice for a number of fundamental ritual actions, including the triumph and the foundation of new

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[366]   Dench 2005.

cities - whether or not this claim actually matched any historical truth. The *libri haruspicini*
providing directions on haruspical practice were commonly accepted as authoritative and,
according to Cicero, constantly added to in order to include insights derived from continued
haruspical practice.[367] The *libri Vegoici* appear to have received the same kind of
preservation, and therefore the same extent of public honour, as the *libri Sybillini*, one of the
staples of Roman divinatory practice.[368] The loss of more material related to the activity of
Etruscan/Roman translators in this period may make it difficult for us to see the exact scope
of their influence; but what little evidence exists is none the less telling.

Alongside these better-known names, a number of other translators must have existed
whose identity is not known and whose credentials may not have been as authoritative as
those of a Nigidius Figulus or Aulus Caecina. It is impossible to assess the exact extent of this
phenomenon with the very little evidence available, and yet some glimpses of it may still be
visible from individual survivals. The aforementioned inscription of Lars Pulena[369] includes
the composition of a writing on the subject of haruspicy. While the fact that this text is
Etruscan only, and the generally Etruscan presentation provided by the iconography of
Pulena's sarcophagus, may suggest that this piece of writing was itself in Etruscan, Pulena
may present us with the possible image of the kind of person that may have been involved in
this process: Etruscan, educated, coming from a good family, being himself an author of
haruspical texts. One must however note that there is one major difference between him
and the three well-attested authors of Latin translations, since Pulena did hold priestly
offices himself.

367   Cicero *De div.* 2.50; *De harusp. resp.* 10.20.
368   Macintosh Turfa 2012 pp. 124-125.
369   See *supra*.

The so-called Prophecy of Vegoia may provide us with an example of an excerpt of a translated text; but the evidence is problematic in its own right for a number of reasons. The debate concerning the authenticity of this text has been lengthy, and is yet to come to a definite conclusion. Respectable voices such as that J.N. Adams and W.V. Harris have strongly suspected it of being a Late Republican - if not later – fabrication.[370] A more recent, and detailed, assessment, conducted by J. Turfa, led to more optimistic conclusions. Turfa's arguments against the possibility that this text is a complete fabrication are indeed compelling, and her suggestion that it may have its origins in a passage from the *libri Vegoici* certainly insightful. Comparing the text to the Zagreb *liber linteus* and the *Tabula Capuana* as well as the *Brontoscopic Calendar* and the text derived form the *De haruspicum responso*, they appear to highlight a number of close correspondences both in themes and in language choices that suggest some level of authenticity can be attributed to this text.[371] One must however wonder if her caution in suggesting that the passage may have been 'quoted or perhaps edited' should have pushed somewhat further, allowing for the possibility that the editing may in some instances have been heavy. Some overly optimistic views on the reliability of this text, less balanced than Turfa's, do not appear to take these problems under due consideration. While it would be interesting to agree with M.-L. Haack that the text represents a Clusine divinatory tradition opposed to the Tarquinian one of Tages, there is simply not enough evidence to support such a view.[372]

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370   Harris 1971 p. 39; Adams 2003 p. 182.
371   Macintosh Turfa 2012 p. 28; 124-125.
372   Haack 2003 p. 20.

The text of the Prophecy of Vegoia names its own author as 'Arruns Veltymnus'. No further

information is provided on this supposed translator, and the name is in itself suspicious,

even assuming that it is a Latinised, and therefore distorted, version of an Etruscan original.

The presence of an otherwise unattested *cognomen* bearing close resemblance to the name

of the Etruscan deity most commonly known to the Romans (Vertumnus/Voltumna) lends

credence to the possibility that this is a fabricated name, chosen by someone who wished it

to sound authentically Etruscan. This does not in itself discredit the reliability of the text,

since it could be very well part of that interference through editing that Turfa acknowledges

as a possibility, especially if the original text came without mention of an author. That the

excerpt was produced for a political purpose is generally agreed, and evident when one

considers the prevalence of the theme of agrarian boundaries in the prophecy and the

importance of agrarian reforms in contemporary politics.

Far from lessening the usefulness of the Prophecy of Vegoia in understanding the role played

by translations of Etruscan religious texts, these uncertainties about its authenticity or level

of corruption make it if anything even more relevant. We are clearly faced with a situation

where a prophetic text is chosen and used for a political purpose; it was therefore of the

foremost importance that the text attained the highest possible degree of effectiveness,

something that was only possible if it appeared particularly authoritative. The fact that

someone chose an Etruscan text, and even possibly went to the extent of trying to make it

look even more Etruscan, testifies to the fact that by this point similar texts of the Etruscan

tradition must have been widely known and perhaps circulated; and that their great

authority must have been generally recognised. Even if the Prophecy of Vegoia was proved

to be a complete fabrication, it would still be a fabrication effectively mimicking features of

an Etruscan prophetic text, which would make these conclusions no less valid.

The case of the Prophecy of Vegoia, as well as the late survival of texts such as this and

Nigidius' translation of the *Brontoscopic Calendar*, or the *Libri Tarquitiani* - whatever their

exact nature - known to Ammianus Marcellinus, proves that the work of the translators was

remarkably successful. It effectively built a channel through which aspects of Etruscan

religious doctrine were imported into Roman tradition, and the acquisition was both

complete and lasting, a sign of the fact that the reliability of this Etruscan knowledge must

have been deeply accepted in the Roman consciousness. In this light, it is particularly

important that these translators came themselves from an Etruscan background. This is not

only because their heritage gave them a higher degree of understanding of the matter they

were translating - or even a knowledge of the corpus from which they were choosing the

texts to be translated - but also because this means that the perception of Etruscan religion

in Late Republican Rome was for the greatest part informed by the deliberate choices of

Etruscan experts. The picture presented to the Roman viewer was consciously built by

authors of Etruscan heritage. They were the ones that picked the aspects of Etruscan religion

that they deemed more worthy of being transmitted to the Roman readership, or perhaps

more likely to be accepted by it. As seen by the analysis of the figure of the *haruspices*, it is

certainly likely that the image of Etruscan religion and even of *etrusca disciplina* preserved in

Latin texts is distorted. However, understanding the role of these translators means giving

back to individuals of Etruscan origins a much higher degree of agency at least in shaping the

scope and direction of this distortion.

The needs that informed the production of these translations are also important. Individuals that were still in touch with their Etruscan origins but were at the same time fully integrated in Roman society were in a particularly favourable position to realise that Latin was becoming the only language in Italy. This might have prompted a desire to preserve at least some of the Etruscan-language cultural material they relied on. Those like Figulus, who held a position of prestige in Roman society, were able to do so by translating a choice of texts into Latin. At the same time, being used to balancing different identities as they moved in Roman society, they would have been aware that the texts they chose had to be marketable to a Roman readership. Hence themes were chosen that were appealing in Rome and regarding whom Etruscans were held to have particular authority, such as divination, haruspicy and brontoscopy. It may well be that other texts that were regarded by an Etruscan readership as equally important would have not been selected for translation because of their limited appeal to Roman readers.

Other interests might also have been at play. It has been observed that Etruscan individuals in Late Republican Rome often try to achieve higher societal standing by means other than the traditional one of achieving senatorial rank. Some appear to have deliberately remained Equestrians and pursued status through wealth, commercial enterprise, or connections with powerful politicians. Other may certainly have done so through religion. In this light, building a commonplace perception of Etruscan religion as particularly ancient and authoritative, and of Etruscan diviners in particular as possessed of a kind of knowledge only they could access, would be especially useful. The work of the translators can certainly have contributed to this

process. A genuine concern for the preservation of aspects of Etruscan tradition can also have been a factor. Lastly, there may have been a desire to satisfy a push from Roman society for aspects of religious traditions that could accommodate its own need - the success of the doctrine of the *saecula* would fit in this category.

Conclusions

From a relatively early date Etruscans had been credited in Rome with a special degree of expertise in some specific fields of religious practice, namely divination through extispicy and the interpretation of some kinds of prodigy. As has been observed, the priests known in Rome as *haruspices* do not seem to possess an exact parallel in contemporary Etruscan society. It seems that Etruscan categories of diviners were much more varied and much more specialised than the generic *haruspex*. While certainly representing some authentic elements of Etruscan lore, the *haruspices* active in Rome would have shaped their perception willingly, selecting those aspects that the Roman audience was most interested in. In this sense, the *haruspices* know no exact parallel in Etruria, but are a cultural product tailored to the needs of fruition in Rome – specifically official interaction with the Roman Senate.

A similar process appears to be at play in the work of the translators of religious writings from Etruscan into Latin. Here too one can observe a deliberate shaping of the image of Etruscan piety and divinatory expertise emerging from the texts. The lists of titles we possess, as well as what little is left of the texts themselves, point towards an emphasis on

some divinatory practices that mirrors that enacted by the *haruspices*. In both cases, it is clear that the process is not passively undergone by the Etruscan individuals involved, but deliberately driven by them with the aim to preserve some aspects of their religious tradition. At the same time, the acknowledgment of their authority in this field would have afforded them public influence in Rome. The action they undertook is therefore purposeful, jointly driven by an urge to preserve their cultural heritage and a concurring one to facilitate integration in Roman society.

In the Early Imperial period, Etruscans would become almost stereotypically connected with religious piety, and in even later periods perceptions of the power of the *haruspices* would deteriorate to the point of it becoming almost indistinguishable from magic. While the many developments of Roman perceptions of Etruscan religion could not have been all guided or even predicted by the Late Republican translators, the general movement gained its first momentum from their work.

Chapter 4

Self-representation of municipal Etruscans in Northern Etruscan family tombs

The previous chapters have addressed the way in which elite Etruscan families, and Etruscans active in the religious community, handled the representation of their own ethnic identity within the context of the city of Rome. This appears to have often been in close connection with the workings of its Senate. The situation might however be different when turning away from Rome itself to consider the activity of families that remained prominent within their own original *municipia* in Etruria.

This field may appear at first less open to investigation, since information about the politics of Italian *municipia* is sparse in the historiographical sources. The epigraphic material from the centres themselves is also significantly less abundant. Nonetheless, an attempt must be made to highlight at least some trends that might present notable differences from what has been observed in Rome for the same time period.

Such an analysis must perforce concentrate on the archaeological material. In particular, what appears to be especially promising is the evidence provided by family tombs of elite Etruscan families. Burial customs, and the expression of identity through burials, have long been highlighted as particularly important when matters of changing identities or traditions are concerned. Because of the great cultural value inherent to the practice of burial, this has been observed to be particularly conservative when compared to other facets of material

culture.[373] Furthermore, the nature of the family tombs themselves means that each of them will often contain the burials of more than one generation. This can allow us to see the evolution of representation provided by one coherent, contained group through time. Furthermore, most of the burials in these elite tombs carry inscriptions, providing at least the name of the deceased. This allows us to compare the evolution of the burial types and iconographies with that of other aspects, such as onomastics, naming patterns, and the gradual introduction of Latin in some of these burials (which will be defined as 'bilingual tombs').

The study of this type of evidence appears undoubtedly promising; yet there are a number of factors that represent obstacles to the possibility of a complete survey. The availability of the existing evidence can vary greatly. Because of their greater interconnectedness with Rome, the tombs from the great necropoleis at Southern sites like Caere and Tarquinii are of limited use. Attention needs therefore to be focused on the Northern centres, particularly the ones with a more extensive epigraphic corpus, like Clusium and Perusia. The existing archaeological material from these centres is not always easily accessible. Many of these family tombs were excavated at a very early date, which makes the excavation reports lacking in content and often in form. The material held at local museums in Chiusi and Perugia is also not always easily accessible because of poor archival condition, or lack of publication. At least one of the more promising tombs for the present study, that of the Cai Cutu of Perusia,[374] although the object of an excellent museum display, remains to this day

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373   Cfr. Parker Pearson 2003.

374   For which see Lippolis 2011, providing some additional information as well as corrections to what stated in Feruglio 2002.

formally unpublished. Materials for other Perusine tombs, including that of the Rafi,

significant for the early appearance of an individual with an Etruscan inscription represented

as a *togatus*,[375] equally remain for a great part inaccessible. A separate study entirely

devoted to the retrieval of these materials and their organisation into a coherent and

accessible corpus would then be required in order to attempt a systematic analysis of a body

of evidence as complete as possible, allowing to draw conclusions based on statistics.

Yet even in these conditions it would be premature to abandon this line of enquiry as

hopeless. While a complete corpus of the existing material is not available and a statistically

valid analysis is therefore impossible, better documentation may exist for individual tombs

that would allow the investigation of significant case studies. Individual cases can bring to

light strategies adopted by a single family dealing with the issue of its own self-

representation in this period of rapid change, within its original *municipium*. In this chapter,

the aim will be to provide a template for the analysis of such case studies by addressing one

individual tomb, both better documented and in itself of particular interest because of the

peculiar nature of its contents. This will hopefully create an example of a working model that

could then be applied in the future to other family tombs as the materials concerning them

become available.

Representation of Etruscan and Roman identities in the tomb of the Volumnii at Perusia

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375   See Maggiani 1985; Camporeale 2008; Steingräber 2014. See fig. 5.

Out of the surprisingly high number of bilingual family tombs known to us from the period ranging from the late second century BC to the early first century AD in Northern Etruria, mostly from the territories of Perusia and Clusium,[376] perhaps none is such a fortunate and enlightening case as the subterranean tomb of the Velimna/Volumnii family from Perusia. The Hypogeum of the Volumnii is rather an exemplary case for the category of a 'bilingual tomb'. Tombs falling in this category contain burials spanning at least three generations, including epigraphic texts both in Etruscan and Latin, and/or Latin/Etruscan bilingual inscriptions. Both criteria are entirely fulfilled by the Volumnii tomb. Our knowledge of this family can also be supplemented by further epigraphic material from Perusia not pertaining to the tomb itself, and its dating makes it possible to place the changes in burial treatment in the wider picture of historical events known from ancient historians.[377]

The tomb of the Volumnii was cut into the local tufa rock in a shape generally recognised as resembling that of a typical house of the time.[378] It had rooms that have been identified as an *atrium*, a *tablinum*, two *alae* with three *cubicula* each, and a slanting roof complete with reproductions of wooden beams.[379] It is accessed through the shorter *dromos* that is common in Etruscan underground tombs of its period. Although entirely independent, it is generally regarded as being integrated within the larger Palazzone necropolis, the most

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376   Although some of the most interesting cases come from elsewhere; most notably this is the case with the family tomb of the Hepenii from Asciano, in the territory of Saena, which is remarkable for the lateness of some of its Etruscan material, as some urns bearing Etruscan inscriptions contained coins of Augustus; cfr. Harris 1971 p. 179.

377   There have been disagreements as to the exact dating of the materials from the tomb, which could have a severe impact on the interpretation of the materials themselves. All conclusions drawn in this chapter are based on dating derived from a general reassessment of the evidence from the grave and other epigraphic material; see *infra*.

378   See fig. 6.

379   This, too, is a feature commonly observed in rock-cut Etruscan tombs; cfr. e.g. Oleson 1982, also for general remarks on structure of rock-cut tombs in this period.

recent in Etruscan Perusia, located roughly 4.5 km from the city and established in the early third century.[380]

The Volumnii tomb is an imposing structure, with a maximum length of 10.38 m from the mouth of the *dromos* to the furthermost room. Although the sheer size of the complex and its careful organisation clearly testify to a careful planning for future use, ultimately only one of the rooms seems to have been used for burials, generally identified as the *tablinum*.[381] Here six travertine urns were found, all located in their original position, bearing Etruscan inscriptions that identified them as belonging to members of four separate generations of the Velimna family.[382] To these a seventh urn must be added, which is made out of marble rather than travertine and displays significant stylistic differences from the earlier group of urns.[383] This later urn bears a bilingual Latin/Etruscan inscription, with slight differences between the Latin and the Etruscan text. The urn belongs to a Publius Volumnius Violens, son of Aulus, who, in spite of his Romanised name, is clearly to be regarded as a direct descendant of the other family members buried in the tomb. Although it is clear that this later burial was added to the tomb after a period of abandonment, the effort to put the family tomb back to use ended with it. No further urns were added after that, and the other rooms in the complex were never used.

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380   Cfr. Cenciaioli 2002.

381   Issues on the level of legitimacy of such denominations for rooms in Roman houses, especially at such an early date and in a context that is not entirely Roman, are quite legitimate; for further discussion of the way these terms may be problematic see works such as Wallace-Hadrill 1994. As this issue is not strictly relevant to our discussion of the tomb, the generally accepted terms will be adopted here, with the *caveat* that no exact identification with the 'standard' structure of a Roman house, whatever the meaning of such a definition, is implied. For remarks on this matter related to the Volumnii tomb specifically, see also Jolivet 2011, pp. 167-183.

382   Although some of these burials – that of Thefri Velimnas, and possibly that of his son Aule Velimnas as well – may be earlier in date than the tomb itself, and may have been relocated to the tomb from a previous site upon its foundation; see *infra*. See fig. 7.

383   See *infra*.

Further information on the later fortunes of the Volumnii of Perusia can however be derived

from epigraphic material not from the tomb. A P. Volumnius P.f. Violens is mentioned in a

dedicatory inscription from Perusia[384] and remarkable in that he appears to have been both

a *quattuorvir* and a *duovir* for the town.[385] He is in all likelihood the son of the P. Volumnius

Violens who was the last person to be buried in the family tomb. It is rather more difficult to

place in a hypothetical family tree the L. Volumnius Perusinus whose name is recorded in a

funerary inscription currently housed in the National Archaeological Museum of Umbria,[386]

but stylistic features and the type of lettering used suggest that the inscription should be

assigned to the later Augustan period. While it is not possible to prove with some degree of

confidence that he was a direct descendant of any of the people buried in the family tomb, it

is reasonable to assume that he was related to them in some capacity. The inscription, which

shows some degree of sophistication, testifies to the fact that the Volumnii apparently

retained some social standing in Perusia.[387]

Methodological issues

Most of the interpretations suggested here rely chiefly on two types of sources: epigraphic

texts and onomastics. Any consideration based on epigraphic material must necessarily take

into account the fact that the epigraphic record on any given subject is inevitably

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384   CIL XI 1944 = ILS 6618. The inscription is currently found at the National Archaeological Museum of Umbria in Perugia, exhibit number 245. See discussion further on for dating. See fig. 8.
385   This, however exceptional, is not an unparalleled case at Perusia, as the same is true for a L. Proculeius A.f., mentioned in another Perusian inscription, CIL XI 1943.
386   CIL XI 2085. See fig. 9.
387   The choice of the *cognomen Perusinus*, while reinforcing this assumption, also possibly suggests that this Volumnius was active outside Perusia, while still trying to maintain his link to the town he originally came from.

incomplete, even at sites like Perusia and Clusium, which present a relative wealth of surviving epigraphic material. Inscriptions may have once existed, at Perusia or elsewhere, mentioning individuals that are currently unknown to us, or providing further information that may change our understanding of the ones that are known to us.

Moreover, as the record is incomplete, one may be able to put the inscriptions we have in a coherent chronological sequence, but this does not necessarily imply that such a sequence does not present gaps or interruptions. One or more generations may be missing, one or more individuals from any given generation may not be represented, and so on. Gaps in a sequence are not necessarily easy to identify, and when a gap in the sequence is present, it may not always be possible to assess its extent with some degree of confidence.[388] In order to be valid, any conclusion based on this type of material must therefore address the possibility that the record may not cover all developments in the family history. This is especially true when including later material that does not originally come from the family tomb and may be separated from it by a time span which is not necessarily easy to measure.

It must however also be pointed out that consistent groups of coherent epigraphic material, especially when found together at one bounded site like a family tomb, can still be regarded as a valid source even with the aforementioned restriction. Compelling information derived from the sequence preserved in surviving material is not necessarily less valid because additional material may be lost. It may also be possible, especially in cases like a family tomb where a continuous sequence can be reconstructed, to safely determine that there is no gap

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[388]   This in particular is an issue that may have a rather severe impact on our interpretation of the material from the Volumnii family tomb, especially regarding dating.

in the sequence. Lastly, lack of material can be itself significant at times, although any assumption solely based on lack of material must be handled with particular care. C.J. Smith convincingly argued in favour of the possibility of using archaeological material to determine kinship between individuals buried together, although with some elements of necessary caution.[389] He does, however, only consider cases where no consistent epigraphic record survives in the burial context. Conclusions may perhaps not need to be so cautious when supported by epigraphic evidence.

Similar concerns apply to conclusions drawn from the analysis of onomastics. The onomastic record for one given *gens* or family name may well be incomplete, perhaps even severely so. We should therefore not regard the group of possible members of a *gens* or family which are represented in the known onomastic record as being equivalent to the entirety of the members of that family. For the same reasons, and even more so, the lack of any evidence for the presence of a *nomen* in a particular area at a particular moment cannot be taken at face value as evidence that no people of that name were present in that area at all. This is particularly important when positing connections between one family and one or more towns, something that has been done in the past perhaps with less caution than was due[390].

Individuals of the same name should also not automatically be regarded as being related. This is particularly true in Roman society, where *nomina* and especially *cognomina* could be

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389   Smith 2006 pp. 164-165.
390   See e.g Harris 1971 pp. 319 ff.: although many of the conclusions reached there are highly valuable, not all cases seem to be equally sound. One wonders in particular why many families appear to be connected to towns like Clusium and Perusia, which are the ones with the greatest amount of surviving inscriptions; perhaps the same names would have appeared at other sites if more inscriptions had survived.

assumed or shed with relative ease depending on personal preference and convenience. Moreover, some of them appear to have been remarkably common throughout Italy and, at later dates, outside of it, and it would be very difficult to suggest that some very widespread *nomina* should represent only one group of individuals all related between themselves. It can still be suggested that this is the case with some of the less common *nomina*, particularly when all known instances come from one area that is both bounded and limited in size. The likelihood of this being the case is also higher at earlier dates. Combinations of identical *nomen* and *cognomen* also appear to be more reliable to this effect than coincidence of *nomen* alone.

The widespread use of adoption in Roman society at times implied the choice of one particular *nomen* by one individual to stress his ties with the family he had been newly accepted into, rather than the one he was originally from, or vice versa. Some interesting remarks about the impact of this practice on Roman onomastics were made in a study by O. Salomies, which, although relative to the early Empire, highlighted trends already active in the last decades of the Republic.[391]

This issue with homonymity not being equivalent to family ties was already well known in Late Republican society itself. It would seem that homonymity was at times used as a political tool. There are known cases of individuals who relied on it to imply connections with influential families to which they were not directly related. Cicero, to name one ancient source, is clearly aware (and disapproving) of the issue, especially regarding people of

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391   Salomies 1992.

plebeian origins trying to reconstruct – or fabricate – a link with patrician families of their same name.[392]

In his studies of the Roman *gens* as a clan-like structure,[393] C.J. Smith has rightly observed that we should not regard the *gens* simply as a continuous lineage, as that would imply descent from a common ancestor, which in the case of Roman *gentes*, and especially when including adopted members, was generally a fictional claim and commonly understood as such. He also convincingly argued that individuals of the same name cannot be automatically regarded as members of the same *gens*, especially when one 'branch' is patrician, and another plebeian.[394]

Even so, circumstantial evidence can be relied upon to clarify whether or not a group of individuals of the same name may in fact be part of the same family group. Family tombs and the inscriptions found in them are an especially lucky case under that respect. It is entirely reasonable to suggest that individuals who were buried in the same tomb and all shared the same *nomen* were related between themselves, especially when individuals of no other name are represented in the tomb. In some cases, as funerary inscriptions can at times be very detailed and often include patronymics, it may also be possible to reconstruct with some degree of confidence the exact type of relationship existing between individuals. Identifying individuals whose names are attested outside of a common burial as members of

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392   Cicero, *Brutus*, 62, especially referring to such false claims being made in funerary *laudationes*; he also points out that, according to the same logic, he himself would have been able to claim descent from a M. Tullius who had been consul some ten years after the Republic was established.
393   Smith 2006, and see especially pp. 2-15 and 19-20.
394   For examples of this see Smith 2006 pp. 52-58.

the same family may be more problematic, but it is still not entirely impossible, especially

when relying on other elements like patronymics and *cognomina*.

This particular aspect of the use of names in Roman society can become especially valuable

when addressing matters of self-representation. Even when it cannot be assumed with some

degree of certainty that one particular individual really belonged to a family with which he

shared one or more names, the choice of said names may still prove relevant in that it may

be purposefully done to imply the existence of such a relationship. The implications of such

a choice in terms of mechanisms of self-representation are no less valid because the

relationship may have been fabricated; in fact, they may prove even more relevant if that

was the case. They would testify to an active effort to stress the existence of a relationship, if

it was authentic, or to construct one, if it was not. Onomastics were clearly used as a tool by

late Republican and early Imperial individuals when it came to representing themselves

publicly, and they can be used as a valid tool nowadays to investigate the importance of

family ties and family histories in Roman society and the way they were used when creating

public identities.

In an attempt to understand the relationship late Republican Romans of possible Etruscan

ancestry had with their family histories, the family ties they claimed to have are just as

important, if not even more so, as the ones they actually had. The intention to present

themselves as part of one particular family group is in this case even more important than

the fact that one individual may or may not have effectively been part of that group. This

was also noted in an earlier study by B. Salway, observing that, in most cases, Roman family

groups appear to have been more concerned with perpetuating a name rather than an actual bloodline. Once again, he also noted that the perception of the *nomen* as a *gentilicium* was not strict, and that it could be manipulated to suggest kinship when there was none.[395] It is highly problematic, however, to assume, as he does, that a similar *gens*-based system already existed in Etruscan society, on the sole basis of onomastics.

Perhaps the main reason why the evidence from the tomb of the Volumnii is so relevant to the present study is that it may represent evidence of the strategies adopted by local elites to adapt at a time of rapid change,[396] and the way personal and family identity were used as a tool in such strategies. This is one case in which self-representation of ethnicity and of family identity may have been purposefully engineered with a political purpose, closely connected to the mechanisms of social change in the last decades of the Republic.

Urns and inscriptions from the Volumnii tomb

At the moment of its discovery, the tomb showed no signs of having been previously forced open or otherwise tampered with, and all finds were still in their original position.[397] This layout was well documented in the original archival material from the time of its discovery in 1840[398] and is now reconstructed in its original conditions in the Palazzone museum.[399]

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395   Salway 1994, see especially pp. 125-127.
396   Such change could be radical and yet happen in a very limited time span; cfr. Stek 2013 p. 340.
397   Cenciaioli 2011 pp. 15 ff.
398   See also the French archival documentation presented in Cenciaioli 2011 pp. 95 ff.
399   See Cenciaioli 2002.

The six travertine urns bearing Etruscan inscriptions and the later marble urn with the

bilingual inscription were all placed in the central room of the tomb. Except for the later urn,

all urns were placed against the walls of the room, as they were probably originally intended

to be, given the fact that decorations are minimal on the back side of all six. A treatment of

this sort is not unprecedented[400] and testifies to a habit of planning family burials on a wider

scale. Proceeding clockwise from the urn of the founder Arnth Velimnas, the burials of his

brothers Vel and Larth are found, then his father Aule and his grandfather Thefri, while the

urn of Veilia, daughter of Arnth, is to the left of her father.[401]

All six urns were stuccoed and bore painted decorations, again conforming to the wider

tradition for this type of burial which is generally found in the territories of Perusia, Clusium

and Volaterrae in the period spanning from the early third to the late first century BC.[402]

Unfortunately, only traces survive of the original colours, still enough, however, to identify

the presence of some common iconographic features,[403] like the doors, generally interpreted

as leading to the realm of the afterlife, depicted on the front of the urn of the founder Arnth

Velimnas. There is, however, a level of elaboration and originality in the relief decorations

that surpasses what is generally found in urns of this type.[404] Together with the very high

quality of the manufacture, it strongly suggests that these urns were made for a very

influential family, and were not mass-produced. The great quality of the work done on these

urns can therefore be regarded as an indicator of the wealth and influence of the Velimnas

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400   See e.g. Huntsman 2014 for urns from Clusium bearing elaborate reliefs on the front side only. Cfr. also Dareggi 1972.
401   Cfr. Cenciaioli 2002.
402   Pietrangeli and Feruglio 1958 p. 85; see also Dareggi 1972 and Sclafani 2010 for developments of this urn type through time.
403   Cfr. Bonfante 1986.
404   Cfr. also remarks made to this effect in Brendel 1978. See fig. 10.

family, which may have been growing in time. Earlier urns known from a different context for female members of the family[405] do not possess the same level of elaboration, and are generally more similar to most urns of this type manufactured locally at Perusia. This reaches a peak in the outstanding urn of Arnth Velimnas, a piece of such high quality that the involvement of skilled artisans from Clusium has sometimes been suggested for its realisation.[406] This may not be necessary, but if true, would contribute to the construction of the Velimnas as an elite family with personal links spanning even outside of the territory of Perusia.

From the point of view of iconography, all six urns are traditionally Etruscan. They seem to be a more finely executed version of a traditional Etruscan type that had been common, first at Clusium and then more generally in Northern Etruria, ever since the early third century BC[407]. The decorations include typical motifs like the barred door on the front and the representation of the deceased as a portrait-like figure on the lid of the urn. A variation from this norm is displayed in the urn of Veilia Velimnei, who is represented sitting and not in the standard recumbent position, generally adopted for males and females both. This variation seems to be due to aesthetic preference only, and the depiction of the female figure does not seem to display any foreign or external influence in its treatment.[408] Other iconographic elements found in the decorations of these urns are again common in Etruscan funerary

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405   Three such urns are visible at the National Archaeological Museum of Umbria in Perugia. Five urns from this earlier groups bore inscriptions that can be found in CIE 3714 to 3718.
406   Brendel 1978; Sclafani 2010. For evidence of Clusine influence elsewhere in Perusia, or even the involvement of Clusine artisans, see Pietrangeli-Feruglio 1958 p. 87, particularly regarding the cinerary decoration group including a Vanth-like figure.
407   The same type persists at Volaterrae for a longer period, cfr. Roth 2009, Gliozzo *et al.* 2014.
408   The portrayal of the female figure is very similar to a 'veiled female' type found elsewhere on urn lids, see e.g. Huntsman 2014 f. 10. The same type is also present in the previous urns for female members of the family held at the National Archaeological Museum of Umbria; cfr. especially exhibit number 125. For possible influences of previous depictions of seated female figures see Lippolis 2011 p. 144; Liberatore 2007 pp. 32-46.

finds, like gorgons. The two remarkable female winged figures flanking the painted door on

the front of the urn of Arnth Velimnas may probably be identified as Vanths; one of the two

is depicted holding a torch, a traditional attribute which supports this identification.[409]

The seventh urn found in the tomb is not made out of local travertine, but of Luna marble,[410]

and the material must therefore have been imported on purpose. It was placed in the same

room, to the right of the previous group. Working on a different material must have required

different skills from the artisans; it is, however, not necessary to assume that it was

manufactured outside of Perusia. Neither the choice of marble nor the presence of external

influences in realisation and decoration of the urn do by themselves imply that it was not a

product of local manufacture, especially considering its later date.[411] This urn also belongs to

a completely different typology from the other six found in the tomb. Instead of presenting

standardised decorations on the front and side and a portrait of the deceased on the lid, it is

temple-shaped, with a pediment and acroteria – palmettes and sphynxes – on the slanting

roof. What kind of building exactly the urn is meant to represent is not entirely clear, but it is

quite clear that it was meant to be a templar building rather than a house.[412]

House-shaped travertine urns are not entirely unknown in the territory of Perusia in the

previous century,[413] especially in the less elaborate burials, but they bear little resemblance

to this one. Etruscan house-shaped urns tend to have a slanting roof without any

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409   There are remarkable similarities that suggest that this may be a higher level of elaboration on a
known Clusine and Perusine type, cfr. Sclafani 2010 pp. 75-77.
410   Cfr. Osgood 2006 p. 178. See fig. 11.
411   Luna marble was not consistently quarried before 40 BC; cfr. Osgood 2006 p. 180.
412   Berrendonner 2002, p. 231, describes the urn as *heroon*-shaped, but does not provide an explanation
for this identification. Heurgon 1958, p. 151, identifies it as a 'neo-Attic house'; the basis for this description is
unclear, and it appears highly unlikely.
413   See for instance Cifani 2015 for cases from the tomb of the Cacni. See also fig. 12.

representation of acroteria, and the main body of the urn is generally identical to the ones

with the portrait lids, typically displaying reliefs of mythological scenes or funerary

processions.[414] This one is instead a detailed reproduction of the building it mimics, with

bricks outlined in detail on the façade as well as individual tiles on the roof. Corinthian

columns are represented on the four corners and a temple-like decoration runs along the

architrave. On the front is a depiction of double doors, closed, which may be a

representation of temple doors as well as a callback to the aforementioned motif of the

doors to the afterlife often to be found in Etruscan urns.[415] On the sides of the urn, the

decoration displays a motif of rosettes, boukrania and garlands, which appears to be

decidedly not Etruscan in nature.[416] This deviation from traditional Etruscan urn forms is

clearly significant.

A total of eight complete inscriptions are known from the tomb; six are Etruscan and the

remaining two are an Etruscan-Latin bilingual group.[417] Five of the Etruscan inscriptions[418]

and the bilingual one are written on the individual urns and are standard funerary

inscriptions indicating name and ancestry of the deceased; it is according to these

inscriptions that individual members of the family can be identified. The sixth Etruscan

inscription[419] is found above the door at the end of the *dromos* and commemorates the

foundation of the tomb by the brothers Arnth and Larth Velimnas. This is supported by the

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414   See Sclafani 2010. A number of the later urns from the Cai Cutu tomb at Perusia also belong to this
house-shaped type, although sensibly poorer in manufacture and decorations; for further remarks on this see
infra.

415   Cfr. Sclafani 2010 pp. 100-101.

416   For further discussion of these features see *infra*.

417   ILS 7833 = CIL I^2 2037 = XI 1963 (Latin); TLE 605 (Etruscan).

418   CIE 3757 to 3762.

419   CIE 3754. Cfr. Thimme 1954 p. 140.

position of clear pre-eminence in which the urn of Arnth Velimnas, by far the most elaborate

in the tomb, is placed, at the centre of the back wall and immediately visible from the

dromos. As the brothers represent the third generation in the tomb, the urns of their father

and grandfather must have been moved there from a previous burial complex, or their

remains transferred to new urns manufactured for the occasion.[420]

The existence of such a previous tomb is corroborated, as already noted, by surviving urns

for previous members of the family found elsewhere in the Palazzone necropolis.[421] As they

were discovered in 1797, information on the site and modality of their retrieval is sadly

lacking. Interestingly, these latter are all for female members of the family, whereas Arnth

and Larth Velimnas only moved their male forerunners to the new tomb; there is no trace of

their mother or grandmother. The female burials for these two generations may have been

left, for reasons unclear, in the original tomb. None of the inscriptions found in the tomb

was damaged, and none required integrations.

Dating

Dating of the tomb and its contents is a somewhat controversial subject, and a very

important one as it has a great impact on the possible interpretations of the tomb itself. The

Palazzone necropolis, which provides the wider context for the tomb, was in use from the

early third to the late first century BC, and almost certainly into the early years AD.[422] We do

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420   For this latter suggestion cfr. Lippolis 2011 p. 142; Osgood 2006 p. 177 argues that this may only be true of the earliest urn, that of Thefri Velimnas. See also *infra*.
421   See *supra*. Eight such urns are held at the National Archaeological Museum of Umbria in Perugia, although only three are currently on display.
422   See *supra*; also see Lippolis 1984; Nati 2008.

know that the original group of urns covers a continuous sequence of four generations. The gap separating them from the later burial may cover one generation only, or be significantly longer, with clear repercussions on the interpretation of the whole sequence.

The date in which the tomb was originally established is itself the matter of unresolved debate. At the time of its discovery, it was originally assigned to the second half of the second century BC.[423] This was primarily based on an assessment of the structure of the tomb itself and the materials it contained. No agreement was reached, however, on this date. Already in a brief assessment of the tomb in 1958 C. Pietrangeli and A. Feruglio suggested that it could be more safely dated to the early first century BC.[424] This dating was more widely accepted and is still acknowledged by a great part of the modern literature on the subject.[425]

There is, however, a trend in modern scholarship to move back the dating as early as the start of the third century BC, almost entirely based on iconographic comparison between the urns from the Volumnii tomb and one of the earliest urns from another subterranean family tomb of Perusia, that of the Cai Cutu. Discovered in 1983 in a locality called Monteluce near Perugia, this latter tomb was established in all likelihood in the first half of the third century BC and was kept in use until the end of the first century BC.[426] It contained the urns of fifty family members along with a sarcophagus of an earlier type attributed to the founder of the tomb. One of the earlier urns from this tomb, that of Arnth Cai Cutu, son of the founder,

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423   See e.g. von Gerkan and Messerchmidt 1942; also see Pietrangeli and Feruglio 1958.
424   Pietrangeli and Feruglio 1958 p. 86.
425   See e.g. Harris 1971, Scullard 1998, Osgood 2006, and others.
426   The tomb is unfortunately very poorly documented. See Rasmussen 1986, which is however, at least in part, based on Cristofani 1984, a report not meant for academic readers, and Feruglio 2000.

belongs to the common type with the recumbent figure of the deceased on the lid,[427]

whereas most of the later ones, which are also considerably rougher in quality, belong to the

simple house-shaped type. Based on supposed similarities between this earlier urn and

those from the tomb of the Volumnii, scholars like S. Stopponi and A. Feruglio have argued

that the two tombs must be of the same date.[428] As the dating of the Cai Cutu tomb can be

assessed more safely,[429] the consequence would be to date the Volumnii tomb back to the

third century BC. This would make the gap between the last burial in the original group and

the burial of P. Volumnius Violens considerably longer.

There are, however, several problems with this dating. Firstly, the suggested similarities

between the Cai Cutu urn and the Volumnii ones are generic at best. That such similarities

exist cannot be denied, as the urns all belong to a common type that generally presents a

high level of conformity.[430] Moreover, this type continues with very little known variation for

the whole period of its use at both Clusium and Perusia, and even somewhat later at

Volaterrae.[431] Therefore, similarities between the Cai Cutu urn and the Volumnii ones cannot

be considered diagnostic, unless any feature they exhibit can be proved to be virtually

identical. No such feature exists.

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427   See fig. 13.

428   Stopponi 1996; Feruglio 2002. The latter even suggests that the Cai Cutu urn and the Volumnii urns were manufactured in the same workshop; there is no evidence to support this claim, as differences between the urns vastly outnumber similarities. This earlier dating has been accepted in several studies on the topic in the following years, but it is still highly problematic; see Lippolis 2011.

429   Mostly on the basis of a shift in burial typology between the founder of the tomb, who is still buried in a sarcophagus of a more archaic type, and his son Arnth Cai Cutu, buried in one of the earliest instances of a cinerary urn type starting in the early third century AD; see Rasmussen 1986.

430   Cfr. Staccioli 1968 p. 13.

431   Cfr. Thimme 1954, Dareggi 1972, Roth 2009, Sclafani 2010, Huntsman 2014 for some examples.

Secondly, a comparison between the two groups of urns is made difficult by the evident difference in quality of craftsmanship they exhibit. Even if the quality of the urn of Arnth Cai Cutu is higher than that of the other urns in the tomb, it still comes nowhere near the level of complexity achieved in the Volumnii ones. If anything, it appears to be much closer to earlier examples of the type like the third-century urns from the tomb of the Rafi, also from Perusia, or the Hellenistic urns from Chiusi held at the Metropolitan Museum, also dating to the third century BC.[432] In fact, the differences between the Volumnii urns and this highly consistent earlier group outnumber by far the similarities. The depiction of the figures on the lids of the Volumnii urns, particularly those of Arnth and Veilia, are also more naturalistic and less archaic than what is found in the Arnth Cai Cutu urn or in other urns from the earlier group. One could even regard markedly innovative features such as the high-relief Vanth figures on the Arnth Velimnas urn as being the expression of a much more 'mature' style, and therefore a proof of its later date.[433] The Arnth Velimnas urn is particularly important in assessing dating for the tomb, as Arnth is stated to be the founder of the complex.[434] A comparison of the lettering of inscriptions on the two sets of urns also seems to support this interpretation. Lettering in the Volumnii inscriptions consistently appears to be significantly more regular and codified than what is found in the early Cai Cutu inscriptions, including that on the Arnth Cai Cutu urn.[435] Iconographic analysis, therefore, not only does not encourage the statement that the Volumnii tomb may be contemporary to the Cai Cutu tomb, but, on the contrary, seems to indicate that it is later.

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432   For the Metropolitan Museum urns see Huntsman 2014. For the Rafi urns see Feruglio 1977.
433   Cfr. remarks on this particular urn in Brendel 1978. Cfr. also, for a detailed discussion of the matter supporting the same conclusions proposed here, Lippolis 2011 pp. 139-146.
434   As stated on the wall inscription from the tomb itself, CIE 3754.
435   Although this may also be due to differences in quality of craftsmanship rather than in date.

Even if one was to accept that similarities between the two earliest urns and the Arnth Cai Cutu urn are significant, this would still have little to no impact on the dating of the tomb itself. The urn of Thefri Velimnas is the closest parallel to the Arnth Cai Cutu urn to be found in the Volumnii tomb. It is also the one that has been most strongly suspected of having been relocated from a previous burial site.[436] As the urn of Arnth Cai Cutu dates to the second half of the third century BC, this would leave us with a late third century or early second century dating for Thefri Velimnas. This would have no particular impact on the dating of the tomb itself to the first decade of the first century BC, which would still be reliable.

Context evidence also seems to support the later dating for the tomb. First and foremost is the matter of the relationship of the tomb with the context of the Palazzone necropolis. As already mentioned, it was established in the early third century BC. The existence of urns for previous female members of the family found in another hypogeum of the same necropolis[437] further discourages the assumption that the Volumnii tomb should date, itself, to the third century. Given the fact that it was integrated in the wider context of the necropolis, the earlier complex could not have dated earlier than the first half of the third century BC. This is still a valid remark even if we assume that some of the urns in this group represent the female individuals in the same generations as Thefri and Aule Velimnas. To assume that the Volumnii tomb was established in the third century BC would create a paradoxical situation, as we would have to assume that two different burial complexes for the same family were present in the necropolis at the same time, one for male members and

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436   Cfr. Osgood 2006 p. 178.
437   See *supra*.

one for female ones – a conclusion that is clearly untenable. Moreover, it would raise the problem of the previous location of Thefri and Aule Velimnas, even assuming that new urns were manufactured for them at the moment of their placement in the new tomb.

Much less contested is the date for the later urn of P. Volumnius Violens, as the nature of the urn itself allows to establish a good *terminus ante quem*. Firstly, the urn is made of Luna marble, a material that started to be quarried in significant quantities only around 40 BC and enjoyed a wider circulation in the late decades of the first century BC.[438] The lettering and spacing of the Latin inscription on the front of the urn also points to a date in the late first century BC or the early first century AD. Slightly more problematic, although generally accepted, is the comparison established between iconographic features of this urn and the Ara Pacis built by Augustus in Rome. It is agreed by virtually all scholars who have dealt with this urn that it suffered some form of influence from the decorations of the Ara Pacis, and that it cannot therefore be earlier than the Ara Pacis itself.[439] If true, this would make the urn of P. Volumnius Violens no earlier than 9 BC.

Such a comparison may, however, require more caution that has been used until now. It is true that some features on the P. Volumnius Violens urn are virtually identical to those found on the Ara Pacis, particularly the decorations on the sides of the urn. Those are a motif with garlands, rosettes and boukrania that is unusual in an Etruscan urn.[440] Close comparison between the Ara Pacis instances of this motif and its reproduction on the urn, however, also highlights some differences. There is, for instance, no trace in the Ara Pacis reliefs of the

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438   Cfr. Osgood 2006 p. 180.
439   See e.g. Harris 1971, Brendel 1978, Osgood 2006, Cenciaioli 2011.
440   See fig. 14.

small birds depicted perching on the garlands on the urn. Even more problematic is the assumption that the urn was meant to parallel the general shape of the Ara Pacis. It is still true that the urn is markedly more Roman in nature than its predecessors, and it is not at all unlikely that it was meant to mimic a Roman temple of some sort. It is, however, not entirely disconnected from earlier Etruscan house-shaped urns; it would probably be best to regard it as the result of strong Roman influences on that earlier type. Whether Roman influences were, in fact, tied to the iconography displayed on the Ara Pacis may be less certain than it was once assumed. In any case, the impact on the dating of the urn would not be drastic; it would be safe to place it in the last years of the first century BC.

An attempt to place the P. Volumnius Violens urn at an earlier date has been made, mainly by W. Harris, on the basis of the later inscription of P. Volumnius Violens P.f., in all likelihood his son.[441] This inscription[442] is remarkable as it bears evidence that this younger Publius had served both as a *quattuorvir* and a *duovir* in Perusia. The change in magistracies is to be linked to the reestablishment of the city as Augusta Perusia; it has therefore been argued that the younger Publius must have lived through the war and somehow retained his magistracy. Such a conclusion is, however, not necessary. Recent studies by C. Letta have satisfyingly proved that the change in name, and probably in status, of the city did not happen immediately following the war.[443] This is proved, among other things, by the presence of altars dedicated to Augustus at Perusia where the new denomination Augusta

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441   Harris 1971 pp. 315-316.
442   CIL XI 1944 = ILS 6618, cfr. *supra* for details.
443   Letta 2012. For previous discussion of the same issue see also Pfiffig 1976, Dondin-Payre 1979. See also Sisani 2011, arguing on the same basis of evidence for the shift to have happened 'in the late years in Augustus' reign'.

Perusia is not yet adopted, and the town is referred to simply as '*Perusia restituta*'.[444] It may

not be entirely necessary to postdate this change as far as the reign of Tiberius, as Letta

does; there is no particular reason why Augustus could not have chosen to change the status

of the town during the later years of his reign. This allows us to place the younger Publius

firmly in the first half of the first century AD. This is also more consistent with the literary

sources we possess on the *Bellum Perusinum*. Although accounts vary greatly, all sources

agree on the fact that Octavian ordered the execution of all magistrates in charge at Perusia

at the time.[445] If the shift from *quattuorvirs* to *duovirs* had taken place immediately after the

conclusion of the war, it would be very difficult to imagine that one of the magistrates in

charge before its end would have been appointed in the new role, even if he had somehow

managed to survive.

The extent of the gap in the use of the Volumnii tomb can now be assessed. If the tomb was

established at the start of the first century BC, and the urn of P. Volumnius Violens dates to

the end of it, then it would be safe to assume that there is only one generation missing from

the tomb, or, allowing for a slightly earlier date for the tomb itself, two at most. Aulus

Volumnius, whose name we are given as Publius' father, could well have been son to Arnth,

or to one of his younger brothers. This cannot of course be demonstrated and must be

regarded as a speculative assumption, but on the basis of the evidence we possess, it

appears to be a highly likely reconstruction.[446] Even if the missing generation is not one, but

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444   CIL XI 1923. See fig. 15.
445   Appian *Bellum Civile* 5. 31-49; Velleius Paterculus, II.74; Cassius Dio 46.14; Suetonius, *Augustus* 9; 14-15. The mention of the human sacrifice in the latter two is most likely a later fabrication. See also Briquel 2012 for further discussion of sources in this regard.
446   Cfr. the proposed family tree in fig. 16.

two, this would however have little impact on our interpretation of the evidence from the tomb.

The case of Publius Volumnius Violens

The pattern of use of the tomb is particularly interesting for the present research. The clear wealth displayed in the tomb makes it clear that its owners belonged to the local elite of Perusia,[447] and its continuity with previous material suggests that this family had a long-standing local history. By the time of its foundation, the tomb is entirely Etruscan in nature, in all of its elements. From the point of view of architecture, the tomb belongs to a well consolidated Etruscan type, with parallels going back in time as far as the fifth century BC – notably, a very similar structure is found in the late fourth century François Tomb at Vulci,[448] which also has female heads sculpted above the doorways in the main room. This is also a parallel for architectural decoration in the Volumnii tomb, which appears to be traditionally Etruscan in nature. As discussed earlier, all urns found in the tomb, with the notable exception of the later burial of Publius Volumnius Violens, are particularly high-quality renditions of a widely spread Etruscan typology, particularly common in Northern Etruria and especially at Clusium, Perusia and Volaterrae. In fact, some parallels have been suggested even for the more remarkable decorative elements in the urn of Arnth Velimnas, although comparisons such as that with the façade of the Tomb of the Mermaid at Sovana[449] must be regarded as tentative at best, given the poor state of conservation of the latter. It is

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447   Cfr. Berrendonner 2002 p. 210 n. 51. and p. 231.
448   For further information on the François tomb see Buranelli 1987. For the original documentation for the discovery of this tomb see Lodolini Tupputi 1988.
449   Oleson 1982 p. 57.

however evident that at the moment of its foundation the Volumnii tomb has a distinctly Etruscan nature and does not show any visible influence of non-Etruscan origins, Roman or otherwise.[450] If the Velimnas family had any important contact or link with Rome at the time of Arnth Velimnas, no trace of that was left in the family tomb.

The burial of Publius Volumnius Violens marks a drastic deviation from this pattern. Even if its iconographic ties to the Ara Pacis appear to be less impressive than previously assumed,[451] there are clear Roman elements subsumed in this burial whose presence cannot be disregarded. It displays decorative features, such as the garlands and boukrania groups on the side, which do not belong to any known Etruscan tradition for decoration of urns.[452] Even assuming some relationship between this urn and the earlier house-type Etruscan urns, numerous elements in its structure and decoration show a clear external influence, in all likelihood Roman. The choice of marble instead of travertine is also strongly suggestive of a Roman link. Most importantly, this is the first and only urn in the Volumnii tomb to bear a Latin inscription. This inscription, which reads *Publius Volumnius A.f. Violens Cafatia natus*,[453] shows that this later member of the family had not only Latinised his family name to Volumnius, but had also adopted a fully developed Latin name according to the *tria nomina* system. This is even more relevant if we consider that the *tria nomina* system was by this time not yet adopted consistently in Rome itself, and that down to the end of the Republican period it is still possible to identify individuals belonging to the senatorial class who do not

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450   It is indeed one of the most traditionally Etruscan tomb structures associated with Perusia; cfr. Oleson 1982 p. 19.
451   See *supra*.
452   They are, instead, quite common in contemporary Hellenistic Greek decorations of a religious nature, particularly on rectangular *arae*; cfr. e.g. Sismondo Ridgway 2002 p. 235.
453   ILS 7833 = CIL I^2 2037 = XI 1963.

have a *cognomen*.[454] Moreover, this Latin inscription is placed in a position of clear pre-eminence on the urn, as it is displayed on two lines the front of the temple-like structure. This is also reminiscent of dedication inscriptions on Roman public buildings.[455] Its lettering is regular and well executed. This is a remarkable development in comparison with the earlier series of urns from the tomb and testifies to a clear intent to display a link to Roman culture that was not visible in the burials of earlier members of the family.

This burial is, however, not entirely devoid of connections to the Etruscan background of this later Volumnius. Some of the elements in the decoration of the urn may be compared to more traditionally Etruscan patterns, such as the female face, probably a Gorgon, on the front, which is indeed similar to those found on other urns from the same tomb.[456] Another mark of a persistent connection with Etruscan tradition is held in the text of the Latin inscription itself. Along with the standard naming pattern in the Roman style, this inscription includes the matronymic, given in the form *Cafatia natus*. The inclusion of the matronymic is a peculiarity of Etruscan naming patterns, where it is commonly found.[457] This is clearly a conservative element, found in the two earliest inscriptions from the tomb, those of Thefri and Aule Velimnas, but not in the later ones. There are several known instances of Latin inscriptions for individuals of known Etruscan origins that include this element in their naming pattern, generally in the form with the ablative of the mother's name followed by

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454   See e.g. Badian 1963 p. 142.
455   See e.g. the inscription on the façade of the Pantheon in Rome, which, although later, is generally considered the copy of an original of Augustan date once placed in the same position: CIL VI 896(1).
456   See *supra*. For common occurrences of Gorgons specifically on Perusine urns cfr. Dareggi 1972 p. 20.
457   Cfr. Adams 2003 p. 169. Also note that in some bilingual inscriptions the matronymic is missing from the Latin text.

natus.[458] The same form is found, just to name one case from Perusia that is slightly more recent, in the aforementioned inscription of the *quattuorvir*, and then *duovir*, L. Proculeius. Proculeius also has a patronymic given in the standard form; however, differently from Publius Volumnius, he does not have a *cognomen*.[459] Its connection with Etruscan tradition appears to be solid and therefore it should be regarded as a further, conscious link to that tradition in the burial of Publius Volumnius Violens.

Most importantly, the funerary inscription of Publius Volumnius Violens can be considered a bilingual text, for an Etruscan version is also present on the urn, although the Latin and Etruscan texts present slight discrepancies. The Etruscan inscription is placed sideways on the slanting roof of the urn, near the back. It also provides the name of the deceased, reading *pup velimna au cahatial*.[460] The lettering of this inscription, perhaps also due to its position, appears to be less regular and less refined than in the other Etruscan inscriptions from the tomb. There also appear to be some uncertainties in the rendition of Etruscan forms. The family name is here given as Velimna, instead of Velimnas. The abbreviation of the patronymic is also a deviation from the expected *aules*, the form found in the funerary inscriptions of Arnth, Larth and Vel Velimnas. These traits, along with the truncation of the *praenomen*, contribute to suggest that whoever composed this inscription had a lower familiarity with Etruscan than the authors of the previous inscriptions. It is therefore even more remarkable that the need to include an Etruscan inscription, even in a clearly

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458   Adams 2003, pp. 172-176, suggests that the Etruscan form with *clan* may be a 'Latinising' form paralleling the construction with *natus* (or *filius*). However, the presence of this form rather than the simple genitive in some older texts, and the presence of the simple genitive in more recent and grammatically stunted ones, rather seem to suggest that both forms were used and perceived as equivalent.
459   CIL XI 1943, see *supra*. For other cases from Perusia see CIE 3514; 3607; 3622. Cfr. Adams 2003 p. 174.
460   CIE 3763.

subordinate position, was still felt and acted upon. The burial of Publius Volumnius Violens cannot, therefore, be simplisticly classified as 'Romanised', but rather appears to have a distinctly composite nature.

While the 'Romanising' iconographic features appear to be mostly influenced by contemporary trends, the choice of the *cognomen* Violens is by itself significant and testifies to an effort to establish a much deeper kind of link. This *cognomen* is highly unusual and various attempts have been made to explain it. The suggestion of J. Heurgon that its choice may have been informed by a particular devotion of the Volumnii to the mythological character of Iolaos[461] is founded on a premise both vague and unnecessarily complex, and it should be discounted. Such a suggestion is entirely based on second-century AD grammarian Terentianus Maurus,[462] who established a connection between 'Violens' and Iolaos. Although Terentianus refers to Cicero to support his argument,[463] the equivalence is patently false, as is correctly recognised by Heurgon himself.[464] He does, however, then go on to suggest that the false equivalence, based on an Etruscan 'Vile' equivalent to the Greek name of the hero, was accepted by Publius Volumnius, and had currency in his time. Even accepting that Cicero regarded the equivalence as correct, he is still not necessarily a good authority for Etruscan attitudes. It is indeed rather more likely that such an identification, if

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461   Heurgon 1958. The lexical material called upon to deny that 'Violens' could not have had its standard meaning as an adjective is not convincing, as the purported 'rarity' of a form in Late Republican authors is not sufficient evidence.

462   GLK VI(2) p. 344, vv. 656-657.

463   This must be a lost passage, as there is no mention of Iolaos whatsoever in Cicero's surviving works. Considering Terentianus' date, it may also be possible that he referred to an apocryphal work falsely attributed to Cicero.

464   Heurgon 1958 p. 153.

it ever had some circulation, would have been a Roman misunderstanding rather than a genuine Etruscan element.

Apart from the two cases connected to the Volumnii of Perusia, the only other known instance for the *cognomen* Violens in a Roman context is Lucius Volumnius Flamma Violens, consul in 307 BC and again in 296 BC.[465] He came from a Roman *gens Volumnia* of plebeian origins,[466] although it has been suggested by M. Torelli that it may be in some capacity related to the earlier consul of 461 BC P. Volumnius Amintinus Gallus, perhaps a branch of the same *gens* that had undergone a *transitio ad plebem*.[467] There is, however, no evidence other than homonymity to support this suggestion. This Volumnius played a rather important role in the events of the Third Samnite War; in Livy's account of that conflict, he is presented as a central figure and depicted in a favourable way.[468] Interestingly enough, he is also said to have fought against Etruscans on several occasions.[469] It is reasonable enough to assume that Lucius Volumnius' name would have been known in central Italy as that of an important Roman political and military leader of the past. In choosing a *cognomen* whose association with this figure would have been clear to most people, Publius Volumnius Violens was making a conscious attempt at creating a link between himself and Roman society.[470] Indeed, this link serves a purpose much deeper than just 'Romanising' the person of Publius Volumnius. By suggesting a connection between his family and that of an

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465   Broughton 1960 p. 176; 178.
466   The suggestion of Piganiol 1927 and Heurgon 1958 that he must have been an Etruscan from Perusia or Clusium is based retrospectively on his association with P. Volumnius Violens and must be discounted.
467   Torelli 1995. There is some slight confusion on Torelli's part as well, as he refers to the consul of 307 as Publius, rather than Lucius, Volumnius. For the consul of 461 see also Broughton 1960 p. 36.
468   See e.g. Livy 10.18-20.
469   E.g. Livy 10.20; 10.30, although he seems to have done most of his fighting in Samnium.
470   Cfr. Harris 1971 p. 176.

important Roman consul of the past, he would have implied that his ties to Rome were not only deep, but also long-standing. By choosing a figure who had fought for Rome against Italians and Etruscans, he was also clearly stating what side he was on.

There was, most likely, no real connection between Lucius Volumnius Flamma Violens and the Velimnas family of Perusia. There are Volumnii known from an early date in Rome,[471] which, furthermore, do not appear to be all necessarily related between themselves. The name is generally interpreted as having Etruscan origins; however, this is not a sufficiently solid basis to assume that the Volumnii of Rome derived from the Velimnas of Perusia, or that both shared a common origin.[472] Many Etruscan names are attested from more than one site, and there is a steady influx of names of Etruscan origins in Rome, and in the Senate, from the early Republic and probably even earlier. It is much more likely that the Roman Volumnii derived from one of these earlier groups. Indeed, an Etruscan component seems to be present in Rome from such an early date that it may be extremely difficult to determine its exact origin.

For the purposes of the present study, families bearing these Etruscan names that are found in Rome from such an early date must be regarded as entirely Roman. While some cases are known of influential Etruscan families who had one branch become part of the Roman Senate while another retained its local possessions and its influence in its city of origin – the

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471   Cfr. Schulze 1904, p. 258, and Broughton 1960 p. 499; p. 635. Among the Roman Volumnii, it is worth noting a C. Volumnius who was a senator in 129 BC, and a P. Volumnius who was one in 66 BC; neither was known to bear *cognomina*.
472   Schulze 1904 posited that all known Volumnii were originally from Perusia on the basis of the only known family tomb of this name being located there, but this is not sufficient evidence. Also note that the Roman Volumnii were not necessarily all related between themselves.

most known case being the Caecina of Volaterrae[473] – there is no evidence that this may

have been the case with the Volumnii. As already observed, in its earlier phase the Volumnii

tomb is entirely devoid of any trace of Roman influence. If Arnth Velimnas and his family

represented a local branch of the Roman Volumnii, such evidence would be expected.

Such a sudden shift in attitude, and a conscious attempt to create a link with one specific

Roman figure, requires an explanation. This may most likely be found in the peculiar political

situation in Perusia in the second half of the first century BC. There is no doubt that the

outcome of the *Bellum Perusinum* caused a sudden and radical change in the situation of the

city.[474] All sources agree that Octavian had the local magistrates who were in charge at the

time of the war executed.[475] This would have dealt an extremely severe blow to local elite

families who had sided with Lucius,[476] and the Volumnii may have been one of those. We

cannot be sure that this is a viable connection, but it is a striking coincidence that in 43-42

BC, very close to the time of the war, we know of a P. Volumnius who was *praefectus fabrum*

under Mark Antony.[477] Was he one of the Volumnii of Perusia? It is impossible to prove it

conclusively, but if he was, this could place the family at least on Antony's side.

It would be difficult to rule out as a coincidence the fact that many of the Etruscan family

tombs in Perusia, like those of the Cutu and the Rafi, ceased being used at the time of the

war. Some of these tombs – both the aforementioned ones among them – had already

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473   Terrenato 1998 pp. 106-108.
474   See Bonamente 2012.
475   See *supra*.
476   Cfr. Fracchia 1996 p. 199; Haynes 2000 p. 382.
477   Broughton 1960 p. 635.

displayed some attempt to introduce Roman elements, like Latin inscriptions and Romanised names. [478] Nonetheless, after the war these tombs were completely abandoned.

Given the chronology reconstructed above, it would be very difficult not to associate the gap in the sequence in the Volumnii tomb to the same circumstances. According to this chronology, at least one individual – Aulus, the father of Publius – is missing from the tomb; perhaps two. In any case, at least Aulus must have lived at the time of the war. Although such a suggestion is necessarily speculative, it would not be difficult to imagine that the reason why he was not buried in the family tomb may be that he was one of the local magistrates executed by Octavian. We have sufficient proof that the family had elite status; it would not be surprising that they held local magistracies. Indeed, we know the son and namesake of Publius Volumnius Violens to have been a local magistrate after the end of the conflict. In any case, even if Publius' father was not one of the executed magistrates, it would be hard not to link the period of abandonment of the tomb with the blow dealt to the local elites by the outcome of the war, and even harder not to connect it with the abandonment of other elite tombs at Perusia.

We know, at least from the career of Publius Volumnius Violens the younger, that the Volumnii managed to recover in the following years.[479] To do so, in a city that had lost most of its autonomy, establishing a connection with Rome would be necessary. Indeed, for Publius Volumnius the younger to be a magistrate repeatedly, even in the new 'Romanised' system, his loyalty to Rome must have been considered proved beyond doubt. We may

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478   Cfr. Rasmussen 1986; Stopponi 1998.
479   Badian 1963 p. 142 even suggested that some of the Late Republican Volumnii in Rome may be linked to the family from Perusia, although there is no evidence to support this.

regard the changes in burial modality in the urn of Publius Volumnius, and his attempt to

link himself and his family to Lucius Volumnius Flamma Violens, as signs of this display of

loyalty. The use of an imported material that was at the time common in Rome may even

suggest that Publius Volumnius had successfully established personal connections with

Rome itself.[480] In any case, by openly adopting the Latin language, the Roman naming

system, and the *cognomen* of a famous Roman who had defended Rome against Italian

populations including the Etruscans, he was unequivocally declaring on which side his loyalty

lay.

Such an explanation does not, however, account for the survival of the Etruscan elements. It

was, indeed, more than a simple survival. The reopening of the family tomb, by itself, was a

meaningful choice, and certainly not accidental; other family tombs in Perusia that had been

abandoned during the war were not reopened afterwards. Also purposeful was the choice to

include an Etruscan inscription on Publius Volumnius' urn, even at a moment when

knowledge of Etruscan was quickly dwindling.[481] While establishing new, strong links

between his family and Roman history and tradition, Publius Volumnius chose not to sever

entirely the links he had with his Etruscan background. On the contrary, the choice to place

his burial in the old family tomb and to include the Etruscan inscription may be read as a

way to reassert those links.

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480   As suggested in Osgood 2006; however, one should be careful when suggesting such links in the absence of stronger evidence.
481   See Benelli 1994 for several examples of bilingual inscriptions that testify to this deterioration of Etruscan. See also Haynes 2000 p. 386.

It is likely that this served a political purpose as well.[482] While the new conditions after the war dictated that prestige as a magistrate could only be regained and held with the support of Roman authority, the power balance between local elite families did not suddenly lose all relevance. The construction of a double identity, such as was clearly displayed by Publius Volumnius Violens through the features of his burial, was a necessary tool in order to retain support from both sides.[483] By displaying clear signs of fealty to Rome and suggesting longstanding Roman connections, one could gain the friendship of Roman authorities; by clearly demonstrating that one still identified with local culture and had not reneged his local roots, one could avoid losing the support of local elites. This would of course not have been limited to funerary practice; it is very likely that this construction of a double identity would have encompassed most aspects of public life. Both the adoption of the *cognomen* Violens and the reopening of the family tomb were clear public statements, and others of the same kind may have happened of which no trace is left. But in funerary practice the clearest evidence of such a construction are preserved.

One may wonder to what extent Publius Volumnius Violens was directly responsible of these choices. We have no inscription testifying that he was a local magistrate himself. As was rightly noted by M. Parker Pearson,[484] the treatment of an individual in a burial context does not testify as much to the will of the deceased as to the will of those who buried him. We do know that Publius Volumnius Violens the younger had a successful local political career that continued after the town was re-established as Augusta Perusia. May it not have been him

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482   This has been suggested, although only through a brief hint, by Lippolis 2011.
483   For some comments on similar double identities being purposefully constructed at Volaterrae see Terrenato 1998 p. 109.
484   Parker Pearson 2003.

presenting a double identity as a political tool through the treatment of his father's burial?

This is most likely true, at least in part, and there is no way to determine whether it was the

father or the son who chose to reopen the old family tomb. There is, however, one aspect

that strongly suggests that the process was at least started by Publius Volumnius the elder.

While the manner of his burial may have been decided after his death, the *cognomen*

Violens was certainly adopted during his life. The evolution from a local identity to a double

identity, purposefully incorporating a strong Roman element without entirely rejecting the

local ones, had therefore already begun at Perusia in the period immediately following the

end of the war; and the reasons prompting it were, at least for elite individuals, primarily

political.

Inscriptions from the tomb of the Volumnii

On wall by the entrance: CIE 3754: *arnθ larθ velimnas| arnzeal husiur| suθi acil hece*

Urn 1: CIE 3757: *θefri: velimnas tarχis: clan:*

Urn 2: CIE 3758: *aule velimnas θefrisa nufrznal clan*

Urn 3: CIE 3759: *larθ velimnas aules*

Urn 4: CIE 3760: *vel velimnas aules*

Urn 5: CIE 3761: *arnθ velimnas aules*

Urn 6: CIE 3762: *veilia velimnei arnθial*

P. Volumnius Violens urn, Latin: ILS 7833 = CIL I^2 2037 = XI 1963: *P. Volumnius A. F. Violens*

Cafatia natus

P.Volumnius Violens urn, Etruscan: CIE 3763: *pup velimna au cahatial*

Chapter 5

Etruscan poets and Etruscan patrons: developments between the Late Republic and the Early Principate

While its roots remain fully planted in the Late Republican period, the matter of the representation of Etruscans through prominent works of literature cannot be addressed without turning to look at their developments in the early years of the Augustan Principate. It is then that the phenomenon reached its peak and in many ways its final point. The depiction of Etruscans in the works of Roman poets between the last years of the Republic and the early years of the Principate would be an important factor in shaping how Etruscans would be imagined and stereotyped not only in Roman literature, but also in historiography, for a number of decades to follow.

It is remarkable that this process happened through the works of poets like Propertius and Vergil, who could claim themselves verifiable Etruscan origins. The works of these authors, while published under the aegis of the Augustan regime, draw their topics from the events of the Late Republic, and most importantly from their conflicts. The shadow of Perusia is cast on the works of Propertius in the same way as that of Actium is cast on those of Vergil. This is a phenomenon that one cannot shy from addressing when attempting to present a complete picture of all the avenues for self-representation taken by Etruscans in our chosen period: both because this is a highly influential mean of self-representation, and because its foundations lie in the happenings of the Late Republic.

It is also important to note that, when the self-representation aspect is considered, the phenomenon observable here is layered rather than linear. The intervention of individuals of known Etruscan origins in shaping the form that these works took is here active on two separate tiers. The most immediate one is of course represented by the presence of prominent poets who had their roots in Etruscan communities, and acknowledged having them in their own works. A second tier must however be superimposed to this, concerning not the poets themselves, but their patrons. The workings of patronage in the Late Republic and Early Empire often implied a high level of agency to drive the contents of literary works on the part of the patron. Even a cursory look is sufficient to realise that on this level, too, the influence of individuals from an Etruscan background is felt.

Most prominent, and in a sense overshadowing all others, is here the figure of Gaius Maecenas, who hailed from the Etruscan centre of Arretium and, if the historical sources, admittedly scarce, concerning him are to be trusted, very publicly acknowledged his Etruscan heritage. While the definition of Maecenas as Augustus' 'minister of culture' of sorts is certainly excessive, there is no doubt that he played an important role in driving the direction taken by many of the most relevant works of literature of the time. Many of these works would turn out to be closely associated with the ideology and politics of the Early Principate. The figure of this powerful Etruscan patron cannot therefore be left lingering in the background. In order to fully understand those depictions, the patterns of their appearance and the goals they aimed to achieve, one has to understand Maecenas as well.

And yet Maecenas may not be the only Etruscan patron who made his influence felt in this respect. Propertius in particular ties his poems with a more Etruscan topic to his close relationship with Tullus, who is almost certainly a Volcacius Tullus of Perusia and therefore an active member of a rising Etruscan elite with municipal origins and ongoing ties with a municipal community. He is, in fact, one of those very same Volcacii Tulli whose family parable has been addressed in detail in the chapter concerning senatorial families of Etruscan origins.[485] In those works, the concerns of Tullus appear to resonate with those of the poet himself, and it may well be that we are here faced with yet another important Etruscan influence driving to some extent the direction of these works.[486]

For all these reasons it is paramount to take a look at the way in which depictions of Etruscans were shaped in the works of these poets between the Late Republic and the Early Principate, as well as the way in which the influence of such important patrons of Etruscan origins was felt. This chapter will therefore address the works themselves, their background and their contents, and then move on to present an analysis of Gaius Maecenas, his own background, and the possible extent of his influence, in order to provide a picture as complete as possible of all aspects of what is clearly a very complex matter.

Changing depictions of Etruscans in Augustan-period literature: Vergil and Propertius

This chapter will address the work of two of the most influential poets for this period: Vergil and Propertius. Both of them originated from a background that, if not exclusively Etruscan,

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485   See *supra*, Chapter 2.
486   For Maecenas, see *infra*. For Tullus cfr. Cairns 2006 p. 21.

had nonetheless a strong Etruscan component, and both display an awareness of this component and different degrees of adherence to it.

Moreover, themes tied to Etruria are to be found recurring in the literary production of both these authors. Vergil's discussion of land reassignments, for instance, touches upon a theme that had been fundamental in the development of unrest in the elites of Etruria, one of the crucial contributing factors in events such as the *Bellum Perusinum*.[487] The *Bellum* itself is in turn repeatedly chosen as a central theme by Propertius,[488] who even comes to the point of claiming personal connections, even in terms of blood relations, to those who had fought in the war.[489] Both authors also present, in various instances in their works, Etruscan characters, both their own contemporaries and mythological figures.[490]

One may also wonder whether the influence of both Vergil and Propertius on the development of a changing perception of Etruscans in Augustan ideology was to some extent driven by their role in Maecenas' entourage. Albeit to a different extent, in different capacities, and in Propertius' case only in some sections of his production,[491] both were involved, through Maecenas' mediation, in the diffusion through literature of some crucial aspects of Augustan ideology. This includes one concept that, as we have seen, is most influential in the changing perception of Etruscans: that is, the increasing identification of Italy and Rome as one and the same, as opposed to a new term of comparison represented

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487   See e.g. Vergil, *Ecl*. 1. See also Coleman 1966 pp.80-81.
488   E.g. Propertius, 1.22.
489   Conte 1994 p. 332.
490   E.g. the god Vertumnus in Propertius, 4.1.; and of course characters like Tarchon and Mezentius in the Aeneid.
491   Jenkins 1998 p. 107.

by a generically Eastern enemy.[492] This theme of the identification of *Roma* and *Italia* is recurring, more or less explicitly, in both authors, and plays, as we will see, a fundamental role in the re-evaluation of Italian peoples in general, and Etruscans in particular.

For each of these two authors the nature of their Etruscan connections will be explored, followed by a detailed analysis of the treatment received by Etruscan matters in their works. This will be articulated on multiple levels. Firstly, we will attempt to identify any recurrent patterns in word use with regards to adjectives such as 'Etruscus', 'Tuscus', and 'Tyrrhenus', and whether they tend to appear particularly in connection to any concept or figure. We will then expand our analysis to consider the larger context in which these terms are employed, and the presentation in these authors' works of characters introduced or characterised as Etruscan. Similarities and differences in treatment in the two authors will also be highlighted, in order to identify any overarching trends that may be present in the works of both. Brought together, these elements will contribute to clarify our understanding of how Etruscans are portrayed in the works of Vergil and Propertius, and in which ways these depictions may have been contributed to a change in the generally perceived characterisation of Etruscans in Roman society in this later period.

Vergil

It is widely agreed that of all the Roman authors with ties to the Augustan regime, whether directed or mediated through the intervention of Maecenas, Vergil is the most relevant in

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492   See also Torelli 1999 pp. 165-1683; Bispham 2007 pp.442-445.

the construction of a widely accepted public ideology.[493] Although Vergil's works are

naturally the product of diverse influences and work towards a number of different aims, it

is possible to clearly identify in all of them distinct elements that would constitute important

blocks of the ideological system adopted by Augustus for his Principate. This is particularly

evident in the Aeneid. While the poem is certainly more than the simple expression of a

political agenda, it was developed in close connection with the guidance of Augustus'

entourage, and was later used as an explicit tool by that very same entourage following the

poet's death. It also contains open references to ideological points that are known to have

been fundamental in the building of the official mindset of the Augustan period.[494]

Moreover, given its nature as a foundation myth, the Aeneid was particularly well suited as a

vehicle to establish such ideological points in a way that made them appear connected with

the most remote origins of Rome and its culture - as if they had been an integral part of the

Roman cultural baggage from its very beginnings.[495] There has been ample debate, for

instance, on how this process took place in the poem in order to generate a mythological

ancestry tale that validated a claim to power for the Gens Iulia, by establishing their direct

descent through Ascanius from Aeneas, and therefore ultimately from the goddess Venus.[496]

Appealing to the *mos maiorum* as an argument to support the validity of an ideological or

political point was of course a well-known strategy in Roman rhetoric.[497] By proposing to

establish an official version of what was ultimately the Roman foundation myth, the Aeneid

was the most effective tool for that purpose, and that is the ultimate reason for the high

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493   Reed 2007 p. 1-3; Syed 2005 p.179, among others.
494   Rudd 1986; Cairns 1989 .
495   Cfr. Syed 2005 p. 205
496   *Aen.* 10.808-892.
497   See e.g. Zecchini 2001.

degree of investment of the Augustan entourage, and the *princeps* himself, in its composition and diffusion.[498]

It is possible that a widespread change in the perception of Etruscans as a component of a wider Roman society was integrated into, and even facilitated by, the larger development in ideology that accompanied the establishment of the Augustan regime. Vergil's works as a whole, and the Aeneid in particular, appear to be a natural starting point in the investigation of this possibility. Furthermore, the way in which Etruscan matters are presented or addressed in these works has a high relevance to the discourse of Etruscan self-representation as well. In fact, the element of self-representation features in Vergil's works on two different levels: firstly, through the influence and possible guidance of Maecenas, who was the poet's patron, and who was known to put a high level of emphasis on his own Etruscan origins;[499] and secondly, through the likely Etruscan origins of the poet himself.

It is perhaps necessary to devote some words to the latter. Vergil was a native of Mantua, a city with a well-attested Etruscan component, of which the poet was clearly himself aware - as demonstrated, most aptly, by yet another foundation myth established in the *Aeneid*. In

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[498]   Ovid, *Tristia* 2.533, addressing Augustus, speaks of '*tua Aeneis*'. *Vita Servii* 27 also openly states that the poem was written on Augustus' commission: '*postea ab Augusto Aeneidem propositam scripsit'*. See also Cairns 1989, whose insightful analysis of the *Aeneid* as a whole rests heavily on this basis; e.g. p. 108 describes Vergil as 'an intimate of the *princeps*' and 'more Caesarian than Augustus himself'.

[499]   Etruscan *maru*, known from epigraphic texts, appears to be a likely root for this. The term seems to indicate some kind of magistracy, perhaps related to the Umbrian *maro*. See Becker 2014 pp. 356-357. The Tragliatella cippus, between the territories of Veii and Caere, mentions a *maru* (Maggiani 1995). Tagliamonte 2017 p. 132 also lists the variant *marunch*. It can also be found in an apparent religious context, see e.g. TLE 190, a sarcophagus from Tuscania of 175 BC circa, which has *maru pachathuras* (elsewhere mistakenly *maru pachathuras cathsc,* but the punctuation following *pachathuras* marks the end of the title); Stopponi 2010 suggests also that the doubtful term *marveθul* from the Campo della Fiera inscription might be related to this *maru-* root. Cfr. also Jenkins 1998 p. 114.

Book 10 of his poem, Vergil attributes the foundation of the city to Ocnus, son of the

prophetess Manto and 'the Tuscan river', i.e. the river Tiber.[500] On the characterisation of the

Tiber as 'Tuscan' more will be noted further on. Let it suffice for now to remark that through

this foundation myth the establishment of the city of Mantua is attributed to the action of a

Tuscan hero, and the city itself is consequently given an officially Etruscan background. Vergil

appears therefore to have been aware of the importance of an Etruscan component in his

native area, and that he himself was likely to have Etruscan roots has been frequently

suggested on the basis of onomastics. Both the *nomen* Vergilius and the *cognomen* Maro are

likely to have Etruscan connections.[501] Whether or not the latter can truly be read as a sign

that Vergil was personally related to the holders of Etruscan magistracies, it is none the less

clear that there was at least a strong Etruscan element in the poet's background, and one

that he himself appears to have, if not openly embraced, certainly recognised. Given his ties

to this Etruscan background, it is also likely that Vergil would have been aware of Etruscan

stories and myths. His choice to adhere to them or deviate from them should therefore be

regarded as deliberate.

The word 'Etruscan' in Vergil's work

In order to begin assessing the effective presence of Etruscan characters and themes in

Vergil's work, an effective first step can be represented by the analysis of the patterns with

which adjectives and nouns signifying 'Etruscan' occur in these works. Since there is not one

unequivocal term expressing the concept of 'Etruscan' in the Latin habit in this period, we

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500   *Aen*. 10.198-200.
501   Jenkins 1998 p. 100.

have concentrated this initial part of our analysis on the adjectives *Tuscus* and *Etruscus*, the respective substantives, and, additionally, the form *Tyrrhenus*, which also signifies 'Etruscan' and can be read as particularly poetic or archaising in its register. This multiplicity of terms is in itself of interest, as it is possible that some might have been regarded as more ennobling, and others as more derogatory.

Throughout Vergil's works, the adjective *Tuscus* occurs eight times in total, seven of which in the Aeneid, and the eighth in the Georgics. The adjective and substantive *Etruscus* occurs nine times in total, all of which in the Aeneid. *Tyrrhenus* is the most frequent of the three forms in the works of Vergil, perhaps unsurprisingly, given that archaising forms are rather prevalent both in the elegiac register of the Georgics and in the epic one of the Aeneid. In total, *Tyrrhenus* occurs in thirty-five instances, two of which in the Georgics, and the remaining thirty-three in the Aeneid.

Let us first address the three total instances of adjectives signifying 'Etruscan' that are found in the Georgics. *Here Tyrrhenus* occurs twice: **Tyrrhenusque** *fretis immittitur aestus Auernis*[502] ("the Tyrrhenian tide is poured through Avernus' straits"[503]), and again: *Inflauit cum pinguis ebur* **Tyrrhenus** *ad aras*[504] ("while the plump Tyrrhenian plays his ivory flute by the altars"). There is one instance for *Tuscus*: *[...] Vestaque mater/quae* **Tuscum** *Tiberim et Romana palatia seruas*[505] ("And mother Vesta,/ you who protect the Tuscan Tiber and the Roman Palatine"). In all three cases, the adjectives are used, at least at face value, as

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502   *Georg.* 2.165.
503   This and all following translations are the author's own.
504   *Georg.* 2.193.
505   *Georg.* 1.499.

geographic signifiers. The 'Tyrrhenian tide' flowing into Avernus in 2.164 is that of the

Tyrrhenian sea. In 2.193, the adjective serves to specify the ethnicity of a flautist playing in

the context of a religious sacrifice, involving libations of wine and the offering of entrails.

This is probably determined in terms of ancestry, since it appears to be tied to a specific

religious tradition. Lastly, in 1. 499 we are confronted with *Tuscus* as a geographic attribute

for the river Tiber, something that, as we will see, is not an isolated occurrence in the works

of Vergil.

While we can discount the occurrence in 2.164 as having a merely geographic connotation,

the other two instances are more significant. Since the passage in 1.499 is not the only

occurrence of the concept of a *Tuscus Tiber* in Vergil, its discussion will be addressed at a

later moment, within the context of this larger groups of cases. It is instead worth examining

separately the use of *Tyrrhenus* in 2.193.

Even though the depiction of the sacrifice in 2.193 is only fleeting, articulated as an aside in

merely three lines of a longer passage on different types of soil, it is still noteworthy that we

find an Etruscan character taking active part in this kind of religious ceremony.[506] This

significance appears clearer when we consider the recurring connection, in Latin literature,

of Etruscans with religious practice in general and practices that are regarded as particularly

ancient or traditional in particular. That this particular vignette depicts a sacrifice involving

an offering of entrails in which an Etruscan is involved is also noteworthy, since perhaps the

most widely recognised religious feat of the Etruscans was their professional ability in

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506   This character is not openly defined as a *haruspex*, but the one in a very similar vignette in *Aen*.
11.735 is.

haruspicy and hepatoscopy, or the practice of divination through the inspection of entrails following a sacrifice.[507] Thus, while only hinting at the description of the religious rite in its three concise lines, the vignette evokes the image of a rite conducted according to traditional practice, and perhaps even hinting at the possibility of haruspicy being performed. It should also be noted that the act of participating in this rite is expressed in the first person plural: *qualem pateris libamus et auro* [...] *funamtia reddimus exta*, "such as we offer in *paterae* made of gold [...] we deliver the steaming entrails". *Reddo* might here be ambiguous and even imply some kind of divinatory process, as in *reddere sortes*. Whether the poet is presenting himself as a participant in the offering, or he is choosing these forms to signify that what he is describing is a common traditional practice in its canonical form, it is significant that the point of view is internal, not external. The rite is not presented as something Etruscans do: it is something *we* do - *we* the poet, and his Roman readership - in the frame of which the direct involvement of an Etruscan is presented without any problematic connotation, and possibly even as a typical feature. Let us lastly remark that this particular Etruscan character is also qualified as *pinguis*: an adjective which is very suitable in this context, since the frame for the episode is the abundance of harvest, but which may also have connections with commonplace characterisations of Etruscans in Roman tradition, connected with ideas of luxury and hedonism.[508]

The wider range of occurrences in the Aeneid, together with the different context of the epic poem, which as we have noted has a particular importance in its role as a foundation myth,

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507   Santangelo 2013 pp. 84-98. See also *supra*, Chapter 3.
508   Cfr. Bittarello 2009.

allows us to expand upon these suggestions both on the geographical and the ethnic value of these terms.

Tuscus

Of the seven occurrences of *Tuscus* in the Aeneid, two (11.629 and 12.551) use it as an ethnic name to qualify Aeneas' Etruscan allies. In 12.551, they are described as taking formation in a phalanx, while in 11.629 they are portrayed as leading the charge against the Rutules, and driving them back to the town twice. These Etruscans are therefore presented as actively engaging, with success, in the pitched battle; in fact, in 11.629 they appear to be the spearhead of the forces loyal to Aeneas, as the main agent driving this particular part of the military action. In four further occurrences, *Tuscus* is used as a geographic signifier. It is again 'the Tuscan coast' at 10.164, while 8.473, 10.199, and 11.316 all concern the river Tiber, in its recurring qualification as 'the Tuscan river'. The reference is kept implicit at 8.473 and 11.316, where the Tiber is understood to be the Tuscan river *par excellence*, and made explicit at 10.199, where the river is a personified force, father of Ocnus, the founder of Mantua: '[Ocnus] son of the Tiber, the Tuscan river'. The last occurrence of *Tuscus* in the Aeneid is also connected to Mantua, and it appears to be meant to underline the city's Etruscan connection, while also implying that it is the source of her strength:

*Mantua diues auis, sed non genus omnibus unum:/gens illi triplex, populi sub gente quaterni,/ipsa caput populis, **Tusco** de sanguine uires.*[509]

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509   *Aen.* 10.202-204.

Mantua rich of forebears, though not all from the same people:/ there the people were

threefold, the tribes under each people four,/ herself head of the tribes, drawing strength

from Tuscan blood.

This latter passage is especially interesting not only because it relates to the poet's native city, but also because it is inserted in the wider framework of an acknowledgment of the composite nature of the ethnic make-up of Mantua. The city, who is described as 'rich in ancestors', is presented as the result of the contribution of three different peoples, themselves divided in further groups or tribes. It is therefore all the more interesting that the strength of the city is said to derive '*Tusco de sanguine*', from its Etruscan blood. Archaising may also be a factor. Even so, the choice is all the more significant when considering that the legend of Manto, daughter of Tiresias, would have provided the city with a strong connection to a Greek element.[510] Foundation myths involving Greek heroes are overwhelmingly common, and when looking for a glorifying element to the origins of Mantua, none would have appeared more obvious than its direct connection with the characters of the Theban myth. Yet, even immediately after recounting the story of Manto, and affirming the mixed nature of its population, Vergil chooses to openly state that the strength of the city derives from the contribution of its Etruscan component. One could also note that the idea of a mixed ethnic component at the basis of its foundation makes Mantua, in a way, a 'little Rome' - as the presence of different ethnic groups in the original founding element of Rome is a recurring theme in most myths addressing this subject,[511] not least of which the Aeneid itself. Yet, while the parallel would have been fully accomplished

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510   Cfr. Pausanias 7.3.2.
511   Cfr. Dench 2005.

simply in noting the composite nature of Mantua's ethnic make-up, a deliberate choice is made to bring the Etruscan element to the forefront.

In this passage about Mantua, too, the Etruscan component is associated with concepts of strength; and of a particular kind of strength - *vires* - that is connected to ideas of masculinity, force, and military power. It is an association that contradicts the commonplace ideas of Etruscans as effeminate and lovers of luxury, and which resonates more deeply with elements typically connected with ideas of the Roman *mos maiorum*. To openly declare that this strength derives from the city's Etruscan blood, therefore, is to build a new association between Etruscans and ideas of strength and military valour that had not previously been a prevalent part of their characterisation. It is the same process we have observed in the scenes in which Aeneas' Tuscan allies are seen taking active part in pitched battle, and even leading charges, instead of being confined to roles more typically associated with Etruscans in a warfare context, like archery.[512] We can then conclude that in the Aeneid the adjective *Tuscus* appears to be connected prevalently to ideas of strength and military valour. In 10.164, too, it was a 'host in arms' that followed Aeneas from the 'Tuscan coast'.

The other most prevalent association of *Tuscus* is, as we have seen, with the river Tiber. This association is also worth a separate discussion. The Tiber is qualified as *Tuscus* when it is personified as a deity, but it is also presented, both in the Aeneid and the Georgics, as the 'Tuscan River' by definition. This association may of course be founded on a geographical basis, since the course of the river Tiber does indeed run along the edge of southern Etruria,

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512   Bittarello 2009 p. 214.

and there is indeed an acknowledgement in these passages themselves of the fact that the

River represented a border of sorts to the Etruscan territory. In Aeneid 8.473, Euander

declares that 'that Tuscan river is my border'; again in Aeneid 11.316, Latinus claims to have

'an ancient domain bordering the Tuscan river'. That both Euander and Latinus identify the

Tiber as the border to their domains is particularly significant, as is the fact that both define

it as the Tuscan river. While the expression may of course be a recursive formula, such as are

often found in the text of the Aeneid, this does not detract from the value of providing a

Tuscan characterisation of what was widely known as the river of Rome. If anything, it does

show that the open presentation of this Tuscan connection was not perceived as negative.

Furthermore, the validity of the definition beyond its role as a *formula* of epic language is

proved by the fact that it also occurs in the Georgica, which as a didascalic poem employ a

different linguistic register. Most significant is the fact that the God Tiber, almost certainly an

equivalent of the Tiberinus that was perceived as belonging to the earliest stratus of Roman

religion - is also qualified as Tuscan: the connection becomes all the stronger when it is

applied to a deity whose defining trait was to be indigenous to Rome (and who would have

an active role in narrations of the Romulus myth and the foundation of Rome itself). Vergil's

Tuscus Tiber is not only a widely recognised border feature between Latium and Etruria; it

brings an Etruscan element into the very heart of Rome itself, and by connecting it with one

of the indigenous deities of Rome, solidifies the idea of an Etruscan element being present in

its fabric and its culture ever since the earliest of imaginable dates.[513]

Etruscus

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[513]   Also note '*Tuscus Tiber'* occurring in Ovid, *Ibis* 138, which demonstrates some circulation of the trope in the Augustan period.

The word *Etruscus* has nine occurrences in the Aeneid. At 9.521, it again acquires a

geographical connotation, and serves to describe the '*pinus Etrusca*' Mezentius is

brandishing against his enemies. In all other instances the term is used to define ethnic

make-up, either of an army (that of Aeneas' allies: 8.503; 9.150; 10.280; 10.489), a

population (that of the *castra Etrusca* visited by Aeneas, 10.148), or a city (Pisa, 10.179;

Agylla, 8.480; though the city is founded by '*Lydia gens [...] iugis Etruscis*' (the Lydian people

[...] the Etruscan heights). This is however not problematic, since Vergil accepts the

commonplace idea of Etruscans originating from Lydia). In some of these passages,

especially in catalogues of Aeneas' allies, the term is used in frequent alternance with

Tyrrhenus; the two appear to be equivalent and the alternance is to be regarded here as a

poetic device.

Once again we find that a term meaning 'Etruscan' is used recurringly in connection with

images of military strength and power. The greater bulk of occurrences for this term is as a

qualifier for the army of Aeneas' allies, or in contexts where the components of this army

are listed. The choice of adjectives accompanying it in these passages is also significant. We

have an Etruscan army at 8.503, and Etruscan military camps at 10.148. At 9.150 Turnus lists

socii Etrusci among the forces supporting Aeneas, which he claims not to fear; this is of

course a rhetoric device - Turnus is claiming not to fear Aeneas' military supporters in spite

of their strength, and therefore we are to assume that the joint forces of the Etruscan allies

are indeed to be perceived as strong, and presenting a real threat. At 10.238, the Etruscan

contingent in Aeneas' army, taking the brunt of the action alongside the Arcadian cavalry, is

'strong' ('*forti permixtus Etrusco*'). At 10.429 Etruscan warriors are shown falling in battle alongside the Arcadians and the Trojans ('*sternitur Arcadiae proles, sternuntur Etrusci/et vos, o Grais imperdita corpora, Teucri':* 'Falls the issue of Arcadia, fall the Etruscans/and you, o Trojans, whose bodies weren't destroyed by the Greeks'). To this sequence we should also add that the *Lydia gens* of the founders of Agylla is *bello praeclara*, illustrious in war. It is not simply a quality of Aeneas' own Etruscan allies to be possessed of military valour and the ability to distinguish themselves in battle: such a quality belongs to them from the moment of their very inception. It is even more remarkable that this qualification should be attached to the Lydian founders of the Etruscan city, since the commonplace trait of effeminacy and lack of warlike nature frequently attributed to the Etruscans tended to be regarded as a consequence of their Eastern ancestry.[514] Once again, Vergil's text is deliberately modifying a widely accepted stereotype of Etruscans, privileging images of strength and valour in association with them; and it is doing so by reaching back to the very source of that stereotype, and overturning it.

A second widespread stereotype associated with Etruscans, this one of a more positive nature, is instead upheld in these passages. It is the case of the close association between Etruscans and religious tradition, and the idea of Etruscans as a particularly pious population, especially observant of religious mandates and particularly sensitive to prophecy.[515] This characterisation is preserved in these passages; in fact, it is reinforced in them, and becomes one of the main motives leading the Etruscans to join Aeneas' force. Indeed, the Etruscans are motivated by prophecy, commanding that they should take a

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514   Bittarello 2009 p. 228.
515   Santangelo 2013 pp. 115-127.

foreign leader: this is why, Euander argues at 8.503, the Etruscan army lies in wait, '*exterrita diuum*'. And when the *gens Lydia* does swear allegiance to Aeneas at 10.155, it is *iussis diuum [...] commissa*. The pious nature of the Etruscans is also used to motivate their rejection of the impious Mezentius as a leader. Respect for religious traditions is both a positive trait and one that was itself part of what was perceived as the oldest core of Rome's own tradition - *pietas* played an important role in depictions of the *mos maiorum*. In this regard, the traditional association of Etruscan with *pietas* is therefore not problematic, and it is preserved. Still, one should note that it is not the most prevalent concept found in association with the ethnic *Etruscus*, which instead appears to be the more innovative idea of military strength.

Tyrrhenus

That of the words meaning Etruscan 'Tyrrhenus' should be the most frequently found in the Aeneid is logical when we consider the deliberately high language register adopted throughout the poem, and its recurring tendency towards archaising. As the aim of the Aeneid is to build a canonical mythological past for Rome, the choice of archaising language contributes to the building of an authoritative feeling for the poem. This suits both the form of the epic poem and its subject, it being concerned with the most remote origins of Roman history.

It is equally logical that most of these occurrences are to be found in the second half of the poem, where the action takes place in Italy and characters of Etruscan ethnicity are directly

involved in it, on both sides of the military effort. In the first half of the poem, the only occurrence of the term is found at 1.67, where the term is simply used as a geographical classifier to describe the Tyrrhenian sea, that Aeneas and his people are sailing: *Tyrrhenum aequor*. The same is found again at 6.697 (*sale Tyrrheno*, with a methonymia), and at 7.647 where the coast of the same sea is described as *Tyrrhenis oris*. The term is also used with a geographical signiificance at 8.550 (*Tyrrhena arua*, the Tyrrhenian plain; though in the context of this action the term also holds a military significance). We can furthermore note two more occurrences in which again the term is used to define the river Tiber: so we find *Tyrrhenum ad Thybrim* at 7.242 and *Tyrrhenoque in flumine* - the Tiber once again being the Tyrrhenian river by default - at 7.663. While these two latter passages do not add anything new to the considerations we have already made regarding *Tuscus Tiber*, they do further reinforce those conclusions and further prove that the expression is not simply the result of the recurring of an epic formula, since it is found in a variant with a different adjective of equivalent meaning. A geographical value is also found at 11.581, in Diana's complaint for Camilla: here *Tyrrhena oppida* are the many Etruscan cities where Camilla could have married into local families, testifying to a certain horizontal mobility through marriage between different Italian ethnic groups.

The word 'Tyrrhenus' is also associated with a placename in 7.209, a passage that holds special significance regarding the way Etruscans are presented in the poem. Here we are introduced to a brief narration of the story of Dardanus, founder of Troy and therefore ancestor to Aeneas and his men. Contrary to the most commonly known version of the myth

of Dardanus, however, according to which he had originated in Arcadia,[516] Vergil presents an alternative version that sees his origin in Italy, and specifically in Etruria. So, at 7.209, Dardanus is described as hailing from *Tyrrhena ab sede*, according to King Latinus' narration. This version had already been introduced much earlier in the poem, at 3.163ff., which however placed Dardanus' origins more generically in Italy, without making any open mention of Etruria; an attempt to reconcile the alternative version of the myth with the better known one is also made at 8.134ff., where Dardanus' Italian origins are confirmed but it is also pointed out that his mother is the Arcadian Electra, daughter of Atlas. This latter narration serves a double purpose, in that it reinforces the narration of 'Italian Dardanus' by presenting it as not at odds with the widely known tradition of 'Arcadian Dardanus', and at the same time it provides Aeneas with a good argument to earn himself the loyalty of Euander, since he can claim kinship on the basis that both have Arcadian origins.

The origins of this alternate version of the Dardanus myth are debated, and it has been suggested that it was fabricated by Vergil himself, to reinforce the idea of the legitimacy of Aeneas as ancestor of the Roman people by placing his most remote origins in Italy itself. It is however not possible to entirely rule out the possibility that Vergil might have been referring to a lesser-known version of the Dardanus myth that is not preserved for us through any source earlier than the Aeneid, but that might have been known locally in popular culture. Wherever the variant myth of 'Tyrrhenian Dardanus' might have been originated, though, its relevance in relation to the depiction of Etruscans in the Aeneid remains unchanged. By making Dardanus the son of the Etruscan Corythus, Vergil is bringing

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516   Cfr. e.g. Dion.Hal. 1.61-62.

the Etruscan component actively into play in the origins of Rome from the most remote of the beginnings, by implying that not only Etruscans might have participated in the act of the foundation, but that the most remote mythical ancestors of the Trojans - and therefore the Romans - was himself of Etruscan heritage.

This would of course hold particular significance if it could be proved that this variant version of the Dardanus myth is of Vergil's own creation; but even though this cannot be conclusively stated, the choice of this version against the most widely known one is still deliberate and therefore still significant. It proves, if not a deliberate desire to bring an Etruscan element into play in Rome's remote mythical beginning, certainly an awareness of the fact that acknowledging the presence of such an element was not perceived as problematic. Let us also note that Vergil could have described Dardanus' origins as more generically Italian, had his purpose only been to legitimise Aeneas' claim to power in Italy through his ancestry. There was no particular need to bring into play a specifically Etruscan heritage for the founder of Troy in order for this device to work. The fact that Dardanus' heritage is nonetheless presented as specifically Tyrrhenian is therefore all the more relevant, and it contributes to an acknowledgment of Etruscan influence operating in Roman heritage from its very inception.

Some connections are present between Tyrrhenians and religious practices. In a list of prodigies sent by Venus to sanction Euander' words offering Aeneas leadership over the Etruscans themselves, at 8.527, the sound of a 'Tyrrhenian trumpet' is included. The Etruscans, and Aeneas himself, are receptive to these prodigies. It is not the only case in

which the Tyrrhenians are depicted as particularly observant of divine will: it is precisely prompted by divine will that Tarchon had come to Euander, as narrated in 8.507, to offer him rule over the *Tyrrhena regna* (and by the time Aeneas meets him, Euander is indeed presenting himself as somewhat of an Etruscan king: at 8.458 he wears *Tyrrhena vincula* on his feet). As we have already observed, then, we are faced with further instances of Etruscan piety, sensibility to signs of divine will, and religious devotion. Tyrrhenians are also associated with another important value that often accompanies *pietas* - *fides*, loyalty - in Juno's speech at 10.71.

In a great number of occurrences 'Tyrrhenus', like 'Etruscus', is found in the context of military action. In the 'prologue in the midst' of Book VII, the poet states that he is going to address, among other aspects of the war, the Etruscan army, *Tyrrhenam manum*.[517] This has particular relevance in a passage that seems to focus the action specifically on Italy (*totamque sub arma coactam/Hesperiam*[518], 'Hesperia, all forced under the arms'), without any explicit mention of Trojans. Aeneas' Etruscan allies specifically are *Tyrrheni* on a number of occasions, to the point that the entire army supporting the Trojan hero is sometimes defined as Tyrrhenian. At 7.426 Allecto exhorts Turnus to cut down the ranks of Aeneas' supporters - *Tyrrhenas acies*. At 8.603 a Tyrrhenian army is shown in military camps under the guidance of King Tarchon. These Tyrrhenian fighters are repeatedly presented as being 'all the Etruscans': *Tyrrenique omnes* take part in the funerary procession for Pallas at 11.93, and later in the same book, at 11.171, Euander openly declares that Aeneas' rule is legitimised by the choice of both *Tyrrheni duces* and *Tyrrhenum exercitus omnis*. Most

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517   *Aen.* 7.43.
518   *Aen.* 7.43-44.

significant is the mention at 10.691: here the totality of *Tyrrhenae acies* is shown directing

the force of its assault at one specific enemy, the enemy being Mezentius - who, while

technically being Etruscan himself, is explicitly presented as the target of the concentrated

odii of the Etruscan community. It is very significant that the ethnic term is used in this

context, since the meaning it conveys is clear: the Etruscans are the ones fighting against

Mezentius, rather than the ones fighting for him.

In the latest part of the poem, and especially after the death of Mezentius, these mentions

of the Tyrrhenian army become particularly frequent. The *Tyrrhena manus* takes part in the

charge together with the Trojans at 11.450. Again we find *Tyrrheni duces* involved in a charge

alongside the Trojans and the Arcadians at 11.835. The Tyrrhenian cavalry in particular is

involved in the combat, and presented by Camilla and Turnus as a danger worth fearing, at

11.504 and again at 11.515. At 11.686 Camilla addresses the enemy she is fighting, the

huntsman Ornytus, specifically as '*Tyrrhene*'. Aeneas' army is composed of Trojans and

Tyrrhenians at 12.123. The word is also an Ethnic signifier at 12.272 for the nine sons of the

Arcadian Gylippus, born of a 'Tyrrhenian mother'; and at 12.290 for the Etruscan king

Aulestes. Tyrrhenus is also the personal name of one warrior, found at 11.612.

Again the ethnic classifier is used rather pointedly in a battle context to define the Etruscan

king Tarchon at 11.727: it is significant that here the term is used in a group of verses

describing an episode of particular military valour and fury on the part of Tarchon, which is

inspired by Jupiter himself and is described with strongly aggressive terms: *proelia saeua*

[…] stimulis haud mollibus inicit ira, 'to savage battle […] brought him to anger with less than

gentle spurs'. We could, in fact, classify this part of Tarchon's involvement in the military

action as the equivalent of an Homeric *aristeia*. What is particularly interesting is that this

aristia serves the purpose of bringing about a reaction in the Etruscan forces that had been

unmanned by Camilla's attack. Inspired by the divine intervention, Tarchon turns to address

the men under his command in terms that are all but compassionate: *semper*

inertes/Tyrrheni, quae tanta animis ignauia venit?[519], 'always inactive/ Tyrrhenians, what

great faintheartendness comes upon you?' Even more interesting, this address of Tarchon to

his troops openly touches upon some of the stereotypical negative tropes concerning

Etruscans: not only the king accuses his Tyrrhenian warriors, in his rage, of being *semper*

inertes, but he also accuses them of being all too ready when it comes to taking part in

pleasures and festivities, such as sex, feasts, wine, and Bacchic dances, which, he declares,

are their true *amor* and *studium*. He even goes to the point of inserting into the list a

vignette of a sacrifice led by a haruspex, an act that would not in itself having a negative

connotation but is nonetheless in turn a common stereotype connected with Etruscans.

Thus we can regard this address of Tarchon to his *Tyrrheni* as a review of all the negative

traits typically associated to the idea of Etruscans. In listing all these traits, however,

Tarchon's speech serves the purpose of rendering them invalid. It is most important that it is

Tarchon, and not, for instance, a non-Etruscan commander like Aeneas himself, that

pronounces this speech: and Tarchon who, right before giving voice to the speech, has been

pointedly defined as *Tyrrhenus* himself, and as divinely inspired. By following up his speech

with a successful *aristia*, and the speech being framed by his characterisation as an Etruscan,

Tarchon effectively overrides the negative stereotypes by appropriating their condemnation.

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519   *Aen*. 11.732-733.

Tarchon's actions contradict the accusations he has just levelled at his own men, and present an alternative image of Etruscans, martial and warlike, which is much more attuned to values generally perceived as positive in Roman literature. Tarchon's speech is openly asking his warriors to prove that the negative stereotypes concerning Etruscans are false through the action. And the Etruscan warriors promptly follow on cue: *ducis exemplum euentumque secuti/Maeonidae incurrunt,*[520] 'following the example of their commander and his success/ the Maeonians charged'.

The treatment of Mezentius will be addressed separately, since this is the character that most strongly presents a problem with regards to the idea that Vergil's representation of Etruscans is generally positive and tied to values that were in turn traditionally perceived as strong positives in previous Roman literature, such as *pietas* and military value. The figure of Mezentius in many ways contradicts this, and it therefore requires a separate evaluation to better understand this character's role in the universe of Etruscan presence in the Aeneid. This might add some level of nuance to a rigid categorisation of ethnicities along a negative/positive axis, allowing for intermediate and complex representations.

For the moment being, however, the two instances must be mentioned in which the adjective 'Tyrrhenus' is used in connection with Aeneas' enemies, one of which does indeed concern Mezentius. At 10.787, 'Tyrrhenus' is Mezentius' fallen son, Lausus; Aeneas, having delivered a successful blow, rejoices at the sight of his 'Tyrrhenian blood'. It is true that the ethnic classifier is here used to describe Aeneas' adversary; but it is also true that Lausus,

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520   *Aen.* 11. 758-759.

differently from his father Mezentius, is a character towards whom the poem - and Aeneas himself, in the verses that immediately follow - has a strongly sympathetic attitude. The youth is presented as brave and loyal beyond measure: Aeneas himself tells him so - *maiora uiribus audes*, he notes, trying to dissuade Lausus from chasing death, and most significantly, *fallit te [...] pietas tua*, 'your *pietas* betrays you'.[521] If Lausus has faults, then, they are excessive audacity and *pietas*: hardly negative traits. Furthermore, we should note that bravery and *pietas* are precisely the two traits we have found most recurrently associated with depictions of Etruscans in the Aeneid. Even though it relates to one of Aeneas' enemies, then, this passage does not build a negative characterisation of Etruscans, and it is in the same spirit of the other occurrences we have previously addressed.

At 10.898 the only instance is found in which the word 'Tyrrhenus' is used to describe Mezentius specifically. We must note that this one instance occurs in the moment of maximum vulnerability for Mezentius, who is facing Aeneas after the death of his beloved son Lausus, has been wounded and thrown from his horse, and is now waiting for Aeneas to deliver the last blow. It is perhaps the only moment in which the eye of the narrator appears to look sympathetically upon Mezentius, and where it is implied that Mezentius is acting in a way that is not typical for him (*ubi nunc Mezentius acer et illa/effera uis animi?*[522], 'where is now that fierce Mezentius and that/ cruel strength of the heart?', Aeneas asks him). Many commentators have wanted to see Mezentius' death as a partly redeeming moment for this character; it is certainly a display of valour, and of *pietas* towards his fallen son.[523] It might be

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521   *Aen.* 10. 811-812.
522   *Aen.* 10.897-898.
523   Gotoff 1984; Nethercut 1975; Kronenberg 2005.

not entirely coincidental that the only moment in which Mezentius is explicitly defined with an adjective signifying 'Etruscan', through the entirety of the Aeneid, is precisely the moment in which these qualities are allowed to shine through.

Depictions of Etruscan characters in the Aeneid

A further step forward can now be taken, leading us to address more at large the way in which Etruscan characters are presented within the narration of the Aeneid. Etruscans play an important role in the plot of the poem, since characters which are defined as such are found, in the later books, on both sides of the action. This provides us with an exceptional occasion to assess the treatment of Etruscan characters both when they are seen under a favourable light, as the allies and supporters of Aeneas, and when their position within the fabric of the poem is significantly more problematic, as his enemies - this is overwhelmingly the case with Mezentius, a character whose intensely negative connotations have been highlighted by numerous commentators[524] and who will need to be addressed separately in his own right.

Etruscan attitudes. Tarchon and the army of Aeneas' allies

As we have seen, the great majority of depictions of Etruscans in the Aeneid concerns Aeneas' allies, who appear to form, if not the bulk of his army, certainly a big component in it. These allies reach Aeneas through the intercession of two leaders of their own: the

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524   Jenkins 1998 633-634; Kronenberg 2005 pp. 405-406, among others.

Etruscan king Tarchon, and Euander, who although native of Arcadia is himself king to a mixed population of Arcadian incomers and Italian natives. Their allegiance to Aeneas is won by means of their devotion to the directions of godly oracles. Euander tells Aeneas, in Book 8, about a rebellion originating in the Etruscan city of Agylla against the ungodly cruelty of king Mezentius, leading to an army being gathered throughout Etruria in order to get Mezentius out of Latium, where he has sought refuge under Turnus' protection, and deliver him to justice. The army, however, is held back by prophecy: an 'ancient soothsayer' has decreed that they cannot achieve their purpose unless they are led by a foreigner, and therefore the army, led by king Tarchon, has come to offer command to Euander himself, because of his Arcadian origins.[525] It will be this very same oracle that will persuade them of the rightfulness of joining in the fight under Aeneas' leadership.

Several aspects in this narration are interesting to define the terms in which Vergil is choosing to depict Etruscans. First of all, the choice of Tarchon as the joint leader of the Etruscan army is all but casual. The mythological king of Tarquinii, of which he is also the eponymous hero,[526] Tarchon had known connections to the Etruscans' reputation for piety, and for prophecy specifically, in previous tradition. Tarchon was indeed connected with the myth of the foundation of the *Etrusca disciplina*, since it was from a field near Tarquinii that the prophet Tages was said to have emerged, and to Tarchon that Tages had originally revealed his wisdom. Some versions of the myth, in fact, had Tarchon himself driving the plough along the furrow from which Tages appeared.[527] In any case, Tarchon was then

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525   *Aen.* 8.454-519.
526   Strabo, *Geogr*. 5.2.2, makes him the founder and co-founder of multiple cities in Etruria, besides Tarquinii.
527   Nielson 1984 pp. 28-29; cfr. Cicero *De Div*. 2.50.

established to have been the original repository of the terms of the *Etrusca disciplina*, directly from its supernatural founder, and most likely the one who had established the tradition of haruspices. This is likely to be a particularly old myth, well rooted in Etruscan tradition. While Vergil does not say that the *longaeeus haruspex* who advised Tarchon to seek foreign leadership for his army is indeed Tages, he was clearly familiar with the association between Tarchon and prophets and responses, and it is perhaps not a peregrine suggestion that any reader familiar with that myth would have been reminded of Tarchon's connection to the prophet of the *Etrusca disciplina*.

The Etruscan king, as we have seen, is given a positive representation as a brave and loyal leader; he is even made to direct the upending of negative stereotypes about Etruscans, and his behaviour itself consistently contradicts such stereotypes throughout the poem. Although some commentators have sought to interpret the character of Tarchon as a negative comparison to Aeneas' correct standards of leadership,[528] the pre-eminence of his *aristia* and the speech accompanying it in Book 11 is in itself enough to contradict such interpretations. It can instead be concluded that Tarchon may have been picked as a leader for the Etruscan army not only because he was a well-known sovereign of Etruscan lore, but also specifically for his solid reputation as particularly pious. In this way, the character is first established as consolidating a pre-existing positive stereotype about Etruscans - the one that wanted them distinguished for their great religious piety, especially in connection with oracles and prophecy. It is not a coincidence that the very first action through which Aeneas' allies are introduced is their rejection of a king, Mezentius, who is disrespectful of religious

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528   Cfr. i.e. Muse 2007.

piety, and their decision to obey the prophecy of the *longaeeus haruspex*. Tarchon, as a

familiar figure with previous connections to religious lore, is particularly well-suited for this,

and this gives him in turn a strong standing point from which he can proceed, as has been

seen, to overturn other established stereotypes about Etruscans - this time, the negative

ones.

Aeneas' Etruscan allies are presented as pious multiple times, and it is quite clear that this

characteristic is not just limited to their king. The citizens of Pisa, for instance, are described,

in the catalogue of the allies, as following the leadership of an haruspex, *hominum

diuumque interpres Asilas*, who is depicted as performing the practices typical to haruspices:

divination through entrails and through lightning.[529] Asilas, like Tarchon, is therefore a

courageous military leader who also has a strong connection with the famous Etruscan

divinatory tradition. In the speech preceding his *aristia*, Tarchon describes a sacrifice led by

an haruspex as the most typical example of an activity that Etruscans are eager to take part

in. The connection between Etruscans and religious piety is, then, reinforced throughout the

poem. To it, as we have seen, are associated multiple examples of acts of bravery and

proficiency in battle, qualities less traditionally associated with the Etruscans but that are

made to constantly emerge in connection with them throughout the poem. Once again the

catalogue of the allies in Book 10 provides us with examples for this. While the inhabitants

of Clusium and Cosa are portrayed wielding weapons traditionally associated with Etruscans,

like bows and arrows, no negative connotation is associated with this. On the other hand,

the six hundred warriors from Populonia are *expertos belli*, and those from Pisa are arranged

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529   *Aen*. 10.175-179. Cfr. MacIntosh Turfa 2012 pp. 37-70; Santangelo 2013 pp. 98-106.

in tight ranks and brandishing spears.[530] Together with the multiple examples of warlike

bravery associated with Etruscans throughout the second half of the poem, these instances

contribute to define a depiction that associates to known positive traits such as religious

devotion new ones like military valour. It is apparent, then, that the poet is aware of the

negative stereotypes previously associated with Etruscan, and is, through the description of

Aeneas' allies, undertaking a deliberate attempt to overturn them.

Mezentius

In the light of this, even the figure of Mezentius, arguably the most negative in the whole of

the Aeneid, appears to be less problematic to our discourse. We have seen that there is an

apparent reluctance to openly associate to Mezentius any adjective meaning 'Etruscan';

indeed, this is matched by Mezentius being depicted throughout the poem as distinctly un-

Etruscan. While the Etruscans scrupulously adhere to religious norms and divine mandates,

Mezentius is, famously, *contemptor diuum*.[531] His presentation is constantly associated with

concepts of cruelty and blind rage. Aside from the descriptions of his inhuman acts of

violence and torture in Euander's account in Book 8, his name is often found in close

connection with terms such as *ira* (8.482, 10.714, 10.742) and he himself is described

through adjectives such as *ardens* (10.689), *alacer* (10.729), *acer* (10.897); according to

Aeneas he is provided with an *effera vis animi* (10.898). In almost every instance in which he

is presented he is prey to strong emotions and manifesting his fury in battle. This recurring

depiction of Mezentius as violent and raging, as well as his disregard of the gods, serves both

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530   *Aen.* 10.170-178.
531   *Aen.* 7.648. He is again *contemptor deum* at 8.7.

to give him an almost inhuman stature - Mezentius, it has been observed, is indeed more monster than man - and to bluntly differentiate him from the other Etruscans in the poem.

In fact, one could even argue that Mezentius is a perfect negative to the depiction of the other Etruscans. Where they are recurringly pious, he is recurringly blasphemous; where they are recurringly wise, he is recurringly raving. It is almost as if Mezentius is deliberately constructed as being everything that a 'good Etruscan' (or, indeed, a good person) should not be. Indeed, this serves to justify the force of the reaction of not just his subjects, but all Etruscans against him. It is not only the citizens who have been vexed by their murderous kings that rebel and bring Mezentius down: all cities in Etruria gather an army together to move against this man who so blatantly opposed all of their shared values. It is even implied that Mezentius' actions caused the downfall of a previous prosperity of the Etruscan communities, which had been no doubt ensured by the respect of those values that Mezentius set about violating.[532] If this contrast was not evident enough, the narrating voice of the poet makes it even clearer by stating that even those Etruscans who still fight at Mezentius' orders do not deserve such a ruler, and would be *laetior* – happier, or luckier – under a different one; and even, that his son Lausus, who is generally presented in a positive fashion, would deserve to have 'a father who is not a Mezentius'.[533] The only moment of sympathy reserved for Mezentius is at the moment of his death,[534] that same moment, as previously noted, is the only one when Mezentius is openly called an Etruscan.

A portrait of Vergil's Etruscans

532   *Aen.* 8.481-482.
533   *Aen.* 7.654.
534   See also Sullivan 1969; Dewar 1988; as well as other commentaries on Mezentius mentioned above.

Throughout Vergil's works, and especially in the Aeneid, Etruscans are given a positive

treatment. The poet displays a clear consciousness of the commonplace stereotypes about

Etruscans existing, and certainly being broadly known, before his works were written. To

these stereotypes he applies a process of reasoned selection. The ones that are of a positive

nature, such as the Etruscans' connections to religious piety, divinatory wisdom and respect

towards oracles, are preserved and even emphasised. The ones that carry mixed values,

such as the Etruscan's proficiency with bow and arrows - a weapon typically associated with

cowardice - or their Oriental origins, are still referenced but given a rethinking that removes

the negative connotation: the Etruscan archers are brave and eager for battle, the Lydians

are famous for being warlike. The negative stereotypes are acknowledged, in passages such

as Tarchon's speech, and then overturned through the characters' actions. Instead of

denying that such negative traits were commonly associated with Etruscans, thus, it is

instead implied that the association is unjust and does not correspond to reality. Lastly, a

markedly negative character such as Mezentius is presented as the polar opposite of

'normal' Etruscan behaviour, and this is in turn reinforced by the strong negative reaction of

all other Etruscans, including the ones who are not his subjects, towards him. Etruscans

emerge from this treatment with their image as a people rebuilt in a much stronger positive

way. It is now a matter of pride to have Etruscan origins: for Mantua, which derives its

strength from it, but possibly also from Rome, since Etruscans are now given a leading role in

its official foundation myth, and Romans are after all distant descendant of Etruscan

Dardanus. This 'cleaning' of Etruscan reputation clearly appears to be deliberate, and can be

better understood in the larger frame of a process through which Augustan-period ideology

constructed a new image of Rome that was equated to *tota Italia*, emphasising much more strongly the contribution of Italian populations to the earliest phases of Roman culture and tradition - and through those, to the *mos maiorum*. That the Etruscans appear to be at the forefront of this process in Vergil's work should perhaps not surprise us. A poet who had himself an Etruscan heritage, working for a patron who was famously proud of his Etruscan ancestors, can easily be seen to have a vested interested in bringing the Etruscans forward as important players in this process; and since this interest was in no way conflicting with the building of *tota Italia*,[535] there is no reason why its appearing prominently in the Aeneid should have been opposed by the Augustan establishment.

Propertius

The context situation becomes perhaps even more complex when we approach the work of Propertius. This complexity stems in the first place from the author's own background. Whereas with Vergil one could most assume a system of parallel or nested identities such as has been observed in other individuals with Etruscan origins throughout the present studies, Propertius' origins as described by the poet himself requires an expansion of this system in order to accommodate three possible levels of self-assigned ethnic identity. This aspect becomes even more relevant since, while the nature of Vergil's works allowed for a greater detachment of the narrating voice from the subject matter, in Propertius the poet is often

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535   Cfr. Witcher 2006 pp.88-89.

the subject of his own work. The self-representation aspect is therefore particularly strong in Propertius, which makes his work of particularly great interest for the present study.[536]

In the self-portrayal emerging from his four books of elegies, Propertius presents himself as alternating between three separate kinds of ethnic identity. Depending on the context, the topic, and sometimes the addressee, the poet appears to self-identify in turn as Umbrian, Etruscan, or Roman, and often as two of these (or even all three) at once. This singularly complex situation is made possible by the poet's own background, which has been investigated at length by modern scholars. F. Cairns, in particular, provides us with a reconstruction of Propertius' origins and connection which is impressive in scope and detail, and relying on a solid body of evidence. It is nonetheless useful to our analysis to briefly present some main aspects.

We know through his own works that Sextus Propertius was native of the Umbrian city of Asisium, where his family appears to have been part of a local elite, with several family members possibly covering local magistracies. The family name is well-attested in local epigraphy, and the family belongs to the tribe Sergia like the rest of the population of Asisium, making it likely that they would not have received Roman citizenship previous to the Social War. Their epigraphic presence in Asisium continues after the Civil Wars, suggesting that the Propertii received little or no damage in their social position from the

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536   For an overview on modern studies on this aspect see Massa-Pairault 2014; Poccetti 2012; Cairns 2006 especially pp. 60-61; 271-274.

conflict,[537] differently from other local families that seem to disappear from the epigraphic record at this time.

The Etruscan connection referenced by Propertius in his works derives most likely from the peculiar geographical positioning of Asisium. The city is located extremely close to the bordering Etruscan territory of Perusia. The connection between Perusia and Asisium is well-documented, with a number of family names appearing in both cities as duplicates with an Etruscan and an Umbrian form (e.g. Vipi/Vibii; Scaefi/Scaefii; Volcacii/Volcasii).[538] That common cultural traits as well as political connections were shared across the Umbrian-Etruscan border is a safe assumption,[539] and the phenomenon must have been particularly relevant to local elites in both cities, due to a degree of horizontal mobility generally observed in Italian elites.[540]

Seen in this light, the relationship of close friendship and probable patronage between Propertius and the Etruscan Volcacius Tullus of Perusia is hardly surprising, nor is it surprising that, in addressing Tullus, Propertius can reference a shared Etruscan heritage. The geographical proximity between Asisium and Perusia, as well as the shared cultural traits between the two populations,[541] are by themselves sufficient grounds to allow this; it is therefore not necessary to assume that Propertius must have had an actual Etruscan

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537   On their role in the Augustan period see ad es. Boldrighini 2008; 2014; Poccetti 2012; Sensi 2005; Forni 1986. Cairns 2006 pp. 8-9 presents a comprehensive overview of epigraphic material regarding the Propertii.
538   Cfr. Cairns 2006 p. 60.
539   And part of a wider phenomenon of acculturation along the Umbrian-Etruscan border for which see Amann 2011.
540   Cfr. Lomas 2012.
541   Cfr. Aigner-Foresti 1997.

ancestry, though given the situation in the Asisium-Perusia region the latter would not be exceptional. It is certainly not necessary to assume, as F. Cairns does, that the poet's mother must have been a relative of the Volcacii of Perusia,[542] something for which there is no material evidence. Given the fluidity in this area, it would not be problematic to assume that Propertius might have presented himself as Etruscan to some degree on cultural grounds alone. It is important to also remember that multiple identities must have enjoyed some degree of fluidity, and could be organised in a parallel system, with each identity coming to the forefront or fading intot he background depending on context.

Considering these aspects of the poet's background, it is possible to approach the actual text and attempt an analysis of Propertius' representations of Etruscans and Etrurian identities. In the light of the poet's self-proclaimed threefold origins, however, we have decided to also bring into this analysis any references to Umbria and Umbrian identities.

'Etruscan' and 'Umbrian' in Propertius' work

As with Vergil, an early phase in our analysis of Propertius' text has been a search for any terms that can interpreted as meaning 'Etruscan', and specifically the three variants *Etruscus*, *Tuscus*, and *Tyrrhenus*. Of these the latter appears to be of no relevance in this case, since of two occurrences one (1.8a.11) is purely geographical in nature and the other (3.17.25) is a reference to the widespread myth of Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates changed into dolphins.[543] The connection between Etruscans and piracy is widespread in

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542   Cairns 2006 p. 61.
543   See e.g. James 1975 for other versions of this myth.

literature[544] and its presence here in Propertius does not appear to hold any particular significance; though we could possibly remark that the poet does not refrain from referencing a myth that presents Etruscans in a negative capacity. *Etruscus* and *Tuscus*, on the other hand, appear in two separate clusters, both of high significance, which will be examined separately.

The two widely discussed elegies 1.21 and 1.22,[545] in themselves remarkable for their open connection to the highly problematic theme of the *Bellum Perusinum*, contain between them three instances of *Etruscus* (1.21.2, 1.21.10, and 1.22.5). All three are geographical in nature, and in fact the term appears to have a strong connection to the territory: the Etruscan ramparts, the Etruscan hills, the Etruscan soil. In 1.21 the narrating voice belongs to a dead soldier named Gallus, one of the victims of the fall of Perusia; only in 1.22 do we find out that he is a relative of Propertius himself. This is particularly relevant because it provides Propertius not only with a direct connection, but with an actual blood tie to the defenders of Perusia. It also provides him with a likely Etruscan blood tie, since it is more than possible that this Gallus would himself have been an Etruscan.

There is more than one Gallus to be found with strong Etruscan connections, foremost of which is *prefectus Aegypti* Aelius Gallus, later in all likelihood the adopted father of Aelius Sejanus. A connection between him and Propertius can be established through his relative Aelia Galla, possibly his sister.[546] She is mentioned in 3.12, an elegy in which Propertius addresses her husband Postumus, who appears to be a relative of the poet and might be

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544   Cfr. Camporeale 2016 p. 81.
545   For which see i.e. Nicholson 1998; Heiden 1995; Putnam 1976.
546   Cairns 2006 p. 20.

one and the same with the C. Propertius Postumus found in the Augustan-period inscription CIL VI 1501.[547] Whether or not this Aelius Gallus is also the Gallus repeatedly addressed by Propertius in the *Monobiblos*, and possibly a patron-like figure to the poet, is a discussed matter which has as yet no clear conclusion. In any case, given Propertius' connection with these Galli, it might be possible that his relative of the same name from 1.21 is related to them as well. Propertius himself appears to attach a strong significance to his connection with this Gallus, which is evidence through the reprise of the theme of 1.21 in 1.22, a poem that clearly serves as a 'signature', given its position at the end of the book and the fact that it addresses Propertius' origins. This latter poem holds special significance because it is here that Propertius provides an instance of direct representation of his ethnic identity.

It is significant that the addressee of 1.22 is Tullus - that is, Volcacius Tullus, of the Volcacii Tulli of Perusia.[548] Whether or not Propertius' professed friendship with it was truly a case of formal patronage, the poet's relationship with Tullus demonstrates yet another strong Etruscan connection. In fact, Tullus' position in Roman society, deriving both from his family and his personal history, may reflect to a high degree Propertius' own position. The Volcacii Tulli had received Roman citizenship previous to the Social War, and attained senatorial degree in Rome, reaching consulship for the first time in 66 BC with L. Volcacius Tullus, probably an uncle to the Tullus addressed in Propertius' works. At the same time, they remained active and strongly influential in their homeland of Perusia, which as we have seen held a strong cultural and political connection to Propertius' native Asisium. They had a well-attested history of supporting the Marian side first and the Caesarian side later, like other

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547   Although Eck 2012 suggests an alternative explanation according to which Postumus, like Aelius Gallus, would be a Roman *eques*, p. 11.
548   For this family see *supra*, Chapter 2.

elite families from Etruria. Given the outcome of the *Bellum Perusinum*, it is likely that this

Tullus may have been one of a number of men of senatorial rank who had original sided with

Lucius Antonius but ultimately evaded punishment by appealing to Octavian's *clementia* by

the end of the conflict.[549] This would have placed him in a somewhat ambiguous position

which appears to be similar to the one Propertius appears to have been in, given both the

fluctuations in his attitude towards the Augustan regime and the fact that at least one of his

own relatives had taken part in the *Bellum Perusinum* on Lucius Antonius' side.

This parallelism between Tullus and himself is openly expressed by Propertius in 1.22.

Questioned by Tullus about his origins and his *penates*, the poet appears at first to suggest

that both his and Tullus' roots lie in Perusia, and he adds that it is especially painful to him

that his kinsman's bones have been scattered on the Etruscan soil.[550] The strong Etruscan

reference is however not isolated, and ultimately leads to the conclusion that the poet

comes from *proxima Umbria*.[551] The choice of adjective is not casual, and this emphasis on

the proximity between Umbria and Perusia must be noted: it is perhaps one reason why

Tullus can better understand Propertius' Umbrian origins if he recalls his own Perusine ones.

The picture is further complicated by the presence, within the frame of the reference to civil

war, of more ethnic references: in the space of five lines the poet mentions, in sequence,

Perusina sepulcra patriae, *funera Italiae*, *Romana discordia* and *pulvis Etrusca*, 'the Perusine

graves of the motherland', 'the funerals of Italy', 'The Roman conflict', and 'the Etruscan soil',

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549   See also Cairns 2006 pp. 44-48; Eck 2012 pp. 2-9.
550   Propertius 1.22.6-7.
551   Propertius 1.22.9.

to conclude at last with the final reference to Umbria.[552] This abundance of references has often been viewed as problematic in modern literature, and attempts have been made to explain it by suggesting that it contains a contrast between some elements seen as negative and others seen as positive.[553]

The contrasts in this string of ethnic attributes are, however, only apparent. With this *excursus* on the *Bellum Perusinum* Propertius is painting a picture in which both he and Tullus can identify themselves, a picture that he clearly perceives as functional to the understanding of his Umbrian origins. Rather than be opposed to each other, the various ethnic references are elements contributing to the same final picture, that of a mixed identity that can apply to Tullus and Propertius both. In order to understand Propertius' *genus* Tullus will need to consider the graves of a shared Perusine *patria*, which is however also a graveyard of Italy's darkest times; while the sorrow of Perusia and Italy both has been caused by a Roman *discordia*. Far from presenting a contrast, Propertius is instead describing an impressively stratified system of nested identities. The players in the *Bellum Perusinum*, including Propertius' relative and Tullus himself, are in turn Perusine, Etruscan, Italian, and Roman - and most importantly, they are at the same time all four. Only after this composite picture of coexisting identities has been established does the poet come to the final element concerning his own identity, the one that he and Tullus do not share: that he is also Umbrian (*proxima suppositos contingens Umbria campos/me genuit,* 'neighbouring Umbria, where it touches the fields lying below/ gave me birth').

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552   Propertius 1.22.5-9.
553   Cfr. Clarke 2012 p. 369.

Two more occurrences of *Etruscus* are to be found at 2.1.29 and 3.9.1, in both cases within the context of dedications to his new patron Maecenas.[554] That pointed references to Etruscans are found when Maecenas is addressed is to be expected given the emphasis the latter seems to have placed on his own Etruscan origins; this will be addressed more at large when the role of Maecenas himself is discussed. For now let it suffice to point out that in 3.9.1 Maecenas is described as an '*eques* of the blood of Etruscan kings', as also elsewhere in the works of others of his client poets, and that these noble Etruscan origins are presented as a reason of pride, with no apparent problematic element attached to them.[555] 2.1.29 is a reference to themes previously addressed in Propertius' poetry: that 'the ruined fires of the ancient Etruscan people' are part of the list is probably a reference to 1.21 and 1.22. Yet it is significant that Propertius regards this as an important theme in his past production, and therefore worthy of mention even though most of the themes in the *Monobiblos* concerned love poetry. It is also significant that once again the Etruscan people is defined through its antiquity, a positive attribute that implies greater respectability: by virtue of their antiquity the Etruscans can be perceived as venerable.

Tuscus Vertumnus

All four instances of *Tuscus* occur within one same thematically uniform block in elegy 4.2, an *aition* relative to the statue of the god Vertumnus and the true origins of the god's name. One of these (4.2.50) is actually part of the name of the *Vicus Tuscus* where this particular statue was located, while the others (4.2.3, twice, and 4.2.49) are all ethnic signifiers,

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554   For a possible connection between Volcacius Tullus and Maecenas, which might imply a higher degree of continuity, cfr. Hammond 1980.
555   Cfr. *infra.*

relative to Vertumnus himself and to the historical Etruscans who are said to have given the

Vicus Tuscus its name. The instance at 4.2.3 is especially notable because of its position at

the start of the poem, immediately after the reader has been warned that in order to

understand the true nature of Vertumnus it is necessary to know the god's origins. The

statue, which throughout the poem is speaking in the first person, then proceeds to

equivocally state *Tuscus ego et Tuscis orior*, 'I am an Etruscan born of Etruscans'. This is the

first information that the statue of the god actually provides the reader with, and it is clearly

connected with the initial warning about the necessity of understanding its origins.[556]

Immediately after that, though, the second information provided is that Vertumnus does not

regret having abandoned the hearths of his native Volsinii *proelis*, in battle (or because of

war).[557] This act is signified by the particularly emphatic verb *deseruisse*, which possibly

implies, giving the military context, an act of desertion in the sense proper. Whether or not

this reference to Volsinii means that the statue itself may have been carried off from that

Etruscan city, possibly as a consequence of an otherwise not attested *evocatio* in connection

with the victory of consul M. Fulvius Flaccus at Volsinii in 264 BC,[558] the pride displayed by

the god about his Etruscan origins and the lack of regret for deserting Volsinii are only

apparently a paradox. The abandonment of Volsinii does not mean that Vertumnus now

rejects his Etruscan origins; if that was the case, the warning at the beginning about the

importance of those origins would be pointless. On the contrary, the apparent contradiction

must be read as part of "the underlying theme of present harmonious coexistence in Rome

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556   For the possibility that this follows a format typical of funerary inscriptions see Suits 1969.
557   Propertius 4.2.4.
558   Cfr. Suits 1969 p. 485. The author's suggestion that there may have been two statues, this one in the
Vicus Tuscus and the one brought to Rome by Fulvius Flaccus, is interesting but not necessary.

of things and persons Etruscan and Roman", as F. Cairns correctly points out.[559] Like the poet

himself - whose situation, when one considers the possible role of Propertius' family in the

Bellum Perusinum, might be remarkably similar - Vertumnus can say that he is not regretful

about becoming a well-integrated part of Roman society without rejecting his Etruscan

origins. Not only that, but he can also put further emphasis on those origins: Vertumnus can

only be fully understood when one is aware of his double identity as a Roman god active in

the very heart of Rome - he openly states that he is happy that he can see the Roman Forum

from his location[560] - and as an Etruscan born of Etruscans.[561]

The whole *aition* surrounding the origins of Vertumnus' name, which is the main topic of the

poem, ultimately finds it conclusion in underlining once more his Etruscan background, since

the god states that the correct etymology of his name is to be found in his *patria lingua*. It

has been suggested that this must needs be Latin, since the proposed etymology appears to

derive from the Latin *vertere;*[562] but the particularly strong statement made by *Tuscus ego et*

Tuscis orior leaves no doubt that Vertumnus' native tongue can only be Etruscan, and the

possibility of a supposed Etruscan etymology cannot be discounted.[563]

The poem, however, also contains a secondary *aition* regarding the origins of the *Vicus*

Tuscus, which is also significant to the theme of the representation of Etruscans in

Propertius' work. The district is identified as getting its name from the fact that it was given

as a reward to the Etruscans by the Romans after the former had aided them in the fight

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559   Cairns 2006 p. 281.
560   Propertius 4.2.14; for a wider discussion of the position of the statue see O'Neill 2000 p. 262.
561   Cfr. O'Neill 2000 p. 262.
562   Suits 1969 p. 485.
563   Cfr. MacDonald 2016 p. 209.

against Tatius and the Sabines. The choice of this particular myth, within the context of the speech of an Etruscan god who has become a Roman, is far from accidental. Going back to a period of Rome's mythological past immediately following its connection, this secondary *aition* introduces the idea of a connection between Romans and Etruscans that is significantly ancient, older even than the widely acknowledged one between Romans and Sabines.[564] That Sabines were from a very early date perceived as being one of the originary components of Roman society, while Etruscans were cast in such a role only later, has been convincingly demonstrated by G. Farney.[565] The myth about the *Vicus Tuscus* presented here by Propertius rectifies that record, suggesting that Etruscans had been fighting side to side with Romans, and had been given residence in Rome itself, even before the alliance with the Sabines. The process is similar to the one we have observed with Aeneas' Etruscan allies in Vergil, and serves the same purpose: the reconstruction of a mythological background where Etruscans are a fundamental component of Roman society and culture from its earliest phase.

Umbria in Propertius' work

Lastly, some words must be spent on other refrerences to Umbria in Propertius' work. The role of Umbria in relationship with both Etruria and Rome in 1.22 has already been noted. Equally interesting are the references to Umbria found in Book 4. A cluster of such references is found very early in the book, in the two programmatic elegies (1a and 1b) that address in turn the history of Rome from its remote beginnings and the role Propertius is to

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564   Going back to the earliest origins of Rome is an important strategy throughout this book, cfr. O'Rourke 2010 pp. 471-472.
565   Farney 2007 pp. 78-25 and especially 112-125.

play in composing his poetry. Here Umbria is mentioned once more as the poet's

motherland, first at 4.1a.63-64, then a second time at 4.1b.121, in both cases in conjunction

with Asisium.

The repeated mention of Umbria in such programmatic poems is all but casual. In 4.1a,

Umbria is the nation of the poet, the Roman Callimachus, of whom she can go proud; once

again in the space of two lines Propertius is presenting himself as both Umbrian and Roman,

and appears to regard both identities as contributing to the honour he has gained. If Umbria

can go proud of Propertius, it is also abundantly clear that Propertius is proud of Umbria,

whose juxtaposition with 'Trojan Rome' holds particular significance. Right before this

double mention, Propertius professes that his poetic labour *patriae serviet omne meae*, 'is

all in the service of my motherland'.[566] Which motherland this is, though, might at first

appear ambiguous, since the poet then proceeds to state first that his work will make

Umbria proud, then that Rome should favour him, since *tibi surgit opus*, this work arises for

her.[567]

The contradiction is only apparent: it is easily solved when one concludes that Umbria and

Rome are equally recognisable as the poet's motherland, and in fact the poet's motherland

can only be correctly defined as both Umbria and Rome as the same time. In this light line

64, *Umbria Romani patria Callimachi*, 'Umbria, motherland of the Roman Callimachus', with

the adjective 'Roman' so emblematically bracketed between *Umbria* and *patria*, works

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566   Propertius 4.1a.60.
567   Propertius 4.1a.67.

almost as a summary of the whole section. Umbria is the motherland of a Roman poet: there is no conflict between the two.

The passage in 4.1b only reinforces this concept; it is however worth noting, lastly, that here too there is a pointed use of the adjective *antiqua*. Umbria is dignified by the antiquity of its origins: a theme that we have already observed occurs frequently when Italian matters, Etruscan and otherwise, are introduced in a favourable light. *Antiqua Umbria* holds the same dignity as *Troica Roma*,[568] and for the same reason: the respectability its history and tradition have acquired through age.

The *tria corda* of Propertius

Compared with Vergil, Propertius' work is less concerned with epic themes and more concerned with contemporary matters, and it is perhaps because of this that it presents a particular attention to the theme of multiple identities whenever an ethnic discourse is concerned. This is articulated both in relationship with figures belonging to a pantheon or a mythological background (Vertumnus and the founders of the *Vicus Tuscus*) and with the poet himself.

Whereas Vergil contributed to the reinvention of the mythological Etruscan past as an integral component of the mythological Roman past, Propertius presents contemporary situations in which an apparent ambiguity is reconciled within a system of multiple identities. Vertumnus, Propertius himself, and his addressee Tullus are all examples of this,

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568   Propertius 4.1a.87.

though the poet himself is so to a higher degree. Both Vertumnus and Tullus are presented as balancing two parallel, coexisting identities: Etruscan and Roman. The god is fully Roman, with a strong connection with the Roman Forum and a particular fondness for the people of Rome, while remarking on the importance of his Tuscan origins; in the same way Tullus can be a player and a victim of *Romana discordia* (and therefore needs be Roman) and still regard Perusia as his *patria*. It could at most be argued that 1.22 also displays an awareness of a further element to this system, that is that one's identity as Etruscan might be part of a larger identity as 'Italian'. The discourse becomes however more complex when Propertius' self-representation is concerned. The poet plainly states his Umbrian origins; at the same time he proudly brings to the forefront, in more than one instance, his Etruscan connections, and in more than one instance he presents himself, equally proudly, as Roman.

It seems clear that what Propertius is representing is not an ambiguity between two systems of parallel identities (Etruscan/Roman or Umbrian/Roman), but one coherent system of three parallel identities (Umbrian/Etruscan/Roman). This is possibly the result of his starting point being in Asisium, which as we have seen was from a much older date part of a 'border culture' connected to the territory of neighbouring Perusia. Because of this border culture it is easy to assume that the inhabitants of Asisium would already have viewed themselves to some extent as operating within an identity system that can be described as Umbrian/Etruscan. The further addition of the Roman element to this system, then, would hardly have proved problematic.

That such a development could have been possible and accepted within the Roman framework is not surprising. One needs only to think of the much earlier claim by the poet Ennius of having *tria corda*[569] to envision something strongly similar. Ennius' claim was of course less deeply articulated than Propertius', and appeared to be built mostly on a linguistic basis; though it would be an interesting question to what degree the knowledge of Umbrian or Etruscan might have played into Propertius' perception of his own identity. Different social and political conditions in the time of Propertius meant that the discourse would have developed to a much more advanced point; but Ennius' example demonstrates that the Roman framework could easily allow for systems of more than two ethnic-related identities - as long as one was Roman. It may not be entirely by accident that it is specifically with Ennius that Propertius compares and contrasts himself in the programmatic poem 4.1a.[570]

Adopting this unique standpoint, and bringing it together with the standpoint of his patrons - both Volcacius Tullus and Gaius Maecenas high-ranking Etruscans that most certainly did not try to hide their origins - Propertius is particularly well qualified to bring Etruscan - and Umbrian - elements into Roman tradition, and, more importantly, presenting them as if they were always a part of it. This more than anything else is the message underlying the Vertumnus elegy; this is the added value brought to the Roman discourse by the founders of the Vicus Tuscus and by the contribution of *Antiqua Umbria*.

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569   Gellius 17.17.1.
570   Propertius 4.1a.61-62..

By engaging with the myth of Rome's foundation and of its earliest origins the poet weaves Etruscan elements in the fabric of Rome from its very beginning, validating them. More and more an image is brought forward in which being Etruscan - or Umbrian - makes an individual no less qualified to be Roman, and perhaps even more qualified to be Roman than others. It is the perspective of Propertius, with the three separate identities he claims for himself, but also, in all likelihood, the perspective of his Roman-Etruscan patrons. It is also, increasingly, a perspective that the Augustan regime, in its effort to equate Rome and Italy into one coherent unity, will adopt and promote. It is likely that this cultural environment, increasingly interested in Italian denominations, could have prompted a growing interest of poets in the way that they identified and described themselves with regards to their own Italian origins.

Building and using an Etruscan identity: the case of Gaius Maecenas

Modern academic literature has equally struggled to provide a detailed portrayal of Maecenas the man and of his role in the politics and cultural scene in the later years of the Triumvirate and the early years of the Principate. Two French-language monographs, one by P. Le Doze and one by C. Chillet, have to some extent grappled with the topic in recent years, addressing it from rather different angles. Le Doze entirely discounted any influence of Maecenas' Etruscan origins on his political career, arguing that everything could easily be explained through his equestrian status.[571] Such a position, however, does not take into account the emphasis that Maecenas himself appears to have placed on his Etruscan

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571   Le Doze 2014 pp. 245-271.

ascendancy, and the recurrent mentions of it in the works of poets to whom he was patron. It is therefore scarcely of use to the present discussion, although some of the remarks presented in this work still bear some consequence on the general shaping of Maecenas' public image. This reconstruction of Maecenas' life and career is also at times problematic in its tendency to make assumptions on Maecenas' character and personality based on weak evidence, or at times little evidence at all. Such is the case with the statement, hardly supported by ancient sources, that Maecenas was an Epicurean,[572] or that his greatest passion was for literature above politics.[573] These conjectures appear informed by suggestions rather than facts, and especially the latter is to some extent confuted by the evidence of Maecenas' deep involvement in the politics of his time.

C. Chillet's monograph appears on the other hand to be primarily interested in setting Maecenas into context, addressing the changes in Roman society in his times. In this, it is sometimes a better source about the cultural backdrop of Maecenas than about the man himself. It does however contain an extended discussion of Maecenas' purported Etruscan origins, albeit somewhat too optimistic concerning the veracity of his connection with the Cilnii.[574]

Before that, the most recent academic monograph regarding his life and works dates back to 1843.[575] The only more recent work, published in 1967 and being a self-declared attempt at a 'spiritual biography', is unfortunately of scarce relevance to our present study.[576] Other

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572   Le Doze 2014 pp. 200-213
573   Le Doze 2014 p. 115.
574   Chillet 2016 pp. 21-167.
575   Frandsen 1843. Previously see also Richer 1748; Lion 1824.
576   André 1966.

than that, he has not been the subject of any other comprehensive work. When scholars

have addressed the works and role of Maecenas, it has been mostly regarding his privileged

relationship with Augustan poets, particularly Horace and Vergil, and, less frequently, the

role he played as appointed ruler of Rome and Italy during Octavian's absence in the years of

the civil wars.[577] Several studies have been devoted to the analysis of the portrayal given of

Maecenas in the famous passage from Cassius Dio[578] opposing his speech to that of Agrippa

on different approaches to political rule.[579] This passage, however, holds only a limited value

as a source for reconstructing the actual figure of Maecenas, as he is presented as a mainly

literary, and in many ways stereotyped, character. The Maecenas depicted by Dio is

therefore largely fictional.

Lastly, Maecenas' relationship to his own Etruscan heritage has been only addressed

concerning his characterisation as 'Etruscan' as constructed by others, not his conscious use

of his 'Etruscan' origins.[580] The latter will instead be the main focus of the present analysis.

Not much is known about Maecenas' early years. He was born around 70 BC and is generally

regarded as being native of Arretium, in Northern Etruria, but we know that his father

played a prominent role among his fellow Equestrians in Rome,[581] so that the possibility that

Maecenas had indeed been brought up in Rome should be considered. It is still quite clear

that he maintained rather strong personal ties with the city his family had originated from.

Like his father, he was a member of the Equestrian order, and such he remained for all of his

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577   See e.g. Clarke 1978; Williams 1990.
578   Cassius Dio 52.2-40.
579   E.g. Adler 2012, with a detailed and insightful analysis.
580   Most notably in Bittarello 2009, see especially pp. 220-223. Chillet 2016 pp. 21-167 addresses
Maecenas' Etruscan background in some detail, although many of his conclusions are simply conjectural.
581   If the prominent Equestrian mentioned by Cicero is indeed his father.

life, purportedly turning down repeated offers by Augustus to appoint him to some important magistracy and elevate him to senatorial standing.[582] He was none the less very influent as one of Augustus' earlier followers and close confidantes. It was apparently with no official appointment that he held a relatively absolute power in governing Rome and Italy in the late years of the civil wars, effectively exercising a set of powers that would have been appropriate both for a *praefectus urbi* and a *magister equitum*.[583] He is listed as *praefectus urbi* for both 36 and 31 BC in Broughton's listings of Republican magistrates, which also records his involvement as an envoy on Octavian's behalf in 38 BC, when he travelled to Syria to meet Mark Antony and request military help, obtaining from him a promise of assistance.[584] Velleius Paterculus describes him as holding command of the city guards in Rome while Octavian was away fighting at Actium, and proceeds to paint a vivid portrait of Maecenas as a man who was well organised and 'almost sleepless' in attending to his duties, but none the less extremely prone to the enjoyment of luxury and lavishness in his private life.[585] This description may well reflect a public image that Maecenas had carefully crafted for himself, which is in turn tied with his own Etruscan heritage and the public perception of it.[586]

In the early years of Augustus' principate Maecenas was extremely influent as a patron of poets, with well-attested personal links with Vergil, Horace, Varius and Propertius. He exercised his personal influence on these authors in order to put forward literary themes that were ideologically connected with the agenda of Augustus' entourage. It is not always

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582   On Maecenas' refusal of involvement in public office cfr. Propertius 3.9.24.
583   According to both Tacitus, *Annals* 6.11 and Velleius Paterculus 2.88.
584   Broughton 1952 vol. 2 p. 393 (38 BC), p. 494 (31 BC); also cfr. PIR 2.315 n. 506.
585   Velleius Paterculus 2.88.2.
586   Cfr. Bittarello 2009 pp. 220-221.

easy to assess the level of effectiveness of this influence. While Vergil openly claims that Maecenas' requests informed the composition of his *Georgics*,[587] it is equally clear that some of the themes addressed by Propertius would have been far from pleasant to Augustus and his entourage.[588] All considered, his work as a patron can be best defined as an underlying influence rather than an effective control of the material produced. It would certainly be far too excessive to describe him, as some scholars have suggested, like some sort of Augustan 'minister of propaganda'.[589]

Whatever its effective scope, this influence continued at least until 23 BC, when a conspiracy was discovered that had as its leader Varro Murena, Maecenas' brother-in-law. Maecenas retired from all involvement in official politics soon after, although it is unclear to what point this was a direct consequence of the uncovering of the conspiracy. While Tacitus claims that he had lost Augustus' friendship,[590] all sources seem to agree that Maecenas' retirement was known to have happened at his own request, at least officially.[591] Whether or not he less openly maintained some sort of link to the court after this is debated, as is the extent to which the influence of his patronage on contemporary ideology continued. He was certainly never opposed to Augustus' regime, and there is good reason to assume that his attitude towards it remained amicable for the rest of his life, and until his death in 8 BC.[592]

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587   Cfr. e.g. Vergil, *Georgics* 3.41.
588   A very good example of this being Propertius 3.9.
589   Cfr. White 2005 p. 335.
590   Tacitus, *Annals* 3.30.
591   Including Tacitus himself, *Annales* 14.53.
592   For further discussion on this subject see White 1991.

Even with the uncertainty surrounding his standing and active influence in his later year, it is safe to assume that Maecenas exercised an important influence in the building of the new official Augustan ideological system. This is especially true when we consider that the period in which his influence was particularly strong is the same period of rapid and radical change, encompassing the last years of the Republic and the earliest years of the Empire, in which that very same system was being built.[593] It is therefore possible to conclude that, if a different way of representing Etruscans was finding its way into the most important works of poetry of that same period, Maecenas may well have been one of the forces directing it – if certainly not the only one, and possibly not even the most important.

To further explore Maecenas' connections to his Etruscan background, we must first of all address some level of uncertainty that appears to be present in the sources regarding his name. Most sources refer to him as simply 'Maecenas', and the ones that appear to give his full name present it as Gaius Maecenas, with no known *cognomen*. Most reference works, however, also associate him with the name Cilnius, to the point that he is indeed often known to the wider public as 'Gaius Cilnius Maecenas'.[594] His association with the name Cilnius is derived from one single reference in Tacitus,[595] concerning the period of his rule in Rome in Octavian's name. Here he is indeed called Cilnius Maecenas rather than Gaius Maecenas; however, this occurrence is entirely isolated, and even elsewhere in Tacitus' works he is consistently referred to as Gaius Maecenas.[596]

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593   Cfr. *supra*.
594   He is also erroneously cited as 'Gaius Cilnius Maecenas' in several important academic works, including Bittarello 2009 p. 220, and the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, s.v. Gaeus Cilnius Maecenas.
595   Tacitus, *Annales* 6.11.
596   Cfr. Tacitus, *Annales* 14.53-55.

Whether or not we should classify Tacitus' outlier reference as simply a slip of the historian, as most scholars now tend to do,[597] the existence of such a slip is nonetheless relevant. It testifies that such an association between Maecenas and the name Cilnius must have existed somewhere in Tacitus' sources. Moreover, we cannot attribute the mistake to an error in manuscript tradition, as Cilnius would undoubtedly classify as a *lectio difficilior*. Although we do not have any other direct evidence openly associating Maecenas' name to the name Cilnius, or implying that 'Cilnius' was at any given point a part of his naming formula, we do possess other strands of evidence that seem to consistently testify to a connection of some sort between Maecenas and the Cilnii. In order to better understand them, a short digression is needed addressing what is known to us of the previous history of the Cilnii as a family.

Early interactions between the wealthy Etruscan family of the Cilnii of Arretium and Republican Rome are attested in some passages from Livy.[598] The framework for these events is that of the *Arretinorum seditiones* of 302 BC, which would later escalate into a rebellion that apparently spread to other Etruscan cities. Although it is not entirely clear what sort of class struggle underlied the rebellion, and scholarly opinions on the subject are varied,[599] Livy seems to write under the impression that the original promoters of the uprising were free men and not slaves. The rebellion in this case seems to be directed, rather than at a generic oligarchic class, at the family of the Cilnii specifically.[600] This family is

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597   Cfr. *Oxford Classical Dictionary* s.v. Maecenas, Gaius. PIR *editio altera* p. 158 n. 730 also lists it as a mistake.
598   Livy 10.3.2; 10.5.13.
599   For discussions of Etruscan social structure see among others Izzet 2007, Haynes 2000, and Torelli 2008.
600   Livy 10.3.2. has the rebellion start as an attempt to drive the Cilnii out of the city.

described by Livy as *praepotens divitiarum* – therefore, extremely wealthy – and is depicted as the sole holder of power in Arretium at the time of the events.

Although it is rather more likely that the Cilnii simply held a particularly prominent position in a local power elite, somewhat similar to what is attested for the Caecinae at Volaterrae,[601] it would not be unlikely for the Romans to perceive their power as kingly, and indeed it appears that Livy himself regarded it as absolute. This is also interesting because it reveals that a direct connection existed between the Cilnii as a family and Rome from a relatively early date, as the Cilnii proceeded to request Roman help against the uprising, which was subsequently granted and managed to reinstate them in power. All this considered, it is safe to assume that the name of the Cilnii would be known in Rome and associated to the idea of an extremely wealthy and powerful Etruscan family, possibly of kingly status.

Historical evidence for the Cilnii both at Arretium and in Rome is, apart from Livy, unfortunately sparse. Epigraphic evidence from Etruscan inscriptions, although not as consistent as it is for the Caecinae at Volaterrae, seems to support the idea that the Cilnii were at the forefront of the local group of elite families.[602] As for their presence in Rome, some family members can be traced as holding important magistracies in the early Empire, the earliest of them being C. Cilnius Paetinus P.f., whose *cursus honorum* includes the titles of *tribunus militum* and quaestor under Tiberius.[603] The family appears to have retained its relevance within the Imperial Senate to a rather later date, as a C. Cilnius Proculus is found

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601   For the situation at Volaterrae cfr. Terrenato 1998.
602   CIE 408; 409.
603   PIR *editio altera* II p. 158, n. 731.

holding a consulship under the reign of Trajan.[604] Both of these later Cilnii belong to the

Pomptina tribe, which is the tribe assigned to Arretium, and they are therefore to be

regarded as most likely genuine descendants of the original Etruscan family, especially

considering the rarity of the family name.[605] Funerary inscriptions for members of the Cilnii

are also still found at Arretium throughout the first century AD.[606]

There are, unfortunately, no records of Cilnii serving any magistracies in the later Republican

period, although it is safe to assume that the family was present in Rome in that period and

most likely gained its senatorial rank before the start of the Empire. A C. Cilnius Cai filius

appears in a severely damaged inscription from Volaterrae,[607] possibly dating from the first

century BC, that may have contained a list of *quattuorviri*, but the date is far from certain

given the extremely poor preservation of the inscription.

Evidence for the Maecenates is easier to put together. An Etruscan original form of the

family name, *mehnate*, is attested in epigraphic evidence.[608] The provenience of these

inscriptions is, however, consistently from Perusia rather than Arretium, which brought W.V.

Harris to suggest that the family may have originated in the former rather than the latter.[609]

It is not necessarily to assume that it was so, as the epigraphic record is severely skewed in

favour of Perusia, and the lack of instances of the name in Arretine evidence may simply be

a consequence of the much smaller number of surviving inscriptions. All historical sources

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604   PIR *editio altera* II p. 158, n. 732.
605   Also cfr. CIL VI 1376, CIE 418 for evidence of Cilnii in the Pomptina tribe.
606   CIL XI 1857; 1858.
607   CIL XI 1746; IX 641(2).
608   CIE 4180; 4395; 4405.
609   Harris 1971 pp. 320-321.

agree in connecting the Maecenates with Arretium, and all known Maecenates are found in the Pomptina tribe, with one notable exception. This is also the earliest mention of a Maecenas in epigraphic evidence from Rome, dating roughly between 100 and 70 BC. It contains the name of a (Gaius?) Maecenas Decimi filius, who is the *patronus* for a society of Greek singers.[610] Interestingly, this Maecenas belongs to the Maecia tribe rather than the Pomptina, which may suggest that the family could have been enfranchised before the Social War. The evidence is however far too weak to support this conclusion, and this particular Maecenas may simply not be related with the others.

A C. Maecenas, mentioned by Cicero in the *Pro Cluentio* as an outstanding member of the Equestrian order,[611] is generally regarded as being the Augustan Maecenas' father, although there is some discrepancy in that epigraphic evidence set up by Maecenas' *liberti* records his father's name as Lucius rather than Gaius.[612] In any case, given his prominence within the Equestrian order in Rome, it is safe to consider him at the very least a close relative. C. Chillet claims that a L. Maecenas mentioned by Nicolaus Damascenus[613] is actually Maecenas' father,[614] but brings no supporting evidence for this claim. Previous works have pointed out that Damascenus is here mistaken in his onomastics, and clearly means to refer to Maecenas himself.[615] There seems nonetheless little doubt that Maecenas' father, whether his *praenomen* was Gaius or Lucius, must have been an equestrian in Rome.

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610   CIL I^2 2519. See fig. 17.
611   Cicero, *Pro Cluentio* 153.9.
612   CIL VI 21771.
613   Nicolaus Damascenus 31.133.
614   Chillet 2016 pp. 21-26.
615   Hall 1923; Toher 2016 p. 417.

One last Maecenas is recorded by Sallust as one of the scribes involved in the conspiracy against Sertorius in Spain, although the passing mention is not sufficient to reconstruct his relationship with the others.[616] It would be unsurprising to find that he too was Equestrian in rank. Nowhere in the evidence we possess are the Maecenates connected with senatorial rank, and nowhere is their name associated with the Cilnii. The greatest number of surviving inscriptions mentioning the Maecenates are funerary dedications for *liberti* of the Augustan Maecenas, all of which appear to have consistently taken the *nomen* Maecenas or the *cognomen* Maecenatianus.[617] This is also the case for Maecenas Melissus, another freedman of Maecenas who was later put in charge of the library in the Portico of Octavia by Augustus.[618]

However incomplete it may look, the evidence we possess is coherent in showing no contact at all between Maecenas and the Cilnii. Moreover, when considerations are to be made about Roman naming patterns, we are compelled to observe that Roman tradition implied that freedmen should take up the *nomen* of their former master. This, together with the absence of the name Cilnius from the naming formulas of all other Maecenates known to us, is sufficient to safely affirm that the *nomen* of Augustus' counsellor must have been Maecenas rather than Cilnius. Epigraphic evidence, as well as other evidence from historical sources, is also consistent in confirming that his *praenomen* was Gaius rather than the highly anomalous Cilnius.[619] Where does, then, Tacitus' naming confusion stem from?

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616   Sallust, *Historiae* 3.83.
617   See e.g. CIL VI 21774.
618   Suetonius, *De Grammaticis* 21.
619   See e.g. the inscription addressed in Hammond 1980 pp. 264 ff.

To try and explain this, there has been a search for a connection between Maecenas and the Cilnii,[620] to the point where it has been suggested that he may have been related to the famous Arretine family on the side of his mother.[621] C. Chillet displays a high degree of confidence in the veridicity of Maecenas being a descendent of the Cilnii. He does, however, admit himself that most of his conclusions to this effect are simply hypothetical.[622]

Based on the existing evidence, that Maecenas was a descendent of the Cilnii on the maternal side is impossible to prove. There are, however, faint traces of some kind of connection being known to Maecenas' contemporaries. Most quoted among these is the passage reported in Macrobius as an example of Augustus' sense of humour, where the emperor is parodying Maecenas' baroque writing style in an elaborate address to Maecenas himself. This is the only direct open connection between Maecenas and the Cilnii other than Tacitus' naming mistake, and it is worth fully quoting:

"*Vale, mel gentium †meculle† , ebur ex Etruria, lasar Arretinum, adamas Supernas,*

Tiberinum margaritum, Cilniorum smaragde, iaspi figulorum, berylle Porsenae,

carbunculum †habeas† "

"Farewell, honey of all peoples [of Medullia?], my Etrurian ivory, Arretine *lasar*,

Adriatic diamond, pearl of the Tiber, Cilnian emerald, potters' jasper, Porsenna's beryl,

carbuncle [...]"[623]

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620   For some considerations on this purported connection see also Simpson 1996.
621   Cooley 2003 p. 341.
622   Chillet 2016 pp. 21-167.
623   Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.4.12.

It is to be noted that this text comes from a later source, and there can therefore be reasonable doubts concerning its reliability. Suetonius did mention a parody of Maecenas' poetry composed by Augustus himself,[624] which could be read as supporting evidence for the veridicity of this quote. It still is at the very least evidence of a persisting association between Maecenas and an Etruscan tradition generally, and the Cilnii specifically.

This text is purported to be a direct parody of the style of Maecenas himself; it openly associates him with the Cilnii; even in its clearly humorous style it establishes a marked connection with a clearly Etruscan milieu. Four of the epiteths have a clear Etruscan connotation (out of which two openly connected with Arretium). These are of course 'Etrurian ivory', 'Arretine silphium-juice', 'Porsenna's beryl', and, most important to our discussion, 'Cilnian emerald'. The Tiber, as seen above, is repeatedly referred to as 'the Tuscan river' in the works of Vergil.[625] The reconstruction of a reference to Medullia is far from certain. If verified, it would be significant as it mentions a city of great relevance in the events of Rome's earliest past.[626]

Given its humorous nature, it would be a mistake to take the connection with the Cilnii present in this text as proof that Maecenas was indeed related to them.[627] It is very likely that the Cilnii appeared in this list for the same reason for which Porsenna is mentioned in it: that is, both were commonplace figures representing famous Etruscan kings. The choice of the Cilnii would have been further influenced by their connection with Arretium, Maecenas'

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624   Suetonius, *Augustus* 86.2.
625   Cfr. *supra*.
626   Cfr. Livy 1.33.4; 1.38.4.
627   A mistake that is made in Bittarello 2009 p. 220 n. 56, where the name given to Maecenas by Tacitus is also erroneously reported as 'Gaius Cilnius Maecenas'.

birthplace. This is not to signify that Maecenas was a descendant of the Cilnii: rather, their

mention works as a metonymy, as that of Porsenna does. The text is meant to jokingly

elaborate on the emphasis probably put by Maecenas himself on his Etruscan background.

This does, however, not mean that it is completely devoid of importance. It is proof that

Maecenas did indeed place such an emphasis on his Etruscan heritage; that such an

emphasis included clear references to his connection with Arretium, a city of which the Cilnii

were considered to have been kings; and lastly, that this probably happened within the

process of redefinition of the Etruscans in early Augustan culture.

Although no other instances are found that openly connect Maecenas with the Cilnii, there

is a clear overarching tendency to thematise him as 'a descendant of Etruscan kings'. Thus,

Maecenas is called 'descendant of ancient kings' in Horatius' *Odes*,[628] and in the *Elegiae in*

Maecenatem he is called 'Etruscan, of kingly blood'.[629] Although the attribution of the latter

work to Vergil has been proven false,[630] its dating to the early years of the reign of Tiberius

testifies that the image of Maecenas as a descendant of Etruscan kings was well ingrained

enough in public perception to be still taken for granted decades after his death. It may also

be relevant that in the famous debate between Maecenas and Agrippa on the forms of

government, Maecenas supports a rather more monarchic position.[631] The debate probably

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628   Horatius, *Odes* 1.1.1; 3.29.1. Also compare Propertius 3.9.1, where Maecenas is 'from the blood of Etruscan kings'.
629   Appendix Vergiliana, *Elegiae in Maecenatem* 1.13.
630   Cfr. Marincic 2007. Le Doze 2014, pp. 193-200, while rightly acknowledging these issues with the *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, is far too skeptical concerning their possible usefulness.
631   See *supra*; cfr. Adler 2012.

never really took place: but it would have made sense to Dio's readers that the descendant of Etruscan kings would speak in favour of a monarchic model.

Maecenas certainly had the means to construct a public image for himself as a descendant of kings, and of Etruscan kings specifically. First of all, there was his direct influence on famous mainstream poets to which he was patron, an influence that Vergil described as pressing and demanding.[632] It is far from unlikely that he used such an influence to direct a new way of representing Italians and Etruscans specifically in order to accommodate new ideological needs, and it is plausible that he may also have used it to promote the public image he wanted to build for himself. Maecenas himself was a very public figure, and although his works have survived for us only as a group of fragment of sometimes contested attribution,[633] he did himself write his own poetry. If Augustus' quote as related by Macrobius is meant to satirise Maecenas' own style, he may have included frequent callbacks to his illustrious Etruscan past in his own works.

Was Cilnius at any point a part of Maecenas' official naming formula? The lack of supporting evidence makes it impossible to assume that it was, and yet it would be far than surprising considering the peculiar use that was made of onomastics in the later Republic and the early years of the Empire.[634] While the evidence we possess seems to deny that it was his *nomen*, and indeed it would have been very unusual for someone to change his *nomen* unless it was to signify adoption in a different *gens*, other parts of Roman naming formulas were dropped or assumed relatively freely, and often based on a political agenda. This is particularly true

632   Vergil, *Georg*. 3.41.
633   See Morel 1927; Büchner 1982.
634   For a detailed and comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon see Syme 1958.

for *cognomina*; it will suffice to mention the case of Lucius Antonius, who was known to have assumed the *cognomen* Pietas in order to signify his loyalty to his older brother in a moment when it could have been doubted.[635]

As we do not know any official *cognomen* for Maecenas, we cannot exclude the possibility that at some point he might have adopted Cilnius as one. Tacitus, however, seems to treat it as his *praenomen*; this would be rather more unusual, but not entirely unheard of in this period. Most famously, Augustus himself obtained licence from the Senate to change his *praenomen* to Imperator;[636] but this was not an isolated instance, and approval from the Senate does not appear to have been required. None was given to Sextus Pompey when he decided to change his *praenomen* to Magnus in order to solidify perceived ties to his father.[637]

Although a later official change of Maecenas' *praenomen* from Gaius to Cilnius is far from impossible, and could better explain Tacitus' slip, this must, however, remain pure conjecture. It is none the less clear that the name Cilnius was associated to that of Maecenas in public knowledge, strongly enough that such a confusion could take place. Considering the reputation of the Cilnii in Rome, this is certainly to be connected to the equally well ingrained public perception of Maecenas as a descendant of kings – a perception that, as we have seen, was built and encouraged by Maecenas himself.

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635   This is in the context of the *bellum Perusinum*; cfr. Cassius Dio 48.5. See also Roddaz 1988 pp. 323-324.
636   Cfr. Syme 1958.
637   Gowing *et al.* 2002; he also assumed the *cognomen* Pius for the same purpose.

Such a claim can certainly only make sense in the changing ideological system that

Maecenas himself helped build in the context of Augustan ideology. This is also probably to

be related with Maecenas' refusal to ever rise above his original Equestrian status. With

Augustus' accession to the principate, a new power class enters the political scene, made up

of men not necessarily related to the old senatorial elite but tightly connected with the court

and its politics.

Maecenas himself is a perfect example of this category: his undoubtedly marked influence

does not derive from official magistracies or recognition as a senator, but from his personal

ties with the *princeps* and his connections with mainstream authors.[638] Moreover, authors

from this period, some of them directly influenced by Maecenas himself, take part in a more

general rethinking of Italians in general, and Etruscans in particular, as the original founders

of authentic Roman culture, in the context of a general process of identification between

Rome and Italy.[639] By tapping into this current Maecenas provided himself with an

alternative claim to respectability, related to the antiquity and illustriousness of his Etruscan

origins rather than to his belonging to the upper Roman social class.

It has also been remarked that his public behaviour was perceived as fitting with the

common perception of a member of the Etruscan nobility; however, commonplace traits

that were generally associated with the Etruscans and perceived as negative, such as a love

for luxury, were counterbalanced by traits like loyalty and efficiency, as underlined by

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638   Both Le Doze 2014 and Chillet 2016 correctly point out that Maecenas may have chosen to remain an equestrian because, with the additional standing provided by the antiquity of his origins, he had no need of further social promotion.
639   See *supra*.

Velleius Paterculus' descriptions.[640] These traits are part of the new commonplace depiction of Etruscans emerging in this period, taking more and more of a positive connotation as it comes to be tightly tied to the origins of Roman and Italian culture and to be systematically opposed to the hostile and degenerate culture of the East. Lastly, Maecenas' public claim to kingly descent is in some way rendered innocuous by his refusal of senatorial rank: by not accepting any magistracies, the interpretation of the claim is diverted from a dangerous allusion to excessive political power to a simply cultural element, related at worst to a lavish and excessive lifestyle.

In conclusion, in Gaius Maecenas – whether or not he was ever officially known as Cilnius – we find a remarkable example of conscious manipulation of self-representation involving Etruscan identity. This can only be fully understood in the wider context of the reinterpretation of Etruscans in Augustan culture and ideology that we have examined in the previous sections of this chapter. It is also important to remark that the contribution of mainstream literature to this reinterpretation was not only provided by authors who had in some cases Etruscan origins, but mostly directed by the influence and suggestions of Maecenas himself. We thus have in Maecenas a unique example of a very influential public figure who seems to have both directed the new trends in public perceptions of Etruscans and profited from them personally.

Conclusions

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640   Bittarello 2009's discussion of the Etruscan nature of Maecenas correctly addresses the presence of both aspects, but fails to recognise that the connotation of Etruscan heritage in this context is not meant to be negative; cfr. pp. 222-223.

A presence of figures with claims to Etruscan origins appears significant in the panorama of Roman literature between the end of the Republic and the early years of Augustus' principate. These authors do not shy from addressing Etruscan themes; on the contrary, such themes are recurring in their works. Evidence of connections with patronage from individuals themselves of Etruscan heritage is also available, and becomes paramount with the establishing of a loose circle of poets surrounding Gaius Maecenas. A discourse around Etruscan themes appears to have been common in this circle, often addressing Maecenas' own origins, which are presented as a source of social standing and prestige.

Both the depictions of Etruscans in works such as those of Vergil and Propertius, and Maecenas' treatment of his own Etruscan heritage, point towards a phenomenon of greater acceptance, and at times active promotion, of positive perceptions of Etruscans. The antiquity of Etruscan origins, be it of cities like Mantua or of individuals like Maecenas, is presented like a valid claim to respectability. The ancient and authoritative cultural tradition of the Etruscans is conflated with that of Rome, and more than the Etruscans are presented to some extent as 'the earliest of the Romans', or at least as active members of Roman society since the most remote of times. This is also accompanied by a lack of emphasis on negative stereotypes of Etruscans, and an increasing emphasis on positive traits that are commonly accepted as desirable qualities in Rome. These include military valour and religious piety. At the same time, the more debatable traits, such as Maecenas' lavishness, are presented through an upending of the negative stereotype that turns them into signs of munificence rather than debauchery.

These developments are in many ways made possible by the increasing adoption of the system of parallel identities that has been observed throughout all case studies in the present work. Reclaiming Etruscan origins as a positive trait is only possible when no apparent conflict exists between being Etruscan and being Roman. This is achieved by acknowledging the Etruscan role in Roman history even before the foundation of the city of Rome itself, but also by establishing a system where multiple identities could be held by the same individual without conflict. It is within such a system that Propertius can be at the same time Umbrian, Etruscan, and Roman; that Vergil can reclaim the Etruscan origins of his native Mantua within the most Roman of epics; that Maecenas can be at the same time the descendant of Etruscan kings and a prominent Roman *eques*.

Conclusions

The number of examples that have been addressed in the course of this investigation of the dynamics of Etruscan self-representation do not illuminate every individual aspect of the development of these concepts in the Late Republic. Rather, they highlight even more how the matter is a complex and multifaceted one, that can only be understood through the sum of its parts. Only by simultaneously pursuing multiple avenues of research can we grow closer to an understanding of the way in which individuals of Etruscan origins changed their ways to publicly acknowledge and express their connections to Etruria, and to use them to their advantage - or hide them when need be. Because of the great variety of strategies employed, and the great variety of different contexts in which they were employed, different types of evidence will also necessarily be addressed.

Across the board, some general trends have been highlighted. There seems to be an ongoing shift throughout the Late Republic, culminating in the early years of the Augustan principate, towards a more positive representation of Etruscans as a norm. This is accompanied by a growing acknowledgement of the role played by Etruscans in important aspects of Roman history and culture. An Etruscan presence in Roman society is recognised from a very early date and, as shown in the analysis of the *Aeneid*, even before the foundation of Rome itself. Etruscans are presented as religious authorities, especially in the field of divination. Measures are taken by the Roman Senate to preserve the practice of haruspicy and its connections to Etruria. In the same way religious texts of Etruscan origins are regarded as valuable and worth preserving. Individuals and families may have seen a growing advantage

in publicly acknowledging their Etruscan origins. It certainly ceased being a hindrance to their political career.

The most important result is perhaps the observation, in every case study addressed in the present work, of an underlying system of parallel or nested identities. Further elaborating on the groundwork laid by G. Farney in his study on Roman aristocracy,[641] the evidence gathered has shown how individuals could at this time lay claim to more than one 'ethnic' identity at the same time. This is an attitude observable both in Rome, with families such as the Perpernae and the Volcacii Tulli, and outside of it, with remarkable cases like that of the Volumnii of Perusia. These systems would comprise typically two concurrent identities – in these case studies, usually Etruscan/Roman. But there is evidence that they could even comprise three: such is the case of Propertius, with his Umbrian/Etruscan/Roman self-representation. What is more important is that no obstacle is perceived to the coexistence of these different identities. The nested model offered by Farney proposes that the non-Roman Italian identity could exist as a sub-category of the overarching Roman identity. From the case studies addressed above it emerged that this is not necessarily always a case. Cases like that of the Velimnas/Volumnii appear to point towards a parallel system, in which the two identities enjoy a similar standing and are chosen in turn depending on situation and context. It must be concluded then that two separate models are followed: the nested one, in which both identities are acknowledged at the same time, and the parallel one, in which each identity is 'performed' when most convenient. It is also likely that the same individual could have switched from a parallel to a nested model when it was expedient to do so.

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641   Farney 2007.

A diversity of choices and strategies has emerged that seems to set apart single families or individuals. Some general trends appear to be tied to the community or city-state of origin, especially concerning political allegiances. At the same time, different families could develop their own strategies and use their Etruscan identity to their advantage in different ways. The acknowledgement of a common belonging to an overarching 'Etruscan' group seems to have been subordinated at times to the interests of a single community or family. This perception of family as an important unit and this predominance of family history as a tool for building identity supports the observations of K. Lomas on the importance of Roman family histories.[642] As Cornell has noted, these appear to have been an important tool for self-representation of identity, especially with ties to geographical or ethnic origins. At the same time, this presents a clear picture of elite families as 'clan-like' structures with independent political leverage. Following on the conclusions of C. Smith in his work on the 'Roman clan',[643] these cases demonstrate that this perception of elite families remained widespread in Etruria as well as Rome, and proved an important tool for integration when 'exported' into Rome.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a need to recognise a high level of agency in individuals of Etruscan origins. In these crucial decades of the Late Republic, they contributed actively to shaping the concept of 'Etruscan' in the general understanding. Far too often studies concerned with the evolution of such a concept have assumed that it was entirely Roman-driven. The circulation, and at times the challenging, of certain stereotypes, would be

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642   Lomas 1996.
643   Smith 2006.

created by 'Romans' looking at 'Etruscans' as an external entity,[644] and modified through time by 'Romans' as the nature of their interaction with 'Etruscans' changed. Yet it is now clear that individuals originating from centres in Etruria, or claiming to be, enjoyed a much greater level of agency than was previously attributed to them. Some of the most influential depictions of Etruscans in literature, which are often claimed by studies to present views of the stereotypical Etruscan, were in fact produced by authors who could themselves traced their origins to the centres of Etruria, and, at least in the early Augustan period, for a good part under the patronage of an influential Etruscan, Gaius Maecenas, who has himself often been depicted as conforming to a certain degree to the circulating stereotypes about 'Etruscans' - while he may well have been driving them to a certain extent.

In the later years of the Republic and the earliest years of the Principate the portrayal and promotion of one's Etruscan identity may have become valuable. The individuals of Etruscan origins that chose to follow this path did so within the framework of a general process of building a shared Italy-wide 'Roman' identity, that allowed for non-Roman origins of cultural elements. This process resonated with the Augustan ideology in a way that had seen its most blatant expression in the rhetoric surrounding Actium. Yet its roots can be detected in the Republic, and its earlier manifestations are already evident in the Republican interest in antiquarianism.

In the religious field, Etruria won a solid reputation for excellence in the divinatory arts. Her tradition of *haruspices* was acknowledged and recognised to a point that the memory of it was still alive in the Late Antique period, well after the last of the actual *haruspices* had

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644   See e.g. Bittarello 2009.

stopped practising brontoscopy or extispicy. It has now become apparent how the

promoters of this commonplace image were themselves the Etruscan practitioners. They

were the ones who chose to present, out of all the aspects of a religious tradition which

evidence suggests to have been far more multifaceted than the Latin-language sources

portray it to be, the ones that they likely thought were more highly 'marketable' in the wider

Roman context. These aspects could attract the attention and the custom of the Roman

Senate itself, presenting themselves as complementary to the work of the *augures* and

pontifices. It was also people of Etruscan origins, who were knowledgeable about the whole

of the Etruscan religious tradition, that chose which texts were to be presented as the

canonical ones for the work of *haruspices* and the doctrine of Etruscan divination as a

whole. This was done through a work of translation into Latin enabling further dissemination

at a time when the Etruscan language was declining, and influential upper-class Romans

could not be expecting to know it. In doing so, they chose the building blocks on which the

widespread concept of Etruscan piety was built. These included their excellency in the forms

of divination concerning the study of thunder and that of animal entrails, their *saecula*

doctrine, and the authoritative antiquity of their religious practices.

Rather than being the passive object of a process of 'Romanisation' more or less forced

upon them by a conquering society pursuing integration through homologation, prominent

families in Etruscan centres appear to have consciously chosen to what degree they adopted

an 'Etruscan' or 'Roman' image. They often moved between the two in order to best support

their needs and achieve political gain. Concepts of acculturation, integration, and cultural

bilingualism developed in the field of social sciences can better help us understand the

nature of these processes. Yet it is clear that they were not, as has often been posited, developed by a more powerful 'Roman' culture and pushed onto a disappearing 'Etruscan' one, but were instead often shaped and controlled by the very same people who defined and presented themselves as possessing Etruscan heritage.

Through the various examples that we have considered, the very concepts of 'Etruscan' and 'Roman' have themselves been redefined. It is clear that there is no clear-cut duality opposing such concepts to each other; not only are the margins separating them blurred, but the concepts themselves appear to have undergone significant variation through time, and they increasingly seem not to be polar opposites, but rather to have often coexisted with each other. Even a burial like that of P. Volumnius Violens, highly influenced by Roman acculturation, preserved signs of Etruscan presentation. M. Perperna Veiento chose an 'Etruscanising' *cognomen* in spite of his family history of uncertain rights to citizenship. Nigidius Figulus was a highly respected Roman Senator and an equally highly respected Etruscan-speaking scholar of *etrusca disciplina*.

The concepts of parallel and nested identities are here particularly helpful in understanding the dynamics at play. It appears that individuals originating in Etruscan *municipia*, and at times even those whose connections with said *municipia* were remote and all but severed, were not confronted with a mandatory choice to present themselves as either 'Roman' or 'Etruscan'. On the contrary, many of such individuals appear to have adopted a binary system in which 'Roman' and 'Etruscan' coexisted without apparent conflict. These systems of identities could present themselves as nested, with the individual being perceived, or

presenting himself, to be both 'Roman' and 'Etruscan' at the same time; or they could

present themselves as parallel, with the individual picking in turn which identity it was more

profitable for him to present depending from context and the nature of his interlocutors.[645]

These systems also allowed for greater adaptability to different contexts, that individuals

without such binary origins did not have access to.

Where someone like Propertius could balance the two identities without apparent

separation between them and speak of *Umbria Romani patria Callimachi*,[646] a magistrate in

Perusia trying to gain solid grounding after the upset of the *Bellum Perusinum* would have

had to carefully pick his presentation in order to curry favour both with the Roman

establishment and with his local supporters within the *municipium*, presenting a reliably

Roman persona for the first but still hinting at the depth of his Etruscan origins for the

benefit of the seconds. Rather than musing upon the ways in which Romans viewed

Etruscans, then, we should think of a system in which 'Etruscan Romans' carefully chose the

nature of their presentation depending on the context, the occasion, and the goals they

were aiming to achieve. In the same way, they may have chosen to underrepresent or hide

their Etruscan connections in any scenario in which it could have attracted criticism.

The idea of the existence of a unitary idea of 'Etruscans' is, as seen above, often itself

problematic in this context. When looking at the behaviour of members of the Roman

Senate whose families originated from Etruscan centres, and whose ties with those centres

were in many cases still active, in the divisive years of the Civil Wars, it has become apparent

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645   For nested identities see Farney 2007; for parallel identities see Smith 2006.
646   Propertius 4.1a.64.

that no shared 'Etruscan behaviour' could be observed or highlighted as a norm. Assumptions made in previous studies concerning the existence of an 'Etruscan mentality' shared across the board in all centres in Etruria,[647] and that would have deeply informed political behaviour in people hailing from those centres, have found no grounding in the actual evidence concerning the behaviour of these families. It would seem that no coherent political line, and no widespread expectation of political behaviour, can be found in people hailing from different centres in Etruria. This is partly a consequence of the fact that these individuals would have perceived their ties to be with their individual centres of origins rather than with Etruria as a whole.

The historical backgrounds of individual regions and cities within Etruria could at times be radically different from each other, as well as the history of their interactions with the Roman establishment. The centres of Southern Etruria, for instance, had a much longer history of commerce and political interactions in Rome than their counterparts in Northern Etruria, and many of their elite families had had an active presence in Rome from a very early date, sometimes within the Roman Senate itself. On the contrary, centres in Northern Etruria have often been observed to be more 'conservative',[648] for instance in their maintaining the use of the Etruscan language in epigraphy to a significantly later date, and their relationship with Rome appears at a glance to have been often more conflictual. Furthermore, there is evidence for conflict or at least for tensions between individual Etruscan centres, and it appears that their allegiance to Rome in a number of conflicts was given through individual choice of each centre rather than as a resolution taken across the

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647   See e.g.Torelli 1969; Gabba 1973; Sordi 1973.
648   An excellent example being the '*Tam firmum municipium*' of Volaterrae, see Terrenato 1998.

board in Etruria as a whole. Individuals hailing from different centres could then be expected to have different backgrounds and different goals, and perhaps a different perception of their position *vis-à-vis* Rome. Geographical distance appears to be a factor in this, but so does the level of interaction with Rome. Other factors may 'abridge' geographical distance – the presence of road connections, for instance.

In order to understand these differing behaviours, the idea of a monolithic 'Etruscan' block possessing a shared allegiance to a perceived ethnic or national unity must be discarded. Yet it would be equally a mistake to assume that there was no overarching concept of an 'Etruscan' identity. The centres of Etruria were not only perceived as a coherent whole by external observers. They shared a language, a distinct material culture, and a religious tradition, and even with the uncertainties surrounding the development of their interactions on the political level, it is safe to assume that they possessed some degree of awareness of their being part of a cultural continuum. Depending on the result that will be yielded by the ongoing archaeological investigation of the site of what may well be the *Fanum Voltumnae*,[649] they may have also possessed a sanctuary that served as a shared religious centre for at least some of these cities, perhaps functioning in a similar way to what has been posited by R. Scopacasa with regards to the sanctuary of Pietrabbondante in Samnium.[650]

Even though it is far from clear how extensive a group it truly covered, the Etruscan-language term *Rasenna* or *Rasna* appears to have been used in epigraphic contexts as a

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649   Cfr. Stopponi 2013; 2016.
650   Cfr. Scopacasa 2014.

regional ethnic covering more than one centre, to some extent comparable to the Latin

Tusci or *Etrusci*, or the Greek Τυρρηνοί.[651] It is therefore safe to say that, even with the

prominent individuality of each centre in Etruria, the possible antagonistic feelings between

different centres, and the different histories of interactions with Rome they had, some

concept of a belonging to what may be defined as an Etruria-wide ethnic group must have

existed in the whole area. It is in this sense, then, that we may speak of 'Etruscans' and of a

self-aware 'Etruscan identity'.

Considering this, it would then be incorrect to posit that an Etruria-wide concept of an

'Etruscan identity' was entirely a later construct, only made possible by the loss by degrees

of political independence of the individual Etruscan centres and the integration of their

inhabitants into Roman citizenship, eventually enabling their local elites to assume an active

role in Roman politics and to achieve the positions of influence in Rome itself that ultimately

enabled them to drive the representation of Etruscans in Roman consciousness. Etruscans as

a region-wide cultural continuum, with traditions that had at times very old shared roots,

were not 'invented' out of nothing in the Late Republic. Language was certainly a unifying

element, yet others were also present that survived after the widespread adoption of Latin.

The sharing of some religious traditions appears to have been one, perhaps the strongest.

It is well possible that some of the Etruscan presences highlighted by Late Republican and

Early Imperial authors in Roman society had truly been there for as long as they were

claimed to be, just as it is possible that the many stories of Etruscan contributions to Roman

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651   Cfr. e.g. in the Greek-Etruscan 'cippus of the Tyrrhenians' from Delphi, where it is equated to
Τυρρηνοί, see Woudhuizen 1986. While this inscription is much earlier than the Late Republic, its use of 'rasna'
is part of a debate on the nature of Etruscan shared identity.

traditions have a solid bottom of truth to them. While the higher degree of agency that we

have brought to light for individuals of Etruscan origins meant that they played an active role

in shaping Roman perceptions of Etruscan as a whole, and of their contributions to Roman

society, it does not necessarily follow that such perceptions were entirely a later

construction. It is much more plausible that this agency was used in helping direct the way in

which some elements or aspects were highlighted and others left in the background, guided

by the interests of those who had a direct influence on the process.

The building of ideas surrounding haruspicy is a perfect example of this mechanism. A closer

look at the evidence has shown that the lore surrounding haruspicy in its original Etruscan

centres, and the corpus of practices performed by Etruscan diviners, might have been

considerably wider than Latin-language sources present it to be; furthermore, that there

does not seem to be one single Etruscan-language term corresponding perfectly to the Latin

haruspex, but a number of sub-terms each representing one individual specialism. It would

appear that some aspects of this wider religious knowledge were selected that were

particularly appealing in a Roman context and then conflated under the *haruspex* label,

presented as a cohesive discipline that yet had no exact counterpart in the much more

complex system of Etruscan divinatory practice. Yet at the same time the aspects that were

popularised in Rome through the workings of the *haruspices* can be shown to be drawn from

authentic religious practice originating in Etruscan centres, and the *haruspices* consulted by

the Senate received bona fide training in Etruria. Equally, in her works J. Macintosh Turfa has

convincingly shown that the texts selected from translation into Latin and presented as Latin

versions of authentic Etruscan originals had indeed their roots in Etruscan traditions, and

were probably actual translations, albeit at times perhaps reworked to better suit their new cultural context.[652] We are then faced here not with the invention *ex novo* of presumed Etruscan cultural traits, but with the choice of a select number of authentic traits to be presented as paramount to build a marketable image of Etruscans - in this case, of Etruscan diviners - in a Roman context. It might also have been to the Roman Senate's advantage to be able to claim that they were resorting to 'real Etruscan' *haruspices*.

The example of the *haruspices* is only one of a number in which we can observe this process of selection and diffusion of Etruscan cultural elements that had authentic roots in the local tradition of centres in Etruria but could be amended, simplified, or at times even overplayed to make them suitable to the Roman *milieu* and to the new perception of Etruscans that was being built. Yet to understand the underlying reasons for this process and the dynamics informing it we have to turn to the wider context of the Late Republic, culminating in the early years of the Augustan Principate.

Some powerful cultural currents have been observed in this period having their roots in the assumption of Roman citizenship of the Italian populations following the Social War. A generalised process can be observed beginning during the Social War itself and coming to an end of sorts with the end of the Civil Wars that completely reshaped the relationship between Rome and Italy. The Italian populations started with being perceived as interlocutors and potential allies, but also potential threats - a threat that in many ways materialised with the Social War itself and was only partially perceived to have been defused

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652   MacIntosh Turfa 2012 pp. 3-18.

by the granting of citizenship. By the end of this gradual process, however, an equation had been built between Rome and Italy, in the light of which 'Roman' and 'Italian' could be perceived to be virtually synonymous, and the Italian populations were widely perceived to be fully integrated into the Roman cultural milieu; a situation in which, in a sense, Rome was Italy and Italy was Rome. It is the process leading to the birth of the concept of *tota Italia* as highlighted by M. Torelli,[653] a concept that would be of paramount importance in Augustan ideology and would remain at the forefront of Roman consciousness for a long time to follow - throughout the years of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and beyond it.

More than that, this equation was not only based on the recognition of the achievement of a new status on the part of the Italian populations. The process of integration was in many ways retroactive. Rather than be limited to the description of a parable in which Italian populations became more and more closely involved in active Roman political and cultural life, this process of equation between Rome and Italy found additional grounding in antiquarianism. As Rome's past became more and more a matter of interest, so too growing emphasis was placed in the role played by Italian influences in the shaping of its very culture and traditions, starting from its earliest origins. The early history of Rome was then increasingly presented as a period of external influences and contributions, in which Italian elements could have played an active role to the point of driving the establishment of what were perceived to be the most authentic components of Roman culture.

The long-lived preoccupation with the concept of *mos maiorum* served here as a tool to validate the authenticity of these Italian contributions. Rome and Italy could be equated and

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653   Torelli 1999.

perceived as a coherent unity because the Italian contribution had been part of Rome's very tradition - it was part of the *mos maiorum* itself, and as such could not be a disruptive innovation. This solidification of the unity between Rome and Italy had been an ongoing process ever since the end of the Social War, though not necessarily a linear or trouble-free one. A number of setbacks could certainly be observed during its trajectory, and the ongoing disputes over the rights of Italian individuals to claim full Roman citizenship or hold magistracies, still active in the Late Republic, demonstrate clearly that it was not accepted without difficulties. Yet the concern existed, and it was driven by a political interest - it is sufficient to look at the number of speeches in which Cicero appears eager to present Italian communities as quintessential players on the Roman political scene, the most faithfully and authentically Roman of communities,[654] to show the existence of an active interest in furthering these ideas. It is important to note also that, just as observed with the construction of perceptions of Etruscans, these Italian contributions being highlighted in this period were not necessarily later fabrications. They might be only partially understood recoveries of traditions that had fallen out of fashion, or have been reshaped to suit the circumstance, but it is likely that many of them hid at least a kernel of truth. What we are faced with is then not the invention of a mythical past, but the reinvention and rediscovery of elements that had been hidden or disregarded, and were now being highlighted to suit a different purpose.

This process gained traction in the very last decades of the Republic, with the conflict between the triumvirs, and culminated in the construction of the ideological implant of the

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654   Cfr. Roselaar 2017.

Early Principate, in what we might well term as *Augustan nostalgia*. A particular interest for the past has often been highlighted as a fundamental trait of the Augustan ideology and was undoubtedly crucial for the founding years of a regime that had to rely on the claim of being a restoration of Rome's old customs and tradition in order to gain solid footing. Yet when we look at what past exactly was at the core of this operation we find that it is not simply Rome's past - reinvented or otherwise - but Italy's past as a whole, and the assumption that Rome's past and Italy's past are fundamentally one and the same. The theme is an important one in the Aeneid, in many ways the core text in this Augustan operation. We can then define Augustan nostalgia as the process of establishing an official joint tradition presenting Rome and Italy as a uniform whole that enjoyed a process of joint development and mutual influence ever since the mythical past.

The purposes of such an operation are clear, and have more than once been remarked upon in modern scholarship. They have their roots in the conflict between the triumvirs, and specifically in the establishment of a polar opposition between the good values of Roman Italy and the potential threat of the Greek-Egyptian East - with Antony specifically being portrayed as betraying the first to the benefit of the second. Enshrined into an official form by the victory at Actium, this system of opposition became one of the foundations of the new Augustan regime. Even so it does not follow that the elements of a shared Italy-wide past that were privileged in this new representation had to be entirely fabricated. On the contrary, we can expect this trend of Augustan nostalgia to follow the same workings of the process we have highlighted up to this point, by shifting attention onto elements of a shared past that held some historical truth, although they could be reworked to serve the occasion

or were reconstructed starting from an understanding that had by this point become only partial. This might be the case with claims to the Etruscan origins of the Roman triumph, the correct practice for founding a city, and so on.

For a number of reasons, Etruscans were ideal candidates to be at the forefront of this process. They had indeed played an important role in Rome's development ever since the time of the monarchy and had a consistent history of interactions with Rome since, though such interactions had at times been turbulent. Their role in the Social War had not been as a whole as hostile as that of other Italian populations. They were perceived as a people of great antiquity, which gave added value to their cultural contributions. Furthermore, through the process of deliberate shaping of their presentation that we have brought to light, they had already established themselves as prime contributors to Roman tradition in at least one field - the religious one - and were in a good position to present themselves as Rome's direct predecessors. It may be also in this period that the idea of an Etruscan egemony preceding the Roman one became common currency. Cato's remarks to this extent are proof that such an idea was certainly circulating at this time.[655]

The defusing of some of the remaining stereotypes circulating about Etruscans that we have observed in works of literature in this period is in a sense yet another phase - the final one - of this same process, and once again we see individuals of Etruscan origins playing a significant role in shaping it. It was a process that was largely successful - the reality of the Etruscan contribution to Roman tradition, and of its importance, was accepted as fact and

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655   Servius *Aen.* 11.584. Cfr. Also Smith 2017.

remained in the general consciousness to a very late date, and the successful parable of a number of families of avowed Etruscan origins continued undisturbed, even gaining further impetus, in the Early Empire. It is to be hoped, in fact, that the further repercussions of this process on the role of families originating from Etruscan centres in the Imperial period will be further investigated in future studies, showing the long-term consequences of what had been established in the period that has been at the centre of this research.

This analysis of Etruscan self-representation in the Late Republic has highlighted a process that was complex, operating at different levels on a number of different fronts. All of these contributed to the establishment of a widespread perception of what was 'Etruscan' that is reflected in a number of Latin-language works in the Early Empire and later, and that would remain enshrined in Roman culture for a long time to come. It has showed the high degree of agency that individuals hailing from Etruscan centres, and/or claiming Etruscan heritage for themselves, had in each and every phase of the construction of this perception. It is a crucial example of a process of mutual acculturation that cannot possibly be simplified within the term of a one-sided 'Romanisation', but was the result of active intervention on both sides of the dialogue, and led to the creation of identities that were multifaceted, stratified, and at times in constant flux - showing the need for the development of theoretical tools able to reflect this complexity, far too often disregarded in our approaches to ancient ideas of ethnicity.

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